
Official Selection
tiff
Toronto International
Film Festival 2019
RED FIELDS
A FILM BY
KEREN YEDAYA
WURLITZER

**United King Films, Transfax Film Productions,**
**Amour Fou Luxembourg** & **Riva Filmproduktion**
present

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# RED FIELDS

## [MAMI]

### A FILM BY KEREN YEDAYA

**FEATURING MUSICIANS NETA ELKAYAM • DUDU TASSA • AMI ABU**
**BASED ON THE ROCK OPERA "MAMI" WRITTEN BY HILLEL MITTELPUNKT**

Israel - Luxembourg - Germany | Scope | 93 min


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# SYNOPSIS

Red Fields is a poetic and realistic adaptation of the rock opera *Mami*, written by Hillel Mittelpunkt, which first came on stage in the 80s before becoming a cult play. 16 songs recorded live, with new arrangements by Dudu Tassa and Nir Maimon, tell the story of Mami: a young woman who works as the gas station cashier of a poor Israeli town, but plans a better future with her beloved husband Nissim for when he gets back from war. Everything changes when Nissim is brought home paralyzed. The young woman decides to rewrite her destiny by leaving for the big city, Tel Aviv.

**Short Version**

Mami works as the gas station cashier of a poor Israeli town, and plans a better future with her beloved husband Nissim for when he gets back from war. Everything changes when Nissim is brought home paralyzed. The young woman decides to rewrite her destiny by leaving for the big city, Tel Aviv.



# DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Red Fields is a musical film, or rather, a cinematic music. It is both a musical and a cinematic work simultaneously. Music shot in a cinematic language, a musical show that tells the unbelievable story of Mami (played by Neta Elkayam), a young woman from a poor Israeli town who, at the end of a chilling, wild journey, becomes the country's prime minister.

For 3 years, we worked at the studio of Dudu Tassa, the biggest middle eastern rock star in Israel (together with his longtime partner Nir Maimon) to create new arrangements for the songs from the legendary rock opera *Mami* that ran on Israeli stages in the '80s, becoming a cult show and turned into an album that became the soundtrack of an entire generation of youth in Israel.

I was a wild 14-year-old girl from a village in the center of the country, when I put on a pair of jeans and a black jacket and took the bus to Tel Aviv to watch *Mami*. That night left a mark on my soul. I didn't understand most of it at the time, and quite frankly neither in my 1,000$^{th}$ listening to the album. I was just too young.

This movie invites the viewers on another kind of journey. One that is musical no less than it is. When it comes to music, emotions work differently. A rock concert triggers emotions in different areas of the brain than a motion picture does. We, as an audience, expect and prepare for a different emotional journey.

The journey I invite you to take with Mami is in many ways more like a rock gig or a classic music concert. The pleasure, the emotion, comes from the areas related to the enjoyment of sounds, of songs that express each character's subtext and feelings. As a matter of fact, the singers play themselves. They are all creative artists, not actors.

It's a musical piece that tells a story in a different way, one that is wild, free, exploratory and risk-taking… One of the key drivers of pleasure is the dramatic decision to record songs live. Live recording creates an intimacy and an authenticity that are usually cast aside in musical films (as the vocals are usually recorded at a later stage). The singers' sincerity, their genuine voice that really comes out of the dramatic moment they are in, and the fact that they are not actors with a nice voice but gifted musicians, all create a truth and a pleasure that do not exist likewise in musical cinema.

The more we abandon the ways we've learned to enjoy cinema, the more we are able to enjoy Red Fields. We must give up the dramatization of moments, the kind of «drama» we've come to expect from cinema, and instead watch the musicians, the singers, their sincerity and their talent. I don't seek to turn their musical moment into a dramatic cinematic image. I do frame them in an aesthetic picture that



tells the story, which is in many ways realistic, but still creates a dramatization and does not create an image or a visual that will replace the singer's face. I saw my own cinema here as a red carpet that I roll out for the talent of the musicians who worked with me. I wanted to build them a beautiful cinematic stage that is genuine, authentic, realistic and poetic, but also crazy and surrealistic, as only cinema can do.

The limited resources we had available also affected my aesthetic choices. The film was shot in 16 days, with 2 extra days for supplementary footage. I wanted a big, grand, epic movie. I wanted to celebrate cinema, celebrate the freedom that I felt after my previous 3 features. I wanted a narrator, a dolly, a free camera, surrealism, crazy art, mass scenes…

How does one do that when there's no money? Must we give up? Opt for a more modest cinematic language? I chose not to give up. Not on the live music recording and not on the exciting, big cinema. I chose not to give up my freedom… not to give up on the pleasure… not to give up on the grandiose and epic nature this work calls for. So, I chose to give up on perfection. I chose to endorse the imperfection and use it wisely in the film's language. I told my French cinematographer (Laurent Brunet), "I am not giving up on the big, ambitious, grand shots… At the worst case, some of them will be a bit 'messed up'…" The regular joke on set was that we were making "drunk Tarkovsky." By the time shooting ended, he was already on crack…



# KEREN YEDAYA

Born in 1972.



## Feature Films

2019 **Red Fields**
*Jerusalem FF, Best Photo and Best Music*
*Toronto Official Selection*

2014 **That Lovely Girl**
*Cannes Un Certain Regard*

2009 **Jaffa**
*Cannes Official Selection (Out of Competition)*

2004 **Or (My Treasure)**
*Cannes Caméra d'Or winner for best feature debut.*
*Cannes Critics' Week Grand Prix & Young Critics Award winner*
*Cannes SACD Screenwriting Award winner*

# MAIN CAST

| | |
|---|---|
| Mami | **Neta Elkayam** |
| The narrator | **Dudu Tassa** |
| Nissim | **Ami Abu** |
| Prof. Kupmachine | **Eran Zur** |
| The bar owner | **Yuval Banai** |
| Batia Classa | **Riki Gal** |
| The Palestinian | **Riyad Sliman** |



# CREDITS

| | |
|---|---|
| Director | **Keren Yedaya** |
| Screenwriter | **Keren Yedaya** |
| Based on the play | ***Mami*** by **Hillel Mittelpunkt** |
| Production | **United King Films** |
| | **Transfax Film Production** |
| | **Amour Fou Luxembourg** |
| | **Riva Filmproduktion** |
| Producers | **Moshe Edery** |
| | **Leon Edery** |
| | **Marek Rozenbaum** |
| | **Michael Rozenbaum** |
| | **Jonathan Rozenbaum** |
| Co-producers | **Bady Minck** |
| | **Alexander Dumreicher-Ivanceanu** (Luxembourg) |
| | **Michael Eckelt** (Germany) |
| Cinematographer | **Laurent Brunet** |
| Editor | **Sari Ezouz Berger** |
| Production Designer | **Victor Peretz** |
| Sound | **Tully Chen** |
| | **Shai Charles Sivan** |
| Music | **Dudu Tassa** |
| | **Nir Maimon** |
| | **Ehud Banai** |
| | **Yossi Mar-Haim** |
| Israeli Distributor | **United King Films** |
| International Sales | **Playtime** |

