

A close-up photograph of a woman with wavy, light brown hair singing into a vintage, silver, ribbed microphone. The scene is dimly lit, with a warm, golden light highlighting her hair and the microphone. The word "Sisters" is written across the center of the image in a large, pink, cursive script.

Sisters

*every self deserves a stage...*

*runtime*

12 mins

*genre*

drama

*format*

16mm · VHS

*languages*

english · turkish



# logline

Manhattan, 1983. Tasked with helping her father run his deli on the night of its 24/7 opening, an unassertive teenager distracts herself with dreams of superstardom, while a few blocks away her idol, David Bowie, embarks on his first tour in five years.





## *short synopsis*

Manhattan, 1983. Moon, an unassertive Turkish-Korean teenager, is forced to help her father run their family-owned deli on the night of its 24/7 opening. A few blocks away, Moon's idol, David Bowie, embarks on his first tour in five years. Over the course of a hot summer's night, inspired by Bowie's ability to transform into wide-ranging versions of himself, Moon contends with her desire for reinvention by reveling in fantasies of her own superstardom.



## *medium synopsis*

Manhattan 1983. Teenager Moon is tasked with helping her father, Baba, run his New York deli on the night of its 24/7 opening, while a few blocks away, her idol, David Bowie, embarks on his first tour in five years.

Born to a Turkish father and an absent Korean mother, Moon is struggling to find her place in the world. Her alienation is heightened by ads which are narrow-minded in their promotion of female beauty. By contrast, Moon is inspired by Bowie's ability to shape-shift into endless different personas.

As concert-goers drift in and out of the store, Moon contends with her desire for reinvention by reveling in fantasies of her own superstardom. The television becomes her portal to another world, a different self. She imagines what it would look like if she were beloved and admired.

In this alternate reality, Moon is a bold and polished star, capable of dazzling all. On stage, she performs a song. It is visceral and enchanting, a bittersweet ode to the conflicting selves we all carry around within us. Soon, however, it is day again, and there is lots to do at the grocery store.





## directors' statement

*Blisters* is a coming-of-age story about cultural inheritance and belonging. Set at the intersection of the real and the imagined, delivered in a mix of English and Turkish, our short film examines one day in a teenager's life that proves formative to her self-worth. A bittersweet portrait of girlhood, set in 1980s New York, *Blisters* draws a parallel between the commercial pressures that shaped adolescence 40 years ago and the way in which social media influences it now.

To create a textured and period-accurate portrait of the era, we engaged in several months of historical research, accessing a wide range of photographic and moving-image archives. In an ode to the '80s, we shot *Blisters* on Kodak 16mm film, including a sprinkling of VHS footage and a selection of curated archival clips in our opening sequence. During the shoot, we recorded sound on analog tapes, and during post-production we composed our score using instruments from the era.

Our relationships to our heritage and homelands inspired the making of *Blisters*. Having experienced the clash of cultural differences and the existence of language barriers first-hand within our own families, our hope was to use our main character's journey as a vehicle for examining what being an outsider can feel like, and how the experience of alienation can provide loneliness and freedom in equal measure.





## alia wilhelm

producer, co-writer & co-director

Alia Wilhelm is a Turkish-German writer, collage artist and filmmaker working in the genre of autobiographical, coming-of-age fiction. Inspired by her multicultural heritage and a childhood during which she moved often, she is interested in examining what it feels like to be an outsider, both within and beyond our own families. Working across moving image, collage and the written word, she is passionate about themes such as transience, cultural inheritance and belonging. Whatever the medium, Alia uses visual and historical research to create soulful work with a handmade and nostalgic feel, shooting on film or sourcing archival footage for her moving-image projects and using magazine cut-outs and family albums to craft her handmade collages. When she is not working on self-initiated projects such as *Blisters*, Alia works in film, television and advertising as both a producer and visual researcher. Most recently, she was the Co-Producer on Alejandro G. Iñárritu's *Digger*. She has also worked on productions directed by Wes Anderson, Lena Dunham, Danny Boyle and Andrea Arnold. *Blisters* is her first short film.



# callie keels ju

co-writer & co-director

Callie Keels Ju is a Texan filmmaker and photographer whose work is as intimate as it is unique. She is passionate about themes such as cultural identity, complex family dynamics, and the exploration of self-worth in a world of differing values. Stylistically, her work strikes a balance between traditional feminine aesthetics and darker cinematic tones, a dichotomy true to who she is. Callie spent years in the art department of major indie films, honing her visual skills on everything from *The Featherweight* and *Shortcomings* to Josh Safdie's Oscar-nominated debut, *Marty Supreme*. Callie balances her career in film with fashion and portrait photography and has had her work featured in print and online publications, including *Glamour*, *i-D* and *Allure* magazines. Currently, she is working as a producer's assistant on A24 x Hulu's upcoming original series, *The Spot*. *Blisters* is her second short film. Her first short, *Ttal*, is currently in post-production.





# adam kolodny

director of photography

Adam Kolodny is a cinematographer based in New York City. His work spans the gamut of the visual world, including narrative, documentary, commercial, fashion and experimental filmmaking. Whether shooting analog or digital, Adam strives to convey the truth of the story being told. Every creative choice – be it lensing, framing or lighting – is made in service of the collaborative experience of visual storytelling. Most recently, Adam was the director of photography on *The Featherweight*, which premiered in competition at the 80th Venice Biennale. He has also worked on the second unit of a number of HBO and Showtime documentary projects and a slew of music videos for bands that he loves. His short films have premiered at film festivals such as Sundance, SXSW, Tribeca and Raindance.

# farah jabir

line producer

Farah Jabir is a Southeast Asian, South Asian and Arab independent and commercial filmmaker based in New York. She is most called to humanistic stories centering on people on the fringes of society, and communal filmmaking outside of linguistic, genre and geographic limitations. Farah is a fellow at Film Independent's Producing Lab, as well as an alum at Mentorship Matters (Amazon/Sony), The Thousand Miles Project (UCP) and the Asian-American Stories of Resilience program (PBS/A-Docs). Her credits include premieres at Tribeca, SXSW, Chicago and Raindance. Her most recent short film *Kasbi* had its world premiere at the 2024 Tribeca Film Festival and was shortlisted for a Sony Future Filmmaker Award.





# credits

**MOON**  
AINUR ZHANIBEK

**BABA**  
ISA CAMYAR

**JAY JONES**  
RYAN KNOWLES

**TOOTHPASTE TEAM**  
REBECCA LAUREN  
EDDIE DATZ  
CALEB HAFEN

**BOWIE FANS**  
THEA HENRY  
PARKER BROWN  
JASON YANTO

**NEW YORKERS**  
ZAIHAH ELLIS  
SARAH MURRAY  
JOSHUA KOSHY  
TINA AMIRAH  
MICHAEL JAMES MCGORY  
ZEYNEP AKSEL  
OTIS REIMERS  
ALIA WILHELM

**DIRECTED BY**  
ALIA WILHELM & CALLIE KEELS JU

**WRITTEN BY**  
ALIA WILHELM & CALLIE KEELS JU

**PRODUCER**  
ALIA WILHELM

**LINE PRODUCER**  
FARAH JABIR

**DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY**  
ADAM KOLODNY

**PRODUCTION DESIGN**  
ERIN LASORSA & TAYLOR BARRY

**COMPOSER**  
KERIM WILHELM

**EDITOR**  
KATE PEDATELLA

**HAIR & MAKEUP ARTIST**  
HANNAH LAUREN DEL ROSARIO

**COSTUME STYLIST**  
MERVE ELTEMUR

**CASTING DIRECTOR**  
RAMONA JINGRU WANG

**LOCATION MANAGER**  
JAMIE LASORSA

**BTS PHOTOGRAPHERS**  
JAMES DE LEON  
RAMONA JINGRU WANG  
NUR GUZELDERE

**FIRST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR**  
EMILY COHN

**SCRIPT SUPERVISOR**  
BRENNA POWER

**PRODUCTION SERVICES**  
SER NOCTURNA  
ARIELLE FRIEDMAN  
CAMILE GRIMALDI

**KEY PRODUCTION ASSISTANT**  
AVI BHAYA

**PRODUCTION ASSISTANTS**  
MARC IOSIF  
JALEEL HILLS

**GRAPHIC DESIGNER**  
ARZU ORAN

**COLLAGE ARTIST**  
ANDREA LUX

**TOOTHPASTE AD ILLUSTRATOR**  
ALIINA KAURANNE

**TITLE & CREDITS DESIGNER**  
MELEK ZERTAL

**ART DEPARTMENT ASSISTANTS**  
HILARY EDEN  
JAMIE HORTON  
REX MORADFAR  
MICHELE MOSES  
JACLYN SKURIE

**ARCHIVAL RESEARCHER**  
CHRISTINA BARTSON  
ALIA WILHELM

**1ST AC**  
LOGAN QUARLES

**2ND AC / LOADER**  
WILL JONES

**GAFFER**  
DAVID WILLIAMSON

**KEY GRIP**  
KIERAN MCSHANE

**SOUND MIXER**  
MARIYA CHULICHKOVA

**ASSISTANT SOUND**  
CARA HUNTER

**KEY HAIR STYLIST**  
CAYLEN CARA

**AUDIO PLAYBACK**  
STEVEN JU

**MOVEMENT DIRECTOR**  
BRIANNA RIVERA

**SOUND DESIGNER**  
JACOB ZACHARIA

**MUSIC RESEARCHER**  
ALEV KAYAGIL

**VFX & ANIMATION**  
ALASDAIR WILLSON

**COLORIST**  
NADIA KHAIRAT GOMEZ



# *contact*

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