

a short film by TESS FORESTIERI

Lisa Carina Maier | Mohammed Alshaneif | Noor Hamdi | Fady Kerko | Jake Murphy | Jonas Löffler

FLUNKYBALL





FLUNKYBALL

a short film

Genre: **Drama**

Running time: **13min, 15s**

Languages: **Arabic, German, English**

*Written/
Directed by:* **Tess Forestieri**

*Executive
Producers:* **Tess Forestieri, Edan Laniado**

*Production
Company:* **Forest Films**

*Cinematography/
Editing:* **David Siciliano**

Composer: **Jonathon Keeling**



LOGLINE

- 29 words -

Two worlds collide when unexpected guests arrive at Mia's house party and she watches the night spiral out of control, caught in the crossfire of ignorance under the influence.

SYNOPSIS

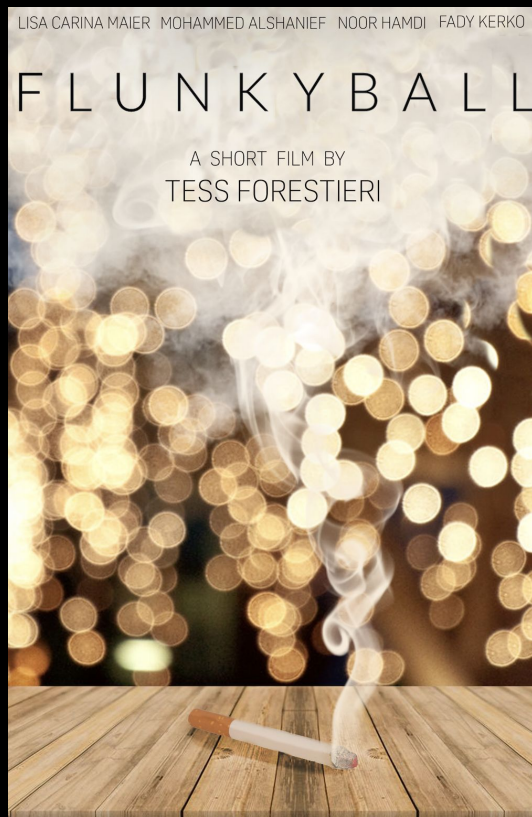
- 65 words -

When Youssef, Nizar, and Elias discover Mia and her friends playing the German drinking game, Flunky Ball, Youssef insists on trying his luck. Upon making the winning shot, the two groups of strangers merge enthusiastically for a fun night in the German countryside.

As the night wears on, the groups' worst fears are realized in a painful portrayal of the consequences of internalized and systemic racism.



FLUNKYBALL PRESS MATERIALS



CREATIVE STATEMENT

Good intentions do not always result in positive outcomes. Inaction, apathy and complacency is often as dangerous and violent as overt racism. *Flunkyball* explores whiteness and the bystander effect in a wrought depiction of internalized and systemic racism.

This film is meant to combine a naturalistic, handheld shooting approach with curiously foreboding and surrealist undertones. Inspiration for visual style came from Sean Price Williams' work on *Good Time* and Reed Morano's in *Meadowland* and *The Handmaid's Tale*. As for score and sound design, I am inspired by Mac Quayle's work on *Mr. Robot* and Mark H. Phillip's score in *Homecoming*.

I worked collaboratively with the cast and crew to develop a script in two languages I don't speak: Arabic and German. One of the highlights in prepro was improvising and devising with the actors to develop the first scene of the film. The challenge of directing in languages I don't speak made me acutely aware of the importance of telling stories responsibly and remaining open for critique. As a white woman, working on this film has only further proven how important continued learning/unlearning is in the journey towards anti-racism.

My hope is that this will give an opportunity for reflection and discussion surrounding topics that are difficult to address.

- tess



Lisa Carina Maier as Mia

Lisa is a German stage director and film actress who recently completed her B.A. at University of Vienna in Theatre, Film & Media studies and English & American Studies. Lisa is in grad school for her M.A. in Arts Administration and Directing and the founder and CEO of her company, [Wiener Spielwut](#). Lisa has directed various theatre projects including *Regained Paradise Lost*, *Bel Ami*, and *Concerning Mars*, which was part of the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. She has worked on various independent films as an actor and producer in Austria and Germany such as *Philomena* (2016), *Stark im Kommen* (2017 TV Show Pilot) and *Terra Nullius* (2019).



Mohammed Alshaneif as Youssef

Mohammed Alshaneif is an actor and writer from Damascus, Syria. Mohammed started acting in plays after moving from Syria to Egypt at the age of 15. Since arriving in the United States in 2017, Mohammed has continued his journey as a stage actor in addition to stepping into the film world. Since 2017 Mohammed has written and acted in more than 15 short films including *Driver*, winner of Scout Film Festival's Emerging Filmmakers Grant, which he wrote and starred in. His most recent role is as Youssef in the upcoming short film *Flunkyball* directed by Tess Forestieri.



Noor Hamdi as Nizar

Noor, who is proudly queer and Syrian-American, is a New York based actor, teacher, dialect coach and circus artist. Noor moved to New York from Chicago many years ago to train at the William Esper Studio, where he honed and further developed his craft. He's appeared in various theatre productions Off-Broadway (including "Cartography" by Kaneza Schaal and Chris Myers), locally, regionally, internationally, and, due to the pandemic, on Zoom. In addition, he has been in some short films and is very happy that *Flunkyball* is one of those, as telling the stories of POC around the world is one of his passions. Noorhamdi.com IG: @_noorhamdi



Fady Kerko as Elias

Fady Kerko is an Armenian Egyptian actor born in Egypt, based in NYC and a proud alumni of the University of South Florida with a BA in Mass Communication. Recently, Fady appeared as Detective Fareed, a recurring Co-star, opposite Liev Schreiber on season seven of SHOWTIME'S hit series RAY DONOVAN as well as Co-Starring as Kamile, the local bodega worker, opposite Natasha Lyonne on the NETFLIX hit series Russian Doll. In the theatre space, Fady played Siggie in Clifford Odets' GOLDEN BOY and Treat in Lyle Kessler's ORPHANS, directed by Aaron Latham (screenplay writer for URBAN COWBOY and THE PROGRAM). When Fady is not performing, he enjoys cooking as a form of therapy and way to recharge. Fady also plays soccer and tennis but most of all enjoys spending time with family. www.fadygkerko.com



Writer/Director

Tess is a multidisciplinary artist with a background in directing, performance and media studies.

Tess successfully crowdfunded over \$17k for her first film, *Flunkyball* which was shortlisted for the Roy W. Dean Grant in 2019.

Tess has written, directed and produced promotional content and shoots for small to medium sized businesses such as The Tailory NYC, Weber Grills, Stoolyoga, etc. In the commercial video and advertising space, Tess has been on the team developing award-winning ad campaigns for Fortune 500 brands like Pepsi, Cheetos and Frito-Lay and her producing work has been featured in AdAge, Medium, The Drum, etc.

Some career highlights include working on the production team for a national TV commercial airing during the 2019 Macy's Day Parade, supporting the digital campaign for the 2019 and 2020 Super Bowl, producing Pepsi's 2019 Pride Day coverage, and writing and directing her first film in two languages she doesn't speak.

Tess is an empath and collaborator driven to tell stories that encourage dialogue surrounding difficult topics. tessforestieri.com



Producer, Edan Laniado

Edan is an Israeli-American artist with a background in an assortment of arts related fields, including classical piano, theatre, film theory and music.

Edan studied screenwriting and film production at FAMU in Prague during this third year of college, where he worked on a variety of independent films as a writer, actor and director. While at FAMU Edan composed original music for the film *Bratři*, which won Best Short Film at the UCLA Film Festival. Edan was also selected as Best Actor in the original play, *Fast*, which brought him to The Kennedy Center for their national acting competition.

After graduating with a degree in film studies, Edan moved back to Tel Aviv for several years and produced his first album, [The Opposite Wall](#), which is available on all streaming services.

Edan currently works in NYC at an Israeli startup selling cyber security for cryptocurrency while continuing to develop his TV pilot about capitalism and parallel universes in addition to his next album.



NEWS & EVENTS

Upcoming Screenings

8/2 - Toronto Lift Off Film Festival
10/11-10/12 - Bucks Fever Filmfest
10/18-10/21 - LA Femme International Film Festival
10/21-10/25 - Bushwick Film Festival
10/23-10/25 - SF International Festival of Short Films
6/6-6/13 - NYC Indie Film Festival

Awards

Best of Fest 2020: Bucks Fever Filmfest

Official Selections

Lift Off Global Network: Toronto 2020; SF Shorts: The San Francisco International Festival of Short Films 2020; BUSHWICK FILM FESTIVAL 2020; Bucks Fever Filmfest 2020; LA Femme Int'l Film Festival 2020, NYC Independent Film Festival 2021

Semi Finalist

Flickers Rhode Island International Film Festival 2020

CREDITS

Written/Directed by:

Executive Produced by:

Cinematography/Editing:

Tess Forestieri

Tess Forestieri & Edan Laniado

David Siciliano

CAST

Mia

Youssef

Nizar

Elias

Jan

Lars

Additional Cast

Lisa Carina Maier,

Mohammed Alshaneif,

Noor Hamdi

Fady Kerko

Jake Murphy

Jonas Löffler

Marco Hiller, Isabelle August,

Sabine Hödl, Anne Eisele,

Luca Frantzmänn, Stephan

Schmidt, Thomas McCullough

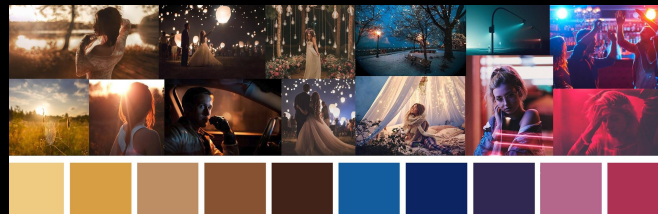
CREW

Line Producer:

Associate Producers:

Jennifer Kachler

Lisa Carina Maier, David Siciliano



Original Music:
Sound Design & Mix
Production Sound Mixer:

Jonathon Keeling
Matt Orlando
Boris Palacios

Gaffer:
Key Grip:
1st Assistant Camera, DIT, VFX:

Justus Page
Ward Kamel
Danny Ryan

Production Design
Costume Design:

Almudena Caminero
Ashley Clemmings

Hair & Makeup Artist:

Shannon Rae Mulligan

Fight Choreographer:

Henry Evans

Colorist:

Sean Henderson

Set PA:

Chelsea Jackson

Cultural Advisors:

Beleal Zarrou, Salma Abdalla,
Ward Kamel

Special Thanks:

Jeri Cohen
Frank Forestieri
Dave Edmonds
Rachel Towne
Ann Towne
Jeff & Karen Beck Pooley
Danny Coates Finke
Michael Finn
Nicos Elias
Lily Kaplan



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