

# CHERIEN DABIS

## *Biography*

CHERIEN DABIS is an award winning film and television writer, director, producer and actor who received her M.F.A in Film from Columbia University. She began her career in television when she joined the writing staff of Showtime's groundbreaking, original hit series THE L WORD in its third season. She wrote three episodes and was promoted from writer (2005-2006) to story editor (2006-2007) and co-producer (2007-2008) before going on to make her feature writing and directorial debut with AMREEKA.

AMREEKA world-premiered at the 2009 Sundance Film Festival, opened New Director's/New Films at the MoMA and won the coveted International Federation of Film Critics Award (FIPRESCI) in the Director's Fortnight at Cannes. It went on to win a dozen more international awards including the Humanitas Prize and Adrienne Shelly Excellence in Filmmaking Award and was nominated for a Best Picture Gotham Award, 3 Independent Spirit Awards, including Best Picture, Best First Screenplay and Best Actress and was named one of the Top Ten Independent Films of the Year by the National Board of Review. Dabis was also named one of Variety's "Ten Directors to Watch" in 2009. AMREEKA was released theatrically worldwide and became the most-screened Arab-directed film in U.S.-cinema history, peaking at 40 screens across most major American cities.

Dabis returned to Sundance with her second feature film MAY IN THE SUMMER, which opened the 2013 Sundance Film Festival's U.S. Dramatic Competition section and had its international premiere at the Venice Film Festival. In it, she makes her onscreen debut alongside Bill Pullman, Alia Shawkat and Hiam Abbass. With the screenplay, Dabis won a Sundance / Time Warner Storytelling Grant, several Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art Grants as well as the prestigious NHK International Filmmaker Award at the 2011 Sundance Film Festival.

Dabis is the recipient of dozens of grants and fellowships including a Creative Capital Artist Grant (2015), Guggenheim Fellowship (2012), USA Rockefeller Fellowship (2010), Renew Media / Tribeca Film Institute Media Artist Fellowship (2008) and New York Foundation for the Arts Artist Fellowship in Playwriting/ Screenwriting (2007). She is an alumnus of the Sundance Screenwriter's Lab, Film Independent Director's Lab and Tribeca All Access, where she was honored with the first ever L'Oréal Paris Woman of Worth Vision Award. For her short film work, she has been awarded generous grants from National Geographic, the Jerome Foundation and the New York State Council on the Arts.

She has been an advisor for the Sundance Screenwriter's Labs in both Turkey and Jordan and has taught in the graduate film program at Columbia University as well as the Vermont College of Fine Arts. She also recently starred in VILLA TOUMA (2014), the directorial debut of critically acclaimed Palestinian screenwriter Suha Arraf (Lemon Tree, The Syrian

Bride), which had its world-premiere at the 2014 Venice Film Festival and went on to premiere internationally at the Toronto International Film Festival.