



EVERYTHING THAT WILL HAPPEN HAS ALREADY HAPPENED

Vladan Nikolic's "Everything That Will Happen Has Already Happened" delves into hope and resilience in a post-COVID world ... Shot from a god's eye view, the film contrasts the city's grandeur with its forgotten corners, while vibrant mini-plots reveal tales of love, loss, and perseverance. With its poignant storytelling, this film invites viewers to uncover beauty and connection amidst chaos, making it a must-see for anyone seeking solace in our shared human experience.

[Milani Perera, Black Nights Film Festival, 2024](#)

A Collaborative Feature Film by Vladan Nikolic

**with stories by Shireen Khaled, Julie Deffet, Luz Zamora
and contributions by Filmmakers from around the world**

**Produced by Julie Deffet, Shireen Khaled, Vladan Nikolic
A Surla Films Production**

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Film Trailer:

<https://youtu.be/Gb6ZgTwKTVw>

LOGLINE

Through a kaleidoscopic collage of stories, made by filmmakers and actors from around the world, EVERYTHING... is a narrative film that explores the current moment we are living in and how the Covid pandemic, economic inequality, climate change, wars, migration and societal divisions shape our lives globally. These international stories coalesce in a film-within-a-film, set in New York City, about two disaffected millennials, creating this project, trying to make sense of the world and their place in it, while dealing with their own issues and contradictions.

SYNOPSIS

Alice was born in Lithuania to a Russian father and Ukrainian mother, and is now finishing her PhD in philosophy in the US, obsessively collecting stories from around the world for her dissertation project. Through a chance encounter in New York, she meets a mysterious young man with a photographic memory, a passion for history, and a peculiar affliction. An offbeat romance between the two develops, while Alice keeps working on her dissertation.

Through the films within the film, which are part of Alice's project, we revisit the Covid lockdowns; we follow a Beirut tailor who lives through memories in a country that is falling apart; a shoe vendor in Caracas shadowing the journey of her son, trying to cross the Darien gap to come to the US; a young girl deciding whether to stay in Hong Kong or to leave; a Belgian man so lonely he willingly deceives himself by dating an online scammer; a Syrian family forced to emigrate; fragments of life across India, Africa, and during wartime in Ukraine... In the end, Alice's project is completed, and Alice and Jake come full circle, back to where their stories began, but something did change - they have found each other.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT – Vladan Nikolic

I've been making films for many years, at the unusual intersection of US independent and East-European cinema (<https://www.imdb.com/name/nm1224554/>). I've also been teaching filmmaking at a university in New York. (<https://www.newschool.edu/media-studies/faculty/vladan-nikolic/>).

When Covid hit, it made me re-evaluate everything I was doing. I stopped the projects I was working on, as they seemed superfluous in this reality. To me, the global response to the Covid pandemic demonstrated the shocking inability of international and national institutions to cooperate and deal with a planetary crisis efficiently and equitably. And now, it almost seems as if nothing had happened; it's just "business as usual." But it's not. We have arguably reached a point where several global crises are converging, yet a disturbing sense of cognitive dissonance allows for the continuation of a numbing status quo.

I searched for a way to make a film that could portray the disruption of our lives and the systemic dysfunctionalities that the last three years have laid bare. I decided to enlist the help of filmmakers from around the world – many of them my former students, now emerging filmmakers in their own right - to create a shared storyline, centered around the issues that, in one way or another, influence all our lives – economic inequality, political instability, the climate crisis, migration, wars, eroding trust in politicians and institutions, harsh societal divisions and violent discourses, and the increasingly alienated and distracted individual. The aim is not to create a narrative of despair, but to gain a deeper understanding of this unique moment we are living in through interesting stories and characters, to see and hear each other, and to hopefully inspire new ideas on how to elicit meaningful change.

To me, it was also important to create a process-driven, joyous, collaborative cinematic experiment that could explore the boundaries of form and content at a time when many question the future of cinema as an art form. A fantastic creative team from a dozen countries came together to realize this film. Enlisting the resources of seasoned professionals and the passion of young filmmakers, we made this project on next to nothing. I believe we made a unique and exciting film.

THE FILMMAKERS FOR THE INTERNATIONAL STORIES:

- [Julie Deffet](#) – Belgium Story & feature co-producer
- [Shireen Khaled](#) – Lebanon Story & feature co-producer
- [Luz Marina Zamora](#) (Venezuela Story), [Tal Shamir](#) (Covid Story), worldwide films and cinematography by **Anton Soroka** (Ukraine), **Osama Naser** (Syria), **Alan Wong** (Hong Kong), **Archit Vats** and **Yash Kanbargi** (India), **Kureng Dapel** (Africa), **Hamza Awan** (Pakistan), **Khanh Hoang Minh** (Vietnam), **Florian Delee** and **Tom Fisk** (global footage), breathtaking drone cinematography by **Nathanial Gary** and **Harry Dwinell**, and animations by **Lucie Hein** (Germany).

A large team of fantastic actors contributed their talents to the stories, from gifted newcomers [Agnes Artych](#) (Alice) and [Henry Watkins](#) (Jake) in the lead roles, to seasoned veterans [Didier Flamand](#), [Nada Abou Farhat](#), [Majdi Machmouchi](#), [Tatiana Mabo](#), [Francois-Michel Van der Rest](#), the film director [Austin Chick](#), as well as many performers and non-actors from around the world.

THE MAKING OF THE FILM

The first idea for the film originated in the Fall of 2022. Nikolic wrote the script for the New York story, which would be the central thread, connecting the various stories from around the world. It's a story about Alice, a young PhD student in philosophy, carrying the burden of her Russian-Ukrainian background, trying to comprehend the "here and now" of this moment by collecting stories from around the world for her dissertation. By chance, she meets Jake, a rootless young man, with eidetic memory, boundless curiosity, and a peculiar affliction of exposing himself to danger. While they banter, get to know each other, and eventually fall in love, Alice continues to collect the global stories and histories, creating a Mandala-like narrative of the "here and now." Alice's and Jake's story unites and reflects the stories from around the world.

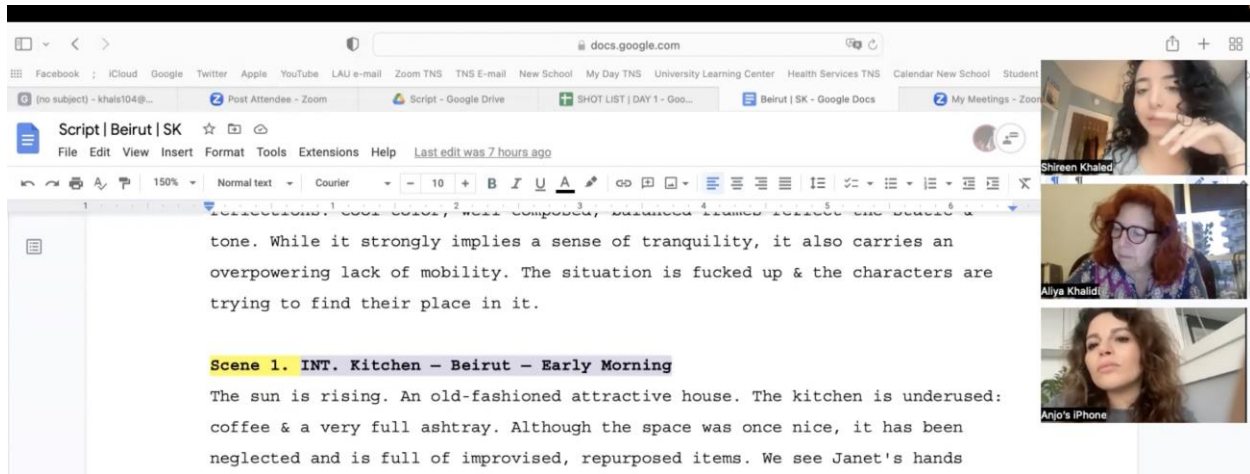
For the world stories, the other filmmakers would come up with stories that would be of interest to them, set in, and reflecting the conflict of a character, specific to their locale. The filmmakers would discuss their ideas and scripts with Nikolic, making sure that the themes would fit with the overall narrative thread. Once the scripts were agreed upon, the filmmakers had creative control over their shorts, casting, shooting and directing their films. They would collaborate again with Nikolic on the edited version for the feature, with the idea that each short could also have a separate, extended edit as a stand-alone short film outside of the feature, after the feature was completed. This way, **EVERYTHING THAT WILL HAPPEN HAS ALREADY HAPPENED** would become a project that also extends beyond the feature film, united by its thematic concept.

Julie Deffet was the first to join Nikolic in this incredibly ambitious no-budget project. Soon thereafter, Shireen Khaled came on board as co-producer and principal filmmaker. The feature developed spontaneously and was forming as it was being created. Instead of waiting for funding sources, which could take many months, sometimes years – and would be very difficult to get for such an unusual, open-ended concept - Nikolic decided to form a co-op with the principal filmmakers. Supported by a small amount of money by a benefactor, the film was willed into being by a slew of service deals, a lot of good will and everyone's willingness to contribute their time and effort to the project – from New York, Beirut, Mumbai, Paris, Caracas, Hong Kong, and many other places around the world.

By March 2023, supported by more co-producers, most notably Matt Wachsmann and his company Ultracom, and Anthony Argento's Rollin Studios in NYC, and a passionate crew of over twenty young, as well as experienced filmmakers, the New York part of the story was shot within a week with three RED cameras, led by DP Orfeas Skutelis, and with spectacular drone cinematography by Nathaniel Gary and Harry James Dwinell.

Before that, and after, the shorts were coming in from all over the world. Nikolic and Deffet started by contacting filmmakers they knew, but soon the network grew exponentially; filmmakers from around the globe contributed remarkable footage and stories to the project. Some of the films were shot clandestinely with small crews, while others developed into ambitious productions – most notably, Shireen Khaled's short, set

in Beirut, which she directed over Zoom from New York, battling black-outs and outages in Beirut, with a thirty-people strong crew and some of the finest Lebanese actors.



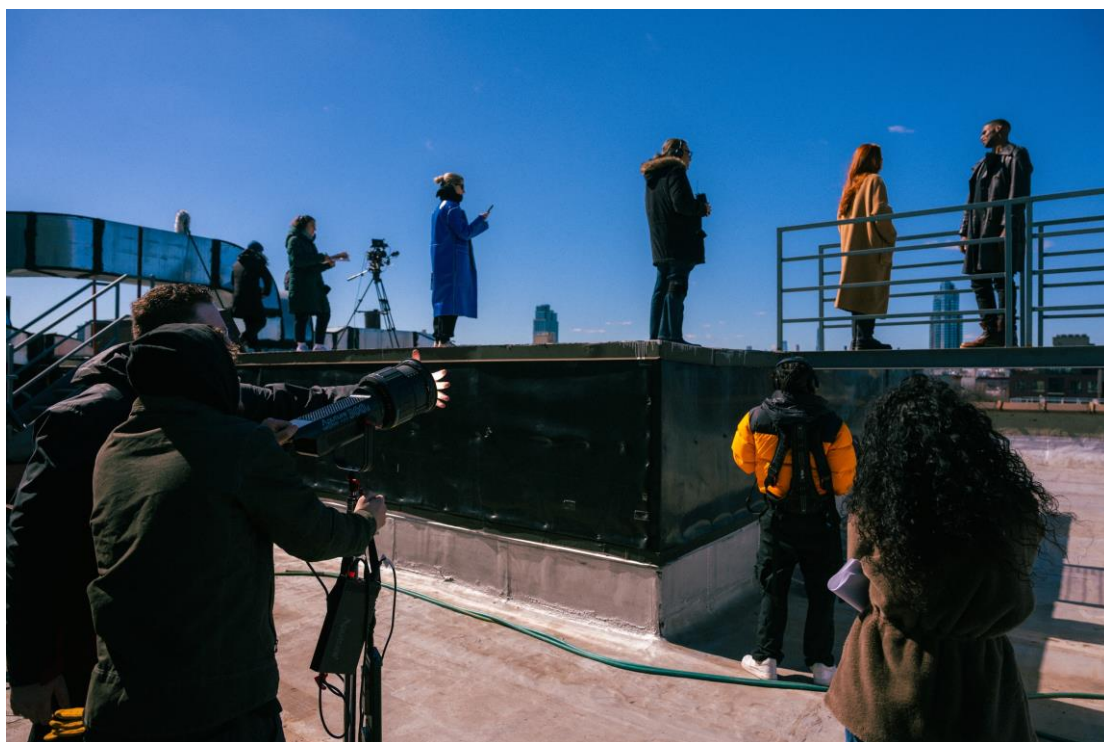
Shireen Khaled directing over Zoom.



The production set in Beirut.



Julie Deffet shooting with Didier Flamand in Paris.



New York production set



Vladan Nikolic directing, NY production set





NY production set



The NY crew



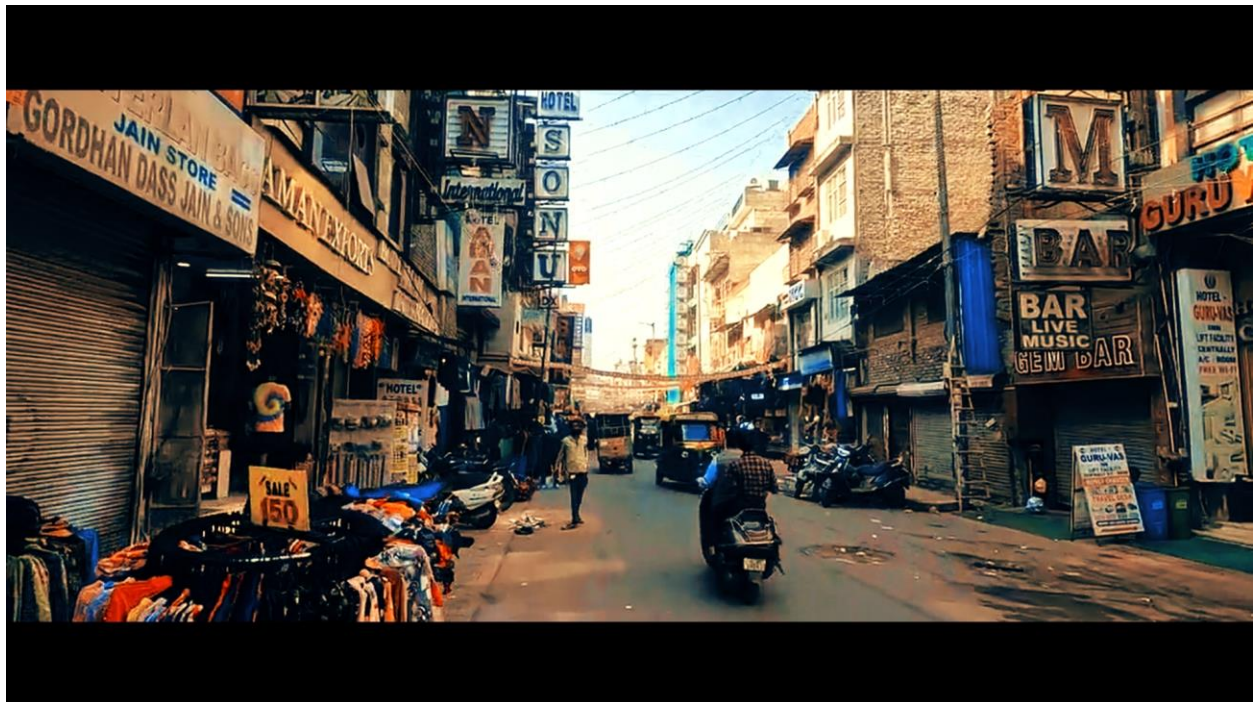
Agnes Artych as ALICE



Henry Watkins as JAKE



Covid



India Montage



Beirut Story



Verviers, Belgium Story



Montage of Moments – Syria



Hong Kong



Animation – The Story of Kathy Change



Venezuela