

Pulling Teeth

Fiction | 78 minutes | 2025



Damian, a resourceful hustler, scrapes out a fragile existence in the shadows of London's booming skylines. By night, he harvests stolen e-bike batteries to sell to others trapped in the same cycle of survival. By day, he navigates the local street market, chasing transient work and whatever income he can find. This relentless grind has weakened his connections, especially with his young daughter whose childhood unfolds in his absence. When his precarious arrangement with an older woman collapses, Damian finds himself on the streets, confronting his growing alienation in a city he barely recognises.





David Alamouti- Director

David is an award-winning director (and ex-producer) specialising in documentary, fiction, and the creative spaces in-between. His documentaries- funded by the BFI, BBC, and Wellcome Trust- have garnered recognition at prestigious festivals including London International Doc Fest, Sheffield Doc Fest, Krakow, and Utah, while his fiction work has earned nominations at Palm Springs (Best International Film and Jury Award), and Best Film at Cyprus International Film Festival.

His fiction films are made using co-creation methods, working closely with non-actors (and their communities) to transform their lived experiences into compelling fictional narratives. This results in a heightened sense of authenticity- but also gives his films a poetry that is both aesthetically distinct and socially grounded.



Nic Nazari- Cinematographer

Nic is an award winning filmmaker. A London Film School alumnus in cinematography. His LFS graduation project was selected by major UK festivals including the London Short Film Festival, Manchester International Film Festival, Aesthetica Film Festival and was nominated for Best Short and Best Cinematography by the British Independent Film Awards (BIFA).

Since then, projects he worked on have gone on to screen and win awards at major international film festivals including Cannes Cinéfondation (where a project he shot in 2016 was awarded Second Prize), Sundance, Toronto's TIFF, Rotterdam's IFFR and many others.



Rob Szeliga- Sound Designer

Rob Szeliga is a London-based sound designer working across film, radio and sound art. After spending several years studying traditional and contemporary music in Indonesia and Japan, he returned to the UK in 2012 to study post-production sound at the National Film and Television School.

In 2015 he worked as sound designer on the BIFA-nominated film *Balcony* (2015) that in 2016 went on to win the Berlin Crystal Bear and Iris Prize. That same year he received a MPSE Golden Reel Sound Editing nomination for his work on the animation short *Chhaya* (2015). His interests are film sound, photochemical filmmaking and experimental music.



Directors Statement

Set in London's Elephant and Castle and against the backdrop of one of Europe's largest "urban renewal" projects, I wanted to make a film that explores the realities of lives being quietly erased.

This film emerged not from a traditional screenplay, but from a chance encounter with non-actor and lead character Damian Smith, a real-life barrow boy who pulls carts around at East Street Market, one of London's oldest surviving street markets. Working with non-actors playing versions of themselves, we co-created a narrative that blurs the line between fiction and lived experience. Our micro-crew moved through real locations in Walworth and Elephant and Castle, staging fictional scenes- many often improvised- within and amongst real locations. This approach gives the film its raw, documentary-like urgency, and scenes that feel both intentional and yet spontaneously observed.

The film speaks loudly to our present moment: the cost-of-living crisis, hand-to-mouth existences, and staggering wealth disparities in one of the world's great cities. It examines how our society creates disenfranchised people- particularly those who work with their bodies and hands, and for whom knowledge economies remain inaccessible. Central to the film's narrative is an examination of precarious work. Damian- whose endless hustle is meticulously observed- is far from a victim in this film. His resourcefulness and entrepreneurial drive are on constant display, yet these qualities never meaningfully alter his circumstances. Through his character, the film explores and examines a unique modern form of disempowerment: it's not about lacking agency or being passive, but rather that hard work and agency rarely meaningfully impact or change one's trajectory.

In our polarised political landscapes, I was eager to create a work that honours the nuances of lived experience beyond reductive categorisations. Rather than exploring political ideas or slogans, the film examines how politics (in the broadest sense of the word) shapes our existence and emotional reality- our being in the world.

What does it feel like to hustle relentlessly yet remain financially precarious? How does one navigate broken relationships without time or resources to repair them? What is the experience of becoming a stranger in the city of your birth? This film offers no easy answers, only a raw testament to the resilient lives that endure while the city reconstructs itself without them.

