



SYRIAN STORIES

10 day creative
documentary production
workshop

Syrian Stories is a practical documentary workshop series led by the **British Council**, **Scottish Documentary Institute (SDI)** and **Bidayyat for Audiovisual Arts** to support Syrian filmmakers to explore documentary creativity for the international festival market.

The workshop will be made up of a mixture of seminars and consultant-led advice sessions that will enable participants to achieve a new understanding of creative documentary and storytelling.



Scottish
Documentary
Institute

‘Syrian Stories’ is project-led and 3 x 5 minute films will be produced during the workshop by teams of 4 participants (director/producer/camera/sound/editor). Each film should offer an original insight to the identity of the locality where the participants are based, working through a personal/character led story.

Outcomes

This practice-led workshop in documentary will allow participants to:

- Develop an understanding of creative documentary for international festivals
- Develop an idea into a short creative film
- Work with characters, sound and visuals dramatically and emotionally
- Produce a 5 minute documentary

Schedule

DAY 1: What makes an idea a good story?

SDI and Bidayyat will outline what makes a good documentary and how a local story can speak to international and Syrian audiences. We will screen clips from feature docs to discuss various approaches to documentary practice and learn from different devices used by well known directors. We will explore how to structure a short documentary and help participants to develop their own ideas into a story.

DAY 2: Visual documentary language and selection of ideas. Morning: We will carry on exploring documentaries through the use of shots and framing.

Afternoon: Everyone will pitch at least one idea and the tutors will select the best 3 ideas and set up project teams with allocated roles: director, camera operator, sound, editor. Each team will be supervised by a dedicated tutor.

DAY 3: Research, camera, sound

The groups will quickly run through the equipment to make sure they have enough technical expertise to use camera and capture sound professionally. The participants dedicated to editing will gather with the dedicated editing tutor to acquire/enhance their skills in using FCP or Premiere (TBC) Each group will further develop their idea and go to their filming location to have an initial contact with the character(s) and work out how best to shoot the film. Key points to be decided on day 3 include:

- Coverage during the interview
- Choosing the aesthetics for the film
- Best sound recording link to location

DAYS 4 & 5: The shoot

Each group will spend all day filming partly supervised by one tutor. Groups will meet with their tutors to review the material and plan the editing. The 3 editors may or may not attend the shoot depending on how familiar they are with the editing software.

DAY 6: Logging

Each group will transcribe and digitise the material they have shot with the editor. They will then start structuring their short film under the supervision of the tutors.

DAYS 7, 8 & 9: Editing and Sound design

Each group will edit the film under the supervision of the tutors. We will explore:

- How to use a dramatic arc in storytelling
- How to create/explore emotions
- How best to use sound creatively

DAY 10: Finalise sound Design and short seminar about producing for international market

Morning: Teams and tutors will finalise last creative aspects of the film and films are ready for SDI to do colour correction, sound mixing and finalise master copies of the films.

Afternoon: Participants will have a final session on how to develop feature documentaries for international audiences and where to apply for funding for future projects. This workshop aims at raising the ambition, knowledge and skills of local documentary filmmakers in order to move from shorts to feature documentaries in order to learn how to compete on the international market.

Further Information

To learn more about the British Council’s global work in film please go to

www.britishcouncil.org/film

To learn more about the Scottish Documentary Institute and access trailers and masterclasses in documentary film-making please go to

www.scottishdocinstitute.com

To learn more about the work of Bidayyat for Audio Visual Arts and see some examples of films they have supported please go to

www.bidayyat.org