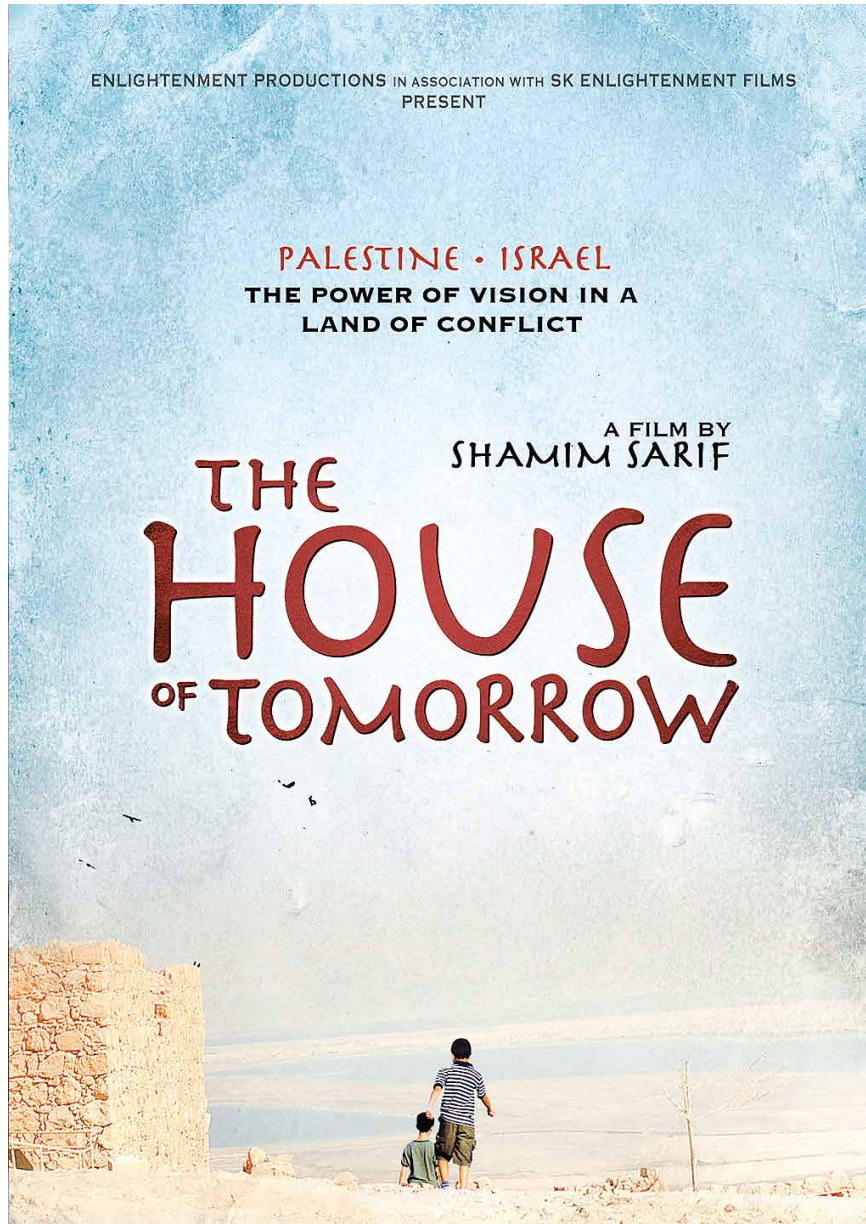


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PRESS KIT

## KEY CREW

Shamim Sarif

Hanan Kattan

Hanan Kattan

Hanan Kattan

Shamim Sarif

Miriam Twaalfhoven

Hanan Kattan

Chuck Cartmel

Jack Hennigan

Clare Griffiths

Hanan Kattan

Shamim Sarif

Director & Writer

Co-Director

Producer

Executive Producer

Executive Producer

Executive Producer

Line Producer

Editor

Editor

Music

Narration

Historical & Background Narration

# THE HOUSE OF TOMORROW

## Short Synopsis

A contemporary and lively documentary set in Israel and Palestine, The House of Tomorrow focuses on women who are changing the future and shaping their own destinies, however unlikely and whatever the odds.

## Mid-length synopsis

A contemporary and lively documentary, The House of Tomorrow chooses to focus on the future and to encourage the idea that people can have a hand in their own destinies, however unlikely and whatever the odds.

Many movies about the Israeli Palestinian conflict are understandably focused on the wrongdoing. The House of Tomorrow looks for a new approach inspired by the vision of extraordinary women who are changing their own local worlds a step at a time - not by overlooking the conflict but by seeing what people can do despite it.

## Long synopsis

Palestine and Israel. Conflicting narratives and a world of preconceptions. Can we see this world differently?

The House of Tomorrow takes a new approach to an old conflict inspired by the forward vision of extraordinary women who are changing their own worlds a step at a time - not by overlooking the conflict but by seeing what people can do despite it.

Shot on location, the film takes us from the high rise tech buildings of Tel Aviv to the holy sites and bustling markets of Jerusalem, from the cobbled lanes of Bethlehem to the expanding streets of Ramallah, capturing the energy and tension of a world defined by it's clashing viewpoints.

A contemporary and lively documentary, The House of Tomorrow chooses to focus on the future and to encourage the idea that people can have a hand in their own destinies, however unlikely and whatever the odds. Palestinian Hanan Kattan and Israeli Liat Aaronson used the renowned TED conference format to bring together outstanding female speakers from both Israel and Palestine to share their inspirations and unique ideas. Using the TEDxHolyland conference as a starting point, The House of Tomorrow is set in the current reality - but challenges viewers to put that reality aside and explore a future of hope and potential for the Middle East in way we have rarely seen before.

## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT – SHAMIM SARIF



I am a great admirer and supporter of the work Hanan Kattan and Liat Aaronson did in bringing together the TEDxHolyLand conference. Bringing together Israeli and Palestinian women to talk – to really communicate and share each other's experiences and visions – was (to quote speaker Safa Aburabia) “a great achievement.”

But I have to confess, I was not certain whether or how this would translate into a documentary film at first. Two things helped to focus me – the first was meeting and interviewing a group of truly exceptional women from all sides of the political spectrum. Political differences paled beside the philosophy and outlook they all shared – which was that anyone could make a difference, however overwhelming the circumstances against them. The second attraction was purely selfish,

from the point of view of a director. And that was the sheer visual feast presented by every aspect of Palestine and Israel.

I was like a child in a sweet shop. Everywhere I looked there were shots that told a story. From the eerily vibrant murals on the wall that divides the West Bank and Israel, to the cobbled alleys and market stalls of East Jerusalem, to the majestic sun soaked vistas of Masada. As I explored all of this, I realised that there might be a way to elegantly combine the intense ideas and concepts that the TEDx HolyLand conference had opened up with the visual world around me.

Finding the structure involved creating five sections that dealt with such themes as Occupation and Identity from the perspective of women who were experiencing the issues and challenging the paradigms associated with them. The aim was to have a very defined structure but one with parts that moved seamlessly and fluidly together. The idea of interspersing historical flashbacks was to give a context in which viewers could truly appreciate the culture of conflict which these women are transcending, and to make the history clear and balanced.

The House of Tomorrow does not claim to be a definitive historical documentation, nor a sweeping overview of the current state of the Middle East conflict. It was important to me to look at it in the context of Hanan's personal journey back to Palestine, but we also tried to ensure that our look back at the history of both Palestine and Israel was as balanced and non judgmental as we could make it. Because the aim was really to focus on the future, to draw a metaphorical line under the past, without discarding its importance, and to look forward.

## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT – HANAN KATTAN



“The House of Tomorrow” represents the confluence of my heritage and my philosophy. As a Palestinian born in Jordan, I grew up intensely aware of the conflict between Israel and Palestine. My mother’s family was from Jerusalem and my father’s family is from Bethlehem. It was only as I grew up that I began to question the predominant view around me, which was anti-Israeli and without much vision of peace.

Questioning every premise, no matter how long held, is one of the keys to our growth as people, as communities, as societies. The vision that I shared with my fellow curator, Liat Aaronson, was for the TEDxHolyLand conference to help question, to challenge the idea that Israelis and Palestinians must always be opposed, to challenge the presumption that without politicians to smooth the way, no peace is possible.

Like our conference, The House of Tomorrow is focused very much on women and their achievements and viewpoints. Women’s voices are often under-represented in the Middle East, but they are also often the mainstay of their family and community structures. They can exercise a unique influence on their children, who will be the next generation to seek peace from conflict. So their vision, their work in breaking moulds, establishing businesses, acting as role models is extremely important.

The conference uncovered a great enthusiasm for dialogue and for understanding, and it was as we started editing that the mini revolutions of the Arab Spring began taking place. The problems between Palestine and Israel are not those of the other Middle East dictatorships, but the potential for ordinary people to start influencing their leaders and to feel a stronger control over their lives seemed to me to be very relevant and incredibly uplifting.

# BIOGRAPHIES

## Writer/ Director – Shamim Sarif



Writer/director Shamim Sarif is an equally successful novelist (the Pendleton May First Novel Award, Betty Trask Award), screenwriter, and feature film director. Her two feature films have won over 30 international awards.

She has published many short stories and has built a successful career in script editing and screenplay adaptation. Shamim has also directed music videos and written lyrics for recorded songs. An accomplished speaker, she has spoken at TED events in London, Jerusalem and India, as well as at corporate events for companies such as Deloitte and Goldman Sachs.

In 2008, Shamim received an Afterellen Visibility Award as International Lesbian/Bi Woman of the Year. With her partner and producer on her films, Hanan Kattan, she runs the Enlightenment group of companies, based in London, and the Sarif-Kattan Foundation, focused on empowering and educating women and children.

Shamim has recently completed a feature documentary as writer and director. Shot on location in Israel and Palestine, The House of Tomorrow looks at the conflict between these countries from a perspective of women who are focused on building a future.

## Co-Director/Producer – Hanan Kattan



Founder of the Enlightenment Group of companies, which include independent film production, film sales and distribution, a fledgling record label and a publishing arm, Hanan has recently produced two feature films, The World Unseen and I Can't Think Straight. These two movies have won over 30 awards between them.

Born in Jordan, of Palestinian background, Hanan's previous businesses included building a successful toiletries distribution company and creating her own brands and creating an entirely new product category that of holistic premium mass-market products.

Her latest venture is Enlightenment Business Solutions, an Internet marketing company. With her partner, Shamim Sarif, Hanan is also the founder of the Sarif Kattan Foundation whose most recent project was TEDx HolyLand bringing remarkable Palestinian and Israeli women together in Jerusalem for a conference. This led to a feature documentary that Hanan has just completed as producer and co-director, called The House of Tomorrow.

## **Composer – Clare Griffiths**



Born in South Wales in 1984, she studied the piano from the age of five. Music has been the driving force and focus from a young age, and it wasn't long before she was writing her own songs and performing at school concerts. At university, she studied BSc. Music Technology (Swansea) and BA. Mathematics and Music (Cardiff), and obtained two first class honours degrees.

Throughout her life she has performed in many bands where she worked in collaboration with others in writing original music. But it wasn't until working with F. M. Powell-Jarvis in co-organising, writing and arranging several Celtic Christmas music productions that her true passion for writing music came into its fullness.

Her music has been used in several projects undertaken by Llama Media and Media Eclipse, which launched her career of composing for film and TV. More recently, she has been living in London; working as a composer and sound producer with production company Enlightenment Productions. The most recent project being a feature length documentary called House of Tomorrow, which has been submitted to The Toronto Film Festival.

Currently she is in discussions with several directors and script writers about up and coming features in production this May

## **Editor - Chuck Cartmel**

Chuck Cartmel grew up in Winnipeg Manitoba, but now lives and works in the United Kingdom. He has been cutting documentaries, commercials and films since graduating from the London College of Printing in 1985. Chuck's latest credit in North America was last year's Emmy nominated series "America The Story of Us".

## **Editor - Jack Hennigan**

Jack has worked as an editor on a number of music videos and short films. Since childhood he has always known that he wanted to go into film making. Early on he saw the ideal unison of his two keenest interests, technology and art. Jack pursued this interest all the way through his education and studied Film and TV Fiction at the University of Herts. Since graduating in 2010 he has began to work freelance as an editor. The House of Tomorrow is the first feature film he has worked on.

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