

UMUT ARAL

DIRECTOR

BIOGRAPHY

Multi-screen storyteller and internationally award-winning director Umut Aral was born in Istanbul, and based in London. Globally experienced and multi-lingual, Aral has managed multinational teams, established partnerships, and worked across Europe and Asia.

In the most recent years, between 2018 - 2023, Aral directed 4 Netflix Originals streamed in 190 countries, including:

- [“Who Were We Running From?”](#) as the pilot director, a psychological thriller adapted from the acclaimed novelist Perihan Magden. The first season was ranked #1 in ‘Non English TV Shows’, #3 in US and #1 in UK. The series was in Top Ten of 83 countries worldwide, watched over 75 million hours globally.
- [“The Protector”](#) as the lead director for 4 successful seasons with a total of 13 episodes. The series ranked #6 most watched ‘Non- English TV shows’ in the UK and #10 in US.
- [“Yakamoz S-245”](#) - A spin-off of the most watched international series, Into the Night. ‘Yakamoz S245’ was in Top Ten for 63 countries, and watched over 35 million hours globally.
- [“Love 101”](#) - The series went on Top Ten in over 15 countries and watched 11 million hours globally on its first week.

Recently, Aral completed 4 episodes of a new crime drama series ‘Karantina’ starring James Franco and Earl Cave, created by Adi Hasak and produced by MBC and Asacha Group, shot in Athens and Beirut.

He directed the first e-Sports feature film [‘Good Game: The Beginning’](#) in 2018. The movie won 12 international awards and screened in prestigious international film festivals: Sarajevo Film Festival, Worldfest Houston International Film Festival, and Beirut International Youth Film Festival.

In 2024, he produced and directed a feature length sports documentary [‘Arda Turan: Confrontation’](#) for Amazon Prime about the controversial football player Arda Turan. The documentary features international football superstar guest speakers from Atletico Madrid and FC Barcelona such as Neymar, Andrés Iniesta, Gerard Pique, Koke, Ivan Rakitic, Filipe Luis, Diego Simeone, and Miguel Ángel Gil Marín.

In 2024-2025, he directed the TV series [Deha](#) (also known as Genius) for Show TV. Starring Aras Bulut Iynemli, Uğur Polat, Taner Olmez, Onur Saylak, Melis Sezen, and Ahsen Eroğlu, the series delivered the strongest debut of the season. Additionally, the show ranked among the top five series with the highest rating increases in its 2nd episode. Aral has directed 31 episodes and completed the series.

Aral has also directed, produced, and written two short films, "Crash" and "Thirtyfour," which have been screened in esteemed film festivals around the world, and won numerous awards.

Additionally, Aral has directed 300+ TV commercials, establishing himself as one of the top talented leading directors in the commercial world, winning numerous awards and being screened throughout the world with his work for clients such as Coca-Cola, Pepsi, Mercedes Benz, Nivea, Vodafone, Unilever, Nestle, Henkel, and McDonald's, among many others.

Throughout his career, Aral has also been a speaker and educator, invited as a guest speaker to global organizations like YPO and universities to run workshops on filmmaking. Aral is also the Chairman of the Board of Members of Mithat Alam Education Foundation and Mithat Alam Film Center, a prestigious cultural center in Istanbul that hosted world cinema icons like Sir Ian McKellen, Sean Connery, and Gus Van Sant for masterclasses, seminars, and screenings.

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AWARDS

Feature Film 'Good Game: The Beginning'

- Best Feature Film Award – Beirut International Children & Family Film Festival 2020
- Special Jury Remmi Award & Best Score Awards – Worldfest Houston Int Film Festival 2020
- Young Audience Award / TeenArena Section – Sarajevo Film Festival 2019
- Golden Award Family / Children Film – Virgin Springs Cinefest 2019
- Award of Excellence Special Mention – Accolade Global Film Competition 2019
- Best Feature Film Award - Aryan International Children's Film Festival in Jaipur 2019
- Best Family / Children Film & Best Debut Filmmaker – Druk International Film Festival 2019
- Best Family/Children Film - Calcutta International Cult Film Festival 2019
- Semi-Finalist - Juniorfest 2019
- Official Selection – Providence International Children's Film Festival 2020
- Official Selection – San Diego International Kids' Film Festival 2019
- Official Selection – Kids First! Film Festival 2019
- Official Selection - Adelaide Youth Film Festival 2019

Short Film 'Crash'

- Best Director & Best Actor Awards - L'Isola del Cinema Festival Del Corto / Italy
- Global Audience Award - CON-CAN Movie Festival / Japan
- Best Foreign Film Award - Action/Cut Short Film Competition / USA
- Best Fiction & Special Audience Awards - Boston Turkish Film Festival / USA
- Official Selection - Locarno International Film Festival / Switzerland
- Official Selection - International Short Film Festival in Drama / Greece
- Official Selection – Raindance Film Festival / UK
- Best Film Award - Metro Group National Short Film Competition / Turkey
- Best Film Golden Cat Award - Izmir International Short Film Festival / Turkey
- Jury Special Award - IF Istanbul Independent Film Festival / Turkey
- Best Film Award & DreamTV Special Award - Yildiz Short Film Festival / Turkey
- Best Film Award - Kisa-ca National Short Film Festival / Turkey
- Special Mention Award - Kanalturk Short Film Competition / Turkey

Short Film 'thirtyfour'

- Best Short Film Award - IFSAK Short Film Festival
- Best Short Film Award - Cine5 National Short Film Competition
- Best Short Film Award - Marmara University Short Film Competition
- Jury Special Award - Orhan Arıburnu Awards, Short Film Category
- Second Best Film Award - Avsa Short Film Festival

TV Commercials

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| - Meyhanedeyiz.biz 'Yuzlesme' | 12 Awards in Various Festivals 2021 |
| - Solgar 7 | Horizon Interactive Awards 2019 |
| - Vodafone 'We are BJK' | 5 Felis Awards 2017 |
| - King 'Shaving Razor' | Crystal Apple Award 2017 |
| - Meyhanedeyiz.biz | Kırmızı Awards / Best Branded Content 2017 |
| - Vodafone 'These Seats Know' | 12 Awards in Various Festivals |
| - Pınar Labne 'Obama' | Golden Effie 2013 |
| - SuperFM | Crystal Apple Award / First Prize in TV Section 2011 |