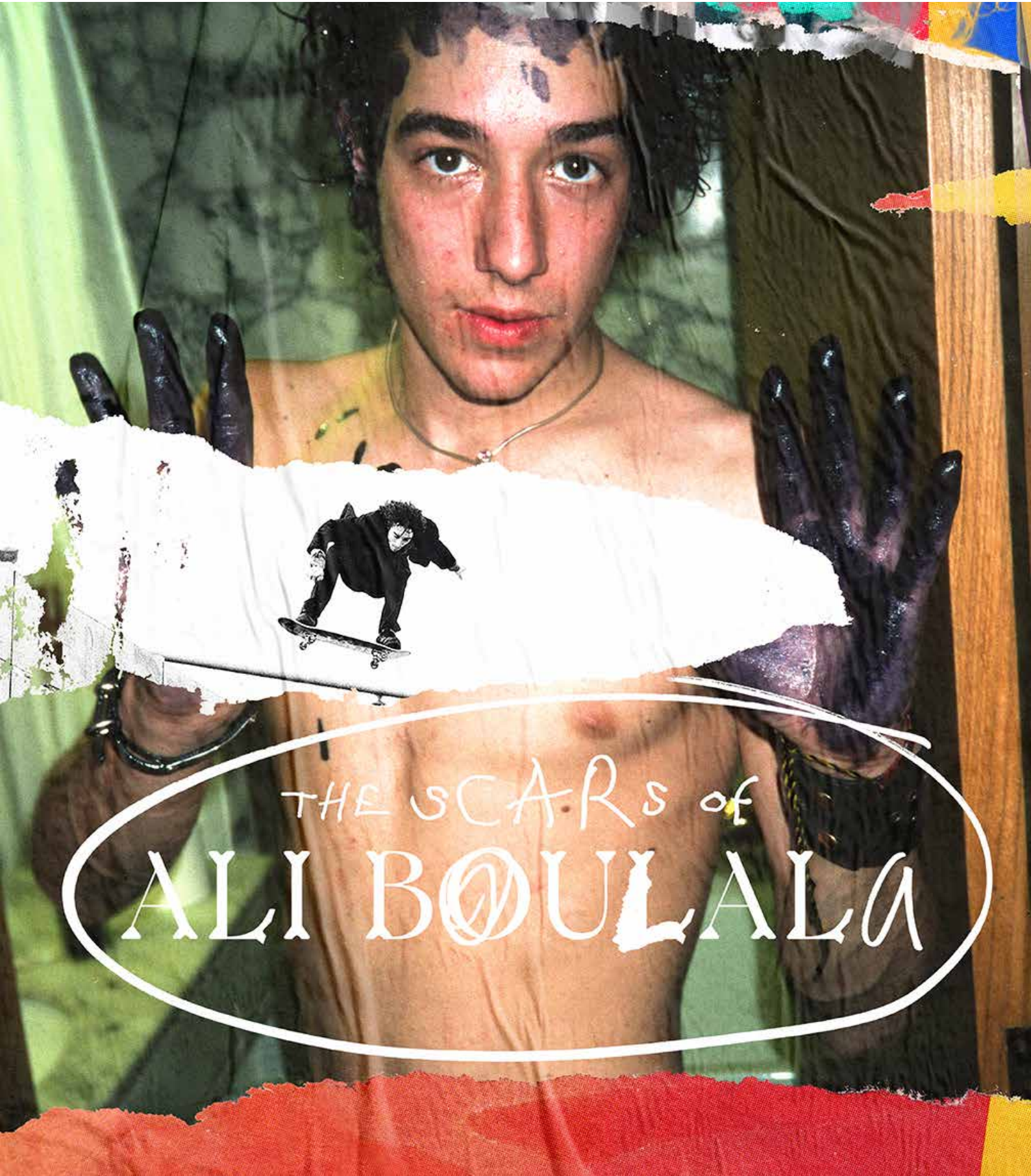


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DOSSIER DE PRESSE



THE SCARS of
ALI BOULALA

THE SCARS OF ALI BOULALA

un film de MAX ERIKSSON



Documentaire - 2021 - Suède/Norvège - 100 minutes

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SYNOPSIS

Ali Boulala a pratiqué le skate depuis son plus jeune âge. Mais jamais il n'aurait cru devenir skateur professionnel. Son rêve se réalise quand, à l'âge de 16 ans, un sponsor lui permet de s'envoler pour Los Angeles, où il devient une star. Mais la vie exubérante du jeune skateur excentrique va finir par dérailler.

Toutes sortes d'excès vont ponctuer son parcours, jusqu'à un accident de moto fatal, en 2007. Reconnu coupable d'homicide involontaire, Ali est condamné. Mais à sa sortie de prison, il n'est plus le même.

Ce documentaire dresse le portrait d'un skateur professionnel jeté trop jeune dans le milieu du business et des paillettes.



MAX ERIKSSON

DIRECTOR & CO-SCREENWRITER

Max Eriksson (born 1983) is a Swedish documentary filmmaker based in Stockholm. Originally from Helsingborg in the south of Sweden, Max found an interest in photography at a young age. His interest in the visual arts is what led him to become a fashion stylist. In this role, what Max found most rewarding was creating fashion imagery based on building characters and telling stories, as opposed to focusing on trends. His clients ranged from musical artists to fashion magazines and fashion shows.

Max has previously directed the short documentaries TIVOLILAND (2013) and SHUT EYES (2011). This is his first feature film.

FILMOGRAPHY

2021	THE SCARS OF ALI BOULALA
2013	TIVOLILAND
2011	SHUT EYES



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

When I saw Ali sitting alone in a bar in Stockholm, I remembered hearing about the accident and the death of his best friend, his time in prison, and that he could no longer skate. He did not appear as the same larger-than-life man I knew of. The evidence of the years was visible on his face. The questions started spiraling in my mind: How does he cope with the loss of his best friend? How does he deal with guilt and responsibility? How does he handle losing the ability that has defined him? The film tells the story of Ali's rise and fall, as well as his path toward possible redemption. Archival material shot on a variety of formats chronicling Ali's years as a pro skater forms the base of the film. This material brings in viewers who may not be familiar with Ali and his legacy into the world of his past and introduces them to the central figures in Ali's life during that time. The feel of the film follows the punk ethos of the skate community by combining these collections of disparate scenes from multiple time periods, disparate audio-visual formats (ranging from fish-eyed lenses to Super-8 film stock), to disparate voices and points of view. Through the liveliness of this archival material from a time gone by, we get a vivid picture of what it was like for Ali to live a life without limits, and as such, we come to understand the profoundness of his loss. Slowly, we come to see a person of contradictions emerge: a contemplative, soft-spoken man with a wild past; a destructive perfectionist. The form of the film also takes on this duality through a combination of the high-energy of the past with the state of limbo of the present day.

- Max Eriksson



ALI BOULALA

Ali Boulala was born in Stockholm, Sweden to a Finnish mother and Algerian father. At 16, he moved to the United States to become a professional skateboarder sponsored by Flip. From an early age, he was characterized as always being the wildest and the craziest of anyone. He brought this energy to his skating and also to the atmosphere of partying that surrounded the skate scene. After being deported from the United States he started using harder drugs such as heroin and crack. Ali continued to tour Europe and Australia with Flip until causing the motorcycle accident in Melbourne that killed Shane Cross in 2007.

Ali suffered multiple injuries during the accident and was placed in a medically-induced coma for a month. During a year-long rehabilitation process, Ali re-learned how to hold a fork, how to feed himself, and how to walk. He then stood before an Australian judge and spoke only one word during the trial: guilty. Ali was charged with culpable driving and served two years in an Australian prison, after which he was immediately deported back to Sweden.

Ali's injuries from the accident affected both his body and his brain. Despite physical rehabilitation, damage to his hip forced him to walk with a limp. Damage to his brain affected his balance (as well as his memory), making it impossible for him to ride a skateboard. During the years following his return to Sweden, Ali spiraled into a deep abyss of depression and drug and alcohol abuse, absurdly hoping that if he just took enough drugs, he would be able to bring Shane back to life. A car accident in a parking garage in Stockholm was the final straw. Ali decided then and there that he would either commit suicide or seek help.

In 2013, he took the first steps to address his addiction and now, 7 years later, continues to attend daily Narcotics Anonymous meetings. He currently lives a quiet life in the suburbs of Stockholm with his girlfriend, Sanna, and his chihuahua, Peggy. Even though he no longer skates, he continues to live off of his former wild-child image, lending his name and brand recognition to shoe and clothing companies in order to make a living. The tragedy of Shane's death continues to haunt him, and this grief is something that he carries with him as part of his punishment.



CAST BIOGRAPHIES

SHANE CROSS (@shanecrossforever – tribute page) was an Australian skateboarding prodigy characterized by his pathological aversion to showers and his infectious good humor. He was recruited to the Flip team, joining the world tour as a teen. Younger than many of the other skaters on the team, joining Flip was Shane's opportunity to skate alongside his childhood heroes. While Shane was known for his fun-loving personality, he came into Ali's life at a point when drug and alcohol use on the team had reached a breaking point. Their friendship was a space of light in the ever-darkening chaos of Ali's life. Shane died on March 7, 2007 while riding on the back of Ali's motorcycle while both were heavily intoxicated. The motorcycle hit a curb at 19 mph, throwing them both into a wall. This wall now features a memorial mural in Shane's memory. Shane was only 20 years old when he died.

EWAN BOWMAN (@bo_def_son) is a Scottish skater-turned-videographer who joined the Flip team in 2003. He accompanied the team on world tours in order to capture footage for Flip video productions such as Really Sorry and Extremely Sorry. He also acted as the tour manager, trying to bring order to the chaos of traveling with a van full of young guys who had no real responsibilities in life other than to occasionally skate. Ewan and Ali remain close friends to this day, with Ewan traveling to Stockholm to celebrate Ali's 40th birthday. During this visit, Ewan reveals that Shane's father would like to meet Ali. Ewan currently lives in California.

ARTO SAARI (@artofoto) is a Finnish skateboarder who spent most of his professional career on the Flip team. In 2008, he left the team due to distress over Shane Cross's death. Arto has now been sober for almost 9 years. Arto currently lives in Hawaii.

DUSTIN DOLLIN (@therealdustindollin) is an anarchic Australian skateboarder who started his professional career riding for Baker Skateboards as a teen. He became the "mascot" of a group of skaters (which included Ali) who lived on Warner Avenue at Huntington Beach, California from 1998- 2000 and called themselves Piss Drunx. A 2001 Rolling Stone feature about the Piss Drunx described them as "the most dysfunctional degenerates to ever bust an ollie." Dustin currently lives in Paris.

KEVIN "SPANKY" LONG (@kevinspankylong) is an American professional skateboarder and illustrator who joined the Baker team in 2003 as a teenager. During a night of drinking in 2011, a friend lit Kevin's shirt on fire as a joke. The shirt was made of flannel and immediately went up in flames. Kevin suffered third-degree burns on his entire upper body. After escalated drinking and drug use, he is now sober. Kevin currently lives in California.

RUNE GLIFBERG (@runeglifberg) is a Danish skateboarder who turned pro at age 18 in 1992, riding for Flip. Now in his mid-40s, Rune will compete in the Tokyo Olympics (scheduled for 2021). This is the first time skateboarding is included as a competitive Olympic sport. Rune currently lives in Copenhagen.

ERIK ELLINGTON (@erikellington) is an American professional skateboarder and co-founder of Baker Skateboards. Now sober, he was also a founding member of the Piss Drunx. Eric currently lives in California.

ALEX MOUL (@moulyalx) is a UK-born skater who became a pro at age 12. He and Ali were the original tenants at the Warner Avenue apartment in Huntington Beach. Alex currently lives in California.

CREW BIOGRAPHIES

MARIO ADAMSON | PRODUCER

Mario Adamson is a producer and founder of Sisyfos Film Production, an independent production company based in Stockholm, Sweden and Edinburgh, Scotland that produces high-profile documentaries with a focus on creative collaborations with international and domestic directors and producers who have a unique voice, a high artistic ambition and share the passion for the art of cinematic storytelling.

Mario has produced and co-produced such internationally acclaimed films as the multiple award-winning documentary *Scheme Birds* by Ellen Fiske and Ellinor Hallin (Best Documentary Feature, Tribeca Film Festival, 2019), *Merry Christmas, Yiwu* by Mladen Kovacevic (Winner of the Heart of Sarajevo, 2020), *The Scars of Ali Boulala* (world premiere at Tribeca Film Festival, 2021), the animated short films *Still Born* (Swedish Academy Award 2015 and The Goldene Taube for Best Documentary Short in Leipzig, 2015). Mario is an alumnus of the EURODOC and Jihlava Emerging Producer programme, as well as the Sundance Institute Fund. He is originally a sound designer/composer with a career spanning four decades in the film industry.

ASHLEY J. SMITH | PRODUCER

Originally from the United States, Ashley Smith joined Sisyfos Film Production in 2018. She has degrees in Cinema Studies from Suffolk University in Boston, USA and Stockholm University in Sweden. In 2018, she published her PhD dissertation on contemporary uses for archival home movies. Along with Mario Adamson, she is currently producing the feature documentaries, *The Scars of Ali Boulala* (directed by Max Eriksson, world premiere at Tribeca Film Festival, 2021), *Elevated* (directed by Gustav Littorin), *Don't Make It Easy* (directed by Charlotta Hayes), *The Chaplain* (directed by Clara Harris), and *Afterlife* (directed by Malin Nicander).

ANITA NORFOLK (FOLK FILM) | CO-PRODUCER

Anita Norfolk is the founder of Folk Film, an independent production company in Bergen, Norway that focuses on creative documentaries and animation. Prior to founding Folk Film Anita worked for more than a decade in the UK. She spent five years in London at Mosaic Films working across content for online, festival and broadcast release. She was the development producer on the feature documentaries *Out of Thin Air* (Netflix, BBC Storyville) and *I am Samuel* (Sundance grantee, premiere Hot Docs 2020), and the series producer on *When I Worry About Things*, an animated documentary series on childhood mental health that won a Royal Television Society Award. In 2020, she was selected for the Berlinale Talents.

MIKEL CEE KARLSSON | CO-SCREENWRITER & EDITOR

Mikel Cee Karlsson is a Swedish filmmaker and former professional skateboarder. In addition to directing and editing his three feature-length documentaries, he has made music videos for Fever Ray, José González, and Calexico, among others. Mikel is part of the highly acclaimed Plattform Produktion in Gothenburg. His award-winning documentary, *Greetings from the Woods*, premiered in competition at Locarno in 2009. *The Extraordinary Ordinary Life of José González* premiered in competition at Gothenburg Film Festival in 2010 and was also selected for Hot Docs 2011. His latest documentary, *A Stranger*, premiered in competition at CPH:DOX 2019 and was nominated for a Swedish Academy Award.

CAST

Featuring (in order of appearance)

ALI BOULALA
RAIJA BOULALA
OMAR BOULALA
RUNE GLIFBERG
ARTO SAARI
EWAN BOWMAN
ALEX MOUL
DUSTIN DOLLIN
KEVIN "SPANKY" LONG
ERIK ELLINGTON
SHANE CROSS
AMANDA BOULALA
PEGGY BOULALA

CREW

Directed by MAX ERIKSSON

Written by MAX ERIKSSON
MIKEL CEE KARLSSON

Produced by MARIO ADAMSON
ASHLEY J. SMITH

Co-Produced by ANITA NORFOLK
Executive Producers EWAN BOWMAN
REBECCA BENNETT
DANIELLE TURKOV
BEN MARKS
ELLIOT JAMES PERRY
AMY SHEPHERD
RUTH REID

Edited by MIKEL CEE KARLSSON
Directors of Photography JONAS EMBRING
IVAN BLANCO
IGA MIKLER

Additional Photography by MICHAEL PARRY
MAJAJ JULÉN
GEOFF CAMPBELL

Original Music Written and Performed by MAX ERIKSSON
WARREN ELLIS