

VIEVITIES

narges rashidi.

Photos by Puria Safary

Credits.

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VIENTES

- MAGAZINE -



NARGES *Rashidi.*

From the moment Narges Rashidi begins to speak, her passion for acting is electrifying. With a contagious enthusiasm, she takes us on a journey through her career, reflecting on the transformative experience of playing Lale in *Gangs of London*. She brings the character to life with a raw intensity that pushed her limits—both physically and emotionally. Through a mix of deep insights and lighthearted anecdotes, Narges reveals the ever-evolving nature of her craft and the priceless lessons she’s picked up along the way.



V: This question intrigues me because I believe it varies for everyone. Is there a particular moment or situation—perhaps during your training or practice—when it clicked for you and you thought, “This is when I truly feel like an actor”? Or do you think that sense of being an actor is something that one is born with?

N: I remember the exact moment I knew I wanted to become an actor. I was 9 years old and home alone with my mother, watching TV, when a dance performance came on. Suddenly, I burst into tears. My mother rushed over, worried, asking what had happened. But then, just as suddenly, I started laughing and told her, “Nothing, I just wanted to see if I could be an actor.” That was the beginning of my journey.

The truth is, I still don’t fully feel like an “actor”—and I don’t think I ever will. To me, that would imply reaching a final destination, and I don’t believe such a thing exists in this craft. Acting is an ongoing exploration, a constant process of discovery. Whether I’m preparing, performing, or simply existing in the space of a character, I know it will never be complete or perfect. That’s the beauty of it—it keeps evolving, and so do I.

V: Could you share what fuels that spark in you? What keeps your passion for acting alive and drives you to seek out opportunities for growth and performance despite the adversities?

N: For me, it’s the state of flow—that moment when you’re fully in it, living as the character in that space and time. It’s like stepping into a different dimension, and the thrill of not knowing exactly where it will go is addictive. When you get to play a great, meaty role in an incredible script, nothing compares. Maybe it’s the adrenaline rush, maybe it’s the high of storytelling—but whatever it is, it keeps me chasing it.

V: Narges, the role of Lale in *Gangs of London* seems to have truly established you as an actor worldwide.

I’m curious to know if this particular project has had a significant impact on your personal acting philosophy or the trajectory you envision for your career. Did embodying this character reshape your perspective on the kind of roles you want to pursue or the impact you hope to make through your craft?

N: Playing Lale in *Gangs of London* was my first time working in the action genre, and I never expected to enjoy it as much as I did. She feeds my inner child enormously. In real life, I’m a lover, not a fighter, but stepping into her world—to play make-believe and take down some guys—is just so much fun.

As an actor, I always aim to keep my projects and characters as diverse as possible, within what’s available, of course. That said, if *Gangs of London* leads to more action roles, I say yes—absolutely, yes, please.

V: Your portrayal of Lale is incredibly dynamic. Can you share what the process of transforming into her character looks like for you, both physically and psychologically? What specific techniques or methods do you use to delve into her psyche and bring her to life on screen?

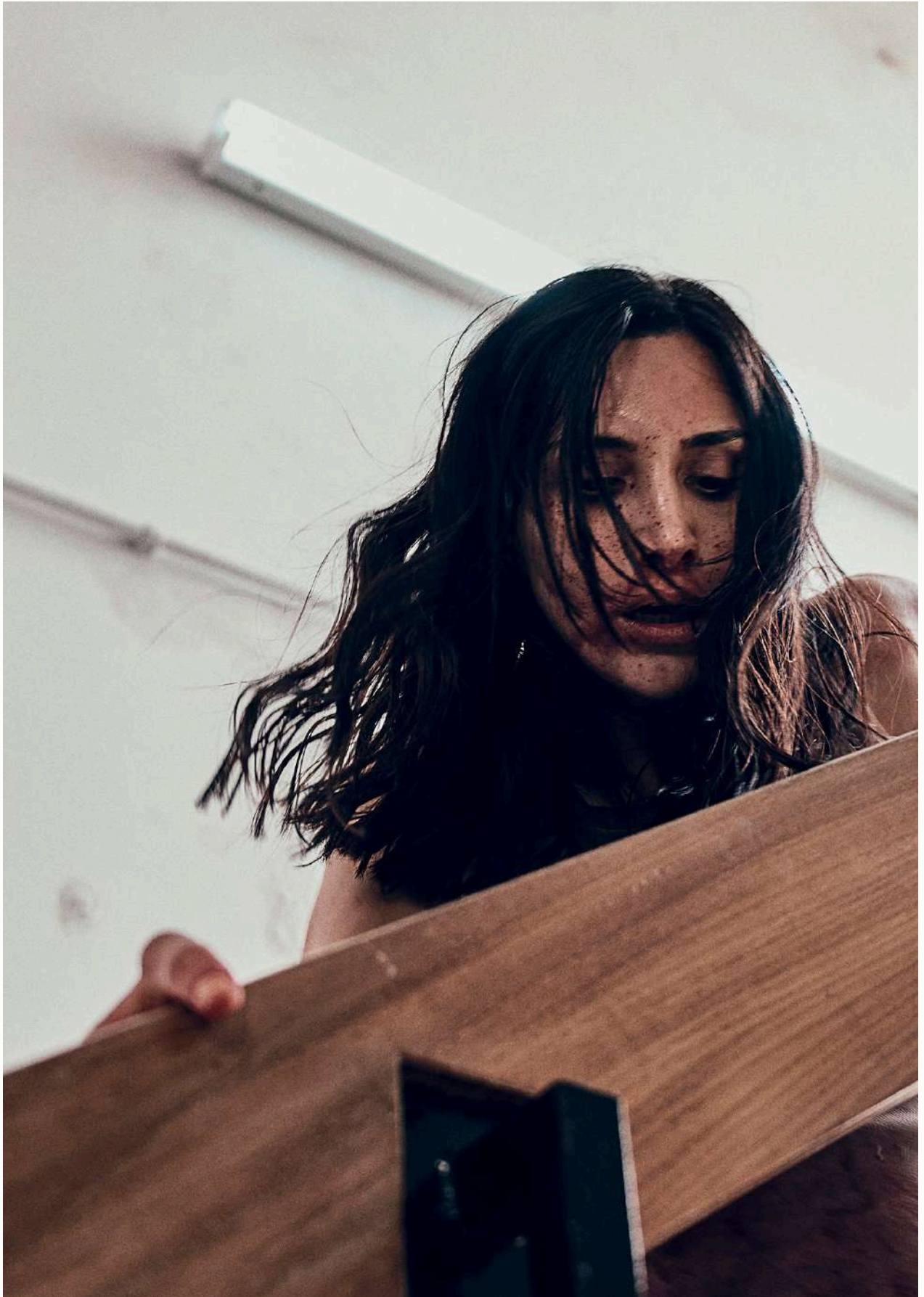
N: It’s a bit like being Columbo—I start by asking a million questions. What does London’s underworld really look like? Is there a Kurdish mafia? How do they operate? Then I go deeper: What does it mean to be Kurdish? What’s their history? Why is Lale so fiercely committed to her cause? What does it mean to be a woman in an overwhelmingly male-dominated world—especially in a criminal one? How does she survive without being eaten alive?

Since I’m Iranian, playing Lale also meant learning Kurdish. That required hours and hours of lessons with my incredible Kurdish teacher, Ferhan. Then there’s the physical side of it. My dance background helped me pick up fight choreography more easily, but I still

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trained 5–6 times a week to be in top shape. Some things just can't be faked. Playing Lale has definitely made me stronger—physically and mentally.

V: Playing a character like Lale must come with its emotional challenges. What are some of the toughest moments you've faced while embodying her, and how do you navigate through those experiences?

N: Emotionally, playing Lale isn't as tough for me as people might think. I don't take her home with me. In fact, I have an incredible amount of fun playing her. The emotional rollercoaster she goes through is cathartic and freeing. It's big, it's Shakespearean.

The real challenge is the physical toll. And that, at times, is brutal—because, at the end of the day, I'm an actor, not an athlete. But for Lale, I have to become an athlete. It's a disciplined lifestyle, but weirdly, I love it.

V: In what ways do you feel these transformations affect your personal growth as an actor? Have you discovered anything about yourself through playing Lale or other characters?

N: The beauty of acting—and of life itself—is the constant growth. That's what keeps me going. Every character teaches me something new about the craft, about the world, and about myself. That's the greatest reward.

With every role, I make mistakes. I learn from them. Then I make new mistakes, and the process continues. Lale has made me stronger in some ways and more vulnerable in others. She keeps giving, and I'm endlessly grateful to her. But after each season, I go home, buy myself a flowery dress, and let myself be as feminine and light as possible—just for a little while. And then, of course, I start missing her again.

V: With your diverse roles, including the recent one in the BBC factual drama and upcoming projects, how do you balance the different aspects of these characters while main-

taining your own sense of identity? How do you ensure that each character remains distinct and authentic, and what strategies do you use to prevent them from blending together?

N: Each character is like building a new house from scratch—a completely different architecture. Different genres, different backgrounds, different emotional landscapes, different physicalities, different ways of speaking, different accents.

The ideal approach is to start fresh every time, as if you've never acted before. It's terrifying and exciting. And yes, sometimes you fail—but that's part of the game.

V: What is it like for you to work alongside such talented individuals you've collaborated with in your career? Is it true that just by observing them in action or sharing a few words, you can absorb some of their wisdom in the profession?

N: Absolutely. You can learn so much just by watching others. Sometimes, the smallest gesture or a single sentence can give you an aha moment—a deep insight—if you're open to it.

V: Could you share an anecdote about a moment in your career when you had to be the most courageous, whether it was in a particular role or in your decision to continue pursuing acting?

N: An actor's journey is brutal. It's an emotional rollercoaster filled with incredible highs but mostly relentless rejection. No matter how much you rationalize that rejection isn't personal, it feels personal. That's hard to endure. The existential anxiety and instability of this career don't make it any easier.

I'm not sure if I'd call it courage, but I've had countless moments where I wanted to walk away—because this job can be painful, humbling, and sometimes even degrading. But then I wonder: maybe the real courage would be to let go. And yet, I can't. I love it too much.



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