

VITA | Zara Zandieh

Filmmaker, Visual Artist and Cinematographer



Zara Zandieh is an independent filmmaker who makes visual art and works as a cinematographer for other visual artists and filmmakers. In 2018 she completed her master studies in Art and Media with Prof. Nina Fischer at the Berlin University of the Arts. Zara's visual work is deeply influenced by her decolonial queer gaze. She focuses on what is not mentioned or left out of a mainstream narrative, complexities, and representations of marginalized subjects. Zara's films and visual artistic work have little to do with the narratives commonly used in Europe and North America. The stories that Zara heard as a child from her parents and grandparents, which always began with the sentence "Once there was a time, and once there wasn't...", sit deep and run through her work today.

Zara's work as a filmmaker and cinematographer has been shown and nominated for prizes at various festivals and competitions, including achtung berlin (Berlin, 2016/2019), EIFF - Edinburgh International Film Festival (2019), Queer Lisboa Film Festival (2019), TLV Film Fest (Tel Aviv, Israel, 2019), XPOSED (Berlin, 2019), DokLeipzig (Germany, 2015/2016), Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival (Toronto, 2018), International Short Film Festival Oberhausen (2018/ 2019), Documenta 14 - 34 Exercises of Freedom (Greece, 2016). Her video installation under-construction under the project management of Harun Farocki and Antje Ehmann was shown at various exhibitions worldwide, most recently at the HKW 2015 in Berlin.

In 2016 Zara won the Queer Short Film Fund of the XPOSED Festival. In the same film festival, Zara was a jury member in 2018. Zara is part of the Queer-Feminist Film Network (QFFN) and the Women Cinematographers Network. At the achtung berlin Filmfestival 2019 Zara Zandieh sat together with Pary El-Qalqili, Biene Pilavcı and the actress Thelma Buabeng on the panel "Women* of Color and German Cinema". At the XPOSED film festival, Zara took part in a panel with Ulrike Zimmermann and Miona Bogović on the topic "(Beyond) the Lesbian". Zara Zandieh's project OCTAVIA'S VISION (working title) was recommended by the Berlin Senate Department for Culture and Europe for the Research Fellowship by it's 2019 jury.

Education

02/2017 - 02/2018 Master Student, Faculty of Arts and Media with Prof. Nina Fischer | University of the Arts Berlin

10/2010 - 10/2014 Cinematography and Master Class in Cinematography at the | filmArche Berlin

09/2004 - 09/2006 MA in Gender, Sexualities & Ethnic Studies, with Prof. Roshini Kempadoo and Merl Storr | University of East London/ UEL

Work experience abroad as filmmaker (director & camera), artist and curator

Wollbrom (Poland), London (UK), Kabul (Afghanistan), Syracuse, NY (USA), Istanbul (Turkey), Tel Aviv & Arad (Israel), Rotterdam (Netherlands), Athen (Greece)

Selected film projects as director

Year	Title	Description, Evaluation, Awards, Links	Work Fields
Research/ Pre-Production	<i>OCTAVIA'S VISIONS (AT)</i> Length: 20' Color, B/W Full HD/ DCP, Dolby 5.1	<i>An audio-visual homage to the African-American science fiction author Octavia Butler - an exploration of her visions of the future, a discovery of her time traveling characters and survivors of genocides, climate catastrophes and migration politics, right-wing populism and colonialism and the influence of Octavia Butler's work on our present in the German and European context.</i> <i>Selected by the Berlin Senate Department for Culture and Europe for the Research Fellowship 2019.</i>	Directing, Concept, Camera, Editing
2018/2019	<i>The Sea Runs Thru My Veins</i> <i>UdK Master Studies Final Project</i> Essayistic short film Length: 20' Color, B/W Super 8, Full HD, DCP, Dolby 5.1	<i>Four protagonists describe what happiness means to them, despite the difficulties and challenges of their lives.</i> <u>Festivals, Screenings and Nominations (Selection):</u> <i>2019 achtung berlin, Berlin (Short Film Competition)</i> <i>2019 TLV QUEER FILM FEST, Tel Aviv, Israel (Short Film Competition)</i> <i>2019 XPOSED FILM FESTIVAL, Berlin (Nominated for the Lolly Award)</i> <i>2019 EIFF - Edinburgh International Film Festival, Edinburgh, UK (Short Film Competition)</i> <i>2019 Quetzalcoatl Indigenous International Film Festival, Oaxaca, Mexico</i> <i>2019 Queer Lisboa Film Festival, Lisbon, Portugal (Short Film Competition "In My Shorts")</i> <i>Winner of the Queer Film Fund, XPOSED Film Festival Berlin, 2016</i>	Directing, Camera, Editing

2016	<i>LOVE-IRRUPTION</i> Video-Installation and Performance Length: 20' Color, B/W Archive-Material, Full HD, Stereo	Video-Installation and Performance in collaboration with performance-artist Rima Najdi	Co-Author, Co-Directing, DP & Editing
2015	<i>Khoshbakhti (Happiness)</i> Short Film Length: 6' Color & B/W Super 8, Full HD, DCP, Dolby 5.1	Essayistic, experimental short film about happiness. Produced in co-operation with the filmArche Berlin. <u>Festivals, Screenings und Nominations:</u> 2019 „Short Films by Persian Female Filmmakers“ at <i>Parasol unit foundation for contemporary art</i> , curated by Dr. Azadeh Fatehrad + Q&A with Professor Griselda Pollock, supported by School of Fine Art, History of Art and Cultural Studies, University of Leeds. 2017 „Jene Tage“ (Those Days) Film and lecture series in relation to Iran @ Topkino Wien & Atelierhaus of Academy of Fine Arts Vienna curated by the Golden Pixel Cooperative 2016 achtung berlin, short film competition “Made in Berlin-Brandenburg” (Berlin, Germany) 2015 world premiere, DokLeipzig, German competition for short documentaries and animations (Leipzig, Germany)	Directing, Cinematography, Editing
2014	<i>Was ist Kreuzberg?</i> Short Documentary Length: 19' Production: GLADT e.V. Color, Full HD, Stereo	Short documentary about three persons from the district Kreuzberg in Berlin and their views on gentrification and discrimination.	Co-Directing, Co-Author, Cinematography, Editing
2013	<i>under-construction</i> Video-Installation Länge: 2' Farbe, Full HD, Stereo	<i>Labor in a Single Shot</i> was a project led by Antje Ehmman and Harun Farocki. Artists from different countries made a 2min Video-work on labor. The results were shown world wide. <u>Screenings:</u> 2015 <i>Haus der Kulturen der Welt</i> (Berlin, Germany) 2014 <i>Universitario Arte Contemporáneo</i> (Mexico City, Mexico) 2014 <i>Boston Center for the Arts, Mills Gallery</i> (Boston, USA) 2014 <i>Sherman Gallery Boston University</i> (Boston, USA) 2013 <i>Lumiar Cité</i> (Lisbon, Portugal) 2013 <i>Goethe Institut/ Max Mueller Bhavan</i> (Bangalore, India) 2013 <i>Muzeum Sztuki</i> (Łódź, Poland) 2013 <i>Tel Aviv Museum of Art</i> (Tel Aviv, Israel)	Concept, Cinematography, Editing
2012	<i>Fragments of Ava</i> Short Film	Ava wakes up and rushes to work, where she encounters an unexpected client. A film about a woman, a sex worker and an almost ordinary day.	Script, Co-Production,

Length: 12'
color, Full HD, Stereo

Festivals, Screenings and Nominations (selection):

Directing,
Cinematography

2015 Officially Selected for Merlinka Festival (Belgrade, Serbia)
2015 TWIST: Seattle Queer Film Festival (Seattle, USA)
2013 Pornfilm Film Festival (Berlin, Germany)
2013 International Short Film Festival Detmold (Detmold, Deutschland)
2013 San Francisco Sex Worker Film & Arts Festival (San Francisco, USA)
2013 Filmmor Women's Film Fest (Istanbul, Turkey)
2012 International Queer Film Festival Hamburg (Hamburg, Germany)
2012 world premiere on the Sex Work Film Fest Hamburg (Hamburg, Germany)

Selected film projects in the function as Cinematographer

Year	Title	Description, Evaluation, Awards, Links	Work Fields
2019	<i>Breakup in 9 Scenes</i> Essayistic Short Fiction Director: Leil-Zahra Mortada Length: 13' B/W, Full HD, DCP, Dolby 5.1	Poetic short film in 10 acts about the separation of two men shortly after the "Arab Spring" in Egypt.	DP
2018	<i>Pirate Boys</i> Experimental Short Film Director: Pol Merchan Length: 13' Color, B/W, Full HD, Super8, DCP, Dolby 5.1	<i>Experimental documentary about the life and work of the feminist author Kathy Acker and the artist, activist and photographer Del LaGrace Volcano.</i> <u>Festivals, Screenings and Nominations (selection):</u> 2019 Outview (Athens, Greece) 2018 Competition: International Short Film Festival Oberhausen (Oberhausen, Germany) 2018 Xposed Film Festival Berlin (Berlin, Germany) 2018 Outfest Queer Film Festival LA (Los Angeles, USA) 2018 Competition: Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival (Toronto, Canada)	DP/ Cinematography of Super 8 Camera, Lights
2018	<i>Einst an einem inneren Ort</i> (Once, at an inner space...) Animated Short Film Directed by Han Van Acoleyen Length: 15' Color, Full HD, Stereo	Animation film about a sound artist and her inner and outer journey. <u>Festivals, Screenings and Nominations(Selection):</u> 2018 Honorable Mention at the Experimental Forum 2018 (LA, USA) 2018 Short Film Music Festival (Burgos, Spain)	Cinematographer

2016	<p><i>#direnayol (#resistayol)</i> Documentary Production: Kanka Productions Director: Rüzgâr Buşki Length: 60' Colour, Full HD, DCP, Dolby 5.1</p>	<p>Documentary about the Gezi uprising and protests 2013 in Istanbul from the perspective of LSBTIQ* activists.</p> <p><u>Festivals, Screenings und Nominations (selection):</u> 2017 6th Pink Life KuirFest (Ankara, Turkey) 2016 TFFB - Transilmfestival Berlin (Berlin, Germany) 2016 DokLeipzig (Leipzig, Germany) 2016 Documenta 14 - 34 Exercises of Freedom (Athens, Greece) 2016 9th Documentarist Istanbul Documentary Days (Istanbul, Turkey) 2016 9th Eagean Documentary Days (Turkey) 2016 11th International Labor Films Festival (Istanbul, Turkey) 2016 World premiere !f Independent Film Festival Istanbul (Istanbul, Turkey)</p>	<p>2nd AD, DP, Editing Supervisor, Subtitling, Part of the film collective Kanka Productions</p>
2015	<p><i>Notes on the Trilogy of the Interspatiality of Love</i> Short Film Director: Davide Crivelli Length: 11' B/W, Full HD, Stereo</p>	<p>A director explores scenes from a film he shoots and calls "The Trilogy of the Interspatiality of Love". In the end, the process confronts him with his own cinematic work.</p>	<p>DP</p>
2013	<p><i>Learning to Milk a Cow</i> Documentary Director: July Saragosa Length: 64' Production: July Saragosa Production Color, B/W, Full HD, Stereo</p>	<p>At 19, Raja, the filmmaker's grandmother, was deported from Soviet Ukraine to Germany to work on a Bavarian farm during National Socialism. Happiness and staying powerful enabled her to survive the Holodomor (starvation) in her country and the forced labor in Germany.</p>	<p>DP</p>
2012	<p><i>Finding a Place to Sleep</i> Short Film Director: July Saragosa Length: 7' Production: July Saragosa Production Color, B/W, Full HD, Stereo</p>	<p>Based on the stories of her grandmother, the filmmaker imagines how she lived in Ukraine during the Stalin era.</p>	<p>DP</p>

Professional experience (selection)

- since 11/2014 working as a freelance filmmaker, artist and cinematographer and producing film/videos for organizations, giving workshops, lectures and teaching. Among others for the Theater Ballhaus Naunynstrasse (Berlin), IFA (Institut for foreign relations-Berlin), Hamilton College (Clinton/ NY), University for Fine Arts (Braunschweig), Gunda-Werner-Institut (Berlin), ARD & ZDF Format Funk/ Softie*, Missy Magazine, Tanztage im August (Sophiensöhle/Berlin), filmArche Berlin, Interflugs/ University of Fine Arts Berlin, KOOOPERATIVE BERLIN Medienproduktion KBM GmbH for funk (ARD & ZDF), camera assistant for one of the exhibition films by Wendelien van Oldenborgh at the Venice Biennale 2017, AG Queer Studies (Hamburg), VIA (Association for Intercultural Work, Berlin), IniRromnja (Berlin), LesMigraS & Lesbian Counseling Center Berlin e. V. , GLADT (Berlin), Gender Sender (Berlin), xartsplitta e.V. (Berlin), Polish Social Council Berlin, Bildungsteam Berlin Brandenburg e.V.
- since 02/2019 Co-founder of the Queer Feminist Film Network (QFFN)
- since 10/2018 Cinematographer at KOOOPERATIVE BERLIN MedienProduction KBM GmbH for funk (video format from broadcast station ARD & ZDF)
- since 04/2018 Coordination and administration of workshops, film screenings, conferences at the cultural and educational association xartsplitta e.V.
- since 10/2017 part of the Network *Cinematographinnen - Women Cinematographer Network* (Network for women cinematographers in Germany and Austria)
- since 10/2016 holding lectures on Cinematography, Image Composition and Documentary Film at the filmArche Berlin
- 10/2016 - 03/2018 Part of the student collective Interflugs (UdK Berlin)
Interflugs is a self-governing and student-led organization at the Berlin University of the Arts.
(Areas of responsibility: Technology maintenance, equipment rental, coordination and organization of workshops and lecture series, teaching, weekly team meetings)
Employer: Berlin University of the Arts
- 04/2013 - 01/2017 Part of the film collective Kanka Productions
- 10/2015 - 05/2017 Board Member of the Lesbian Counseling Center Berlin e.V. / LesMigraS

- 08/2010 - 01/2014 Part-time position at LesMigraS: coordination, organization and implementation in the field of empowerment, anti-discrimination and anti-violence work
Employer: Lesbian Counseling CenterBerlin e.V.
- 08/2008 - 06/2009 Media & Education Workshop Faciliator in the project 'Video Letters'
Employer: Bildungsteam Berlin Brandenburg e.V.
- 01/2008 - 05/2008 Artistic programming of the SECOND TAKE - Film festival about gender and society in cinema in Kabul/Afghanistan
Employer: mazefilm

Further Trainings (selection)

- 10/2010 - 09/2013 Participation in film workshops & seminars at the filmArche Berlin (selection):
Image Composition- Gruscha Rode, Ute Freund, Andreas Köfer, Aviv Kosloff
Direction & Improvisation- Andreas Dresen
Experimental Film - Angelika Levi, Lior Shamriz
Sound in Documentary - Ulla Kösterke
Script Writing- Katti Jisuk Seo, Mark Wachholz
Documentary film - Elfe Brandenburger, Sandra Schäfer, Simon Brückner
- 05/2007 - 11/2007 Image Editing with Photoshop (finished with very good),
Digital Image Editing and Video Editing with Final Cut Pro (completed with good)
After Effects (completed with good),
Sound Editing with Logic (completed with very good)
All courses completed at: Cimdata (Media Academy Berlin)

Languages:

- Farsi: First Language
German & English: Written and oral very good
French: Basic knowledge