

"THE WOUND IS THE PLACE  
WHERE THE LIGHT ENTERS YOU"  
RUMI



FEATURE FILM  
ANNEXY 2021  
OFFICIAL SELECTION

# Lamya's Poem

2021 | USA, CANADA | 88 MINUTES | ENGLISH



## SYNOPSIS



**LAMYA'S POEM** is an inspiring and timely tale about a 12-year-old Syrian refugee girl named Lamyia. When she flees the violence of her country, she is given a book of poetry of the famous 13th-century poet Rumi. As the perils of her journey mount, the book becomes a magical gateway where she meets Rumi when he was a boy and also a refugee fleeing the violence of his time. In a shared dreamworld, they battle the monsters that follow them from their real world situations, and Lamyia must help young Rumi find his calling and write the poem that 800 years later will save her life.



UNITY PRODUCTIONS FOUNDATION

*in association with*

PIP ANIMATION STUDIOS

# Lamya's Poem

CAST

(IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE)

LAMYA	<b>MILLIE DAVIS</b>
LAMYA'S MOTHER	<b>AYA BRYN</b>
MR. HAMADANI	<b>RAOUL BHANEJA</b>
JALAL	<b>MENA MASSOUD</b>
BAHA WALAD	<b>FARAN TAHIR</b>
BASSAM	<b>NISSAE ISEN</b>
BASSAM'S MOTHER	<b>SETTA TOROS KESHISHIAN</b>
SMUGGLER	<b>RAOUL BHANEJA</b>
HUCKSTER	<b>SAM AL ESAI</b>
MUEZZIN	<b>OSAMAH SALEH</b>
SYRIAN CHILD #1	<b>RAYAN ABDO</b>
SYRIAN CHILD #2	<b>MOHAMMED DOST MOHAMMED</b>

WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY **ALEX KRONEMER**

PRODUCED BY **SAM KADI, GLENN JAMES BROWN, ALEX KRONEMER**

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS **JAWAAD ABDUL RAHMAN, MICHAEL WOLFE**

ANIMATION & ART DIRECTOR, **BRANDON LLOYD**

ORIGINAL MUSIC COMPOSED AND ORCHESTRATED BY **CHRISTOPHER WILLIS**

EDITORS **GLENN JAMES BROWN, PAUL NEUMANN**

POST-PRODUCTION SUPERVISOR **JEREMY MORRISON**

CASTING DIRECTOR **DEE SHIPLEY**

3D ANIMATION SUPERVISOR **ASIF YOUNUS**

PRODUCTION EXECUTIVES **DULCIE CLARK, DAVID J.C. FORTIER**

NORTH AMERICA SALES **ICM PARTNERS**

INTERNATIONAL SALES **WESTEND FILMS**

## LAMYA'S JOURNEY

As the film begins, Lamya is a normal 12-year-old girl, texting friends on her cell phone, arguing with her mother about homework, and daydreaming. But her circumstances are far from normal. She lives in Aleppo, in the run-up to a civil war. Her father was killed sometime ago in a demonstration, her mother barely copes, and bombs are raining down on the city nightly, still far from their apartment, but coming closer every day.

The schools are closed because of the conflict, but her devoted teacher visits her and other students each week to hand out books and assignments to keep up with their studies. On this week's visit, he gives Lamya a book of poems by the popular Medieval poet Rumi. Her teacher tells her that she and Rumi have a lot in common: as a boy, Rumi also lived at a time of violence and war and was eventually forced to flee his city with his family.

Life goes on as normally as possible, until one day the bombing finally comes to Lamya's neighborhood, nearly killing her. Lamya and her mother pack what they can carry—including the book—and leave Aleppo, becoming refugees.

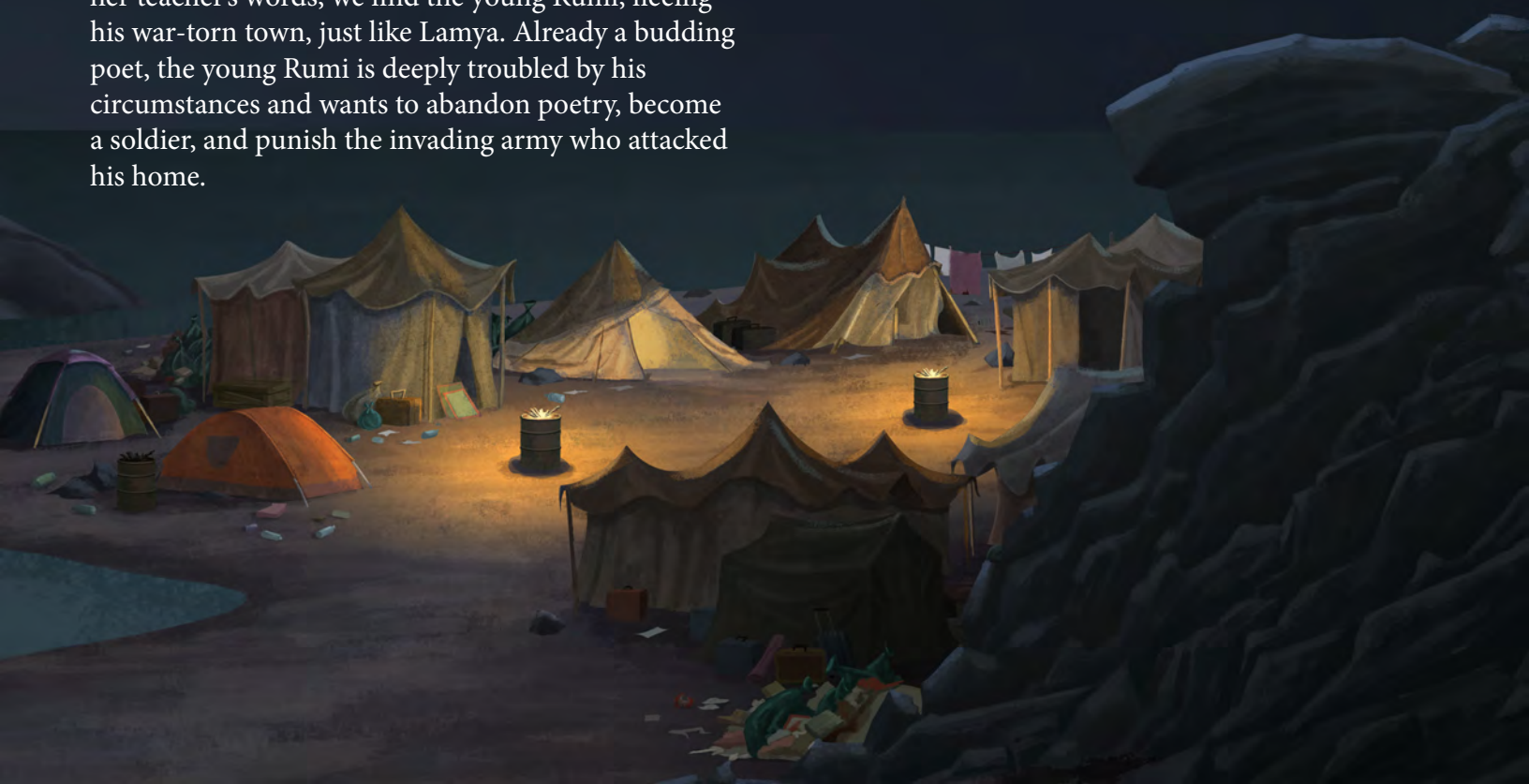
The story shifts 800 years into the past, where true to her teacher's words, we find the young Rumi, fleeing his war-torn town, just like Lamya. Already a budding poet, the young Rumi is deeply troubled by his circumstances and wants to abandon poetry, become a soldier, and punish the invading army who attacked his home.

As he struggles to write the poems that she reads, the book becomes a magical gateway where they meet in a mysterious dream world. There, they strike up a friendship that provides a respite for each of them. It is short lived. The real-world perils each one faces begin to creep into their shared dream world, where they encounter monsters and frightening settings that bear a surreal resemblance to their real-world trials.

Descending into greater peril on their journeys, the dream world grows ever more dangerous, and they are separated, severing their connection just when they need each other the most. Young Rumi abandons his poetry, and Lamya's treasured book loses its power to inspire her as life grows more desperate.

They must find the way back to each other in the dream world for them to survive the real dangers they each face. But will there be time? Can Lamya help Young Rumi to write the poem that 800 years later might save her life?

The film concludes with a lyrical demonstration of art's power to reach across time and space, bringing two vulnerable people together to lead them to the source of all love.





## GENESIS OF THE STORY



Several years ago, during one of the worst periods of fighting in Syria when over 12 million Syrians lost their homes and half became refugees, a story came to our attention about a group of Syrian refugees in a park in Athens who were reading poetry to each other, and Rumi was one of the poets they were reading. This caught our attention. Rumi's poetry is often associated with themes of love, which seem very remote from the experiences of these refugees. But upon deeper examination, we learned that it wasn't as strange as it might appear at first glance.

Rumi's poetry is rooted in parts of his life story that are much deeper—and earlier—than is often understood. As a boy, Rumi was himself what we could call a refugee, as his family was forced to flee the Mongol Invasion that swept across Central Asia and over much of the Arab Middle East. During this period, he is known to have been haunted by frightening dreams of people calling for his help, which his father

interpreted for him as people in times and places he could hardly imagine needing his words. Literature is a way of overcoming trauma. Those Syrian refugees in that Athens park needed Rumi. And through the connections he had to such people, he needed them to have a reason to write. Out of such thoughts was born the story of young Rumi and a 12-year-old Syrian girl living 800 years later who are connected by poetry that saves them both.

Lamya is a composite of stories of real-life Syrian refugees who we interviewed in developing her character. Her struggle to endure, grow, and learn in the face of civil war, chaos, and flight is also their story.

Lamya's Poem speaks to the conflict of good and evil that resides within all of us. The film offers a glimpse into a world torn by invasion and war, yet reveals that the greatest battle we face is usually within ourselves.

## TEAM



**ALEXANDER KRONEMER**  
*Writer / Director / Producer*

Alex Kronemer is the writer and director of *Lamy's Poem*. His previous film, *The Sultan and The Saint*, was nominated for a national Emmy award in 2018. He was the co-writer for the animated feature, *Bilal: A New Breed of Hero*. The film won "Best Inspiring Movie" on Animation Day during the Cannes Film Festival in 2016. Kronemer's work focuses on stories that promote understanding and dialogue between different faiths and cultures. He is the co-founder of Unity Productions Foundation, an award-winning media non-profit.



**GLENN JAMES BROWN**  
*Producer*

Glenn Brown has been in the television industry for over 20 years as a producer and director in both live action and animation. His animation credits include: *Cyberchase*, *Through The Woods*, *Doki*, *The Tom and Jerry Show*, *The Cat In The Hat Knows A Lot About That* and *Wandering Wenda*, to name a few. A crowning highlight for Glenn, was working closely with Donald Sutherland on the award-winning animated feature film *Pirate's Passage*. He also produced PIP's award-winning short films – *Kit The Kat* and *Jamie's Paper Train* both of which have won numerous awards in Canada and abroad



**SAM KADI**  
*Producer*

Sam Kadi is an award-winning Syrian-born American filmmaker. Kadi is the director, writer, and producer of critically acclaimed feature drama *The Citizen*, starring Cary Elwes (*The Princess Bride*). Kadi's recent acclaimed war zone documentary *Little Gandhi* was an official entry for Best Foreign Language Film for the 2017 Oscars. Kadi has been recognized by the prestigious Cinema For Peace organization for raising awareness of human rights issues through motion pictures.

## OTHER KEY TEAM MEMBERS



**ZEKI GÖBELEZ**  
*Associate Producer*



**NORAH ALI**  
*Prod. Coordinator*



**BRANDON LLOYD**  
*Director of Animation*



**ASIF YOUNUS**  
*CGI & VFX Supervisor*



**JAWAAD RAHMAN**  
*Executive Producer*



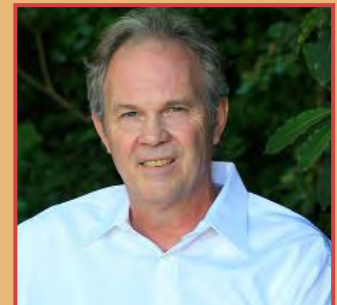
**HOMAYRA ZIAD**  
*Script Consultant*



**DANA AL DAIRANI**  
*Story Consultant*



**RANA DAJANI**  
*Story Consultant*



**MICHAEL WOLFE**  
*Executive Producer*



**JEREMY MORRISON**  
*Post-Prod Supervisor*



**LENA SULPOVAR**  
*Prod. Coordinator*



**CHRIS WILLIS**  
*Composer*



## VISUAL STYLE



In designing Lamyā's Poem, we set out with the goal of creating a film that would have a refined, artistic look appropriate to the topic. We drew inspiration and techniques from several sources, including graphic novels and classical paintings, to create our visual palette. Our intent was to compliment the mature nature of some of the themes of the film with the grit and texture afforded by visible brush strokes, roughened textures, and imperfect color fills.

In this classic tale of good versus evil, we used green and red as beacons of guidance for the audience in the film. Through these uses of color, as well as many symbolic visual metaphors, we were able to support the storytelling. For example, in the beginning as Lamyā dreams of chasing fireflies in a beautiful garden, we opted for a subtle but peaceful green as the dominant hue in the night sky. The use of green is extended to the fireflies, which throughout the film, symbolize hope. Green is also the color of Lamyā's teacher's sweater, whose guidance nurtures the start of her journey. In contrast, red hints at the corruption of anger and hatred which stain the dream world and even flicker within Lamyā as she struggles. We see it in her eyes, which are a window in into the hope and despair she feels as a refugee.



While doing justice to the tragic reality of such a life, Lamyā's Poem also evokes a sense of rich culture through classical painting techniques, bold silhouettes and large vistas. The use of a wide visual format for the film helped to further the sense of scale and adventure.



## MUSIC

A rich score by award-winning British composer Christopher Willis matches the film's visual palette with soaring orchestration that makes use of the traditional Middle Eastern reed flute called the "ney."

Willis took inspiration from a ney, an important recurring theme in the poetry of Rumi, and likewise a central part of the film. When Lamya first meets Rumi in her dreams, he's playing a reed flute. She literally follows the sound to find him. The flute connects the two characters, singing to them at many key moments, bridging the distance between them. It represents the powerful way that Rumi's poetry calls out to Lamya across space and time.



To bring this to life, Willis collaborated with Hossein Omoumi, one of the world's foremost performers on the Persian ney. Around this central element, the music is scored for chamber strings, with harp, soprano, and electronics. The strings represent Lamya's point of view, while the harp draws us into her dream landscape. And the lurking, threatening dark forces in the movie are represented by the electronic sound design. In constructing the sound design textures of the movie, Willis drew on audio recordings of the sounds of modern war, including bombs, tanks and breaking glass.

## INTERNATIONAL SALES - WestEnd Films

WestEnd Films is a London-based production, financing and international sales company for feature films and TV, offering filmmakers finance, production and sales expertise as well as an extensive network of contacts across all sectors of the industry. WestEnd's library includes Oscar-nominated titles such THE BREADWINNER, ALBERT NOBBS, SONG OF THE SEA, FOOTNOTE and THE INVISIBLE WOMAN.

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## NORTH AMERICAN SALES - ICM Partners

With over 40 years of experience and offices in Los Angeles, New York, Washington D.C., and London, ICM Partners is one of the world's largest and most established full-service sales agent, talent and literary agencies. ICM Partners have represented over the years, many of the most iconic hits and high profile films. ICM Partners represent hundreds of award-winning clients, including Nobel Laureates, Academy Award, Emmy, Tony and Grammy winners, best-selling authors, and Fortune 100 companies.

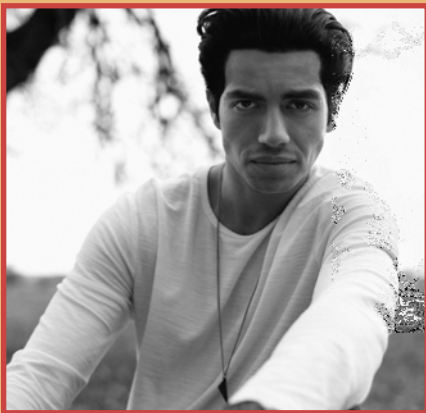
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## VOICE TALENT



### MENA MASSOUD

*Rumi*

Mena Massoud is a Canadian actor who voices the *Jalal* (young Rumi) character in *Lamya's Poem*. He plays *Aladdin* in Disney's live-action remake of *Aladdin*, directed by Guy Ritchie. Massoud stars as *Tarek Kassar* in the series, *Tom Clancy's Jack Ryan* and can also be seen in the feature film *Strange But True*.



### MILLIE DAVIS

*Lamya*

Millie Davis is a Canadian actress who voices the *Lamya* character in *Lamya's Poem*. She is best known for her roles as *Ms. O* in the PBS Kids series *Odd Squad*, the character, *Summer*, in the film *Wonder*, and *Gemma Hendrix* in the series *Orphan Black*.



### FARAN TAHIR

*Baha Walad*

Faran Haroon Tahir is a Pakistani-American actor who voices the *Baha Walad* (Rumi's father) character in *Lamya's Poem*. He appears in numerous American television series and films, best known for his roles as *Raza* in *Iron Man* and *Captain Robau* in *Star Trek*.





# PRODUCED BY



Unity Productions Foundation (UPF) has been working in film and television for over twenty years, producing documentaries for PBS, consulting with writers and producers on many television shows, and writing scripts, including co-writing the 2017 animated film: *Bilal: A New Breed of Hero*, which won “Best Inspirational Film” at Animation Day in the 2016 Cannes Film Festival. UPF’s docudramas have won many national awards, including dozens of “best film” awards and a national Emmy Award Nomination in 2018. UPF’s films have been broadcast and seen in all over the world, reaching an estimated audience of 200 million.

THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF TELEVISION ARTS & SCIENCES

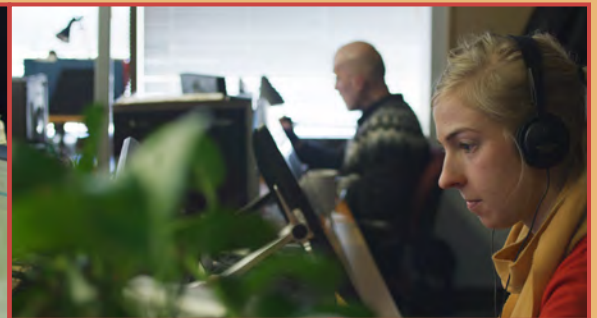
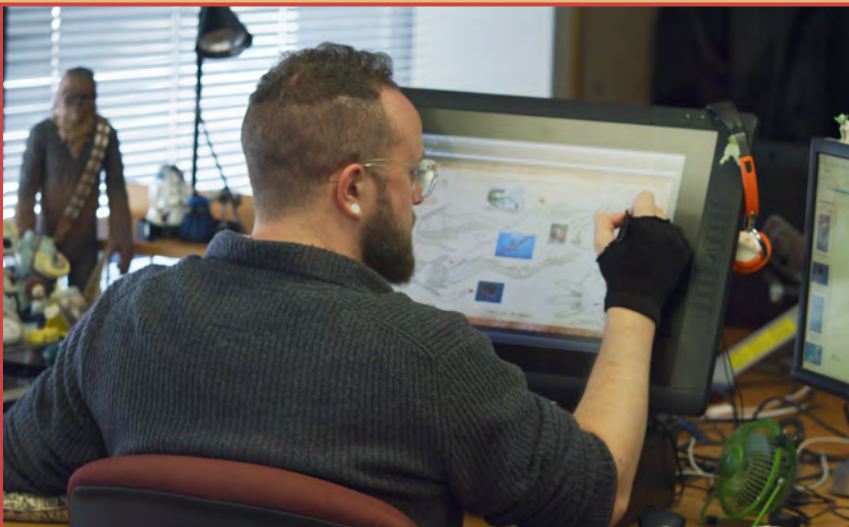


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**PIP**  
animation  
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[PIPANIMATION.COM](http://PIPANIMATION.COM)

PIP Animation is an award-winning animation studio based in Ontario, Canada. PIP has been involved in numerous animated features and TV specials that reach worldwide audiences. *The Cat in the Hat*, *Wandering Wenda*, *Caillou*, *Cyber Chase*, *Through the Woods*, *Pirate's Passage*, and most recently the Netflix original series, *The Umbrella Academy* are some of the projects in which they have taken various production roles.





# CONTACT



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