



# MY CREATIVE INSPIRATION ALI MOSTAFA

**1.** I used to love watching cartoons as a child. Some of my favourites were from Walt Disney, such as *The Sword in the Stone*. I was fascinated by the idea of turning into different animals and shapeshifting, which also justifies my addiction to the children's programme the *Barbapapa's*.

**2.** My father had the biggest collection of films. But strangely enough they were always in a format that was bound to become obsolete. His collection of Betamax was huge and his

later collection of LaserDiscs was even bigger. There was one cartoon that I slipped out from his Betamax cupboard that I used to watch religiously. I was definitely not allowed to watch it as it was quite raunchy for a cartoon, but I was addicted to its fantasy and how much it used to scare me. It was called *Fire and Ice*.

**3.** My gaming machine was the Amiga 500. It was massive and I felt like a real professional on it. There was one game in particular where I

was able to use characters and make little films. But the coolest thing was that when my father was in Bahrain once, he met an old friend who owned a computer store and, while chatting, my father's friend found out what my name was and gave me more than 200 games. I guess I have a good name.

**4.** My first impressions of stop motion animation were from old films such as *The Clash of the Titans*, *The 7th Voyage of Sinbad* and *Jason and the Argonauts*. I was mesmerised by

the monsters and also intrigued by how weirdly they used to move. I remember figuring it all out at a very early age and made many attempts at making my own stop motion animation films with my toys.

**5.** Adrenalin was another addiction of mine. My cousin and I were so into stunts that I sometimes look back and wonder how we're still here. I used to collect stunt films on VHS, like *Stunt Wars* and *Stunt Mania*. When I see Parkour (urban free run-

ning) it reminds me of my day-to-day antics as a kid.

**6.** I use to love to draw. I was always doodling and sketching in class. My father was an architect and I assumed that's where my creativity came from. It also led me to my short stint as an interior designer before taking up filmmaking professionally. Drawing at such a young age made me appreciate beautiful designs such as cars and motorcycles. I've always loved the design of a Ducati, which

led me to finally purchase one after my film *City of Life*.

**7.** Steven Spielberg created some of my most influential films. *ET*, *Jaws* and *Indiana Jones* – I have probably seen them 100 times and Harrison Ford was my favourite actor. My best Indie line was "Trust me!"

**8.** Richard Dean Anderson was my favourite TV actor. I was absolutely obsessed with the show *MacGyver*. I remember it used to come on right

after Maghreb prayer on Channel 33. He could make a bomb out of a shoe and a matchstick. It was fantastic. I think everyone feels they have a bit of *MacGyver* in them at some point in their life.

**9.** *Star Wars* was a film that changed a lot for me. It gave me inspiration to seek the impossible and to see filmmaking on a whole other level. It also has one of my favourite costumes of all time – the Stormtrooper. One day I'll own an original from the

film. Another film that inspired me on a huge emotional level was *The Message* by Mustafa Akkad. It brings tears to my eyes to this day.

**10.** People and cities. Any major city I go to I make sure to take a day or night and just walk for hours. You find the best people and experiences and stories that way.

*Ali Mostafa is director and executive producer of afm films. He directed the UAE's first feature film, City of Life*