



# IT WAS TOMORROW

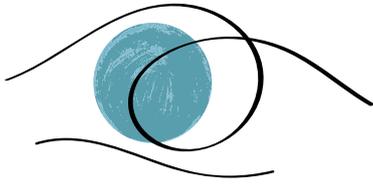
a film by Alexandra D'Onofrio



PRODUCTION THE UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER DISTRIBUTED BY GINA FILMS WITH MAHMOUD HEMIDA · ALI HENISH · MOHAMED KHAMIS ·  
VIDEO EDITING ANTONIO AUGUGLIARO GRASSHOPPER FACILITIES FRANCESCA COGNI SOUNDTRACK DISSÓI LOGOI COPY EDITOR ANDREW IRVING · ALISON JEFFERS ·  
JOHANNES SÖBERG ANIMATION TRACKING DAN RICHARDS · STAFF AT ANIMATE AND CREATE TECHNICAL SUPPORT DAN POWER · KARL SPENCER · JON TIPLER ·  
TRANSLATION AND ADVICE GABRIELE DEL GRANDE FUNDED BY ARTS AND HUMANITIES RESEARCH COUNCIL DIRECTED BY ALEXANDRA D'ONOFRIO

[www.ginafilms.net](http://www.ginafilms.net)





**GINAFILMS**

presents

The University of Manchester  
productions



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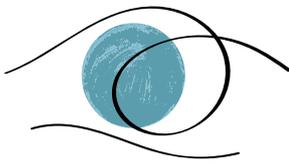
a film by Alexandra D'Onofrio

Italy / United Kingdom 2018, 52 minutes

[www.ginafilms.net/it-was-tomorrow](http://www.ginafilms.net/it-was-tomorrow)



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## CREDITS

**Directed by** Alexandra D'Onofrio

**Cast** Mahmoud Hemida, Ali Henish,  
Mohamed Khamis

**Video editing** Antonio Augugliaro

**Supervision** Andrew Irving, Alison Jeffers,  
Johannes Sjöberg

**Animation facilitator** Francesca Cogni

**Animation training** Dan Richards & Staff  
at Animate and Create

**Soundtrack** Dissòì Lógoi

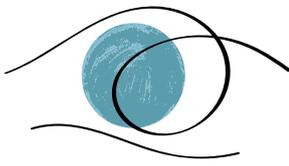
**Technical support** Dan Power, Karl Spencer, Jon Tripler

**Translation and advise** Gabriele Del Grande

**Production** Drama and Anthropology  
at the University of Manchester

**Funded by** Arts and Humanities Research Council





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## SYNOPSIS

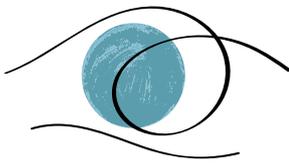
**Ali, Mahmoud** and **Mohamed** are three **Egyptian men** who lived in Italy **without documents** for almost ten years. Suddenly thanks to an **amnesty** they finally manage to **legalise** their status and their future is re-inhabited by **possibilities**. As part of their need to **rediscover** their **dreams** and **hopes** they decide to take the **journey back** to the first places of arrival, where they disembarked from the boats that had brought them as teenagers to Italy after **crossing the Mediterranean**. The film follows them back to the emblematic places of the past, where **memories** are intertwined with **fantasies** about what **could be**, or could have been, their possible **new life**. **Collaborative documentary** filmmaking is accompanied by creative narrative processes such as **theatre, storytelling, photography** and **participatory animation**.



The life we end up living is **only one** amongst many other **possibilities**. When we wonder **who we are**, where we come from and where we are going, we are also asking ourselves **who would we be** and what would have happened if only life had taken a **different route**.

Our life stories are re-crafted in the continuous dialogue between **reality** and **possibility**. Especially during moments of crisis, like when we find ourselves at a crossroads, and we need to choose which way to go, our **imagined lives** take hold of us again and question us.

**Art** and **creativity** can help us retrace their existence.



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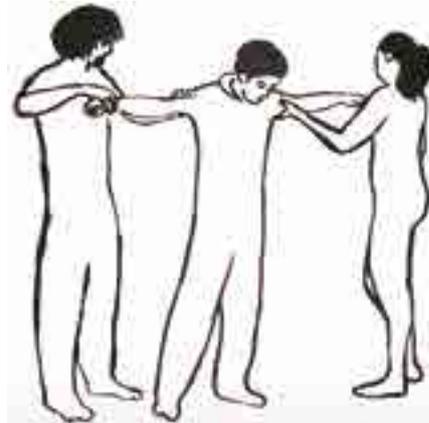
## **DIRECTOR'S NOTE**

ALEXANDRA D'ONOFRIO

**Migration** is one of the most topical themes of **our times**, represented and discussed in the media on a daily basis through images and words that often have **little relationship** to the **personal experiences** of the protagonists. In fact, what emerges from the stories of the people directly involved are **complexities** and **nuances** that reveal the dilemmas, desires and struggles of the people involved in the phenomenon we call **migration**.

I first met **Ali, Mohamed** and **Mahmoud** in 2010 when they came to participate in a **theatre forum** project which concluded by bringing on stage the difficulties experienced by those who live in Italy **without legal papers**. When we decided in 2012 to embark on a practice-based research project that would explore more in depth these people's **personal stories**, an amnesty decreed by the Italian government changed the stories they used to tell themselves regarding their life in Italy; suddenly their future **was refilled** with **hope**, with **new possibilities** and with long-cherished dreams.

For almost two years I engaged **Ali, Mohamed** and **Mahmoud** in creative processes in order to explore their memories and their imagination of the future, of what could be, or could have been if things had gone differently in their lives. We



experimented with **theatre, storytelling, photography, documentary filmmaking** and **animation**. Memory and more recently reverie and imagination have become central to ethnographic practice, but the problem that anthropologists face when carrying out this type of fieldwork is how to bring fantasies and events of **people's past** into life, when there is no independent access to people's thoughts and past experiences. It was through the process of **tracing** their recollections by painting on photographs which recalled their experiences, that my research participants became my **co-researchers**. They made decisions over what stories to tell and how to tell them, molding them imaginatively thanks to the **poetic possibilities** offered by the theatre improvisations and the animation technique. The **experimentation** of using these creative processes as part of the **research** and at a later stage to include them into the documentary, has also opened the way to trace and identify the forms and qualities that **imaginative possibilities**, within the process of remembering, take in people's experiences. Not only can **animation** be useful in the **process of memory** and knowledge making but provides an **interesting aesthetic quality** that is faithful to the evanescent and at times unsettling character of memories.

## **DISTRIBUTOR'S NOTE**

GINA FILMS

“Gina”, from the Arabic “**we have come**”, is a word contained in the refrain of a popular song we were singing while we were climbing over the Passage of Death between Grimaldi Superiore and Menton, during the shooting of “**On the Bride’s Side**”. The song tells the story of a group of friends who try to woo a beautiful and noble young lady. Similarly beautiful and noble, according to **Gina Films**, is the tension that moves us towards **contemporary reality** in search of new and **unexplored points of view**. Cinema for us, is not just **entertainment**, but also an action capable of **inspiring new aesthetic** forms and creating common imaginaries that are made up of **concrete actions** too.



This is the reason that motivated us to distribute “**It Was Tomorrow**” by **Alexandra D’Onofrio**. As it happened with other previous experiences with “**On the Bride’s Side**” and “**For a Son**”, we felt that this **documentary** has the potential to impact on **real life** before playing out on the screen. Through theatre, storytelling and animation workshops, which played a crucial role in the making of the participatory and experimental documentary “It Was Tomorrow”, the director Alexandra D’Onofrio encourages the three protagonists to **relate** to the other participants, facilitating the formation of **new relationships** which consequently influence the social fabric that surrounds them.

The **distribution** too will proceed in this direction, offering the possibility of combining the screenings with **workshops** of: **participatory media** (photography, animation, video, sound), **storytelling** and active listening, **theatre of the oppressed**, **image theatre** and **improvisation**.

# ALEXANDRA D'ONOFRIO

DIRECTOR



**Italian** and **Greek** with a foot in **England**, **Alexandra D'Onofrio** is a **visual anthropologist** and a **director**. In the past few years she has been using documentary filmmaking, animation, theatre and storytelling as **collaborative methods** of research on the topics of **migration**.

In her **social and cultural** work on the ground, she applied similar creative methods in order to create social contexts to foster new encounters and the sharing of stories, by co-

founding in Milan the **Fandema** community theatre group, the Italian language school for newcomers **Asnada**, and the storytelling project on motherhood **MAdRI**. "**It Was Tomorrow**" is her last film produced as part of her **PhD in "Anthropology, Media and Performance"** at the **University of Manchester** (UK).

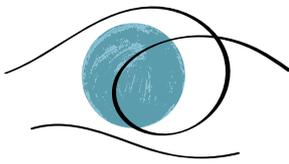
## **Filmography**

2017 [It Was Tomorrow](#)

2012 [La vita che non C.I.E.](#) (trilogy containing the shorts: [Love in the time of borders](#); [Luck will save me](#); [Daddy's not coming back](#))

2008 [Caught in between Darkness and Light](#)

2007 [Sense](#)



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## **FRANCESCA COGNI**

ANIMATION FACILITATOR



**Filmmaker and illustrator.** She uses drawings, **animations** and filmmaking as methods for observing, exploring and narrating reality. For several years, her research has focused on **migration, languages, hybridization, sustainability** and **self-production**, and has been accompanied and inspired by workshops and courses in cultural organizations, reception centres, schools and universities in **Italy, Germany, France, Belgium, Tunisia** and **Mexico**.

She works alone and in collaboration with **anthropologists, directors, artists, dancers, musicians, architects**. Nowadays she is collaborating with **Andrea Staid** on the graphic novel "**Senza Confini**", soon to be released.

### **Essential Filmography**

2009 [42 - storie da un edificio mondo](#)

2013 [Sui bordi - dove finisce il mare](#)

2010 [Appunti di resistenze](#)

2017 Tirhas

2017 Neviaro

2016 [Es war einmal in Café Kotti](#) (performative project)

## THE CAST



### ALI

was born in the Nile Delta region. He graduated in philosophy at Alexandria University (Egypt). In 2007, as a member of the crew, he boarded a merchant ship bound for Italy. Since then he has lived in Milan where he works as a sales assistant at the department store of Rinascente.



### MOHAMED

was born in Tatoun, a rural town in the district of Fayyoun (Egypt). He cut short his high school studies to travel to Italy from Libya in 2005. He arrived in Milan when he was still a teenager and since then he has been working in the building sector, becoming an expert in internal finishing, plasterboarding and false ceilings.



### MAHMOUD

was born in Tatoun, a rural town in the district of Fayyoun (Egypt). He was still a teenager when he left for Italy from Libya in 2008. He went to Milan to join his brother and since then has been working in the building sector becoming an expert in internal finishing, plasterboarding and false ceilings.