

MOTHERLAND

Short Film by Hila Elena Royzenman

17 min • Fiction Drama

migration; Russians in Israel; women; homeless; loneliness; mother

Production Country | Israel

Language | Hebrew, Russian

Subtitles | English

Screening format | DCP, Color

Audio format | 5.1

Ratio | 2:35:1 scope

Shooting format | Digital

Tailer: <https://vimeo.com/642752168>

pass: motherland21

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Cast

Lena Fraifeld | Svetlana Demidov | Andrey Kashker | Marek Rozenbaum

Creative team

Writer, Director : Hila Elena Royzenman

Producer : Uria Kedem

Cinematographer: May Abady Grebler

Editor: Mattan Kedem

Assistant Director: Gaya Elstein

Sound Design & mix: Yossi Appelbaum

Online: Ori Alon

Synopsis

Masha, a young Russian immigrant, dealing with a life altering crisis, seeks out her mother, Vera, at a quarry in the Israeli desert where Vera is employed. Instead of finding comfort in her mother's arms, she is sucked into Vera's new passionate social life , alongside a group of homeless quarry workers. Masha is confronted with the challenges of being an immigrant and a mother – as she herself is on the cusp of life changes.

Synopsis #2

A fantasy about a daughter's yearning for her mother's warmth and comfort, which turns into a nightmare about harsh reality of a group of homeless quarry workers. Masha arrives at the quarry with a heavy heart, burdened by a secret she hasn't told anyone about. She wants to speak with her mother, Vera, but she has struggles of her own. A young woman finds herself in a deafening masculine environment where no one's listening. A journey to save herself quickly blurs into a venture to save her own mother. Ants crawling on the walls of the house, childhood photos and Russian food, are the harsh reality of one woman, and a comforting memory for the other.

Production Notes

The film deals with issues of migration and foreignness. The main motif I chose to work with was the constant noise, the inability to hear and the effort required to speak and be understood. That's why I chose to shoot in a quarry. The difficulty of filming in such a location, especially in covid-19 days , led us to shoot at several locations across the country , and piece the world of the film together like a puzzle.

Another element that emphasizes the distance from society, was focusing on a relationship between two foreign and lonely female characters, set against an overtly masculine world. This is my 3rd film working with the actress Svetlana Demidov. This time we were joined by Lena Fraifeld, and together they created a tough yet emotional world, both within the film's storyline and within the cinematic world in which all three of us work.



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Hila Elena Royzenman

Director's BIO

Hila was born in 1988 in Saint Petersburg, Russia, and immigrated to Israel with her parents at 1990. She graduated from the Sam Spiegel film school in Jerusalem in 2019 where she studied film directing. Her latest short film, “Motherland”, was produced in collaboration with the “Short In The Desert” project, a short film initiative of the Arava Film Festival. Her graduate film, “Cold frost & Sunshine”, won 1st place at the Moscow VGIK International Film Festival in 2021, and also won the Israel’s Film Critic’s Forum Award in 2020.

She’s received her BA in Theater, Communications and Journalism from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. She’s currently working on her first full length feature film.

Director's Filmography

2021 **MOTHERLAND** 17 min, Israel

2019 **COLD FROST AND SUNSHINE** 18 min, Israel

2107 **CUCKOO** 13 min, Israel

awards

GRAND PRIX at VGIK International Student Festival, Moscow

Asociación de criticos de cine de Israel prize - Tel Aviv International Student Film Festival

screenings

Premiered at the Jerusalem film festival

Jerusalem women's film festival

2107 **CUCKOO** 13 min, Israel

screenings

Vienna Jewish FF

Tel Aviv International Student Film Festival

Beer Sheva Short Film Festival

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Director's Statement

The Israeli Poet, Leah Goldberg, coined the term “quarry feeling” in her journals. She described the impression the quarry left on her as such: “today I went walking in the quarry. I have a weakness for quarries. I remember seeing such a thing for the very first time near Bonn with Kahala, he said: “That’s how the Siebenbürgen looks from the inside”. And i had an almost erotic attraction to those rocks. I’ve never felt anything like that before.

Leah Goldberg’s “Quarry Feeling” is a description of the inside of things. Meaning, what can’t be shared and remains forever within one’s own soul.

The poet and psychoanalysis, Dana Amir, once gave a lecture about the ways in which we learn vocabulary when we’re young. There are some words that instantly mean the same thing, like the word table, for example. But the real issue lies with the words that will never have the same meaning for any two people. When each one of us is hurt, the word pain permeates within us a little differently.

These gaps create within each person, his or her own personal “Quarry Feeling”, The places we’ll never be able to explain, communicate or be understood.



Photo of Lea Goldberg and drawing by Goldberg from *She'erit HaChayim* (1971)

CREW

MAY ABDAI GREBLER **CINEMATOGRAPHER**



Graduated from the Sam Spiegel film and television school at 2017 and has been working since as a DOP and director. "Mamushke", her debut film, screened at the Jerusalem film festival 2017. Worked as a personal assistant for the Israeli director Keren Margalit on her series "Sleeping Bears". Her work as a DOP also include "SIGNER" by Nurith Aviv, and other short fiction and documentary films.

MATTAN KEDEM **EDITOR**



Graduated from the Sam Spiegel film and television school in 2019, and has been working since as an editor. "To The Grave", his debut film as a director, screened at the Haifa film festival, and other festivals around the world. He edited short films and music videos, and is currently editing a feature film "Double Glazing" by Idan Haguel.

