



OFFICIAL  
SELECTION

INTERNATIONAL  
FILM FESTIVAL  
ROTTERDAM  
2024

# SONG OF ALL ENDS

A FILM BY GIOVANNI C. LORUSSO

آغنية كل شيء

LABO



GCL



## **BRIEF SYNOPSIS**

The film follows the life of a family of 6 in the Shatila camp, a series of days made of nothingness and boredom.

Slowly, through hardship and dreams, we discover a family grieving the loss of their youngest daughter, little Houda, passed away after the 2020 Beirut port explosion.

This will lead them to abandon all their possessions in search of a new beginning.



### ***A Note From a Traveler***

When I saw  
death performing its ablutions in the fountain  
People around me crossing the streets in their sleep  
It seemed that my dreams were  
pyramids of sand  
crumbling before my eyes  
I saw my day fleeing  
in the opposite direction  
far away from that cursed city...

We choose the beginning  
But the end chooses us  
And there is no road  
except the road

from Sargon Boulus, 1944-2007

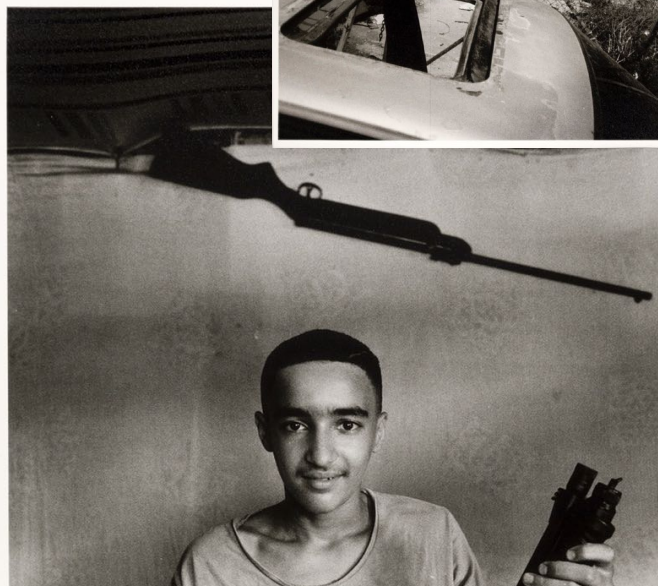
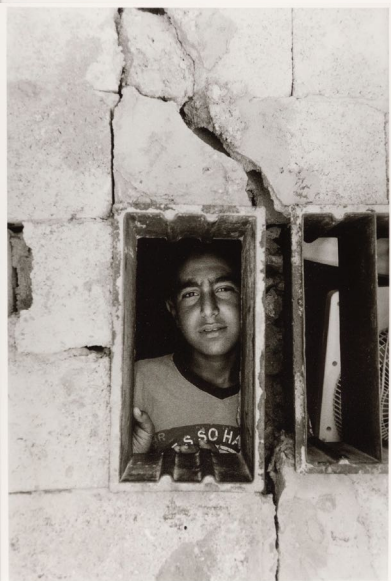
*Hamil al-Fanus fi Laylal-Dhi'ab* (The Lamp Carrier in the Wolves' Night) Cologne: Dar al-Jamal, 1996  
[Translated from the Arabic by Sinan Antoon]

This poem pinpoints much of the drama the family is going through during the course of the film. For this reason we decided to have the Father recite it as if it was of his own making, a reflexion of the difficulties and complex decisions they were forced to make for the family.









Images taken in August 2020 for the project 'The Limits of Ruptures'



## EVOLUTION OF THE PROJECT

This project is the result of a 2 year relationship with the community of Lebanese, Syrian and Palestinian residents of Shatila Camp and more specifically with the Alhaddad family.

A previous work featuring the family was the self-published 2021 book "THE LIMITS OF RUPTURE" - shot in the days and weeks following the Beirut explosion of August 2020.

<https://www.giovanniclorusso.net/limitsofrupture>

<https://www.giovanniclorusso.net/rupture-project>

<https://www.giovanniclorusso.net/rupture-book>

Between January and March 2022 I have completed two further journeys in Shatila for a total of 6 weeks, shooting around 25 hours of footage and several hours of sound in and around Alhaddad's house.







The compound where the family lives









## **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

In August 2020 at 6pm a warehouse in the port of Beirut was the epicentre of the most powerful artificial non-nuclear explosion in history.

The devastating event had dramatic consequences for the already economically affected people of Lebanon.

Although the numbers of deaths and injured are known, less evident is the losses that the population had to face at the time and that still hunt them today.

## **ON SHATILA CAMP**

The Camp was built in 1949 to contain the large influx of Palestinian refugees who had been forcefully expelled from their land. In 1982 it was the theatre of one of the worst events in the history of the country: the Massacre of Sabra and Shatila.

Since the beginning of the war in Syria in 2011 the population has more than doubled, accommodating now thousands of Palestinian, Syrian and Lebanese families. Alhaddad's family is one of them.





## A PHILOSOPHICAL INTRODUCTION

I believe in the theory that life is absurdity: nothing in the world is clearly explainable. (While problems in the realm of physics can be approximated to a satisfying degree, more stringent issues such as psychological and existential ones are far from being clear to us.) Hence we look for ways to *normalise* the World, our world, the world we live daily. This is what we call 'understanding': the process of *assuming* some reasons are sufficient to explain certain facts.

Such a process of *normalisation* is far from universal: it only applies to an individual's personal World. This is why when we face realities far removed from ours we feel a sense of discomfort and incomprehension, denying to ourselves the relativity of our presuppositions.

I believe filmmaking, above all arts, can help reducing the discrepancy between these Worlds: films can project us into the most foreigner of corners and allow us to understand, hence to *normalise* what was at first strange, different, incomprehensible and absurd. I further believe that this is the most enriching and fundamental of all human achievements: to appreciate and perhaps love the strange, yet human differences that collectively make us who we ultimately are.



## THE LISTENING APPROACH

I have tried throughout my latest works to preempt as little as possible, commencing the journey perhaps with a simple word, a feeling or a basic philosophical question, letting the world around me dictate the process. I came to the conclusion that the least we assume, the more options can open in front of our eyes: all is required is a listening eye, rather than a predetermined mind.

After all the World has its own meaning, inexplicable as it might be, so what one can do is merely to find out with which signs such a meaning can be expressed.

In the case of *Song of All Ends*, this work is the result of a 2 year relationship with the family Alhaddad and the community of Shatila. Over the past year I have been further convinced that only by putting myself into a completely foreigner environment and living it truly, I could eventually understand and be sufficiently open to appreciate what makes this subject so inspiring and ultimately *familiar*.





## THE METHOD

Intimacy is a difficult goal to achieve. It requires trust and reciprocal respect. This is further complicated when your subjects don't have a clear understanding of the filmmaking process.

You need to be one with your subject. There are no shortcuts.

That's where I have so far put most of my investment: giving myself the time needed to tune my mind to appreciate and contemplate what is at first different and absurd, to then be able to elaborate naturally and honestly the central points of my research.

There is never an instance where this leads to nowhere, except when it's rushed. And I can hardly imagine a different way that doesn't inevitably implicate disrespect for the subject of my enquiry.

For this reason my latest works could only be made by being technically self-sufficient and autonomous, living, sleeping and eating with the family inside the camp (for *Song of All Ends*) or living with Amerco in the bushes of Soweto (for *AMERICANO!*), in the remote area of Serekunda with Mohammed (*MORIAH*) or in the 9th floor of the Gaza Building with the family Al Ali (*A MAN FELL*) and scheduling the work around my subjects/collaborators needs.







## 'SONG OF ALL ENDS'

Technical Details: 1.43:1 @ 25fps

73' - B/W + COLOUR

Source Format: PRORES 4K

1st Shooting: January - February 2022

2nd Shooting: March 2022

3rd Shooting: May 2023

Post-Production: 2022-2024

Locations in Lebanon: Shatila Refugee Camp, Beirut - Saoufar - Barouk

Preview Teaser

<https://www.giovanniclorusso.net/soae-presentation>



# SONG OF ALL ENDS

أغنية "كآخر النهايات"

FAMILY ALHADDAQ

FATHER GALEB - MOTHER BOUTHINA

HASAN - SHROUK - ABDULLAH

KIKI - ALI SOLAIMAN

HOUDA ALHADDAQ

ZAKI ALHADDAQ - FADIA MERHI

MAHMOUD ABED ELRAHMAN

SAMIR ALHASSAN - ZAKI ALHADDAQ

FATIMA ALHADDAQ - EDDISAN ALHASSAN

SCOTT MCCULLOCH - MUHAMMAD AL DALIL

DANIA KAKOUR - MARK GIBRAN

SILVIA ARECCO - ALEXANDRE AYDOR

EVA SERRANO - JOE EL KIK

ELISA PASCAREL - CLEMENT DENEUX

KLIMAN DOUNO

A FILM BY GIOVANNI C. LORUSSO







## REFERENCES



D'où venons-nous? Que sommes-nous? Où allons-nous?

Paul Gauguin

## A SHORT NOTE ON GAUGUIN'S LAST WORK

Looking for a society more simple and elemental than that of his native France, Gauguin left for Tahiti in 1891 where the painting *D'où venons-nous? Que sommes-nous? Où allons-nous?* was created.

The painting is considered "a philosophical work comparable to the themes of the Gospels".

The three major groups in the painting reflect the overall themes presented in the title: the beginning of life, the daily existence of young adulthood and, according to the artist, the acceptance of everything, the resignation to all thoughts.

Together, the painting from right to left suggests the cycle of "birth-sin-death", to which is added, in the centre, the image of a little girl surrounded by kittens representing *purity*.

As Gauguin describes: "the figures appear as if they were floating in space rather than resting firmly upon the earth".

These elements together with the title of the work have been particularly influential when developing the ideas behind *Song of All Ends*.

The eternal pursuit for the elemental, the various stages of reasoning about life and the purity in the image of little Houda, her life lost due to an act of human indifference, are fundamental blocks of this drama which is as fictional as it is real.



**Here listed are some approaches from  
contemporary directors that have  
guided me in my work**

### **PEDRO COSTA**

I have been long stoked by the intimacy with which he has been able to portrayed his characters in Fontainhas. PC has manipulated time and space in a new meditative form, rich in minimalistic details, patient and inquisitive.

### **SHARUNAS BARTAS**

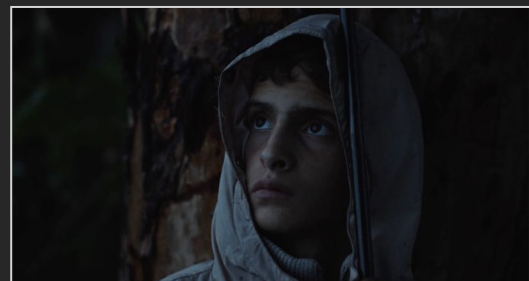
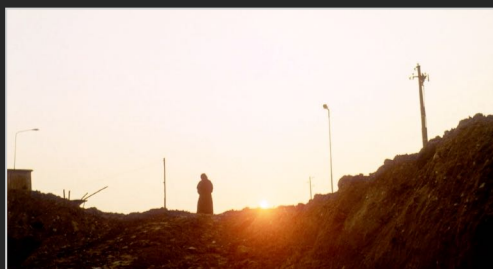
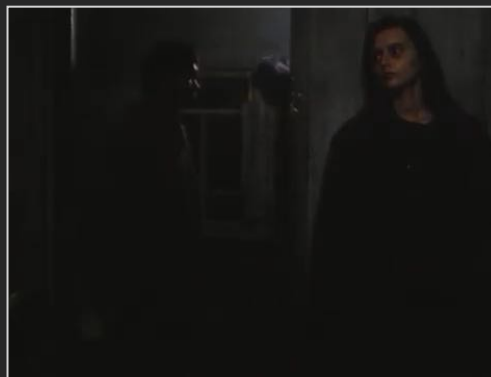
The early cinema of SB is characterised by silence as a medium of communication, reflecting over each instant as a rare opportunity to listen to the world in a pure and respectful way.

### **PIERPAOLO PASOLINI**

Poetry without boundaries. PPP has offered numerous inputs in my career as a cinematographer and in recent years as a storyteller. Above all his direct approach to the men and women facing his unobtrusive camera, maintaining a high level of dignity in both form and meaning.

### **GIANFRANCO ROSI**

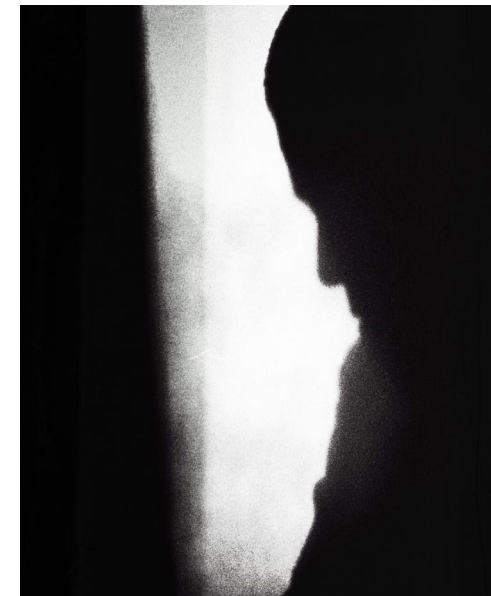
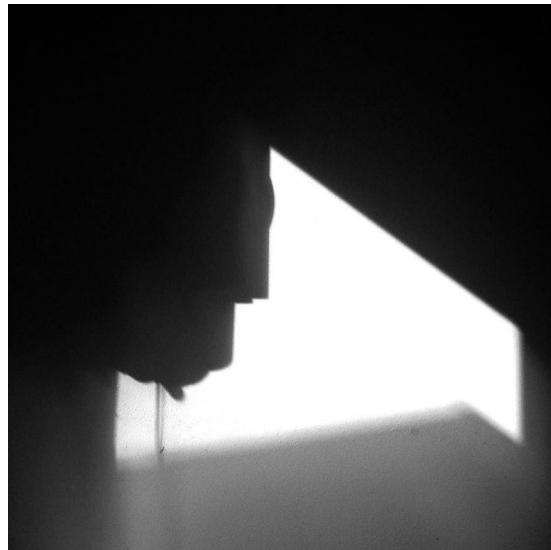
A filmmaker's journey into unreachable corners, searching for the underlying sense of the world. A series of windows of reality that are as close as it gets to a small miracle.







## PHOTOGRAPHY



Michael Ackerman, Ananias Léki Dago, Clara Chichin, Gabrielle Duplantier, Gilles Roudier, Gökşin Varan, Halil Koyuturk, Igor Males, Jacob Aue Sobol, Josef Koudelka, Joseph Rodriguez, Leonard Pongo.











## FILMOGRAPHY

[AMERICANO!](#) (62') 2023: The story of a Mozambican immigrant living in the outskirts of Soweto (SA) affected by short term memory impairment;

[SONG OF ALL ENDS](#) ('73) 2024: A portrait of a Palestinian/Jordan family surviving the loss of their daughter in the Shatila Camp (Lebanon) after the port explosion of 2020.

[MORIAH](#) (72') 2024: The story of a Malian refugee rubbish collector abandoned by his wife and looking after his baby daughter in the outskirts of Serekunda (Gambia)

[A MAN FELL](#) (70'): 2024 The life of the inhabitants of The Gaza Building, a former PLO hospital, symbol of Palestinian survival in the refugee camp of Sabra (Beirut), North of Shatila camp.

Giovanni C. Lorusso ACS is a filmmaker, cinematographer and photographer with a background in literature (BA Arts, Rome 2003 - MA Litt, Rome 2005) philosophy (MA Phil, London 2009), filmmaking (Sydney Film School 2006, Kodak Masterclass, Sydney 2011) and 13 years work experience as a cinematographer for productions around Asia, Oceania, Africa, Middle East and Europe (with works premiered in Venice, Berlin, Rotterdam).

His most recent research spans between photography and videography, with the self-publication of 3 books in 2021: *The Limits of Rupture*: on the aftermath of August 2020 explosion in Beirut, Lebanon; *VOCI*: experimental analog work exhibited in Paris in 2023; *Keep Fire Burning*: a photographic work originally produced during his first journey in Johannesburg in 2018. And the making of 4 self produced feature length films in Johannesburg (*AMERICANO!*), Banjul (*MORIAH*) and Beirut (*Song of All Ends*; *A MAN FELL*).

[www.giovanniclorusso.net](http://www.giovanniclorusso.net)



A vision of Little Houda