

Director Bio - Noam Argov

Noam Argov is an Israeli-American filmmaker, National Geographic Explorer and MFA Directing Student at NYU's Tisch School of the Arts. Growing up between the Middle East and Orlando, Florida, Noam spent much of her childhood walking around barefoot and dreaming up strange stories. After five years of directing and producing documentary films in all parts of the globe, she's spent the last two years staying still for a change while writing, directing and producing narrative films at Tisch. In graduate school she is a Film Futures Scholar and a nominee for the BAFTA US Scholars Program.

Overall, Noam's films tend to center on faulty heroes who challenge the stereotypes of their reality, leaving on tough conversations about attitudes, identity and our relationship with the world. From presenting with Women in Media in LA to teaching film workshops for teen girls with Reel Stories, Noam is also active in organizations that elevate and mentor women in film. Her affiliations include NYWIFT, Free the Work, and Women in Media.

Director Statement - Noam Argov

It took growing up to recognize that there are things I did in my childhood that I am not proud of, even ashamed of. When I was a kid it felt like rebellion, but as an adult I find myself remembering things in a new way. And the feelings around the memories start to change.

This is my most personal work by far. For years I've shied away from creating art that is so directly based in my own experience because I've always struggled with my identity. While immigrating to the United States was a positive move for my family in so many ways, it was also fraught with so many challenges for assimilation. With this project I wanted to take a personal, creative risk, to do something that scared me. I wanted to tell an immigration story rooted in relationships, disconnection and even shame within the family and within ourselves. I guess that just means this film is rooted in the parts of myself I am often afraid to examine. But that's also what I hope makes it beautiful and human.

And so I made SULAM. The film is based on a conglomeration of memories from my childhood immigrating to the United States. It deals with the feelings I then experienced around my mother and her inability to properly communicate in a new country. At the time I was ashamed of her, but today this work is an artistic expression and evaluation of the shame I feel retroactively for not understanding how hard it was for her to feel helpless and alone. I wanted to create space for that distinct moment in which many of us immigrants come of age and grapple with our conflicting identities. I wanted to make a film in which other immigrants can feel at home, even in the complexities of the experience. I learned that making such personal work can often be the most painful, but I hope that in something so personal others can see themselves.