

A PLACE CALLED WELCOME

A DOCUMENTARY FEATURE FILM
ABOUT MIGRATION, KINDNESS AND BELONGING.

Directed by: Noah Bakour



LOGLINE


A Syrian refugee filmmaker travels across the UK with a retired British teacher who has spent years welcoming asylum seekers. By telling the stories of migrants and the communities that embrace them, the film explores what it takes to belong.

A man with dark curly hair and a woman with grey hair stand behind a chain-link fence. The man is on the left, wearing a brown jacket, looking towards the right. The woman is on the right, wearing a red jacket and a grey scarf, looking towards the left. The background shows a body of water and a field of tall grass under an overcast sky.

Synopsis

Grounded in his personal experience as a displaced person and shaped by her perspective as someone raised in rural Britain, the film follows their unlikely friendship, reveals uplifting stories of welcome and challenges the prevailing negative narrative.

• The film invites audiences into stories rarely seen on screen

A photograph of two men embracing. The man on the right is looking over his shoulder with a tearful expression. Both are wearing dark plaid shirts. The background is a plain wall with a blue vertical stripe.

THE KEY QUESTION

What happens after the door is opened and the refugees arrive? The story explores welcome as something lived over time: shaped by shifting policy, challenged by uncertainty, and sustained by everyday acts of kindness.

Main Characters



Gbo

From Sierra Leone, Gbo is rebuilding his life through music as he seeks asylum in the UK. Music becomes both a means of survival and creativity as a way of staying present while the future remains uncertain.



Esme

Forced to flee Colombia, Esme and her husband are rebuilding their lives through food and music. Their story captures dignity in transition, balancing hope for the future with the emotional weight of displacement.

Main Characters



Abdulhadi

A Syrian refugee resettled on a Scottish island through the UN scheme with his family. They have helped the local economy through food, business, and community connections. Welcomed by the locals, we see how integration is a shared process.



Bogdana

Fleeing Ukraine, Bogdana is rebuilding life in the UK through creativity, work, and community while living with her British host. Their story reflects both the generosity of welcome and the instability created by temporary visas and unequal systems.

Film Tone and Style

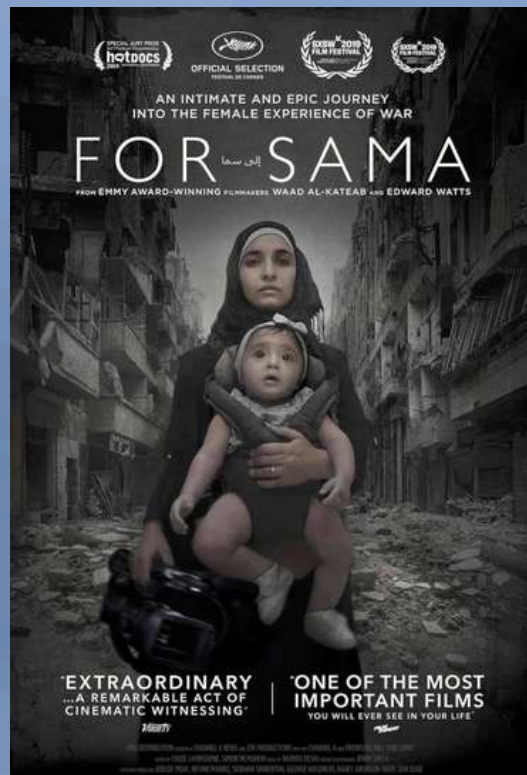
Poetic, observational, life-affirming
and uplifting

The film blends intimate “*vérité*” scenes with reflective narration and symbolic imagery, natural light and handheld cinematography.

The story begins with an animated swallow tracing its migratory route from Africa to the UK, a recurring visual motif that becomes a witness to Claire and Noah's journey. The animation gently dissolves into live action, grounding the film in the physical landscapes of Britain: kitchens, high streets, coastlines, and countryside.

The heartbeat of the film is music performed by the cast of refugees and asylum seekers.

COMPARABLE FILMS



For Sama (2019)
Personal Narration



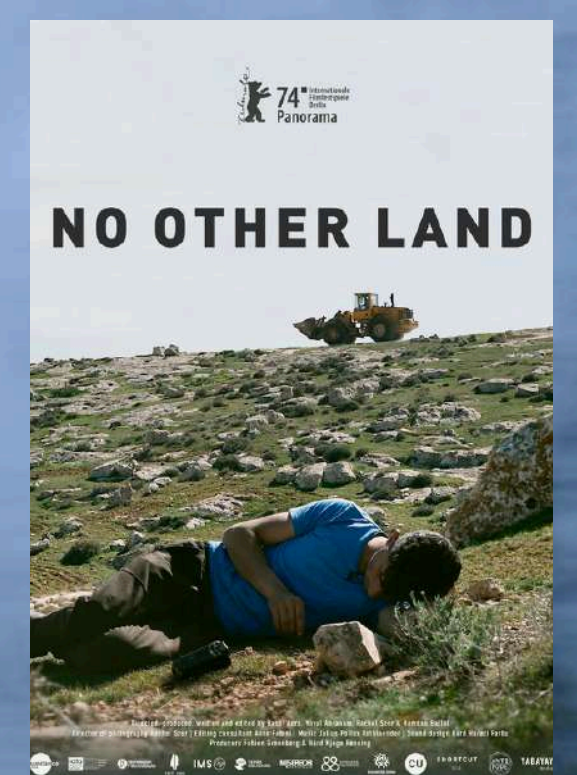
Limbo (2020)
Humour



Flee (2021)
Animation blend



The Swimmers (2022)
Resilience



No Other Land (2024)
Directors with a dual perspective

A young man with dark curly hair, wearing a red jacket, and an older woman with short white hair, wearing a blue jacket, are looking at a branch of yellow flowers in a garden. The background is a soft-focus green landscape.

NOAH & CLAIRE *Dual Perspective*

At the centre of the film is the friendship between Noah and Claire.

Together, they explore what welcome demands both emotionally and practically, allowing the film to hold two compatible perspectives.

A FILM ROOTED IN REALITY

Migration is one of the defining issues of our time, yet public debate often reduces refugees to numbers, threats, or burdens. *A Place Called Welcome* is the story of real lives and real people. The underlying context of policy and legality appears through the unfolding story of the lives of the people Noah & Claire meet on their journey.

With the insights of professionals and academics the film acknowledges:

- Most refugees stay in countries close to their own
- The UK hosts a small percentage of the world's displaced people
- Seeking asylum is a legal right under the UN Refugee Convention



Director's Vision

When I was 17, I became immersed in film and TV, specifically journalism. I documented the Syrian civil war, lived through displacement, and arrived in the UK seeking safety.

Over time, I learned not only how to survive, but also how to belong, and eventually how to tell stories from within that experience.

This film is told from a refugee's perspective. I am not interested in portraying people as victims or symbols, but as complex individuals navigating real lives. By filming others as they rebuild their sense of home, I am also reflecting on my own.

I am making this film now because the public conversation around refugees is increasingly shaped by fear and division. I believe it is important to show people beyond headlines and labels sharing real lives, real communities, and real moments of kindness.



DISTRIBUTION AND AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT

A Place Called Welcome is planned for completion in May 2026.

Festival Strategy

The film is intended for its premiere at major documentary festivals such as:

- Sheffield Doc/Fest
- IDFA
- BFI London Film Festival
- Leeds International Film Festival
- Glasgow Film Festival

Broadcast & Distribution

We are seeking:

- A UK broadcaster or streaming partner
- A theatrical and educational distributor
- An impact producer to support long-term engagement

Impact & Audience

The film is designed to reach:

- General cinema audiences
- Community groups and refugee organisations
- Educational settings
- Policymakers and practitioners

SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN

Alongside the film's festival and broadcast journey, A Place Called Welcome will be supported by a coordinated social media and community campaign developed in collaboration with refugee and humanitarian organisations.

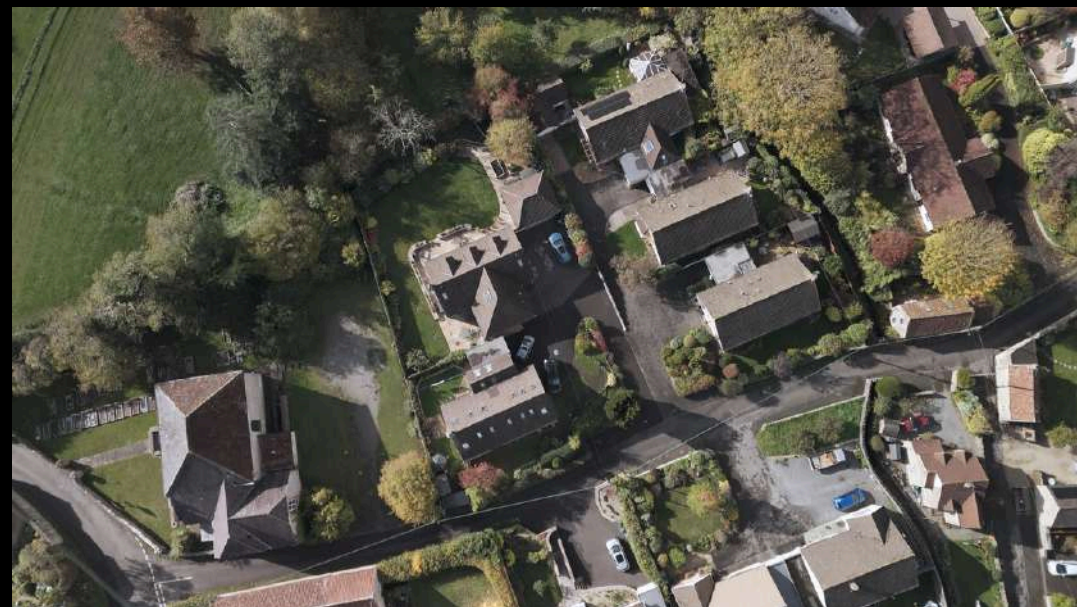
We plan to work with charities and networks, including **UNHCR UK, Choose Love, and Counterpoints Arts** as well as refugee support organisations, and grassroots community groups, to co-create digital content that extends the film's life and reach.

 @APLACECALLEDWELCOME

 @APLACECALLEDWELCOME

This campaign will include:

- Short-form video clips and excerpts from the film
- Contributor-led stories shared in their own voices
- Behind-the-scenes reflections on welcome, belonging, and integration
- Campaign posts aligned with key moments such as Refugee Week



The Film in Frames



The Film in Frames

MEET THE CREW



Noah Bakour

DIRECTOR

A Syrian refugee filmmaker and visual artist based in UK tells stories rooted in lived experience, dignity, and human connection. His work spans documentary, and socially engaged filmmaking.

Noah's work has been recognised across the film, arts, and social-impact sectors in the UK, including the Arts Council of Wales Contribution to the Arts Award (2023) and the KLAT Visual Artist of the Year (2025).

A Place Called Welcome is his most personal and ambitious feature to date.



Claire Ash Wheeler

PRODUCER

A UK-based community organiser and co-founder of Sanctuary Community Holidays, supporting refugees and asylum seekers since 2018.

A former teacher, Claire brings a complementary perspective to the film, that of someone who has chosen to welcome others and who continues to reflect on responsibility, care, and solidarity. Her presence grounds the film in lived practice rather than theory.



Anya Sitaram

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

An award-winning journalist and executive producer with extensive experience across international documentary filmmaking. She has overseen hundreds of broadcast documentaries for major global platforms, including BBC, PBS, Discovery, National Geographic, and Al Jazeera.

Anya oversees the editorial and creative direction of the project, ensuring the film has maximum impact.



Karen Walsh

PRODUCER

An award-winning producer and director with experience across documentary, factual television, and socially engaged storytelling. Her work is known for combining strong narrative structure with sensitive, ethical approaches to real-world subjects.

Karen supports the film's production strategy, working on location with the crew and contributors and helping to shape the narrative.



Phil Chappell

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

A UK-based cinematographer specialising in visually rich factual and documentary storytelling. His work is known for its naturalistic style, emotional restraint, and cinematic attention to everyday detail. Phil's years of experience bring skilled visual craft to the film, supporting its poetic and observational tone.



Andrew Yarme

SOUND OPERATOR

A BAFTA-nominated sound recordist and sound supervisor. His approach prioritises intimacy, clarity, and atmosphere, ensuring voices and environments are captured with sensitivity and precision, a crucial element for a film grounded in listening and presence.

***IMAGINE WHAT IT'S LIKE TO SEEK
WELCOME?***

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