



**Production company**  
**DEUX BEAUX GARÇONS**  
Galit Cahlon  
galia13@gmail.com  
121a Yehuda Hlevi st  
663355 Tel Aviv  
Israel

**Distribution Company**  
**DULAC DISTRIBUTION**  
Michel Zana  
mzana@dulacdistribution.com  
60 rue Pierre Charron  
75008 Paris  
www.dulacdistribution.com

Charles Hembert  
Responsable Promotion  
Marketing  
06 13 08 72 78  
chembert@dulacdistribution.com

Eric Jolivalt  
Programmateur Paris  
06 62 84 92 30  
ejolivalt@dulacdistribution.com

Nina Kawakami  
Programmation Province  
06 84 44 30 88  
nkawakami@dulacdistribution.com

**International Sales**  
**PLAYTIME**  
Paul De Beco  
paul@playtime.group  
33 avenue de l'Opéra  
75002 PARIS  
www.france2.fr

**French publicists**  
**LAURETTE MONCONDUIT & JEAN-MARC FEYTOU**  
Tél: 33 (0)1 43 48 01 89  
A Cannes:  
Laurette: 06 09 56 68 23  
lmonconduit@free.fr  
Jean-Marc: 06 12 37 23 82  
jeanmarcfeytout@gmail.com

**International Media Company**  
**CLAIRE VORGER**  
**COMMUNICATION**  
clairevoger@orange.fr  
12 rue des Jardins  
50460 La Hague  
France  
claire-vorger-communication.fr

2016, Paris, iPhone, Shlomi Elkabetz  
2009, Kiryat Motzkin, Canon XF100, S.E  
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Deux Beaux Garçons Films in association with Unité present

a film by **SHLOMI ELKABETZ**  
with **RONIT ELKABETZ**  
and **MIRIAM ELKABETZ, ELI ELKABETZ**

# BLACK NOTEBOOKS

פחברות שחורות ופאתרסודא

رونيت  
قيثيان

NOTEBOOK I **VIVIANE RONIT** NOTEBOOK II

With the participation of

**VIVIANE AMSALEM, MENASHE NOY, SIMON ABKARIAN, AVNER YASHAR, SASSON GABAI, SHLOMI ELKABETZ, YECHIEL ELKABETZ, GILBERT MELKI, JEAN-PHILIPPE REZA, OMER MOSHKOVITZ, KOBI REGEV, YAM EITAN**

Produced by **SHLOMI ELKABETZ, GALIT CAHLON**

Executive producer **DOMINIQUE WELINSKI** Associate producer **BRUNO NAHON** Director of Photography **SHLOMI ELKABETZ** Original music **DIKLA**

Sound **ITZIK COHEN** Mixer **JÉRÔME WICIAK** Colorist **YOAV RAZ** Co-screenwriter and editor **JOËLLE ALEXIS**

a film written and directed by **SHLOMI ELKABETZ**

قىشيان

رونيت



## **SYNOPSIS**

**In a Parisian taxi, a man learns from a Moroccan fortune-teller that his sister is about to die. In an attempt to alter the prediction, the brother embarks on a fictional journey between Morocco, Israel and Paris.**

**Based on family archives and excerpts from the trilogy created by Ronit and Shlomi Elkabetz - CAHIERS NOIRS: VIVIANE and CAHIERS NOIRS: RONIT, invite us into the intimacy of a Jewish-Arab family, a family of uprooted exiles, in an imaginary story where a brother and sister revisit the past and the present to defy an implacable future. But the prophecy still shadows them, as in life, so in cinema.**



## INTERVIEW

Q: **Why Black Notebooks?**

A: In Hebrew, the word notebook is a feminine term. The notebook is not only black, it is black in the feminine. Black is a color that absorbs light and images to infinity without ever restoring them. In contrast, white never absorbs anything. A notebook is not a diary. A notebook is not the diary that you open at the beginning of the day, it is much more open-ended than that. A notebook is for ideas, poetry, collages, testimonies. Black is my history, black is Arabness, black is Ronit. Men have given themselves the privilege of writing history. The greatest privilege that women have given themselves is to rewrite history with their own words. For me, Ronit is one of them. She is the black box. When I say that Ronit is black, I mean that she has this ability to absorb images, to archive them, and then to restore them through her own silhouette. Her body, her movements are words, her words embody femininity in general and black femininity in particular. The black notebook is Ronit, and I have had the privilege of being allowed to write a few lines in it. Why Black Notebooks in the plural, because the struggles that Ronit led, she led in the name of all women. It is in this sense that Ronit is multiple.

Q: **Black Notebooks erases the distinction between life and cinema, between documentary and fiction. Is this related to the uprooting of your family, who came from Morocco in the 1960s?**

A: For the three films we made, I had the rare opportunity to have direct access to the raw material of the fiction that Ronit and I created: our mother and father. As an immigrant, you have to play a role every day, especially if you are an Arab. You have to play "white", pretend to be someone you are not. When you are used to pretending, it is easier to become an actor. You feel comfortable in front of the camera, sometimes even more than in life. At home, my mother and father were always fighting to be filmed, to be the one chosen to tell the story, which story, what version of the story and what truth. The camera of Black Notebooks gives a reason to live, to act, to its characters. Through it, the moment can be lived and the most intimate truth can emerge. That's why my parents cooperated, otherwise they would have thrown me out. It is obvious that they fascinate me as characters as much as the camera fascinates them. It's simple, if I come to spend a few days at their house and I don't take my camera out, they get upset. My father may leave the room and blame me for not even thinking of taking it out. It's like he's saying, "You didn't play your part!" He obviously doesn't think the same about our fictional work because he has no control over our films.

Q: The titles are in French and Arabic, and not in Hebrew?

A: I don't deny Hebrew, but Arabic is my parents' mother tongue, the language spoken at home. It is the language in which we discovered life, quarrels, joy, sorrows, discussions, reflections and also songs. Arabic is our intimacy. French is spoken throughout the Maghreb, it is a way to hide one's Arabness, it is the first step towards immigration. In Israel, it is not well seen to be Arab, that's why, as soon as they leave home, Moroccans speak French instead, there is even a specific insult in Hebrew: Tsarfokaïs (a combination between Tsarfat / France and Marrokai / Moroccan). It was only when I came to Paris that I discovered that my parents had an Arabic accent in French! The titles of the films are written in Tsarfokai.

Q: Can you tell us about the editing process?

A: We worked for four years, about five months a year, that's 400 days of editing to assemble about 600 hours of rushes, shot with different cameras over several decades. I wrote a script. I put myself in the shoes of a character who lives in the future and already knows what happened. My present is the future of the characters in Black Notebooks. The stories: a mother and a daughter, a brother and a sister, a couple in the making, a tired couple, a woman who flees to free herself from her mother, a woman who tries to overcome death, a brother who denies reality, Arabism, Prophecy, religion and secularism, politics and society, motherhood and fatherhood, immigration, creation, the public, the cinema... All these stories are haunted by an inevitable death. In my films all the characters are one. Sometimes it is enough that one dies...

For 30 years, I have filmed the same words, the same phrases, the same

expressions and the same scenes, those that we find in our fiction. The phrases of Ronit, Miriam or Viviane, the scenes between my parents have been filmed dozens of times... Everything repeats itself. Only the ages and the times change. For once, the number of possible takes was unlimited! I was spoiled for choice, as far as sets, costumes and even dialogues were concerned. I just had to choose what I liked best! In the end, I had much more freedom than in any fiction. The story of Black Notebooks is told through all these fragments patiently articulated with the genre codes of a thriller. The editing, like the films, is a journey in time. I go back to my past with the knowledge of the future trying to fix it, only to discover again that all had happened already. The work of editing was to unite all times in order to avoid death. In that sense I allowed myself to move freely within my archives, until I was able to create, in my eyes, a loop.

Q: Why 2 films?

A: Since I was very young, I have seen my mother as a woman, not just as a mother. I started filming Ronit in the late 90s. My first images are those where she is at the window in Paris marveling at the Parisian light. In 2003, in "To take a Wife", I filmed the character of Viviane, played by Ronit who embodies my mother. It was only in 2004 that I began to film her in her own role. To sum up, I filmed three women who, in reality, are only two, the two chapters of Black Notebooks.

Q: Black Notebooks: fiction or documentary?

A: You know what you see, but what you see is nothing other than what I suggest you see... Four months after Ronit's disappearance, in the summer of 2016, I was in Paris and went to a 35mm screening of "To take a Wife", at the Luxor. The image that appeared

on the screen was completely distorted and it took the projectionist almost 5 minutes to fix the technical problems. During these few minutes, while the spectators were shouting their disappointment, I saw Ronit speaking to me, saying that she was still talking to the audience. It even seemed to me that the audience was reacting to that, laughing at what I was seeing. I didn't see a technical problem; I saw a ghost.

When for others, it is the keyboard, the ink and the paper, for me it is my camera or my phone as my writing tools. I never planned to make these films. The minute Ronit disappeared, she became an image on a screen, whether it was fiction or personal archives. The image of Ronit is for me the image of the absent. In all my archives, hundreds of hours, what I see is absence. I no longer see what I really shot. My reality has also become a film, the move from Sucher Street, a funeral; the Uber driver, a bogeyman. Ronit continues to live on this screen, in this fiction that is my reality, a reality that I transmit in the form of fiction. What you see in Black Notebooks, my archive images, are yours today. At the moment when the private becomes public, life becomes image and reality, fiction.

## BIOGRAPHY



Shlomi Elkabetz, 48 years-old, is a Film Director, Screenwriter, Teacher, Actor and Producer. In 2011 he wrote, directed and produced "Testimony" that showed at the Venice Film Festival in 2011. Alongside his sister, Ronit Elkabetz, he created the trilogy; "To Take a Wife" (2004), "Seven Days" (2008) and "Gett: The Trial of Viviane Amsalem", who were all selected respectively to the Critics Week at the Venice Mostra; the Critics Week and the Directors Fortnight at the Cannes Film Festival. In 2016 he produced "In Between" Directed by Maysaloun Hamoud, which had its International Premiere at the San Sebastian film festivals. He recently starred as the leading role in HBO's TV series "Our Boys". He produced the first Israeli feature created by a Bedouin - "EID", currently in post production. "Maria", the new feature by Shlomi Elkabetz, is currently in preparation.









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2005, Paris, Sony MiniDV, S.E  
2005, Paris, JVC MiniDV, S.E  
2016, Paris, iPhone 6, S.E  
2017, Paris, iPhone 6, S.E  
2009, Kiryat Motzkin, Canon XF100, S.E  
2005, Kiryat Motzkin, Canon XF100, S.E  
2009, Kiryat Motzkin, Canon XF100, S.E  
2016, Paris, iPhone 4, S.E  
2011, Kiryat Motzkin, Canon XF100, S.E  
2003, Rishon Lezion, Sony HDR900, Y.S  
2011, Kiryat Motzkin, Canon XF100, S.E  
2003, Rishon Lezion, Sony HDR900, Y.S  
2016, Kiryat Motzkin, Sony XD CAM, S.E  
2003, Rishon Lezion, Sony HDR900, Y.S  
2016, Kiryat Motzkin, Sony XD CAM, S.E  
2003, Rishon Lezion, Sony HDR900, Y.S  
2009, Kiryat Motzkin, Canon XF100, S.E  
2003, Rishon Lezion, Sony HDR900, Y.S  
2004, Paris, Sony MiniDV, S.E  
2000, Paris, Panasonic DV, S.E  
2016, Paris, iPhone 4, S.E  
2004, Paris, Sony MiniDV, S.E  
2000, Paris, JVC MiniDV, S.E  
2004, Paris, Panasonic miniDV, S.E  
1999, Paris, JVC MiniDV, S.E  
2004, Paris, Sony MiniDV, S.E  
2005, Paris, Sony MiniDV, S.E  
2016, Paris, iPhone 6, S.E  
2019, Vesoul, Leica D-Lux 7, S.E  
2009, Kiryat Motzkin, Canon XF100, S.E  
2008, Paris, Leica D-Lux 3, S.E  
2010, Kiryat Motzkin, Panasonic miniDV, S.E  
2016, Paris, iPhone 6, S.E  
2007, Paris, Sony MiniDV, S.E  
2004, Paris, Sony MiniDV, S.E  
2016, Paris, iPhone 6, S.E  
2004, Lille, Sony MiniDV, S.E  
2004, Venice, Sony MiniDV, S.E  
2004, Israel, Sony MiniDV, S.E  
2004, Israel, Sony MiniDV, D.P  
2009, Kiryat Motzkin, Canon XF100, S.E  
2005, Israel, Sony MiniDV, S.E  
2005, Israel, Sony MiniDV, S.E  
2009, Kiryat Motzkin, Canon XF100, S.E  
2011, Kiryat Motzkin, Canon XF100, S.E  
2003, Rishon Lezion, Sony DSR-PD100, U.A  
2014, L.A, iPhone 4, S.E  
2011, Kiryat Motzkin, Panasonic Full HD, S.E  
2009, Kiryat Motzkin, Canon XF100, S.E  
2017, Essaouira, iPhone 6, S.E  
1999, TLV, JVC MiniDV, S.E  
2011, Paris, iPhone 3, S.E  
2003, Rishon Lezion, Sony DSR-PD100, U.A  
2003, Rishon Lezion, Sony HDR900, Y.S  
2008, Kiryat Motzkin, Leica D-Lux 3, S.E  
2003, Rishon Lezion, Sony DSR-PD100, U.A  
2003, Rishon Lezion, Sony HDR900, Y.S  
2017, Morocco, Leica D-Lux 7, S.E  
2003, Rishon Lezion, Sony HDR900, Y.S  
2017, Morocco, Leica D-Lux 7, S.E  
2003, Rishon Lezion, Sony HDR900, Y.S  
2017, Morocco, Leica D-Lux 7, S.E  
2012, Kiryat Motzkin, Canon XF100, S.E  
2017, Morocco, Leica D-Lux 7, S.E  
2017, Kiryat Motzkin, Canon XF100, S.E  
2010, Kiryat Motzkin, Canon XF100, S.E  
1999, Paris, Panasonic miniDV, S.E  
2017, Kiryat Motzkin, Leica D-Lux 7, S.E  
2011, Kiryat Motzkin, Canon XF100, S.E  
2003, Rishon Lezion, Sony HDR900, Y.S  
2003, Rishon Lezion, Sony HDR900, Y.S  
2003, Rishon Lezion, Sony HDR900, Y.S  
2003, Holon, Sony DSR-PD100, U.A  
2003, Rishon Lezion, Sony HDR900, Y.S  
2003, Holon, Sony DSR-PD100, U.A  
2017, Kiryat Motzkin, Leica D-Lux 7, S.E  
2010, TLV, iPhone 4, S.E  
2017, Kiryat Motzkin, Leica D-Lux 7, S.E  
2016, Paris, iPhone 6, S.E  
2003, Holon, Sony DSR-PD100, U.A  
2017, Kiryat Motzkin, Canon XF100, S.E  
2017, Kiryat Motzkin, Canon XF100, S.E  
2003, Rishon Lezion, Sony HDR900, Y.S  
1998, Paris, JVC MiniDV, S.E  
2000, Paris, JVC MiniDV, S.E  
2007, Rome, Leica D-Lux 3, S.E  
2019, TLV, iPhone x, S.E  
2003, Rishon Lezion, Sony HDR900, Y.S

2000, Paris, JVC MiniDV, S.E  
2000, Paris, JVC MiniDV, S.E  
2009, Paris, Moviecam Compact 35 mm, F.S  
2000, Paris, JVC MiniDV, S.E  
2001, Paris, JVC MiniDV, S.E  
2000, France, unknown, Y.C  
2004, Paris, JVC MiniDV, S.E  
2000, Paris, JVC MiniDV, S.E  
2002, Paris, JVC MiniDV, S.E  
2001, Paris, Panasonic miniDV, T.O  
2001, Paris, JVC MiniDV, S.E  
2001, Paris, JVC MiniDV, S.E  
2003, Rishon Lezion, Sony HDR900, Y.S  
2003, Paris, JVC MiniDV, S.E  
2003, Paris, Panasonic miniDV, T.O  
2003, Paris, JVC MiniDV, S.E  
2003, Paris, JVC MiniDV, S.E  
2004, Paris, JVC MiniDV, S.E  
2012, unknown, iPhone, S.E  
2006, Kiryat Motzkin, MacBook Pro, S.E  
2006, Kiryat Motzkin, MacBook Pro, S.E  
2002, TLV, Sony DSR-PD100, U.A  
2001, TLV, Panasonic miniDV, S.E  
2001, Bersheva, Panasonic miniDV, S.E  
2003, Rishon Lezion, Sony HDR900, Y.S  
2009, Paris, Sony DSR-PD150, N.B  
2013, TLV, Leica D-Lux 7, S.E  
2017, Paris, Canon XF100, S.E  
2017, Paris, Canon XF100, S.E  
2000, Paris, JVC MiniDV, S.E  
2003, Rishon Lezion, Sony HDR900, D.G  
2009, Paris, Sony DSR-PD150, N.B  
2003, Rishon Lezion, Sony DSR-PD100, U.A  
2003, Rishon Lezion, Sony HDR900, Y.S  
2009, Paris, Sony DSR-PD150, N.B  
2008, Cannes, iPhone 3, S.E  
2018, TLV, iPhone x, S.E  
2004, Paris, Sony MiniDV, S.E  
2018, TLV, iPhone x, S.E  
2018, TLV, iPhone x, S.E  
2000, France, unknown, Y.C  
2018, TLV, iPhone x, S.E  
2009, Paris, Moviecam Compact 35 mm, F.S  
2016, Toronto, iPhone 6, S.E  
2009, Paris, Sony DSR-PD150, N.B  
2010, Jaffa, iPhone 3, S.E  
2019, Vesoul, Leica D-Lux 7, S.E  
2003, Rishon Lezion, Sony HDR900, Y.S  
2013, TLV, ARRI ALEXA, J.L  
2010, Kiryat Motzkin, iPhone 3, S.E  
2010, TLV, iPhone 4, S.E  
2010, TLV, Leica D-Lux 7, D.A  
2010, TLV, iPhone 4, S.E  
2011, TLV, iPhone 4, S.E  
2011, TLV, iPhone 4, S.E  
2011, TLV, iPhone 4, S.E  
2003, Rishon Lezion, Sony HDR900, Y.S  
2011, TLV, iPhone 4, R.E  
2011, Paris, Eilat, Sony XD CAM, S.E  
2011, TLV, iPhone 4, S.E  
2012, TLV, Canon XF100, S.E  
2012, TLV, Canon XF100, S.E  
2013, Kiryat Motzkin, Sony XD CAM, S.E  
2014, TLV, Canon XF100, S.E  
2003, Rishon Lezion, Sony HDR900, Y.S  
2014, TLV, Canon XF100, S.E  
2003, Rishon Lezion, Sony HDR900, Y.S  
2009, Paris, Moviecam Compact 35 mm, F.S  
2020, TLV, Sony a7S III, G.R  
2009, Paris, Moviecam Compact 35 mm, F.S  
2009, TLV, Sony a7S III, G.R  
2020, Paris, Moviecam Compact 35 mm, F.S  
2009, Paris, Moviecam Compact 35 mm, F.S  
2017, Paris, iPhone 6, S.E  
2009, Paris, Moviecam Compact 35 mm, F.S  
2020, TLV, Sony a7S III, G.R  
2003, Rishon Lezion, Sony HDR900, Y.S  
2014, TLV, iPhone 6, S.E  
2003, Rishon Lezion, Sony HDR900, Y.S  
1996, NYC, unknown, S.E  
1997, NYC, JVC MiniDV, S.E  
1999, Paris, JVC MiniDV, S.E  
1998, Kiryat Motzkin, JVC VHS, Z.A  
2006, TLV, JVC MiniDV, S.E  
2004, London, JVC MiniDV, S.E  
2006, Kiryat Motzkin, MacBook Pro, S.E  
2006, Kiryat Motzkin, MacBook Pro, S.E  
2003, Berlin, JVC MiniDV, S.E  
2006, TLV, MacBook Pro, S.E  
2011, TLV, Sony MiniDV, S.E  
2015, TLV, iPhone 4, S.E  
2008, unknown, Sony XD CAM, S.E  
2011, Paris, Canon XF100, S.E  
2011, Paris, Canon XF100, S.E

2016, Paris, Leica D-Lux 7, S.E  
2014, Paris, iPhone 6, S.E  
2017, Paris, Leica D-Lux 7, S.E  
2015, Paris, iPhone 6, S.E  
1999, Paris, JVC MiniDV, S.E  
1999, Paris, JVC MiniDV, S.E  
1999, Paris, JVC MiniDV, S.E









A man writes about his life.

All the conversations he had  
are one conversation.

All the people he knew are  
one person.

All the times he had lived  
through are one time.

And his death is eternal,  
so he despises eternity.

A man films his life and all  
the moments he filmed are  
one moment.

He filmed a tree but didn't  
know he was filming his  
mother.

He filmed a dirt road and  
didn't know he was filming  
his father.

He filmed a beginning only to  
discover he filmed the end.

He filmed his love and  
discovered he filmed his love.

A man documents his life  
through the objects of his love,  
and all the objects meld into  
one love.

and all the silences amount  
to a conversation and all the  
conversations equal silence.







**TO TAKE A WIFE**

50 Tapes  
47 Hours

**YEARS**

1989 – 2016  
2016 – present

**GETT:  
THE TRIAL OF  
VIVIANE AMSALEM**

12 Ito Tapes  
100 Hours

**SHIVA (SEVEN DAYS)**

45 MiniDv Tapes  
47 Hours

**MAIN LOCATIONS**

Paris  
Essaouira  
Tel aviv  
Kiryat yam  
Kiryat Motzkin

**EDUT**

5 Ito Tapes  
11 Hours

JVC VHS / 27 tapes / 31 hours

Sony MiniDV / 108 tapes / 72 hours

iPhone 3 / 16 GB / 15 Hours

Leica D-Lux 3 / 10 Memory cards / 17 Hours

iPhone 6 / 270 GB / 24 Hours

iPhone 4 / 70 GB / 23 Hours

Leica D-Lux 7 / 18 Memory cards / 27 Hours

JVC MiniDV / 12 tapes / 7 hours

Panasonic DV / 3 tapes / 2 hours

Sony HD CAM / 890 GB / 67 Hours

iPhone X / 254 GB / 45 Hours

Canon XF100 / 139 Memory cards / 63 Hours

Panasonic Full HD / 37 Memory cards / 19 Hours

Sony XD CAM / 39 Memory cards / 16 Hours

Panasonic miniDV / 9 tapes / 7 hours

MacBook Pro / 2GB / 6 hours

**TOTAL OF HOURS: 205**

**NOTEBOOKS: 107**

**TOTAL OF HOURS: 441**