

**Nikoleta Leousi** Director

## **Short BIO**

She was born in Athens in 1981. She studied as a chemical engineer in the National Polytechnic University but quickly she decided she wanted to work in the film industry. With the money she got from her university scholarship she bought her first camera. She studied film in Greece and the UK where she concluded an MA degree with specialization on directing and editing. Her first film "Generator" took part in international festivals and won some awards (Award for best script, Award of the Greek Film Critics Association during the 36<sup>th</sup> Drama Film Festival, MEDIA Award Tirana International Film Festival). In 2016 she took part in the Berlinale Talents Short Film Station with the script for the movie "37 Days" which premiered in the Rotterdam International Film Festival. IFFR 2019.

## **Filmography**

***Letters to Sofia*** (3', 2018) Hellenic Company of Directors, 59<sup>th</sup> Thessaloniki Film Festival

<https://vimeo.com/301794446>

Password: letter2019

***37 Days*** (23', 2018), production of Marni Films, GFC, ERT. International Film Festival Rotterdam 2019, 41<sup>st</sup> Drama Film Festival (OKLE Award), 24<sup>th</sup> Athens International Film Festival (Best Script Award)

<https://vimeo.com/271045967>

password: 37dayscreener

***Tzeni and Giannis*** (13', 2018) production Marni Films, OTE TV

<https://vimeo.com/272715099>

password: JohnandJenny

***Generator*** (19', 2013) production Marni Films, ERT.

36 36<sup>th</sup> Drama Film Festival (Script Award, Award of the Greek Film Critics Association), Tirana International Film Festival 2013 (MEDIA Award), Palm Springs Short Film Festival 2014, 36<sup>th</sup> Cinemed Festival international du cinéma méditerranéen de Montpellier.

<https://vimeo.com/75302416>



***37Days (2018) directed by Nikoleta Leousi***

### **How did you decide to work in the film industry?**

I think if there were no buses I would have never started working in the film industry. I remember my self, age 13, sitting in the bus 220 and looking the glass window, imagining different lives, stories and myths. In reality it was then that I decided I wanted to work in the film industry but I never admitted it out loud until after I got my degree as a chemical engineer.

### **Where there any female directors that inspired you?**

Until I started learning more about the cinema I didn't even know the films of Agnès Varda, Chantal Akerman, Marketaki and some others that I love today. It was during my studies that I discovered my favourite female directors.

### **Until now you have only directed short films, would you be interested in directing a feature film?**

In a feature film the director gets the chance to go deeper in an idea and develop the theme more. In my last film "37 Days" I felt quite often that I was moving towards directing a feature film while directing a short film. The movie is 23' but the narration talks about events that happened during a period of 37 days. This alone made me feel more ready for a feature film.

*"In projects that there are more money, there is of course a preference towards male directors. In editing that I also work in, those preferences are expressed with mistrust and lower salaries. I had the misfortune to work in the editing of a series, in such a disgusting environment from which I got fired for being too serious."*

**With what funds did you get to make your movies? Where would you suggest a new director, that is just starting her career, to look for funds in order to create her first film?**

*The state funding of GFC and ERT through the program microfilm are the best ways of funding for a short film. However, they probably won't risk it with a director who directs her first film.*

So, for the first film of someone I would suggest either doing it without a budget, always with respect to our colleagues that will work for free (only if it is a useful and educational experience for them) or trying to find some private funds. During the preparation for my last short film I did a crowdfunding campaign which was very successful.

What I would like to underline is that we should not get disappointed with the creation of our first film and just try again. It is very possible that our first film will be bad. It is ok. It happens to the best of us.



***37Days (2018) directed by Nikoleta Leousi***

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**Many countries the last few years try to apply the measure of 50/50 in the case of women participating in film production and in the programming of international festivals etc. In Greece for the time being there has been no initiative concerning such a measure. Is it something that you would want, that you maybe have discussed with other people in the film industry or you believe the conversation hasn't started yet?**

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Personally the measure of 50/50 confuses me. It actually leaves out many people that don't belong to any of the two halves. It also quantifies by force something that is far from being considered a product. I understand that the 50/50 measure is positive in terms of “forcing” society to move towards equality, but I don't believe I have the appropriate social knowledge to comment on if it actually can work.

**In which level and how in your opinion and through your experiences is gender discrimination expressed in this specific job? Was it something you experienced/observed that you could share with us?**

I believe gender discrimination starts when there are big sums of money to go around. In short films I have rarely felt any gender discrimination because I rarely got paid. In projects that there are more money, there is of course a preference towards male directors. In the part of the editing that I work also, those preferences are expressed with mistrust and lower salaries. I had the misfortune to work in the editing of a series, in such a disgusting environment from which I got fired for being too serious.



***Generator*** (2013) directed by Nikoleta Leousi

**In the films you have worked until now have you seen the number of women rise in the film crew?**

I think the number of women in directing, production and other positions has risen in general. Maybe there are some exceptions in the image department which for some reason is ruled by men (and where I have met the most macho colleagues). But I think even this department is in the process of change.

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**What advice would you give a young female director who wants to work in the field?**

Just do it. It seems logical to me to want to study film or work in the film industry. The jobs of this field will fill your life with adventures, knowledge and experiences. You will never feel satisfied you will always keep looking for something new. Your colleagues will be cool people and you will feel good working within a team. However it is difficult to keep going on. My advice would be to never give up during their first tries. If they are making a film for Cannes, it is possible they will be disappointed quickly. If they create films as an adventure I believe they will last longer. It will also help to have an alternative way of securing their income (family resources or another job).

**In the next five years what do you hope will change for the best in the Greek film industry?**

The most important in my opinion is for the audience to trust us and watch our movies. But of course I will also ask for the obvious: for state funding to rise as in other countries and for the procedures of the GFC to become faster in order for someone to do the movie he or she wants now and not ten years later.

**Finally tell us what you are currently working on?**

I am currently working on a documentary called "if there were no buses, would there be films?" A documentary to watch behind the glass window of a bus or through a camera lens.