

# Six directors preserve city's memory with film

Istanbul, a capital of different empires over the millennia, will be the subject of an innovative new film combining the works of six international directors.



ISTANBUL  
Hürriyet Daily  
News  
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"Our main purpose in this film is to challenge those who have been forgotten [the past] and to highlight human values," Hüseyin Karabey, a young Turkish director who invited the six to create "Unutma Beni İstanbul" (Do Not Forget Me Istanbul), recently told the Hürriyet Daily News & Economic Review.

"The six directors will each tell their stories. Their spots are not the same but they will link to each other," said Karabey, who is also producing the film.

The project, which is being supported by the Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture agency, features the work of Eric Narzarian, an Armenian living in the United States, Aida Begic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Hany Abu-Assad of Palestine, Omar Shargawi of Denmark, Stergios Niziris of Greece and Stefan Arsenijevic of Serbia.

Of the directors, only Nazarian has ties to the city. The script, meanwhile, was written by famous Greek screenwriter Petros Markaris.

"Do Not Forget Me Istanbul," which will feature six 15-minute short films, will be released Dec. 15, with the world premiere planned for either the Berlin or Cannes film festivals.

"We think that Istanbul belongs to us only, but this is not true. We don't realize that we lose our richness on this land; we ignore the ones who lived before us. This film tells everyone that left their traces in Istanbul," Karabey said.

"My family roots have nothing to do with Istanbul or Anatolia," Niziris, who was recently in Istanbul to shoot his part of the film, told the Daily News. "But I love this city; it is a unique and special city."

## Project evolved thanks to coincidence

According to Karabey, the idea for the film emerged thanks to a chance conversation at the Thessalonica Film Festival.

"I was speaking with Markaris and he asked me where I was living in Istanbul. I answered that I lived in Kurtuluş. Then he asked me where exactly my house was because he grew up in Kurtuluş. When I told him the name and location of my apartment, he was shocked because it was the building in which he had spent his childhood and youth," he said.

Immediately

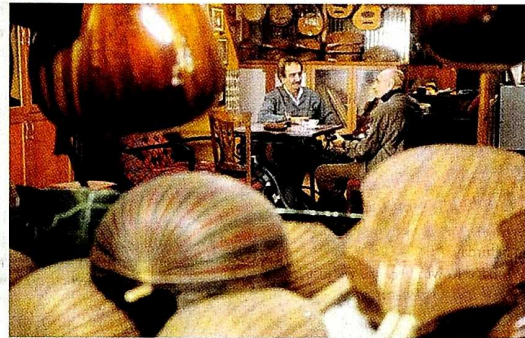
'Unutma Beni İstanbul' (Do Not Forget Me Istanbul) is a film project supported by the 2010 European Capital of Culture agency. Produced by Hüseyin Karabey, the film features the work of six directors, only one of whom has ties to Istanbul. 'This film tells of those who left their traces here and reminds us of our forgotten past,' says Karabey



PROJECT EMERGED IN GREECE: Director Hüseyin Karabey has invited foreign directors to Istanbul for the project, 'Do Not Forget Me Istanbul,' which emerged thanks to a chance conversation with a Greek director at the Thessalonica Film Festival.



SIX FILMS: Each of six short films by six directors tells a different story. According to Karabey, one of the most interesting stories is the one about a family, which had an oud store in Istanbul. The film will follow the traces of the lost store.



after the encounter, he contacted the six directors, all friends, and began work on the present project.

Noting that he had Kurdish origins from the eastern Turkish province of Malatya, Karabey said: "I saw how cultures are ignored on this land. But it is of no use to act like a victim. I confronted myself, made peace with my identity and decided to progress. This point has inspired my film." Nazarian's story, meanwhile, was one of the saddest of the six, according to Karabey. "Nazarian's family had an oud store in Istanbul. The hero in the film will follow the traces of this lost oud store. Let's see if he will find it or not."

Another striking short is from Abu-Assad. "This is a very impressive story, too. The members of a family, which was shattered during the Israel-Palestine



war, did not see each other again. Many years later, their meeting point will be Istanbul," he said.

## 'This region has a common language'

Niziris, who was hosted by Karabey while working on his part of the film, said he had accepted the proposal without hesitation.

"Whenever I go abroad, I am impressed by the fact that the closest friends of Greeks and Anatolian Greeks are Turks. Actually this is very natural. Our language is the common language of this land; nobody understands us better than each other," he said.

