

INDYCA, RAI CINEMA, NEUE BIOSKOP,
TARANTULA, BIM PRODUZIONE
PRESENT



SAMIA

DIRECTED BY YASEMIN ŞAMDERELI
in collaboration with DEKA MOHAMED OSMAN

inspired by the international bestseller
DON'T TELL ME YOU ARE AFRAID by Giuseppe Catozzella

2024 – ITALY, GERMANY, BELGIUM – DRAMA – 102'

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SHORT SYNOPSIS

Samia defies taboos by racing through the streets of Mogadishu, in a society where a woman is not supposed to run. Her passion will one day take her to the Olympic Games.

SYNOPSIS

SAMIA YUSUF OMAR is only nine years old when she discovers her special talent. Samia is a born sprinter. Whether boys or girls, Samia runs faster than anyone she knows. At first, all this means is: the advantage of never being late for school. But with the aid of her best friend, ALI (9), it becomes a true goal, a dream – the dream of becoming a runner and competing in the Olympics one day. Thus, at the tender age of nine, Ali becomes the trainer of a girl his own age, Samia. Even a civil war cannot stop the children. They deftly weave their way through battle lines, welcoming burnt-out tanks as obstacles to be cleared parkour-style and rubble heaps that serve as ramps. Children are true masters of improvisation, and Samia and Ali are among the best. Or, as the saying goes: You can make something out of any stone, even those placed in your path. Together, they train hard, and their endurance is rewarded.

Samia, a skinny little girl barely ten years old, wins the Mogadishu city run. A sensation! Buoyed by their first success, the two children realize that even their big goals are drawing within reach. They must just continue to believe in themselves and fight hard for their dreams. As the civil war progresses, the Muslim fundamentalists grow stronger. Suddenly, everything is forbidden that was until recently permitted: music, movies, libraries, colorful garments, individual haircuts, everything! Everything that used to be part of their everyday lives, part of a normal reality. Things eventually get so bad for Ali and his family that they have to flee. Without warning, Samia loses her only friend, her ally. But not their common goal.

Samia's father dies at the bazaar during a bombing attack perpetrated by the Muslim fanatics. But Samia and her family are not about to give up. Otherwise, this murder would have achieved its aim: to make them submit. Samia trains even harder, wins all her meets and becomes the fastest woman of Somalia. Despite reprisals from the Muslim fundamentalists. She catches the attention of the Olympic Committee. They ask her to compete for Somalia at the Peking Olympics, at the age of just 17. There, instead of a medal, she wins the spectators' hearts. Who is this skinny little Somali with such huge talent? Now even the international press takes note of her. The media love her, the underdog who has made it this far.

Samia's desire is now greater than ever to show the world that she has what it takes. She excitedly looks forward to the next Olympic Games. She becomes an icon, as many girls and women follow her example and take up running. Such blatant female empowerment is a thorn in the side of the Islamist Al-Shabaab. They don't tolerate sports of any kind, and

certainly not women's sports. When they kill the Somali minister of Sports, Samia realizes she, too, is in great danger. She must leave her country, if she wants to survive.

Samia decides to flee – to Europe, where she still hopes to compete in the 2012 Olympic Games in London. The same journey her elder sister completed in “only” a few months becomes nearly two years of torture for Samia.

In Sudan, she winds up in jail for several months. On her overland trip through the Sahara, she nearly dies of thirst. She is repeatedly forced to wait for money from her sister in Europe. Again and again, she is cheated by human traffickers, but Samia refuses to give up. She struggles and keeps on going. Finally reaching Tripoli, she faces her final hurdle: the Mediterranean Sea. Europe is but a short boat hops away.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

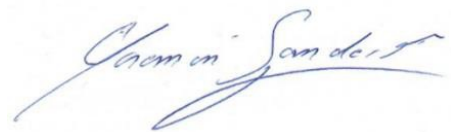
How much you burn for something. How much you love and believe in something can be seen in how long you are willing to fight for it. How much you are willing to sacrifice to make it happen. Samia has been my absolute heart project for more than six years. There is no project I believe in more and no story I have fallen so much in love, like the life story of the Somali athlete Samia Yusuf Omar. For no project did I fight so hard and so long for after my cinema debut ALMANYA.

The story is based on the novel NON DIRMI CHE HAI PAURA (Don't Tell Me You're Afraid) by Giuseppe Catozzella, who again became aware of the fate of this remarkable Somali woman through a newspaper article and then, after much research, and after long conversations with Samia's sister Hodan, wrote the novel. The novel tells the life story of Samia Yusuf Omar, who came from the poorest of backgrounds and made it to the Olympic Games in Beijing. Samia did not let herself be stopped by the misogynistic bans and reprisals of the Islamists, who do not even want to grant a woman the right to do sports.

The book not only gives a touching insight into Samia's family history, but also manages to impressively portray the major and fundamental problems of this region and to outline why people have to flee Africa. Why they leave their homeland and repeatedly risk the perilous journey across the Mediterranean to start a new life in Europe. What their hopes are and why Europe means the last chance for many. A chance for a life worth living. A chance to help themselves and their own family. A chance to be allowed to be oneself.

We faced great challenges in the TRANSFORMATION INTO A MOVIE SCRIPT, because it was clear that the film as such must of course do justice to the visual art. We wanted to celebrate the life of this young athlete. We wanted to show what this young woman was capable of and why the Islamists feared and fought her so much. Samia was an inspiration to many and simply wanted to become a great athlete, which she managed to do - despite all the obstacles. We focused on the aspects that are inspiring, upsetting but absolutely captivating. I think we succeeded in doing that in the script.

A new element that we used in the script and that certainly runs through my projects somehow like an ARTIST'S HANDWRITING are Samia's poetic fantasies. In many situations we see what Samia imagines or wishes. For example, her father is her faithful mentor who continues to fulfill this role even after his death. For it is her fantasies that give her courage and keeps her believing in herself and her goals. She continues where many others would surely have given up. Great cinema gives strength, gives courage. Samia's story stands for exactly that.



Yasemin Şamdereli

CAST

Ilham MOHAMED OSMAN	Samia
Riyan ROBLE	Young Samia
Fathia MOHAMED ABSIE	Ayaan
Fatah GHEDI	Yusuf
Mohamed ABDULLAHI OMAR	Said
Amina AYAANLE OMAR	Hodan
Armaan HAGGIO	Yassin-Ahmed
Elmi RASHID ELMI	Ali
Zakaria MOHAMMED	Young Ali
Kaltuma MOHAMED ABDI	Miriam
Shukri HASSAN	Young Hodan
Armaan HAGGIO	Yassin-Ahmend
Waris DIRIE JONES <i>as special guest</i>	Saado

CREW

Director	Yasemin ŞAMDERELİ
in collaboration with	Deka MOHAMED OSMAN
Screenplay	Yasemin ŞAMDERELİ, Nesrin ŞAMDERELİ, Giuseppe CATOZZELLA
Produced by	Indyca, Rai Cinema, Neue Bioskop Film, Tarantula, Bim Produzione
Co-produced by	Momento Film, Voo, Be Tv, Shelter Prod e Film i Väst
Producer	Simone CATANIA, Dietmar GÜNTSCHE, Anja-Karina RICHTER, Michele FORNASERO, Francesca PORTALUPI, Martin ROHÉ, Joseph ROUSCHOP, Riccardo RUSSO, David HERDIES, Michael KROTKIEWSKI, Iman ISMAIL, Christoph FISSE
Executive Producers	Piergiuseppe "Beppe" SERRA, Karim CHAM, Michael KÖLMEL
Impact Producers	Danielle TURKOV, Amy SHEPHERD
Creative Producer	Thomas WARTMANN
Delegate Producer	Claudio ESPOSITO
Line Producer	Simone FRATTARI
Director of Photography	Florian BERUTTI
Editor	Mechthild BARTH
Production Designer	Paola BIZZARRI
Sound Engineer	Antoine VANDENDRIESSCHE
Sound Designer	Andreas VORWERK
Costume Designer	Sophie OPRISANU
Music	Rodrigo D'ERASMO
Music Publisher	Edizioni Curci

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