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مهر جان هوندل مينا للسينما

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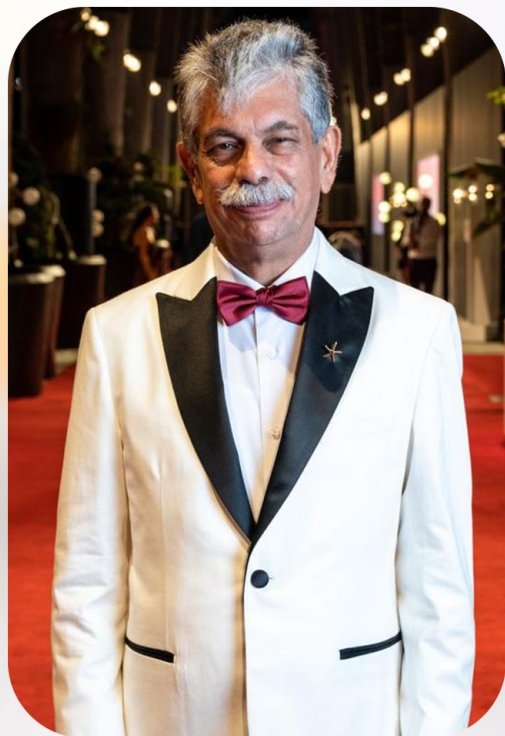
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Welcomes & **Festival Mission**

Message from Intishal Al Timimi

Honorary President of the Holland MENA Film Festival



At this remarkable sixth edition of the Holland MENA Film Festival, we come together once again to renew the bond between the dream-makers of cinema from the MENA region and an audience eager to discover new voices and fresh visions within a space that celebrates artistic dialogue, creativity and cultural exchange.

This festival reminds us that cinema is so much more than entertainment. It is a mirror for reflection, a universal human language that reveals the richness of our shared humanity and, a platform where untold stories can finally be seen and heard.

The Hague, with its openness and diversity, is the perfect place to host this festival. It reflects our mission: to celebrate freedom and creativity, to build bridges across borders, and to bring together filmmakers and audiences from East and West, from near and far.

For me, it is both an honour and joy to be part of this journey, strengthened by my belief in the transformative power of art, and by a vision of cinema as a force that can open new horizons and to help new talents to rise beyond the limits of imagination.

With my warmest wishes to all the filmmakers, artists and supporters whose dedication has helped turn this dream into a living and vibrant reality.

Intishal Al Timimi

Honorary President of the Holland MENA Film Festival
El Delft – The Netherlands, September 15, 2025

Welcome to the 6th Edition of the Holland MENA Film Festival

Welcome from the Festival President



The sixth edition of the Holland MENA Film Festival marks a new chapter in a remarkable journey that began as an initiative to foster dialogue and encounter, and has since grown into an international platform where film, culture, and community come together.

In The Hague – City of Peace and Justice, home to more than 140 nationalities – we connect filmmakers from the Middle East, North Africa, and the diaspora with a broad and diverse audience.

We believe cinema is more than an art form. It reflects reality, connects people, and amplifies voices that might otherwise remain unheard. This year, we strengthen that vision with a rich program of premieres, screenings inside and beyond the cinema halls, inspiring debates, workshops, music, and neighborhood activities. In this way, the festival becomes a bridge between the international character of The Hague and the vitality of neighborhoods such as Schilderswijk, Transvaal, Zuidwest, and Segbroek.

Under the umbrella of the MJG / Cultuur Foundation, we pursue a long-term vision: rolling out the red carpet from local neighborhoods to the city's cultural institutions. Our ambition is to make culture a bridge – between generations, between communities, and between worlds. A special focus lies on young people, offering them opportunities to engage with contemporary themes through film, to discuss them openly, and to explore them creatively.

In this spirit, we are also developing neighborhood cinema initiatives in Schilderswijk, Transvaal, and beyond. These small-scale screenings – always linked to a theme and followed by open dialogue – provide meeting places where residents can come together, exchange ideas, and contribute to building more connected and peaceful communities.

This year, we are honored to welcome our Honorary President, Mr. Intishal Al-Timimi, and our Guest of Honor, the great artist Marcel Khalife – both icons who embody creativity, freedom, and hope. We also warmly thank our partners, in particular the Municipality of The Hague and Fonds 1818, whose invaluable support ensures the continuity of this cultural initiative.

We are delighted to invite you to the official opening on Thursday, September 25th, where we will also pay special tribute to the distinguished members of our jury. Our heartfelt appreciation goes as well to all film professionals who share this vision with us – their presence enriches the festival and is a cornerstone of its success.

Finally, I wish to express my deepest gratitude to the festival's dedicated team, volunteers, and everyone who makes this event possible. Through their passion and commitment, the dream of this festival continues to grow and flourish.

We warmly welcome you to the Holland MENA Film Festival 2025 – a celebration of film, art, and community.

With sincere appreciation,

Dr. Mustapha Barbouch

President of the Holland MENA Film Festival
MJG / Cultuur Foundation
The Hague – September 2025

Welcomes and Festival Mission

Welcome from the Artistic Director

Welcome to the 6th edition of the Holland MENA Film Festival in The Hague. Once again, we are delighted to gather with an audience that shares a deep love for cinema. This festival opens a window onto artistic and human experiences from the Middle East and North Africa, showcasing both established and emerging filmmakers.

For this edition, we have curated a selection of feature and short films that resonate with contemporary issues and reveal the richness of cinematic imagination. Stories of identity and memory stand side by side with intimate tales that pulse with life and the search for meaning.

My gratitude goes to the filmmakers who entrusted us with their work, to our partners, and to our loyal audience whose presence gives this festival its special energy.

We hope you enjoy a journey through images and sounds that will stay with you long after leaving the theater.

Wafa Miras

Artistic Director



Filmfestival & Location

About the Festival

The Human Voice Behind the Lens

Celebrating cinema that bridges cultures, the Holland MENA Film Festival takes place annually in The Hague. It showcases films from the Middle East, North Africa, and diasporic communities, offering a space where diverse narratives intersect and the camera meets the human experience. The festival presents feature and short films that explore exile, displacement, identity, struggle, and hope. These stories emerge from turmoil, yet carry beauty, memory, and resilience through image and sound.

Screenings are accompanied by professional gatherings, panels, and tributes, creating a dynamic environment for dialogue and cultural exchange. Each year, the festival reaffirms its belief that cinema is a tool for understanding, connection, and artistic expression that transcends boundaries.

More than a platform for films, the Holland MENA Film Festival is a living space that celebrates the human, the intimate, and the real—inviting audiences to engage with the voices behind the lens.

About The Hague



In the heart of Europe, The Hague stands tall—not merely as an administrative or political centre, but as a city of art and philosophy. It once welcomed one of the greatest minds of Western modernity: Baruch Spinoza, the philosopher of rationalism and freedom. Amid its old alleyways and quiet cafés, Spinoza shaped his reflection on nature, justice, and coexistence, granting The Hague an existential depth that continues to inspire to this day. Yet The Hague was not only a haven for philosophers—it was also an open stage for great visual artists who lit up the skies of Dutch and global art. Here, Vermeer's delicate realism met Mondrian's modernist abstraction, merging sensual Dutch naturalism with the boldness of geometric purity. The city became a living mirror to the evolving tastes of humanity. In this very space—where grand questions meet visual creation—the Holland MENA Film Festival rises to carry forward this cultural legacy. It offers the Mediterranean South—from the shores of the MENA region—a space within a North that has always served as both mirror and bridge. Welcome to The Hague: the city of reason, light, and image.

FESTIVAL TEAM

- Intishal Al-Timimi
- Mustapha Barbouch
- Wafa Miras
- Farid Aït Lahcen
- Btisam Akarkach
- Fadia Darraj
- Ur Al Basri
- Abdelillah Ouali
- Ali El Kashoty

Honorary president
Festival president
Artistic Director
Festival General Advisor
Program Coordinator
General Coordinator
Festival Graphic Designer
Visual Designar Director
Head of The festival Press Office

FESTIVAL GUESTS

■ Honored guest: Intishal Al-Timimi

In this edition of the Holland Mena Film Festival, the festival proudly honors Mr. Intishal Al-Timimi festival's Honorary President, with The Hague Cinema Award, in recognition of his rich and inspiring career in the world of cinema.

Who is Intishal ?

Director of El Gouna Film Festival (2017 - 2023)
Strategic Adviser (since 2023)

Intishal Al Timimi is a key figure in the regional film circuit, as well as a widely recognized personality in the international film festival scene. His entire career has been dedicated to supporting Arab cinematic voices, enabling them to evolve through dialogue with their counterparts within the Arab world and beyond. His efforts in this field have been duly recognized by stakeholders within and outside the Arab world. Al Timimi was born in 1954 in Baghdad, Iraq, and holds a master's degree in journalism from Moscow State University. He has held several notable positions, compiling an impressive portfolio of experiences. These include his roles as the artistic director of the Arab Film Festival in Rotterdam (2001-2009), program advisor of the International Film Festival Rotterdam:



IFFR (2004-2011), programmer of the “Iraqi Retrospective” at the Biennale des Cinémas Arabes à Paris (2004), programmer at the Osian's Cinefan Festival of Asian and Arab Cinema (2004-2009), coordinator of “30 Years of Arab Documentaries” at the Munich International Film Festival, coordinator of “10 Years of European Cinema” at the Ismailia International Film Festival, as well as curator of the “Tribute to Johan van der Keuken.”

Al Timimi also served as a programmer at the prestigious Abu Dhabi Film Festival (2008-2010), after which he became director of Arab programming (2011-2014).

He was also director of Sanad Film Fund (2010-2015), under whose leadership the fund supported numerous projects that were completed, acclaimed, and awarded at some of the most distinguished festivals around the world.

Over the past three decades, he also served as a jury member at a number of international film festivals. These include the Parma Film Festival (1989), the Munich International Documentary Film Festival (1997), the Singapore International Film Festival (2005), the Ismailia International Film Festival (2006), the AMAL - International Euroarab

Film Festival (2008), the Tallinn Black Nights Film Festival (2010), the Guanajuato International Film Festival (2013), the Munich International Film Festival (2014) and many more, where he often moderated or spoke on panels primarily addressing Arab cinema.

Al Timimi is also a member of the advisory board of Network for the Promoting of Asian Cinema (NETPAC), and has served as a member and president of the NETPAC jury at some of the most prestigious festivals, including Berlin, Karlovy Vary, Locarno, Kerala and Toronto.

He is an avid photographer and designer, whose photographic work has been featured in various exhibitions around the world. His designs, particularly book covers for Arabic literature, are widely published.

FESTIVAL GUESTS

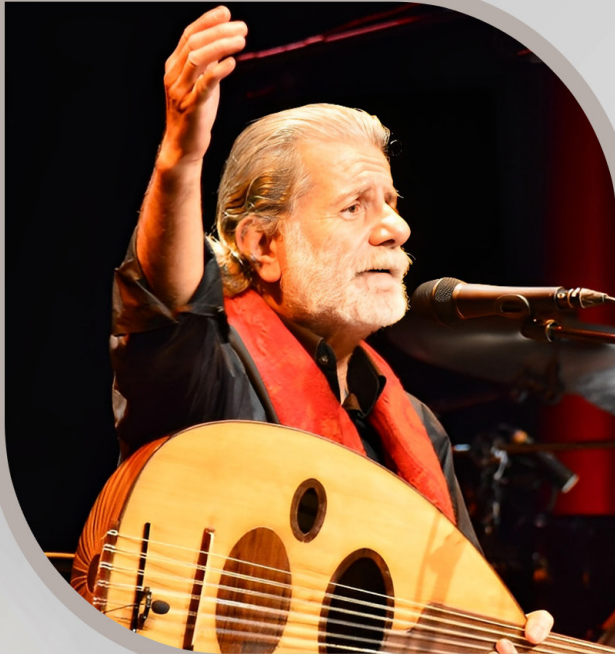
■ Special guest: Marcel Khalife

We are honored to welcome Marcel Khalife, the renowned Lebanese composer, singer, and oud virtuoso, as a special guest at the MENA Film Festival Holland.

Khalife has been a leading figure in Arabic music for over five decades, blending traditional melodies with contemporary influences to create a unique and deeply moving musical experience.

He is widely celebrated for setting the poetry of Mahmoud Darwish to music, combining artistic expression with social and political engagement.

In recognition of his contributions to culture and human rights, he was named a UNESCO Artist for Peace in 2005. We are privileged to have Marcel Khalife join us in celebrating the rich cultural heritage of the MENA region and inspiring audiences with his music and vision.



FESTIVAL GUESTS

■ Special Guest: Mohamed Hefzy

We are pleased to welcome Mohamed Hefzy, a pioneering Egyptian screenwriter and producer, as a special guest at the MENA Film Festival Holland. Hefzy is the founder of Film Clinic, a leading production company in Egypt and the Arab world. Established in 2005, Film Clinic has been instrumental in producing over 40 feature films, including acclaimed titles such as *Clash* (2016), *Sheikh Jackson* (2017), *Luxor* (2020), and *Feathers* (2021). His films have been showcased at major international festivals, including Cannes, Venice, Berlin, Sundance, and Toronto, earning more than 100 international awards. In addition to his work at Film Clinic, Hefzy has been an active participant in the global film community. He has served as a jury member at prestigious festivals such as the Sundance Film Festival and the Venice International Film Festival. In 2018, he was appointed as the youngest president in the history of the Cairo International Film Festival, a position he held for four consecutive years. Recognized for his contributions to the film industry, Hefzy has received numerous accolades. He was named the only Arab among 30 future leaders in film production by Screen International in 2013 and was featured in *Variety*'s 500 list of the most influential people in the media industry worldwide.



In 2019, he was honored with the Arab Cinema Personality of the Year award by the Hollywood Reporter and the Arab Cinema Center.

Through his work, Mohamed Hefzy continues to shape the landscape of Arab cinema, fostering new talent and bringing diverse stories to the global stage.

2025 Festival Schedule & Film Program Details

HMFF 2025 Shedule

■ THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 25

6:00PM – Opening Ceremony

7:30PM – Opening Film Naji Al-Ali

9:30PM – Dinner/Cocktail

■ FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 26

12:00PM – Masterclass with Intishal Al-Timimi

3:00PM – Hobal

5:20PM – Songs Of Adam

7:30PM – Short Film Screenings

Orange from Jaffa, Scarecrows of the Red Zone, The last Dismissal, Abu Joudi, Ebb and Flow

■ SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 27

12:00PM – Panel discussion : Cinema of Exile

3:00PM – To a Land Unknown

5:15PM – Short Film Screenings

Salam Cinema, Hide & Seek, Dawn Every Day, Children of the Barzagh, Bougainvillea, Last One Time

6:45PM – The Tale Of Daye's Family

8:45PM – Algiers (196 Mètres)

■ SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 28

2:00PM – The Wound

6:00PM – Closing Ceremony

For locations see the program on the official festival website:

www.hollandmenafilmfestival.com

OPENING FILM

■ Naji Al-Ali

This documentary, directed by Kasim Abid, offers an in-depth journey into the life and work of the legendary Palestinian cartoonist Naji Al-Ali, creator of the iconic character Handala. The film traces his life from his birth in Galilee to his assassination by an unknown gunman in London in 1987.

It explores the forces that shaped Naji Al-Ali as an artist who faced a range of challenges, including harassment, siege, displacement, exile, and terror. The documentary shows how his artistic experiences became a mirror for all Palestinians living in the diaspora. His drawings documented the struggles of the Palestinian people, critiqued Arab regimes, and carried a universal message of social justice and human rights.

SYNOPSIS

In July 1987, Palestinian cartoonist Naji Al Ali was shot by an unknown assassin. This documentary traces his life and work from his birth in Galilee to his death in London.

It examines the forces that shaped Naji Al Ali as an artist who faced a range of challenges, including harassment, siege, displacement, exile, terror and shows how his artistic experiences become a mirror for all Palestinians living in the diaspora.

Documentary | 1999 | 52min | Arabic speech with English subtitles

Director : Kasim Abid

Producer : Kasim Abid



FEATURE FILM JURY

■ Ahmed Almulla

Poet and Director of the Saudi Film Festival



Ahmed Al-Mulla is a Saudi poet and filmmaker, founder of the Saudi Film Festival in 2008, and founder of the Cinema Association in 2021. He is one of the leading cultural figures in the Arabian Gulf. He currently serves as the Vice President of the Cinema Association in Saudi Arabia and has previously held the position of Director of the Culture and Arts Association in Dammam, as well as a board member of the Mowared Cultural Foundation. Al-Mulla has contributed to the establishment and management of numerous cultural and cinematic projects at both the Arab and international levels. He has also acted as an advisor to several artistic and cultural programs. He has been honored with multiple awards and recognitions, most notably the Mohammed Al-Thubaiti Poetry Prize, and has been recognized as a prominent cinematic figure by the Saudi Ministry of Culture and various Gulf festivals.

His literary and poetic contributions are extensive, having published more than ten poetry collections and weekly articles in newspapers, in addition to writing screenplays for short films. Ahmed Al-Mulla's rich experience combines creative sensibility with organizational expertise, making him one of the most prominent cultural voices in the contemporary Saudi scene.

FEATURE FILM JURY

■ **Sonia Herman Dolz**

Documentary Film Director

Sonia Herman Dolz is one of the leading Dutch documentary filmmakers, renowned for her poetic and visually rich style in exploring artistic and human subjects. She comes from a multicultural background (Spanish mother and Czech/Peruvian father).

Her notable films include *Romance de Valentía*, *Lágrimas Negras*, *Yo Soy Así*, and *The Master and His Pupil*, most of which have won major international awards such as the Golden Hugo, Golden Calf, and Tribeca prizes. In 2023, her film *DEPOT – Reflecting Boijmans* had its world premiere at the International Film Festival Rotterdam and won the Grand Jury Prize at the Socially Relevant Film Festival in New York in 2024.

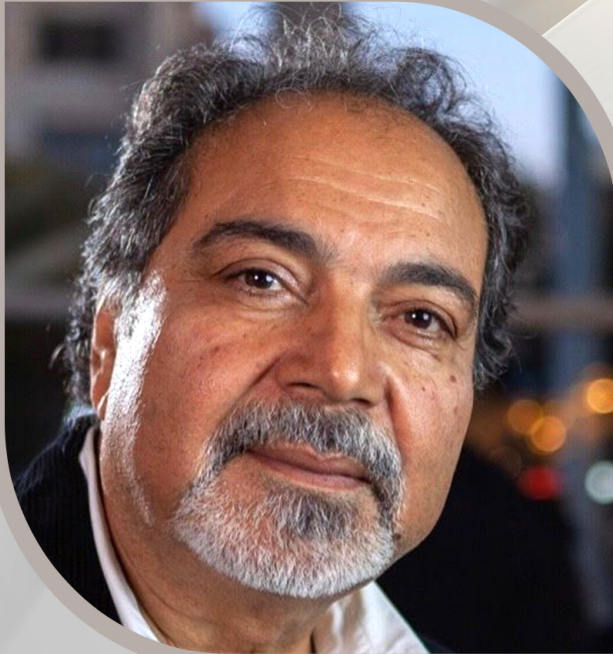
She has also served as a jury member at major international festivals including Rotterdam, Tribeca, Guadalajara, Seville, Madrid, and Barcelona, and her work has been the subject of retrospectives at festivals in Seville, Madrid, and Barcelona.



FEATURE FILM JURY

■ Kais Kasim

Film Critic & Cultural Journalist



Born in Iraq in 1954, Kais Kacem has worked in journalism and the arts since the mid-1970s. He studied journalism in Czechoslovakia (now Slovakia). He was one of the founders of the Arab Television Channel (ATC) in Gothenburg, Sweden, and was involved in producing and directing television programs for Sweden's Open Channel. He also created and hosted programs for the local Arabic radio in Gothenburg.

Kacem supervised the cinema section of Al-Usbouiya magazine and continues to write film criticism for leading Arab newspapers. He served for several years as a consultant for the Arab Film Festival in Rotterdam and worked as a web editor for the Abu Dhabi Film Festival. He actively participates in cinematic panels and workshops and regularly covers Arab and international film festivals. He is a member of the editorial board of Arab Cinema Magazine, has served on the juries of various Arab and international film festivals, and is a member of the Network for the Promotion of Asian Cinema (NET-PAC), the Arab Critics' Awards committee, and the Swedish Film Critics Association.

FEATURE FILM COMPETITION

■ HOBAL



Abdulaziz Al-Shalahei

Abdulaziz Al-Shalahei is a Saudi director and screenwriter born in Riyadh in 1986. As a self-taught filmmaker, he is part of a new generation shaping contemporary Saudi cinema. His work explores social transformations through a distinct visual language. His film *Zero Distance* won the Golden Palm for Best Film at the Saudi Film Festival, while *The Tambour of Retribution* received multiple local and international awards, including at the Cairo International Film Festival. He was also honored with the Best Director award at the Malmö Arab Film Festival.

SYNOPSIS

In the nineties, after the Gulf War, a Bedouin family lives in complete isolation in the Saudi desert, led by a grand Father who believes the end of the world is near. His strict teachings govern everyone until a contagious disease threatens the family's stability. Inner conflicts arise between obedience and anxiety, and the mother emerges as a voice full of hope and life.

"Hobal" is a story of struggle between fear and the desire to survive, between a ruling past and a present demanding freedom.



Saudi Arabia | 2024 | 111min | Arabic speech with English subtitles

Film Credits :

GENRE: Drama and Fiction

Director: Abdulaziz Alshlahei

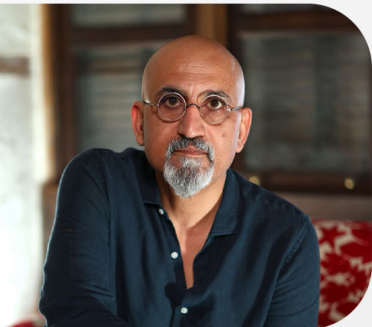
Scriptwriter: Mufarrij Almajfel

Producer: Sharif Almajali

Cast: Meshal Almutairi, Mila Alzahrani, Ibrahim Alhasawi, Motreb Fawaz, Abdulrahman Abdullah, Drian Aldrian, Hamdy Alfreidi, Reem Fahad, Noura Alhamed

FEATURE FILM COMPETITION

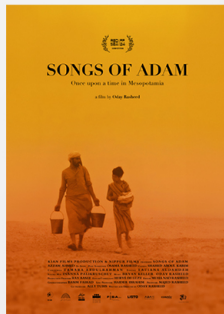
■ SONGS OF ADAM



Oday Rasheed

Oday Rasheed is an Iraqi-American filmmaker whose works navigate between the wounded memory of Iraq and questions of exile in America. His debut feature *Underexposure* (2003) marked a milestone as the first film shot in Baghdad after the U.S. invasion. It premiered internationally at the International Film Festival Rotterdam and won the Best Film Award at the Singapore International Film Festival.

His film *Qarantina* (2009) received the Jury Prize at the Oran International Arabic Film Festival. After settling in the United States in 2012, Rasheed made his first English-language film *If You See Something*, which premiered at the Woodstock Film Festival (2024). His latest film *Songs of Adam* won the Yusr Award for Best Screenplay at the Red Sea International Film Festival (2024). His films are characterized by a human tone that moves between fragility, exile, and the search for meaning.



SYNOPSIS

In the summer of 1946, under their father's strict orders, Adam is forced to accompany his younger brother Ali to witness the washing of their grandfather's corpse—a ritual from which their cousin Iman is excluded simply because she is a girl. Confronted with this haunting scene, Adam makes a defiant choice against time : he refuses to grow up, and his body stops aging. This strange transformation stirs suspicion and fear among the villagers, who begin to whisper of a curse upon him. Meanwhile, his brother Ali, witnessing his own aging, believes Adam should be isolated. Yet Iman and Anki, a shepherd and Adam's loyal childhood friend, see his condition as a rare gift that preserves the purity of innocence and the clarity of the soul. Set against the scorching desert sands and the enchanting oases of Iraq, this is a breathtaking story filled with beauty and sorrow



Iraq, Netherlands, Saudi Arabia and United States of America (USA) | 2024 | 97 min | Arabic speech with English subtitles

Film Credits :

GENRE : Drama and Magical Realism

Director : Abdulaziz Alshlahe

Scriptwriter : Oday Rasheed

Producer : Majed Rasheed, Ally Tubis, Oday Rasheed

Cast : Azzam Ahmed Ali, Abdul Jabbar Hassan, Alaa Najm, Tahseen Dahis, Star Awad Hatem, Hoda Shaheen, Osama Azzam

FEATURE FILM COMPETITION

■ TO A LAND UNKNOWN



Mahdi Fleifel

Mahdi Fleifel is a Palestinian-Danish director who graduated from NFTS in the UK. In 2012, his first feature-length documentary A World Not Ours premiered at TIFF and gathered around thirty awards (Berlinale, CPH:DOX, Yamagata, DOC:NYC). He took part in the Cinéfondation in 2013, and subsequently directed several short films: A Man Returned (Silver Bear 2016 EFA nomination), A Drowning Man (Cannes, Bafta nominated), I Signed The Petition (IDFA award and EFA nomination).

SYNOPSIS

Chatila and Reda are saving to pay for fake passports to get out of Athens. But when Reda loses their hard-earned cash to his dangerous drug addiction, Chatila hatches an extreme plan, which involves them posing as smugglers and taking hostages in an effort to get him and his best friend out of their hopeless environment before it is too late



United Kingdom, France, Germany, Netherlands, Greece, Qatar, Arabia, Palestine|2024|106 min Arabic speech with English subtitles

Film Credits :

GENRE: Drama

Director: Mahdi Fleifel

Scriptwriter: Mahdi Fleifel, Fyzal Boulifa, Jason McColgan

Producer: Geoff Arbourne (Inside Out Films), Mahdi Fleifel (Nakba Filmworks)

Cast : Mahmoud Bakri, Aram Sabbah, Angeliki Papoulia, Mohammad Alsurafa, Mouataz Alshaltouh, Monzer Reyahnah, Mohammad Ghassan

FEATURE FILM COMPETITION

■ THE TALE OF DAY'S FAMILY



Karim Elshenawy

Karim Elshenawy is an award-winning Egyptian director known for his unique storytelling style and deeply impactful narratives. He began his career with his debut film Gun-shot, which opened doors to success in both cinema and television. Among his notable works are the series Qabeel, Seventh Year Itch, Take Care of Zizi, and Lam Shamsiya. His latest film, The Tale of Daye's Family, produced by his co-founded company Blueprint Productions, reflects his dedication to telling meaningful stories that leave a lasting impression on audiences.



SYNOPSIS

The film follows Daye, a 14-year-old Nubian albino boy with a remarkable voice, who faces discrimination and hardship due to his unique appearance. After being abandoned by his father and bullied, he journeys from Aswan to Cairo with his family to audition for The Voice, inspired by his idol Mohamed Mounir. Along the way, they confront theft, loss, and police pursuit amid societal prejudice. Supported by kind strangers and driven by determination, Daye strives to reach the stage and fulfill his dream. A heartfelt exploration of identity, resilience, and hope, the film showcases the transformative power of music and the strength of marginalized communities.



Egypt and Saudi Arabia|2024|100 min Arabic speech with English subtitles

Film Credits :

GENRE : Family, Adventure and Drama

Director : Karim Elshenawy

Scriptwriter : Haitham Dabbour

Producer : Karim Elshenawy, Haitham Dabbour, Ahmed Youssef, Ahmad Badawi, Faisal Baltyuor

Cast : Aseel Omran, Islam Mubark, Haneen Saeed, Mohammed Mounir, Badr Mohammad

FEATURE FILM COMPETITION

■ ALGIERS



SYNOPSIS

After a little girl's kidnapping ignites a whirlwind of tension and suspicion within the city, Dounia, a brilliant psychiatrist, and Sami, a dedicated police inspector, attempt to uncover the demons of Algeria's past and solve a perplexing mystery.



Chakib Taleb-Bendiab

Chakib Taleb-Bendiab is an Algerian screenwriter, filmmaker, and composer. He has worked on many feature films and is one of the screenwriters behind the British spy series GO DARK. Chakib Taleb-Bendiab's filmography includes several compelling short films. Among them are the award-winning short flick BLACK SPIRIT, which circulated at several prestigious festivals across the globe and received the Programmers Delight Award at the 2018 Sapporo International Short Film Festival and Market in Japan, and SANG FROID, which won the Jury Award for Best Screenplay at the 2013 Sapporo International Short Film Festival and Market.

Algeria, Tunisia, France, and Canada|2024| 92 min Arabic speech with English subtitles

Film Credits :

GENRE : Mystery, Thriller

Director : Chakib Taleb-Bendiab

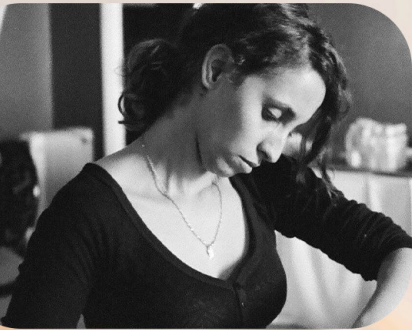
Scriptwriter : Chakib Taleb-Bendiab

Producer : Khaled Chikhi, Yasmine Dhoukar

Cast : Meriem Medjkane , Nabil Asli, Hichem Mesbah, Ali Namous

FEATURE FILM COMPETITION

■ THE WOUND



Seloua El Gouni



SYNOPSIS

Leila, a young Moroccan girl who just entered the workforce, tries to pursue her passions and ambitions while navigating the thorny societal constraints imposed on women under the guise of tradition and cultural normalcy



Seloua El Gouni boasts an impressive career in the film industry, contributing her expertise to renowned projects like Men in Black International, The Wheel of Time, Beirut, The Forgiven, and Seneca. With experience spanning various roles including Production Supervisor, Manager, and Producer, Seloua has collaborated with top studios like Sony, Amazon, and Netflix. After a decade in the field, Seloua founded her own production company, Pink Sheep Productions, reflecting her dedication to pioneering creativity and excellence in filmmaking. Under Seloua's leadership, Pink Sheep has swiftly gained recognition for its unwavering commitment to quality and innovation.

Morocco|2024| 125 min Arabic speech with English subtitles

Film Credits :

GENRE : Drama

Director : Seloua El Gouni

Scriptwriter : Taha Benghalem / Co-writers: Brian & Brice Bexter

Producer : Seloua El Gouni, Taha Benghalem

Cast : Oumaima Barid, Amal Ayouch, Mansour Badri, Brice Bexter

SHORT FILM JURY

■ **Chafina Bendahman**

Writer

Chafina Bendahman is the founder of ROSE stories, a company that since 2014 has been producing stories created by bicultural talents across various cultural forms such as theater, film, and books. She has long been committed to diversity and inclusion in the arts. She began her career as a screenwriter and later worked as an editor for several Dutch broadcasters, contributing to programs such as Kassa! and De Wereld Draait Door.

In 2016, as part of a national campaign by WOMEN INC., she conducted research on the role producers play in perpetuating stereotypes in the media, and together with ROSE stories and NTR, organized the Innoversity Parade, where media producers engaged in discussions about diversity and inclusion in their work.



SHORT FILM JURY

■ Kasim Abid

Iraqi filmmaker, director, producer, and Cinematographer



Kasim Abid is an Iraqi filmmaker, cinematographer, and producer, and one of the most prominent documentary voices in the Arab world. He studied cinema in Moscow and has been based in London since the 1980s. Known for his contemplative visual style, Abid relies on image and place rather than voice-over narration, focusing on themes of exile, identity, and social transformation across Iraq and the region. His award-winning films include *Life After the Fall* (2008), *Naji Al-Ali: Artist with Vision* (1999), *Whispers of the Cities* (2014), and *Mirrors of Diaspora* (2018).

In 2004, he co-founded the Independent Film & TV College in Baghdad and helped establish key film events such as the Baghdad Documentary Film Festival and Eye on Baghdad Festival, supporting independent Iraqi cinema and training a new generation of filmmakers.

SHORT FILM JURY

■ **Hanna Atallah**

Filmmaker, Producer

Hanna Atallah is a filmmaker, producer, and cultural art manager, based between Berlin and Jerusalem. He holds a bachelor's degree in Cinema Studies from the High Institute of Cinema in the Egyptian Academy of Arts.

Empowering unheard voices has been the motor of his professional career as a filmmaker, producer, and educator. With the creation of the non-profit organization Filmlab Palestine in 2014, located in Ramallah, he developed a platform to activate cinema culture and professional knowledge exchange in Palestine that opened the door for a regional and international network for Palestinian film professionals.



SHORT FILM COMPETITION

■ AN ORANGE FROM JAFFA



Mohammed Almughanni

Mohammed Almughanni born in Gaza in 1994, Mohammed Almughanni is a film director and screenwriter. He earned his Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Film Directing from Łódź Film School in Poland. His films, focusing on racial justice and socio-political life amid wars, have garnered awards at festivals including Ji.hlava (2020), IDFA (2023) and Clermont-Ferrand (2024). Almughanni raises awareness about collateral issues faced by innocent civilians in war, including national identity and unregistered children.

SYNOPSIS

Mohammed, a young Palestinian, embarks on a tense journey to cross an Israeli checkpoint with a temporary Polish residence card. After being turned down by other drivers, Farouk, a well-meaning taxi driver, offers him a ride. However, they soon encounter severe trouble when Israeli soldiers discover Mohammed's previous failed attempt to cross. The film powerfully captures the oppressive reality of life under occupation and the personal costs involved.



France, Poland, Palestine|2024| 27 min Arabic speech with English subtitles

Film Credits :

GENRE : Fiction

Director : Mohammed Almughanni

Scriptwriter : Mohammed Almughanni

Producer : Marcin Malatynski, Rashid Abdelhamid, Mohammed Almughanni ,Co-producers: Patryk Sielecki, David Frenkel

Cast : Kamel El Basha, Samer Bisharat

SHORT FILM COMPETITION

■ SCARECROWS OF THE RED ZONE



Jalel D. Faïzi

Jalel D. Faïzi Tunisian artist and filmmaker from Sbeitla. After pursuing my studies up to the baccalaureate, he interrupted his school career to explore different experiences and discover his true passion. He worked in tourist animation and fitness training, but his fascination with art led him to the world of cinema. He learned photography and editing, and had the opportunity to participate in a script-writing workshop as part of the "TACIR" program. This experience resulted in the production of his first film entitled *Les épouvantails de la zone rouge*. This film marked a decisive turning point in his artistic career, revealing the power of cinema to tell stories and address societal issues. With passion and determination, he continues to pursue his journey in cinema, striving to contribute to the development of the seventh art in Tunisia, while highlighting the challenges and dreams of society and individuals.



SYNOPSIS

The film tells the story of Jalel, an artist who buried his childhood dream under the weight of tradition and social constraints. Years later, he returns to his birthplace — the mountains of Semmama — carrying a renewed desire to create. There, he meets Zaynab, a self-taught painter who, despite familial rejection and the harsh realities of her environment, never gave up on her art. A woman who chose to listen to her inner voice instead of surrendering to silence, resisting in order to preserve the light within her. Alongside children from the mountain, whose eyes reflect innocence and wonder, Jalel embarks on a new journey — one that seeks not only art, but meaning, hope, and the possibility of reclaiming a dream in a place where dreaming itself feels like an act of resistance. A film about art born from the margins — and dreams told by those who lived them.



Tunisia|2024| 17 min| Tunisian Arabic – English Subtitles

Film Credits :

GENRE : Documentary, Fiction

Director : Jalel D. Faïzi

Scriptwriter : Jalel D. Faïzi

Producer : Sorour Krouna

Cast : Zaineb Helali, Wael Hleli

SHORT FILM COMPETITION

■ THE LAST DISMISSAL



Jawaher Al-Amri

Jawaher Al-Amri is a Saudi writer, director, and producer, graduated from the College of Cinematic Arts at Effat University. She has directed and produced several award-winning short films, including Departure (Insiraf), which won two awards at the Hollywood Short Film Festival and was featured in the Short Film Corner at the 77th Cannes Film Festival. She produced The Girls Who Burned the Night, which won multiple international awards, and her film Saadia Left Sultan won Best Short Film at the Saudi Film Festival.

SYNOPSIS

In the aftermath of losing her closest friend, a teenage girl is forced to confront her grief head-on when she's made to attend a school lecture on the ritual washing of the dead. Between emotional shock and physical ritual, personal mourning blends with collective learning, revealing the depth of sorrow and the difficulty of coming of age through pain.



Saudi Arabia[2023] 14 min Arabic speech with English subtitles

Film Credits :

GENRE : Drama

Director : Jawaher Alamri

Scriptwriter : Jawaher Alamri

Producer : Gianluca Chakra, Norah El Khateeb

Cast : Ghada Aboutd, Rajaae, Aisha Al Refaey, Saada Alzahrany

SHORT FILM COMPETITION

■ ABU JUDY



Adel Ahmed Yehia

Adel Ahmed Yehia is a young Egyptian filmmaker who graduated from the High Cinema Institute in Egypt. He made his directorial debut with the short film NADA (2018), his graduation project, which garnered numerous awards at regional and international film festivals. His second short film, ABU JUDY, premiered at the Cairo International Film Festival in 2024. Recently, Adel ventured into television, directing six episodes of the successful true-crime series DATE AND TIME. He is currently developing his first feature film.



SYNOPSIS

Judy, a 10-year-old girl, regularly accompanies her father to work. One day, an unexpected event unfolds, challenging their relationship.



Egypt|2024| 16 min Arabic speech with English subtitles

Film Credits :

GENRE : Drama

Director : Adel Ahmed Yehia

Scriptwriter : Adel Ahmed Yehia

Producer: Baho Bakhsh, Saï Eldin Mahmoud, Moataz Abdel Wahab

Cast : Emad Ghoniem, Janna Farouk, Nesma Bahy

SHORT FILM COMPETITION

■ EBB AND FLOW



Nay Tabbara

Nay Tabbara is a Lebanese filmmaker based between New York and Beirut, and a recent MFA in Filmmaking graduate from NYU Tisch School of the Arts — where she also teaches Editing within the Graduate Film department. Before moving to New York, Nay built her on-set experience working as an assistant director on numerous award-winning pictures, most notably *The Insult* by Ziad Doueiri (2017 Academy Award Nominee). Born and raised in Beirut, Nay's stories center around her upbringing, and are inspired by her experience as a Lebanese woman existing within a largely hybrid society. Her previous short film *Frayed Roots* premiered at the 2020 Raindance Film Festival and has toured the circuit in several other Academy-Awards qualifying film festivals. She is a 2021 Sundance Uprise and Doha Film Institute grantee for her most recent project

Ebb & Flow, which premiered at the Tribeca Festival in June 2024 and received the Student Visionary Award. *Ebb & Flow* is currently making its way through the festival circuit in competition at several notable and Academy-Awards festivals such as the Palm Springs International Shortfest, IndyShorts, HollyShorts, Nashville, El Gouna, and several others.

SYNOPSIS

Determined to have her first kiss, Loulwa defies her tumultuous world in search of normalcy. As she braves through Beirut in pursuit of her sexual awakening, she finds herself taking an instant leap into adulthood when her world erupts into a redefined “normal”.



Lebanon, Qatar, USA|2023| 19 min Arabic speech with English subtitles

Film Credits :

GENRE : Coming of Age / Thriller

Director : Nay Tabbara

Scriptwriter : - Nay Tabbara

Producer : Isabelle Mecattaf, Hasan Hadi, Nay Tabbara

Cast : Dona Atallah, Aya Zeaiter, Elyssa Skaff

SHORT FILM COMPETITION

■ SALAM CINEMA



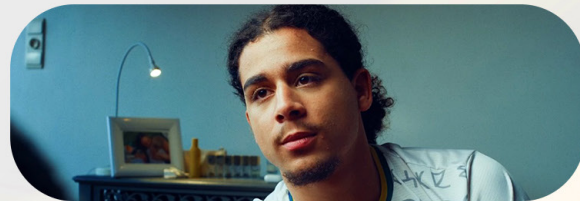
Zakaria El Bakkali

Zakaria El Bakkali was born in 1978 in Midar, Nador. He earned a degree in political science in 2004 and pursued film directing studies at INRACI film school in Brussels from 2006 to 2008. In 2009, he directed a series of mini-documentaries for TV Brussel. Since 2010, he has been responsible for film and photography production workshops and in charge of the film club programming at the Maison des Cultures in Molenbeek. He has also collaborated with several media outlets as a director, cameraman, and editor, including ABC News, Al Jazeera, and Euronews.



SYNOPSIS

Amine, 18 years old, is a young man from Brussels of Moroccan origin. He hangs out with his friends in the streets of his neighborhood. One day, at the town square, he witnesses a film shoot. For him, it's a turning point : he decides to make a film. Driven by passion, Amine embarks on the adventure. Without any experience in cinema, many obstacles stand in his way.



Belgium|2024| 19 min Arabic speech with English subtitles

Film Credits :

GENRE : Fiction

Director : Zakaria ElBakkali

Scriptwriter : Zakaria ElBakkali, Samuel Malhoure

Producer : Leila Meziane

Cast : Amine Bousial, Hamidou Ben

SHORT FILM COMPETITION

■ HIDE AND SEEK



Rami Abbas

Rami Abbas is a Palestinian director, animator, painter, and multidisciplinary artist. He studied art in Syria and later continued his studies in Madrid, where he currently resides. Abbas has directed several experimental and animated short films. In addition to participating in numerous artistic exhibitions worldwide, he has worked for many years in animation and graphic design, producing promotional projects addressing humanitarian, social, and justice issues. More over, he conducts animation training workshops & youth empowerment. He won several international awards for his latest animated short film Hide & Seek.

SYNOPSIS

"Hide & Seek" is an animated short film that narrates the story of a child and his fish on their journey into the unknown, following the raid on the child's town during the ongoing war ravaging his country. The short film captures the steps of this journey and its transformations, concluding as the child reaches one of the coasts.



Spain, Palestine|2024| 7.14 min| No Dialogue

Film Credits :

GENRE : Drama, war, immigration

Director : Rami Abbas

Scriptwriter : Khaled Alsaïd

Producer : Rami Abbas

Animators : Wissam Shaheen, Yaser Koresh, Mahammad Almahamed, Rami Abbas

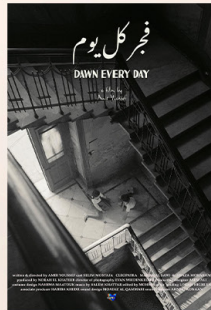
SHORT FILM COMPETITION

■ DAWN EVERY DAY



Amir Youssef

Amir is an Egyptian filmmaker based in San Francisco. He strives to create unconventional stories that echo unheard voices, while drawing inspiration from the extremely rich culture of his native Egypt. In his latest work, Amir focuses on themes of alienation and identity during periods of social and political chaos. He delves into topics of duality, where opposing ideas and emotions coexist, revealing the complexity and dissonance within the true self. His latest short film 'Dawn Every Day' is currently on the festival circuit. It premiered at Galway Film Fleadh in Ireland and screened at BFI London Film Festival, San Francisco International Film Festival, Emir Kusturica's Kustendorf Film Festival, Director's Notes, Princeton University and the National Gallery of Art in DC. It also won awards at El Gouna Film Festival, Urbanworld, Thomas Edison Film Festival, and Martha's Vineyard International Film Festival. Amir's previous short film 'The Laughing Woo Woo' screened at the 2023 Slamdance Film Festival. His directorial debut film The Initiation won Best Narrative Short Film at the 2020 Oakland International Film Festival and Best Director at the 2020 Oregon Short Film Festival.



SYNOPSIS

In the 1950s, the cosmopolitan society in Egypt was disrupted by the conflict between nationalists and colonial powers, affecting citizens and residents with foreign affiliations, including Europeans, Syro-Lebanese and Egyptian Jews. Amidst this turmoil, 8-year-old Nabil navigates through new social norms that he cannot comprehend, impacting his next-door best friend, Mireille, in post-nationalized Egypt. This story is inspired by real people and true events.



Egypt|2024| 20 min Arabic speech with English subtitles

Film Credits :

GENRE : Drama

Director : Amir Youssef

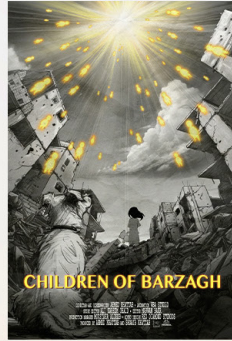
Scriptwriter : Amir Youssef

Producer : Norah El Khateeb

Cast : Selim Mostafa, Cleopatra El Ghazawy, Marwa Al Sawi, Shaza Moharam

SHORT FILM COMPETITION

■ CHILDREN OF BARZAGH



Ahmed Khattab

Ahmed Khattab is an Iraqi filmmaker with a background in directing and producing advertisements and cultural films. He now bridges his experience from art and culture into narrative filmmaking and storytelling.

SYNOPSIS

A small girl carries her teddy bear across the rubble in war-torn Gaza, a city so ruined that it is barely recognisable. Hearing the whimpers of a dog under a pile of fallen bricks, she struggles to free the animal and finds herself with a loving, irrepressible new friend. Together, girl and dog traverse the city. With the dog's help, the child is able to cross the divide between the living and the dead, finding and freeing the souls of children who have died. Meanwhile, the bombs keep falling.



United Arab Emirates|2024| 8min | Arabic speech with English subtitles

Film Credits :

GENRE : Animation

Director: Ahmed Khattab

Scriptwriter Ahmed Khattab

Producer : Ahmed Khattab, Shoayb Khattab &

Co-producer Ali Kareem

Animators : Sara Taher LULU

SHORT FILM COMPETITION

■ BOUGAINVILLEA



Yasir Faiz

Yasir Faiz is a Sudanese filmmaker, raised in Iraq until the age of 20, then moved to his home country Sudan, where he worked as a journalist for 10 years before making a career shift into film-making. One of his notable achievements includes being the second unit director in the short film "The Dog's Shitter," as well as serving as the co-scriptwriter in the acclaimed short film "Journey To Kenya." These projects earned him local and international awards, such as "The Black Elephant Award" and the "Special Jury Award" at the Sudan Independent Film Festival, respectively. He is known also as a cultural manager, where he successfully established cultural programs in Sudan, Egypt, and Ukraine. Additionally, He has been actively involved in various international programs such as Tandem. The short film "Bougainvillea" is Yasir's directorial debut as a director, produced by In Deep Visions productions.

SYNOPSIS

Amidst Sudan's popular revolution in December 2018, a group of six women found themselves ensnared within the confines of oppression. Through their journey, a powerful narrative unfolds, revealing the transformative power of determination and the enduring hope that resides within the human spirit.



Egypt, Sudan[2024] 17min Arabic speech with English subtitles

Film Credits :

GENRE : Drama

Director : Yasir Faiz

Scriptwriter : Yasir Faiz

Producer : Ibrahim Ahmed

Cast : Linda Omer, Islam Mubarek, Suhanda Abu-Bakr, Shams Mubarak

SHORT FILM COMPETITION

■ ONE LAST TIME



Karim Rahbani



Karim Rahbani is a Lebanese award-winning director. His first two short films, "With Thy Spirit" and "Cargo, have been widely screened in numerous festivals around the world and garnered over 30 awards collectively. His body of work in the film industry encompasses a diverse range of projects, spanning from fictional films and documentaries to TV shows and advertisement videos in the Middle East and the Gulf region. In 2020 he was selected to write and direct a short film part of the International Emmy nominated series "Beirut 6:07" following the tragic blast on August 04, 2020 that decimated the city. Recently, Rahbani directed "Dark Minds", the first Arab docu-series about the serial killers of the region (produced by SRMG Studios and now on Netflix. In 2022 he co-founded RAHBANI 3.0 a music and film production.

He served as the director and co-producer of the 2024 Lebanese National Tourism Campaign "Meshwar Rayhin Meshwar", which has received extensive promotion both domestically and among the diaspora. Karim Rahbani is part of the third generation of the Rahbani family renowned for their vibrant oriental music and musical plays.

SYNOPSIS

Toufic, a widower in the twilight of his years, lives alone in his house in a state of monotonous routine. One morning, a charming attractive neighbor knocks on his door mistaking his house for another, breaking his monotony and turning his life upside down. A dormant passion for life awakens within him, stirring up a youthful sexual energy that was on the verge of disappearing. What ensues is a journey of self-discovery and a quest to actualize his deepest desires, if only for one last time.



Lebanon[2025] 19min Arabic speech with English subtitles

Film Credits :

GENRE : Drama and Social

Director : Karim Rahbani

Scriptwriter : Ghady Rahbani - Karim Rahbani

Producer : Karim Rahbani, Nour Akiki, Omar Rahbany

Cast : Afif Mazboudi, Elie Njeim

SHORT FILM COMPETITION

■ WALNUTS (JOZ)



Mahmood Yahya AlShaikh

Born in Bahrain in 1986, Mahmood Yahya Alshaikh is a Bahraini producer, writer, and director. A graduate in Multimedia from the University of Bahrain, he has been active in filmmaking since 2007. Over the years, he directed and produced numerous short films that screened at international festivals and won multiple awards, including Rainbow (2014), which earned recognition in the UAE, Morocco, Iraq, Tunisia, and beyond. In addition to his cinematic work, Alshaikh contributed for over a decade to the production of Gulf TV series and directed several successful television programs. He has also provided training workshops in media, filmmaking, and television drama. His first feature film, Rose Water (2024), won Best Arab Film at the Kuwait International Film Festival, Best Actress at the Gulf Film Festival in Riyadh, and the Best Director Award at the Arab Creativity Festival in Cairo.

SYNOPSIS

Nargis, a woman battling sickle cell disease, longs to become a mother again after the heartbreaking loss of her child. Yet, her journey collides with her husband's unhealed grief, forcing them both to confront love, loss, and the fragile hope of starting anew.



Bahrain|2025| 19min Arabic speech with English subtitles

Film Credits :

GENRE : Drama and Social

Director : Mahmood Yahya AlShaikh

Scriptwriter : Mahmood Yahya AlShaikh

Producer : Aqeel AlMajed

Cast : Hussein Abdali, Shaimaa Rahimi, Yahya Abdulrasool

SIDE ACTIVITIES

■ Masterclass

From Vision to Impact – Building a Film Festival in a Changing World

Guest Speaker: Intishal Al Timimi

Special Guest: Mohamed Hefzy

Discover how visionary leadership transforms cultural initiatives into internationally recognized film festivals. Intishal Al Timimi renowned festival director, leads this masterclass and shares his experience in festival programming and strategy, highlighting his work with Abu Dhabi Film Festival, El Gouna Film Festival, and Rotterdam Arab Film Festival.

Egyptian producer Mohamed Hefzy offers insights from the production side, connecting Arab cinema to global networks.

Duration: 75 minutes

Date: September 26

Time: 12:00 PM

Location: See the program on the official festival website:

www.hollandmenafilmfestival.com

Free admission with prior registration



MOHAMED HEFZY

A renowned Egyptian screenwriter and producer, with an evolving filmography of more than 40 feature films including worldwide acclaimed titles *Clash* (2016), *Sheikh Jackson* (2017), *Luxor* (2020), and *Feathers* (2021). He served as a jury member in various international festivals including the 2022 Sundance Film Festival and the 75th Venice International Film Festival.

As of its 40th edition and for four consecutive years; Hefzy was the appointed President of the Cairo International Film Festival. In 2005, He founded Film Clinic; the now pioneer production house in the MENA region with a variety of commercial blockbusters & Art house films that have participated in major film festivals worldwide including; Cannes, Venice, Berlin, Sundance, Toronto, and Tribeca with more than 100 international awards under its belt. Later Hefzy founded Film Clinic Indie Distribution, with a mission to create opportunities for Arab independent films within and beyond festival circuits & Co-founded Meem Creative Circle which produced Netflix's first Egyptian original series; *Paranormal*. Hefzy was cited among 30 future leaders in film production by Screen International, headed Variety's list of Ten names you need to know in the Arab Film Industry and was among Variety's 500 list of the most influential people in the media industry worldwide. In 2019, Hefzy was granted the Arab Cinema Personality of the Year award by the Hollywood Reporter & Arab Cinema Center. Hefzy is an official member of the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts And Sciences in the producers' branch. In recognition of his significant contribution to the Arab film scene, He was honored as a "Knight of the Order of Arts and Literature" from France. In 2024, He was awarded the Variety International Vanguard Producer Award within the 5th edition of the Red Sea International Film Festival.

PANEL DISCUSSION

Panel: Cinema, Migration, and the Question of Identity

This panel opens a conversation on how cinema reflects experiences of migration and displacement, and the ongoing search for identity and belonging. Films created “between two worlds” often carry both personal testimonies and collective memory, raising profound questions: How is the image of homeland reshaped from afar? Does the camera serve as a bridge between memory and the present, or as a tool of resistance against forgetting and a way to reclaim what is human?

The discussion will be moderated by film critic kasim, with contributions from critic and writer Ibrahim Al-Ariss, alongside other distinguished guests including filmmakers Kasim Abid and Oday Racheed. Together, they will bring critical insight and lived experience to highlight cinema’s role as a space for dialogue and the reimagining of human stories.

Language: Arabic and English
(with simultaneous interpretation)

Duration: 75 minutes

Date: September 27

Time: 12:00 PM

Location: See the program on the official festival website:

www.hollandmenafilmfestival.com

Free admission with prior registration



IBRAHIM AL-ARISS

Ibrahim Al-Ariss is a distinguished Lebanese film critic, cultural historian, and translator, widely recognized as one of the leading voices in Arab cinema criticism. Born in Beirut, he began his engagement with film as a set designer and assistant director, later studying film directing in Rome and screenwriting and criticism in London.

Since the 1970s, Al-Ariss has been a prolific journalist, contributing to major Arabic-language newspapers including Al-Hayat, Al-Safir, and Al-Dustour. He served as the cultural editor and head of the cinema section at Al-Hayat, where he authored daily columns on cinema, human heritage, and cultural history. He also founded and led two monthly magazines, Al-Masira and Al-Maqasid.

Al-Ariss has authored more than fifteen books on Arab and international cinema, including *A Journey in Arab Cinema*, *Martin Scorsese: A Cinematic Biography*, *Youssef Chahine: A Child's Perspective*, and *Cinema: History and the World*. He has translated over forty works on cinema, philosophy, and cultural history from French, English, and Italian into Arabic.

A sought-after lecturer and jury member at international film festivals, Al-Ariss is known for his insightful and nuanced approach to cinema criticism, emphasizing the ideas and cultural narratives behind the films he examines. His work continues to inspire new generations of filmmakers, critics, and scholars across the Arab world and beyond.

WORKSHOP PROGRAM

WORKSHOP PROGRAM

Acting Performance Workshop | Led by Actress NORA AKECHAR

In this interactive workshop, theatre actress will guide participants through a series of intensive exercises focusing on body, voice, and emotional expression, aiming to unleash creative energy and build an authentic connection between the actor and the role.

Participants will have the opportunity to work on dialogue scenes, improvisation exercises, and explore their inner tools of expression.

This workshop is designed for aspiring actors, both amateurs and professionals, who wish to refine their performance and acquire new skills for working with theatrical and cinematic texts.

Mobile Cinema Workshop: Neighborhood Stories from Camera to Screen Led by Director Abdelilah Wali

In this interactive workshop with director Abdelilah Wali, we believe that every neighborhood story carries a unique voice that deserves to be heard, and that a mobile phone camera is a powerful tool to capture this voice in its authentic form. Together, we explore the art of transforming everyday moments into vibrant cinema, where the simple becomes profound, and the ordinary extraordinary. This workshop is not just about learning techniques, but a journey to discover each person's ability to see the world from a new perspective and express it with tools accessible to all, making art a true expression of our shared humanity.

Exhibitions/ Musical Performances/ Community activities

Musical Performances



Umm Kulthum: A Voice That Lives On

A musical evening in partnership with the Holland MENA Film Festival and the Marmoucha Orchestra – The Hague**

On the 50th anniversary of the passing of the Arab world's most iconic singer, this special evening pays tribute to the legacy of Umm Kulthum, whose voice continues to inspire generations of artists and listeners alike.

Organized by the Holland MENA Film Festival in collaboration with the Marmoucha Ensemble – The Hague, this cultural event celebrates Arab music at its finest and revives a timeless artistic experience that shaped the collective memory of the 20th-century Arab world.

More than a homage to an extraordinary singer, this evening affirms the enduring value of a cultural icon whose voice transcended time and solidified the Arabic song as a vessel of identity, emotion, and refined taste.

For location see the program on the official festival website: www.hollandmenafilmfestival.com

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