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© Islam Kamal, Marouan Omara

One Plus One Makes a Pharaoh's Chocolate Cake

Marouan Omara, Islam Kamal

2016, color, 37 min., English, Arabic, French. **Producer** Thomas Burkhalter, Mark Lotfy. **Production companies** Fig Leaf Studios (Alexandria, Egypt), Norient Sounds (Bern, Switzerland). **Director of photography** Islam Kamal. **Sound** Sameh Nabil. **Sound design** Raef Ali. **Editor** Islam Kamal, Michael Shafek. **Production manager** Sameh Gamal. **With** Islam Chipsy, Aïsha Devi.

Contact: <http://www.figleafstudios.com>

Islam Chipsy from Egypt and Aïsha Devi from Switzerland are two musicians whose main strength lies in their live performances, informed by a non-repetitive unique style that YouTube or SoundCloud will never be able to reproduce.

One Plus One Makes a Pharaoh's Chocolate Cake documents the process of a week of meetings between Aïsha and Chipsy in Cairo, Egypt where they were asked to produce a collaborative music track. Shot on a VHS camera, the experimental, performative project was conceived to be full of improvisation, with no fear of failure from either the filmmakers or the musicians, and no pressure to produce a final product, be that a finished piece of music or a documentary film.

Cultural exchange is not the process of "Here's my culture, I'll have some of yours" that we sometimes think it is. Rather, it is something that should be mutual and deeply based in commonality and equality. *One Plus One Makes a Pharaoh's Chocolate Cake* is an inquiry into the difficulties of artistic collaboration and questions whether anything is ever actually exchanged within so-called cultural exchange.

Marouan Omara, born 1987 in Cairo, Egypt, is a filmmaker based between Cairo and Alexandria. He holds a diploma in filmmaking from the Art & Technology of Cinema Academy and a BA in Applied Arts from Helwan University. He currently works as an adjunct professor for film production at the American University in Cairo. He also works closely with Fig Leaf Studios, an independent company that leads many international co-productions in Egypt. He was the managing director of Cairo Industry Forum, as part of Cairo International Film Festival 2014, and part of the selection committee in 2015. His films have been shown in major international film festivals.

Islam Kamal was born in 1978 in Alexandria, Egypt, where he is also based today as a visual artist and a filmmaker. He studied painting in the faculty of fine arts at Alexandria University and in 2004 filmmaking at the Jesuit Cultural Center in Alexandria. In the same year he started working as a director of photography for several films and directed several short films and documentaries. Since 2006 he has been the head of the video production department at Fig Leaf Studios, an audio-visual production house founded in 2005.

Films

Marouan Omara: 2013: *Crop* (47 min.). 2015: *Azziara/The Visit* (43 min.). 2016: *One Plus One Makes a Pharaoh's Chocolate Cake*.

Islam Kamal: 2004: *Icarus* (10 min.), *Made in Max* (10 min.), *City Report* (13 min.). 2006: *Gudranne* (9 min.). 2007: *Filmer les pierres naturelles* (9 min.). 2008: *God Creates Still Life* (15 min.), *Surface* (10 min.), *Public Domain* (24 min.). 2009: *Shali Ghali* (24 min.). 2010: *Local Copy* (21 min.). 2011: *Dream 79* (10 min.). 2012: *Hayat* (16 min.). 2015: *Azziara/The Visit* (43 min.), *Expired* (14 min., Forum Expanded 2016). 2016: *One Plus One Makes a Pharaoh's Chocolate Cake*.