



**LEBANESE UNIVERSITY FACULTY OF FINE ARTS
AND ARCHITECTURE DEPARTMENT OF CINEMA
AND TELEVISION**

Option: Film Directing – Cinema and Television

***“CINEMA, A THERAPEUTIC TOOL:
A STUDY THROUGH ZYARA THE DOCU-SERIES.”***

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*“No form of art goes beyond ordinary consciousness
as film does, straight to our emotions,
deep into the twilight room of the soul.”
—Ingmar Bergman*

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Abstract

The world holds different types, forms and kinds of therapies. These forms of therapies come in a wide spectrum, each attaining the same goal which is a treatment that helps someone feel better, relieve, heal, grow stronger after undergoing a certain trauma, or mental illness in their past life or currently going through the incident in their present life, but through different ways. What this research sheds light and focuses on is *Cinematherapy*. Cinematherapy is very common in the Western and European sides in the world but we wonder why it is something that has not been tackled in the Middle Eastern side, specifically in Lebanon. However, the beginning of something we consider similar to cinematherapy has risen in Lebanon since the past six years which is called *Zyara*. We will emphasise on the importance the role of society plays on the content; characters being portrayed in *Zyara*. Therefore, we dug deeper into this case study by using a descriptive and analytical method in order to know whether it could truly be considered as a therapeutic tool one could rely on. Throughout the research we realized *Zyara* ended up being a therapeutic tool to the makers, the audience and their heroes but to a certain extent.

Keywords: cinematherapy, films, therapy, documentary, fiction, society

Introduction

Topic

There are different kinds of therapies within the world such as hypnotherapy, psychotherapy, cognitive behavioral therapy, person-centered therapy, family and marriage therapy, and the list goes on. These specialties are abided by professionals to assist heal their clients handling mental health issues, insecurities, communication problems, etc. The core of counseling and talking therapy is what we all know and certify of treated by either a medical prescription in some cases or perhaps helping someone understand him or herself better through their past, supported by their own experiences. However, is that ever enough? Does this form of therapy work with the majority of humankind? In the era we live in, loneliness is a factor that has touched more and more individuals. Because back in the time, our parents, grandparents, or ancestors were all used to bottling their feelings and emotions up and rarely communicating about their traumas, pain, and problems. That's why therapy is not always such a viable tool for healing because not everyone knows how to communicate and share their thoughts, feelings, and emotions. Some will be forced into therapy which will probably not end up with a productive outcome because those people are not willing to open up and talk about their past experiences or traumas, and others will have the will, want, and need to go visit and work with a professional because they are self-aware that this is a vital need for human beings to grow, however, they would not know how or from where to start.

The process of healing goes through talking things out, therefore through the process of communication, then understanding why things happened after stating them out loud, and finally accepting that we cannot change the past or the situation but we can change ourselves and the way we perceive it. Therefore, it is very important to note, we do not exist without one another. The other is almost always a mirror of the self. But within this new era, as much some people are more in touch with themselves and are self-aware of their emotions, feelings, and thoughts. Some

people on the other hand are less likely to be able to do so. Just because someone is not able to communicate, does not mean he or she cannot communicate. The process of communication can find its way through other forms within an individual. In our case, we are talking about the “Art” forms. Certain people are talented in other factors that one should shed the light on. For the past few decades, art has paved its way and mixed it with science. Therapy has taken a step deeper and into a broader dimension. Now, various types of therapies exist like music therapy, drama therapy, art therapy, bibliotherapy, and cinematherapy. Our main focus here relies on forms of Art that are based out of total emotional responses and reactions. Something that society has nothing to integrate itself within. Something so pure and genuine because our brains have all been wired and designed to think and believe in a specific way to support the culture we come from, our traditions, our ancestors, our religion, our friends, a character we saw in a film, random strangers we met, or even a book we read. Our brains are the trashcans of life. But what makes a person, human? It’s purely his emotions. That’s why he or she should trust and rely more often on them.

Gradually speaking, firstly, Art Therapy came out in the beginning. First, art has traditionally been used to distinguish academically sponsored arts, including painting, drawing, and sculpture, from artisanal art. The latter generally refers to those works created for a function, such as ceramics, jewelry, textiles, handicrafts, and glass, which are still known as decorative arts. This distinction is not applied as strongly in contemporary arts and crafts, where a wide variety of media are used, including pottery and embroidery, for example. However, there is still a flexible boundary between objects that are created with a selected function in mind and people who are primarily doing it intended for display. Secondly, a broader definition of art encompasses those activities that produce work of aesthetic value, including filmmaking, acting, and architecture. For example, architecture has always had a detailed connection with painting, drawing, and sculpture. From the instant human kind felt the impulse of expressing oneself and that they started drawing on the walls so as to proof their existence, up to the time everything evolved and this became entitled “art”. We are now at a stage where we are categorizing the various types of art into various boxes. Art business, art therapy,

art entertainment, etc. Art is that the genuine impulse of expressing oneself. To leave a trace behind. And this comes from the necessity to heal oneself. To urge the pain out of your system. Through dancing, painting, photography, writing, filming, and this list goes on. Therefore, art is therapeutic naturally. The other type of art is entertainment. You'll be an exotic dancer that charges money over her entertainment, otherwise you can dance and transform that into a masterpiece of self-expression. But some art forms specialize in making art products except for different purposes, like selling. In recent years, technological advances in the world have led to several new forms of visual art such as video art, computer art, performance art, animation, television, and videogames. So, when we tend to initially talk about Art therapy, we tend to should note that it happens through integrative ways, art medical care engages the mind, body, and spirit in ways in which during which area unit distinct from verbal articulation alone. Kinesthetic, sensory, perceptual, and symbolic opportunities invite various modes of receptive and communicative communication, which could circumvent the constraints of language. As stated in the website, the definition of Art therapy would be considered as the following: *“Visual and symbolic expression gives voice to experience and empowers individual, communal, and societal transformation. It mostly focuses on painting, drawing, or modeling”*. (About Art Therapy, 2017)

Then the notion and concept of Bibliotherapy was born. It indeed followed art therapy. The idea of bibliotherapy dates back to three hundred B.C. once ancient civilizations placed inscriptions over library entrances that expressed that among the building was healing for the soul. Through the use of stories via fiction and poetry books, plays, short stories, an expert will facilitate help you gain a deeper understanding of the considerations that brought you into the sessions with him/her in the first place. It uses a personality's relationship to the content of books and poetry and different written words as a therapy. As stated in the website, the definition of Bibliography would also be considered as the following: *“It also helps improve communication and encourages more in-depth conversations and connections for participants.”*(Lindberg, 2020) Finally, after that, came Cinematherapy. Gary Solomon states in his book, *The Motion Picture Prescription* that movies are a true example of how art imitates life. *“To begin the journey all*

you need to do is to identify those movies that apply to your life problem or those that will help you to self-nurture and grow. The movies will help you experience healing yourself and/or supporting family members and friends along their healing path." (Solomon, 1995) This form of therapy, needs self-awareness, emotional intelligence, and an individual to be able to feel and identify with the story or the characters to be ready to benefit. This kind makes us realize that we are not alone in the world and not alone with our problems. But it rather ensures us that people are feeling the precise same thing which provides the receiver with peace of mind and ease to simply accept his problems with a lighter heart and mind. Because not only we are in a transcending one on one session, in a clinic with a doctor, feeling like we are a patient of something, but we are rather watching, seeing, hearing, and feeling the characters that are addressing a story that is almost very similar to our personal story.

Literature

Cinematherapy has been used in both the European and American parts of the world. For this research we will use articles and six books: *A movie lover's guide to healing and transformation*, *Cinematherapy: Using the Power of Imagery in Films for the Therapeutic Process* both books are written by Birgit Wolz. A book by Gary Solomon entitled *The Motion Picture Prescription*. Then we have *The Basics of Art History* by Grant Pooke and Diana Newall and finally, the last book is *Cinematherapy: An Idea for Recreational Therapists* written by Danny Pettry. And finally, *The Principals of Art* by R. G. Collingwood. On the other hand, the docu-series *Zyara* will be used as an example that we will analyze as a case study which might be the start of a somewhat considered as the first form of cinematherapy here in Lebanon because this therapeutic form does not exist in the middle eastern countries yet, or at least as not been applied. We have also used some PDFs and other gathered information from other researches and websites. Besides, a list of people we have interviewed from professionals in the therapy field but also in the filmmaking field will be used to attest to authenticity and truthfulness to the research topic. We also interviewed the audience and surveyed the impact

Zyara has had on them. And finally, some video links that also helped portray each episode in Zyara but also regarding cinematherapy.

Scope of the Topic

The scope of the topic chosen for the research will revolve around the episodes that include people who have undergone traumas, had a life-changing or challenging incident, people with mental illness or special needs, and how they overcame their problems and inner struggles on their own but we will also go through a general review of what cinematherapy is based on the books of Birgit Wolz.

Aims and Objectives

The importance of this research is the fact that if the art form/tool or language if we may call it, is true of a therapeutic nature that one could rely on, to fully heal and start to make a change based on something he/she watched, why is it that here in the Lebanese society this does not exist and has not been approved of? Why are films more commercialized rather than being fully made for a cause? Because if we go back to the core and the essential base of self-expression, it comes from one's pain and the need to share our stories with others to get rid of them and start to move on. If film, or through this art form, therapy can help heal and make a big change in a person's life, mindset, or behavior, then what are we waiting for? Here in Lebanon, there's a lot of social criticism, judgment, lack of accepting one another, and our differences. It exists but it comes in very small scales. Because most of the subjects treated in Art could be considered as taboo. The main aim and objectives of this research are to be able to analyze to what extent, how and through what ideas, tools, and ways can the audio-visual art form, in other words, cinema, be it a fiction film, a documentary, a short film or even series be therapeutic to the audience but also the filmmakers themselves. To both people behind the art "the creators" and the people in front of the screen "the audience." It is also very important to shed light on why this is more popular in the western side of the world rather than the Middle East and here in Lebanon in particular. However, we can feel like, there's a start of something similar growing in Lebanon, maybe call it the

embryo of cinematherapy which will be our case study in this research, that is, Zyara the docu-series. Therefore, we aim to analyze and see how, and in what ways has Zyara impacted the social Lebanese artistic, and non-artistic society and culture in Lebanon, and in what ways has it been therapeutic or could be considered as the first form of cinematherapy ever here in Lebanon.

Question and Hypothesis

“Is Zyara the docuseries a valid therapeutic audio-visual expression?”

It is known that art is therapeutic by nature and that also includes the audio-visual form. But when stating the fact that it is “therapeutic” or healing, to what extent can it be? To what extent can it be a reliable tool for people to use it to get over a certain trauma, entirely heal, change, or even transform. Let’s suppose that cinema, the audiovisual tool or art form, in other words, is therapeutic, but the content may not always be something one could rely on in films because it’s not always based on real characters from real life. Sometimes, and most of the times films tend to make us live in a fairy tale. But some other films could be reliable to build on as a therapeutic, analytical healing tool because they are very raw and coming almost straight out of reality without any further adjustment. They are not scripted and/or tailored to fit a certain criterion, to fit the norms of the society or the needs of a producer/director. These types of films can make a difference. If not, a major life-changing one, but it surely can trigger a human to start with the process of wanting to dig a bit further and deeper into his pain to heal. Why? Because films shed light and trigger our deepest repressed emotions. Although, this will require courage and strength from the audience, and a “right” setting to watch and process the emotions. In some other countries they audience might need to free themselves from their environment, or society so they would not be afraid of judgment, and this would easily let them open up freely. We will suppose that Zyara will be therapeutic for both the makers, the crew, the heroes, and the audience, on a personal level at first, but also on a public/social level secondly. But to come and think about it, can art be anything in life, but therapeutic to the human being? Is

this form, the audio-visual art impactful, life-changing to them to the point of inciting the will of change, and the healing process?

Methods

This master's thesis is channeled by two research methods: the descriptive method, and therefore, the analytical one. On the one hand, we will be able to use the descriptive method within the first part of the research to spot what cinematherapy is. The descriptive research aims to accurately and systematically describe a population, situation, or phenomenon. It can answer what, when, where, and also "way" questions. In other words, it "describes" the subject of the research. We will be using the books of Birgit Wolz and articles, PDFs, websites, and other researches we've read to portray what the notion of cinematherapy is, what its functions are and how it works. On the opposite hand, in the second part of the research we will use a mixture of the descriptive method again to introduce what Zyara is then intertwine the analytical method with it to investigate the case study by employment of Zyara the docu-series. Whereas the descriptive research endeavors to explain and encourage us to explore the question of *what?* The analytical research aim is to research the info by answering the question of *why?* Applying this method is by the utilization of validating the prevailing conditions regarding the subject/topic that has been treated in the first part of the research. We will therefore set a comparative structure between the two subjects.

The analytical method is the best method to conduct this research thanks to the utilization of a qualitative observation, which implies it doesn't involve measurements or numbers instead of just monitoring characteristics and theories. Analytical research may be a specific sort of research that involves critical thinking skills, and therefore, the evaluation of facts and to search out the foremost relevant information referring to the research. From this type of research, an individual finds out critical details to feature new ideas to the theories being produced. It focuses on understanding the cause-effect relationships between two or more variables which during this case are cinematherapy within the western side of the world and also the use of cinematherapy here in Lebanon, through the example of Zyara.

Analytical is important because it introduces new ideas about what's happening in your data and helps prove or disprove hypotheses. The data gathered helps in identifying a claim and ascertaining whether it's true or false. It brings together small details, often unobservable, to form more provable assumptions a couple of phenomena being investigated. In this part, we will introduce what Zyara is, it's history, it's mission, the way it functions but also, its process and the way it has impacted society. Then we will move on to using all the interviews we did with the heroes of Zyara and therefore, the crew, additionally to the series itself by the selection of specific episodes and finally the survey we did with the audience.

Structure

To start with, we decided to divide the research into three main parts. The beginning is introductive and descriptive, the second is descriptive while introducing our case study and the last one is purely analytical and comparative in which we developed our summary and synthesis. The part one of the research is the biggest in information because it is important that we understand and know the origin of things before diving into what our core subject it, which is cinematherapy. First of all, we will go through the history of art as a self-expressive healing tool, in order to understand later what the functions of art as a therapeutic tool are. Meanwhile, in the second part, we are going to go through two main chapters. We will firstly introduce the history of Zyara and how it started, the future it prospers and aims for, and the role it implies in its context as an art form and tool of self-expression. Secondly, we will move on to the medium this art form uses, their method and process and finally talk about the difference between fiction and documentary films and which serves better as an honest art medium of truth. We will then go through our subject by defining what it is, its goals and its role. Finally, we will encounter what the three ways to apply this therapy are and how important it is to watch movies with conscious awareness in order to attain the best of a personal projection and identification.

In other words, we will firstly introduce the topic in general which is, “Art” as a therapeutic tool and then different forms of therapies that exist through this form. Then, we will focus and go deeper and specify over only one form of therapy that interests us the most which are cinematherapy. We will dive into its history, methodology, pros, and cons to explore in what forms and way it can be a visual healing tool in disguise as a therapy for human beings that has not yet been explored in the middle eastern culture, but we will specifically speak about its situation in Lebanon. The final third part of the research is the most condensed and intense not only in information but mainly in analysis since we have gathered all of our knowledge and insight from our readings, interviews and filmography, which are being put together as whole for the sake of one purpose; answering the hypothesis we have set at the beginning of our research. We will cover in the first chapter what is the relationship between Zyara and the images of their heroes, and then the relationship the heroes have with their image in society. Next we will cover what is the relationship Zyara has with Society, the impact it has had on the audience, and what professionals have to say about it. Finally, we will unfold how Zyara the docuseries could be considered as a therapeutic tool. We will use Zyara the docuseries that could be considered as a new format that has had a big social impact on the Lebanese people locally, but also internationally. We will dive deeper into their methodology. Finally, after describing and analyzing both these artistic ways/forms, we will conclude and answer the given problem and hypothesis.

PART ONE

CINEMATHERAPY

“Anytime we are angry we are actually something else underneath. Fear, hurt, embarrassment, overwhelm, sadness, or any other feeling. We express these as anger because anger feels powerful. But anger pushes people away and destroys relationships. Vulnerability draws others close. Expressing that underlying emotion instead of anger helps us to heal, when we do so with those we can trust.”

- The Phantom Menace

Chapter One – Art Therapy

1.1-Self-expressive healing tool

The first chapter of Grand Pooke and Diana Newall's book says:

“There really is no art. There are only artists.”

(Pooke & Newall, 2008, p.4-8) The various examples that are not illustrated in this primer (ceramics, constructions, paintings, land art, installations, performance, photomontage, and sculpture) all have an aesthetic status. In other words, the label "art" combines very different objects, practices, and processes. To recognize this diversity, various categorizations are made within the definitions of arts. On this basis, we propose general guidelines for understanding what art should be.

First, art has traditionally been used to distinguish academically sponsored arts, including painting, drawing, and sculpture, from artisanal art. The latter generally refers to those works created for a function, such as ceramics, jewelry, textiles, handicrafts, and glass, which are still known as decorative arts. This distinction is not applied as strongly in contemporary arts and crafts, where a wide variety of media are used, including pottery and embroidery, for example. However, there is still a flexible boundary between objects that are created with a selected function in mind and people who are primarily doing it intended for display. Secondly, a broader definition of art encompasses those activities that produce work of aesthetic value, including filmmaking, acting, and architecture. For example, architecture has always had a detailed connection with painting, drawing, and sculpture.

Moreover, contemporary definitions of art do not appear to be moderately specific or of specific limitations on the role of aesthetic value. These ideas relate to the art of institutional theory, perhaps the most widely used definition. Art is believed to

be a term defined by the artist and the institutions of the art world, rather than a process of external validation. On the one hand, it provides a detailed framework for understanding the various art forms, on the other hand, it is so extensive that it is practically meaningless. However, regardless of the classification, all definitions of art are influenced by culture, history and language. To discover these different concepts of art, we will always need to explore their social and cultural origins. (Newall, 2008)

Art is formed and enjoyed by many of us for several reasons. When new visual ideas are first introduced by the artist, they're often seen as shocking, and maybe whilst incomprehensible. There's nothing harder than trying to understand what was shocking or illuminating about certain images, or ways of creating images. But once the shock is gone, we would have all absorbed this little bit of visual data into our own vocabularies. Artists show us new ways to determine familiar things, and the way to interpret new situations and events through various forms of visual shorthand. This creation of visual language could also be the artist's intention, or it should be a side effect of other purposes. So, what are a number of the needs that art fulfills?

Art has often served as a brainwashing system through history, just like propagandas. In either case, the flexibility of visual images has frequently been used to persuade masses of people to only accept beliefs, take action, or follow leaders. The role of an artist as being part of society could simply be for him/her to show us the world we live in through his/her lens. To shed light on certain topics, details that matter to them and could make the audience slightly more conscious without enforcing us to take any particular action on the subject they are portraying. Art could even be simply some way of recording visual data-telling the "truth" about what we see. Art is additionally a strong means of storytelling. It's also the good gift of illustrator, who had the flexibility to inform powerful and subtle stories about ordinary people and events, in exactly one picture. The expressive power of art is seen in literal ways within the capturing of facial features and visual communication. In any case, one amongst the first functions of art is to interpret the topic matter at hand. So, any variety of art is up for analysis and never

up for judgment. The topic matter doesn't change all that much over time. Although the new material has evolved, the human condition, nature, and events still capture the eye of artists. The media used have changed relatively little; though new materials have appeared during this century; the traditional media is still being used. Each work is an expression of the topic within the context of the values, culture, and events of its specific era.

From the instant human kind felt the impulse of expressing oneself and that they started drawing on the walls so as to proof their existence, up to the time everything evolved and this became entitled "art". We are now at a stage where we are categorizing the various types of art into various boxes. Art business, art therapy, art entertainment, etc. Art is that the genuine impulse of expressing oneself. To leave a trace behind. And this comes from the necessity to heal oneself. To urge the pain out of your system. Through dancing, painting, photography, writing, filming, and this list goes on. Therefore, art is therapeutic naturally. The other type of art is entertainment. You'll be an exotic dancer that charges money over her entertainment, otherwise you can dance and transform that into a masterpiece of self-expression. But some art forms specialize in making art products except for different purposes, like selling. In recent years, technological advances in the world have led to several new forms of visual art such as video art, computer art, performance art, animation, television, and videogames.

1.2-Functions of Art Therapy

We used a very recent article that portrays the most important functions of Art written by Shelley Esaak. She is a former writer for *Thoughtco* which is a premier reference site focusing on expert-created education content. She has hands-on experience with a host of visual arts mediums and techniques, all of which have caused her to empathize with the labors of other artists. In this article we picked, she states: taking anything out of context can cause misunderstanding art and misinterpreting an artist's intentions, which isn't something you want to undertake and do. The functions of art normally compose three categories: physical, social, and personal. The physical functions of art are often the simplest to understand. The audience can often relate during social art and are sometimes even influenced by it.

“Art that depicts social conditions performs social functions. Art also has highly subject functions to the audience most of the time.”- Shelley Esaak

The author of this article claims that personal functions of art don't seem to be likely identical from person to person. An artist may create a touch out of a desire for self-expression or gratification. They may also or instead want to talk an idea or point it out to the viewer. Sometimes an artist is simply trying to provide an aesthetic experience, both for self and viewers. A small amount may be meant to entertain, provoke thought, or even do not have any particular effect within the slightest degree. (Esaak, 2020)

Art could be a doorway to the unconscious. Now to state the filmmaking industry and its entire process of constructing the film, watching the film may be therapeutic through all its phases. Pre-production, shoot and post production, the screening and eventually the interaction director with audience. But the audience is split into two, those that want therapy and those who are there to only get entertained. However, what must be clarified is that the proven fact that cinema isn't only a source of entertainment but it's having a much bigger and deeper dimension thereto. Cinema is that the costliest variety of therapy. Because one puts his fears in, his time,

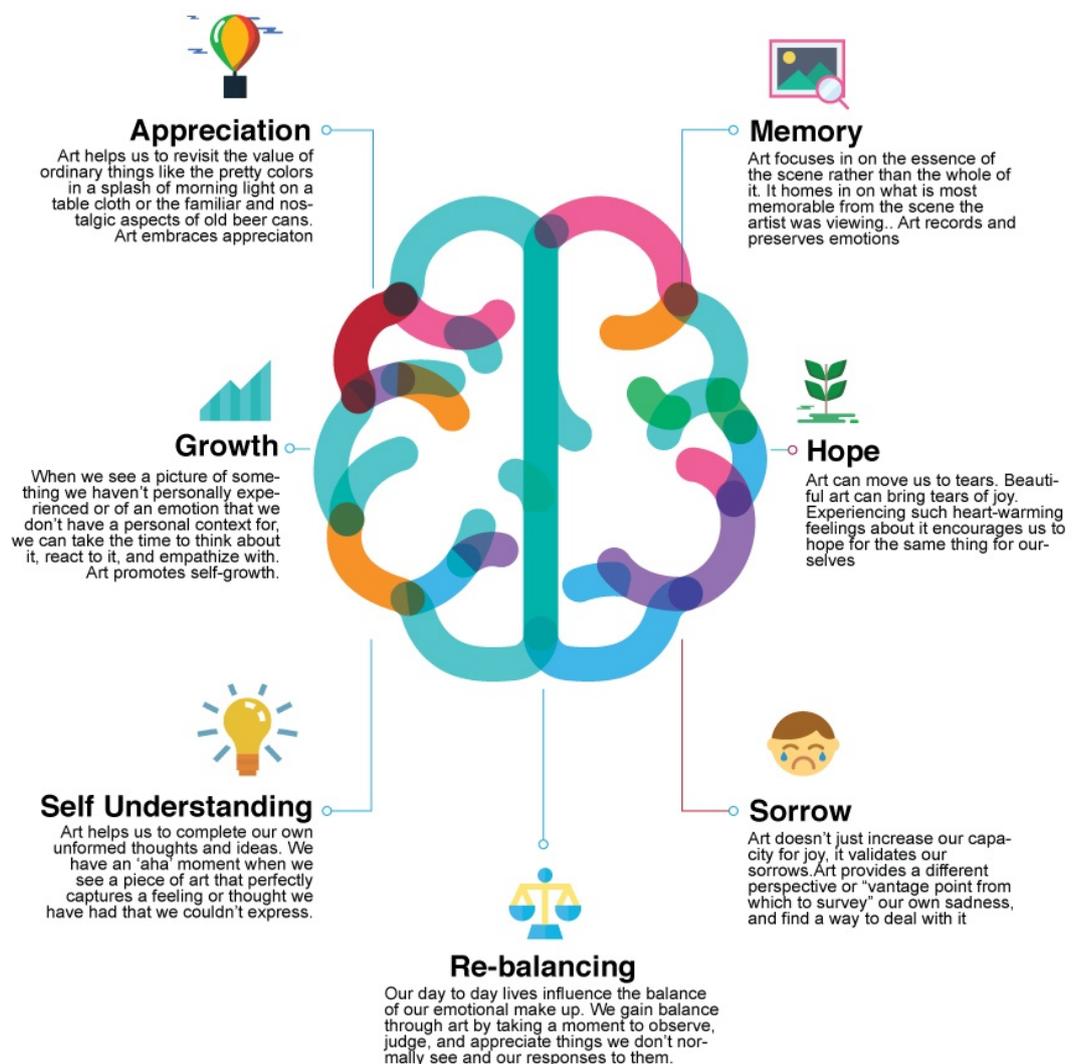
money, pain, recalling of memories instead of just visiting therapy and rebuke the therapist about his pain. The director here then starts forming art out of a private experience so as to urge over it. The sole form of revenge that really is efficient if you're an artist is through films. Because everyone has his own truth. Everyone has his own scale and balance of the healing process. What can genuinely fully may be healing and what only triggers? Can the creative process be therapeutic? How can the creative process be therapeutic? Is it the aim of art to try and do that? Or be that? Is it an act of self-understanding, or a therapeutic act for those that make it, see it and feel and knowledge it? During this research we are going to attempt to prove that art can be therapeutic through cinema. Can art be anything in life, but therapeutic to the human being? Is that this type of art impactful, lifechanging to them to the purpose of inciting the need of change, and healing process?

The personal function is vague for a reason. Knowing the background and behaviors of an artist helps when interpreting the non-public function of their pieces. The functions of art apply not only to the artist that created a chunk but to us as the viewers. Your whole experience and understanding of a chunk should contribute to the function you assign to it, moreover as everything you recognize about its context. Which means after you are attempting to grasp a bit of art, we'd like to do and remember these four points: (1) context and (2) personal, (3) social, and (4) physical functions. Remember that some art serves just one function and a few all three. Perhaps sometimes even more like appreciation, memory, self-understanding, sorrow, hope and self-growth. Whether or not we are tuned into it, we allow art to affect our lives in one way or another. Art helps us grow and evolve in our understanding of ourselves, each other, and also the globe we board. In viewing art, our perceptions change and grow, leading to growth and alter in ourselves. These categories can and sometimes overlap in films. The opposite side of the coin would be the audience. How does the audience intake the variety, object, or product itself? (7 Functions of Art That Make Us Empathetic Human Beings, 2017)

Art As Therapy

How art helps us grow and evolve in our understanding of ourselves, each other, and the world we live in?

Based on the book *Art as Therapy*, Alain De Botton and John Armstrong identify seven functions of art



“Art is the community’s medicine for the worst disease of mind, the corruption of soul. It is through imaginative construction that the artist transforms vague and uncertain emotion into an articulate expression.” -Collingwood

In short, according to the speculation of expression, art ought to clarify and refine ideas and feelings that are shared with the viewer. Among its most powerful exponents was British people scholarly person and aesthetician R. G. Collingwood. In *The Principles of Art* (Collingwood, 1938), Collingwood argued that the real form of art is distinguished by a specific and distinctive feeling, not possessed by either craft or art as entertainment, that he describes as lesser kinds of technical art. As he eloquently places it, art’s place is to inform the audience ‘the secrets of their own hearts’ by discussing and unfolding authentic thoughts or a state of minds, art enabled each the creator and viewer to achieve self-awareness and knowledge and then lead an improved personal life. The idea that art ought to have a broadly speaking communicative role isn't new, however what Collingwood appears to be suggesting is a lot broader: art ought to convey vital truths and insight concerning what it means to be human within the world. This theory is considered normative; its concern isn’t with a definition of art, but rather how art ought to be valued and understood.

Chapter Two - Cinematherapy

2.1-Definition of Cinematherapy

Creativity ought to be a very important component of the education method of individuals with intellectual disabilities, emotional and mental disorders in conjunction with alternative members of society, are totally capable of inventive effort and involvement in creative activities. In such cases, art becomes a link between the skin and also the within world we live in. The film is a very important space of ability. Film stories will perform as works of art, recreation, analysis tools, advertising posters, etc. A movie is often a major component of medical aid additionally thanks to the very fact that it's not restricted to aesthetic values. It mostly mirrors economic, social, current, and historical relations also. One in all the benefits of the film is that it's nearer to reality than the other ancient arts. Cinema, due to the mix of varied art forms, shows life in its entire course and all told its fugacity. (Smieszek, 2019)

The narrative, as associate degree organizing conception, is a vital framework within the follow of psychotherapy to capture and inform life experiences that square measure kept within the body and the story should be obtained from a distance, generally on the far side the boundaries of consciousness. However, filmmaking, in contrast to alternative art therapies that emphasize the conclusion of expertise, such as drama therapy, creates a concrete and also the lasting outcome, the film. It offers participants the chance to seem back and find it. (Mashiach, 2018) As Pettry states within the introduction of his eBook (2014, p.4) In today's world, counselors, psychologists, and therapists measure branching intent on embodying distinctive and nontraditional strategies of operating with patients, whether or not those people have a diagnosed mental condition or just is also probing a rough time in life. One in all these non-traditional strategies, that is gaining additional speed often thanks to its success in cinema medical aid. In this book the writer explores cinematherapy in which we find out how it is utilized by therapists, however, its reception, and the way it's almost like different kinds of medical aid strategies used

nowadays. To start with, we will establish what specifically cinema therapy is. (Pettry, 2014)

"Cinematheapy is that the method of exploitation movies created for the massive screen or tv for therapeutic functions. Cinema therapy is a something that is self-administered." -Gary Solomon

Therapists suggest movies to assist amendment the means we predict and feel. The idea, says Solomon, is to settle on movies with themes that mirror your current downside or scenario. As an example, if you or a wanted include an abuse downside, he suggests *Clean and Sober* or if you're addressing the loss or serious sickness of a lover, he might recommend *Steel Magnolias* or *Beaches*. Once you watch such movies as a style of medical care, he says to seem for the therapeutic context like addiction, death/dying, abandonment or abuse, the flexibility to achieve internal suppressed emotions. But there are several faces and kinds of cinema medical care. However, there's no one definition of cinema medical care, says the urban center, Calif.-based cinema expert Birgit Wolz, Ph.D., author of *The Cinema medical care workbook: An assist Guide to exploitation movies for Healing and Growth*. There is "popcorn cinema medical care," which might embody watching a movie for a required emotional unleash. In keeping with Wolz, popcorn cinema medical care is quite significant in cinema and rather light-weight medical care. (Mann, 2006)

Along with Dr. Gary Solomon we also find a second person who has gone in depth with the practical and theoretical use of cinematheapy, Birgit Wolz. She has a Ph. D., and is a psychotherapist in camera practice in Loch Lomond, Lake County, CA. She worked with a range of therapeutic modalities for several years before she developed an innovative systematic methodology of using movies as an adjunct to traditional therapeutic methods. She offers the foremost effective type of therapy for the precise must make lasting changes possible for people and couples. Her work is deeply transformative. She recognizes and produces forth strength, hope, inner peace, purpose, and joy. She states the actual fact that she is often available to elucidate clearly what she observes about the method of the individual. Her effective therapeutic methods can help resolve deep-seated emotional problems.

Her kind of therapies that employment with the body/mind system. She has worked with individuals, couples, and groups since 1991, combining intuitive understanding with careful application of the foremost promising new therapeutic techniques. (F.Seal, 2020)

Cinema treatment will be a catalyst for recuperating and development for individuals who are affable learning how motion pictures influence individuals and to observing certain movies with cognizant mindfulness. Cinema treatment permits one to utilize the impact of pictures, plot, music, etc. In movies on the mind for knowledge, motivation, enthusiastic discharge or help and characteristic alter. Utilized as a portion of psychotherapy, cinema treatment is an imaginative strategy backed by conventional helpful standards. Eliciting emotion is a perspective is particularly vital for clients who tend to intellectualize or something else stifle their feelings. By activating feelings, motion pictures can open entryways that something else might remain closed. For a few individuals, it's more secure and in this way simpler to doing without of their resistances when sentiments emerge whereas observing a motion picture than after they emerge in "real life" with "real people". They encounter experience encounter involvement feelings that they're frequently not in-tuned with through distinguishing proof with certain characters and their pickles. Frightening movies can make watchers feel lively, "on the sting of their seats". They're completely shown with their involvement like amid terrifying minutes whereas ice climbing or skiing. Birgit energizes clients to be deliberately tuned in to these enthusiastic reactions whereas they observe the motion picture. Talking almost these sentiments a while later inside the session makes a difference to coordinated the encounter and so extend the resistance for a much greater run of feelings. When her clients let her know that they felt livelier, completely showing with observing an energizing or terrifying scene, she offers assistance they find the chances to get to aliveness and nearness in their life. (Wolz, 2013)

2.2-Goals of Cinematherapy

In the first chapter of the E-book of Danny Pettry, he states what the goals of cinematherapy are and what the term cinematherapy stands for. (2014, p.6-8)

Sense of Accountability

Often, patients' UN agency have hassle with handling emotions and that they develop improperly custom-made patterns in their relationships with others. Often, this, in turn, results in a scarcity of answerableness during a person's social life. They don't completely perceive why they are doing things and also the consequences of their actions. By watching a film show within which the protagonist faces an identical scenario and should take care of the implications, people might return to know however they may be poignant their social life. In this sense, cinema medical aid prompts a way of answerableness. In fact, this typically happens once someone has not even entered medical aid. They'll see a film, acknowledge their own actions within it, and find out that they have to contemplate seeking skilled assistance on their own.

Stress Management

Movies and films supply a variety of diversions. Once viewers sit therein theater, they don't believe the issues of their own lives, the strain they'll be addressing, or the problems they're facing. Instead, they target the characters on the screen. As a result, an excellent impact of cinema medical aid will be available in the shape of stress management as a result of viewers are able to break loose their issues. Not the sole method cinema can facilitate aid in the management of stress. Consider this scenario: Have you ever watched a moving picture within which the protagonist did one thing improbably unwise or downright "stupid"? Have you ever watched those scenes and thought to yourself that the mistakes you've got created merely don't appear therefore dangerous anymore? Once looking at a moving picture, there are two totally different sorts of stress management that return from connecting with characters on the screen. Someone could feel higher regarding themselves by seeing somebody else looking one thing worse. As an alternative, a

viewer could feel higher regarding themselves when they see the protagonist of a moving picture get in and so climb out of a nasty state of affairs.

Profound Emotional Experiences

Patients World Health Organization faces conditions during which they disconnect from their emotions or have too sturdy of an affiliation occasionally might notice facilitate within the style of cinema medical aid. As an example, anxiety disorder or post-traumatic stress disorder may be a condition spurred by a traumatic event within the past. Patients World Health Organization are diagnosed with anxiety disorder usually keep themselves at a distance from their emotions in worry of a “flashback” to their traumatic event. However, by inhibitory their emotional connections, they're really forcing even stronger flashback events. Patients with these styles of conditions might notice their symptoms lessened by watching movies that embody emotional experiences. In a sense, by eliciting emotional responses within the patient during a means that doesn't connect with them in person, this permits the patient to attach with their feelings while not feeling that they're connecting with their trauma.

This system has been used for four decades. Video has been used as an element within therapy in recent years for varied populations and within the treatment of various psychological issues, along with post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD. However, despite the growing use of its growing use of the video medium in varied therapeutic settings, the sphere continues to be inside the parturient stages of development; thus, no agreement has but been reached about what specifically constitutes video-based or filmmaking treatment or but it works to alleviate patients' suffering. as a result of films are going to be used in different ways in which and since they serve varied functions in treatment, the sphere continues to be lacking as an example, the term “video medical aid” is presently accustomed describe several uses of video in medical care, like observation films video-recording oneself thus on witness and per the treatment narrative approach, once a traumatic event happens, it queries one's identity in an exceedingly very profound approach. Often, you'll see within the media, most of the people solely contemplate the negative effects of cinema and tv. various news shops link violent movies with

violent outbursts in individuals. For this reason, you'll marvel however look a movie might even have a positive impact.

Media Response

Often, you may see within the media, the general public solely contemplates the negative effects of cinema and tv. Varied news shops link violent movies with violent outbursts in folks. For this reason, you'll be surprised however looking at a movie may even have a positive result. Cinematherapy, like bibliotherapy truly helps patients in varied alternative ways, and whereas the bulk of films used square measure rising and inspiring, a number of them have darker or a lot of serious topics. That's as a result of the goal is to assist the patient mirror on their lives. Despite media attention on movies for the negative, there's undoubtedly a positive impact of the film on patients' UN agency might have it for mental state problems or perhaps for passing considerations in their lives. As you'll be able to see, the precise definition of cinematherapy is quite broad. It exists as a way to assist patients to deal with varied considerations and problems whether or not in their life or mentally through looking at movies.

2.3-Role of Cinematherapy

In chapter two of *Cinema Therapy: An Idea for Recreational Therapists*, (2014, p.8-10) Pettry states that:

“One aspect of most movies is that they serve as allegories, in much the same way as do stories, myths, jokes, fables, or dreams, which can all be utilized in therapy. The cognitive effect of cinema therapy can be explained through recent theories of learning and creativity, which suggests that we have seven intelligences”

Moreover, Danny Pettry introduces in this book the seven bits of intelligence which is a conception developed by Howard Gardner, a well-known and accomplished psychologist.

- 1. Visual/Spatial** – those who have a broach into this a part of their intelligence are unremarkably terribly in-tune with physical area and ability. Commonly, this can be intelligence related to architects, transmission developers, those that often daydream, and artists. In observance movies, the images, colors, and symbols of the film are strategies of sound into this intelligence.
- 2. Body/Kinesthetic** – This intelligence reflects those who are effectively in tune with their bodies. Samples of those that have a broach into this intelligence embody dancers, surgeons, and skilled sports players. Obviously, the movement of the film itself moreover as movement inside the film faucets into this intelligence.
- 3. Musical** – clearly, a region of the brain is directly full of music and finds feeling or medical aid in tunes specifically. Throughout movies, sounds and music are accustomed enhance the story, and this helps connect viewers with their musical intelligence.

4. **Social** – those who simply appear to be ready to “read” others supported body movements, facial reactions, and speech have a broach into their social intelligence. The entire storytelling conception and attempting to work out what's going to happen next helps viewers connect with their social intelligence.
5. **Intrapersonal** – this can be just like social intelligence, however it refers to those who are in tune with their own inner feelings, like motivation, intuition, wisdom, and conscience. The inner steerage shown in characters inside the pic can facilitate viewers realize their own intrapersonal intelligence.
6. **Linguistic** – This intelligence refers to those who truly suppose in words or connect everything with words specifically. They're usually excellent at word games and writing. Obviously, the dialogs inside the pic enable viewers to use their linguistic intelligence whether or not they are attempting to pull together what a personality can do next or what's not being same in an exceedingly speech communication.
7. **Logical-Mathematical** – the ultimate intelligence must do with reasoning and calculations. Those who have a broach into this intelligence are usually excellent at logic games, mysteries, and puzzles. The plot itself can faucet into logical intelligence, often seen once viewers feel that a plot doesn't add up. That's as a result of it's not connecting with their logical aspect. (Pettry, 2014)

On the whole, each one of us has his or her own favorite line or scene from a movie that has deeply affected us in a way or another but has also marked our memory forever. We cannot deny that cinema possesses extraordinary power. Through the journey of one film, we cannot help but experience a roller coaster ride over the spectrum of our human feelings. However, whereas using films as a therapeutic tool, once a traumatic event happens, it challenges one's identity in profound ways in which it's typically quite tough to integrate the expertise into

one's autobiography while not taking stock of however this event affects one's sense of standing within the world. Survivors could also be battling problems with management over their lives, changes in however they view the globe and/or themselves, new dark and negative thoughts, loss of hope, and their futures. The Narrative form, as a method, is the framework that's required within the psychotherapy practice, so as to retrieve and convey the life experiences that are held on within the body and regenerated into symptoms: the damage that had been made in the past should be recovered, and transformed into language. The stories should be retrieved from somewhere quite distant, generally sometimes farther away from the frontiers of consciousness. Someone must be able to metamorphose the harm that had been caused to him or her, into words, in other words, to narrate it. However, filmmaking conjointly differs from alternative arts therapies that emphasize the enactment of experiences (such as drama therapy) in this it produces a concrete and permanent end-product – the film – which supplies the participants with the chance to watch it repeatedly whenever they need, and to gain insights, even when the intervention with the professional ends.

One way to elucidate the powerful learning result of cinematherapy is through recent theories of learning and creativeness, that include the various types of “intelligence.” The faster we consume those bits of intelligence, the quicker we tend to access and learn more about our suppressed emotions. The existence of the film conjointly provides participants with how to spread and share their experiences with others visually and emotionally. Cinematherapy is the method of using films as metaphors to boost the viewer/patient insight and optimize growth. By prescribing a personal task to watch a movie, clinicians anticipate that their clients can connect their own life experiences with those viewed on-screen and ultimately acquire new solutions to their previous issues. The goal of cinematherapy is to stimulate uncommon exploration into the known issues the person is facing and to come up with new concepts for growth. It involves therapeutic discussion of the prescribed film, as well as client/character similarities via strategic questioning and nonliteral language, that helps forestall the viewer's resistance once they have to process harsh material. If used befittingly, cinematherapy is a very effective tool with powerful therapeutic properties.

Chapter 3 - The Ways of Cinematherapy

In the Ph.D. of Dr Birgit Wolz entitled “*Cinema Therapy: Using the Power of Imagery in Films for the Therapeutic Process*” she explains how the movie-watching experience is combined with effective conventional therapies. These methods differ each in their own ways but could also be combined all three together: The Evocative Way, The Prescriptive Way, and therefore the Cathartic Way.

3.1- The Evocative Way

Don't have to recommend specific movies to client. The film is used for exciting and therapeutic purposes to get out of a dream job. Because it is feasible to achieve insights from any dream, emotional responses to almost any reasonable movie can teach clients to grasp themselves better.

“The film can be seen as the "collective dream" of our time, it manages to entertain as well as inform”-Birgit Wolz

When some films empathize with their customers, they touch the unconscious part of their soul. adds the author. Personality and imagination can also be very disturbing. (2013, p.20)

“Understanding their emotional responses to movies, even as understanding their nighttime dreams, can function a window to their unconscious. Both are ways to bring their unconscious inner world to a conscious level.”-Birgit Wolz

As clients understand their responses to movie characters, they'll get to understand themselves in ways they were previously unaware of. Consequently, these responses will teach them a way to reach increased health and wholeness. this is often possible because expanded awareness alone often helps them to relinquishing of unhealthy patterns and reconnect with their authentic self. just in

case insight alone isn't sufficient, other additional therapeutic tools are going to be suggested. In this way, the client explores disowned material through negative and positive reactions. Exploring negative reactions to a movie character might help clients to find disowned or repressed shadow parts of their psyche. Awareness of this extension helps clients leave unhealthy patterns of rejection and they can reconnect with their authentic self. In psychoanalytic theory, projection is seen as a defense reaction within which various forbidden thoughts and impulses are attributed to a different person instead of the self, thus avoiding anxiety. About to know these disowned parts prevents clients from acting come in an involuntary and undesired way. Becoming conscious and accepting these shadow qualities can even help clients become more authentic mortals and access their hidden potential. The identical concept of projection may be true for disowned positive qualities. If clients resonate with a movie character during a positive or admiring way, a subsequent inquiry in session can help them discover their latent and not fully conscious capacities and resource. (Wolz, 2013)

3.2- The Prescriptive Way

Specific movies are prescribed to the client. Psychotherapists continually strive to search out stratagems to assist their patients 'see the obvious'. What tools we've in movies for our armamentarium. (2013, p.27)

*"Precious images of sight and sound, imagined and acted truly,
and now due to new technologies, readily accessible through
rental from the local video store." -Birgit Wolz*

Patients may be pointed to key scenes, which they'll watch easily over and over as they practice their own new skills. The Prescriptive Way relies on the belief that watching a movie can put clients into a lightweight trance state, almost like the state often achieved via guided visualizations. This sort of trance work is meant to assist clients get in reality with a mature and wise a part of themselves that helps them overcome problems and strengthen positive qualities. Within the prescription line, specific films are suggested to identify a specific problem-solving behavior or consumer competence and access and development. Through the Prescriptive Way clients may learn "by proxy" how to not do something or to not behave because

they see the negative consequences of a character's action. (Solomon, 2001) Birgit often uses movies during this way, when she works with clients who struggle with addictions, for instance, or when she works with couples on their communication. Here films are used as cautionary tales. (Wolz, 2013)

3.3- The Cathartic Way

Specific movies or style of movies are recommended to the client. A visual image that rises in the minds of moviegoers is fluid and changing. It affects personal traumatic experiences and has a cathartic function. A film can improve the lives of modern people who feel alienated not only in an art genre but in all walks of life. It works by building social relationships. A film has healing potential because people who watch the film can recognize their problems, compare their reality with the problems of the film and find solutions for themselves. (Kim, 2014)

Our cultural preference for processing emotions cognitively rather than feeling them in our bodies tends to take care of and prolong distress. Emotions are stored within the body, not only the mind. Cathartic therapeutic techniques allow therapists to assist clients access these stored emotions and release them. These methods are supported the idea that the more catharsis clients experience, the faster they move through the healing process. Painful emotions can do over produce tears; they need also been proven to make stress chemicals in our bodies. Catharsis can help combat buried emotions by releasing them. Nature has given us the sound of our natural processes like laughter and crying to connect our pain and beyond. Because many films convey ideas through emotions rather than intelligence, they neutralize the tendency to suppress emotions and stimulate emotional release. Calming emotions, watching movies can open the door, it doesn't close. Many of our clients find it safer and easier to leave their protection than to watch movies with real, real people. By identifying certain letters and their predictions, they experience feelings hidden from their consciousness. Sometimes tears flow on the emotional side, but not especially in the world. Watching and empathizing with a movie character in the face of tragedy can lead to a particularly emotional release. (2013, p.30)

“Often the break, allows a depressed person to start out exploring and healing the underlying issues that caused Depression originally. Grief is processed more easily too. Cathartic psychotherapy tells us that laughter too releases emotion.” -Birgit Wolz

It provides the physical process that releases tension, stress, and pain, physically furthermore as emotionally. Laughter decreases stress hormones, increases pain-relieving hormones, and activates our system. Laughter may relieve anxiety similarly as reduce aggression and fear. Many purchasers have told Dr. Wolz that after watching a humorous movie they were able to approach an answer to a controversy they were worried about with less emotional involvement and a fresh and inventive perspective. Even light depression can lift for ages. Therefore, clients receive a brief emotional release after selecting a movie using their particular emotional reaction experience. (Wolz, 2013)

In other words, in the analysis of Birgit Wolz while writing her book, she came to know a lot more about the impact movies have of the psyche of a human and how to use these films in order to support her work with her individual clients, couples but also her group therapies. She confirms the outcome she has gotten from her patients has been more than ever a very fruitful recognition to the value cinema holds as a therapeutic tool or as new way that is in contrast to the traditional therapeutic strategies. Each strategy is therefore used accordingly to need and not desire of the client. So, it is very important that the psychotherapist notes that. Her book, *E-Motion Picture Magic* isn't an observational journey through movies in order to flee one's issues. It's the entire opposite. It's not simply watching films hoping that somehow, through a form of diffusion, some life lessons are going to be absorbed. A lot of the healing created is made long before one watches the film. Therapists may simply recommend films to their patients but that surely won't be enough at all. However, the expert has to bear in mind that the moving picture expertise mustn't be used as a therapeutic modality by itself. According to her, both fiction and nonfiction films are often used, but in her book and therapy process she has decided to only focus on the employment of fiction films.

Chapter Four - The Power of Projection and Identification

4.1-Watching Movies with Conscious Awareness

Recollection is about looking back, integrating, reorganizing life, and finally solving the painful problem of personal loss due to changes in experience and aging. The storage method works only if you have headphones. So, it's not enough to think quietly. You need a listener to be effective. In this sense, conversation comes to the fore. In recent years, in the field of counseling, the use of cinema therapy cinema as a therapeutic technique has become widespread. It has been shown to be effective in participant confidence, emotional expression and understanding, interpersonal relationships, depression and rehabilitation of psychosis. Cinema Therapy prescribes cinema to interviewees as a healing process. The psychological mechanisms of film therapy have been proposed as identification, projection, idealization, modeling, and alternative learning. In film therapy, the interviewer enjoys the film and encourages further treatment. They can go back and forth between imagination and reality and find emotions related to the current problem. The advantage of this film is that the recipient can respect the text and accept it as strictly as possible as a story. The use of auditory, visual, and written language has a significant impact on the impression of the recipient and is a very accessible resource for the interviewer. Interviewees who have not received psychiatric treatment can volunteer to participate in games that offer cinema therapy. Recipients feel stable and secure when they watch or make movies. Movies are more emotionally effective than intellectual. This helps reduce tolerance, another defense. It is also effective in helping older people with speech difficulties express their feelings and resolve conflicts and problems. (Kim, 2014)

Many psychotherapeutic and spiritual orientations recognize the healing power of awareness. Some suggests that normally we don't see what we predict we see, that what we perceive is more a mirrored image people than it's objectively it.(2013, p.34).

*“Everything we experience is altered and shaped by our minds.
We regularly react with fear or anger and regress into old
childhood patterns we thought we had outgrown”- Birgit Wolz*

Our desires filter our selection of the things that we perceive. Our emotions color those perceptions. and eventually, our attention wanders from perception to perception, virtually guaranteeing that what we see of the globe and ourselves is usually inaccurate. This idea has been echoed by epochs, poets, storytellers and philosophers. Today, many psychologists trust the thought that mindlessness, within the Buddhist sense, is extremely common, way more so than we'd realize. Mindlessness conditions us to exchange authentic experience with habitual responses. consider our state of mind once we are tired, ill, or in pain: we tend to own a brief span and small patience. In such a coffee state of awareness, our motives and emotions are possibly to be habitual. It's no wonder that we regularly miss important details or react from an unhealthy place. When clients start watching movies with conscious awareness, they experience a psychological strengthening process and make a larger inner container for his or her undesired emotions, so they will hold them consciously.

The more they learn to be ready to tolerate unwanted feelings while watching a movie, the less they feel compelled to suppress them or act out against themselves or others in their real world. Instead, they become strong enough to resist action. And the more they practice, the more they become believers. Birgit often asks her clients to study the relationship between awareness and inside information after they experience a movie or the rest in their life with conscious awareness, they increase their capacity to access their inner wisdom. Inner wisdom is quite knowledgeable. Whereas knowledge is solely acquired information, wisdom requires understanding on a deep level. Since our rational mind is just a tiny low a part of the portal to your inner wisdom, she suggests a process within which the

client watches and listens with their whole body, not simply their mind. Body awareness helps you to access inner wisdom through a felt sense instead of through mental perceptions. Our awareness of our physical reactions, especially our breath, is a very important vehicle for increasing awareness. The explanation is that even when our mind has become disconnected from our authentic experience, our breath usually remains locked into it. Sometimes, after we try to mask our feelings, our breath can sometimes give them away despite our greatest efforts to cover them. Perhaps this is often nature's way of ensuring a particular degree of emotional transparency between the creatures of the globe. Ironically, even when our breath, or another body-language sign, broadcasts our true feelings for all to work out despite our greatest efforts to cover them, often we are the sole ones fooled by the deception.

Tapping this potential key to greater awareness may be a technique people will learn. A decent place to start is to seek out what happened to our authentic feelings and why our body continues to be connected to them. The matter usually begins during infancy. Most young children quickly learn that it is often dangerous to precise their full range of emotions. As they learn to cover undesired feelings from their parents, siblings, and also the remainder of the globe, they also hide them from themselves. Gradually, they subordinate their own awareness of their true state and learn to be aware of themselves. Be aware of our bodily reactions, especially when our breathing reveals grave experiences. The sign of neurosis is the fact that we give up self-awareness for self-awareness. When we know about ourselves, we open our minds to the reactions of others. As we increase our awareness, we regain a full, fresh and uncontrollable vision. As an example, as we notice tension or expansion in our chest, how our breaths vary, or other reactions to movie scenes and their messages, they show us our biases and pinpoint the thanks to our healing. As we become awake to a physical sensation that's triggered by emotions during a movie experience, we increase our capacity to tolerate unwanted emotions with no need to suppress, to numb them, gamble them, or ease them. We don't have to resist these feelings because we have experienced them as one more force in your body. Without resistance, our emotions can run their course and not become excessively strong. This will be seen as a desensitization process. (Wolz, 2013)

4.2-Doorway to the unconscious and overcoming resistance

Through identification with characters, the individual projects himself into the action. The impact of movies tends to be on an emotional level rather than an intellectual level and that movies help reduce repression or other defense mechanisms. One of the main advantages of cinematherapy is that it allows processing of difficult material in an indirect manner. (Sharp, 2002)

For our further exploration during this context, Wolz finds a more general definition of projection useful: Clients might also project their disowned positive qualities onto a movie character, as they admire or idealize them. Admiring a personality and his or her actions may point to qualities that are hidden from the clients' full awareness. Therefore, she also finds it useful to explore the projection on movie characters of desirable characteristics that don't "fit" into the clients' self-image. Understanding this sort of projection helps clients recognize their admirable qualities. Gaining recognition of their positive character traits during this indirect way helps them within the process of learning to have these previously hidden qualities. So, as for them to understand their full potential, these qualities must be discovered and developed. An even more general, very useful definition of projection includes the method of assuming that others feel, perceive, and act similarly to the way we feel, perceive, or act. Here projection refers to all or any conscious or unconscious interpretations of our life experience. In line with this definition, it's not necessary for a projected trait to be unconscious. Clients are already tuned in too many positive or negative traits that they project on a movie character. In therapy, they learn to recollect these traits and to totally recognize and acknowledge them in themselves. This fashion their positive qualities may be strengthened. As they deepen their understanding of how they see themselves during a negative way, they become better able to either improve their shortcomings or leaving behind of their negative perspective. It helps them to grasp that others, who are just like the film characters, struggle with similar deficiencies. (Wolz, 2013)

First, the unconscious communicates its content in symbols. Then, we can become conscious of this communication through dreams and active imagination, which are windows to the unconscious: both convert the invisible styles of the unconscious into images that are perceptible to the conscious mind. Third, another window will be the emotional response to a movie scene or character. Therefore, depth psychologists can use responses to movies, as they use responses to dreams or active imagination. Such a response often indicates that a pathway to the unconscious is activated.

Furthermore, we should note that there is a therapeutic reasoning for working with the unconscious which follows these two points; on the one hand, our unconscious is usually in conflict with our conscious ideas, intentions, and goals. Then on the other hand, inquiring into the symbolism and also the effect of a movie can break down the barriers between the two levels of the psyche and founded a real flow of communication between them; unconscious material can start to become more conscious. This helps to resolve a number of our neurotic conflicts with the unconscious, and thus learn more about who we actually are as authentic men. Helping to beat resistance one can circumvent resistance in clients by telling stories and using movies can do the identical.

Resistance dissolves because a person is interested after my suggestion if you watch a movie, especially if you don't expect such an intervention. Or, movies speak the language one is familiar with, so reports develop faster and more powerfully. It's not psychologically intimidating. Watching the movie in subsequent discussions will help the person determine their position from the bird's eye view. Resistance often leads to a feeling of helplessness. Many movies show a change in behavior, and consumers are beginning to consider ways to solve the problem. It promotes insight, insight, and understanding. (Wolz, 2013)

4.3-Stages of Identification and Projection

The stages of cognitive and emotional interpretation through identification and project goes as the following. To begin with, something called *disassociation* occurs which means that the client watches character(s) outside their internal frame of reference. Then *identification through projection* process follows, in which the client begins to spot with character, situation, etc. Next, *internalization* follows in which the client develops sense of ownership of what was felt through character, scene, situation and feels less alone. And finally, the *inquiry into transference or projection* where the client can examine and work with issues which were first safely “outside” and now are identified. These stages are often described to clients within the following way: One, watching a personality outside ourselves during a movie. Two, getting down to identify with a personality, scene, etc. “*I want a personality*” or “*I hate what he's doing*”. Three, getting down to develop a way of ownership of what was felt through a personality or scene. “*This feels exactly like my life.*” Four, examining and dealing with positive or negative qualities, which first were “outside of ourselves but on the screen” and now are recognized as our own.

Whereas, we also find the stages of cognitive and emotional interpretation through the projection of disowned parts of the self that goes as the following. Firstly, disassociation occurs where the client watches character(s) outside their internal frame of reference. Secondly, *the projection of disowned parts of self* in which the client begins to dislike or disapprove of character(s), their behavior, or certain attributes. Thirdly, *the inquiry into transference or projection* where the client examines whether the rejected character(s), their behavior or attributes might be a part of repressed self. And finally, *the acknowledgement of disowned parts* in which the client explores ways to become more whole by embracing their repressed shadow self and thus move toward emotional healing and inner freedom. These stages may be described to clients within the following way: One, watching a personality outside ourselves in an exceeding movie. Two, setting out to like or dislike a personality, their behavior, or certain attributes that we don't recognize in ourselves. Three, examining whether a personality, their behavior, or attributes can

be a part of our not-yet-fully-recognized positive qualities or repressed shadow self. Four, exploring ways to become more whole by embracing the projected positive qualities, so as to appreciate our full potential in addition to acknowledging our repressed shadow self, to maneuver toward emotional healing and inner freedom. (Wolz, 2013)

In brief, watching a movie with conscious awareness is kind of like experiencing a guided visualization. Films contain metaphors which will be used in cinematherapy similar to stories, myths, jokes, fables, or maybe dreams. Viewing films throughout that demonstrates courage while having to face a challenge and will support psychotherapy treatment. The client becomes motivated to repeat the behavior seen on screen and is more hospitable successfully undergo treatments like exposure to behavior avoidance prevention. Additionally, films galvanize feelings, which increase the probability that clients will do new and desired behaviors. Identifying with a personality can help clients to develop ego strength as they recall forgotten resource and become awake to the proper opportunity for those resources to be applied. Understanding reactions to characters who are different and unlikable can guide the client to find within the shadow of their own psyche and story their true self and their potential. Watching movies reception during this context is a bridge between therapy and life.

To sum, we have introduced the main and most important points of what cinematherapy is as a therapeutic tool used by professionals in the Western and European side of the world and how it functions. In addition to that we will discover what the Middle Eastern side of the world has as a somewhat similar tool immersing more or less newly in its own different and unique way. After stating all of these chapters above in this first part, we will be using them all in the upcoming second part as a form of simultaneous analysis and comparison. From the history of art as a tool of self-expression, we will explore what Zyara is, go through its history in the Lebanese social platform. Then while we defined what cinematherapy is, its goals, functions, why and how it's used, we will go further into discovering by denoting which of the three cinema therapeutic ways Zyara uses: cathartic, evocative or prescriptive. What their process is? Furthermore, while

watching movies with conscious awareness helps big time in the power of projection and identification, we will go through the interviews and public surveys we have made with the audience to see the ways Zyara might be or not be considered as therapeutic form of art to both the makers and viewers.

PART TWO
CASE STUDY ON
ZYARA THE DOCUSERIES

“We need to talk, we need to share, we need to love who we are and telling our stories out loud is one way to do it. Zyara offers a platform for those who are courageous enough to tell their story and those who are willing to rise up and say I exist and this is me, perfectly imperfect. The rest is up to the unfolding of life. Love is the only thing that matters in the world and Zyara is our way of loving the world.”

-Zyara

Chapter One - Introducing Zyara

1.1-History of Zyara

The Arabic word “Zyara” translated in English means “Visit”. The log line of this docu-series is “*Life is a beautiful Zyara*” therefore “*Life is a beautiful visit.*” How can one not agree with this statement? We are all brought to this life in a time we have not decided to walk into this so-called journey Life, and each one of us has his own time associated with his visit in Life. It is something that we can never control nor know the certainty of. We know we are here now, we exist now, in this specific time and moment, so let us make the best out of our existence without wasting our time and sabotaging ourselves. The aim of this documentary series is to promote identity, tolerance, and acceptance by visiting individuals, in their personal setting, reproof them heart to heart, paying attention of their cherished stories, the reminiscences that marked them the foremost, feeling their deepest emotions, sharing their lives. It presents associate innovative and deeply personal approach to storytelling. These exceptionally moving net documentaries unlock the testimonies of individuals United Nations agency have intimate and overcome an honest vary of social challenges through bravery, perseverance, and resilience. they have a completely unique role to play in promoting social cohesion, underlining the qualities that people have in common rather than those that set them apart. (Zyara, 2020)

“Zyara is a doc web series that was created by the impulse of needing to exist and survive. It was born from the need to express and be free in the creative act. It was born because we believe in true stories as life lessons, because we are here to testify of the magnificence of human experience through our art and life. Zyara is not just a project, for us it is a life mission and we will keep creating those portraits for as long as we live.”- Muriel Aboulrouss (Baranowska, 2017)

The origin of Zyara is the Home of Cine-Jam that is an associate degree association for Humanitarian Arts. Its main objective is to inspire and induce social and emotional healing through authentic short films or series. Zyara is that the first

creation of the Home of Cine-Jam. it's associate degree victory documentary series that paints poetic portraits of people. Through 5-minute episodes, Zyara manages to engrave elements of its subjects' souls, a variety of their stories, and most of all, their emotions. "Zyara" presents an associate degree innovative and deeply personal approach to storytelling. These exceptionally moving internet documentaries unlock the testimonies of individuals United Nations agency have practiced and overcome an honest vary of social challenges through bravery, perseverance, and resilience. they have a unique role to play in promoting social cohesion, underlining the qualities that people have in common rather than those that set them apart. Created and made by a team of Lebanese filmmakers, "Zyara" has won forty-five accolades from festivals worldwide and enjoys an invasive following on-line. there's an important potential for exportation this model across the center East and for developing a centralized hub that may act as a passage for shared experiences and constructive discussion. give-and-take at native screenings is additionally a key component of the "Zyara" construct and one which provides each civil society and community leaders an opportunity to explore ways in which of supporting the victims of social injustice. (Zyara, 2020)

Zyara was a personal initiative since the start for the producer of Zyara, Denise Jabbour. She was enclosed by people she found attention-grabbing since her childhood, all returning from completely different backgrounds, completely different social categories within the middle of various experiences in life. Observing them and being attentive to them fascinated her within the past and still does till this current day. This pushed her to want to grasp a lot of regarding them and dig deeper into the who they are as individuals. In 2014, Lebanon was going through a rough part and as a motion-picture crew of freelancers, they didn't have any job or any project to work on. Thus, instead of expecting one thing smart and productive to happen, these folks as well as together with Denise herself determined that the foremost effective thing to do in order to overcome this robust time is to undertake and do one thing that they believe in. So, she had the concept of filming interviews with people, one thing that has perpetually been a large interest to her, to understand a lot of regarding their lives, their dreams, their hopes, their fear, the first time they fell in love, what made them terribly happy and what

caused them pain. Being attentive to people sharing their personal stories, she finds enriching on a personal level, by validating their journey in life, making them feel alive, being happy with them, and crying with them creates a beautiful sturdy connection on a human level. (Jabbour, 2020)

As for the co-founder Muriel Aboulrouss, things were slightly totally different. Since 2012, there have been massive forceful changes happening along with her. She was now not happy being a cinematographer any longer because of social behavioristic psychology (competition, gossip, feeling, egoistical angle, expedience, fakeness etc.)

“I do not state this as a judgement as we were all raised into this dynamic but I was personally unhappy within that dynamic and decided to exit the train. I personally cannot thrive in that “stagnant water” and I was ready to give up my passion for cinematography to save it from being trespassed on by the dirt of the system.”-Muriel Aboulrouss

She wanted to teach but outside academia for more freedom and alternatives. Because she believes that teaching is mentoring, its accompanying people on a journey and that cannot be done fully during a few hours a week within a credit system. She then created Cine-Jam the filmmaking workshop, which turned out to be the manifesto of her creative process which she was able to later on teach to others. It aims to reconnect the artist with their intuitive creativity which is a divine force we have within us; it involves instinctive creative choices made based upon the emotion the filmmaker chooses to portray in their Cine-Jam film. The main story behind the birth of Zyara is that the niece of Muriel, Gia was born in October 2013 only to transform back into the light in February 2014, her physical early death when she was only 4 months old was the most intense experience she had ever lived. The year of 2014 was a family journey of reconstruction and transformation. That is when Denise Jabbour, who went through it all with Muriel, proposed in August 2014 that they go and talk to people about their lives in order to reconnect with people on a genuine level. Denise always had that impulse as she loves to hear stories and meet people, however for Muriel, it was one of the most challenging paths because she is the kind of person who prefers aloneness to

socializing. Muriel then agreed with Denise on the basis to have full creative freedom. *“I shoot what I feel.”* States Muriel to Denise. Gia taught her that life is about the *“now”* and nothing else matters. That gave birth to Zyara and made Muriel jump into Zyara despite the discomfort. (Aboulrouss, *The Origins of Zyara the Docu-Series*, 2020)

1.2-Future of Zyara

“Our vision for Zyara is grand!” affirms the producer. They aim to film twelve episodes every year, starting from Lebanon, tackling different traumas and different social issues, then moving outside Lebanon to film at least six episodes everywhere around the world. Zyara has a global and international vision for them, in which you have the map of the world, marked with the Zyara pin, referring to all the countries where Zyara was filmed. (Jabbour, 2020)

“Whatever happens I am happy and grateful for life, grateful that Zyara was meant to be born through us (Denise and I) I am so overwhelmed by that.” (Aboulrouss, *The Origins of Zyara the Docu-Series*, 2020)

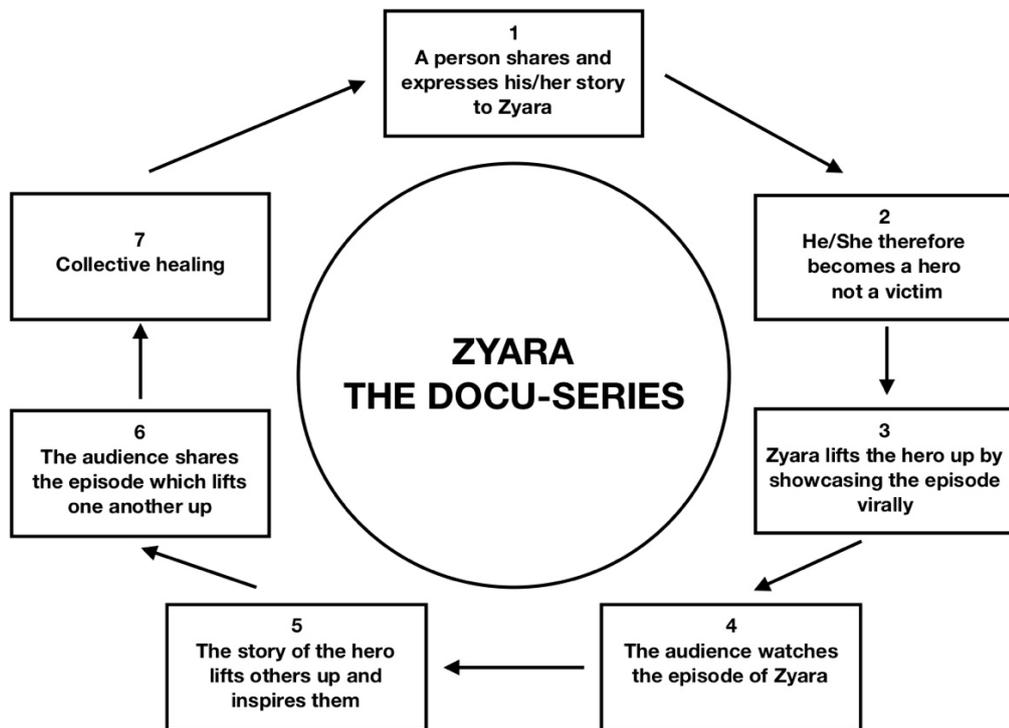
“We dream of a world tour Zyara by screening or filming because only then we will clearly realize the oneness that Zyara is here to portray. Zyara is our way of loving the world!”-Zyara Team

According to the makers, we live in a transition phase where loving oneself is a vital need and furthermore, the world needs actions not words. We live in a time where empowering people with Love, is a human and artistic duty. We live in a world where fear still reigns however, the Zyara makers are messengers of love and light. They will continue producing One Season every year. Twelve episodes, twelve heroes of their own stories, spreading awakening and oneness in their voices, proud of their vulnerability and courageous enough to speak up despite all taboos and judgment. Zyara is like a spider web of emotions which can stick and connect to any human being on this planet. (Aboulrouss, *Future of Zyara*, 2020)

1.3-Role of Zyara

“We need to talk, we need to share, we need to love who we are and telling our stories out loud is one way to do it. Zyara offers a platform for those who are courageous enough to tell their story and those who are willing to rise up and say I exist and this is me, perfectly imperfect. The rest is up to the unfolding of life. Love is the only thing that matters in the world and Zyara is our way of loving the world.”- Muriel Aboulrouss

This docu-series is to unite people through their personal stories in life, off from politics and religion, far from everything that separate us as humans. The core mission behind Zyara is to mention, that regardless of how personal, unique and different we are as individuals, we are all one once we return to our human journey. That regardless of the irrespective feeling of how hard the journey we are in could appear, life will always be a beautiful Zyara. It's all about authenticity, self-awareness and emotional intelligence. Muriel states the need for therapy. Therefore, she uses cinema as a variety and power to heal, express and understand herself better. By sharing the results of this art, it also helps others by sharing it, in order for others to benefit too, acknowledge that they're not alone, which makes the pain somewhat universal. She believes that cinema helps us visualize our pain, communicate with the planet employing a language, we all can understand which is film. The role of Zyara, is to speak in an exceedingly professional way. They're telling someone's story, sharing it with the globe. They're not showing the person as a victim both rather as a hero. They convince their characters that they're the hero of their own story. (Aboulrouss, The Core Purpose Behind Zyara the Docu-Series, 2020)



In order to keep the transparency and honestly flowing, Zyara has gotten in contact with a professional who was happy to give her input on their art form. *Farah MOUKADDAM Clinical Psychologist Analytic & Systemic Psychotherapist MHPSS Consultant*. She is a psychotherapist who practices at her own clinic. She specializes in individual psychotherapy as well as family and couple's therapy. She is a consultant in mental health and psychosocial support for the employees working in the United Nations agencies and international non-governmental organizations (INGO's) who work in humanitarian section in Lebanon and worldwide.

The text bellow was sent to Zyara by the doctor Farah Moukaddam *"First, there was expression... a child's first cry is the very first expression of its pain and needs as well as the acknowledgement of its own existence. It's the only way it knows to communicate a need for help, food or healing. All psychological, educational and social theories agree on the importance of expression, as stated by in his/her article entitled '...' in the magazine 'Cerveau et Psycho' - emphasizing the fact that it is not enough to administer a medical treatment to*

overcome important life experiences that have a long-term impact on the human psyche and social well-being. The need to express the impact of these experiences and sharing them with others remains a crucial step in the healing process. This leads to new neurological pathways / synapses that help the subject come up with new ways of dealing with past trauma and adapting to it.”

After watching Zyara, Doctor Farah noticed the potential it has in terms of prevention and treatment of emotional and social therapy for people who, up to this moment, have had to suffer alone and in silence. It offers a safe and necessary space for people to start talking about their pain, which in itself, is a first step to healing and starting over. According to her, Zyara goes beyond the environment of traditional therapy, which remains confined to clinics and organizations. Zyara's strong suit is that it speaks to the entire world across the five continents. It is able to reach a larger number of people through its cinematographic format as well as its presence in the digital world. 'Zyara', through the topics it tackles in its episodes and the debates it creates not only online, but in schools as well, is targeting the delicate age bracket where childhood issues are brought back to the surface. In that stance, youngsters are faced with a choice: to express their unresolved issues in a safe space, thus taking a path towards healing, or to keep their experiences bottled up, which, in the long run, leads to complexes, which in turn, hinder their well-being. Zyara is therefore working hand in hand with schools and educational institutions who offer this safe and essential space for expression. It's lending its support to their mission in helping this rising generation speak up about its potential pain and turning expression into a tool for social healing, aside from the work that's already being done by the relevant educational and welfare institutions. (Aboulrouss, Zyara, 2020)

To be sure, after going through the definition and introduction of what Zyara the docuseries is on almost all its aspects, it is important that we discover how it functions, what are its ways and what is its language. The people who undergo cinematherapy are entitled clients/patients, whereas in Zyara they are entitled as Heroes. We will further explore the story behind this in the upcoming chapter.

Chapter Two – The Strategy of Zyara

2.1-The Method and Process of Zyara

“If Zyara is one of these available mediums for celebrating the final touches of healing and simultaneously be a platform that allows sharing who people are with the world as an act of love and humanitarian activism, then we are blessed to be its makers.”- Muriel Aboulrouss

We have discovered what Zyara is and what is its mission as it grew bigger and deeper within us states Muriel. Zyara the doc series invites people to remember and validate their journey, it brings back images, memories, sounds to the present time. As we remember those emotions and describe them, we feel that the healing has been completed, they feel lighter. Zyara is an invitation for people to celebrate their healing through the evocative way. According to her as a filmmaker this initiative is a great healing journey. Diving into the skin of all their heroes and then diving into the meditative state of filming their spaces and environment, feeling their energy and allowing them to guide her lens energetically through their voices and emotions, is definitely a healing process because becomes one with them at that exact moment of creation. Zyara is a meditation for Muriel and it grounds her as much as it lifts her beyond the physical world. What they believe and what they offer is a platform called Home of Cine-jam where people can choose to be in Zyara as a final act of self-healing and love. It is not Zyara that heals anyone, it is them who chose to complete their healing through Zyara as a medium and the makers as their partners. They choose together to walk that heroic path of being proud of who they are and sharing their experiences knowing that this can stay after they are long gone and it might inspire someone to keep going or stop someone from killing themselves. No one can heal anyone, unless there is a will to heal and that the person is looking for a medium to support their decision to heal.

Why only stick to the scars and not go deeper into the wounds we asked the makers. Their reply was that a bleeding wound needs follow up and close care. It needs time to mature and be digested. Zyara cannot do that for anyone but ourselves. The markers are personally healing through Zyara because they are going through the process since its birth and every year, they receive a deeper healing from creating it. The scar needs acknowledgment and appreciation, it needs to be shown proudly and for that it needs empowerment and love. That is what Zyara can offer to those who choose to tell their story. During the interview with the cinematographer, co-founder and director Muriel Aboulrouss explains the different phases they go through from start to finish. (Aboulrouss, *The Method*, 2020)

“The process has been almost the same since the first episode, but the details and awareness we transfer to our hero, before they commit, is greater because we have learned a lot along the way. We are still learning and growing while making Zyara and we truly believe that the project will continue as long as there is a genuine need for it in the world.” -Muriel Aboulrouss

A) The Meeting

They contact someone or the person contacts them based on a recommendation. Then the crew makes sure that the person either knows Zyara or that she/he have watched a few episodes before they commit to it. Sometimes the makers meet the person before the filming process and sometimes, they don't, but either ways, they explain everything to the hero on the phone to make sure the person is aware of their choice and their commitment.

B) The Filming

After this stage, the crew and makers go and visit the person on the shooting day knowing briefly the main experience they want to share with them. But they let the rest of the story unfold on the spot. The makers ask them to sign an agreement after the shoot which states that they agree to this Zyara and all the content that they have given them and that they are allowed to screen and use the videos for as long as they live and anywhere, they want.

C) The Editing

The makers established a system for Zyara's post-production: editing is split into two parts; the sound and the image. They select the main audio content first and send it to the heroes for them to listen and give them their blessing or comment if they have any. Rarely they are requested to remove a word or a sentence. If the hero asks for changes, the team abides by their request because what matters to them beyond the signed agreement, is their relationship with their heroes and their blessing on their Zyara. When they edit the visuals on the approved audio content, they then arrange to visit them and show them their episodes or send them a private link to watch and get back to them with feedback. Also, very rarely, they receive a request or comment on the edit. After having everybody's blessing on their respective Zyara episodes, the team finalizes everything; the grading, sound mixing and subtitling.

D) The Screening

The release happens over a period of six months online and the team tries to arrange for as many screenings as possible throughout the year in festivals, schools, universities etc...

2.2-The Medium of Zyara

A) Visual approach

Zyara's audio-visual language was born from that same intuitive creative process which is exactly what Muriel teaches: Cine-Jam (Authenticity in Art as in life) When Denise Jabbour first approached her to go and film interviews with people to ask them about their lives, Muriel first declined because she wasn't a big fan of filming interviews. But in order to make it happen they agreed on the following: Muriel films what she feels and Denise asks what she feels. This is how they started in season one. She filmed only what she felt drawn to, without any further thinking or judgment. She knew before she went on the first day of shoot (summer 2014) that she did not want to see the person till the end (she dreamt about this) and she also knew that in order for her to write with the natural light, she

needed to un-peel the layers within this encounter. The layers that she discovered along the way are made of skin, light, objects and eyes.

The process of creating Zyara was like a channeling of a vision that was meant to be, the smooth flow of the edit and the simplicity of the process are really overwhelming. Every layer that blends into another is a pure accident and it is magical. According to Muriel, it is a great challenge to use the same tools to paint a different soul every time. It is a journey to go and witness the light around and within the person we visit, knowing that she needs to grab it all through her lens, as authentically as possible, with as much love as possible. Organically, with time, season after season, the language evolved in rhythm and pace. The tools are the same, the macro lens and the natural light keep dancing at the rhythm of their hero's voice, a unique different dance for each but all leading to the light. The only rule she follows is authenticity. Letting go of the thought process is the most freeing experience we can experience as artists, it is an act of self-love and most of all it is a highly spiritual act where we connect with the source of all creation with no expectations just trusting the magic of audio visual chemistry blending with the intention to discover and love the person we meet.

Every season Zyara changes in its pace and heart beat but the purpose remains, like water it adapts and flows but its essence remains. Zyara is meant to unite us all under the emotional umbrella that makes us human. Today after 60 episodes being produced, Muriel looks at the canvas, and sees all of them as one. She understands more deeply the reason why it was born with that blurry defect filming Zyara is a meditation for her as it is for those who watch it, for some more than others. Zyara was born blurry, slow, poetic, a visual painting of layers and most of all an ode to the light (inner and outer). Zyara's visual style, was born like that from her womb, her inner gut feeling and she respects that because she truly believes that it is being created through her and not by her. Muriel emphasizes on the fact that what she is saying, the purpose behind it, is not to explain or justify, it is to empower the young filmmakers to follow that path because she promises that they will be full, happy, humbled and proud inside of having trusted their inner feelings despite all outer opinions or judgment. (Aboulrouss, *The Medium*, 2020)

A few comments from filmmakers on Zyara have been, *“Isn’t it too repetitive?”*, *“You’re using too much macro”*, *“Aren’t you bored to repeat the same thing over and over again?”*, *“Don’t you want to change the style a bit?”*, *“The Zyara curve is predictable - childhood/challenge/overcoming/lesson, don’t you want to mix them a bit to make it more appealing for people? They might get bored”*, *“Are you sure you want to stop being a cinematographer just to shoot Zyara?”*, *“In the end it’s just a web-series.”* But Muriel the cinematographer’s answer to all the above is: *“I don’t know how things will evolve but I know that as long as I am evolving, everything around me will as well. Meanwhile I am happy! And that is what matters.”*

B) Format

When Zyara was first conceived, it came from the need to listen to people and witness their beauty. There was no doubt for the creators that it would be documentary based in its audio content because the authenticity of it was their only rule. It is only by its esthetical treatment that came impulsively, where they realized that reality is the greatest poetry and it holds within it the key to an unlimited potential. The choice of making it into a web series came from the fact that they wanted it online and they wanted it to borderless and accessible to all people. It is crucial for Muriel as a teacher and as an explorer of the audio-visual tools to experiment and try different formats. It was crucial to find the essence of their visit and keep it as intense as possible knowing that five minutes would be more than enough to get the emotional message across. She believes that Zyara in its form has crossed the boundaries of documentary and/or fiction. It is a poetic portrait of people flowing through the pace of their breath and their voices. (Aboulrouss, *The Medium*, 2020)

2.3-Documentary Vs Fiction

“As a rule of thumb, a film is hardly a film without camera work, cuts or editing, and it is neither a fiction film nor a documentary if it is nothing more than a "representation" of what happened to be in front of a lens and a microphone.”

- Roberta Sapino

Documentary films are not less than fiction. In the analysis written by Roberta Sapino entitled *“What is also a Documentary film: Discussion of the genre”*, she elaborates on the thought. In line together with her, the foremost relevant distinction between documentary and fictional film, from that all its formal characteristics derive, from a simple mirroring or duplicative function. Documentary could be a smaller quantity closely coupled to photography than one would expect: free from the boundaries of tradition, it constitutes an awfully new tradition of its own. This affirmation, which may sound too radical in its try and separate documentary from all the pre-existing modes of illustration, becomes much more silver-tongued once reformulated as such: The documentary is purposive; it's supposed to appreciate one thing in addition to entertaining audiences and creating cash. The two modes originated from radically completely different wants, which they were planned as the way to appreciate completely different functions, that of a documentary being the diffusion of change. As a consequence, many variations are typically discovered between fiction and non-fiction film choices. First, in contrast to fiction movies, the logic of documentaries depends a lot of on the rhetorical treatment of a central argument than on the narrative organization around a temperament.

For this reason, documentary filmmakers tend to not use continuity redaction, that establishes time and house relations in narration, however they like what is known as evidentiary editing: places, people, objects, and voices are brought forward per a definite rhetorical construction, whose aim is to prepare the logic of the argument. The informing logic is in addition sustained by the intervention of a narrating voice (the supposed “voice of God”), that has been one in each of the foremost characteristic options of the documentary and that is typically absent, or solely

marginal, in fiction movies. The standard documentary is recorded in an extremely natural setting, and it stages nonprofessional performers, whom are defined as “social actors”. As a consequence, production arrangements show a high degree of simplicity: the shooting is completed by a tiny low crew, mistreatment not terribly elaborate –but lightweight and really practical- instrumentation to record individuals whose acting ability is typically way less crucial than the importance of their testimony. The conditions underneath that documentaries are created implicate a wider house for improvisation and invention at intervals the sphere than there is in fiction shooting: an outsized quantity of footage is made following typically straightforward scripts, and it's the editor's duty to decide on and to set up it therefore it manages to specific the writer's plan. However, in contrast to Hollywood, wherever a pointy differentiation of functions between extremely specialized craftsmen is at the thought of the thought of an honest product, at intervals the documentary field, the overstepping of crafts lines and a high degree of cooperation are the norm.

Finally, vital variations are progressing to be determined at intervals the distribution and reception of the ultimate word product. As a rule of thumb, the distribution of the documentary aims at reaching comparatively little cluster audiences, who typically share social or political positions, whereas fictional movies are usually addressed to mass audiences. Moreover, the purposive intent of the documentary determines the factors on that the audience judgment is based. Documentaries tend to be mentioned as documentaries instead of fiction work of cinema and their reception tends to be influenced a lot by power than by aesthetic fascination. We need to state that fiction and non-fiction are two sides of the same coin. Despite all the options that seem to collocate documentary and fiction in radical opposition, the two genres do not appear to be so far from each other reciprocally one might suppose. In fact, documentary and fiction rely upon the identical rules, that are those of filmmaking typically. To start out with, since each documentary and amusement films are planned thus on the interest of the overall public, they each follow a very easy rule: The audience should be for one factor, against one thing else. From this angle, the discussion is not targeted on the shut relationship that documentary is supposed to entertain with existence, however on

the creation through that the material is created into. It is then a willed presentation of one thing created by somebody in associate passing specific means and for someone. (Sapino, 2011)

In the first part of defining documentary film, written by Henrik Juel he states the following: *“As a rule of thumb, a film is hardly a film without camera work, cuts or editing, and it is neither a fiction film nor a documentary if it is nothing more than a "representation" of what happened to be in front of a lens and a microphone. A film is not a mere representation, but a willed presentation of something made by someone in a specific way and for someone. The phrase "representation of reality" is utterly mistaken as a definition of documentary, because the idea of film as mirroring is a false one and a very misleading ideal.”*

Also, the term "reality" is confusing: it ought to have the straightforward positive connotations of facing reality and seeing things as they extremely area unit, however typically enough it's taken by students in theoretical discussions as simply cinematography "normally" in associate degree "objective" method while not being artistic or artful. simply the facts...However, attempting to form "a correspondence with actual facts" and "objective and neutral reproduction" the core characteristics of documentary is naive inside the sense that it is the identical weaknesses as philosophical positivism. To believe that reality is created up first by objective facts and second by subjective or personal sentiment is to make you yourself blind and inattentive the prevailing power structures and ideologies of this world. (Juel, 2006) This but does not imply that it's alright to disregard facts or to tell a non-fiction film. However, it should be noted that the "truth" of a movie is often understood in other ways than that. In a fiction film, the entire story is additionally pure fantasy, the characters fictitious and also the behavior of the actors could contain unbelievable stunts – however still the film is additionally seeking for "truth" in another sense of the word: true emotions and perhaps even as an example some additional general truths regarding human life. Lacking an honest definition of its essence, it should be a concept to look at the etymology and history of the term. The word documentary has its root within the Latin word "docere" that meant to indicate or instruct. We tend to conjointly apprehend the extra fashionable and

customary phrase that one thing is "a document" (e.g. a vital piece of paper bestowed in court) which we could raise somebody "to document" his identity or statements.

Functions of the film, metaphorically described (by personification): a documentary film can be seen to function as a prophet – explorer - painter – advocate – bugler – prosecutor – observer – catalyst – guerrilla – performer – therapist – spin doctor. Possible modes or narrative strategies:

Expository: lecturing, overtly didactic, e.g. with a personal presenter or an explanatory voice-over.

Observational: like a "fly on the wall," the camera, microphone and film crew seem not to be disturbing the scene or even to be noticed by the participants.

Participatory or interactive: the film crew takes part in the action or chain of events.

Reflexive: the film exposes and discusses its own role as a film (e.g. the ethics or conditions of filmmaking) alongside the treatment of the case or subject.

Performative: the film crew creates many of the events and situations to be filmed by their own intervention or through events carried out for the sake of the film.

Poetic: the aesthetic aspects, the qualities of the form and the sensual appeals are predominant. Ways of being true. Documentaries seem to have a certain obligation towards "truth". This may be understood, however, in different ways:

Correspondence: statements and details of film are not lies or fiction but in accordance with actual or historical facts, events and persons.

Coherence: the film constitutes a well-argued, non- contradictory whole.

Pragmatic or conventionalist view: the film is in line with predominant views and general, long termed discursive practice.

Relativism or constructivism: as you like, or how we make sense of things.

Illumination theory of truth: to become enlightened, to see and hear and understand more, to become inspired and gain insight (perhaps recollection).

More points to consider:

Intentions of the filmmaker: enthusiasm and commitment, the filmmaker wants to explore, to probe and to show us something important or otherwise overlooked; devoted to a cause or to people, trying to make a difference (not just making money, having fun or exposing oneself).

Subject matter, themes or content: something of importance and relevance; historical, social or natural phenomena; persons and places of significance.

Expectations of the (general) audience: authenticity, insight, disclosure, something about real people and problems, learning something.

Target groups (implied): general public (public service), or segments with a more specialized interest and knowledge on the subject in question.

Ethics: we expect truthfulness, not lies or distortion, even when the film is committed to high ideals and values. Propaganda is over the line. The documentary may be engaged and enthusiastic, but should be open about its preferences, sympathies and presuppositions. "Neutrality" or "objectivity" should be understood as problematic, but a well- balanced view is welcomed. The film may reflect its own intervening and perhaps ethically problematic role in relation to participants and general context. Carefulness, but also boldness in addressing tabooed subjects.

Communicative function: to inform, discuss, engage, enlighten, intervene, explore, express, disturb and commit – more so than to merely entertain, amuse, distract, conform or confirm (e.g. a religious or political community).

Labeling: sponsors, critics, distributors, professionals, scholars, curators, librarians, editors of TV- and film- programs would characterize this as a documentary.

Popular, lay opinion, everyday language: films received and talked about in accordance with the tradition, similar to other so-called documentaries or non-fiction films.

Context of actual use: education, public service (as image or part of an obligation for the distributor), debate forum, campaigns, discussions and pastime entertainment (e.g. in the cabin on an airplane flight).

Style and form: often realism, perhaps with a reportage-like style, interviews, a rough style, lighting and settings and sound appear natural and not carefully controlled (contrary to smooth and slick lighting, camera movements, montage and continuity of classic Hollywood style). Often an argumentative, exploring or investigating attitude, often thematic more than dramatic.

Relation to major genres and art: it is not fiction, it can be seen as belonging to one of the main genres of rhetoric: judicial, epideictic or political. It may be highly artistic and poetic, but seems more like art with a purpose than art for art's own sake. Epics, lyrics and drama seem to serve the didactic aspect.

Recordings: on location, authentic settings and props, real time, real sound, no actors or acting, but actual people (or animals, in nature documentaries) being themselves. Drama and narrative appear not imposed on the scenes, but emerging from the actual (pro-filmic) events.

Editing: the rhetorical structure appears to be more important than ordinary dramatic continuity; the rate of manipulation and rearrangement of picture and sound seems low. A voice-over commentary or text-streaming is more likely than extensive use of non-diegetic music. The mixing of heterogeneous material (e.g. recordings from a different time or location) is accounted for.

Context of viewing or distribution: e.g. the Discovery Channel, educational TV, TV-slots or festivals announced as documentary, educational institutions, films shown within organizations and companies.

Importance and evaluation: In terms of context and communicative qualities, the film makes a considerable contribution towards a better world... (Juel, 2006)

Similarly, in the middle eastern side of the world, the documentary side of cinema is somewhat and somehow underestimated and not given importance or value as much as fiction films are. But we are very happy to have found that one of the heroes of Zyara has also used the format and genre of the documentary storytelling which is Elie Barakat in his short documentary entitled “*Eme-li*”. In this film, we accompany both of them in different ways. We accompany his mother visually throughout her daily routine but we move with the director Elie, internally. His film is considered to have many of the tools stated above such as being a *participatory, poetic, illumination theory of truth* kind of film. Knowing that Elie has studied audio-visual, which in other words means he has the total freedom and choice to make this film as a fiction film, but still he chose to keep it as a documentary. After interviewing him, he confirms the following:

“I have always considered photography and cinema to be my therapy. They both affect me powerfully. I find a photograph, to be worth a thousand words. A film, a motion picture is even more than that. By making this film I wanted to understand myself and my life even more in order to face yet understand my pain and fear of death.”-Elie Barakat (Barakat, 2020)

So, if we go back to what we stated previously, a film is not a mere representation, but a willed presentation of something made by someone in a specific way and for someone. In this case, Elie was portraying his worst fear, that of losing his mother, but also death in general. His fear of having her image lingering in the tossed away picture albums, that he would need to visit each time he misses her. This is a very personal story; however, it depicts a higher and broader general truth that everyone can relate to anywhere in the world even if they come from different cultures, religions and or traditions. Therefore, we come to ask, do the seven functions of art therapy apply to his movie? In fact, most of them do. His film takes us into *appreciation* first, by revisiting the value of our family, mostly our mother and siblings. Which later on throughout the movie makes us dive into our *memory* relentlessly and effortlessly. At the end of the movie, it validates our sorrow and fear and provides a different perspective on our own sadness and *sorrow* yet how we view the death of our loved ones. That's why it is very likely that we burst into tears. This means this movie has more of a *cathartic effect* on the audience. After going through the sorrow and being on our own after the viewing of the film, that will surely move and push us to a self-observation and self-analysis in order to get to a better *understanding of the self*, which would later on surely derive in one's personal, emotional and mental *growth*.¹

Clearly, after getting to know the terminology and explanation of what cinematherapy is as a common tool of therapy in one side of the world and then understanding and further introducing what Zyara the documentary series actually is but also going through the language of expression it uses, we will now move on to analyzing in what ways could those two subjects be similar in order to conclude whether or not could our case study be considered a valid therapeutic tool to both the makers and the audience.

¹Synopsis: EME LI is a short documentary featuring a mother and son relationship. A relationship that has dismantled in the past and restored again in this film. To watch the short film, check the annexes p.103 and to read the interview with the director check annexes p.156-159

PART THREE

ZYARA THERAPY

"It is clear that social judgment and family shame is a great heavy load on our consciousness and that we need to educate people one heart at a time to start honoring their wounds instead of hiding them. We all have to talk and share our stories because Life is short, and Life is a beautiful Zyara"

-Zyara

Chapter One – Zyara and Heroes

1.1-Zyara, a mirror to the heroes

This part includes the revealed episodes in Zyara. The selection below is not based on viewership neither on a personal favorite episode nor on favoritism among the people Zyara visited, it is a selection based on the knowledge of how much Zyara has impacted the lives of the crew, the makers but also the hero's lives. After interviewing the crew, we also interviewed the heroes.

“I truly believe that each Zyara brought a blessing to her hero and brought changes into their lives but we are not aware of all of them. Some are more expressive than others, some became our friends and some didn't due to age difference or geographical distances. But we are all one family as we believe humanity is one family under the sun.”-Muriel Aboulrouss

All the Zyara heroes are either recommended to us by someone, or they contact us because they felt the urge to tell their stories. Only Season one of Zyara was mainly based on them trying to reach out to people and they were not really aware of where Zyara was going and what was its mission. Zyara season one was the stepping stone of a very surprising journey to the makers and the team. It was a very overwhelming adventure, but the factor on which they based their choice of heroes in season one was simply about people they knew and some we which we found resilient, some genuine, some inspiring, some we just wanted to honor. As they moved forward in their journey and realized what the mission behind Zyara was, they started being more aware and more specific about who they are visiting and why.” (Aboulrouss, Talking About Episodes of Zyara, 2020)

As we realize just like fiction films, Zyara goes through almost the same pre-production phase in which they need to sit and talk with their character, explain the body and core of what they are doing, in the case of fiction it is the script reading, then rather than preparing a space to invite their characters and set up an esthetically

pleasing visual space with art direction, they rather go to the house of the character or the location the character wants and decide everything on the spot. They flow with the rhythm of what happens throughout the day and what the character gives them without imposing anything on their characters. There's space for exploration and improvisation, which creates magical things. It's like the characters indirectly become the directors of their own story without knowing. It's a similar process to fiction, while using a different approach to serve a different message, goal and purpose. While in fiction films the team abide by what the director and producer want, in Zyara's case, they abide by what their character wants, because they value and respect to showcase and view their story as it is, without interfering in any adjustment, but rather being the thin artistic line to conveying their story in a poetic and professional visual way. Somewhat giving eyes and a vision to their stories. In fiction, the relation between a director and actors or team is limited and it ends during the filming process. But in Zyara's case, the relation with their characters doesn't end before or even after the screening of their episode.²

1.2-Unrevealed other side of the mirror

This part includes the unrevealed episodes in Zyara cause by the heroes being very much impacted and involved with what society has to say about their image. Part of being as authentic as Zyara is, one must note that note all Zyaras worked perfectly and smoothly. As much as there are success stories, but at times some things do not go as planned because things are in constant motion and probability of changing. So is a human being bound to changing his or her opinion and decisions. Bellow we will find a few Zyara's that did not have the chance to get diffused and revealed. Zyara makers confirmed that they do not judge anyone on their limitation or insecurities because they have their own and no one is perfect. They understand that taking part in Zyara is a huge challenge and that sometimes one could see the episode and reject the reflection of oneself. That is very normal and to each their right and free will to express their feelings. They also do not

² Check the interviews and links of the Zyara episodes in annexes to get a full insight on the journey of the heroes p.122-133

believe in failure, instead they believe that life is a constant force moving them forward and along the way. They try and change, they evolve and grow, they live. Out of the sixty Zyara heroes they have encountered different situations and they have learned from all of them. That includes the makers and the heroes as well.

Firstly, they had the case of “shyness” in two different seasons, where two male heroes didn't want to share their episodes on their personal profile as to avoid a confrontation with their own families. Zyara respected their wish and understood the limits in which they could promote for their episodes. This experience taught them that sometimes the hero is ready to share “the journey” for the love of others but is not necessarily ready to dive into a family confrontation in regards to their choices or behavior.

“It is clear that social judgment and family "shame" is a great heavy load on our consciousness and that we need to educate people one heart at a time to start honoring their wounds instead of hiding them.”-Muriel Aboulrouss

In the first case and after having the full approval and feedback on her episode, the hero decided that she would like to change the content of her Zyara and talk about something else. It was a big dilemma for Zyara because they had finalized the episode and since Zyara is a self-funded project, it was unconceivable for them to throw a Zyara away or to re-do the sound / interview and sound mix again. They had discussed all the possibilities with her but they needed to meet with her in person to try and talk this through in order to find the best solution; She declined and they couldn't manage an opportunity to see her as she would refuse to do so. Zyara however understand her position, it is hard to reveal a scar in public and then realize that it was still bleeding. It is very clear in Zyara that they do not discuss open wounds because the healing process wouldn't have happened within their hero. They need them to have healed so they can phrase their pain and explain their wound while knowing that they have risen above it and have chosen the light of life despite the darkness; and if they are not totally healed but they still choose to be a Zyara hero, it is because they are aware that their Zyara will give them the push to be the heroes of their own story. (Aboulrouss, Unreleased Episodes, 2020)

Secondly, they had also similar “self-image” issues in two different seasons but this time with two female heroes, where they had a negative feedback on their Zyara (in the post-approval stage). One was shortly before it was time to release the Zyara online and the other was a week after the release. In the second case was a bit more complicated as they discovered along the way (post shooting) many challenges. The hero is a big Zyara fan and they had met her through Zyara in a screening and when they spoke on the phone the first time they instantly clicked. She told them her story and Muriel jumped from joy saying: *“Shall we do a Zyara?”* They truly believed in her and they knew that she is the kind of person who leads by example so they waited for her to see if she would agree to it or not. A few months later they spoke again and she told Zyara: *“Yes why not, let’s do it! That would be a small revolution to start!”* The team was so happy and they set a date for the shoot. One must note that Zyara never ever gives their opinion on what the person should wear, or how they should look. They consider them co-creators of their episodes so they always ask them: *where do you feel we could find your layers? What are the elements that you would like us to paint you with?* Etc. This is how Zyara does it. That is their vow of authenticity. The hero had a very clear answer and took them to the location where the team would find her visual layers. When they reached the editing and selected the audio track, they sent it to her for approval. She told them that she found the story sad and that the positive/lesson part in the end is too short.

The markers explained that this is the Zyara scheme and curve since the start and that the lesson comes in the end, same as all the episodes. They discussed and then agreed to move forward in the process and then they sent the first draft for her approval. They then received a list of comments requesting to remove all her facial close ups as she found them very intrusive and violent and also a request to remove 1.25sec of the sound which she found to be very sad and emotional.

“As a filmmaker I always like to discuss the comments with them in order to make sure that we have reached our limit and then we abide by the requests and comply to our hero's wish because we consider our relationship with them is at least equally important as the Zyara itself.”-Muriel Aboulrouss

After the team applies all changes she requested and send her the final edit for her blessing, she agrees. But a week after they released the episode, they usually request from their hero, a genuine feedback on Zyara as a project or on their own personal Zyara experience. Something happens and she was unhappy with her Zyara. They didn't get the chance or the opportunity to really talk about all this face to face. (Aboulrouss, Unreleased Episodes, 2020)

1.3-Zyara, an emotional outburst

After collecting all these answers by the heroes to the interviews we had with them³ we realize that Zyara wasn't a healing tool in itself for the characters because most of them stated the fact that they were already healed on their own. Maybe not fully healed, but they were at a good stage of their healing process even if they were not aware of it because they were able to talk, express and verbalize their incident, emotions, story and feelings to Zyara. They mentioned that Zyara helped them grow their social circle. So, it was rather a tool that helped their healing process either progress, end, make them feel calm, accepted, but mostly it opened the heroes and their stories up to a new social circle which is society itself. Regardless of the fact of if they might get accepted or rejected by them, that doesn't matter anymore, what matters the most is the fact that their story is out there and anyone undergoing the same issues, problem or hardship as them can watch it and feel less lonely about their situation. And feeling less lonely is a very important factor in the healing process of a human being because it makes the problem look smaller than it originally already is.

When you are carrying heavy weight all on your own, and have never talked about it is something, and when you open up about what hurt you even if to a certain extent you have healed, but the process of verbalizing the pain has a tremendous effect on letting all the negative toxins out of your body, mind, soul and heart. So, when the pain is shared and spread to the world, it makes your pain less heavy to consume and live with. So Zyara makes a difference maybe not on the spot in the

³ Check the interviews in the annexes in order to get a full and better insight on what the heroes had to say p.122-133

exact same moment, but it makes a difference in the long run of the hero's life. After their episode is shared. The amount of love the hero would receive back from the crew, the makers, which in fact all the heroes stated above in the interviews are now considered not only as friends but even closer, they are like family, is tremendous. What about the love and respect they will receive from the audience as well? That's even double the love. Zyara helps in the validation of one's pain, making someone feel extremely valued and portrayed artistically, but also deeply listened to. They don't give the impression of listening; they actually are deeply listening to every word coming out of one's soul and what's beautiful is the fact that it echoes in them and they don't mind showing it to the hero. This makes the hero even more comfortable. Zyara is not afraid to portray the strength but also weakness of their hero in ways that are not intimidating but rather powerful.

We should not forget the process that Zyara explained to us, the fact that is solely based firstly on the selection of the audio. So, sound plays a huge and almost the biggest part in their form. Moreover, the lack of use of music, the choice of tailoring a sound design for each hero according to the place he or she comes from. We manage through the lack of music to still have the chills and feel goosebumps. Why is that? Because their language is purely based on the story, character and his emotions without the distraction of any other element that would be considered unnecessary to the world/bubble they have created for their heroes. And in fact, this is what human kind needs the most, someone to listen, accept them and love them. Not to view them as a victim but rather a hero. To tell them you are strong for going through what you have gone through. Zyara is not creating something that does not exist in this world, it is just visiting. Like holly messengers conveying their visits from one home to another using their own manmade personal poetic language. Who knows when it might be our turn? Listening is an act of wisdom and Zyara is spreading a new wave of positive energy rays, love and respect to human kind. Each episode captivates one from the moment they press play, they can't not finish the episode until the very end because of the way it has been put together.

In cinematherapy, fiction movies do not have the same impact. It appeases us from one side, but from the other side we feel like but that's just a movie. The characters

storyline, set up, almost everything in the film is not real. It was made to convey a certain message, or feeling of excitement, sadness, happiness, chill, etc. So, when the movie is done, and we are out of the cinema, it's left there. Rarely are the times we leave the movies talking about a film that deeply moved us and marked us. Whereas Zyara, their stories as we know are nothing but a literal mirror to the self. So how can you not carry it along? How can you forget it? If you try the exercise of watching three episodes, each of 5 minutes, we guarantee even if a few years pass by or months or weeks, you will still remember the story of that specific person, and if you saw them in the streets you'll want to have the urge to go and praise them for their hard work, courage and generosity.

In sum, we are all attached to what our image looks like in public, because we always feel like we can't exist on our own and we need the eyes of others in order to be able to see ourselves. But there's an irony in stating the fact that through the eyes of others we get to know who we truly are. Because that is very wrong. Someone, specially society might criticize you so badly and one will end up believing it if we follow this state of mind. We should be able to attain a point where we do not need the other in order to know who we are. As society states, *Be who you are*, then when you do, society tells you, *No, not like that*. Conversely, cinema is the type and form of art that cannot exist without an audience. Because it is made for the audience. Due to that, we will explore in the next chapter what is the relation and impact Zyara the docu series hold within society.

Chapter Two – Zyara and Society

2.1- Social Influence of Zyara

After we did the survey⁴ we realized and came to conclusion that Zyara is both a personal and social healing tool for the viewers, the makers and also the heroes. Because most of the people who answered the survey mentioned that it gave them a lot of hope. Cinematherapy heals individually but Zyara heals collectively. But the end results are that is both an individual but also a collective experience. After launching a survey to question the audience about their opinion of Zyara and how it has impacted them we came to the following conclusion:

Zyara has raised awareness into the minds and souls of the audience. It's very easy for them to relate and identify with the character, most of the audience does. It has raised hope and sometimes courage towards many things on a personal level. It makes them feel loved, appreciated and like gives them a sense of belonging, like they are not alone in this world, to further enhance this thought most of them mentioned that they feel like they are all equal and no one is above any other. They also feel empowered and capable to overcome whatever issue they are going through. This results in them also feeling like they are no longer afraid for being who they truly are and to actually take it easy on themselves. They all are eager to always know and what the next episode. And finally, there is nothing they would change about Zyara, they admire it just the way it is.

Basically, anyone can get pleasure from using cinema therapy in a form of different situations. It's not simply limited to patients of therapists and people who have mental conditions. As an example, parents can use cinema to assist explain important life concepts to their children. Additionally, men and ladies can use the therapy to beat major changes within their life sort of a death in the family or

⁴ Check the answers of the survey in the annexes p.161-174

divorce. Children and teenagers bear numerous different issues that may be very difficult and the kids don't talk to their parents about these problems. When parents watch movies with their children, they will use this as a way to open the door to communications. Some of the subject the child might be going through would include: bullying, fears, loss, teens trying to find their identity, becoming an adult, lack of communication and therefore the list could last. This way, the kid is also more willing to speak their own problems or issues in their lives. Whether or not they are not directly stating what's bothering them, the comments they create through the movie can help lead the parent within the right direction. In addition, the parent is going to be able to encourage communication by asking the kid questions about the movie or characters. Moreover, to those mental and emotional benefits, cinema therapy or even Zyara gives parents a reason to spend longer quality time with their children in order to get to know them better. This connection alone might be enough to assist children be more willing to speak with their parents which might lead to raising a fierce, strong new generation that's supported by self-awareness, authenticity and internal peace.

We cannot neglect and should state the fact that Zyara has played a huge role in the lives of not only of the elderlies but also the adults. But the most important impact it has had is on the youth. Zyara has been to several schools doing the same thing over and over again because that is where the change actually can occur. For instance, we interviewed the principal of Lycée Emmanuel, who confirmed that Zyara had an outstanding impact on its students. She mentioned that Zyara had an instant impact on the students and it was miraculous. She went into each class after the meeting of Zyara with the students and she saw how everyone was relieved. Some students who usually are struggling with severe depression have their faces lit up and happy. The children couldn't resist not talking and sharing their stories. She was astonished with the impact Zyara had on them, and to that she is grateful because the students even decided on their own to stop the bullying because they started to consider the feelings of others. (Zyara goes to Lycée Emanuel, 2019)

2.2- Review by Professionals on Zyara

Doctor Farah Moukaddam confesses the following in her interview with Zyara team: *“I am going to tell you what caught my eye when I first discovered Zyara. It’s not just about one individual’s voice, or their family or community. It goes way beyond that. It’s about society as a whole. The more a person is willing to share, and express their feelings, the farther we, as a society, get from mental pathologies and illness. None of us is immune. We never know when the straw will break the camel’s back. From a therapist’s point of view, I admit that what Zyara is doing, is greater than what I do in my clinic.”* (Moukaddam, *A Social Impact*, 2018)

According to her the audience is divided into two, the people who want therapy and people who are there to only get entertained. She believes that the audio-visual art can be a therapeutic form to humans. As long as a person hears and sees, if he was passive human, the artform would be helping his or her empathy at least, to bring out the expression between him and himself, as a bare minimum. Although if that same person had undergone an interview then it has more to do with self-expression. So, this means he’ll get into a deeper level of healing. But if watching a movie or video in a passive way it will only have an introspective impact on a person, one will wake up to the fact that this pain exists inside of me. But if one expressed about the pain, and one got it out, then the person is healing in a deeper way. Therefore, if the person is truly expressing himself verbally, that could help one could overcome a traumatic experience. It is idealistic to have the artist make his art, then have a psychological encounter with professionals. As long as the art form is emerging emotions in us and helping us have an insight then it is for sure helpful or healing to a certain extent depending on the level of each person.

“I believe when the knowledge of cinema and therapy or humanism intertwine together it gives a beautiful impact.”

- Farah Moukaddam

She sees Zyara as a great social healing tool. Because it wakes up what we have swollen up inside of us. Or we have long forgotten inside of us by showing us how

other people have overcome it. It gives one hope for the future and motivation. She categorizes Zyara the docu series as a valid healing tool specifically when the episodes are screened. She mentions that their selection of the characters, the questions, the filming helps the emotional state unfold and people start to go on this audio-visual journey of what they are seeing and hearing. According to her, what is even stronger is when they got into the schools and started having discussions with teenagers. She finds this very important and vital because at that age is when the person might start developing the complexes. So, if someone was able to express during that period, then he would avoid a lot of things in the future. It would be even more interesting to have a workshop with both the makers and a psychotherapist in order to have a more guided discussion it becomes a deeper therapeutic tool she mentions. (Moukaddam, Can Zyara be considered as a Therapeutic Tool?, 2020)

Zyara has proven to be a much-needed educational tool for awareness and empowerment of the society. It is time we give equal value to our emotional healing in order to prevent our future generations from the darkness of bullying, depression, abuse, shame, guilt and more. We strive to abolish victimization and to remind people of their strength and the beauty of their being. We commit to the social emotional healing that comes from sharing our stories and embracing the lessons learned from pain and struggle. Zyara the doc series was born to promote oneness and compassion among the human family. (Team, 2018)

Zyara the doc series aims to tackle all social psychological traumas and social challenges that a human being goes through in their lives.

“So far we were able to feature everyday heroes sharing their experiences with bullying, disability by birth or by accident, death/loss, addiction, violence, war, sickness, love, dreamers, paperless, orphans, being born "different", self-image, depression, homosexuality and transgender, racism, poverty, we also featured Canadian, half Australian and half American, Palestinians and Syrian heroes.” -Muriel Aboulrouss

According to them, the journey will continue as they believe that every story is as important as the other and every reaction to a "trauma" is a lesson for us all to learn from. When they started Zyara all they wanted was to reconnect with people and pay them a visit to talk about life. Their first four heroes were chosen for their authenticity and because the makers knew them personally. Then after receiving a great amount of positive feedback they continued producing Season One and started digging deeper around them for the people they personally found inspiring and genuine. The next year they made the decision to keep going, with the support of their team and with the awards Zyara had won internationally but most importantly because they realized *the need*.

"We all have to talk and share our stories because Life is a beautiful Zyara" -Zyara makers

Then they decided to offer Season Two to people who are going through or went through physical and/or mental challenges. The makers say that due to the overwhelming success of Zyara, they were flooded with names and numbers of people to meet, people they did not even know, people who changed their lives forever. Since then every year they have twelve heroes showing up and expressing their readiness to share their story through Zyara. Zyara no longer looks for them, the people find them or are directed to them through their circle of friends and family members. The decision to accept going on a Zyara is based on the person's awareness of their wounds and their clear healing status from the trauma they are sharing with docuseries. Zyara does not deal with open wounds. Zyara supports and highlights those who choose life and love despite all challenges. Those who believe like Zyara does that no matter how challenging the world might get.

Lebanese society like any society is a sponge to receive any kind of information or artistic endeavors. The challenge resides in the level of reception and the level of involvement. Zyara has a small circle but they are very loyal fan base who are always hungry for more. Zyara makers believe that humans will always seek entertainment rather than deep emotional interaction with an art work because life within the system is serious enough and they just want to take a break. They truly

understand that what they are offering is not necessarily what people would consciously choose but they will keep offering it because they know that deep within, they need it. A little dose of Zyara once in a while could be the reason for someone to awaken and grab on to hope in life again. Zyara was also able to witness the incredible capacity of children to absorb and appreciate Zyara in its content and style, this is why they are even more rooted into their mission when they realized the empowerment and necessity of Zyara for the education of the youth. The system focuses more on educating the mind but we also need balance, therefore Zyara.

“I don't know about “criticism” because we don't take it in, we respect everyone's opinion but we leave what is negatively/destructive into the bin and we take on what is constructive.”- Muriel Aboulrouss

There is no negative feedback in general unless it is infused with envy and a clear intention of harming the project is what the makers consider. That is why they directly choose to let it go and focus on what they are doing despite all opinions. They have no expectations on how and what society will do, they are doing Zyara with faith and love. (Aboulrouss, Zyara and Society, 2020)

“Everything done with love will definitely make a difference but how, when and who? We will let life surprise us along the way.”- Muriel Aboulrouss

It seems, that Zyara has a social therapeutic impact on a wide range of ages just like a film does. It is universal in its emotions, the storylines, but also the different sectors and age range of society. From elderly, to adults to teenagers and kids, as long as the person is a human being, then Zyara's impact will imply on them. There's a vital need that's being portrayed by this docuseries and raising awareness of the fact that “speech”, finding one's voice, expressing one's pain goes beyond just verbal words and vocals interlacing with one another. It has a way broader and deeper connection and meaning to it. And this is exactly what we will explore in the upcoming chapter.

Chapter Three - Zyara and Therapy

3.1- Metamorphosis of Zyara

We live in a world that's going through more and more problems, on all levels. Emotionally, economically, and specially mentality because the previous generations and our ancestors did not have the privilege to be able to communicate and vent out or understand what was happening on their insides, such as processing emotions. Moreover, the environment and culture, religion, tradition but also society we live in might prohibit one from talking therefore cause oppression and repression which would then reflect ones insecurities, negativity but also personal problems into their family, loved ones, children or even friends, it might also affect their personal life and growth because they would be stagnant. We need a healing tool; it is something vital. Because not everyone is confident enough or feels safe enough or could trust a therapist enough to just go and pour his or her problems out entirely. That is why, therapy through film is like a shortcut, a method that eases the doorway into someone's unconscious, because it breaks ones walls down and penetrates directly into one's mind, soul and heart by awaking all of a humans senses by the use of its audio, visual, and based on memory kind of form. It is important for all people in this industry to be aware of the therapeutic feel it offers. However, as much as cinema can be therapeutic, it could also be draining to the makers.

Because they get to a point where they feel like what they have accomplished is never enough. It is like a pierced basket that needs to constantly be filled, knowing you need to try harder every time. Cinema is something that is so dense and vast, and no matter how much knowledge you gain around the subject, realistically, you will never know or acquire enough. That's why the makers are always on the race and chase. Even while doing this research, we got to know a lot of new information. So, it's like exchanging pain, experience and knowledge with one another to

empower each other on different scales. Identification with the pain, if one does not feel that, no form of art will be able to move or change anything in you. That's why cinema has a worldwide feeling and impact on the world because our emotions are global, are universal but the things we think are not and cannot be that way ever. In other words, our emotions are commonly universal but our thoughts are uniquely personal.

Cinema makes us feel like we are not alone. Other forms of art don't have a voice, they are like a silent form of art that make you think and analyze on our own, but that would still keep a person in his/her own circle of thoughts and ideas, which isn't healthy for the long run. Each and every one of us can come up with a different analysis because there are no norms, rules or standards. But films are given to you with a story line based from reality. Cinema can help as a visual memory to those in need in order to relate better to some stories. Therefore, the process of identification just falls into place. It is true that in this research we avoided talking and mentioning all the mainstream cinema that exists in the world, but that is because most of them, their main purpose is entertainment and scoring the highest in the box office. We believe movies should not include characters of abnormal or supernatural human powers because it only, and only has a negative effect on the viewers. It creates a character, life, situation in their head that does not exist, which they would self-sabotage themselves for not being or having it just like them. Obviously, in every kind of expertise, there's the business side of it but there's also the purely authentic artistic side too which we preferred tackling in this research. Is the audiovisual art form a valid therapeutic tool? Why aren't we using the social media platform to actually raise awareness and promote healthy authentic therapeutic tools instead of promoting pain, fear, and entertainment services?

As we previously discovered what cinematherapy is in the first part of the research we noticed that it focuses on people going through mental, emotional and intellectual issues. These people might be going through a breakdown, an emotional rollercoaster, a very confusing period of their life where they feel like they can't quite fathom anything that has been happening around them, in their life, in the past, present and sometimes even overthinking the future. They need

someone to guide them out of the black hole they are sinking into, or might have been drowning in for a very long time. So, the patient visits the therapist in his or her space, they will get a movie prescription rather than a medication prescription and then within a period of treatment, once the clients starts opening up to the process and become more familiar with it they will gradually start to become more self-aware of what they have been through, what they are feeling at the current state and how will they deal with it later in the future on their own without the help of the therapist. Of course, all of this, the client is paying for.

Whereas here in *Zyara*, the therapeutic process and safe place knocks at the hero's door, we cannot call him a patient, and walks into their house free of charge. The person is called a hero because he or she have already overcome their tragedy or trauma, their story on their own with maybe the slight help on from friends and family. But the work was mostly done by themselves. This is good but could also be tricky to the hero. Because we don't know we are heroes and we did a great job until someone tells us we did. We think what we have undergone is something very ordinary and everyone might have it worse, we might also feel like our pain is one of a kind without really understanding that so many other people are also suffering if not the same suffering something very similar. We are all suffering in silence but *Zyara* gives a voice to the healed pain. It validates it and marks it in history, a place where everyone and anyone can go back to and watch it whenever they need it. Just like a fiction film is timeless, it exists long after any of the makers has died. It is accessible for decades long after it has been made, each *Zyara* is too. The only difference is we pay to watch the fiction films that might be therapeutic when they are first launched but we don't pay to watch any *Zyara*. Therefore, the hero has already played the role of being his or her own therapist. It is true that both have different structures but they both use the same medium which is the audio-visual story telling. Conveying a message, feeling and story through sound and images.

They both mostly mirror economic, social, current, and historical relations also. However, *Zyara* makes us focus on the story and what is being said more than focusing on the character him or herself because no one should be judged. These

two different but similar forms both have the power to penetrate the unconscious. We have also seen in the first part that in today's world, counselors, psychologists, and therapists are starting to use distinctive and nontraditional strategies of operating with patients, whether or not those people have a diagnosed mental condition or just is also probing a rough time in life. We can say that the audio-visual art form and tool is a medical aid. As Solomon mentioned that cinematherapy is to settle on movies with themes that mirror one's current downside or scenario, Zyara goes on the journey of visualizing then sharing the extremely personal pain of one hero in a very direct form in order for the entire world to be able to mirror his her feelings and feel like they are not alone in the world.

There's no messing with the structure of reality. The story is being told as is it. Without the use of any music, wardrobe, actors, etc. It's a real story, with a real character from real life. Either ways, fiction films whether we like it or not, have mostly always been inspired by real life events and characters, but they have a need to add all the other components because they are not doing the films in order for people to heal, their purpose is to entertain. So, they both have the same visual medium, just totally different intentions. But regardless, if it is Zyara or any fiction film or other visual medium, in order to really feel the impact of the medium over a human being one must watch and intake the art form with total and full conscious awareness.

In a nutshell, Zyara falls into the category of documentary filmmaking. It uses the evocative way but the result and impact of it on the audience is cathartic. The process of Zyara, the combination of sound and images is evocative. Because they are evoking an emotion, memory, state of mind, light, space. It is evocative in its treatment. When talking about the evocative way while watching a Zyara episode, the audience will empathize and the character in the episode and will touch the unconscious part of their soul. The episode therefore manages to entertain as well as inform. So, while the viewer understands their emotional responses to the episode, even as understanding their nighttime dreams, it can function as a window to their unconscious. Both are ways to bring their unconscious inner world to a conscious level. moreover, when the viewer explores negative reactions to the

Zyara, the hero inside of it might help the viewer to find disowned or repressed shadow parts of their psyche. Awareness of this extension helps them leave unhealthy patterns of rejection and they can reconnect with their authentic self.

Regarding the cathartic way while watching a Zyara episode, a visual image that arises in the minds of movie lovers is fluid and changing. It affects personal traumatic experiences and has a cathartic function. It works by building social relationships. Zyara has healing potential because people who watch its episodes can recognize their problems, compare their reality with the problems of the ones in the episode, and find solutions for themselves. Despite our cultural preference for processing emotions cognitively by suppressing them rather than feeling them in our bodies tends to take care of and prolong distress. Emotions are stored within the body, not only the mind. Cathartic therapeutic techniques allow therapists to assist there to access these stored emotions and release them. After watching Zyara, calming emotions are what arise, which means it can open the door, it doesn't close. So, the more catharsis people experience, the faster they move through the healing process. Painful emotions can do overproduce tears while watching Zyara. Catharsis can help combat buried emotions by releasing them. Nature has given us the sound of our natural processes like laughter and crying to connect our pain and beyond. Because many films convey ideas through emotions rather than intelligence, they neutralize the tendency to suppress emotions and stimulate emotional release which is what most of Zyara episodes leave the audience feeling. After going through all these interviews with the makers, professionals, audience and the heroes themselves we have realized that Zyara the docu series can highly be considered as a therapeutic tool for both the makers and the viewers. Fiction films might have a collective impact but Zyara on a first layer and level, has a direct impact on the hero himself. Zyara does not prescribe episodes to their viewers, they just have their own library which you can visit anytime and be of self service to your own self. Just like cinematherapy, the therapist has his or her filmography in which they could pick the movie that suits your situation best in order to help you access some unlocked emotions in order to help the talking process happen.

3.2- Zyara fills the Checklist

As a reminder, the goals of cinematherapy were firstly, *a sense of accountability*, which means a person doesn't completely perceive why they are doing things and also the consequences of their actions. That's why Zyara comes in and validates all their pain, by listening, filming, interacting, and sharing the story. In order to let the hero, know that they are not alone, and through the audience they have grown, their personal pain is something we will almost all identify with in one way or another and that this pain exists in each and every one of us. It is universal. Then comes *stress management*, an excellent impact of cinematherapy will be available in the shape of stress management as a result of viewers are able to break loose their issues. The same goes for Zyara, while the viewers are watching, they won't only break loose of their personal issues and feel less lonely, but they will feel more confident and empowered to face society because it some way or another it is showcasing heroes who have broken the norms and are extremely powerful and strong.

The third point would be a *profound emotional experience*, in a sense, by eliciting emotional responses within the person during a mean that doesn't connect with them directly in person, this permits the viewer to attach with their feelings while not feeling that they're connecting with their trauma. This is also something that Zyara offers while watching any of their episodes. Finally, the last goal of cinematherapy is *media response*. Often, you may see within the media, the general public solely contemplates the negative effects of cinema and tv. But within the docu-series, there's nothing to have of a negative effect on any of the viewers. Because as much as considering watching a violent movie be violent on any human, adolescent, etc. Also, the fact of showcasing love fairytales and other things. That are out of the norms could be more damaging to the human life because they'd keep looking for something in the real life that only exists in movies. Zyara portrays things as they are, no matter how harsh the reality is. Their number one rule in everything they do is authenticity and transparency. That is why there is no negative media response for Zyara from the audience, and to prove that is the survey we had made in which we realized no one commented in a negative way. In a movie we

find thousands of layers inside the film, layers over layers just like in real life, things based on lies and acts everything that is not tangible in reality. But within Zyara, it is only one layer, despite its visual medium which is trying to convey something else.

Do these also exist in Zyara? We should not forget that each episode of Zyara varies between 4 to 6 minutes maximum whereas any fiction film is of an hour and half or more. Does length have anything to do with how deep we can be touched by the story? Not necessarily because one can hear a 30-minute song that wouldn't resonate to him/her but a 3-minute track could mean the world to them and vis versa. So, what we notice is that content is greater and more important than the length of anything. It also highly depends on what the person is going through and what made them resonate with this art form and not the other.

Now the reasons cinematherapy is used were the following: *a visual/special* (the images, colors, and symbols of the film are strategies of sound) *a body/kinesthetic* (of the film itself moreover as movement inside the film faucets), *a musical* (sounds and music are accustomed enhance the story, and this helps connect viewers with their musical intelligence), *a social* (the entire storytelling conception and attempting to work out what's going to happen next), *an intrapersonal* (refers to those who are in tune with their own inner feelings, like motivation, intuition, wisdom, and conscience), *a linguistic* (this intelligence refers to those who truly suppose in words or connect everything with words specifically), and finally a *logical and mathematical one* (the plot itself can faucet into logical intelligence, often seen once viewers feel that a plot doesn't add up). So, we can notice that not all these seven terms exist in Zyara. Movies therefore make sure to almost always reach a broader amount of audience whereas the audience of Zyara is not the same. Movies can be watched by people who are not emotionally intelligent, but Zyara cannot. Because it needs authenticity and transparency. Which are two qualities not everyone has or are ready to cultivate.

The visual, mental and spiritual freedom used in Zyara is something that is definitely not allowed or is not practical to be used in fiction films. Because there

is a certain norm, pace, color palette, rules the cinematographer needs to abide by, the art director needs to follow, the actors need to say, the director needs to envision, all rolling back to their guide which in their case is the script. When it comes to Zyara, each episode is of something none of the crew or even character can predict. It is both a challenge and an excitement to work around and with the space provided, to make something out of nothing, and here is where all the power lies in. When being in a space that is not familiar to us, but making it become familiar to us through portraying its details. In this docu series nothing is guiding the makers other than their gut feeling, the story of the character and the character him or herself. In fiction, the script goes on the top of the pyramid while every member of the 300 people or more crew work endlessly to portray the vision of the story the writer, director and producer want to convey to entertain the audience. But when it comes to Zyara, with such a small crew, it is all about maintaining the transparency, authenticity and rawness of the story of the character. So, be it a fiction, documentary or portrait, the core importance of cinema but in other cases and perfect example Zyara, is to convey the feeling, emotion and message the character holds and generously wants to share with world rather than being aesthetically pleasing to the crowd and making it to the next box office. Regardless, what was the origin and main core of making film? It was the pure exploitation of portraying reality as it is yet documenting it. Making films for and because of a cause. That is how it all started long before storylines became involved into the visual medium and controlled it.

As we noticed, cinematherapy solely focuses on prescribing fiction films to the clients, and any other format is nowhere to be found. However, who said only fiction can be therapeutic to human kind? In fact, other formats carry components that could help integrate a human's emotions, mind and subconscious faster. Because in fiction films we have a certain structure the human's brain has gotten used to that one needs to follow in order to get to the point where the story unfolds. Sometimes one should wait up until the end of the movie in order to figure out what the entire film is about. Moreover, we should not forget the fact that fiction films always abide by what the producer, director and market want. Which means sometimes the original story of the writer loses a bit of its authenticity in order to

fit into a certain norm. often at other times, fiction films make humans live in a fairytale of things that do not exist because they keep on adjusting the first reality a human being lives in according to the second reality that is made in the film. This means that the difference between a fiction film and a documentary is their representation and presentation of reality and the way a story unfolds. Therefore, after the movie is done, after consuming several films of the same genre, or not, we realize that just like social media tends to shows us the best and happiest version of oneself, the fiction movie industry tends to do the same.

So, people for instance start to look for a type of love that doesn't necessarily exist in real life. Act like certain characters they saw and got inspired by in films which wouldn't necessarily fit their current situation in life. They would just adapt to the lifestyle of the fictional character they met, not knowing the depth and danger of what follows next if they do not understand what and why is it, they were inspired in the first place by that protagonist. They would act upon his actions just because they want to without understand the why behind it. All we need to keep in mind is that there's an extra mile in the manipulation of reality when it comes to fiction films. Whereas, in other formats like documentaries, this does not exist. Documentaries have a reality that is subjective to the director that is indeed correct however it is not manipulated, we do not have a double reality. In other words, it is a presentation and representation of reality. Because the characters are not fictional but they are rather people who are based from real life and their dialogue has not been rehearsed nor memorized, it's rather spoken fluently. Their actions are based on daily life routine rather than a scripted scene, their clothes and wardrobe don't necessarily fit into the frame but that is because we mirroring real life. The camera is there simply following its character without interfering and changing anything he brings into the scenes. Therefore, these kinds of films are authentic, raw and transparent. Despite the fact that some directors would manipulate the reality of the story in order to match their own truth, but some others just leave it as it is. Regardless, there's no scale for what is real and what is not because to each human being his own truth, his own reality. Generally speaking, fiction films are made for entertainment, while documentary films are made for a cause in hope of making a

change in the world and leaving a trace behind or at least change the way in which some audience will look upon the world or themselves.

The goals of cinematherapy were four things: sense of accountability, stress management, profound emotional experience and media response. *Zyara* doesn't cover all the goals, because it has its own personal goals. But it surely does cover five out of seven of the functions of cinematherapy which in other words are called the seven bits of intelligence: the visual/spatial, the body/kinesthetic, the social, the intrapersonal and the linguistic. As we previously saw in the last part of chapter one in part one, in order for an art to be considered as therapeutic tool it needs to have at least half of the seven functions/impacts on the viewer, maker. After and while watching any or each episode of *Zyara*, the following seven functions apply as an impact to what the audience feels.

The appreciation by revisiting the value of ordinary things. ***The memory*** by focusing on the essence of the scene rather than the whole of it. Because *Zyara* records and preserves emotions that one could go back to and see anytime they would like. ***The growth*** by meeting and experiencing a picture, a feeling, an object or even incident we don't have a personal context for but we end up taking the time to think about it, react to it, and empathize with it. ***The hope*** by moving us into tears. Experiencing heartwarming feelings about something encourages us to hope to be able to attain the same thing for ourselves. ***The sorrow*** by validating our sorrow. It provides a new and difference perspective which helps us find a way to deal with our own. ***The self-understanding*** by complementing our unformed thoughts and ideas by listening to others stories and pain. ***The rebalancing*** by influencing the balance of our emotional make up. Gaining balance by taking a moment to observe and appreciate the things we don't normally see. That we are not alone and some other people are going through things as severe as our situation or maybe less or more.

We should however not forget the importance of watching the episodes of *Zyara* with conscious awareness in order to attain a projection and identification through it. Therefore, the more we as an audience learn to be ready to tolerate unwanted

feelings while watching a movie, or a Zyara episode, the less we would feel compelled to suppress them or act out against ourselves or others in the real world. Instead, we become strong enough to resist action. But again, one should keep in mind that knowledge is solely acquired information and wisdom requires understanding on a deep level which is not something everyone in the audience is capable of doing. Through identification with characters, in other words heroes in the case of Zyara, the viewer projects himself into the action. The impact of episode tends to be on an emotional level rather than an intellectual level and the episode itself helps reduce repression or other defense mechanisms. One of the main advantages of cinematherapy is that it allows the processing of difficult material indirectly. Zyara does the same exact thing. As we previously mentioned in chapter four or part one, doctor Birgit Wolz states in her book *A Movie Lover's Guide to Healing and Transformation* the difference stages a viewer goes through in order to attain projection and identification. So, in the case of Zyara, it would be:

One, watching the hero outside ourselves during their episode which stands for dissociation. Two, getting down to identify with the hero, visuals, sounds, etc. which stands for identification through projection. Three, would be getting down to develop a way of ownership of what was felt through the hero and his story which stands for internalization and they feel less alone. Fourthly and lastly would be examining and dealing with positive or negative qualities, which first were "outside of ourselves but on the screen" and now are recognized as our own which stands for the inquiry into transference or projection.

However, one should not forget that what would enhance the healing process and make it even more therapeutic is that after watching a Zyara episode or even a fiction film if a person ever felt some emotions arise that they cannot handle or maybe can actually handle but they do not necessarily understand their origin, to actually seek professional help, by trying to change the way one thinks about therapy, because it doesn't mean you're a patient of anything, it's not something that's taboo. It might be viewed that way in the Middle Eastern societies, but that does not mean it is a general truth. We need to break the cycle. The healing process of a person cannot just be done through a visual form, it takes one to want to heal

in all kinds and sorts of ways, therefore he or she could grasp a way therapeutic way that would resonate and suit him/her as a person and their mental, emotional and physical state. Therefore, Zyara could be more or less fully therapeutic but it would entirely depend on the level of self-awareness the viewer has personally attained in their personal life. Because a lot of people, who are emotionally intelligent, with a slight push through something they watched or read, some slight guidance, are able to find their way through within the simple pleasures of life. Visiting a therapist doesn't mean you are diagnosed with anything. A therapist would just help you guide you and organize your line of thoughts emotions and feelings better in order to make sense of everything you are feeling and thinking without any judgment.

In the European world and United States, Cinema as a tool of therapy is highly used in therapy in order to help the client heal. But here in Lebanon, despite the social and cultural challenges of living in a small country Zyara was able to do that in a different form and way. By uplifting the character and making him a hero rather than a victim, sharing his/her story with the world. In the European and American side of the world, there have been several ways of cinema therapy, it could be made in group, by watching films that have been prescribed, by filming oneself, by joining a workshop of a specific duration that includes videography etc. For instance, experiencing films over elderly people in foster homes, experiencing films over military veterans, even over adolescents. Cinematherapy is not only used by the prescription of films and watching them, but also by filming oneself, filming things that interest oneself, being in the field of cinema itself as a film director and conveying messages through a professional use of the major, etc. It also the process that starts before the film, during the film and after the film. It is a therapeutic tool for the makers and the viewers. Cinema is a form of therapy that affects all humans of all ages, races, differences because most of the time the movie treat universal subjects. Nonetheless of mentioning the box office movies that are just created for entertainment but there are a huge number of films that are made for a cause and a purpose of healing rather than just making money. The use of cinema as a therapeutic tool from the essence and core of a person, regardless of the fact of if it's going to make tons of money or not. Just wanting to convey and share ones

message out there into the world and getting it out of their system through the use of the audio-visual form, that is therapy to its core and rawest form. There are various forms of pain that cinema might cure, from small problems, misunderstanding, lack in confidence, character progressive transformation, but also heavier problems such as traumas. The fact that cinema and movies have been used as a therapeutic tool, shows and proves the fact that cinema is therapeutic. But in what ways is it? We have described the process all along the research.

From artist to artist and viewer to viewer, one's experience with art is different. Personal function is vague for a reason. Knowing the background and behaviors of an artist helps when interpreting the personal function of their pieces. Art may also serve the personal function of controlling its viewers, much like social art. It can also perform religious service or acknowledgment. Art has been used in various ways. Some art brings order and peace, some creates chaos. There is virtually no limit to how art can be used. But as we mentioned, our main focus in this research is art therapy and more precisely cinematherapy. As we previously mentioned in the research, a simple definition of therapy is that it is a treatment intended to relieve or heal. However, it is important to note that not everyone has the same ways of healing. Each person has his or her scale of healing. Any art form can be a tool to trigger internal repressed emotions that were unwanted to surface dating from a day, a month or even years of repression. But it will not create total healing. It could be a portal, a window into the process of a long-term healing. But healing doesn't happen on the spot. It is a process that could not and should not be rushed. We most of the time get into any form of therapy looking for the professionals and others to give us the answers to our questions. While the answers to all our questions lie inside of us.

We expect to go to therapy and get the answers to our questions or solution to our problem from the doctor. But little do we know that is not how things happen. The therapist cannot and is not allowed to tell you what to do, but rather ask you questions that would help you figure out to find a solution to your problem on your own. We just need the therapy so the doctor could guide us discover ourselves and understand ourselves better. They say feed a man fish he would only eat it for a

day, but teach him how to fish, he would eat fish for the rest of his life. That's exactly the what therapy does. It gives you, wakes up in you all the tools that have already existed and sometimes some new methods and ways in order to face anything life throws at you. But one should not that, whatever the professional gives you are not a constant method or equation that will work like a magic wand to solve all your problems every time, that's why we as human beings should simply follow our gut feeling. The base of a human being is his emotions. Because our brains are always far impacted by society, tradition and culture, they can be very driven and created into something we do not actually believe in. But our emotions are the purest form of instinctive reliability a human can count on because it comes and gets formed from within, without the use of any exterior factor that has had an impact on it. One must be able to be self-aware of himself and have emotional intelligence in order for cinema to be a therapeutic form of art for him/her, in other words, one should have a conscious and subconscious awareness. Someone who is so in touch with him/her self, their ideas, feelings, emotions, past, traumas, thoughts. Sometimes not only in touch but also has the ability to rationalize, understand and analyze all of the above. While having those traits, one can be his own therapist.

Overall, after introducing the most important aspects of cinematherapy, then exposing our case study and diving to the core of what it truly is, after describing but also analyzing and comparing the different aspects art therapy has, and the different methods that are used in the world in order to help heal oneself and others, we have gotten the closest to answering our hypothesis and introducing the problem we are encountering here in Lebanon.

Conclusion

In conclusion, moving back to the start and essence of this research, our research aimed to identify whether or not Zyara the docuseries is valid therapeutic audio-visual tool. Based on our descriptive, comparative and analytical method we can conclude that we now have our answers. As we supposed that Zyara is be therapeutic for both the makers, the crew, the heroes, and the audience, on a personal level at first, but also on a public/social level secondly. We realize that it is therapeutic but within its limits and capabilities. But to come and think about it, can art be anything in life, but therapeutic to the human being? Is this form, the audio-visual art impactful, life-changing to them to the point of inciting the will of change, and the healing process? In fact yes, throughout all this research's, the theories and testimonials above, we realize and we understand that the creative act, itself has been a therapeutic experience for the makers through the interviews and the testimonials who have been featured in that film(s) we realize the therapeutic value it had on them and on their lives but also through the school and educational program Zyara and Cinejam, we also realize the social emotional healing impact it implied as doctor Farah Moukaddam asserts in her analysis of Zyara. The hypothesis we stated at the beginning of the research is then confirmed. The docuseries is therapeutic to the makers, the heroes and also the audience.

It was a must for us to go back to the essence of what art is, define it, check its history out to understand what was the origin of our subject cinematherapy, which we discovered was bibliotherapy. Then describe and inform our readers about the main important terms of what it consists of, its history, how it's done and by who, what are its functions and what is its impact. While understanding that psychotherapists usually prefer and use most of the time fiction films, we rather wanted to focus and shed light on the other side of the coin of what cinema is which is documentary filmmaking. We came across Elie Barakat a film director, photographer who is highly inspired by the style of documentaries, but that was not all, he also happened to be a hero that participated in Zyara our case study. That is why it was important for us to further explain and showcase the details of what

documentary filmmaking consists of so that the middle eastern side of the world, specifically here in Lebanon start to understand that documentary is not less than fiction. It is even something that is almost like a vital need to the artistic culture of the society that could help heal a large amount of people through the current crisis Lebanon is going through.

In general, while working over this research we had an easy path rather than a rough and difficult one. The only difficulty we had faced is getting answers from most of the crew and to get the audience to fill the survey. We were aiming to get at least 100 answers whereas we got 35. We believe this happened due to the current economic and political situation Lebanon is currently going through. Because during the time of the peak of our interviews, the explosion of August 4th happened and people have lost their homes, family, lovers or even friends. So not everyone was in their best state to actually put time and effort to explain and answers the questions that somehow needed a bit of emotional intervention from their side. But some other people were extremely friendly and were willing to give and invest a lot from their time to help convey the message Zyara expands amongst the world.

From trying to hold a balance to describe what cinematherapy is then do the same for what Zyara the documentary series consists of, we then based the research on a comparative and analytical method to be able to conclude that Zyara is a social therapeutic healing tool but it has its limits. The limits of therapy are caused by the society we live in, and the mentality society has implied on the person him/herself. In other words, both the person and society could be the limits to the subject we treated, because of their own beliefs and taboos, etc. Why is it in the Lebanese society the lack of being able to digest their traumas and talk about them would be an extremely slower personal growth. Zyara helps the heroes, people with integration and acceptance into society in a very artistic way without the fear of judgment. Because these people don't appear as victims, they appear as heroes. They have been accepted from one part of society now through Zyara, they have broken the ice at some point, so they no longer will fear to face the other side of society because they have now gained the confidence and power to make it through. It might not help heal instantly, but it surely does expose the experience, trauma

and pain in a positive way on a bigger scale to help spread the positive energy and hope to people who firstly don't know or are not aware of their pain, to help accept themselves, etc. This means Zyara doesn't have an instant effect, but rather a lifelong kind of impact. People got so used to seek healing through the validation of society but Zyara helps you seek validation and acceptance through oneself regardless of society. That's when the heroes/subjects become fierce. It is like creating a new generation, a new army that is ready for the cruel world we live in, that have become natural born leaders to help others, to lead by example.

The need to create in order to share might be what helps heal a director or the maker, more than the story line itself, because they are conveying many stories all along their career. But the process and the idea, the way of thinking and the lifestyle is what makes it therapeutic to them. On the one hand, it can be highly considered as a therapeutic tool in its own ways, with its own personal goals, however it is not entirely a healing tool from scratch because the function of Zyara is to actually raise awareness within one another that we are all one in this world but on the second hand help heal or push the healing process a bit further to those who are already in the process of healing. We are not different and we are not alone. We all share them same pain, just in different times, ways, stories and spaces. Therefore, we strongly believe based on all this information, we allow ourselves to ask a further question: further research is needed to determine if one could install, develop and propose films as a scientifically proven tool for therapeutic and emotional healing? Besides the creative act itself, can using films be the new way of healing somebody from their trauma, entirely?

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With the heroes

Rita Esber, August 15th 2020
 Hiba Zibawi, August 18th 2020
 Rabih Jammal, August 18th 2020
 Gina Halik, August 18th 2020
 Henry Loussian, August 18th 2020
 Elie Ballan, August 19th 2020
 Sasha Elija, August 19th 2020
 Youssef Majed, August 19th 2020
 Toya Masri, August 20th 2020
 Wissam Roukoz, August 23rd 2020
 Charles Kassatly, August 23rd 2020
 Ahmad Assayed, September 1st 2020
 Omar Mikati, September 4th 2020
 Elie Barakat, September 6th 2020

With the professionals

Cherine Honeine, August 17th 2020
 Zeina Daccache, August 21st 2020
 Elie Barakat, September 6th 2020
 Farah Moukaddam, September 13th 2020

With the crew

Muriel Aboulrouss, July 22nd 2020
 Bachar Khatar, August 19th 2020
 Rana Maalouf, August 21st 2020
 Denise Jabbour, August 23rd 2020
 Muriel Aboulrouss, September 1st 2020

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ANNEXES

Zyara the docu-series
(all episodes are available on YouTube)

Zyara Season One released in 2015

“**Souad Razzouk**” an old unmarried Lebanese farmer, has been living in her house since childhood and for the past 20 years she has never ventured out. She lives in is one of the rare remaining farms in Beirut.

<https://youtu.be/OcmBxDq9rZw>

“**Henry Loussian**” started out selling jewelry on the streets of Beirut, he now has a small shop in Hamra / west Beirut, his love for his city drove him to buy remains of old Beirut houses and reconstruct them in Batroun – north Lebanon.

<https://youtu.be/8ve-bCPIhFw>

“**Dei El Ayoubi**” is born in Australia from a Lebanese father; she came to Beirut a few years back to be with her dying grandmother and stayed since then. She is a filmmaker and visual artist in love with Beirut.

<https://youtu.be/xvXWx65-mzQ>

“**Perar Naimh**” is born in Okaibe, north Lebanon. He fell in love with the sea since he was a child and worked as a fisherman since then. He fought for his country in times of war and for the well-being of his family all his life through the sea and it’s offering.

<https://youtu.be/n1z5LcyK9Uc>

“**Samantha Bissessar**” is a Canadian woman who married a young Lebanese man and they are now expecting a child. She has worked as a cook for a while but now she is fully dedicated to being a mother.

<https://youtu.be/ry7hxNaW7NI>

“**Nehmatallah Jabbour**” is an old retired photographer from north Lebanon; he is the father of 6 and the grandfather of 12. His love for life and his family keeps him at peace with whatever life brings.

<https://youtu.be/GTeEmgdVmtc>

“**Renee Deek**” is an old Lebanese actress and model; she broke all rules and fought for her dream & passion for all arts. She now lives with her brother, unable to be independent for lack of support by the government. She is still active as an actress and teacher up till now.

<https://youtu.be/yNnOLngV5dc>

“**Alexandre Paulikevich**” is one of the very rare male oriental dancers and choreographers in the Arab world. Despite being bullied by society all his life, he insisted on being the artist that he is and dances his way through life.

<https://youtu.be/UWP0IyJID8c>

“**Joanna Raad**” a Lebanese multi-disciplinary artist. She feels deep love for her father who passed away after long absences followed by Alzheimer; she still longs for him and relives her childhood everyday through her Art.

<https://youtu.be/VxeyddH1ne4>

Dr “Antranik Dakessian” studied Armenian History in Armenia; he was born and lived most his life in Beirut. His love and faith in his culture drives him to collect old vintage items and artwork from his country to keep it alive.

<https://youtu.be/zQ2oFdmnUYA>

“Danielle Abi Saab” is a Lebanese American Architect and Yoga instructor. She grew up in Lebanon during the Lebanese civil war then went to work in New York. She witnessed the war here and then the twin tower collapsing. Enough violence she says.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jPTMFyrK02c>

“Ali” is an Ex war detainee, he was kidnapped and taken to prison for 13 years in Syria. He tells the story of his journey home and most importantly pays an homage to his wife who raised the children on her own.

<https://youtu.be/h8Jf10zFU3I>

Zyara Season Two released in 2017

“Marie Khoury”, a middle-aged Lebanese woman, was shot in the neck during the Lebanese civil war and found herself paralyzed from the neck down at age 18. In spite of it all, she found her passion and talent for painting while trying to find a way to write her name again. She now paints using her chin to guide her hand. She currently holds exhibitions and makes a living out of her art.

<https://youtu.be/C019WbRCHP4>

“Pierre Geagea” is 36-year-old Lebanese dancer. He was born deaf and discovered his love for music and dancing at the age of 15. Since then, he started using hearing aids. Pierre performs on stage, teaches dance classes and lives for and through his passion.

https://youtu.be/vwPDR10d_HU

“Afaf Merheb” was born with dwarfism syndrome and she has successfully achieved everything she had set her mind to. She is now happily married, a successful freelance graphic designer and a joy to everyone around her.

<https://youtu.be/y8gmOMck48w>

“Wissam Roukoz” is a rally champion, a horseback riding champion and a sportsman at heart since his young age. On August 10th, 2014 he was in a motorbike accident and found himself paralyzed from the chest down. He had suffered a 90-degree fall on his neck, despite wearing appropriate protection gear. Today, Wissam’s sports journey continues while he trains on his hand bike and works on getting back into car racing again.

<https://youtu.be/PW-H2gAqLE8>

“Manal Houssary” was diagnosed with ALS 4 years ago. Despite the pain of this incurable disease, the love of her three children and childhood friends has kept her going. *August 2020 Manal passed away and now can freely visit the sea anytime she pleases.*

<https://youtu.be/5psKUW19qIY>

“Rabih Jammal” is a young lawyer-to-be who graduated with honors despite his blindness. Thanks to his mother, he was able to study his law books through audio recordings. Today, he is seeking to find an internship at a law firm - a great challenge for him. Rabih was born with glaucoma syndrome, which is the number one cause for blindness in the world. He lost his eyesight completely at the age of 16.

<https://youtu.be/iDS1eE6rTyE>

“Elissa Harik” is 22 years old. She was born with Dandy-Walker syndrome. Despite her physical challenge she managed to learn to play the piano and become a swimming champion. Today, she is a photographer preparing for her first exhibition.

<https://youtu.be/Bx-3DnGXI84>

“Pierre Nassif” is a middle-aged man who was wounded during the Lebanese Civil War. He found himself paralyzed from the waist down at the age of 18. He now works as a wood carver & lives to inspire the disabled community around him in Beit Chabeb. Pierre passed away in 2019 leaving his voice and message behind through his Zyara.

<https://youtu.be/Iv5RC4KMt3k>

“Rita Esber” was born with "amelia" syndrome, a condition preventing the development of one or more limbs. In her case, she was born with a missing arm. Rita’s parents raised her to feel normal and perfect just as she is. She is proud of her body and is today an entrepreneur. Her dream is to spread love and happiness in the world.

https://youtu.be/OmVWfthy_W8

“Bassem Fayad” is an award-winning Lebanese Cinematographer. He struggled for a long time with depression and Anxiety disorder. This year Bassem decided to take charge of his life, to stop the medication and face it all in order to shine one day at a time.

<https://youtu.be/HAE-isqgdkI>

“Mariana Abi Nakhoul” is 28 years old. She graduated with a degree in cinema studies from AKU University. At a year and a half old, she was severely burnt in a fire. She has undergone more than 52 operations since then. Her accident didn't stop her from growing up to be a happy, social and ambitious woman. Today, Mariana is a yoga instructor for people with special needs, but her ultimate passion is horseback riding.

<https://youtu.be/6msQhaWPNgk>

“Ghassan Jabra” was diagnosed at the age of 8 with Duchene muscular Dystrophy. His brother Gharib was diagnosed with the same disorder a year earlier and passed away in 2016. Today, Ghassan resides at “Anta Akhi” - a home for the disabled, and dreams of inspiring a positive change in the world through his extraordinary life experience and observations.

<https://youtu.be/3ePhCSgym9I>

Zyara Season Three released in 2018

“Mona el Khalil” has been working for the past 17 years to protect the turtles in Mansouri/Tyre area south of Lebanon. She has established the Orange House & the OCTC to raise awareness on that subject. She suffers from constant bullying from her surrounding but despite it all she stands strong in her faith, her love for Lebanon & the turtles (endangered species). Mona needs our help to sustain her humanitarian mission.
<https://youtu.be/zzHY136qako>

“Omar Mikati” is an actor in his 70’s today. Omar’s passion for his Art & commitment to his profession are unwavering. In Lebanon there is no retirement plan for Artists, many find themselves alone and in poverty in their old age. We urge the Lebanese government to establish a law to protect and honor the great Men & Women who offered a life of entertainment, Art & emotions to the public.
<https://youtu.be/u8yHRmA6CTs>

“Aline Manoukian” is the first female war reporter in the Arab world. She has witnessed the war through her lens and feels the responsibility to share her memories with the generations to come. In Lebanon the civil war is not taught or even discussed in schools although healing could only come through “talking about your wound”
<https://youtu.be/5Nj1AIEInYY>

“Charles Kassatly” has suffered from alcoholism & sex addiction for a long time but he chose to change & accepted help in order to succeed in his quest. Today he is a sponsor for many addicts & urges all those suffering on their own to come forward & ask for assistance. ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS BEIRUT HOTLINE: +961 3 787 811, +961 70 206 247, +961 71 519 319
https://youtu.be/IaL__cZ2fYU

“Yasmina Audi” lost her daughter a year ago to sudden death. Since then she has established “The Sparks Factory” to honor her daughter’s smile and give joy to children through music & education. Her blog “Super Mama” is her way to empower mothers and support them in their overwhelming journey.
<https://youtu.be/aKT-dTwUsMI>

“Hadi Mehdi” is a young man who fled home abuse in search for love & peace... After having worked in numerous fields from construction to restaurants, Hadi studied finance and volunteers today in many NGOs and association to help others, mostly children. Hady’s dream is to build a community where children can grow doing what they love.
<https://youtu.be/mw6utVhpASA>

Hayat has suffered from a long life of heroin addiction. She was brought back to life through her passion for horses who are now her partners in healing others through equine therapy. Hayat calls on everyone to find their passion and live it in order to create a life where artificial substance is not needed to ease the pain.
<https://youtu.be/0gspdk5nPh0>

“Ahmad el Sayed” lived the prison experience like a rebirth and chose to believe in his Art as a way of survival. He strongly Believes that establishing establish rehab centers within every prison facility will allow many other addicts or convicts to find their way back to life.
<https://youtu.be/RCOYVUzhZwg>

“Mirella Saleme” was a quiet child who has suffered from judgment and bullying until she realized the beauty of her difference.

Mirella paints and plants in her silence to express her feelings.

She wants children, parents & teachers to hear her story and create awareness on the pain bullying can cause.

https://youtu.be/MSv3Njj5l_A

“Kassem Istambuli” is an actor with a dream. Born in Tyre from Lebanese father & a Palestinian mother. “The Rivoli theater” in Tyre, is the third cinema he is restoring with the unwavering faith & help of many benevolent workers in the area. Kassem aims to revive the joy & beauty of Art within his community.

<https://youtu.be/cqParNoLd94>

“Sasha Elijah” is a transgender woman, an activist for human LGBT rights and a child who has overcome many obstacles to be where she is today. Sasha is a hybrid model who designs her own costumes. Sasha is the voice of a community who has suffered enough rejection & judgment from all of us. It is time to choose love over fear. “Between being a man or a woman there is an ocean of wonderful possibilities” the Zyara makers

<https://youtu.be/JFp8mfu84fo>

“Talal Gharib” is one of 80.000 people born without papers. A person without an ID doesn’t have the right to work, to get health insurance, to enter a hospital, to travel or to make a family. Talal is the voice of those of us who were continuously abandoned, by their parents, by the society & by the government. It is time to raise our voices & change the law. Talal still struggles but he did not give up.

https://youtu.be/vorL-siJ_IM

Zyara Season Four released in 2019

“**Ghada Feghali**” established MMKN, in March 2010, a democratic, non-sectarian, not-for-profit organization, which aims to spread knowledge and raise social awareness. Through her association, Ghada has made it possible for thousands of Lebanese, Syrian and Palestinian children to receive an education. She believes education is our greatest act of resistance. The public-school support program of Mmkn is still going thanks to alfanar philanthropic venture <https://youtu.be/O8Woufmxync>

“**Salah Tizani**” shares for the first time his childhood memories and challenges he had to overcome to become an artist. Salah Tizani, best known for the character he portrays Abu Salim, is a Lebanese comedic actor, born in Tripoli in 1929. Salah was a carpenter with great talent and a dream. He’s lived out his dream despite geographical, social and political obstacles. It’s time we establish a law to protect and honor the great artists who have offered us a lifetime of entertainment, art and emotions. <https://youtu.be/WV-XyT-YTJc>

“**Hiba Zibawi**” was born with cerebral palsy, a group of disorders that affect muscle movement and coordination. Despite the pain and the slower pace, Hiba graduated in communication Arts at LAU and today she’s re-launching Ishbilila theater - the first independent art house in Sidon. <https://youtu.be/CXM3DKlm6fY>

“**Youssef Majed**” despite his inability to walk, is a self-employed carpenter. Since the year 2000, he’s been a volunteer at the Art of Living foundation where he teaches The Happiness Program (Kriya yoga). Youssef believes that if we learn to breathe correctly, life will reveal itself to us differently. <https://youtu.be/v-qtlllv9uM>

“**Gina Halik**” is an active member of L.A.N.D for Hope Association, dedicated to helping people with neuromuscular and rare diseases. Gina tells her story and shares the pain of witnessing your own child growing up with no hope of a cure. She also teaches us to find the blessing and lessons learned along that journey by helping others smile. <https://youtu.be/-XxzX0bzj1U>

“**Adham Dimashki**” is an award-winning poet and writer. His books “Sarir” and “He Brought Forth Neither Male nor Female” are self-portraits that brought healing in his life with the blessings of his mother and siblings. Adham tells his story in order to bring forward understanding, compassion and awareness, all of which are key elements to healing ourselves and society. <https://youtu.be/rc6UyhHDwa8>

“**Amal Kaawash**” is the face behind "Meiroun", a cartoon character she created to pay tribute to her family’s hometown Meiron in Palestine. Since the passing of her

grandmother, Amal has had to stand again by her own mother in her successful battle against cancer. Today she stands, with her testimony, by those who have lost a loved one to cancer.

https://youtu.be/HUxbj_N6Atw

“Elie Ballan” is an activist in the Arab Foundation of Freedom and Equality, raising awareness on the challenging lives of the LGBT & HIV communities. Elie believes that when families support each other, they become a source of strength and drive for their children. Unconditional love is essential to prevent suicide and depression.

<https://youtu.be/0PROldpZLE4>

“Wadad Halwani” founded in 1982, the Committee of Families of the Kidnapped and Disappeared in Lebanon, a Lebanese human rights association whose mission is to demand the right to know the fate of thousands of persons who disappeared in Lebanon. Wadad urges everyone to join and support their cause. Going through life without knowing the fate of a disappeared loved one means living a life of constant pain and suffering.

<https://youtu.be/S733Waz8LI4>

“Abdul Rahman Katanani” born in 1983, is a Palestinian artist who’s spent his entire life at the Sabra and Shatila refugee camp in Lebanon. Today, he is internationally recognized and he’s been granted the French nationality in honor of his genius and talent. Abdul Rahman believes that art and education are the greatest act of resistance.

<https://youtu.be/ZbN0J3YTplg>

“Yasmina Ali”, a Syrian refugee, currently works as a hairdresser to make ends meet.

After recovering from a dark and suicidal period, she has finally found it in her heart to believe and love again. She is looking to work with organizations in order to help and inspire those in need.

<https://youtu.be/zAkZo3oqiA0>

“Marc Torbey” works as a bank manager. Since 1995, he is today the president of The Joy of Giving Association. Despite an accident that left him paraplegic, Marc believes that he is still alive for a humanitarian mission and he will not give up until he sees it through.

https://youtu.be/_h_igSBbIE8

Zyara Season Five released in 2020

“Minerva Jabbour” is a mother of 6 she has lived and known Beirut before, during and after the war and she is a firm believer in the peaceful Co-existence of Lebanese people, a co-existence she has lived and bears witness to today in her Zyara.

<https://youtu.be/5uMDmED3It0>

“Mohamad Masri” (Toya) 23 years old, filmmaking student, a half Filipino / Half Lebanese who struggled from racism since childhood. Toya has found a way to fight racism through film making and by supporting several anti-racial non-governmental organizations as a photographer/videographer.

<https://youtu.be/8oYkzKwD0oY>

“Maya Chams Ibrahimchah” is the founder of “Beit el Baraka” a home for the Lebanese elderly in Lebanon. She is also member of the committee for the preservation of national heritage in the Lebanese Ministry of Culture. She's an activist for human rights and environment.

<https://youtu.be/C-wSKM1WKvM>

“Raja Sabra” is young man who went through a suicidal phase because of anxiety and panic attacks and OCD. Raja tells his story to raise awareness on mental health problems emphasizing on the fact that the only reason for suicidal thoughts is to stop the pain! He now volunteers with NGO's to support people going through mental breakdowns and teaches Acrobatic yoga.

https://youtu.be/IsDpEJ_H85o

“Aya Jallad” was diagnosed with a rare autoimmune disease at the age of 15 called scleroderma, which means skin of stone; but despite all that, she became a fashion designer, she plans to travel to get her master's degree in fashion abroad and she an inspiration to everyone around her... Aya never gives up.

<https://youtu.be/uwfnV2RdHGE>

“Elie Barakat” is a very well-established photographer and filmmaker who uses his Art to exteriorize his fears and emotions. By accepting and understanding his fear of death, Elie hangs on to life more than ever, by enjoying every moment of every day, most of all through his lens.

<https://youtu.be/VcmgpNUeNfI>

“Souhad Karam” raised her children as a single mother but struggled to move forward in her life as a woman because of the kidnapping of her husband three decades ago... Today she is a member of the Committee of Families of the kidnapped and disappeared in Lebanon. Going through life without knowing the fate of a disappeared loved one means living a life of constant pain and suffering and it is our human duty to raise our voices in support of this cause.

<https://youtu.be/o3RUYTLP61I>

“Alberto Nehme” is an internationally recognized Lebanese painter. He lived and travelled in many countries. In his artwork he paints the human emotions &

feelings. He believes in non-judgment, freedom of self-expression and self being. Alberto considers that human growth comes from giving and receiving unconditional love.

<https://youtu.be/s1MtU0AO8M8>

“May Sahhab”, is an actress and a TV host, she suddenly lost her husband to a drunken driver who drove into him while he was helping others in the middle of the night. She soon discovered she was pregnant and had a boy (second child); her life as a mother and a woman has been a big challenge since then. She is a proud mother and her children’s love give her the strength and faith to celebrate life despite the pain.

<https://youtu.be/KhTFxI1pqcE>

“Jad Hadid” was 3 years old when he found himself alone, abandoned by his parents who went their separate ways because of a religious disagreement. Jad grew strong despite the abandonment. He found within himself the love he never received from his parents. He is a famous Lebanese model and Actor and a very successful entrepreneur. Jad’s genuine positive mindset is an inspiration to all those who know him or follow him on Social media.

<https://youtu.be/vzNTDBAk3zc>

“Amar Omri” published her first book in 2015 a combination of texts about her childhood and family experience, entitled “Past Tense, Present”. The book holds all her personal diary writings since 1997. She strongly believes that telling our stories will heal us individually and collectively. Amar urges everyone to embrace their wounds and to celebrate their scars.

<https://youtu.be/K1bSKN6DyiM>

“Gabriel Yammine” is a famous Lebanese Artist. He has played, notably, for the television and the Lebanese theater where he incarnated comic and popular characters. Gabriel teaches theater at the Lebanese University where he received his training during the war. Suddenly, in 2019 he was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and has been fighting it with an unwavering faith that the love of those around him is stronger than any disease. Gabriel urges everyone to value their loved ones because love is all that matters in the end.

https://youtu.be/OIK2zbIW4_s

Interviews with the Crew

The list of questions asked

1. Why did you decide to get into the journey with Zyara?
Is it related to you in personal way?
2. How do you pick your crew? And why? Based on what?
3. What did you expect from Zyara when you first started working with them?
4. How do you evaluate the experience with the heroes?
5. Do you identify with the heroes?
6. Do you feel like you are helping yourselves while helping the heroes?
7. Were you able to achieve your goals in each Zyara?
Please elaborate and say how. If not why?
8. Was Zyara therapeutic to you?
If yes, how and in what ways?
If no, why and how could it have been done better?
9. Do you feel like anything in you has changed on a personal level before and after your experience with Zyara?
10. In your opinion, is cinema, films or in other words the audio-visual expression able to help someone overcome a traumatic experience? Is it able to heal someone emotionally to a certain extent?

BACHAR KHATTAR – Behind the Scenes cameraman

Zyara is produced by Home of cine-jam. I have taken a workshop with Home of cine-jam couple of years before Zyara was born, which focused on how to jam in cinema, in making movies, and most importantly how to share an emotion. The workshop was definitely related to me personally, and intrigued me to work more on my personal artistic skills, and on my own approach to cinema languages. I decided to join Zyara because I had a total confidence in Muriel and Denise's work. What excited me the most that they were doing it out of the need of expressing themselves rather than a job demanded by a different production or a client. I knew that were making art and I wanted to be part of it.

I usually pick my crew depending on the type of project. I need to pick the people who will be excited to work on the topic and will make a personal input to the project. Having a great understanding with all the crew members is essential to any work of art. The collective input creates art itself and that what makes cinema and videos a unique art that is mostly done by a group of people. It all depends on you to make the best crew for a certain job, and then together the project will grow into its best shape.

I joined Zyara after they filmed their first episodes, I knew what to expect. I expected a beautiful encounter a "Zyara" to someone who is willing to sit and share his experiences in life and what he learned from it. I expected that not so many people will want to be filmed since sharing your personal life is pretty delicate to most of the people. I have to say and that I was astonished by Denise's power to interview each person and the power of Muriel in choosing her frame and her position threw out the interview. they were definitely floating in the room with full concentration on the subject. They were very transparent and honest, and that triggered me in helping them create their masterpiece.

The experience with the heroes was definitely the best part of the process for me as an assistant or as a behind the scene operator. I am very grateful to each one of them for trusting us, trusting me to listen and share their personal stories. It was a rush of information and emotions that makes your heart and mind grow to infinity. How magical it is to have the honor to meet a person who was wounded (physically or emotionally) and willing to share his story with full honesty for the sake of sharing and letting himself and the viewer that they are alone in this world. usually these types of people, you see from far and you hear their Stories from people around them, Zyara allowed me to enter these people's home and listen to their story from their own perspective. I see my experience with heroes as a blessing in my career. I identify with some heroes more than others of course, but I definitely identify with them all, and if you don't then you cannot be part of Zyara crew. The point of Zyara is to share our similarities as humans on this planet, where we all breath from the same bubble. Almost all the heroes of Zyara made me smile, cry, love and forgive. It's hard not to identify with them.

Yes, I do believe that any type of a good act provides only good consequences to everyone who is part of it. I helped myself by being able to be strong and look these heroes in the eyes and see the human side that we all share without being

interrupted with their appearances. If I am not able to see and recognize all the struggles and the power that exist in us, then I will never be able to create a true approach to my personal life and therefor to my professional life.

Zyara is therapeutic because when you least expect it and go to the shooting with no real expectation but with an open heart, you get to see what you have never saw before, the Truth. What is hiding under our skin, a skin of a hero who is willing to share his story and sorrows with confidence. That power of confidence you feel it in your bones, this privilege of trusting a stranger that much. I definitely felt way much more confident in my personal and professional life after the Zyara experience. nothing has changed, I just got more confidence in trusting myself and in dealing with my emotions and most importantly to realize how blessed we are everyday on each sunrise. It's holy when someone confess to the world, and we all feel it: the viewer who is listening familiar stories from a familiar voice, The hero who is getting over his secrets for the sake to make new ones and move forward in his personal life, and finally us the crew, we always look each other in the eye before , during, and after the shooting, and we realize that we all shared a moment together that fed us with love, patience and trust. It makes us happy and its definitely therapeutic when you feel that your life is needed and worthy for a better society.

***RANA MAALOUF* – Behind the Scenes Editor**

It's not related to me. Muriel contacted me thinking that I would be the right person for this mission and I was delighted to be part of her team. Of course, based on their expertise and professionalism but I also believe that their personality plays an equal role in this matter, if they are reliable, trustworthy, show up on time and answer their phones, know their limits on set with the crew and cast, if they are passionate for what they are doing no matter how small their role might be. I also believe that years of experience are not a criterion for picking your crew. Sometimes a 25 years old DOP can do a better job than a 55 years old DOP. It's more about picking the right person for the right project.

I knew that it will be different than any other work experience I went through. It wasn't like a regular job but more like a journey where I had to be in the team and the hero's shoes without actually being with them but through the lens and it was also important for me to transmit the whole Zyara experience without taking advantage of their weakness in front of the camera. For me, Zyara was more like getting to know Muriel and the person behind her. she was my Zyara. So, what I want to say here that sometimes it's not only the artwork or the outcome that matters but people you meet along the way.

Cinema is another way of expressing your thoughts and experiences. It's like therapy in a way. But I cannot generalize that it is a healing experience to everyone. Because I do believe that people react differently and each one of us has his own rhythm for dealing with traumas. And a film might not be enough for that.

Interviews with the Heroes

List of questions asked

1. Why did you participate with Zyara?
2. What did you expect from Zyara at first?
3. How did it feel like to talk about your scar?
4. Would you have liked to go deeper?
5. Was Zyara helpful to you?
If yes, how and in what ways?
If no, why and how could it have been done better?
6. Do you feel like anything in you has changed on a personal level before and after your experience with Zyara?

AHMAD ASSAYED

I participated in Zyara because I believe that if my past experience could reach or would be able to make a change even if only one person, this would make me really happy and I wouldn't feel like my experience went to waste. And just like I learnt my lesson from it, someone else would learn from my experience too.

It hurts to dig inside the same place of a wound, but it is also something very essential and very important for the healing process. Because if we did not become aware and accept our wounds, we cannot overcome that phase or what caused it and move forward with the future and built something new. Just as Rumi said, love your wounds and scars because that's where the light comes in. we should not try to fix the wound on the surface only, if you truly want to heal you will need to go into the deepest part of the wound in order to really heal it and yourself. Because if you don't do that it's going to cause a lot of problems for you in the future. Zyara has surely helped me, because some people watched my episode and it really helped them at some point. This satisfies me and makes me happy. Everyone has undergone bad experiences in life but it up to the person. If he or she is able to open up their brain and heart and understand but also receive the experiences and the benefits from them. But on a personal level, Zyara offered me new friends and social circle, but personally it didn't change anything because I had already talked and healed from my wound.

RITA ESBER

I was in a place in my life where everything was changing and everything that was happening was making me feel that It was leading me to a good place where I can feel and be more confident. The idea of Zyara was rly nice especially the message it gives to others. I thought why not open more to the world, the more people know me and my story, the more people will start to change the way they think about others with differences. I know it was going to help me get into a beautiful place but I didn't know how or when, I knew something good was going to happen for me. and it did. It felt really good, the moment talking about your scars and pain, is the moment you overcome everything happened in your life, it became power. No, the way it was done it was perfect, sending the right message, straight to the point

Zyara was from the first new things I do in my life that started to help me overcome my difference, Zyara was a push for me that made me see how much people loved me for who I am, from the number of views and shares, from the time it was screened in Batroun, my difference is so special, it makes people not forget me. And that made my confidence grow. Everything changed, Zyara was really one of the first things that was pushing me to get out of the comfort zone and face my life with all the power I have inside. Even now at this moment, I am different than the time I was on Zyara and before that

HIBA ZIBAWI

Two years ago, I stumbled with Zyara episodes on social media and I was deeply touched by the stories and the people behind them. I also appreciated the originality of the idea and the way it was portrayed. The seasons tackled topics and ideas that weren't seen before in a Lebanese cinema production nor seen by the Lebanese audience. The episode conveyed the idea of the power of storytelling and its magical moments that come after it. Moreover, the cinematic side of the Zyara was authentic, highly aesthetic, and expressive. The scenes and the background sounds and music transferred the meaning and feeling behind each story. Moreover, I had full respect to the Zyara makers for insisting on not showing the narrators/ heroes faces during the whole 5 mins and kept it till the end of each episode. This affirmed the idea behind Zyara that people share similar feelings, sorrows, and experiences regardless of their appearances.

In addition, when I met the founders of Zyara to screen the first three episodes at Ishbilia Theatre and Art- hub in Saida, South Lebanon, they asked if they can shoot an episode with me. I was born with cerebral palsy, a disorder caused by brain damage that affects my motor and movement abilities. Throughout my life, I was in constant battle with myself and my body. I refused to accept my disability and that made me suffer emotionally without knowing. However, 5 years ago, I decided to go to therapy and that was a life learning and a transformative point in my life, where I learnt to accept my body as it is and deal with fears and anxiety. Thus, when I decided to go through the Zyara experience I was ready then to tell my story and share my challenges and scars, because therapy made me aware of the importance of expressing, and sharing feelings. However, sharing your story on camera and then on a screen in front of an audience is a different experience which I was ready to take despite being hesitant at first. I myself was empowered, enlightened, and touched by Zyara heroes. Thus, I decided to be part of it because I felt that it will be part of my non ending healing journey and it will liberate me. I thought it might as well make someone feel better or support him/her with his/ her own journey.

I tried not to set expectations and to go with the flow and live the moment. Despite sharing my stories with several people before, I didn't expect that it would be such an emotional experience to tell my story. However, I was sure that I would be safe, accepted and appreciated and that has met my expectations. I was comfortable to know that there are some people who are listening attentively to my story without any judgements or expectations. After watching my episode, I felt proud of being in such a cinematic documentary series and to be next to other heroes.

It was a mix of feelings. First, I was hesitant to open up and speak, but then I decided to take the chance. A person doesn't often find people that can share with them his/ her stories without judging. While shooting the episode, I felt a bit intimidated, yet grateful, safe, and liberated at the same time. After finishing the episode, I felt more comfortable because Sharing my scars out loud made me appreciate the journey I have been through. Every time I share my scar, I reflect

on it from a different perspective depending on what stage I'm in my life now. I believe that each human story is worth sharing and mine is one of them.

No, I said what I felt I wanted to share at the moment and I was aware and conscious of what points I want to talk about and what points I want to keep to myself. I believe It's not always necessary to share everything about your story in order to prove your authenticity and how deep it affected you. The important thing in my opinion is to share what you find meaningful and honest to you at this moment and this will eventually leave an impact on you and others.

Zyara's experience was certainly a helpful and enlightening one. It helped me reach a higher stage of self-accepting. Narrating your story on a big screen makes you embrace and appreciate it way better. However, one of the most rewarding things about Zyara was a message I received from a mother of a child that has the same physical case I have. The message was one of the best things that happened in my life. The mother expressed how grateful she was for my episode because it helped her acknowledge and understand what her child is passing through on emotional and mental levels. Being able to support people and make them feel that they are not alone in this journey had a remarkable impact on me. This mother without knowing made me feel that there are plenty of people out there who we can connect with. I believe that this aspect is the power of storytelling, when people acknowledge that they are not alone who are facing hardships, challenges, they feel supported, empowered, and accepted.

Each experience in life plays a role in shaping who we are and of course Zyara was one of those unforgettable experiences. Zyara made me appreciate people's battles and made me aware of the way I listen to people's stories. I became more present while listening to others. On another hand, when I shared my story with Zyara, it made me more confident and freer. The impact of telling my story was about knowing and grasping my story, acknowledging that it is part of my journey fully but I don't live in it. it's part of me but it does not define me. It also made me aware of what impact can my story has on others and that sharing it with the right people might help them.

RABIH JAMMAL

I participated in order to get my message and story across: which is how blind people are able to learn and live a good life despite all the hardships. I also wanted to change people's perspective upon this subject, specially people who're undergoing the same issues as I am.

I was expecting that my message will be delivered across. And I trusted Zyara. After Zyara had been released it was very beneficial to me. It was very successful to me because it reached a very wide audience. I challenged myself as well because I do not like to be filmed, but I did it either ways. The major I studied is law, one layer watched the video and had called me. I don't consider being blind a scar, it's more of an obstacle that I had overcome. If I talk about myself it's just

for the sake to let others like me get inspired. Never lose hope, keep working until you get there. No one is free of problems and obstacles, but for a person to be successful he needs to work hard on himself. Not give up and sit at home to do nothing because I have a problem.

GINA HALIK

I used to watch Zyara without knowing who the creators of Zyara were. I randomly met them on Facebook. And I watched one episode and I really liked it. I have a case at home, and I liked the way the interpret things and how they do it. I never imagined they would ever come to visit me. So, I took part of Zyara because I felt like it's an awareness tool to expose the case of my daughter but also for other people to accept the cases they have too. Very simply. I didn't know what to expect from Zyara, because it was the first time someone ever makes an interview with me in this way. Spine-muscular atrophy is what my daughter is dealing with. It was the first time an entire crew comes home to film our situation so I had no clue what to expect. They were a very cute group. The makers came over first and paid us a visit while introducing themselves, and I felt at ease with them.

It was easy and not easy at the same time to talk about the pain. My daughter is now 13 years old; I have overcome a lot of things regarding her situation. Their approach and how they make someone feel at ease and to easily communicate really helped. So, if the person cries, it's because he got emotional in the situation. It didn't feel like crying over oneself, or one's situation, it felt like crying because it got emotional during the situation itself. I got relieved when I talked about the subject, regardless of the fact that I like to talk about my daughter. Their approach is beautiful and smooth and friendly. You feel like you are siblings. It is not a normal visit. It is like someone from family is coming to visit me. I didn't feel like I am talking deeply, or needed to talk even further and deeper. The discussion and conversation were unfolding on its own. It was like some friends are coming over to pay you a visit. And the only difference is that a camera exists. And two friends are discussing in front of it. I might have gotten deeper than I thought I would have, without even feeling it.

This was the most beautiful visit in my entire life. It helped me, it helped my daughter and it even helped the people around I believe. It helped me become comfortable in front of cameras and feel like it is nonexistent. It was the most beautiful visit because they have a very big heart. You don't feel like you're undergoing an interview, or you're shooting a documentary. You get to express everything positive you want to the audience through this visit. It had a very positive impact on my daughter. I'm not shy of my daughter, because you know here in Lebanon, her case is considered as a taboo.

On a personal level, what changed is the fact that I got to know the makers and we became very close friends. And I love to see them and their crew. Because I feel like every time we met, we now have a common ground something that is very common between one another. Each one of us has had talked about a certain

subject and expressed it, and now feels at peace and ease. Because he or she overcame the subject that was disturbing him or her. It's true that we don't see each other, but I feel like we have a deeper link and connection with one another. Each one of them taught me something. And this made me feel like we are not alone. Just as we say, everyone has his own problems and burdens in this life, but we are not alone. You get to exchange and feel like you are not alone and that they too have problems, which helps you also overcome your problems as well. They have a very special place in my heart.

When they came to make the visit, I had already overcome the subject regarding my daughter. I didn't go to a therapist, I didn't do any of that, I just started reading about other families who have the same case, and I realized that I am not alone in this world. I started to look forward to life. Zyara helped people who do not know about this subject to now know about it, who also might have not yet overcome their fears and problems. It helps them in a positive way so that the person doesn't isolate themselves or else they would fall into depression. It helps someone talk easier about his pain. To do such mini documentaries, such as the makers did, one must have a humanitarian purpose but also know how to approach people and talk to them in specific ways. They never force anyone to talk about the subject but rather give them their freedom or else they wouldn't proceed. And when a person needs to talk about such subjects, he or she need to have already overcome a specific part of his life, and the second part that he's trying to overcome with difficulty, Zyara will help him without feeling like you are in a studio and the presence of a camera. You forget your surroundings.

ELIE BALLAN

I got into Zyara because a slight moment before I met them, I had gotten on TV and talked about my case with HIV. It was the first time ever had I get on TV and mention that I am intuitive and I defend my case with HIV. I had decided that if I ever did that, I will do that when I have a strong statement in my mind. It was a very famous tv show that thousands and hundreds of people had watched. This raised awareness in me because I am an actor. So, it started making me reconsider what to say, when to say, etc. I witnessed a big chunk of hate after that, but I also witnessed a chunk of love that was even bigger than the hate. Zyara came after this period. I am felt like my voice got stronger, and a lot of people started to listen and pay attention to what I say, people were even getting impacted. When I first checked them out, I felt like it had a very weird but interesting and beautiful feel to it. It's like I don't see anything, but I feel everything. That was how I felt their approach to be.

I didn't know what to expect from Zyara. I used to ask them what are we going to talk about? They used to answer with don't worry we're just going to talk. I don't get stressed usually but I just wanted to get an idea about the ambiance we were getting in. Since I have studied audio visual, while they were shooting, I couldn't help but construct in my head how they might puzzle everything up at the end. Usually when I talk, I'm really serious, but with them I was really at ease. The

love and energy the entire crew gives is just impeccable. I got really close to them. I felt like I knew them from a very long time. It felt like sitting with friends, and we are just having a conversation. When I saw the end result of my episode, it was something I didn't expect at all. It was amazing.

It wasn't really hard to talk about my scar, because I had already talked about it previously and I had already overcome most of my fear and pain. But specifically, with Zyara, the discussion was different. It wasn't an interview, like yes, tell us your story. But it was rather a conversation and we were discussing with one another. It was very comfortable. It was all very interactive. I would have liked to go deeper, I wouldn't say no. But the idea and the aspect that was taken was different and it was something I did or had not talked about it specifically. I also did something for the first time which is state something beautiful to my parents or give them credit. And I don't know if they watched it or not. I like where it led to. Even though I didn't go deeper.

It was beneficial to me in ways I did not expect. I discovered support from new people. I met and felt part of the Zyara family. Honestly, when they once screened all seasons in the French embassy and I watched what other people had gone through, I felt ashamed of myself because I realized a lot of people had gone through things a lot worse than I did. But then I realized, in the past, the things I had gone through were not easy at all for me, maybe now I don't think about them, I am stronger because of them, but this doesn't mean that I didn't go through them. This feeling, to feel and know that other people also have power, the amount of support between everyone that day, it was a really rare feeling that I had rarely experienced in my life. It felt like a community, solidarity. It was lifechanging, because we focused on the bigger picture. We shed light on the differences, but most importantly, we accept them.

SASHA ELIJA

I participated with Zyara few years ago, in hopes of sharing my story and inspire other people. Specially trans individuals and marginalized individuals, in order to be hopeful and stay strong in their lives as hard as it might get. I didn't expect anything from them but to share my story.

At that moment, talking about my scar was pretty dramatic and I cried a little bit. But if I talk about my scars now, I have changed. Whenever I need to talk about parts of my life, I don't try to make a meaning out of it rather than make sense out of it. Now I feel like I am a little bit more guided and conscious about the things going on around me. I would like to have gotten deeper, but not more personal. By deeper I mean to talk more about the marginalized people in the world, such as trans women and trans women of color and migrant workers and women in general. Talk about more relevant issues, but not go deeper in my issues.

Zyara was helpful to me yes in that point of my life since they helped me share my story and form some sort of a checkpoint for my life. A lot of things changed

in me. I am not the same person. If I watched the old interviews with that person in the screen, because of the traumas I have faced in my life I created different personalities, and different images, consciousnesses. And I can't relate to my old self anymore. I am completely detached.

YOUSSEF MAJED

I participated because my daughter told me it was a nice idea. But other than that, I think that if the story that I am living, if people shed light on it, you might touch their heart at a certain extent, their soul and thoughts too. In order for them to start having the power of sustaining and enduring pain.

I didn't expect anything honestly. After the shot the episode with me and left, I was worried. (Laughs). These things usually scare me. Each time someone films something with me or about me, it frightens me. Because I cannot depict how I will look like, or what would happen. And we people tend to talk a lot, so I get to the point where I say I wish I didn't say this or that. Your mind starts to analyze.

Talking about my scar, at a certain point I teared. Because I believe that the pain, I caused that person, made him part with life. I always prefer to have not been at the place I am in now. At the age of 17, I was so productive to the point that a 40-year-old man wouldn't have achieved what I had done by that age. Everything was always bigger than my age. And then all of a sudden, within the less of a second, everything got destructed, and you had to start from 0 all over again. No one would wish to be in my place. I teared at several points, although it's been a long time, and I think I had overcome it and I had accepted what happened.

Talking deeper about my scar, I don't think there's anything deeper than this. Zyara might have portrayed me in a very elegant and sophisticated way, and respectful but also transparent. They conveyed my story to people in a very beautiful and artistic way with a lot of value. The only thing that changed is the fact that I gained people to love even more. They are very unique people. I met a lot of people and a lot of heroes. They are all very natural and honest with themselves.

HENRY LOUSSIAN

The makers were my customers from a very long time. And they used to see how I used to collect a lot of objects from old abandoned houses and to put them behind my store and home, etc. Zyara was the first video for me, before I ever got famous. I was expecting appreciation from society and friends and family but no one appreciated my work and passion but Zyara. And how I constructed the house of my dreams through the love I have for Beirut. They wanted to know how I love Beirut and why?

They are the only ones who wanted to show true love. So, when the episode was done and screened to the public, a lot of TV stations and people came to interview me about my accomplishment. I became so famous and appreciated around the world because of Zyara. I became a hero through them. They made me become someone who is wanted. Someone people can look up to. We are all important, a taxi driver feels like he's a hero, a doctor feels like he's a hero. We are all equally important. We all have scars and a story to tell.

It was relieving for me to talk about my scars. I didn't expect I was going to talk about that. No one can be strong unless he accepts his weakness. When you accept your weakness, you'll become stronger. If you keep fighting against your weakness, you'll only become weaker. The Zyara team is very sensitive. And they know how to extract the emotions out of humans. We all like to talk about our scars in order to share hope, get over them and set an example to others.

They played a huge impact on my life because the video got watched by thousands of people and I became noticed after all the struggles I underwent to create the house; I finally got my recognition.

GHADA FEGHALI

Zyara contacted me upon the recommendation of a common friend and when we met the first time we simply hooked and it felt that I knew them from a long time. I did not know at all still expected them to be human, close and loving. I did not talk about a scar but about my parents and about their struggle to give us me and my siblings the best education ever

I felt nostalgia remembering my childhood and very proud of my parent's achievement and their impact in shaping my commitment to my society. I went very deep which brought tears into my eyes. Zyara was helpful because through the sincere and compassionate questions they brought back good memories. After the interview was launched, I had so many lost friends that contacted me and thanked me for sharing such intimate moments. I was proud to spread hope.

TOYA MASRI

Having second thoughts when Zyara asked me to narrate my story, I took my time to think about it since it's something I wouldn't love to talk about it, but after watching Zyara's documentaries my mind got changed. I have seen so much racism around the country and felt like talking about my experience to raise awareness against racism in this country, to inspire others to change, to deliver a message to everyone, to encourage everyone who got bullied to stand up and overcome the obstacles and come out stronger than ever.

Zyara was the perfect platform to deliver this message, and they delivered it perfectly, the team was very supportive, ever since I've come to realize that facing your past makes you stronger than ever. Having watched Zyara's

documentaries previously, I knew that Zyara's intention is to raise awareness against certain problems people are facing, but as soon as we started to shoot, I've realized it's more than that, it's about spreading love and peace, it's a school where it teaches people to become stronger.

At first, I was scared, having this subject to be private and hard for me to talk about, Zyara encouraged me to speak up, to express my feelings, the experience caused me trauma, I was scared and hesitated but I also wanted to raise awareness, talk about the I went to the deepest, as soon as I started talking, I felt free, I felt like I need to talk about it, I got encouraged, I felt like a fighter and a defender. Having Zyara team on my side made me feel safe, it was the perfect place to express my feelings, it made me bring peace to myself. As per my previous answers, yes, it did change me, to the better, it made braver, it made me feel like a hero, it made me stronger and better.

WISSAM ROUKOZ

At first, I did not know who Zyara was and they called me. They came and paid me a visit and they gave me an idea about what they do. They told me they are an award winning docu series that is specified for the people of special needs. Honestly, I really liked the idea and it felt really original to me. It had a lot of expertise the way they did it.

At first, I thought they wanted to do a report about me or my achievements but that wasn't their goal. Their goal and what they focused on was the life of my daughter and I at home and my relationship with her. How I started to feel the way my daughter was. The difference is she was born this way but I had an accident and became this way. We are both two handicapped. We have two wheelchairs at home. My daughter is entirely handicapped she can't even talk. After they screened our episode, it took about 54 thousand views.

In our situation, you have two choices: either to attack or you'll give up. My motto in life is: never look back. My accident was on the 11th of August 2014. I feel like Wissam Roukoz was born on that day. I live constantly with constant pain. But I never felt fear. The accident happened while I was doing motocross. I've always done extreme sports.

It wasn't my choice to go deeper or not. It was up to them and not to me. The story inspired a huge amount of people all around the world. But on the other hand, I do consider myself going deeper in my life, I still go to work, I still pursue my extreme sports, etc. I'm always in pain, but I keep forcing and challenging my body in order to achieve the goals I want.

Zyara was certainly helpful to me because Zyara is a message in fact. It's more than a short movie. The makers and the crew together have a message to convey to the world.

When I watch the other episodes of other people, you can see how people are fighting, etc., despite the fact that we do not have the same cases. It's certainly an

inspiration. Zyara is something very important. Some people dislike this because they want to escape their reality, and I understand them. I highly relate to all the other episodes because we have a shared pain in common but some of the audience might not like to watch or understand such stories because they have never lived that experience, they never suffered. People don't know the value of what they have (health) just until they lose it.

Nothing changed in my life, no. But I respect them because we have a special bond a relationship. Zyara is something very special. It didn't change anything in my life, but when I watch the other episodes, they surely make a difference. Indirectly they do change. Because you learn a lot from others and the people around you. Extraordinary people who are refusing to get down. The experience of watching the others has made a change yes.

CHARLES KASSATLY

It was very important for me to share the root of addiction, what is addiction, etc. the importance of the 12 steps and the program that exist for free, and the meeting that happen here in Beirut for free. That could save a brother, a mother, a father a sister or a daughter or a son from this vicious disease which is addiction. I believe it was a great opportunity for me to share my personal knowledge and experience and hope in the program. It is important to identify with a subject that you are talking about. Speaking out sets you free from the addiction.

I took part in Zyara, first I was invited by a friend of mine who is one of the makers of it.

I was already a big fan of what they were doing. So, when Muriel asked for it, it was a great honor. I totally believe that when someone has a remedy, and doesn't share it with others, that's a crime. So, I wanted to share in particular with the Arab world and in Lebanon the importance of the 12 steps program.

I knew they were coming to pay me a visit, and I knew that they might ask me personal questions. So, I expected them to be paying me a visit, that's all that Zyara is about. The translation of Zyara in English is "Visit". Like paying a friend a visit. I didn't expect anything at all, expect the fact of being as open as I can and make it a great visit. I was excited happy and honored. Because I admire these strong women and what they stand for and what they are doing.

Of course, I would have liked to gone deeper because I have tons of stories to tell. I'm a lifetime full of adventures, scars, damage, internally, self-loathing, self-sedating, self-beating up, you name it, drugs alcohol. Of course, I would have like to go deeper and share it with the world because the world needs to know. I am hoping one percent of the 8 billion were able to hear and identify with me. And learning from my scars and experiences and strengths and weaknesses and hope and applying it to their lives. My goal is just to set awareness. These meetings are there and they are completely lifechanging.

I wish it was only one scar. It was very full of heaviness and darkness and sadness while talking about my scars. The flip coin is very healing. Because they say we are as sick as our secrets. In the support group I go to we talk about our scars very openly all together. It's the best free therapy that exists out there. Since I have almost healed through the previous support groups, I wasn't ashamed talking about them because I had already gone through the phase. I didn't feel sorry for myself nor victimized by them. It was the entire opposite.

Zyara was very helpful to me because I felt that the information about addiction and everything I had to share, exposing myself, and showing my strength and weaknesses to the public was very helpful to me and I am praying it will be very helpful for other people too. They cause for Zyara is giving me hope and faith. Everything that's in each episode of Zyara, the editing, the sound the cinematography is extremely helpful in many ways. Exposing the beauty of the Lebanese culture, the old and the new of all kinds and all backgrounds. It's very helpful for me to learn from all these different people from different religions, cultures, stories, power and wisdom. I identify with them. I see my dad and mom, brother sister and friends in them.

Of course. There's a very positive beautiful biological experience happening. Physically, mentally and spiritually, when you share from your heart. So, of course, I felt lighter. It's a positive thing that I did. I am more comfortable with who I am what I am and what I do. We need something like this to expose the stories as truthfully as possible and as picturesque as possible. More hope in the future.

OMAR MIKATI

The psychological side of art has to do mostly in my opinion with the audience. Because the director or writer is practicing his career and passion therefore, he is doing it out of love. But personal and psychological problems, we encounter them within our personal daily life. So, an art form/piece can have a psychological and personal impact on the audience. And it could also be on the entire crew as well. Anything in this art form can elicit emotions such as the dialogue itself.

When a person decides to watch a movie, the choice of the film already is a personal choice. Depending on his mood and his psychology. The psychology that starts his he is in his mother's tummy. A person might always watch the same type or style of films and it is surely not be accident but it is by choice and for a certain unidentified reason. Let's say a person likes action films, because it gives him an adrenaline rush through the course of the story line. He enjoys watching thieves, people fighting with one another, etc. This shows that a person might have something in his or her personality that portrays violence. (entertainment films) Cinema is not therapeutic to everyone. It highly depends on the interest of the audience and how integrated he is into the film. Zyara was a chance for me to dive back into my childhood and memories.

ELIE BARAKAT

Let me start by saying that we humans are addicted to stories. Even when our body goes to sleep, the mind sort of stays awake telling itself stories. Sleep create story elements. Sleep create dreams and dreams create stories with themes, concerns, figures, objects and much more. I'm someone who's in love with both Cinema and photography and both are based on stories. I strongly consider them to be therapeutic. Zyara is all about healing through storytelling and visuals. This is why I strongly relate to Zyara not only by being part of its family but by also sharing my scar.

Zyara helped me to look for inspiration and self-healing through the importance of listening to the stories of others. Their pain and what they gained from it. The experience of being all connected through Zyara helped me achieved my goals and to heal. Every hero, every story, their pain, their fear connects us to one another. They unite us and heal us. They allow us to understand what all of our lives look like. And by sharing stories about the saddest, toughest, and scariest parts of their lives to a room of strangers and by doing it with so much courage they help themselves and others to heal. I was even moved to tears during some of the interviews. The point is, and I keep coming back to this, we all have a story to tell and those stories, no matter how painful they are, connect us as human beings on this earth and help us heal by building a connection between each other.

Finally, I believe that cinema has the power to change individual's thoughts and feelings and can be profoundly effective... Story exists because the world is not perfect. Stories would be boring if the world was perfect. I don't believe in happiness and perfection itself. I believe in their pursuit. Zizek once said "We don't want what we desire. Why be happy when we could be interesting?!". And cinema and art are all about that pursuit of happiness of perfection... Artists exist because the world is not perfect, which reminds me of a famous quote by Andrei Tarkovsky: *"An artist never works under ideal conditions, some sort of pressure must exist; the artist exists because the world is not perfect. Art would be useless if the world were perfect, as man wouldn't look for harmony but would simply live in it. Art is born out of an ill-designed world."*

Interviews with the Professionals

List of questions asked

- 1) To what extent do you feel can the audio-visual art form be of a therapeutic tool to humans? Could it help someone overcome a traumatic experience? Is it able to heal someone emotionally to a certain extent?
- 2) How would you define what Zyara is?
- 3) Would you categorize as a therapeutic tool? Justify your answer.
- 4) How deep is a director allowed to go with his protagonist, hero or main character by discussing and tackling the trauma with his character?
- 5) Should one be a psychologist along with being a director to be able to handle his protagonist? Justify your answer.
- 6) In your opinion, what effect does Zyara have on society?
- 7) What effect would such art expression (documentary/docufiction/docuseries) and tool have on society?

CHERINE HONEINE

Audio-visual art can be a therapeutic tool. If the subject identifies with the character and through the latter succeeds in establishing a reflection and developing responses that touch on his problematic, then we are on a therapeutic journey. A journey that can be set in motion from an image, a sound, a phrase, a sensation ... a whole set of elements that we find in the 7th art. Zyara oscillates between suffering and resilience, life and death drives, hope and despair. So many antagonistic themes that weave the basis of who we are, complex beings, in other words, humans.

A clairvoyant, a priest, a psychologist, a confidant, an animal, a work or even a film production ... Anything can constitute a therapeutic tool from the moment the subject manages to gain access to the understanding and the elaboration of his experience of life. By elaboration I mean, not a simple identification, but the capacity afterwards to be able to question ourselves and understand the active role that we play in our own problems.

The question touches on an ethical and human dimension. If the subject has not done previous personal work with a professional (and therefore has not made sense of his trauma) it would not be wise to approach it, much less in depth. Not necessarily. But a psychologist can obviously facilitate the work and even bring out interesting elements through his analytical skills and his intuition sharpened with his years of experience.

This type of documentary is essential because it allows issues to be exposed and thus serves as prevention. All the more so in a patriarchal, conservative and traditional society in which taboos may be present (sexuality, homosexuality, virginity, etc.). Breaking taboo subjects and illuminating obscure areas are the two points that such a tool could have in effect on society.

ZEINA DACCACHE

Of course, cinema can have a healing consequence on people. We can take the example of the movie "Shahrazad's diary" when I used to screen it. Some of the audience were women. This film was mostly based on the anger issues towards women, domestic violence, marriage at a very young age, etc. Stories of women whose husbands used to beath them till death or maybe they defend themselves and end up in prison. At the end, when you look at the audience most of them were going through catharsis. A purification of emotions. Some crying, some wants to take the mic and talk about their experience for an hour and its start. Is it the whole healing? No. It's the start. Because there's something that moved in that person. Even if there weren't any Q and A the spectator would go and share the film with someone else. So, from here on, it goes up to the person whether they would want to continue with the healing process or not.

I would like to congratulate Zyara and their team for their work because they are shedding the light on specific and certain people. The type of people we don't always encounter in our daily life or that the press and media keep talking to you about. Each time an episode ends, you end up with the feeling of constantly wanting to know more and more about the person and subject. There isn't a single episode I watched from the docu series without having the feeling of being curious to know more. Is it therapeutic? It depends on the fact that if you can put yourself in the shoes of others in order to really be able to feel and experience what they've been through.

The relation between a director and the character should be built upon from a very long time ahead from the shooting days, this way the shooting process because nothing but a consequence to their relationship. In my case regarding my plays, there's a year and half therapy before we call the characters protagonists. You cannot just put the person and start asking them about their trauma and expect it to be therapeutic. It's like you're re-traumatizing the person. Before I even insert the camera into the scene with my characters, they need to sign a contract. Because who ever really wants to be part of this can, and no one is forced into it. And it has happened with me once that the person accepts at first but then after a few months changes their mind. You need to respect their opinion and cut the paper out. It's really nice to be the psychologist and the director at the same time. It's a personal preference. Some directors don't necessarily have to have studied psychology but they have ethics and kindness with their way of talking.

Cinema could be eye opening tool that's coming from real life and that it exists and it's very close to us. We aren't shooting anything from mars then showing it to the audience. It might motivate the spectators to actually feel like they need to act upon the subject and make a change or be inspired by the subject. Third is the fact that just like this person was able to express his or her self we also are capable of that.

FARAH MOUKADDAM

I believe that the audio-visual art can be a therapeutic form to humans. As long as a person hears and sees, if he was passive human, we would be helping his or her empathy at least. To bring out the expression between him and himself, as a bare minimum. Although if that same person had undergone an interview then it has more to do with self-expression. So, this means he'll get into a deeper level of healing. But if watching a movie or video in a passive way it will only have an introspective impact on me, I am waking up to the fact that this pain exists inside of me. But if I expressed about the pain, and I got it out, then I'm healing in a deeper way. Therefore, if the person is truly expressing himself verbally, that could help one could overcome a traumatic experience. It is idealistic to have the artist make his art, then have a psychological encounter with professionals. As long as the art form is emerging emotions in us and helping us have an insight then it is for sure helpful or healing to a certain extent depending on the level of

each person. I see Zyara as a really great social healing tool. Because it wakes up what we have swollen up inside of us. Or we have long forgotten inside of us by showing us how other people have overcome it. It gives you hope for the future and motivation.

I do categorize Zyara the docu series as a valid healing tool specifically when the episodes are screened. They're selection of the characters, the questions, the filming helps the emotional state unfold and people start to go on this audio-visual journey of what they are seeing and hearing. What was even stronger is when they got into the schools and started having discussions with teenagers. I find this very important and vital because at that age is when the person might start developing the complexes. So, if we were able to express during that period, then we would avoid a lot of things in the future. It would be even more interesting to have a workshop with both the makers and a psychotherapist in order to have a more guided discussion it becomes a deeper therapeutic tool. I believe when the knowledge of cinema and therapy or humanism intertwine together it gives a beautiful impact.

THE MAKERS



MURIEL ABOULROUSS is a multiple award-winning cinematographer from Lebanon. Her numerous cinematography credits include multiple feature documentaries, films and web series. Zyara, the award-winning doc web series is her first creation as a director/cinematographer, in partnership with Denise Jabbour, produced by their humanitarian Arts association: Home of Cine-Jam. Muriel is now committed to her mission as a Zyara maker and a teacher/mentor empowering and guiding filmmakers to finding their own cinematic language through Cine-Jam.

Process of Zyara

- we contact someone or they contact us based on a recommendation and we make sure that the person either knows Zyara or that she/he watches a few episodes before they commit to it.
 - we sometimes get to meet them before we film and sometimes, we don't, but either way we explain everything on the phone to make sure the person is aware of their choice and commitment.
 - We go and visit the person (shooting day) knowing briefly the main experience they want to share with us but we let the rest of the story unfold on the spot
 - we ask them to sign an agreement after the shoot which states that they agree to this Zyara and all the content that have given us and that we are allowed to screen and use the videos for as long as we live and anywhere, we want.
 - we established a system for Zyara's post-production: editing is split on 2 parts (sound and image). We select the main audio content first and send it to the heroes for them to listen and give us their blessing or comment. Rarely we are requested to remove a word or a sentence. If they do ask for changes, we abide by their request because what matters to us beyond the signed agreement, is our relationship with our heroes and their blessing on their Zyara.
- When we edit the visuals on the approved audio content, we also arrange to visit them and show them their episodes or send them a private link to watch and get back to us with feedback. Also, very rarely, we receive a request or comment on the visuals or edit. After having everybody's blessing on their respective Zyara episodes, we finalize (grading, sound mix, subtitling).
- the release happens over a period of 6 months online and we try to arrange for as many screenings as possible throughout the year (festivals, schools, universities etc...)

The process has been almost the same since the first episode, but the details and awareness we transfer to our hero, before they commit, is greater because we have learned a lot along the way. We are still learning and growing while making Zyara and we truly believe that the project will continue as long as there is a genuine need for it in the world. I truly believe that each Zyara brought a blessing to her hero and brought changes into their lives but we are not aware of all of them... some are more expressive than others, some became our friends and some didn't due to age difference or geographical distances etc.... but we are all one family as we believe humanity is one family under the sun.

All the Zyara heroes are either recommended to us by someone, or they contact us because they felt the urge of telling their stories. only Zyara season 1 was mainly based on us trying to reach out to people and we were not really aware of where Zyara was going and what was its mission. Zyara season one was the stepping stone of a very surprising journey to us and very overwhelming adventure, but the factor on which we based our choice of heroes in season one was simply about people we know and some we found resilient, some genuine, some inspiring, some we just wanted to honor. as we moved forward in our journey and realized the mission behind Zyara we started being more aware and more specific about who we are visiting and why.

Let me start by stating that we do not judge anyone on their limitation or insecurities because we have our own and no one is perfect. We understand that taking part in Zyara is a huge challenge and that sometimes we could see the episode and reject a reflection of ourselves. That is very normal and to each their right and free will to express their feelings.

Having said that we also do not believe in failure, instead we believe that life is a constant force moving us forward and along the way we try and change, we evolve and grow, we live!

Out of 60 Zyara heroes we have encountered different situations and we have learned from them, and when I say we, I include us the makers and the heroes as well.

We had the same case of “shyness” in two different seasons, where two male heroes didn't want to share their episodes on their personal profile as to avoid a confrontation with their own families. We respected their wish and understood the limits in which we could promote for their episodes. This experience taught us that sometimes the hero is ready to share “the journey” for the love of others but not necessarily to dive into a family confrontation in regards to their choices or behavior. It is clear that social judgment and family "Shame" is a great heavy load on our consciousness and that we need to educate people one heart at a time to start honoring their wounds instead of hiding them.

We had also similar “self-image” issues in two different seasons but this time with two female heroes, where they had a negative feedback on their Zyara (in the post-approval stage). one was shortly before it was time to release the Zyara online and the other was a week after the release.

- In the first case and after having the full approval and feedback on her episode, the hero decided that she would like to change the content of her Zyara and talk about something else. Of course, for us it was a big dilemma, we had finalized the episode and since Zyara is a self-funded project, it was unconceivable for us to throw a Zyara away or to re-do the sound / interview and sound mix again. We have discussed all the possibilities with her but we needed to meet with her in person to try and talk this through in order to find the best solution; She declined and we couldn't manage an opportunity to see her as she would refuse to do so. we totally understand her position, it is hard to reveal a scar in public and then realize that it was still bleeding! It is very clear to us in Zyara that we do not discuss open wounds because the healing process wouldn't have happened within our hero. We need them to have healed so they can phrase their pain and explain their wound while knowing that they have risen above it and have chosen the light of life despite the darkness; and if they are not totally healed but they still choose to be a Zyara hero, it is because they are aware that their Zyara will give them the push to be the heroes of their own story.

- The second case was a bit more complicated as we discovered along the way (post shooting) many challenges. Our hero is a big Zyara fan and we have met her through Zyara in a screening and when we spoke on the phone the first time we instantly clicked. She told me her story and I jumped from joy saying: “shall we do a Zyara? We truly believe in her and we know that she is the kind of person who leads by example so we waited for her to see if she would agree to it or not. a few months later we spoke and she told me *YES why not, let's do it! that would be a small revolution to start!* we were so happy, we set a date for the shoot and spent a great day together with the team.

I have to specify here that we never ever give our opinion on what the person should wear, or how they should look. We consider them co-creators of their episodes so we always ask them: *where do you feel we could find your layers? What are the elements that you would like us to paint you with?* etc... and this is how we do it and that is our vow of authenticity.

Our hero had a very clear answer and took us to the location where we would find her visual layers; and we did. when we reached the editing and selected the audio track, we sent it for approval. she told us that she found the story sad and that the positive/lesson part in the end is too short, we explained that is the Zyara scheme and curve since the start and that the lesson comes in the end, same as all the episodes. We discussed and then agreed to move forward in the process and then we sent the first draft/edit for her approval. We received a list of comments requesting to remove all her facial close ups as she found them very intrusive and violent and also a request to remove 1.25sec of the sound which she found to be very sad and emotional. As a filmmaker I always like to discuss the comments with them in order to make sure that we have reached our limit and then we abide by the requests and comply to our hero's wish because we consider our relationship with them is at least equally important as the Zyara itself.

After we go apply all changes and send her the final edit for her blessing, we receive it with bells on and finally we have a happy hero and a beautiful Zyara ready to inspire. A week after we release the episode, we usually request from our hero, a genuine feedback on Zyara as a project or on their own personal Zyara experience; so I call her and ask for a feedback video which she was exited to give us, but, we don't really know what happened after that because a few days later, she has changed her mind and was upset about her Zyara (maybe its related to some critical comments she received from other filmmakers or friends). We didn't get the chance or the opportunity to really talk about all this face to face, but I am sure we will, because when we are bound by a Zyara we become a family forever. It is very sad for us to deal with the breakup between the hero and their Zyara. I, personally feel a huge load of pain in my heart when this happens because I know how much love we put into carving these little poems where we only focus on the beauty and light within the darkness, the darkness which we refuse to deny.

Is Zyara into social healing, personal healing, or a building of self-esteem?

Zyara has proven to be a much-needed educational tool for awareness and empowerment of the society. It is time we give equal value to our emotional healing in order to prevent our future generations from the darkness of bullying, depression, abuse, shame, guilt and more. We strive to abolish victimization and to remind people of their strength and the beauty of their being. We commit to the social emotional healing that comes from sharing our stories and embracing the lessons learned from pain and struggle. Zyara the doc series was born to promote oneness and compassion among the human family.

Why do you only stick to the scars and not go deeper into the wounds?

the bleeding wound needs follow up and close care ... it needs time to mature and be digested! Zyara cannot do that for anyone but us. We personally heal through Zyara because we are going through the process since its birth and every year, we receive a deeper healing from creating it.

the scar needs acknowledgment and appreciation, it needs to be shown proudly and for that it needs empowerment and love ... that is what Zyara can offer to those who choose to tell their story.

Which way does Zyara use for healing (either if is personal healing or social healing) Is it the cathartic way, the evocative way, or the prescriptive way? How do you imply that answer to Zyara, and elaborate slightly about the subject?

We have discovered what Zyara is and what is its mission as it grew bigger and deeper within us. Zyara the doc series invites people to remember and validate their journey, it brings back images, memories, sounds to the present time. As we remember those emotions and describe them, we feel that the healing has been completed, they feel lighter. Zyara is an invitation for people to celebrate their healing through the evocative way. Zyara for me as a filmmaker is a great healing journey. Diving into the skin of all our heroes and then diving into the meditative state of filming their spaces and environment, feeling their energy and allow them to guide my lens energetically through their voices and emotions, is definitely a healing process because I become one with them at that exact moment of creation. Zyara is a meditation for me and it grounds me as much as it lifts me beyond the physical world.

What we believe and what we offer is a platform called Home of Cine-jam where people can choose to be in Zyara as a final act of self-healing and love. it is not Zyara that heals anyone, it is them who chose to complete their healing through Zyara as a medium and us the makers as their partners. We choose together to walk that heroic path of being proud of who we are and sharing our experiences knowing that this can stay after we are long gone and it might inspire someone to keep going or stop someone from killing themselves. No one can heal anyone, unless there is a will to heal and that the person is looking for a medium to support their decision to heal... if Zyara is one of these available medium for celebrating the final touches of healing and at the same time a platform that

allows sharing who we are with the world as an act of love and humanitarian activism .. then we are blessed to be its makers.

Do you know people who are against, or do not believe that art is a therapeutic tool?

No, I don't really know anyone who denies the healing power of Art as an act of self-expression but I think all mainstream cinema and their followers have chosen to call entertainment "Art" and we need to respect their free will. There is a difference between Art having therapeutic healing powers over the makers, the participants and the viewers; and Art being used as a tool for healing by therapists.

I am an artist who needs to create like I need to breathe, I create to live and love the life I bear witness to. I am not doing the creative work just in order to heal, I am doing it because it is my mission, my calling, my passion, my way to express myself and that indirectly heals the broken memories of life, that alone can mend a heart. When we do what we love and put our soul into it, the healing occurs subconsciously.

Creating Zyara and watching it grow into a social emotional platform where we can all be free to say what we have been through, who we are, what we fear and how we have overcome our challenges in life, is the greatest gift of all. Imagine that what makes you happy is also collaborating to a happier community, society, world. Zyara is a state of being where we want nothing and we are one with everything, where all the pain transforms into poetry, beauty and light... that is its healing power on us, the heroes and the public, because we all become one during these 5 mins. (Aboulrouss, 2020)

Explain your visual style and why you decided to embark on this specific kind of cinematic language, such as the double layers, the sound design, the colors, the fact that the hero choses his space, why do we see the faces until the end, etc.

Zyara visual style - applying the Cine-Jam process:

When Denise Jabbour first approached me to go and film interviews with people to ask them about their lives, I first declined as I don't like filming interviews! In order to make it happen we agreed on the following: I film what I feel and she asks what she feels. This is how we started in season 1, I filmed only what I felt I was drawn to, without any thinking or judgment. I knew before I went on the first day of shoot (summer 2014) that I did not want to see the person till the end (I dreamt it) and I also knew that in order for me to write with the natural light, I needed to un-peel the layers within this encounter. the layers that I discovered along the way are made of skin, light, objects and eyes... The process of creating Zyara was like a channeling of a vision that was meant to be, the smooth flow of the edit and the simplicity of the process are really overwhelming. Every layer that blends into another is a pure accident and magical!

It is a great challenge to use the same tools to paint a different soul every time. It is a journey to go and witness the light around and within the person we visit, knowing that I need to grab it all through my lens, as authentically as possible, with as much love as possible. Organically, with time, season after season, the language evolved in rhythm and pace. The tools are the same, the macro lens and the natural light keep dancing at the rhythm of our hero's voice, a unique different dance for each but all leading to the light. The only rule I follow is authenticity. Letting go of the thought process is the most freeing experience we can live as artists, it is an act of self-love and most of all it is a highly spiritual act where we connect with the source of all creation with no expectations just trusting the magic of audio visual chemistry blending with the intention to discover and love the person we meet. That is what Cine-Jam is, that is what I teach, what I have to offer.

Every season Zyara changes in its pace and heart beat but the purpose remains, like water it adapts and flows but its essence remains. Zyara is meant to unite us all under the emotional umbrella that makes us human. Today after 60 episodes being produced, I look at the canvas, I see all of them as one. I understand more deeply the reason why it was born with that blurry defect. Filming Zyara is a meditation as it is for those who watch it... well for some more than others. Zyara was born blurry, slow, poetic, a visual painting of layers and most of all an ode to the light (inner and outer)... Zyara's visual style, was born like that from my womb, my inner Gut feeling and I respect that because I truly believe that it is being created through me not by me.

Now the purpose of this text is not to explain or justify, it is to empower the young filmmakers to follow that path because I promise you that you will be full, happy, humbled and proud inside of having trusted your inner feelings despite all outer opinions or judgment. Now realistically here are a few comments from filmmakers on Zyara: isn't it too repetitive? too much macro!!! aren't you bored to repeat the same thing over and over again? don't you want to change the style a bit? the Zyara curve is predictable - childhood/challenge/overcoming/lesson ...don't you want to mix them a bit to make it more appealing for people...they might get bored! are you sure you want to stop being a cinematographer just to shoot Zyara? in the end it's just a web-series.

My answer to all the above is: "I don't know how things will evolve but I know that as long as I am evolving ... everything around me will as well. meanwhile I AM HAPPY! and that is what matters" I wish you all the same from all my heart #lifeisabeautifulzyara

Explain why you decided that Zyara takes the format it has. Explain your choice as a director. To you why is it a documentary and not a fiction.

When Zyara was first conceived, it came from the need to listen to people and witness their beauty. There was no doubt for us that it would be documentary based in its audio content because the authenticity of it was our only rule.

It is only by its esthetical treatment that came impulsively, where we realized that reality is the greatest poetry and it hold within it the key to an unlimited potential. The choice of making it into a web series came from the fact that we wanted it online and we wanted it to borderless and accessible to all people.

It is crucial for me as a teacher and as an explorer of the audio-visual tools to experiment and try different formats. It was crucial to find the essence of our visit and keep it as intense as possible knowing that 5 minutes would be more than enough to get the emotional message across. I believe that Zyara in its form has crossed the boundaries of doc and/or fiction. It is a poetic portrait of people flowing through the pace of their breath and their voices.

What is the social aspiration you hope to attain with Zyara here in Lebanon but also worldwide?

Zyara the doc series aims to tackle all social psychological traumas and social challenges that a human being goes through in their lives.

so far we were able to feature everyday heroes sharing their experiences with bullying, disability by birth or by accident, death/loss, addiction, violence, war, sickness, love, dreamers, paperless, orphans, being born "different", self-image, depression, homosexuality and transgender, racism, poverty, we also featured Canadian, half Australian and half American, Palestinians and Syrian heroes. The journey will continue as we believe that every story count and every reaction to a "trauma" is a lesson for us all to learn from.

when we started Zyara all we wanted was to reconnect with people and pay them a visit to chat about life, our first 4 heroes were chosen for their authenticity and because we knew them personally... then after receiving a great amount of positive feedback we continued producing season 1 and started digging deeper around us for the people we personally found inspiring and genuine... and season 1 was completed. The next year we made the decision to keep going, with the support of our team and with the awards Zyara was winning internationally but most importantly because we realized the need, we all have to talk and share our stories. We decided to offer our second season to people who are going through or went through physical and/or mental challenges. Thanks to the overwhelming success of Zyara we were flooded with names and numbers of people to meet, people we did not know... people who changed our lives forever.

Since then every year we have 12 heroes showing up and expressing their readiness to share their story through Zyara, we don't look for them ... they find us or they are directed to us through their friends or family members!

the decision to say YES to a Zyara is based on the person's awareness of their wounds and their clear "healing" status from the trauma they are sharing with us. Zyara does not deal with open wounds... Zyara supports and highlights those who choose life and love despite all challenges... those who believe like we do that no matter how challenging "Life is a beautiful Zyara" (visit)

We live in a transition phase where loving ourselves and the world needs actions not words... We live in a time where empowering "Love and people" is a human & artistic duty...we live in a world where fear still reigns however, we the Zyara

makers are messengers of love and light. We will continue producing one season every year, 12 episodes, 12 heroes of their own stories, spreading awakening and oneness in their voices, proud of their vulnerability and courageous enough to speak up despite all taboos and judgment. Zyara is like the web, a web of emotions which can connect to any human being on this planet. We dream of a world tour Zyara by screening or filming because only then we will clearly realize the oneness that Zyara is here to portray. "Zyara is our way of loving the world!"
The Zyara Makers

How do you describe the Lebanese society in accordance to the art form you're inviting them into, in other words Zyara? Is it making a difference? Have you received criticism? Etc.

Lebanese society like any society is a sponge to receive any kind of information or artistic endeavors. The challenge resides in the level of reception and the level of involvement. Zyara has a small but very loyal fan base who are always hungry for more. We believe that humans will always seek entertainment rather than deep emotional interaction with an art work because life within the system is serious enough and they just want to take a break. We truly understand that what we are offering is not necessarily what people would consciously choose but we keep offering it because we know that deep within, they need it. A little dose of Zyara once in a while could be the reason for someone to awaken and grab on to hope again. Even it is only one person a year. Now we also witnessed the incredible capacity of children to absorb and appreciate Zyara in its content and style, this is why we were even more rooted into our mission when we realized the empowerment and necessity of Zyara for the education of the youth. The system focuses more on educating the mind but we also need balance, therefore Zyara! I don't know about "criticism" because we don't take it in, we respect everyone's opinion but we leave what is negatively/destructive into the bin and we take on what is constructive. There is no negative feedback in general unless it is infused with envy and a clear intention of harming the project, that is why we directly choose to let it go and focus on what we are doing despite all opinions.

Do you think through Zyara the society will start to perceive certain subjects as less of a taboo and something to keep only for oneself?

We have no expectations on how and what society will do, we are doing Zyara with faith and love. Everything done with love will definitely make a difference but how, when and who??? We will let life surprise us along the way. We need to talk, we need to share, we need to love who we are and telling our stories out loud is one way to do it. Zyara offers a platform for those who are courageous enough to tell their story and those who are willing to rise up and say I exist and this is me, perfectly imperfect... the rest is up to the unfolding of life. Love is the only thing that matters in the world and Zyara is our way of loving the world. (Aboulrouss, The Style and Format of Zyara, 2020)

Why did you decide to get into the journey of making Zyara? Is it related to you in personal way? The core purpose of it.

Since 2012 there was big drastic changes happening within me:

- I wasn't happy being a cinematographer anymore due to social behaviorism (competition, gossip, ingratitude, self-centered attitude, opportunism, fakeness etc....)
I do not state this as a judgement as we were all raised into this dynamic but I was personally unhappy within that dynamic and decided to exit the train.
I personally cannot thrive in that "stagnant water" and I was ready to give up my passion for cinematography to save it from being trespassed on by the dirt of the system.
- I wanted to teach but outside academia for more freedom and alternatives; Because I believe that teaching is mentoring, its accompanying people on a journey and that cannot be done fully during a few hours a week within a credit system.
- I created Cine-Jam the filmmaking workshop, it turned out to be the manifesto of my creative process which I was able to translate and teach to others. It aims to reconnect the artist with their intuitive creativity which is a divine force we have within us; it involves instinctive creative choices made based upon the emotion we choose to portray in our Cine-Jam film.
- My niece Gia was born in October 2013 only to transform back into the light in February 2014, her physical early death (4 moths old) was the most intense experience I have ever lived. 2014 was a family journey of reconstruction and transformation and this is when Denise Jabbour, who went through it all with me, proposed in August 2014 that we go and talk to people about their lives ... to reconnect with people on a genuine level. Denise always had that impulse as she loves to hear stories and meet people, but for me it was the most challenging path because I am the kind of person who prefers aloneness to socializing. I agreed with Denise on the basis of full creative freedom: I shoot what I feel! Gia taught me that life is about the Now and nothing else matters and that made me jump into Zyara despite the discomfort.
- Zyara's audio-visual language was born from that same intuitive creative process which is exactly what I teach: Cine-Jam (authenticity in Art as in life)

How do you pick your crew? And why? Based on what?

Our crew is composed of people we have worked with extensively for the past 15 years on different projects: The camera team: (assistant cam and/or behind the scenes) Rachelle Noja, Elsy Hajjar and Bachar Khattar, the three of them worked with me in the cinematography team on many projects and we became friends since then. For me to be able to work with people, they need to be: talented, passionate, committed, ethical, punctual, genuine and professional. These qualities are all equally important and they should come as a package topped by loyalty and transparency in communication. Since Zyara started the first person we contacted was Rachelle Noja and then with time Bachar and Elsy joined as well as other people they recommended like Lea Lahoud (school videos creator)

and other volunteers we sometimes invite, to help us with the behind the scenes for screenings or for an episode of Zyara. The editing: Liliane Hanbali
I have known Liliane since 1999 and we have worked together on different projects but most importantly we share the same ethics and values and that is why it was very clear that we could only build this “empire of love” with her. Liliane is the most professional, ethical and committed person I know, she is knowledgeable and very speedy despite her acute perfectionism. She puts her heart and soul into her work. Briefly the team should be like a soul family connected by purpose and faith that we want to walk that path together. Zyara is an artistic humanitarian mission and who ever will be involved needs to be there because they feel inclined to do so. We are blessed that our team does and this is why we call ourselves a family.

What did you expect from Zyara when you first started off?

I didn't expect anything specific but we all felt we had a very special project at hand after the first 4 episodes were finalized. Mostly because of the simplicity and authenticity of its content and the originality of its form... it surprised me by taking me into a journey wilder than my dreams. What a blessing it is to be a Zyara maker.

How do you evaluate the experience with the heroes?

People are for me the greatest challenge of life. It is, overwhelming, as it could be draining also. After season 1 (which was more a general chatting about life) Zyara revealed itself (season 2 and onward) as a platform for empowerment and raising awareness on all social causes; so I am blessed to say that most of our Zyara heroes became also our friends and we make sure to stay in touch with them as much as possible. The beauty of being surrounded with people who have overcome their trauma, is that you are always surrounded with that warrior spirit who refuse to surrender, but also you have around you people who are genuine and never in denial of their darkness. Today we have 60 heroes in total, and if we call them heroes it does not mean they are perfect (no one is); it is because they just chose to be heroes of their stories in a moment in time and they had the courage of sharing their lives for the love of life. “I truly believe that when you call someone a Hero... they rise up to meet you”.

Do you identify with the heroes?

In every Zyara there is a part of me... in every human being I see myself. The exact moment where I would be filming the Zyara I am totally one with them, and then when the Zyara takes shape and it is done... it becomes, them and me, as one during the 5 minutes' episodes. When I say “ME” I mean as the audio-visual creator of Zyara but to be clearer I should say “US” because without Denise Jabbour there is no Zyara. She is the soul and the initiator; she is the glaring eyes that absorbs all their emotions. Some people you connect with more than others in life but Zyara taught us the meaning of oneness and compassion... even if u cannot befriend a person it doesn't mean you cannot see their beauty and respect the differences.

Do you feel like you are helping yourselves while helping the heroes?

“If your art doesn’t change you then it is decorative and ephemeral “authentic Art can only be timeless as it is being created through you, like a channeling of codes that can only become a reality for others to see, through you! Of course, for me Zyara has changed me and it brought out the best in me. It will continue to do so because I cracked my shell wide open and jumped into the unknown through Zyara; I am so grateful for it. When I took the decision to change my life and remove the unwanted clutter since 2012... it led me to an emptiness and that was where “Zyara” was born. From that blank canvas came the impulse and from that impulse Zyara was born with its unique codes and cinematic language. In Art as in life, what serves your highest and best will definitely serve others, as an artist whatever you create from the Gut and by intuition is there to heal you and help heal others... because there are no others ... because we are all one!

Were you able to achieve your goals in each Zyara? Please elaborate and say how. If not, why?

The goal of every Zyara is to paint someone’s portrait and record their stories in the most faithful way in order to carry their stories and reveal them to the world. Every Zyara is meant to be a message of resilience, love, self-love, awareness, compassion, forgiveness, oneness etc.

I personally believe that every Zyara has succeeded in its purpose as it was the best we could do at that moment in time. In its imperfection, every Zyara, represents us and the person we visit, at that moment in time. The goal is achieved individually but more so collectively because the power of Zyara is in its collective component and the audio-visual archiving of human emotions which we hope will contribute to a better world long after we exit the world.

Was Zyara therapeutic to you? If yes, how and in what ways? Do you feel like anything in you has changed on a personal level before and after your experience with Zyara? Please explain how and why.

Yes! Zyara is definitely therapeutic for me. I am a loner because I find it hard to be fully myself around others, maybe because they, as well find it hard to be themselves... well I suppose we are all afraid of judgment! I used to only mingle when it was related to my work, keeping in mind that shoots involve big numbers of crew members and that means heavy socializing. The rest of the time had to be for me as I was working extensively the first 20 years of my career, I never took vacations or breaks... I gave it my all and I was 24/7 committed to that. In 2012 I revolted and decided to retire from all that life style... in 2014 Zyara was born. Zyara taught me to feel safe, to open up and allow myself to feel good or bad without defense, Zyara taught me to accept others as they are and remove all expectations of how they should be, Zyara taught me to accept myself as I am and love myself as I am; Zyara taught me about the artist/poet in me, Zyara revived the child in me who just want to create intuitively without smart adult advise, Zyara liberated me from the system or maybe I co-created Zyara because I knew I wanted out of the system without letting go of my love for Cinematography.

Zyara taught me to breathe and meditate, Zyara taught me to cry and enjoy it, Zyara taught me to let go of all expectations... While Cine-Jam paved the way ... Zyara finished the job: I AM FREE!

Do you feel like anything in you has changed on a personal level before and after your experience with Zyara? Please explain how and why.

I am free, I am lighter. When you exit a belief system you feel alone and marginalized at first glance... for me quickly this feeling transformed into a sense of peace I needed and I stayed in that place; in the shadow of the tree out of the human high-speed world. There was anger towards the system... all of it: the religious, the educational, the professional etc.... a lot of anger and disappointment which was only erased by the death of my niece. She emptied me from anger and replaced it with peaceful acceptance of what is and what was... Zyara came after that phase and it was more a call for peace and call for love... I was tired, exhausted and I needed to rest in the arms of the light... the light/the creator/god/nature/the sun etc... I just needed to rest! I rested since 2014 ... I rested in full trust that I will not move a finger unless my gut instinct told me I can... I will not press the record button of my camera unless it was organically triggered by my intuitive emotional creative process... I will not abuse my talents and gifts unless they serve a greater purpose which is my soul, my growth and the life within. Since 2014, I am a Zyara Maker and a teacher for whoever knocks on my door... Zyara revealed me to myself and through it all it revealed the hidden beauty of us all.

Where do you see Zyara in the next five years?

I don't really think much or get attached to fixed visions if it is meant to travel the world ... it will and we will do Zyara with people from all walks of the earth. If it's meant to grow into an international wave with wider reach and greater impact, I would be very happy. Whatever happens I am happy and grateful for life, grateful that Zyara was meant to be born through us (Denise and I) I am so overwhelmed by that.

Why stick to the scar rather than going deeper into the wound?

In my personal opinion when talking of a bleeding wound in public, I see it as an abusive act. Media goes and covers open wounded stories for sensationalism or fund raising all the time...No one is ready to make sense of their bleeding wound in time of chock... no one has a sense of awareness in times of tragedy and trauma and most probably they will regret their words and behavior with time... open wounds need special care and it needs respect and privacy. The scar is a beautiful mark of life that Zyara celebrates proudly. This is what we believe is needed, we are all scarred in many ways... we should not hide them, we should celebrate them! The Zyara heroes are those who look at their scars and smile, those who at least are willing to expose their scars and allow themselves to be vulnerable as an act of self-love. When we choose to love who we are... only then, we can truly love others.

In your opinion, is cinema, films or in other words the audio-visual expression able to help someone overcome a traumatic experience? Is it able to heal someone emotionally to a certain extent?

I believe that Art is a healing tool by nature, Art exists because humans needed to express themselves. We are a work of art, as nature and all living being are. What I call Art is purely an organic authentic act of self-expression in order to exorcise what is raging within... our experiences, our emotions, our observations etc... Art is a selfish act of the self-wanting to come out and scream I exist...I feel... I am! If that is not healing, then what is???

The choice of healing has to be made by the person in order for the healing to take place. The way/tools in which they choose to heal is irrelevant as long as the decision has been made. Art as an act of self-expression, in itself, is healing and this is why Drama therapy was born. The difference between Drama Therapy and the artist intentionally using his/her art to heal is huge... Drama therapy is conducted by a person and the actual art work outcome, quality or impact is irrelevant because it is the act itself that matters, while the artist who is exorcising a piece of his soul on a canvas or a film is intentionally having a surgery to extract the tumor and transform it into a language which can communicate with the whole world.

Zyara for me is my Art and every Zyara holds a piece of my soul chanting to the world, and while Zyara as a creative act has healed me, it also is at its core a collective healing act because the artistic act itself cannot exist without the will of the person we want to visit. Zyara involves the visitor and visited... an interactive creative act... an agreement on healing together. They want to tell their story; we want to paint their spirit: The "Zyara" is born. I don't know how this whole magical process evolved to become what it is but I know for sure that it is being created through us and the only thing that is needed from us is to surrender to its power. The love we feel in every Zyara is the power that makes it what it is today.



DENISE JABBOUR is an award-winning Creative Producer from Lebanon. After a few years of working as an agency producer in Dubai, she came back to Lebanon & worked on a numerous award-winning project. In 2014, she produced “Zyara”, the award-winning doc web-series, in partnership with Muriel Aboulrouss as the first creation of their Association “Home of Cine-Jam”.

Why did you decide to get into the journey of making Zyara? Is it related to you in personal way? The core purpose of it.

Zyara was a personal initiative since the start.

I was surrounded by amazing people since childhood, all coming from different background, from different social classes, with different experiences in life... watching them and listening to them used to fascinate me and still does, all I wanted is to know more about them, to discover them in depth.

In 2014, Lebanon was going through a rough phase and we – as a film crew of freelancers – didn’t have any job or any project to work on. So instead of waiting for something good and productive to happen, we decided that the best way to overcome this tough period is to do something that we believe in... So I had this idea of filming interviews with people, something that is a big interest to me, which is my curiosity to know more about their lives: their dreams, their hopes, their fear, the first time they fell in love, what made them very happy and what caused them pain... Listening to people sharing their personal stories is something that I find so enriching on a personal level, validating their journey in life, making them feel how important they are, laughing with them and crying with them creates a very strong connection on a human level, even if it is only for the time of a Zyara.

Together with Muriel Aboulrouss – The co-creator of Zyara – we decided that this series will be something that unite people through their personal stories in life, away from politics and religion, away from everything that separate us as humans. Our core mission behind Zyara is to say, that no matter how personal, unique and different we are as individuals, we are all one once we go back to our human journey. Our core mission behind Zyara is to say, that no matter how hard the journey we are going through may seem, life will always be a beautiful Zyara.

How do you pick your crew? And why? Based on what?

The first thing I did when I had the idea was to share it with Muriel Aboulrouss, for me she has an exceptional talent in telling stories through very powerful visuals, combining images and existing light.

Muriel is an impulsive artist; she follows her instinct and genuinely cares about the humanitarian values behind every creation she embarks on.

We spoke about Zyara, brain stormed a bit and agreed that she will follow her impulse and film freely whatever she wants and I, from my side, will ask the questions that triggered my curiosity about every person we meet.

Bachar Khattar, Rachel Noja, Elsy Hajjar are more like family members than film crew, we have worked with them since 2009, they are excellent in what they do, professional, discrete with very high ethics and values, they are caring, supportive and believe in the necessity of Zyara. Liliane Hanbali, our editor, is a very important member in the creation of Zyara, she always plays the devil's advocate and question decisions that we might have took from an emotional perspective, she is someone who keeps on reminding us to raise the bar and to push the limits... plus, she is excellent as an editor, she multitask on Zyara as she is the one who handles the sound mix as well, she have very high ethics and values, with a huge faith in the mission of Zyara. Khalil Aboulrouss, the colorist, is excellent, very professional, caring and supportive, he is a core family member with high ethics and values, he has a strong faith in Zyara.

The people I have mentioned here, including myself, are the family behind Zyara, the backbone that holds it together as one piece. They are not simply filmmakers or crew members, they are the Zyara-Makers

What did you expect from Zyara when you first started off?

When we filmed the first 4 episodes as pilot, all we wanted was to do something that we believe in, that have a humanitarian cause and that hopefully will serve humanity, one person at a time. We didn't have any expectations back then, we did it from the heart and trusted life to take care of it. Today Zyara became our mission in life, we are committed to film 12 episodes a year for as long as we live, starting from Beirut then filming all over the world.

How do you evaluate the experience with the heroes?

Entering someone's place for the first time (in most cases) and listening to strangers talking about their life journey turned out to be something very intense and sacred for me.

What's really amazing is the bond we create from the first few minutes which allows them to trust and talk openly about what their personal experiences. Zyara is a co-creation between the Zyara Makers and the hero of each episode, they are an equal collaborator in the creation of their episode.

Do you identify with the heroes?

We don't. While conducting the interview, I sit very close to our hero, we hold each other's gaze, we feel with them, we share their happy moments and their painful ones, but we know that this is their story, we learn a lot from it, it change us forever but we don't identify ourselves with them.

Do you feel like you are helping yourselves while helping the heroes?

In Zyara we don't "help" the heroes, we simply listen genuinely to them and validate their story. Talking about their hard experiences will definitely help them heal and listening to them is a great learning experience for us. When listening to someone talking about their disability, or losing a child, or still searching to find a missing loved one, or transcending an addiction, or facing any difficulties and how they were able to overcome it in a positive way, etc. all these stories and everyone we met, who trusted us and shared genuinely and courageously their journey, made us see our lives into a different perspective, made us appreciate it more and be grateful for every single blessing we have in life. The hero helped understand life better and appreciate it for what it is while counting our blessings.

Were you able to achieve your goals in each Zyara? Please elaborate and say how. If not why?

Zyara is a collaboration between the creators and the hero behind every episode. We have 60 heroes so far who shared different life experience, from rape to being gay, to overcoming an addiction, to losing a child, to honoring the lives of old artist, to being a refugee, to being bullied, to surviving physical abuse, to racisms, etc. Our goal in filming each Zyara is to sit with our hero, establish a relationship based on trust, listen to them sharing their lives, specially the hardest experience they went through and how they were able to overcome it. We were able to achieve this goal every time we filmed a new Zyara, we had rare few cases where the hero censored some details of their story in order to protect their family members... but this was a minor detail and mainly irrelevant to the story they were telling, so it didn't affect the final result of their episode.

Our main goal behind Zyara is to say that no matter how different we are, how unique our personal experience is, we are all one as humans and this as well we were able to achieve, not only through the heroes but through the viewers who watched the episodes and were able to relate to some of our heroes, saying this

was me when I was at the same age, that reminded me of my grandmother, I've been through a similar experience, etc. Zyara managed to bring people together through their personal stories, away from everything that might separate them, from borders, to sex, to religion, to politics, etc. so it did succeed in achieving this as well.

Was Zyara therapeutic to you? If yes, how and in what ways? If no, why and how could it have been done better?

Yes, it was. Every time we visit someone, we listen to their stories on how they went through a very difficult phase in their lives and despite it all, they are still standing and walking through life in a positive way, every time we do that, we come out a bit changed and definitely feeling deeper and lighter. To listen is therapeutic, to talk is therapeutic, to face a hardship that someone went through, which might be something we deeply fear to experience ourselves is therapeutic, to share this sacred and intense moment is therapeutic, to cry with someone over their sadness is therapeutic, to laugh with them over their happy moments is therapeutic, to feel with them, hug them and come out of it caring for them is therapeutic... Everything about Zyara is therapeutic, from the moment someone address us wanting to share their story, till the moment we finalize the episode at the editing suite... all the Zyara journey is therapeutic.

Do you feel like anything in you has changed on a personal level before and after your experience with Zyara? Please explain how and why.

On a personal level we became more sensitive, compassionate and non-judgmental towards others. The ultimate change that happened was discovering that Zyara became our life mission, one of the main purpose for which we live, we have the dream and vision to keep telling these stories for as long as we live, as they are making a positive change in this world, by making the heroes feel lighter and more at peace within and bringing people together by sharing their stories with the world.

Where do you see Zyara in the next five years?

Our vision for Zyara is grand! We aim to film 12 episodes every year, starting from Lebanon, tackling different traumas and different social issues, then moving outside Lebanon to film at least 6 episodes everywhere around the world. Zyara have a global and international vision for us, where you have the map of the world, marked with the Zyara pin, referring to all the countries where Zyara was filmed.

Why stick to the scar rather than going deeper into the wound?

We never address an open wound; we never abuse the fresh traumas of our heroes... We'd rather wait for the person to heal, to learn from the hardship they went through, to have the courage to talk about it and to be willing to share it openly with people from all over the world. Zyara is not about digging deep in an open wound, it is about sharing the scares but more importantly what the person

have learned from it. So, it is much more about the lesson, the resilient spirit and the will to move on in life in a positive way.

In your opinion, is cinema, films or in other words the audio-visual expression able to help someone overcome a traumatic experience? Is it able to heal someone emotionally to a certain extent?

Of course! If someone simply write about their traumas, it will make them feel better... All forms of arts are generally healing... So, think about writing, researching, analyzing, filming, recreating, facing a traumatic experience through a film, it will be a massive process to digest the trauma, face it and get it out of the system under the form of a film.



ELIE BARAKAT, this happening by accident, being born in Beirut, has inspired him to express his admiration for beauty through the city's imperfection in different forms of visual arts. As a director and photographer, he uses his skills to break all visible and invisible boundaries. He doesn't only show his point of view in his image, but also unintentionally helps the viewer understand better the mystery of this world and discover something new about them. He undoubtedly believes that the screen and the photograph can be used as a transformative tool to highlight many social, political, and humanistic cases, therefore he is always up for any challenge that has to do with all aspects of this field. Noir graduated from The Holy Spirit University Kaslik in 1999. His film *"The Man Who Once Carried Me to Bed"* talks about the complexity of a relationship between a father and his son. It was selected in several film festivals and has had positive reviews. His most recent work are two photo exhibitions, *"When I Looked at You"*, *"It's Not All Hearts and Flowers"*. In addition, a short documentary *"Eme-Li"* which won the best Lebanese documentary as well as the short film, *"شوبيبيقي / Shadows In A-Frame"*

What pushed you to make this film?

I have always considered photography and cinema to be my therapy. They both affect me powerfully. I find a photograph, to be worth a thousand words. A film, a motion picture is even more than that. By making this film I wanted to understand myself and my life even more in order to face yet understand my pain and fear of death.

What was the process like? Please explain and mention all phases of production. Writing, preproduction, production, shooting, editing and screening.

I did not plan anything while shooting, it all happened spontaneously. No script and zero production were involved since I shot the entire film with my phone. Of course, I had an idea in mind to start with but I had no script, I didn't want to limit myself. I use to film two scenes per week sometimes one scene and edit simultaneously. It took me around 2 months to finish the film. The ideas and the direction came flowing while shooting and editing. Again, most of the filming was very spontaneous. I allowed the events to guide me through it all. The film was screened in several festivals including the LEBANESE FILM FESTIVAL, FICMEC 8 and BMFF (Batroun Mediterranean Film Festival) and won Best Lebanese Documentary FICMEC 8 and Won BMFF Film Residency Award in KINO GUARIMBA Calabria Southern Italy.

What did it feel like during the screening phase?

I wasn't worried during the screening. Because at one point, I decided I want to be naked and free of everyone around me. So, when I threw it out of my system, no one has got anything on me. I don't feel shy anymore. I don't worry anymore. Because according to me, just like when you take a picture, you don't take it and put it in the closet. Because that isn't therapy. You need to take a picture and show it to people. And when you show it to people you become naked and raw in front of them. Its then up to the people, they either accept you or not. Regardless, people will always continue to criticize. This is what I know how to do and how to do and it is what I did. And I had the courage to expose myself. I can't deny the fact that while watching your film there's the internal feeling of feeling naked, but it's not like I am sad about it, on the contrary its part of therapy to be naked. I was overwhelmed.

What was the hardest phase for you?

The hardest part for me was when I felt like I was taking advantage of the whole situation the day both my mother and I cried in the shoot. I went back into my room and I thought to myself. What if I am not being honest? What if I am being a hypocrite? Kieslowski got once shocked because he discovered documentary was all about manipulation. He once said: documentary is not about showing what real, its more about showing what you want to show as your own

perception. The fact of also editing and making a choice in everything in the documentary makes you manipulate.

What do you think filming with a phone makes of a difference? Why did you choose filming with your phone? Does it give a new or different format to the visual art?

I chose to film this movie with my phone because a phone is more intimate. And people are used to phones nowadays. These people won't worry that you are holding a camera in your hand and following them. Either ways, my mother had already gotten used to me using my phone to take pictures of her. The phone was like a shield between us. It was protecting the both of us. Protecting me as a director not her child, and for her she had no problem and she was very natural in the film. she forgot she was even in front of a camera. The only time the shield got removed was when we both got overwhelmed and I cried. That's when the phone got out of my hands and I wasn't in control anymore. I wasn't the director anymore; I became her son. The phone fell from me and I collapsed. And she felt the same when the phone was no longer filming right in front of us, it was total darkness, we both collapsed in emotions. That's when I noticed that I had to pick the phone back up and continue. When I did that, we went back to me being the director and she being the character. I felt guilty by then, why am I filming this situation and taking advantage of it? But then I realized in the editing, despite that this scene was really painful to me that she was also playing the role of the actress because she asked me in that scene, did we finish? Did you finish filming? It's like she was like she was playing the part of the actress just like I was playing the part of the director.

Do you feel like you have changed as a person after making this film? Are you the same person before and after this film?

Yes, I did. I thought while shooting the film that it was a documentary about my mom but along the way I understood that it wasn't about my mother. It was about me. It was I who needed to change and not my mother. It was I who needed to look from a different angle and understand the purpose of my existence.

Did making the film truly help you overcome your fear and pain? Do you feel like making this film helped you heal entirely? Partially?

It definitely helped me ... let me say it's not the film that helped. It's me who helped myself through this film, through the medium. But also let me explain that we can never remove our pain and we shouldn't, because it will always come back and haunt us. We can never overcome it completely. I don't want to win over it or remove it, I want it to remain and I want to embrace it. We should embrace our pain and fear and not remove them. This is how we learn from them and accept ourselves and be inspired. Pain inspire us, and lets us be born again. After all, aren't we born out of pain? Out of the darkness and pain of the womb?

How do you feel after watching the film now, if you are somehow over the subject?

I am Healed. I hope this will answer your question.

What would your message be to future filmmakers and the cinema industry here in Lebanon itself regarding making films that are as raw as the one you've made?

Cinema is Identity. Never run or shy away from your own true identity. Always start by yourself, your own perception of things of life. The rhythm, the emotions, the feelings, the observation of life around you, the love in you. Only your identity will help you understand yourself through film. For what we see is what we are, for eyes are a projector not only a viewer.

Do you feel like filmmaking, the fact that we picked this medium, a film to express our pain, it is the most healing form out of the 7 arts? If yes why and if not also why?

In my opinion, cinema is the most healing form for me as much as photography also is. Although each form of art has its importance. But to me, when it comes to death, I go back to cinema, because it is the only form that can heal me. Not writing not through painting, nothing. Because all other forms are artificial to me when put in comparison to cinema. Maybe in other words in order not to say artificial, there's something realistic about them that is missing when we are talking about death. Just as Cocteau states: cinema is the only art that films death at work. In painting, you need to paint death, in sculpting you need to sculpt death, in writing you need to write about death. All these don't portray death. Although cinema and photography, the visual expression and medium they are the only medium who portray death. It represents death but it also presents death. Everything put inside cinema states that these people no longer exist. There's a paradox between what is absent and what is present at the same time. Cinema is 24 frames of representation of death.

I made my research about the presentation and representation of death because I wanted to heal from my fear of death. And the only way to do that was through filming and cinema. It was therapeutic for me. Although I didn't talk about the fact that it was therapeutic to me in the research, but the entire act itself was. I used to fear death, and to me photography and cinema are death themselves so going through them and using these mediums had helped me heal and overcome my fear.

Survey with the Audience

List of questions asked

The survey was made over survey monkey.

- 1) What do you believe is the reason for your emotional response to the Zyara hero? Do you get a glimpse of the capacities that you recognize the hero inside yourself? How do you feel when you sense the potential of these inner resources?
- 2) What parts of the Zyara episodes touch you most? Do certain themes in the Zyara reflect themes of your own life?
- 3) Have you discovered transformational gifts of grief after experiencing a loss before, similar to the Zyara heroes?
- 4) What can you learn from the heroes after watching each episode? The fact that you were touched by parts of some episodes might indicate that there is a message that guides you toward healing and wholeness for yourself. What is this message?
- 5) How do you feel after watching each episode from Zyara? What kind of feelings does it elicit?
- 6) Is there anything you dislike about Zyara and would like to recommend?
- 7) Do you believe that Zyara might have had an impact on how you see yourself and the world today?
- 8) Do you feel like Zyara has a potential of change in the Lebanese community and society?
- 9) Was there any aspect of the episode that was especially hard to watch? Could this be related to something that you might have repressed?
- 10) Did you experience something that connected or reconnected you with certain values, virtues, capacities, inner wisdom, or your higher self as you watched the episodes of Zyara or immediately after?

1. What do you believe is the reason for your emotional response to the Zyara hero? Do you get a glimpse of the capacities that you recognize the hero inside yourself? How do you feel when you sense the potential of these inner resources?

Yes, I see the hero in me. I get in touch with my power.

Amazed

The Zyara hero inspired me for years now and reminded me how to jam with lights

Hope

Powerful, human, worthy of love

The second explanation is closer to my emotional response. The human experience uncovers the potential of the human being's inner capacities to transcend and reach the divine. inner capacities human experience uncovers the potential of the human being to reach the divine, his inner capacities. The human experience gets me closer to the human being, more understanding

This question assumes that I see the Zyara character as a hero which I don't, I see them instead as everyday people like me.

Every one of us has a story to tell and everyone that believes in something (goals, achievements, etc...) will eventually reach it. All of Zyara heroes has reached a certain goal that they wanted to achieve and now telling their stories no matter how bad was it to us. That shows a lot of character and courage to do that. From my perspective while Watching Zyara, I always have a certain feeling of Courage.

I am not sure I got the question right, but most of the videos makes me feel less alone. Maybe because I relate to them, or also maybe because I realize how hard can life be and how tough can one be

I love that Zyara heroes suffered a lot whether from physical disabilities or from the society in general but regarding this they never lose hope and they teach us how to stay positive and grateful for the small things we have

I feel like I am capable

Motivation

Epic

I feel it needs immense power to overcome the problems that the heroes of Zyara had done.

The sadness of those stories

Recognition of the hero inside each person

It's the shared human experience and understanding the pain of others and appreciating their courage and strong will
The hero helps me rethink my struggles and inspires me to have strength to overcome them

Je suis en admiration pour ces héros et je me dis que l'être humain est toujours capable de surmonter les difficultés de la vie. Par conséquent, chaque héros de Zyara m'apprend une leçon de vie différente.

الثقة بالنفس

يختلف السبب باختلاف الشخصية، لكن ما قد يجمع كل الشخصيات، هو القدرة على البوح، والانفتاح على عالمهم الداخلي، وهذا بلا شك يستحق الإعجاب والتقدير والاحترام.

كل قصة بطل هي قصة ملهمة ومحفزة. وفي كل قصة بطل جزء منّا. أشعر بالفرح والطاقة والإصرار على إكمال إنجازاتي وبطولاتي ومشاركتها مع الآخرين

مهما كانت قصته، فأشعر بأنه انعكاس لي مما يساعدي على إطلاق العنان لما في داخلي من جراح ومشاعر دفينه، محوّلًا بذلك معاناتي لطاقة ونور

2. *What parts of the Zyara episodes touch you most? Do certain themes in the Zyara reflect themes of your own life?*

Variety of subjects approached

Hearing the heroes' voices with close-ups on their faces and not being allowed to see their full face until the end helps me get an insight into who they are instead of what they look like. I have found themes of anxiety disorders in Zyara to be themes I identify with

First series was the best for me

It's always the peak of the story and the big final shot that shows how the person overcame the big obstacle. I am always touched by themes of never giving up and overcoming life's struggles to build a good life. They are a good reminder.

The human experience

It's the story of my country, of all my people, our collective memory that is being recorded here.

Human side Yes

Love

All themes are interesting because they don't limit the scope of love and care.

They all touch me. Themes of mental challenges touch me

Season 1 (episode of the fisherman) was a thrilling online experience. It was the first time that I was stunned by the cinematic vibe in a web series (it doesn't happen often). The themes which are more relevant for me are Cinema / Art.

This ability of transcending pain with lucidity, intimacy and honesty. Certainly, many experiences meet mine, listening and feeling with "the other" becomes an encounter, a lesson ...

The one that touched me most was the episode of Youssef Majed. SUCH AN INSPIRATION

Sharing your story and opening up is a very challenging, I relate to the authenticity of the characters and stories

Sometimes I do feel connected to what I am listening to, and sometimes the pain is so strong I find myself just watching. almost speechless. I have two or three episodes that come to my mind when I think of Zyara but I don't find a direct link between them. So, I cannot tell which part touch me the most.

I identified myself in most of the stories shared. it's so beautiful to see portraits of other people.

People who exhibit their dark side

Toutes sans exception.

L jeze2 l tene houwe aktar jeze2 assar fiye. Li2eno Bi farjina ede 3ena ni3am w ma 3m n3ref imeta. Bl wa2et li fi 3alam khosro nazaron aw sama3on aw Chaklon l kherje bs tkhatto kel hl chi w woslo la matra7 kbir Bi 7aue-ton

أكثر المشاعر التي لمستني هي الخوف وتحديداً الخوف من الاختلاف. هذا بالإضافة إلى فكرة التعايش والتصالح مع الماضي وجراحه

في حياتي بالتحديد، هناك عدّة قصص وعدّة مواضيع وأحداث، وبالتالي فكلّ مواضيع زيارة تلامس قلبي وعقلي

المشروع عموماً بكافة أجزاءه يتسم بالصدق والحميمية، بالنسبة لي الحلقات التي تعمقت في الناحية الإنسانية من حياة الضيف كانت الأكثر تأثيراً

لا يمكن الإجابة على هذا السؤال بشكل محدد إلا أنه الحلقات كافة استطاعت أن أكون قريب منها

3. *Have you discovered transformational gifts of grief after experiencing a loss before, similar to the Zyara heroes?*

Yes

Fighting against my own dark side was one of my biggest achievements

No

Yes

No

Humility, modesty, acceptance, courage, a feeling you are not alone in your grief and a motivation to move forward

Sorry to say it this way but I'm 32 years and I haven't experienced grief yet. This is why it seems to me that the Zyara heroes are real heroes.

Not all hardship is transformational. You have to be open to change and transformation for it to take place. It is a conscious act

Yes

Noy really but I will never stop watching Zyara I just love it

Yes, but none that are similar to any Zyara episode

Yes. ALOT.

I am a Zyara hero myself

Yes

Yes

Sometimes yes

Journey

Yes

Parfois je sens une similitude entre le héros et moi concernant le sentiment de culpabilité et la tristesse.

باعتقادي مشاعر الذنب هي الحالة المشتركة بين البشر. وبالتالي فالحزن أيضاً. كل بطل استطاع أن يواجه مشاعره هذه هو مصدر إلهام لي ولغيري، لأن في مواجهة مشاعرنا طريق عبورنا إلى الحياة

مشاهدة أحدهم يتشارك شعور الذنب مع الآخرين، يسقط تلقائياً عن كاهلي جزءاً كبيراً من أي ذنب كان قد أرتكبته، وهذا ينطبق على الشعور بالخزن أيضاً. فكلنا نأس عندما ندرك أن ما يراودنا من مشاعر وأفكار يراود آخرين.

4. What can you learn from the heroes after watching each episode? The fact that you were touched by parts of some episodes might indicate that there is a message that guides you toward healing and wholeness for yourself. What is this message?

Kel ma o7dar 7al2a jdide men Zyara. Befham ede kbire w 7elwe l ne3am yale alla 3atina yeha. Eno nou3a l sobe7 hayde ne3me Eno nkoun mne2cha3 aw mn emche aw Mne7ke hayde ne3me. Eno ykoun fi ahel w as7ab w 3alam Bi 7ebouna 7weleyna hayde ne3me. Kel 7al2a men Zyara bet3alemne adder aktar w aktar kel ne3me alla 3atine yeha. Law ad ma tkoun basita. Hayde l ne3me li Ana bchoufa basita. Fi nes ma7roume Mena w Mest3ede t3mol l moustawil ta temteleka. Fi sadi2 la ele mkarsa7 alle Marra "7elme ou3a chi Yom w Ana oum men l takhet la 7ale w emche" Farjene ede kbire l ne3me li alla 3atine yeha eno be2dar emche. M3 eno hayda l chi houwe Bl nesbe ele routine yawme. Lezem n2ader l ni3am li alla 3atina yeha law ad ma kenet zghire Bi nazarna. Li2eno hayde 7elem la 3alam tenye

Yes, Zyara is a healing journey to watch. The message I get is honor your pain, thank it, say sorry for hating it, love your pain and move on to help others suffering from it like you.

The best message is that love and compassion can do miracles

Authentic

The inner light

To find a light at the end of the tunnel

No answer, still figuring out my way through life.

It's never as bad as you think. You can always find the light in the dark if you reach within you

There is always a way There is always light

To be true to myself. This is what I wish I could achieve before I die

Be your authentic self and own your story

Life goes on. Or In other words, like you guys say " Life is a beautiful Zyara" so treated like one. Keep your positive energy and you will surpass any obstacle that comes your way. " Il7ayat Helwa, bass Nifhamha.."

I learn that perseverance is key and to always be thankful and have a positive outlook

No matter how much we suffer or how big are problems are we are just here for a Zyara and should benefit from every second and remain happy and positive finding meanings in life and gratitude despite high levels of adversity

Love is all what we need

Love always wins

Hope, perseverance

Qu'il faut toujours faire preuve de courage et de détermination devant les obstacles de la vie.

عدم الخوف من مواجهة مخاوفنا وفشلنا وضعفنا، بل تسمية هذه التجارب والبوح عنها يزيدنا قوة ويقربنا من الشفاء

أتعلم أن أتعلم من تجارب حياتي فبمواجهتها أولاً وقبلها ثانية، أصنع لنفسني طريقاً خاصاً بي. وأتعمّم مشاركة هذه الطريق مع الآخرين لتحفيزهم وتشجيعهم على المضيّ قدماً، والاستفادة من أحداث حياتهم، لنكون جميعاً بصلة مترابطة مع أنفسنا ومع الكون

الاصرار على ما أنت عليه

جُلّ ما تعلمته هو التحدّث والمشاركة من جهة، وتقبّل الآخر ومحبته من جهة أخرى. وذلك إنما هو خمر أساس في رحلة شفائنا من جروحنا وخطوة كبيرة نحو الكمال

5. How do you feel after watching each episode from Zyara? What kind of feelings does it elicit?

I cry a lot and feel empowered at the same time

Strength. But sometimes sadness

human, equal, nostalgic

Intimacy, honesty, respect

Different from episode to another. Some of them means nothing! On another hand first episodes for me was a huge success and i waited for them! Amazing

It elicits feelings of joy, compassion, victory and love

Genius

Depends all spectrum of feelings

connected to humanity

Sadness and hopefulness

Sadness and gratitude.

Hope

I think watching Zyara this year in particular is kind of difficult due to the general world situation and the local tragedy in Lebanon. I used to find comfort in the grief and calmness of Zyara episodes, as a break from the stress of life. But now, everything is gloomy around us. It became a bit hard to go through the whole 5 minutes. But aside from 2020, Zyara always gave me a feeling of hope and serenity.

Courage and Hope.

I feel mostly connected

It's a feel-good moment or a compassionate feeling after I've watched one Zyara episode

emotional touched and a sense of hope in humanity

Men Ba3ed kel 7al2a bo7dara men Zyara. B7ess bl za3al Wel chafa2a. Akid mich 3ala l batal l 7al2a. Bechfa2 3leyna w bez3al 3leyna. Bez3al 3leyba li2eno fi ktir oumour sakhife ne7na mkabrina w mfakrina mechekle bl nesbe elna. Bez3al li2eno 3ened a2ala mechekle betwejhba mnetdamar w mnestaslem. Bl wa2et yale fi nes ktir 3endon msayeb ktir kbire. Bs hene cheyfina ne3me w edrin yet2aklamo w 3yt3eyacho ma3a w ykouno sa3idin aktar men a Bi 7ayeton. Hole l nes byetala3o bl nos l melyn men l kebeye. W hl chi Bi se3edon ya yet2adamo w yetghallabo 3ala alamon w waja3on

Je sens de la compassion et de la fierté vis à vis du héros

أبتسم وأحب

أشعر بالفخر أولاً أن لدينا هكذا "زيارة" يمكن أن تشقلب حياة الناس نحو الأفضل فقط من خلال 5 دقائق من المشاهدة المميزة. أشعر بالفرح لتعرفني على أبطال جدد، ورسالتنا واحدة. أشعر بالرغبة بأن أشارك الفيديو ... مع كل الناس ليشعروا مثلي وأكثر

الفخر، المحبة، التصالح.. الخ

الهدوء، ورغبة عميقة بالتأمل

6. Is there anything you dislike about Zyara and would like to recommend?

No
No
No
No
No
No

Zyara episodes are coherent units that have their harmonious flow. Nothing to discard or omit.

I would love to see Zyara without the superposition or the double exposure effect. I'm so intrigued on how you will direct it.

Keep going.

I love Zyara. I am not sure if I would change anything about it. Maybe Zyara needs new themes? I somewhat felt that previous seasons were of a more powerful impact. Season 5 has this slow gloomy atmosphere, despite the beautiful profound art that you do. Then again, is it the 2020 effect? I am not sure.

Season one for me was enough. The repetitive directing style I would recommend you to change it because in some of your episodes the way of directing stopped me from watching. I recommend to have different types of shootings with different styles

I wish you post more frequently

Some episodes feel repetitive

I love everything about it, you should expand your stories and look for people in more regions

Perfect imperfections

Seeing more the person behind the story

Zyara is one of the best art projects in opinion

Tout le travail de zyara me plaît

Ana cherket Bi 7al2a men 7al2et Zyara. Zyara bl nesbe ele houwe hayda l daw yale men choufo Bi ekher tunelle aswad w moszem. Houwe daw l amal yale Bi daw Bi wej kel ensen 3m Bi 3ene men mechekle aw de2 m3ayan w Mano 3eref Kif yetkhatti. Zyara w abtal Zyara 3atoul mawjoudin kermel yse3do hole l 3alam

ta yousalo la hayda l daw w yetkhato l chi yale hene manon met2ablino. Zyara is perfect

لا يوجد

لا يوجد شيء محدد

زيارة هي حبّ متكامل. من الفكرة إلى الأشخاص إلى المقابلة إلى التصوير إلى الإخراج إلى المونتاج إلى الترجمة إلى طريقة المشاركة بتوقيت محدد، ومشاركة كل يوم صورة جديدة.... أفتقد في الأونة الأخيرة الفيديوهات التي يرسلها الأبطال بعد عرض حلقاتهم. فكرتها جيّدة، وأحبّها أن تكون عفوية أكثر

لا أفكر كثيرًا لدى مشاهدتي "زيارة". أشعر فقط. وبالتالي فإنني لا أكون بوارد التعليق أو الإنتقاد بل استخلاص أنقى المشاعر الإنسانية

7. Do you believe that Zyara might have had an impact on how you see yourself and the world today?

kel ensen yemken yeje Yom w yet3araf la 7edes m3ayan Bi 7ayeto Ma32oul ykhali yef2od chi Ken met3awad 3le. Zyara bt3alemna eno ma lezem nettalla3 bl akhar nazret chafa2a. Li2eno Hayda l ensen yale 3m nonzorlo nazret chafa2a yemken ykoun 3eyech Bi sa3ade aktar mena w metkhata soh3oubto w met2aklam ma3a. W ne7na li mnemlok Kelachi w mch na2esna chi. Houwe bl we2e3 na2esna kel chi

Yes, it is essential Zyara is spread all over the Middle East to educate people about pain and not to be ashamed of our fears, illness, handicaps and challenges

No. It has had an impact on me. I discovered multiple Lebanese real-life characters which made me think about positivity and long-term happiness.

It confirms to me things I already knew

It touches me deeply. The way the heroes talk about their obstacles makes me feel as if everyone has chosen their life. Which makes it easier for me when i think about my problems.

No

It definitely did

Yes

Yes definitely

Definitely it broadens the perspectives of tolerance, understanding, compassion and surely closeness and love to all

Zyara was one of the main reasons that pushed to do a film on myself to overload my feelings. It was like a Zyara from me to me and I very much needed that.

Yes. Honestly, I used to dwell in negative thoughts but not anymore. I removed a lot of pages that made me feel uncomfortable or not worthy enough and one of the great pages I have left on my social media accounts is Zyara. It helps me stay positive and grateful

Yes, it made me want to reach out and inspire others

Kind of! Sometimes I see that you search for some known people or stories! We need something new! That's what 1 season brought us! After it I am sorry, I didn't really like most of them

Yes! YES! YES!!! To the better :) Both as a Zyara hero and as a member of audience. It's Inspiring and makes you do a lot of self-reflection!

In some episodes yes

It's more ways to see life, my life, my country. Zyara would be gain to have a bigger exposure with the people who are not already in touch with their feelings and who do not have a sense of belonging to humanity

Oui j'ai une meilleure conception du monde et de la vie.

زيارة" وما تحمله معها من مشروع إنساني ورسالة أمل وإلهام لن تغيب، بل غيّرت من حلقاتها الأولى
نظرتي لنفسي وللعالَم لتجعلها نظرةً أنقى

طبعاً. أشعر بارتباطي أكثر مع العالم، فكأننا متشابهون في المعاناة وفي ابتكار طرق التعافي. أشعر أن رسالتي الشخصية جزء من رسالتنا الكونية. وأنا كواحدة من أبطال زيارة لهذا الموسم، أوكد أن هذا اللقاء مطبوع بذاكرتي وبوجداني للأبد

ممكّن لكن أتصور أن يكون هنالك مكان تعرض فيه الحلقات ويتم مناقشتها ويشارك فيها الكبير والصغير
لأنني أتصور أننا بحاجة لتغيير الكبار وغيرهم من أجل تقبل الاختلاف

بالتأكيد لها تأثير كبير

8. Do you feel like Zyara has a potential of change in the Lebanese community and society?

Maybe

Absolutely

Yes, listeners and viewers cannot but react or respond and be inspired or motivated to look into oneself

of course, and without being 'pushy'

Yes, if distributed amongst closed societies

I am sure Zyara has a local and international impact on a society (starting by the web one).

I hope so

I hope so. I don't think it can be done easily though.

Lebanese people don't like to embrace change as is evident in the political and sectarian divisions but it is good that Zyara gives people a voice that otherwise is not heard and represented

Of course! We need more people like Zyara

Yes, especially in schools

Definitely! In a condition to make the community/society involved more (in my POV)

Absolutely

Yes

Yes, more exposure, always more exposure, especially within the older generation

Absolutely it can. It only needs more propaganda to reach a wider range of audience

I would say yes even if it's 1% of a positive impact. But the thieves running this country will never allow positive change.

Oui certainement.

Abtal Zyara henne heros. Heros tkhatto achadda l sou3obet Bi 7ayeton w kafo 7ayeton w nej7o fiya. W talama fi 3alam hek w hole l 3alam edrin ya3to motivation ktir awiye Lal 3alam akid hl chi r7 Bi ghayer Bi nazret l moujtama3 l lebnene Lal gher. Moujtama3na moujtama3 kello show off w fi ktir bullying. Zyara ejet ta twa2ef l bullying

طبعاً كل مشاركة هي دعوة للتغيير. فكيف اذا كانت هذه المشاركة هي زيارة. المجتمع اللبناني مجتمع منغلق، كل مجموعة على نفسها. لأننا كغيرنا مجتمع يقدر الصمت والسكوت. والتغيير يبني بالكلام والمشاركة خاصة مشاركة قصصنا العميقة وزوايانا الممنوعة من الصرف

إنه مشروع زيارة من نوع المشاريع الذي يقترب ببساطة من قلوب الناس ويساعدهم على إعادة قراءة حياتهم وحياة من حولهم، وهو بالتأكيد مشروع مؤثر

كثيرًا حتى ولو بوتيرة بطيئة.

أجل، المجتمع اللبناني قابل للتغيير

**9. Was there any aspect of the episode that was especially hard to watch?
Could this be related to something that you might have repressed?**

It is hard for me to watch to see how many people in Lebanese society are marginalized by others because it reminds others of the fears, they are not facing

No, I didn't experience that "difficult to watch" feeling while seeing Zyara episodes. Zyara make me think how powerful is the Inner light which lives in each of us.

When I feel sad, I avoid watching some episodes

No. Everything is smooth, and flowing. There is some kind of respects towards both heroes and the spectators

The loss of a beloved one and the strength of belief to go on.

Not really, reality is hard

I wouldn't say "hard to watch" but i remember seeing few episodes that I didn't like to continue. Maybe I get affected by the tone of their voice. Some are more intriguing to me than others

No

No

No

No

No

It's not hard to watch

No, I can't really recall any

Intense

Sometimes yes

It varies. But I personally cannot watch suicidal themes even if they are hopeful. They bring about very negative emotions.

No, personally I am ready to receive all scenes despite the harshness in some

it's usually well narrated, filmed and directed

The feeling of helplessness when I see the world, and Lebanon, collapsing. Zyara brings more hope into this world.

لا أذكر شيئاً من هذا القبيل

لا أتذكر ان حدث معي شيئاً كهذا. أظن لأنني خرجت وأخرج كل يوم من دائرة لاوعيي، ونفسي تتعلّق بكل ما يساعدني على الوعي وتغيير نفسي قبل كل شيء. وبالتالي صحيح، الأشخاص الهاربون من زواياهم العميقة يجدون حتماً صعوبة في الإصغاء إلى قصص الأبطال حتى لا يفقدوا السيطرة على لاوعيهم

10. Did you experience something that connected or reconnected you with certain values, virtues, capacities, inner wisdom, or your higher self as you watched the episodes of Zyara or immediately after?

Yes

Yes

No

Yes

Yes

Always

Oui je me sens plus forte à affronter les problèmes qui peuvent entraver mon chemin dans la vie.

As a spiritual and human being, I feel connected to this Inner light you always explore on your episodes throughout the seasons.

it is clear that Zyara promotes important human value related with different topics

It helped me to meditate more, to value inner abilities and to reach a higher strength. A feeling of relief somehow and empowerment.

Filmmaking is my passion. But I lose it sometimes. Zyara makes me fall in love again in it. That's what I admire the most in Zyara. It makes me want to hold a camera and enter every house I can. And I thank you for that.

As I said in the previous answer, be your authentic self and own your story

If you want to grow as a person, don't be afraid of sharing your story. You never know who's at the end of the screen watching your story and Experiencing something very similar to what you are experiencing. Your story might help others to recover as well.

I believe that all men are created equal. Every episode of Zyara reminds me of that. No matter how the person looks or what he believes in he is worthy of love. I just love the fact that you guys highlight on this

Sometimes yes as mentioned before

Of course, :) Especially themes of forgiveness and strong will

I connect with my childhood and embrace all the peon with love and pride

Connection with others

Action is always the answer

لا أقدر أن أهدد بشكل دقيق. ولكن كما قرأت من يومين: لا تعرف أنك قوي إلا عندما لا يعود لديك خيار آخر سوى أن تكون قوي. وهذا ما أشعره بمتابعة أبطال زيارة: كل بطل هو بطل لأنه لم يستسلم وتحلى بالقوة والشجاعة ليأخذ حياته بالاتجاه الصحيح.