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Building Social Bridges
by entrepreneurial thinking



Role models

Austria





MO Harawe

I didn't listen to the doubters.



Mo Harawe, 29 years old, born in Mogadishu/Somalia, lives in Austria and Germany. Mo is a filmmaker and studies Visual Communication. His short films are shown at international festivals and he has won some film awards.

My first film...

When I was a child, I didn't know I want to make movies. Though I always liked movies and have watched movies my entire life there was not a certain movie, which was the trigger. It just happened to be. Suddenly you get the feeling that this is the right thing.

There was no certain moment, but I always liked to invent and write stories. The wish of making movies emerged much later after I left my home. I made my first film in 2014.



Menschen, Mo Harawe, 2014. (filmstill)

Motivation

At high school my English teacher asked me on the first day what I wanted to do. So, I told her I want to make movies. She replied that I should do that and keep on going! She kept on asking how it was going with the movies over and over again. That was very motivating.

Filmmaker

Making movies is generally difficult. Even more difficult if you're alone, without a family who has your back. And especially in a country such as Austria it is more difficult again, because this system exists in which it is nearly impossible to get into. The chance to quit in a situation like mine is higher than usual.

In the film industry you progress by actively doing something. By trying to meet people. You have to actively approach people by writing or directly talking to them. Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't. It's a matter of luck.

A lot of work, luck, people who have supported me... I think these are the things that have encouraged me.



The story of the polar bear that wanted to go to Africa, Mo Harawe, 2017 (filmstill)

Role model

From my mother I have learned that you just do and keep on doing. You fail and you just have to get up. I have witnessed her fail and how she just kept on going.

200 percent

I have learned where my limits are and that you have to be patient in life. I have learned how to circumvent people; I have learned how people tick and what satisfies them even when you yourself don't feel that well. For example: when you're on set, you have to do it in a way that satisfies everyone, so that good work results from it. If you are the first who is in a bad mood, then everyone will be in a bad mood.

Superpower

If you grow up in a certain culture and suddenly find yourself somewhere else, then everything is different. Due to the sole fact that I've grown up somewhere else, I see everything from two perspectives.

Sometimes people ask me why something doesn't bother me. I say: "Hey, it's not the end of the World." But maybe it is the end of the world for a person who is [from] here. And the other way around, when I'm in Somalia I look at things from different perspectives. Both perspectives are there simultaneously.

That's a superpower!



1947, Mo Harawe, 2020 (filmstill)

A 1000 questions

The way I made my last movie in Somalia, for someone from here it would be a no-go. First one thousand questions have to be answered and the money has to be raised. But I can do it, because I see things differently.

For the people here this might be difficult, because they think this cannot be done. This is a hard path and I maybe have a part where I think: "what do I have to lose?" This is something I wouldn't have if I had grown up here. I would have a different career then. Maybe one that is easier.

In different words: I am the fool, who doesn't know how difficult it is.



Life on the Horn, Mo Harawe, 2020 (filmstill)

Don't listen to the doubters!

You will often hear that you shouldn't do something... when someone comes to you and says: hey I would like to become a doctor. Your mind would immediately say: hey, that's fake: you have to do Matura, learn the language... and and and. Everybody says: do an apprenticeship... become a cook, a mechanic... and that's a problem... maybe that person can do it. But it will never happen that you will hear from someone. Yes it fits, do that!

Try it!

I want to make films. If I would look at it from the perspective from here, I wouldn't say I'll continue making films with all the problems from here. If I would see it from the perspective from here, I wouldn't consider following that path. From the other perspective, however, I see myself as privileged with what I have. This shouldn't be an excuse... it depends on you. Try it!



Life on the Horn, Mo Harawe, 2020 (filmstill)

Tips

- Do what you think you want right now – get out there and do it –
- but do not lose the ground under your feet;))
- Learning the language was important, this has given me more opportunities.
- Get to know people!
- Don't listen to the doubters!
- but be open to your critical friends, this is important for your development.



Portrait: MO, 2020 (filmstill).

Interview: Mo Harawe, Birgit Waltenberger, Translations: Daniel Schweiger, KUNSTLABOR Graz, 2020.

Watch full self-portrait of Mo:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tE5XBvol8E4>

<https://buildingsocialbridges.eu>



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