



مهرجان عمان السينمائي الدولي
Amman International Film Festival
أول فيلم Awal Film



الدورة الثانية 2nd Edition

23-31/8/2021

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About Amman International Film Festival – Awal Film (AIFF)

Jordan's second edition of an international film festival, unprecedented in the kingdom, and that showcases Arab and international movies continues to thrive amidst exceptional circumstances. The aim of Amman International Film Festival – Awal Film, according to its president Princess Rym Ali, is "developing and promoting an Arab cinema that reflects the creativity of the region and tackles the issues that are prevalent today."

The distinctive edge of this festival lies in its focus on first-timers. An international Jury made up of industry professionals choose the winner of the Black Iris Award in each of the Arab film competitions; Feature narrative, feature documentary, and short. While International narrative and documentary films compete for the Audience Award.

This is a year full of stories and sentiments, despite the challenges and regardless of the testing times we have been all enduring. The line-up of the second edition features 51 films – narratives and documentaries, Arab and international - from 26 countries . They have all been released in 2021 – 2020, showcased for the first time in Jordan, and in some cases in the region and the world, made by first-time directors or starring first-time experiences.

The "First & Latest" section features the work of one veteran filmmaker, showcasing the process between his first and latest film. We are delighted to host this year Syrian auteur and acclaimed director Mohammad Malas.

In this edition, we have taken a couple of crucial steps that reflect cultural and environmental awareness. First, we have crafted a special Rendez-vous section for the Franco-Arab Film Festival that we are hosting; adding to the diversity of the programming. Second, we have taken "green steps" towards a sustainable and an environmentally friendly festival.

Whether you are a filmmaker, an actor or a critic, an industry insider or an enthusiastic consumer, Amman International Film Festival – Awal Film welcomes you!

About the Amman Film Industry Days (AFID)

The Amman Film Industry Days (AFID), the industry branch of the Festival targeting mainly people involved in filmmaking, will take place between August 24th and 30th, 2021.

AFID hosts masterclasses, workshops and panels with industry professionals focusing on pressing issues of the film industry such as international co-productions, greener production transformation and the industry's social impact.

For its 2nd edition, the Amman Film Industry Days showcase voices from Jordan and the Arab World through two pitching platforms for feature-length film projects: one for Jordanian and Arab resident filmmakers in Jordan whose projects are in development; the other for Arab filmmakers whose projects are in post-production.

13 projects have been selected this year. The participants will share their stories and pitch their projects to a jury of professionals, who will award the best projects and help them bring to completion.

The awards announcement, concluding the Amman Film Industry Days, will take place on August 30th at the Royal Film Commission – Jordan.

Welcome Note

There are three words that come to mind as our amazing team puts together this second edition of the Amman International Film Festival-Awal Film: reflection, recollection and gratefulness.

Reflection around what a film festival means in our region, and what ambitions we might have for it, because the magic of the silver screen goes way beyond the immediate pleasure and escape it provides us.

As in some parts of the world, cinema in our region is seen not only as an art, but can often be considered as a form of resistance. As many Arab filmmakers can attest, it can help denounce the injustices of the occupation - in the case of Palestinian filmmakers - or other inequalities faced by those fleeing conflict, or poverty for example, as it can depict women, children or minorities fighting for their right to live a dignified life.

And of course, we are all acutely aware of how films help bring us together, especially in the last year and a half, and can contribute to mutual understanding, to distract us or to share moments "apart but together," allowing us to be touched by the emotions they provide us.

Yet it remains a fact that while filmmakers have never been so needed, they have also never been hit so hard economically.

Which is why we salute the determination of those filmmakers who produced the films you will be seeing in the next few days.

And we would like to reassure all those who supported these films and all those who have stood by the AIFF this year: it is an investment in much more than an annual competition. It is an investment in our communities.

We hope that one day the AIFF will be recognized as a beacon of quality among other notable international cinematographic events, for what it offers to the filmmaking community and its audience and for the perseverance with which it does so, despite its limited means for now.

We are extremely pleased that this year's edition of the AIFF is integrating the Franco-Arab Film Festival which as many of you know has been a pillar on the local film scene for more than two decades. We very much look forward to the greater choice and diversity of storytelling it will add to our event and to how enriched our festival will be as a result.

Recollection and gratefulness go hand in hand, in a way. We are saddened by the loss of those in the local, regional and international art scene - artists, actors, filmmakers - many of whom we would have otherwise expected to see here today, were it not for the cruel effects of the pandemic. But we are grateful for their contributions and that they reminded us, by their work, of what is important. I also think they would have been proud of what has been achieved and of the potential that exists to achieve more.

Last year, we stood out on the international festival scene, by being among the only ones to hold a largely in person event, except for our Industry Film Days which were online and except for the fact we were not able to welcome guests from abroad.

Many of the films that were selected and some of those that won awards at last year's festival have proved to be films that have made their way to larger audiences. Among the projects that were supported, many have been prized at international festivals this year.

In this year's edition of the festival, following governmental guidelines, we are able to host guests from abroad and our audience will be able to watch films of a different, non-commercial nature, which we hope will also prove to be successful internationally. And they will be able to do so using not two, but three venues: a drive-in and an open-air amphitheatre like last year and, a novelty for us this year, in movie theatres in Amman and screenings of some movies in the governorates of Irbid, Salt, and Wadi Rum. We could add another « venue » if we include the Istikana streaming platform thanks to which film buffs throughout the Kingdom will get to see some of the festival's movies.

On the whole though, we can definitely say that thanks to the magic of vaccines, we are one more step closer toward achieving some form of "normality".

And this is where gratefulness comes in: it has led us to a greater awareness that none of this is possible if we do not also come together, as humans, to protect our Mother Earth. So another novelty in this year's editions of the AIFF is that we are introducing small steps towards making our festival a bit more "green."

While events like film festivals or other cultural gatherings were taken for granted in previous years and decades, we have also all come to realise the value of being able to meet in person to debate, discuss and exchange ideas, and connect around movies.

Having acutely felt what we missed in those encounters, I believe we can all truly agree that it is important to appreciate what we have in this event during which we will be seeing each other for the next nine days to celebrate the seventh art. Once again, culture binds us, and we can also be grateful for that.



Rym Ali
Festival President



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أول فيلم Awal Film



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Welcome Note

Our festival just turned one. Conceived out of love for cinema and born amid unexpected challenges, it is growing and thriving. And like any “parents”, we have big ambitions for it and want it to mature, without ever losing its dynamic youth and focus on content.

In this year’s artwork, we can see light behind the black iris. It is the light that we chase through cinema, which unlocks images and sounds, as we chase whatever moves us, saddens or uplifts us, fills us with ideas and dreams, makes us feel alive and ultimately reminds us of the human in us. Light can be tainted with shadows; they can even embellish it. We went - and are still going - through a difficult period, as the pandemic hasn’t been defeated yet.

We largely focused on our basic needs, our physical and mental health. At the same time, we found immunity in culture and realized that it can sustain an individual and protect society from whatever is threatening its existence. Unfortunately, this is not the only challenge we face in our region, marred by socio-economic problems and, in some cases, political instability, violence and a climate change that we did not have the collective will or means to slow down.

The films showcased in this second edition, as well as the projects in the making, are proof that the fallouts - resulting from the global health situation or from other constraints - have not halted artistic production. They are also a proof that creativity cannot be simply bought with money. What we want for our “child” is precisely to reflect our concerns and dreams, without hiding them under a red carpet or behind the glamour of an event.

Last year, we celebrated Mohanna Durra – Jordan’s iconic artist. He had kindly agreed to design the Black Iris trophy for our festival. We will always be grateful to him and are celebrating him again this year, but sadly in absentia. Does it not show, however, that a creator lives very long, if not forever, through his/her art?

In this edition, we are also giving a nod to cinema theaters. Not out of nostalgia; but because they are the needed agoras to meet and share, and because their lives are closely intertwined with the history of the places that host them. And the AIFF will continue this tradition by being primarily connected to film lovers in Amman.

I would like to thank all those who believed in our festival and generously extended the means it needed to grow: the Board, partners, jurors, participant filmmakers, audience and the exceptionally committed and resourceful team of the AIFF.



Nada Doumani
Festival Director

Welcome Note

With our selection at the Amman International Film Festival – Awal Film (AIFF), we're committed to bringing our audience the first cinematic experiences from Jordan, from the region and from across the globe. Awal, Arabic for first, is the ongoing theme of our festival, and lives in the core of its selection.

"You can remember the second and the third and the fourth time, but there's no time like the first. It's always there" (actress/ writer Shelagh Dellaney). What is, explicitly, so significant about first cinematic efforts, is that they articulate all the emotions and the experiences of their makers in picture, in sound, in dialogue, and in music. They are the harvest of many years, and in many cases a lifetime, of sweat and reflection.

At AIFF, we take pride in supporting the first audio-visual expressions of the filmmaker. We seek to celebrate the filmmaker's debut work, their first experience in the genre and in the format; the nuances and the amalgam of sentiments they bring to the big screen - whether it be in narrative or in documentary; in feature or in short. We believe in art as a universal tool and a cultural interpretation.

We believe in cinema as a medium that rejoices freedom of expression; and that soars above hegemony and monopoly. The AIFF aims to facilitate access to films away from premiere restrictions and without any limitations.

The AIFF is a festival primarily dedicated to Jordan, to the city of Amman, and to the Jordanian residents. We are overly eager to turn some of the cities' diverse and most visited cinema displays into cultural and emotional palettes that reflect assorted global and human narratives. Through those screens, we will carry our audiences to soul-searching journeys that examine a myriad of distinct themes including exile, identity, family and rites of passage. We will enable our various venues to articulate the talent, the emotions and the intimacy that select filmmakers have granted us through their work.



Areeb Zuaiter
Head of Programming

Welcome Note

This year, we are celebrating the Franco-Arab cinema by our partnership with Amman International Film Festival. The annual meeting of cinephiles is back; this 26th edition of the Franco-Arab Film Festival is taking a new form within the AIFF as the "Franco-Arab Rendez-vous".

As always, this cultural event aims to illustrate the link that unites French and Arab cinematography through their production, their subject or their funding. Two years where film production and distribution have been undermined and reduced all over the world, France wishes to participate and be present in the return of the 7th art in the heart of Jordan: the Franco-Arab Rendez-Vous will take the Jordanian public from Gaza to Paris and from Beirut to Algiers, in theaters, drive-in and online. Perfectly shedding light on the strong ties between France and the region through cinema, the festival's opening film, "Gaza Mon Amour", is a Franco-Arab co-production, filmed in the Kingdom.

Finally, and for the 15th year, the young Jordanian production will also be honored during this "Franco-Arab Rendez-Vous": the short film competition organized by the French Institute in Jordan in collaboration with the Royal Film Commission and the Greater Municipality of Amman is back! The jury, composed of Shima Tal, cultural director of GAM; 2019 competition winner Mona Shehabi and AIFF 2020 winner May Ghouti will nominate best documentary and best fiction. I wish you a very good festival!



Veronique Vouland Aneini
Ambassador of France in Jordan

Cette année, nous célébrons le cinéma franco-arabe en nous associant au festival international du film d'Amman. Le rendez-vous annuel des cinéphiles est ainsi de retour, cette 26ème édition prenant la forme d'une section spéciale au sein de l'AIFF : le « Rendez-vous franco-arabe ». Comme précédemment, cette manifestation culturelle aura à cœur d'illustrer les liens qui unissent les cinématographies françaises et arabes à travers leur production, leur sujet ou leur financement. Après deux années où la production et la diffusion cinématographique ont été mises à mal partout dans le monde, la France souhaite ainsi participer au retour du 7ème art en Jordanie : le Rendez-vous franco-arabe fera voyager le public jordanien de Gaza à Paris et de Beyrouth à Alger, en salles, en drive-in et en ligne ! Illustrant parfaitement les forts liens qui unissent la France à la région à travers l'industrie cinématographique, le film d'ouverture du festival, "Gaza Mon Amour", est une co-production franco-arabe, tourné dans le Royaume.

Enfin et pour la 15ème année, la jeune production jordanienne sera aussi mise à l'honneur lors de ce « rendez-vous franco-arabe » : la compétition de courts-métrages organisée par l'Institut français de Jordanie en collaboration avec la Royal Film Commission et la Municipalité d'Amman revient ! Le jury, composé de Shima Tal, directrice culturelle de GAM ; Mona Shehabi, lauréate de la compétition 2019 et May Ghouti, lauréate de l'AIFF 2020, désignera le meilleur documentaire et la meilleure fiction.

Je vous souhaite un très bon festival !

Veronique Vouland Aneini
Ambassadrice de France en Jordanie.

AIFF Board Members



Princess Rym Ali



Raja Gargour



Kinan Jaradat



Omar Masri



Nadia Sukhtian

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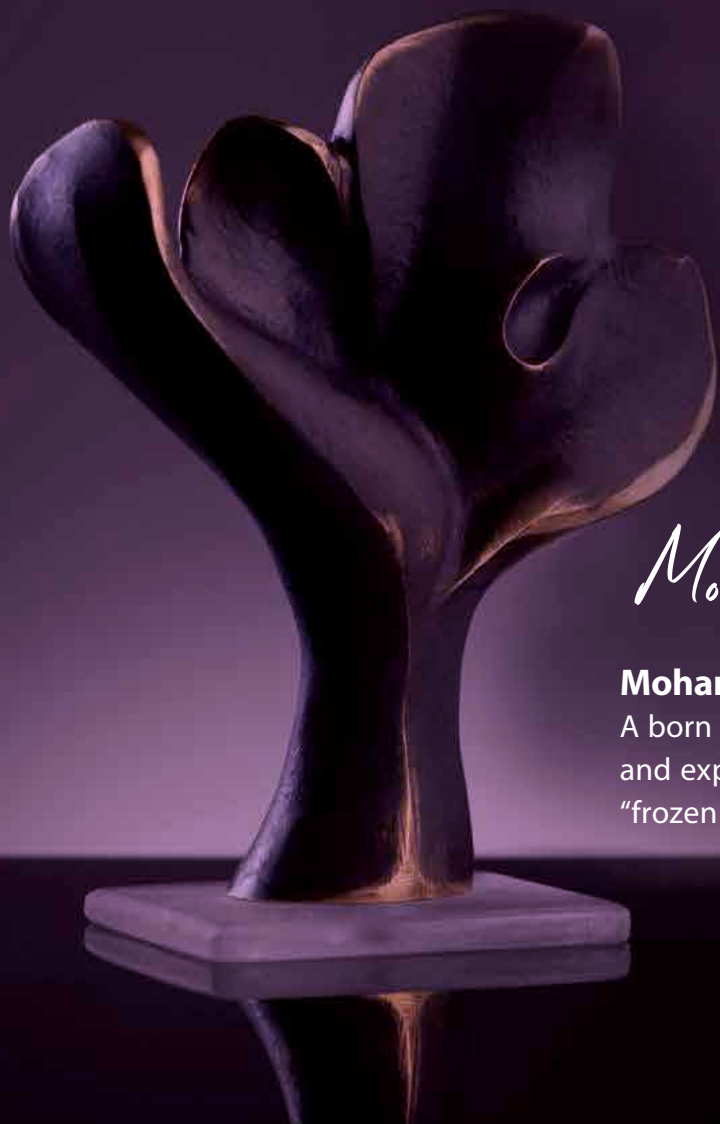
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ROYAL JORDANIAN

الملكية الأردنية





The Black Iris Trophy

&

Mohanna Durra



Mohanna Durra (1938 – 2021)

A born artist who enjoyed every minute of his life, experimenting and exploring the beauty of painting. He called his abstract work "frozen music".

GREEN STEPS

This year, the festival is taking small yet serious steps toward a sustainable and an environmentally friendly festival, starting with our own operations and promoting these practices. We believe the film industry is a strong platform that can contribute to a positive change.



Here are the Festival's steps in that direction:

- Reduce our carbon footprint by repurposing some of our last year's branding
- Remove diesel generators as a main source of power at our Drive-in cinemas
- Incentivise electric vehicles
- Reduce our waste and printed material
- Use environmentally friendly packaging
- Recycle our waste
- Use recyclable material
- Offset the carbon footprint that might result from our necessary actions, such as traveling and transportation, by donating to the Arab Group for the Protection of Nature in order to plant 674 trees in Jordan



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Jury

Arab Feature Narrative Competition



Samir

Samir is an award-winning filmmaker and producer. He was born in 1955 in Baghdad, Iraq, and migrated with his family to Switzerland in the 60s. After studying at the School of Arts in Zurich, he apprenticed as a typographer. In the late 70s, he trained as a cameraman. In 1982, he began work as a freelance author and director. Today Samir is well known for his unique fiction, documentary and experimental films, whose innovative character drew attention at various festivals and won numerous awards. His work to this day encompasses more than 40 short and full-length feature films for cinema and television. In the 90s he also worked as a director for national and international broadcasters. In 1994 he took over Dschoint Ventschr Filmproduktion with filmmaker Werner Schweizer and producer Karin Koch. Based in Zurich, it builds up new Swiss film talents. Beside his own projects as an independent producer and director, he is also known for directing theatre plays and works in the field of visual arts.



Csaba Bollók

Csaba Bollók graduated as a film and television director at the Hungarian Academy of Film and Drama, studied filmmaking in the United States, and made shorts at the legendary Béla Balázs Stúdió in the 1990's. His features earned many home and international prizes, among them the European Discovery of the Year (2007). In 2019, two of his works, "Silent Years" and "Iska's Journey" have been selected as essential Hungarian movies by the National Film Archive. He is a teacher and leads workshops worldwide in screenwriting and independent and analogue filmmaking.



Khaled Haddad

Khaled Haddad is the CEO and General Manager of Amman-based production company Jordan Pioneers. With over 30 years of experience in the audio-visual field and a BA in Cinema Studies, Haddad has co-produced over thirty documentaries, feature films and TV programmes in addition to commercials and informational spots. Most prominently, these projects include "Under the Shadow" (2016), "Gaza mon Amour" (2020) and "Madam President" (2015), among many others. Currently, he is the Executive Producer of the humanitarian project Ahlan Simsim in collaboration with Sesame Workshop and the International Rescue Committee, funded by the MacArthur Foundation, with its fourth season set to air on MBC3 at the end of this year. Haddad is also the founder of Slate Film Services, the biggest equipment-rental company in Jordan that has provided light and grip equipment to countless award-winning films and television programmes since its founding in 2007.



Jury

Arab Feature Documentary Competition



Mai Masri

Mai Masri is a Palestinian filmmaker who was born in Amman and grew up in Beirut. She studied film at San Francisco State University (USA) and founded Nour Productions in 1995 with her late husband, Jean Chamoun. She directed several films that were screened worldwide and won over 90 international awards. Masri's feature narrative film, "3000 Nights" (2015) had its world premiere at Toronto International Film Festival and won 28 awards. Her filmography includes "Children of Fire" (1990), "Hanan Ashrawi" (1995), "Children of Shatila" (1998), "Frontiers of Dreams and Fears" (2001), "Beirut Diaries" (33", (2006 Days" (2007), and "Beirut: Eye of the Storm" (2021). She also co-directed with her husband Jean Chamoun the films "Under the Rubble" (1983), "Wild Flowers" (1986), "War Generation – Beirut" (1988), and "Suspended Dreams" (1992).



Elias Chahine

Elias Chahine is a senior Lebanese film editor with 20 years of experience and owner of post-production house RedHat Studios. His experience extends over more than 60 documentaries films, 7 feature films, more than 100 corporate films and many TV commercials. He worked on many award-winning documentary films for director Hady Zaccak such as "Ya Omri", "Kamal Joumblatt, Witness and Martyr", "Mercedes", and "A History Lesson". He also worked on award-winning feature films such "Stray Bullet" and "Still Burning" for director Georges El Hachem. He won Best Editor in 2012 for the film "Mercedes" by Fondation Liban Cinema and in 2016 for the film "Ya Omri" by Lebanese Film Awards.



Caroline Pochon

Caroline Pochon graduated from the French national cinema school La Femis in 1997. She studied History at Sciences Po and La Sorbonne. She has made several documentaries with French television (Arte, France 2). She is also a novelist (Deuxième femme, La fille du capitaine Fracasse), a script-doctor, a teacher, and a member of the selection committee of La Fabrique des Cinémas du Monde. Africa has always been a source of inspiration for her work. She has studied Wolof in Inalco and spends her time between France and Senegal. Her last film, "Family Song", with the famous Senegalase singer Zale Seck, was premiered in Vues d'Afrique of Montreal in 2021, it won the Feature Documentary Prize at the California Music Video and Film Festival and will be released on TV5 soon.



Jury

Arab Short Film Competition



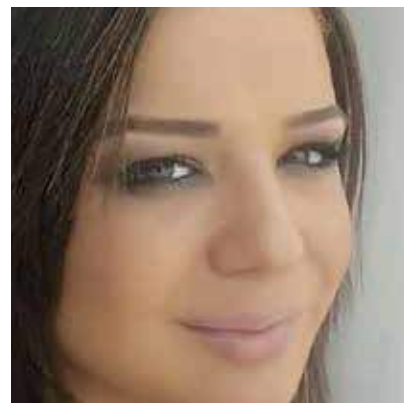
Jérôme Paillard

Jérôme Paillard started his career as an oboist and as a producer and CFO of the French classical record company Erato. In 1991, he became General Manager of Erato Films alongside Daniel Toscan du Plantier where he executively produced over a dozen feature films. He joined the Festival de Cannes as Executive Director of the Marché du Film in 1995 to oversee the development and management of what is now heralded as the world's leading film market. He is also the Co-Director of Ventana Sur, the first market specialised in Latin-American films.



Anaheed Fayyad

Anaheed Fayyad is professional actress who worked in Syrian and Arab TV dramas and participated in several well-known Arab TV series. She has worked in cinema, theatre, and radio. She also worked in the first Turkish TV shows dubbed into Arabic. She holds a BA in Acting from the Higher Institute of Dramatic Arts in Damascus and a master's degree with honours in Journalism and Digital Media from the Jordanian Media Institute. In addition to acting, she provides training workshops in performing arts and conducts stress-relieving workshops using drama. She worked for development NGOs providing training on making puppets with basic materials and enabling the use of puppets in interaction and communication with others and drama therapy.



Fadi Haddad

Through a diverse experience across the field since 2010, **Fadi Haddad** has worked as a screenwriter, director, editor, creative producer, and script analyst for several short and feature films and TV series. His award-winning debut feature film as a writer and director, "When Monaliza Smiled" (2012), was presented in international film festivals around the world, Jordanian cinemas and Arab television. Currently, he teaches Film and TV Screenwriting and Production at the American University in Dubai, and mentors the school's writers' room incubator for TV series. Moreover, he is currently a PhD candidate in Film and Visual Culture at the University of Antwerp (Belgium). His doctoral research is focused on Pan-Arab TV series screenwriting practices and transnational Arabic storytelling.





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First and Latest: Talk with Mohammed Malas

First and Latest

This non-competitive section presents accomplished and renowned filmmakers, offering a closer look at their work and at how their filmmaking style has evolved over the years.

Mohammad Malas, representative of Syria's auteur cinema, is our guest for AIFF's second edition. He will take us on a journey starting with his very first film, visiting some of the experiences that influenced his cinematic language and ending with his latest production. The director will share his knowledge, expertise, and lessons learnt along the way, while analysing how challenges have helped him mature as a director.

Mohammad Malas' Biography

Born in 1945 in Quneitra in the Golan, Mohammad Malas is a Syrian writer and director. He is one of the most prominent auteur filmmakers in Syria. He studied philosophy in Damascus University then completed his cinema studies at The Russian State University of Cinematography in Moscow in 1974, where he directed several short films. Upon his return, Malas joined Syrian TV where he achieved several narrative and non-fiction shorts before embarking on his feature-length journey with films that tackle critical social and political issues that gained regional and international recognition. Among his award winning and internationally acclaimed films are "Dreams of the City" (1984), "The Night" (1992), "The Dream" (1987), "On the Sand", "Under the Sun" (1998), "Passion" (2005) and "Ladder to Damascus" (2013). Malas has headed and joined jury committees in numerous national and international film festivals.



Opening Film



Gaza Mon Amour

Director: Tarzan Nasser, Arab Nasser
 Drama – 2020 – 87 minutes – +16 – Jordanian Premiere
 Palestine, France, Germany, Portugal

Language: Arabic – subtitled in English

Screenplay: Tarzan Nasser, Arab Nasser, Fadette Drouard

Cast: Salim Daw, Hiam Abbass, Maisa Abd Elhadi, George Iskandar

Cinematography: Christophe Gailliot

Editing: Véronique Lange

Producers: Rani Massalha, Marie Legrand, Michael Eckelt

Synopsis

Gaza, today. Sixty-year-old fisherman Issa is secretly in love with Siham, a woman who works as a dressmaker at the market. Finally determined to propose, he discovers an ancient statue of Apollo in his fishing net, which he decides to hide at home. When Hamas discovers the existence of this mysterious treasure, troubles start for Issa. Will he succeed in declaring his love to Siham?

Co-Directors' Biography

The Nasser Brothers

Twins Tarzan and Arab Nasser were born in Gaza, Palestine, in 1988. They studied Fine Arts at Al- Aqsa University and became passionate about cinema and paintings. They directed "Condom Lead" (2013), which got selected in the Official Competition at the Cannes Film Festival 2013. Their first feature film, "Dégradé" (2014), made its world premiere at Cannes' Semaine de la Critique 2015, and also screened at the 2015 Toronto International Film Festival. "Gaza Mon Amour" is their second feature-film.



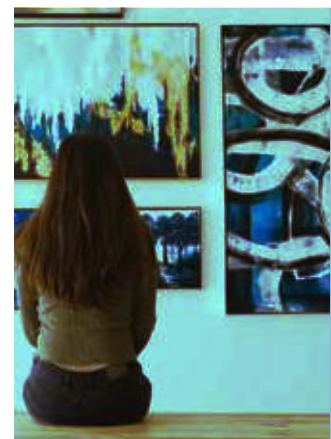


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Arab Feature Narrative Competition

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- Car parking over four basement floors
- SkyGarden open-air terrace with BBQ facilities

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The Edgo Atrium is based in the heart of the Abdali district in Amman, Jordan. As one of the only buildings in Amman with a gold certification for its environmental sustainability from the LEED, the Edgo Atrium offers a tenant experience that is unsurpassed in the country. With frictionless tenant security, including facial recognition entry and a license plate recognition system for the

building's four floors of car parking, the Edgo Atrium offers seven floors of office and commercial space over 14,343m² serviced by five high speed passenger elevators. Along with functional, quality reception and communal areas, the property boasts the SkyGarden, an open-air roof terrace with panoramic views of the Amman skyline, fully equipped with lounge seating and BBQ facilities.



The Man Who Sold His Skin

Director: Kaouther Ben Hania

Drama – 2020 – 104 minutes – +16 – Jordanian Premiere
France, Tunisia

Language: Arabic and English - subtitled in English

Screenplay: Kaouther Ben Hania

Cast: Yahya Mahayni, Dea Liane, Monica Bellucci, Koen De Bouw

Cinematography: Christopher Aoun

Editing: Marie- Hélène Dozo

Producers: Nadim Cheikhrouha, Habib Attia, Annabella Nezri, Thanassis Karathanos,
Martin Hampel, Andreas Rocksen

Awards: Best Arab Film at the Feature Narrative Competition - El Gouna Film Festival 2020; Best Screenplay - Stockholm International Film Festival 2020; Edipo Re Award & Venice Horizons Award for Best Actor - Venice Film Festival 2020

Synopsis

Sam Ali, a young, sensitive, and impulsive Syrian, left his country for Lebanon to escape the war. To be able to travel to Europe and live with the love of his life, he accepts to have his back tattooed by one of the world's most well-known contemporary artists. Turning his own body into a piece of art, Sam will come to realize that his decision might actually mean anything but freedom.

Director's Biography

Tunisian director Kaouther Ben Hania studied cinema in Tunisia and then in Paris. Her previous film "Beauty and the Dogs" premiered at Cannes Film Festival official selection "Un Certain Regard" in 2017, won the Best Sound Creation Award and was distributed in many countries.

"Challat of Tunis", her first feature, opened the ACID section at Cannes Film Festival 2014.

Her second documentary "Zaineb hates the Snow" premiered at Locarno Film Festival 2016 and won several awards. "Imams go to School", her first documentary, premiered at IDFA 2010. She also directed several shorts, including "Wooden Hand", (2013) and "Sheikh's watermelons" (2018).



First-Time Lead Actor

Yahya Mahayni is a Syrian-French-Canadian actor living in Fontainebleau (France). After growing up between Damascus, Paris and Montreal for much of his childhood and adolescence, he continued globe-trotting while studying and working in different fields. He dabbled in acting for a while, mostly taking up unpaid roles in short amateur films. Some years after giving up on acting, he was contacted to pass auditions for the role of Sam Ali in "The Man Who Sold His Skin".



First-Time Lead Actress

Dea Liane is a Syrian-French actress living in Paris. After studying political science and history she finally dedicated herself to theatre. She was admitted in a National Theatre School in Strasbourg at the age of 24, and since her graduation she works as a stage actress with various directors and companies, mainly in contemporary plays. She was discovered in 2018 for the role of Abeer in "The Man Who Sold His Skin", which was her first role in a feature film.



Oliver Black

Director: Tawfik Baba

Drama – 2020 – 93 minutes – +13 – Arab Premiere
Morocco

Language: French and Arabic (Moroccan) – subtitled in English

Screenplay: Tawfik Baba

Cast: Modou Mbow, Hassan Richiou, Ilham Oujri, Mohamed El Kachir

Cinematography: Smail Touil

Editing: Aissam Raja

Producers: Tawfik Baba, Rabab Aboulhassani

Awards: Best Film Grand Prize – Seoul Guro International Kids Film Festival 2021; Best Actor Award in a Leading Role – Tangier National Film Festival 2020; Best Actor Award in a Supporting Role – Tangier National Film Festival 2020; Special Mention from the Moroccan Association of Film Critics – Tangier National Film Festival 2020; Best Director – Los Angeles Fashion Film Festival 2020; Best Actor – Los Angeles Fashion Film Festival 2020; Best Foreign Film Award – International Film Festival of Lleida 2020; Best Foreign Film Award – Festival de Cinema de Alter do Chão 2020

Synopsis

Vendredi, a young black African boy crosses the desert to reach Morocco to pursue the art of the circus. He meets an old white man who wants to go to his granddaughter's wedding, but lost his camel. They both go on a harsh journey and a very deep relationship grows between them. Finally, the white man sells Vendredi to some mercenaries as a slave, then to ISIS. He becomes Oliver Black.

Director's Biography

Tawfik Baba is a filmmaker based in Ouarzazate, Morocco. He studied directing and screenwriting in Casablanca. As a teenager he loved writing, and tried to write poems, short stories, and philosophical essays. He worked in many famous film shootings in different departments. In 2013, he received funding from the Moroccan Cinematographic Centre as a screenwriter in a short, "Ten Dollars". He received the same fund in 2014 for another screenplay for the short, "The Ring". He wrote and directed his first short, "Epitaph" (2013), followed by "Winter Time" (2013), "Sand Man" (2014), "Routine" (2014), and "Clowns" (2015).





Skies of Lebanon

Director: Chloé Mazlo

Drama – 2020 – 90 minutes – General Audience – Arab Premiere
France

Language: French, Arabic, and Italian – subtitled in English and Arabic

Screenplay: Chloé Mazlo, Yacine Badday

Cast: Alba Rohrwacher, Wajdi Mouawad, Isabelle Zighondi

Cinematography: Hélène Louvart

Editing: Clémence Carré

Producers: Frédéric Niedermayer

Synopsis

In the fifties, young Alice leaves her natal Swiss mountains for the sunny and vibrant shores of Beirut. She falls madly in love with Joseph, a quirky astrophysicist intent on sending the first Lebanese national into space. Alice quickly fits in among his relatives, but after years of bliss, the civil war threatens their Garden of Eden.

Director's Biography

Chloé Mazlo is a French-Lebanese writer, director, artist, and animator based in Paris. Among her six short films is "Les petits cailloux" (2014), which was nominated for a César Award for Best Animated Film. She says of her first feature, "Skies of Lebanon" (2020), "I wanted to talk about the Lebanese Civil War as my family told it to me. The character of Alice is very much inspired by my grandmother".





Trapped

Director: Manal Khaled

Drama – 2021 – 77 minutes – +13 – Arab Premiere
Egypt

Language: Arabic – subtitled in English

Screenplay: Manal Khaled, Rasha Azab

Cast: Caroline Khalil, Osama Abo El Ata, Reem Hegab, Sara'a Jebel

Cinematography: Zbigniew Rybczynski, Tarek Hefny, Mahmoud Lotfi

Editing: Rania Montaser

Producers: Manal Khaled

Synopsis

Different women from various social backgrounds find themselves trapped in the events unfolding in the Egyptian streets and apartment blocks. Their entrapment is not necessarily limited to concrete walls and locked doors, but it is imposed by the inner conflicts and thoughts. Even though the women share similar dreams of breaking free from social constraints and conditions, each fights her own battle.

Director's Biography

Manal Khaled is an Egyptian filmmaker who studied Philosophy at the University of Alexandria. She worked in Misr International Films and has a vast experience working with award winning directors, such as Saad Hendawi, Kamla Abou Zekri, Hani Khalifa and Mohamed Ali. Also, she attended a multitude of masterclasses and workshops on filmmaking, screenwriting and film criticism. Most recently, she has finished shooting her feminist feature documentary film "An Hour or So" with American director Adolfo Martinez who teamed up previously in a number of works with the celebrated director McGee.





Zanka Contact

Director: Ismaël El Iraki

Romance, Action, Music – 2020 – 120 minutes – +18 – Jordanian Premiere
Morocco, France, Belgium

Language: Arabic and English – subtitled in English

Screenplay: Ismaël El Iraki

Cast: Khansa Batma, Ahmed Hammoud, Saïd Bey, Abderrahmane Oubihem

Cinematography: Benjamin Rufi

Editing: Camille Mouton

Producers: Saïd Hamich

Awards: Best Actress (Venice Horizons Award) – Venice Film Festival 2020

Synopsis

In hellish Casablanca, the burning love story between has-been rocker Larsen and the streetwise prostitute Rajae sets ablaze a crazy Moroccan underworld in this story of passion, trauma, and rock 'n roll. The only hope for their blooming romance is to skip this ferocious town, and for these punk Romeo and Juliet, maybe the answer lies in a song - the one they've been writing and dreaming together: Zanka Contact.

Director's Biography

Born in 1983, Ismaël El Iraki lives between Casablanca and Paris, where he studied directing at La Femis. His award-winning short films reinvent genre tropes relocated to his native Morocco. Passionate about live music, he founded a concert recording company in Paris, shot photos for music bands and a video installation for the 2014 Venice Mostra. "Zanka Contact", his first feature, premiered at the 2020 Mostra in Venice and won the Orizzonti Best Actress Award. Despite the pandemic, it has since been selected in many high-profile festivals and won many awards.





Honey Cigar

Director: Kamir Aïnouz

Drama – 2020 – 100 minutes – +18 – Arab Premiere
France, Algeria, Belgium

Language: French and Berber Languages – subtitled in English

Screenplay: Kamir Aïnouz

Cast: Zoé Adjani, Amira Casar, Lyes Salem, Louis Peres

Cinematography: Jeanne Lapoirie

Editing: Albertine Lastera

Producers: Christine Rouxel, Marie-Castille Mention-Schaar

Synopsis

Paris, 1993. Selma, 17, lives in a bourgeois and secular Berber family. When she meets Julien, a provocative young man, she realises for the first time how the heavy rules of patriarchy affect her intimacy. As she faces her own fears to explore the power and dangers of her desire, her family crumbles and the terror of fundamentalism emerges in her country of origin. Selma must fight back to reclaim her body and become a free woman.

Director's Biography

Born in Paris to Algerian parents, Kamir Aïnouz lived seven years in Los Angeles where she studied film writing at UCLA and participated in various filmmaking workshops at USC School of Cinematic Arts. Sister of renowned Brazilian-Algerian director Karim Aïnouz, she has been developing original content inspired by her dual Algerian and French culture. Aïnouz has also worked as a screenwriter for cinema and television, notably on "Lol USA" (2012) by Lisa Azuelos. "Honey Cigar" (2020) is her directorial debut. Her original script was selected at the Rawi Screenwriters Lab with the Sundance Institute and awarded the Fondation Beaumarchais-SACD cinema grant.





Final Round

Director: Mohamed Fekrane, Gustavo Cortés Bueno

Drama – 2021 – 80 minutes – +16 – Arab Premiere

Morocco, Belgium, Spain

Language: Arabic – subtitled in English

Screenplay: Gustavo Cortés Bueno

Cast: Ahmed El Mir, Youssef Ettouile, Yassine El Garda, Rabie El Kati

Cinematography: César Hernando

Editing: Claudia Cortés Espejo

Producers: Saïd Andam, Gustavo Cortés Bueno, Toni Espinosa

Synopsis

Rashid is a teenage orphan boy who dreams of becoming a world-famous boxer. With his orphan friend Salek, they box every day for bets to save up enough money to smuggle into Europe, escaping their shabby life in Morocco. However, to realise their dream, they have to endure exploitation from adults and overcome fraud. Eventually, the boys arrive in Tangier in northern Morocco, a few kilometres from Spain. On their way, they meet Illy, a boy who dreams of becoming a footballer. The three boys try to go to Spain together, but the journey is filled with danger.

First-time Co-Director's Biography

Mohamed Fekrane is a director of French-Moroccan origin, he has a master's degree from Paris Film School. He has worked on and created many projects in advertisement, documentaries, and short films, among others. Fekrane pays special attention to the direction of actors, an area that he completely dominates. The child actor dynamic and its integration into the circle of professional adult actors is the main theme of his projects.



First-time Co-Director's Biography

Gustavo Cortés Bueno has been a cinema exhibitor, television producer, independent producer, content manager, screenwriter, and filmmaker since 1985. "Final Round" (2021) is his first feature-length screenplay, and yet he has received the Charles Spaak Best Screenplay Award. He is also a co-producer of the project through his production company Le Midi.



200 Meters (Special Screening - Out of Competition)

Director: Ameen Nayfeh

Drama – 2020 – 96 minutes – +13

Palestine, Jordan, Qatar, Italy, Sweden

Language: Arabic – subtitled in English

Screenplay: Ameen Nayfeh

Cast: Ali Suliman, Lana Zreik, Samia Bakri, Tawfeeq Nayfeh

Cinematography: Elin Kirschfink

Editing: Kamal El Mallakh

Producer: May Odeh

Awards: Best Actor, Cinema for Humanity Prize, EDA Award, and the FIPRESCI International Critics Prize – El Gouna Film Festival 2020; Audience Award and Jury Prize – Ajyal Film Festival 2020

Synopsis

Mustafa and his wife Salwa live 200 metres apart in villages separated by the wall. One day he gets a call every parent dreads—his son has had an accident. Rushing to cross the Israeli checkpoint, Mustafa is denied on a technicality. But a father's love won't give up and he will do anything to reach his son. A -200metre distance becomes a -200kilometre odyssey, as Mustafa, left with no choice, attempts to smuggle himself to the other side of the wall.

Director's Biography

Ameen Nayfeh (born in Palestine, 1988) spent his formative years moving between Jordan and Palestine. Despite an early interest in filmmaking, in 2010 he earned his B.Sc. in Nursing from Al-Quds University in East Jerusalem. Two years later, he earned an MFA in film producing from the Red Sea Institute of Cinematic Arts in Jordan. Ameen Nayfeh's previous films include "The Crossing" (2017, Short), "Suspended Time" (2014, documentary segment), "The Eid Gift" (2012, Documentary), and "The Uppercut" (2012, Documentary). 200 METERS is his first feature film.



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Gevar's Land

Director: Qutaiba Barhamji

Documentary – 2020 – 75 minutes – +13 – Jordanian Premiere
France, Qatar

Language: Arabic and French – subtitles in English

Cinematography: Qutaiba Barhamji

Editing: Qutaiba Barhamji

Producers: Karim Aitouna, Thomas Micoulet

Awards: The Jury Special Mention - Odessa International Film Festival 2020

Synopsis

Recently settled with his partner and son in a Reims suburb, Gevar, who has arrived from Syria, has decided to invest in the rental of a small patch of land to grow vegetables. Filmmaker Qutaiba Barhamji films them over four seasons as they settle on this new ground that often rebels against the couple's hopes.

Director's Biography

Born in the Damascus suburbs, Qutaiba Barhamji spent his childhood between Syria and Russia, where he studied medicine. In 2005, he settled in Paris and studied film at ESEC. In 2016, he made the short, "Wardé", coproduced and broadcast by Arte. In parallel, he has worked as an editor on some thirty documentary and fiction films, including "Still Recording" by Saeed Al Batal and Ghiath Ayoub, Fawzi Saleh's "Poisonous Roses" and Abdallah Al-Khatib's "Little Palestine, Diary of a Siege", which was screened at Cannes Film Festival (2021).





The Fifth Story

Director: Ahmed Abd

Documentary – 2020 – 90 minutes – +16 – Arab Premiere
Qatar, Iraq

Language: Arabic and Kurdish – subtitled in English

Screenplay: Ahmed Abd, Louai Haffar

Cinematography: Saef Alden

Editing: Raya Yamisha, Mohamad Ali

Producer: Aljazeera Documentary Channel

Awards: Fédération Internationale de la Presse Cinématographique (FIPRESCI) Prize for First Appearance – Amsterdam International Documentary Film Festival (IDFA) 2020

Synopsis

Narrated by Ahmed, the author, "The Fifth Story" is a long emotional journey spanning four decades of wars and conflicts in Iraq.

Four main characters; Nassar, the young Bedouin, Akheen, the eighteen-year-old Yezidi female fighter, Ahmed's father, the war gravedigger, and Adnan, the old man who settled in seclusion in Baghdad's train station. Through the self-revealing experiences of these characters, Ahmed tries to heal himself through a spiritual transformation between three chapters that marked his life; fear, anger, and revolution.

Director's Biography

Ahmad was born in Baghdad, Iraq in 1994. He received filmmaking training at the Independent Iraqi Film Centre. Ahmed worked as an assistant director with Iraqi director Muhammad al-Daradji to realise his narrative feature film "al-Rihlah" (The Journey), and with director Mohanad Hayal in his feature narrative film "Haifa Street" (nominated by Iraq for the Academy Awards in 2021). Ahmed directed one short narrative, "War Nest", and a short documentary, "Birds of Sinjar", which won the BBC Arabic Film Festival Award for Best in Journalism. His first feature length documentary, "The Fifth Story", won the IDFA FIPRESCI Award in 2020.





Their Algeria

Director: Lina Soualem

Documentary – 2020 – 72 minutes – General Audience – Jordanian Premiere
France, Switzerland, Qatar, Algeria

Language: French and Arabic – subtitled in English and Arabic

Screenplay: Lina Soualem

Cinematography: Lina Soualem

Editing: Gladys Joujou

Producers: Marie Balducci

Awards: Prix étudiant de la première œuvre CCU Crous – CineMed 2020; Prize for the Best Arabic Documentary – El Gouna Film Festival 2020

Synopsis

After 62 years of living together, Lina's grandparents, Aïcha and Mabrouk, have decided to separate. Together, they came from Algeria to Thiers, a small medieval town in the middle of France, over 60 years ago. Side by side, they have experienced this chaotic immigrant life. For Lina, their separation is an opportunity to question their long journey of exile and their silence.

Director's Biography

Lina Soualem is a French-Palestinian-Algerian filmmaker and actress, born and based in Paris. After graduating La Sorbonne, she worked in journalism and film festival programming, combining her interests for cinema and the study of contemporary Arab societies. Soualem's debut feature documentary "Their Algeria" (2019) received the Best Doc-in-progress award at the Doc Corner at Cannes. "Their Algeria" was selected to premiere in Visions du Réel 2020. Soualem recently acted in three feature films directed by Hafsia Herzi, Hiam Abbass and Rayhana. She is currently developing her second feature documentary and works as an author and assistant director on many projects.





A Way Home

Director: Karima Saïdi

Documentary – 2020 – 90 minutes – +13 – Jordanian Premiere
Belgium, France, Morocco, Qatar

Language: Arabic and French – subtitled in English

Cinematography: Caroline Guimbal, Redha Benhamouda, Karima Saïdi

Editing: Frédéric Fichet

Producers: Julie Freres, Karim Aitouna

Awards: Jury Prize - Millenium International Documentary Film Festival 2021

Synopsis

After years of separation, the filmmaker renews her relationship with her mother, Aïcha, now suffering from Alzheimer's. From Brussels to Tangiers, the odyssey of a family marked by exile is evoked through discretion and confession, pain, separation, grief, and joy.

Director's Biography

Karima Saïdi lives in Belgium and is of Moroccan origin. She has worked as an editor for RTBF since 1997. She is also a documentary editor ("Femme taxi à Sidi Bellabes", "Les damnés de la mer", "Cheveux rouges et café noir"), and a continuity supervisor for feature films ("Le cochon de Gaza", "À perdre la raison", "Adios Carmen"). In 2013, she created "Murmurs et 10 voix", a series of sound portraits of Moroccan immigrants in Brussels. In 2016, she directed a short documentary, "Aïcha", an evocation of her mother's death, a prelude to "A Way Home", her first feature-length documentary.





On the Fence

Director: Nesrine Lotfy Elzayat

Documentary – 2020 – 69 minutes – General Audience – Jordanian Premiere
Egypt

Language: Arabic – subtitled in English

Cinematography: Olla Elmallah

Editing: Nesrine Lotfy Elzayat

Producers: Hala Lotfy

Synopsis

After her mother has a bad dream, Nesrine travels from Cairo, where she has lived since 2002, to her hometown Tima in Upper Egypt, in an attempt to save their old home. The filmmaker takes us back and forth between two worlds, belonging to neither. She struggles with the idea of selling the house, as it holds the last memories from her beloved father. She tries to clean it and do the needed repairs in vain as the wreckage is beyond repair. She finds some old tapes recorded by her father, some notes and an ambush of memories.

Director's Biography

Nesrine El-Zayat was born in Sohag, Upper Egypt. She started as a film critic and journalist at Rosa El-Youssef magazine. She made two short documentaries, the first, "Ward No. 6", won the Jury Prize for the Human Rights Competition at the Baghdad International Film Festival and the Jury Prize for Best Short Documentary at the National Festival for Egyptian Cinema in 2009. The second, "The Black Dress" (2013), was screened in festivals in Egypt, India, France, and Morocco. "On the Fence" is her latest and first feature documentary film. It premiered at the Cairo International Film Festival in December 2020.





Only the Ocean Between Us

Director: Khaldiya Amer Ali, Marah Mohammad Alkhateeb, Karoli Bautista Pizarro, Christy Cauper Silvano
 Documentary – 2021 – 81 minutes – General Audience – Arab Premiere
 USA, Jordan, Peru

Language: Arabic, Spanish, and Shipibo – subtitled in English

Cinematography: Khaldiya Amer Ali, Marah Mohammad Alkhateeb, Karoli Bautista Pizarro, Christy Cauper Silvano

Editing: EB Landesberg, Laura Doggett, Tasneem Toghoj

Producers: EB Landesberg, Laura Doggett, Tasneem Toghoj, Lali Madueño Medina

Synopsis

Two Syrian directors in Za'atari Refugee Camp, Jordan and two Indigenous Shipibo-Conibo directors in Lima, Peru correspond through film diaries in a cross-border project from Another Kind of Girl Collective.

"Only the Ocean Between Us" tells four profoundly personal stories of motherhood, displacement, and the power of both personal and communal resistance.

First-time Co-Directors' Biographies

Khaldiya Amer Ali is a Syrian filmmaker living in Za'atari Refugee Camp, Jordan. Her short film "Another Kind of Girl" (2015) premiered at Sundance and screened at Cannes and SXSW (South by Southwest). It won numerous awards, and was featured as a New York Times Op-doc. She won a 2015 Kassel Documentary Film Festival A38- Production Grant. Her first feature-length film, "Only the Ocean Between Us" (supported by the Sundance Institute and Creative Capital), had its world premiere at Hot Docs 2021.



Marah Mohammed Alkhateeb is a Syrian filmmaker living in Za'atari Refugee Camp, Jordan. Her short film "Children" (2015) won numerous awards at film festivals. She also won a top award at Punto De Vista International Documentary Film Festival. More recently, she created a short film for the Thomson Reuters Association and completed a 360 film. Her first feature-length film, "Only the Ocean Between Us" (supported by the Sundance Institute and Creative Capital), had its world premiere at Hot Docs 2021.



Karoli Bautista Pizarro is a Shipibo-Conibo filmmaker, cultural practitioner and activist living in Cantagallo, Lima, Peru. Her short film "Escúchame Cantar" (2016) screened at the North Carolina Latin American Film Festival and Alice Fest. Her photographs were featured in an article in the Peruvian investigative journal Ojo Público about human rights issues in her community during the 2020 lockdown. Her first feature-length film, "Only the Ocean Between Us" (supported by the Sundance Institute and Creative Capital), had its world premiere at Hot Docs 2021.



Christy Cauper Silvano is a Shipibo-Conibo photographer, filmmaker and cultural practitioner living in Cantagallo, Lima, Peru. She co-directed the short film "Un Pedacito de la Selva en la Ciudad" (2015), which won an audience award at Mi Primer Festival, in Lima. Her photographs were also featured in the group exhibit "Fotos por el Cambio" at the Peruvian North American Cultural Institute. Her first feature-length film, "Only the Ocean Between Us" (supported by the Sundance Institute and Creative Capital), had its world premiere at Hot Docs 2021.





Manca Moro

Director: Rim Temimi

Documentary – 2021 – 86 minutes – +13 – World Premiere
Tunisia

Language: Tunisian Arabic, French, and Italian – subtitled in English

Screenplay: Rim Temimi

Cinematography: Rim Temimi, Nasredine Ben Maati, Selim Harbi, Simone Gambelli, Rayan William Harris, Anetta Mitrofanova.

Editing: Anes Saadi

Producers: Dora Bouchoucha Fourati, Lina Chaabane Menzli

Synopsis

Born to an Algerian father and a Sicilian mother in Tunisia, I have always been a child of three cultures. This motherland is where my Algerian ancestors were born when it was called Ifriqiya. It is also home to my Sicilian grandparents whose parents were part of the important migration flux of the beginning of the last century. A workforce by the thousands reached the shores of this “Promised Land”. A hundred years later, I embark on a quest to rediscover my Sicilian family, exiled for the past sixty years, scattered between Italy and France.

Director’s Biography

Rim is a photographer, researcher and archivist of Tunisian History, Arts and Culture. She has taken part in many international photo exhibitions. “Manca Moro” is her first experience in cinema.



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8 Years

Director: Ziad Mazraany

Drama – 2020 – 12 minutes – General Audience

– Jordanian Premiere

Lebanon

Language: Arabic – subtitled in English and Arabic

Screenplay: Doris Saba

Cast: Najla Mazraany, Ziad Mazraany

Cinematography: Fatma Rasha Shehadeh

Editing: Ornella Maalouf

Producer: Melissa Roukos

Awards: Runner-up Prize Winner – Sundance TV 2020 Shorts MENA 2020

Synopsis

Najla is still living in her childhood: the last images in her memory are 8 years old. War, childhood, and passion for cinema, all these phases are mixed in her heart and brain. Nothing can awaken them except Ziad who takes care of her and who decides to use cinema in order to let her memorise and remember one of the turning points in her life: her holy communion.



Director's Biography

Ziad Mazraani is a photographer, filmmaker, and creative editor based in North Lebanon, with a passion for photography that turned into a career in filmmaking. He has won awards at numerous international photography contests, and his photos were featured in many prestigious international magazines. Moreover, he is a top filter creator for Instagram, Facebook, and Snapchat. He was the runner-up at the Sundance TV Shorts Competition in the MENA region for his short film "Huit Ans" and was officially selected in many festivals. Through his work, he focuses on showcasing the stories of different people with diverse backgrounds.



Potato

Director: Mohamed El-Badry

Drama – 2021 – 11 minutes – General Audience – International Premiere

Egypt

Language: Arabic – subtitled in English

Screenplay: Marwa Mustafa

Cast: Lobna Wanas, Karim Abdel Aleem, Sara Hesham, Mokhtar Ragab

Cinematography: Mahmoud Fawzi

Editing: Mahmoud Mahdy

Producer: Mohamed El-Badry

Synopsis

The film is inspired by Van Gogh's The Potato Eaters. Two families from the underprivileged class share one housing, the first family consists of the father, Rady, the mother, Ahlam, and their daughter. Everyone turns around the dining table, the child interrupts their conversation and attacks the potatoes and tea quickly, then we find her falling into place and showing symptoms of poisoning while everyone exchanges different looks.



Director's Biography

Mohamed El-Badry, Bachelor of Arts in English, is a 27-year-old Egyptian director. Born in 1994, apart from directing, he is a graphic designer and an English translator. He completed a film directing workshop from the Higher Institute of Cinema in Egypt in 2019. This film is his first cinematic experience, but he has practiced theatre between acting, writing and directing for 15 years. He completed several dramatic workshops in scripting, directing and montage.



The Red Mountain

Director: Kamel Harb

Drama – 2020 – 15 minutes – General Audience –
Jordanian Premiere
Lebanon

Language: Arabic – subtitled in English and French

Screenplay: Kamel Harb

Cast: Ahmad Bdeir, Mahdi Hachem, Mohamad Mokadem

Cinematography: Hussein Farhat

Editing: Kamel Harb

Producers: Kamel Harb

Awards: Best Cinematography – Dhaka Youth International Film Festival 2020; Special Jury Award – Jerusalem International Film Festival (Gaza) 2020

Synopsis

A dream of escaping the cruel reality they're living in in boarding school takes the boys far with their thoughts and plans. Only one obstacle is a threat.



Director's Biography

Kamel Harb, born in 1991, is a Lebanese Filmmaker. He has a bachelor's degree in Cinema Studies and Political Science. In his films, he tends to search for personal memory and turn it into cinematic projects. His film "The Red Mountain" (2020) won 3 awards including the runner-up award at Sundance TV in the MENA region.



The Other Cheek

Director: Sandro Canaan

Drama – 2020 – 11 minutes – General Audience –
Jordanian Premiere
Egypt

Language: Arabic – subtitled in English

Screenplay: Sandro Canaan, Ahmed Ghoneimy

Cast: Tarek Abdelaziz, Dora Youssef, Mohey Dorgham

Cinematography: Guido Raimondo

Editing: Nancy Fares

Producers: Kawthar Younis, Alaa Lasheen

Synopsis

When Nashaat's daughter is viciously attacked by his neighbours' dog, he is aggrieved to hear claims that she provoked the attack. Unreconciled emotions lead to a heated confrontation with his ex-wife, leaving the cornered father with no choice but to take out frustrations on the perpetrator.



Director's Biography

After receiving his bachelor's degree in Economics from the American University in Cairo and joining a summer workshop at UCLA, Sandro Canaan moved to Paris to complete his master's of Fine Arts in Directing Film at EICAR film school. Since returning to Egypt, he has worked as an Assistant Director on titles including "Diamond Dust", directed by Marwan Hamed, and "Resistance", a co-production between the UK and UAE directed by Maurice Sweeney. He was the Editor of "About Separation", a short by Kawthar Younis.



Revolutionary Baby

Director: Sheherezade El Moumni Berdaï
Drama – 2020 – 12 minutes – General Audience –
World Premiere
United Kingdom

Language: French and Moroccan Arabic – subtitled in English

Screenplay: Sheherezade El Moumni Berdaï

Cast: Sameera Al Asir, Yasmine Bouabid, Tara Ahmed, Yassine Mkhichen

Cinematography: Jaffar Raza Jafri

Editing: Xiao Ding

Producer: Alissa Autschbach

Synopsis

Revolutionary Baby takes place the night before Eid Al Fitr, in a fragmented Moroccan household. Fatou, the housemaid, shares a strong nurturing bond with the eldest of the family; Inès, who suffers from an eating disorder. However, the mother, Narjisse, who is the head of the house, neglects her daughter's illness and disapproves of Fatou's protectiveness over her. Narjisse, who gets carried away by her jealousy towards their bond, imposes a ruthless punishment to whomever disagrees with her intolerant judgement.



Director's Biography

Sheherezade El Moumni Berdaï grew up between Morocco and the UAE, where she has long nourished an ambition to create visual art. She moved to the UK to study filmmaking in 2017, focusing on directing and cinematography. Since then, she has created numerous short fiction and experimental films, as well as documentaries, that have helped her nurture her eye and voice as an Afro-European storyteller. She aspires to tell more stories revolving around the characters that occupy the abstract and naive world that she grew up in. Since Revolutionary Baby, she has been developing her next film, set in Northern Morocco.



Left Foot

Director: Falah Al-Baghdadi
Animated – 2020 – 3 minutes – General Audience – Jordanian Premiere
Iraq

Language: No dialogue

Screenplay: Falah Al-Baghdadi

Cinematography: Ali Iyad

Editing: Yasser Al Khaled

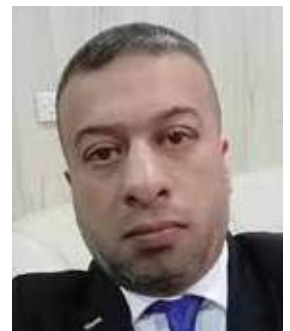
Producers: Seven Layers Production

Awards: Best Screenplay Award
– Childhood International Film Festival for Short Films 2021

Synopsis

"Left Foot" was made by hand; the characters, the environment, and the stop motion process. The film's motto is "Be satisfied with what you have, perhaps you have what others don't".

The film starts with a rich man getting out of his luxury car, standing in his precious clothes in front of a shoeshine. As the shoeshine begins his work, his mind drifts off, imagining himself in the rich man's shoes, living a life of luxury, until he is shocked to find out that the rich man's left foot is missing.



Director's Biography

Falah Al-Baghdadi, born in Baghdad in 1979, holds a BA in Arabic from Al-Mustansiriya University. He is a screenwriter, creator, animator, photographer and stop motion film director. He wrote several works of art in the fields of cinema, television, theatre and novels. He held several positions, including Member of the Baghdad International Film Festival, and Director of Seven Layers production company. He holds several certificates, including a Certificate of Director from the Iraqi Foundation for the Development of Cinema and Culture, and a Certificate in Television Photography from the Akito Media Training and Development Centre.



Falling into the Summit

Director: Aya Radi

Animation – 2020 – 5 minutes

– General Audience – Jordanian Premiere
Jordan

Language: No dialogue

Screenplay: Aya Radi

Cinematography: Aya Radi

Editing: Aya Radi

Producers: Aya Radi

Synopsis

A short that discusses life away from home and how it can tempt us away from family and stability. The film revolves around Saleh, who lives in his small hut with his mother, living off the apple tree next to his house. Yet, he always watched the city on the mountain and dreamt of visiting it. When the apple tree loses some of its yield, the city tempts him to leave his mother and his livelihood and head to the city. Once he realises his alienation and longing, he tries to return home, but it's too late.

Director's Biography

Aya Radi is an Animation and Multimedia graduate from Jordan. Her first experience with filmmaking was her animated short film, "Falling into the Summit", which was also her 2020 graduation project for university.



Amygdala

Director: Dana Abdessamad

Drama – 2020 – 20 minutes – General Audience –
Jordanian Premiere
Lebanon

Language: Arabic – subtitled in English

Screenplay: Dana Abdessamad

Cast: Carole Abboud, Yehia Jaber

Cinematography: Samer Sayegh

Editing: Dana Abdessamad, Samer Sayegh

Producers: Ghinwa Nasr, Dana Abdessamad

Awards: Audience Choice Award – Beirut International
Women Film Festival 2021

Synopsis

Farid and Amal are an elderly childless couple, they are a high-end bourgeois family and are very concerned with the words and looks of society. Farid suffers from episodes of amnesia and loss of perception, which makes him wander in his own world, free of societal chains, loving exceptionally, all amidst continuous bursts of public dancing. What will Amal choose as a woman of her age? True and innocent love? Or will she choose to be held down by the burden of acceptance from the world around her?



Director's Biography

Dana Abdessamad, 21 years old, is a fresh graduate from the Lebanese University (Cinema & TV). She had several internships at Ginger Production House and Lumens Film Production, and participated in the making of five students' short films as assistant director. In October 2020, "Amygdala" was submitted as her senior project and first short film. She is currently working as an editor for Sarde After Dinner on YouTube.



Geisha L.O.V.E

Director: Mike V. Derderian

Animation – 9 – 2021 minutes – General Audience –
World Premiere
Jordan

Language: Arabic – subtitled in English

Screenplay: Mike V. Derderian

Voice cast: Rania Kurdi, Hala Odeh, Sally Sweidan,
Tamer Qarrain

Cinematography: Mike V. Derderian, Tamer Qarrain

Editing: Mike V. Derderian, Tamer Qarrain

Producers: Nadine Toukan, Tamer Qarrain, Zaidoun
Karadsheh, Mike V. Derderian, The Royal Film
Commission (RFC) through the Jordan Film Fund (JFF).

Synopsis

Geisha L.O.V.E. is a day in the life of a graffiti artist and her robot protector and companion set in 2155. The action takes place within the span of 24 hours in Delphipolis, a futuristic city rocked by political upheaval and economic unrest. The World Union, a conglomerate of Europeans, Arabs, and Asians, established NADA to eradicate defiant street art through ruthless robots that do not hesitate to execute graffiti artists on the spot. Geisha L.O.V.E. is a renegade graffiti artist in a dystopian world, where graffiti has become the only way to spread the word, and reclaim the city.



Director's Biography

Mike V. Derderian is a writer, illustrator, t-shirt designer, and comic and graffiti artist. When he is not drawing comics or graffiti, he is a newsreader and DJ at Bliss 104.3. A former journalist, Derderian decided to pursue drawing comics and graffiti by founding his own studio, F.A.D.A. 317. He launched Fanzeen three years ago, a comics collective with comic artists from Jordan and abroad. He also has a comic strip called The Darker Side of the Spoon. "Geisha L.O.V.E." is inspired by Derderian's own work in the local graffiti scene in the streets of Amman under the penname Sardine.



Roadblock

Director: Dahila Nemlich

Drama – 2020 – 16 minutes – General Audience –
Jordanian Premiere
Lebanon

Language: Arabic – subtitled in English

Screenplay: Pascale Seigneurie

Cast: Julian Farhat, Ahmed Hammadi Chassin, Pascale
Seigneurie, Mohamad Yassine

Cinematography: Fatma Racha Shehadeh

Editing: Adam Jammal

Producer: Marine Vaillant

Synopsis

Beirut, 2019, during the revolution. On her way back from a protest, Farah, a Lebanese activist, and her French-Lebanese boyfriend Anthony, are stopped at a roadblock held by two armed militiamen who have a bone to pick with Farah.



Director's Biography

Dahlia Nemlich is a French-Lebanese director. Upon completing her studies in Cinema at ISCPA Paris, she spent three years working in series production at TF1 before relocating to her home country of Lebanon, where she was hired by Webedia Arabia as a Content Director and Head of the Production Department. Nemlich is also an accomplished singer and songwriter, performing under the name Dahlia on the Run.



A Handful of Dates

Director: Hashim Hassan
 Drama – 12 – 2020 minutes – General Audience –
 Jordanian Premiere
 Sudan
Language: Arabic – subtitled in English
Screenplay: Issraa Elkogali
Cast: Abdelhakim Eltahir, Abdallah Jaknoon, Diab Abdelnaser
Cinematography: Khalid Awad
Editing: Evan Schafer
Producer: Mamdooh Salih
Awards: Award of Excellence – Best Shorts Competition 2020;
 Jury Award – Arizona International Film Festival 2021; Silver
 Gate Award – Digital Gate International Film Festival 2020

Synopsis

In a mythical Sudanese village between the desert and the Nile, a young boy enjoys an idyllic childhood, taking pleasure in the fertile fruits of the land and basking by the river. But the boy's precious world begins to unravel when he learns the disturbing truth behind his family's fortune, and a certain farmer's inevitable demise.



Director's Biography

Hashim Hassan received his Bachelor of Arts in Middle East Studies from the University of California in Santa Barbara and his Masters in Fine Arts in Directing from the American Film Institute in Los Angeles. Following the release of "A Handful of Dates", Hassan began working as a Film Producer in Central California and is currently starting his own production company to develop film, documentary, and TV projects.



Ward's Henna Party

Director: Morad Mostafa
 Drama – 2020 – 22 minutes – General Audience
 – Jordanian Premiere
 Egypt
Language: Arabic – Subtitled in English
Screenplay: Morad Mostafa, Mohamed Ali Mansour
Cast: Hailma, Ward, Marina Victor
Cinematography: ZEZO
Editing: Mohamed Mamdouh
Producers: Sawsan Yusuf, Safie El Din Mahmoud

Synopsis

Halima is a Sudanese henna painter living in Egypt. She goes to one of Giza's local areas to prepare a bride for her wedding with her -7-year-old daughter Ward. Ward starts to wander around and discover the place.



Director's Biography

Morad Mostafa is an Egyptian Filmmaker, born in 1988 in Cairo. He studied filmmaking in Egypt and started his career as an Assistant Director in various independent films. He Collaborated as an Executive Director in "Souad", a feature film that made the Official Selection at Cannes Film Festival 2020 and Berlinale 2021. "Henet Ward" had its world premiere in Clermont-Ferrand and was selected in other major festivals. The film won more than 25 international awards.



Aicha

Director: Zakaria Nouri

Drama – 21 – 2020 minutes – General Audience – Arab
Premiere
Morocco

Language: No dialogue

Screenplay: Mohamed Rida Saaoud

Cast: Nisrin Erradi

Cinematography: Adil Ayoub

Editing: Zakaria Nouri, Mohamed Rida Saaoud

Producers: Raouf Sebbahi, Khaoula Benomar

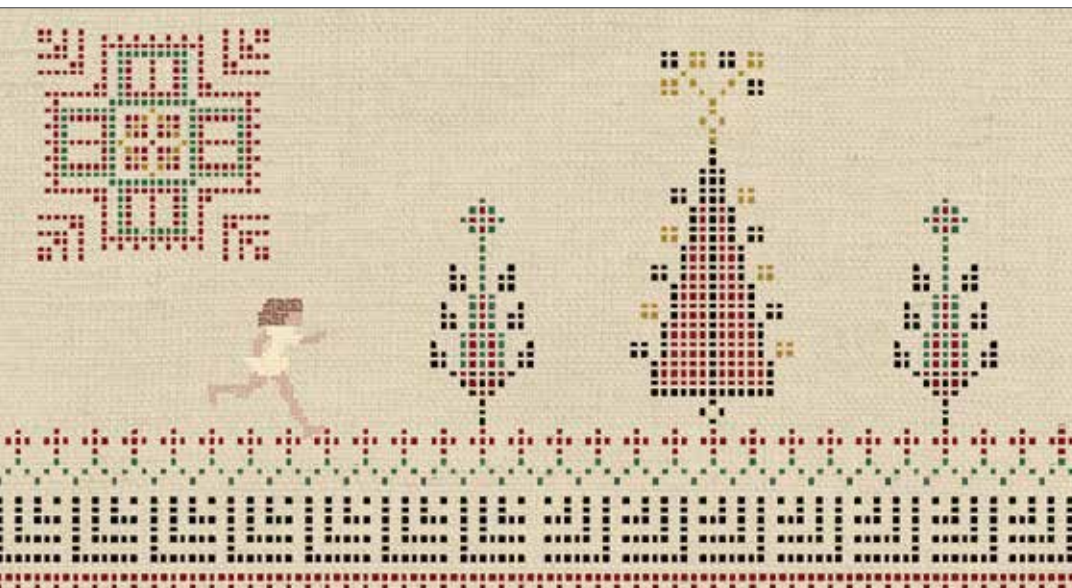
Synopsis

On the outskirts of town, in a traditional house, -26year-old Aicha leads a monotonous lifestyle. During the day, she does household chores and cares for her elderly, bedridden mother. In the evening, Aicha leaves home and awaits crossing the possible path of a lorry driver.



Director's Biography

Zakaria Nouri was born in 1993 in Casablanca. After obtaining his bachelor's degree in Physics and Chemistry in 2011, he continued his studies at the Higher Institute of Journalism and Information in Casablanca, and obtained his diploma in Audio-visual Engineering. Nouri then moved to Belgium where he continued his professional training by integrating directing workshops and working on various audio-visual and film projects as first assistant director between Belgium and Morocco. In 2020, Nouri directed his first short fiction film, "Aicha".



Mariam

Director: Dana Durr

Animation – 2020 – 5 minutes – General Audience –
Jordanian Premiere
Palestine, The Netherlands

Language: No dialogue

Screenplay: Dana Durr

Editing: Dana Durr

Producer: Dana Durr

Awards: Best Animation – Faten Hamama Film Festival 2021; Audience Award – Festival Cine-Palestine 2021

Synopsis

After the loss of her precious paradise, Mariam looks for strength through her culture and heritage.



Director's Biography

Dana Durr, aged 26, was born in Nazareth. Her work branches out in worlds of film, animation and music. With a Film Studies background, Durr continued in Animation Studies seeking to pass on moments of beauty, presence, and life. She digs deep into her Palestinian heritage and aims to portray that way of life through poetic visual storytelling.



The Hurl

Director: Samir Al Kawas

Drama – 2021 – 5 minutes – General Audience –
Jordanian Premiere
Lebanon

Language: Arabic and English – subtitled in English

Screenplay: Samir Al Kawas

Cast: Abdallah Kawas, Tarek Majzoub, Lina Sukkar,
Aida Wehbe

Cinematography: Mikaela Aramouni

Editing: Samir Al Kawas

Producers: Lama Hatoum, Samir Al Kawas

Awards: Best Sci-Fi – International Symbolic Art Film
Festival 2021

Synopsis

Trash around a small town in Lebanon mysteriously starts to slither away onto the streets, forming a monstrous, sky-scraping tower of garbage, Mother Nature's vengeful plan to ruin whoever has ruined her Earth. Little do the frightened citizens know that they've brought the hurl upon themselves.



Director's Biography

Samir Al Kawas was born in 1998 and was raised in Beirut, Lebanon. He graduated with a B.A. in T.V. and Film at the Lebanese American University. His horror student short film "Jabbara" has been recognised at film festivals internationally and locally. More recently, he worked on a "zero-budget sci-fi environmental PSA" titled "The Hurl", his first independent short film. Currently, he is a freelance video editor and VFX artist, where he has turned his one-time hobby into the first step of his career. He hopes to defy the norms of traditional Lebanese cinema through experimenting with new genres.



It is Better There

Director: Hasanain Al-Hani

Animation – 2020 – 12 minutes – General Audience –
Jordanian Premiere
Iraq

Language: no dialogue

Screenplay: Saad Haddabi

Editing: Anas Al Mosawi

Producers: Hasanain Al-Hani

Awards: Best Animation Film – Golden Earth Film
Event 2021; Best Film – Dhaka International Film
Festival; The Jury Prize – International Rome Film Fest;
Best Film and Best Director – Oujda Film Festival 2020

Synopsis

A life that presents the end before its struggle is a terrifying life. Human nature defies the end, and thirsts for adventure. It makes the newborn dive into life's struggles, and prove that survival is for those who overcome their challenges. Though, there are events that make one turn back and shut the womb they emerged from.



Director's Biography

Hasanain Al-Hani is an Iraqi director who graduated from Baghdad University in 2004 from the College of Fine Arts. He directed many documentaries and fiction films for cinema and TV. He also participated in many local and international festivals. Moreover, he is the founder and manager of al-Nahaj International Festival and serves as a jury member for several festivals. He also works in an Iraqi TV channel.



Hemingwhy

Director: Ghaith Al-Adwan, Laith Al-Adwan
 Drama – 2021 – 14 minutes – General Audience –
 Jordanian Premiere
 Jordan

Language: Arabic – subtitled in English

Screenplay: Ghaith Al-Adwan, Laith Al-Adwan

Cast: Abdullah Jriesat, Jala Sa'ed, Yassmin Aldalo

Cinematography: Ahmed Jalboush

Editing: Abdallah Sa'da

Producers: Sulieman Tadros, Ghaith Al-Adwan, Laith Al-Adwan

Synopsis

Najeeb is a Jordanian writer in his late fifties, indulging in his dreams, believing he is the most famous Arab writer. His relationship with his eleven-year-old son Nour, with whom he shares every decision and choice in life, represents the essence of his life as a writer and artist. Najeeb collides with some facts in a hopeless society that does not appreciate art, especially after his book launch ceremony, which represents the pinnacle of his artistic life, popping his bubble and returning him back to reality. Standing in front of a crossroads between his flowery world and a faded reality.



Co-Directors' Biography

Ghaith and Laith Al-Adwan are Jordanian film directors and writers. Ghaith Al-Adwan worked on several film projects as a visual effects supervisor, editor, and digital artist. Ghaith got the opportunity to work in many local and international productions that were part of international festivals. Laith Al-Adwan worked as a writer, cinematographer, and director on a number of short fiction films and documentaries. He also worked as an editor and technical assistant for films at the Royal Film Commission of Jordan and Backup & Beyond Festival in Germany.



About Separation

Director: Kawthar Younis
 Drama – 2020 – 12 minutes – General Audience – Arab
 and Asian Premiere
 Egypt

Language: English, Hungarian, and Arabic – subtitled
 in English and Arabic

Screenplay: Kawthar Younis

Cast: Hermina Fatyol, Sara Abd El Rahman, Bence Matte

Cinematography: Robert Maly

Editing: Sandro Canaan

Producers: Kawthar Younis

Synopsis

Kawthar Younis is an Egyptian filmmaker who studied film directing in Cairo. Her film "A Present from the Past" set a record for audience demand. The film was screened in numerous national and international film festivals and received local and international acclaim from critics such as Jay Weissberg. Younis worked as an assistant director and as a producer in several TV commercials and feature films. Her short film "About Separation" received AFAC funding and participated in FID Marseille. She also co-founded the workshop Sisters in Film for the MENA region, and Two Stories Productions, focusing on short films.



Director's Biography

Yasmina, a young Egyptian woman, is suddenly called by her Hungarian friend Yoko to assist her with her secret departure from Cairo in the aftermath of an Italian student's mysterious death. Trying to cope with the tense situation, they spend their last few hours together in denial and anger of their unpleasant reality.

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International Section



The Father

Director: Florian Zeller

Drama – 2020 – 97 minutes – General Audience – Jordanian Premiere
United Kingdom, France

Language: English

Screenplay: Florian Zeller

Cast: Anthony Hopkins, Olivia Colman, Mark Gatiss

Cinematography: Ben Smithard

Editing: Yorgos Lamprinos

Producers: Philippe Carcassonne, Simon Friend, Christophe Spadone

Awards: Oscar for Best Performance by an Actor in a Leading Role and Oscar for Best Adapted Screenplay – The Academy Awards 2021

Synopsis

A man refuses all assistance from his daughter as he ages. As he tries to make sense of his changing circumstances, he begins to doubt his loved ones, his own mind and even the fabric of his reality.

Director's Biography

Florian Zeller is an award-winning French novelist, playwright, and director. He was described as "the most exciting playwright of our time". He has written more than 10 plays, including *The Father*, *The Mother*, *The Truth*, *The Lie*, *The Height of the Storm* and most recently *The Son*. His plays have been staged in more than 45 countries. "The Father" is one of the outstanding hits of recent years and was described as "the most acclaimed new play of the last decade" by the Guardian and has won several awards. "The Father" is Zeller's first film as a director.





Anima

Director: Cao Jinling

Drama – 2020 – 120 minutes – +13 – Jordanian Premiere
China

Language: Chinese – subtitled in English

Screenplay: Cao Jinling

Cast: Wang Chuan-jun, Xi Qi

Cinematography: Mark Lee Ping Bing

Editing: Liao Ching-Song

Producer: Liao Ching-Song

Awards: Outstanding Achievement Award, Cinematography – Fajr International Film Festival 2021; Special Mention – Far East Film Festival Udine 2021

Synopsis

After young Tutu kills a bear to save his little brother's life, he is considered an outcast as bears are sacred to the Lonki tribe. Years later Tutu and Linzi struggle to get by and work as lumberjacks near the forest they grew up in. When they both fall for the same woman, it drives the brothers apart. While Linzi connects more and more with nature and the forest, Tutu chooses another path. Through their story, we experience the deep connection of all living things and witness the mysterious retribution wrought by nature on humans who wound it.

Director's Biography

Jinling Cao attended China's Central Academy of Drama, where she received a doctorate degree with a major in Dramatic Literature, and in 2016/2015 attended the School of Cinematic Arts at the University of Southern California. Her body of screenwriting work includes the screenplays for "Meet Miss Anxiety" (2014), "Crying Out in Love" (2016), and "Seventy-Seven Days" (2017). She wrote the screenplay for "Anima", which is her directorial debut.





Botox

Director: Kaveh Mazaheri

Comedy – 2020 – 97 minutes – +13 – Arab Premiere
Iran, Canada

Language: Persian and German – subtitled in English

Screenplay: Kaveh Mazaheri

Cast: Susan Parvar, Mahdokht Molaei, Soroush Saeidi, Mohsen Kiani, Morteza Khanjani

Cinematography: Hamed Hosseini Sangari

Editing: Pooyan Sholevar

Producers: Soroush Saeidi, Kaveh Mazaheri

Awards: Best Film and Best Screenplay – Fajr International Film Festival 2021; Best First Feature Film – Shanghai International Film Festival 2021

Synopsis

Sisters Akram and Azar lie about the disappearance of their brother by telling everyone he has fled to Germany. In time this lie takes a life of its own and leads everyone to dark and mysterious places.

Director's Biography

Kaveh Mazaheri was born in 1981 in Tehran, Iran. He earned his bachelor's degree in Railway Engineering and began self-taught filmmaking in 2005. He made five short fiction films and more than twenty documentaries. One of his films, "Retouch", became very successful in Iranian cinema and won more than 80 international awards. "Botox" is his first feature film.





Influence

Director: Richard Poplak, Diana Neille

Documentary – 2020 – 90 minutes – +13 – Jordanian Premiere

South Africa, Canada

Language: English

Screenplay: Richard Poplak, Diana Neille

Cinematography: Glauco Bermudez, Mark Ó Fearghail

Editing: Ryan Mullins

Producers: Bob Moore, Neil Brandt

Awards: Best Documentary Feature – SpyFlix Film Festival 2021; Best South African Documentary – Durban International Film Festival 2020

Synopsis

"Influence" is a profile of the morally slippery British reputation manager, Lord Timothy Bell. Born into a working-class family, Bell climbed his way to the heights of global power, first spinning Margaret Thatcher into the "Iron Lady", then working for the successors of Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet; later branching out into France, Africa, Russia, the Middle East and elsewhere. In 1998, Bell co-founded the PR firm Bell Pottinger, earning a reputation for representing even the most unsavoury characters, regardless of circumstances. "Influence" examines how Bell and his associates shaped and co-opted the very institutions on which our governance systems are premised.

First-time Co-Director's Biography

Zabou Breitman studied Richard Poplak is an award-winning author, journalist, and filmmaker. He has become one of the most widely read and controversial political journalists in South Africa, editing at large for Daily Maverick. Poplak has reported from over 30 developing countries for news outlets across the world, and he was part of a team that won the prestigious Global Shining Light Award for investigative journalism.



First-time Co-Director's Biography

Diana Neille is an award-winning journalist and filmmaker from Johannesburg, South Africa. A 2011 alumna of Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism, Neille has subsequently co-founded two media startups with the intention of fostering long-form investigative storytelling and documentary filmmaking at a time when journalism is facing unprecedented challenges globally.



Josep

Director: Aurel

Animation – 2020 – 74 minutes – +13 – Jordanian Premiere
France, Spain, Belgium

Language: French, Catalan, Spanish, and English – subtitled in English

Screenplay: Jean-Louis Milesi

Cast: Sergi López, Valérie Lemercier, David Marsais, Gérard Hernandez

Editing: Thomas Belair

Producers: Serge Lalou, Jordi B. Oliva

Awards: Audience Award & Best Screenplay – Athens International Film Festival 2020;
Best Animated Film – Cesar Awards 2021; Best European Animated Feature Film –
European Film Awards 2020

Synopsis

February 1939. Spanish republicans are fleeing Franco's dictatorship to France. The French government built concentration camps, confining the refugees, where they barely have access to hygiene, water and food. In one of these camps, separated by barbed wire, two men will become friends. One is a guard, the other is Josep Bartoli, an illustrator who fights against Franco's regime.

Director's Biography

Aurel is a French illustrator born in 1980. He is working as a press illustrator for the national daily Le Monde and the satirical weekly Le Canard Enchaîné. He has also worked on numerous graphic reports for various French newspapers. As a cartoonist, Aurel has published around twenty books, including two non-fiction comics, Clandestino and La Menuiserie. In 2011, he co-directed with Florence Corre his first animated short film, "Octobre Noir". "Josep" is his first feature film.





Fire in the Mountains

Director: Ajitpal Singh

Drama – 2021 – 84 minutes – +13 – Arab Premiere
India

Language: Hindi – subtitled in English

Screenplay: Ajitpal Singh

Cast: Vinamrata Rai, Chandan Bisht, Sonal Jha

Cinematography: Dominique Colin

Editing: Parikshhit Jha, Simon Price

Producers: Ajay Rai, Alan McAlex, Mauli Singh, Amit Mehta

Awards: Silver Lady Harimaguada for 2nd Best Film and Best Actor Award – Las Palmas De Gran Canaria International Film Festival 2021; Audience Award for Best Film – Indian Film Festival of Los Angeles 2021; Best Director – New York Indian Film Festival 2021; Jury Award for Best Film – Ouray International Film Festival 2021

Synopsis

A mother toils to save money to build a road in a Himalayan village to take her wheelchair-bound son for physiotherapy but her husband who believes that a shamanic ritual (Jagar) is the remedy, steals her savings.

Director's Biography

Born in Punjab, Ajitpal Singh was 8 years old when his father, a farmer and ex-army man, ran a cinema hall in Bathinda which suffered massive losses and was shut down during insurgency. His family moved to Ahmedabad where his father worked as a security guard. Singh grew up in a ghetto amidst poverty and violence and faced discrimination due to anti-Sikh sentiments in India at the time. After studying chemistry, theatre and photography, he pursued filmmaking as his calling. His passions are writing, reading, cooking, cycling, and travelling. He commutes by bicycle in Mumbai and uses an old-fashioned Nokia phone.





Feels Good Man

Director: Arthur Jones

Documentary – 2020 – 92 minutes – +16 – Arab Premiere
United States

Language: English

Screenplay: Arthur Jones

Cast: Matt Furie, Robert Barnes, Samantha Bee

Cinematography: Giorgio Angelini, Kurt Keppeler, Guy Mossman, David Usui

Editing: Drew Blatman, Katrina Taylor, Aaron Wickenden

Producers: Giorgio Angelini, Caryn Capotosto, Aaron Wickenden

Awards: Best Documentary – B3 Biennial of the Moving Image; Best Documentary Feature – Big Sky Documentary Film Festival; Outstanding Achievement in Graphic Design or Animation – Cinema Eye Honors Awards; Best Documentary – Lighthouse International Film Festival; Best Documentary – Sidewalk Film Festival; Emerging Filmmaker – Sundance Film Festival

Synopsis

Artist Matt Furie, creator of the comic character Pepe the Frog, begins an uphill battle to take back his iconic cartoon image from those who used it for their own purposes.

Director's Biography

"Feels Good Man" is Arthur Jones's directorial debut, but he's uniquely suited to tell the story. He's a cartoonist who came up in the same indie comics scene as the film's subject, Matt Furie. Jones published a book of his illustrations in 2011, *Post-it Note Diaries*. Over his career, he worked as an art director in animation and motion graphics for journalists and documentary filmmakers, working with multiple prestigious international companies. Recently he's been a part of several documentary features, including "Seed Money: The Chuck Holmes Story" (2015), "BUNKER 2017" (2017), "Owned, A Tale of Two Americas" (2018) and "Hal" (2018).





Softie

Director: Sam Soko

Documentary – 2020 – 96 minutes – +13 – Jordanian Premiere
Kenya

Language: English, Swahili, and Kikuyu – subtitled in English

Cinematography: Joel “Ingo” Ngui, Chris Rhys Howarth, Sam Soko

Editing: Mila Aung-Thwin, Sam Soko, Ryan Mullins

Producers: Toni Kamau, Sam Soko

Awards: Opening Night Film – Hot Docs 2020; Best Feature Film (Ex-aequo) – African Asian Latin American Film Festival (FESCAAAL) 2021; Best Documentary – Durban International Film Festival 2020; Best Film – Encounters South African International Documentary Festival 2020; Best Feature Documentary Award – El Gouna Film Festival 2020; World Cinema Documentary Special Jury Award for Editing – Sundance Film Festival 2020

Synopsis

Boniface Mwangi is daring and audacious. He’s recognised as Kenya’s most provocative photojournalist. But as a father of three young children, these qualities create tremendous turmoil between him and his wife Njeri. When he wants to run for political office, he is forced to choose: country or family?

Director’s Biography

Sam Soko is a film director and producer based in Nairobi who seeks out stories that enable him to engage in socio-political spaces. His work on civic literacy projects in music, non-fiction and fiction has allowed him to connect with artists around the world. He is a co-founder of LBx Africa, a Kenyan production company that produced the 2018 Oscar nominated short fiction film “Watu Wote”. Soko’s first feature documentary film, “Softie”, premiered at the Sundance Festival in 2020.





Spaceboy

Director: Olivier Pairoux

Drama – 2020 – 100 minutes – General Audience – Arab Premiere
Belgium

Language: French – subtitled in English

Screenplay: Olivier Pairoux, Eusebio Larrea

Cast: Basile Grunberger, Albane Masson, Yannick Renier, Bérénice Baoo

Cinematography: Thomas Rentier

Editing: Maarten Janssens

Producer: Annabella Nezri

Awards: Heart-on Awards – Busan International Kids and Youth Film Festival 2021; Best Film (Teen Screen Competition) – Molodist Kyiv Film Festival 2021

Synopsis

Arriving in a new town with his father, Jim, a gifted -11year-old boy has to participate in a young scientist competition with his new classmate Emma. Jim convinces her to secretly build a real air balloon.

Pursuing his father's dream of going to space, Jim drags her into an adventure which brings them closer.

Director's Biography

Olivier Pairoux is the production designer and artistic director of the Belgian TV channels RTL TVI and Club RTL. He also works as an independent artistic director for major brand campaigns and music video clips. But his real artistic ambition lies in writing and filmmaking. In 2017, he shot his first short film as author and director. His film, "Puzzle", is a poetic sci-fi tale with singer and actor Philippe Katerine and Cosmo, a kid robot designed by Stéphane Halleux.



Closing Film



Diana

Director: Maysoon Hbaidi

Drama – 2020 – 20 minutes – Number+ Jordan

Language: Arabic – subtitled in English

Screenplay: Maysoon Hbaidi

Cast: Rakeen Saad, Suhaib Nashwan, Mohamed Ghassan, Karam Ghassab Khalil

Cinematography: Ali Elsaadi

Editing: Amani

Producer: Jana Zeineddine

Producers: Mohamed Hefzy, Gianluca Chakra, Mamdouh Saba, Zeina Durra

Synopsis

Diana, a young farmer from a conservative family, lives in the rural villages of the country. During her day off, she and her sisters sit on the rooftop, preparing themselves for a neighbour's wedding. For Diana, it's a chance to meet her secret boyfriend. Her mother discovers their relationship, which leads to her entire family finding out. On the third day, all the family's women ride the truck to go to work on the farm as usual. As Diana's father requested, her brother takes all the unmarried women with him. He wants them to see it. It is Diana's last day.

Director's Biography

Maysoon Hbaidi is a Jordanian film director and screenwriter. Since 2013, she has occupied various roles in several film productions, TV series, and documentaries. Her first short documentary "Sara" got selected at the Short Documentary Competition at the Malmo Arab Film Festival and Palestine Cinema Days as well. Hbaidi is passionate about creating new perspectives and authentic narratives for Arab cinema, dealing with social issues that reflect an honest point of view of filmmakers as members of society.



عن الهيئة الملكية الأردنية للأفلام

تأسست الهيئة الملكية الأردنية للأفلام في تموز ٢٠٠٣، وهي هيئة عامة ذات استقلال اداري ومالي تهدف للمساهمة في تنمية وتطوير قطاع الإنتاج السينمائي والتلفزيوني في الأردن على مختلف أنواعه. تنظم الهيئة ورشات عمل وعروض أفلام وتقدم خدمات انتاج.


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About The Royal Film Commission – Jordan:

The Royal Film Commission – Jordan (RFC) is a public institution, with administrative and financial autonomy, established in 2003 with a mandate to promote for and contribute to the development of an internationally competitive Jordanian audio-visual industry. The RFC organizes training workshops, screenings and provides production support services.


We believe that "cinema is modern writing, whose ink is the light", as Jean Cocteau put it so well. Cinema is culture, modern culture, and an important means to express oneself and convey messages.

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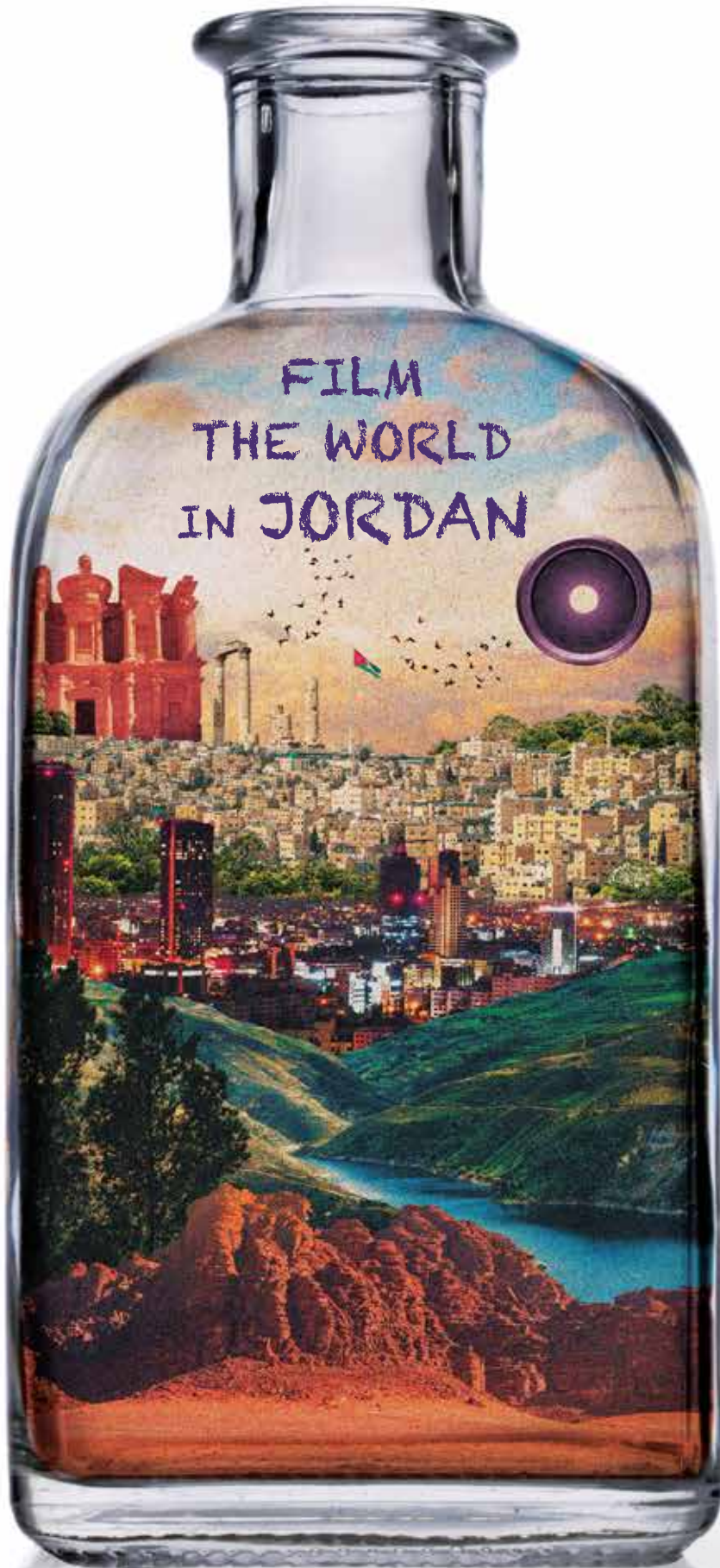
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Franco-Arab Rendez-Vous



Faithful (De nos frères blessés)

Director: Héliel Cisterne
Drama – 2020 – 96 minutes – +18 – Arab Premiere
France
Language: French – subtitled in English
Screenplay: Katell Quillévéré, Héliel Cisterne
Cast: Vincent Lacoste, Vicky Krieps
Cinematography: Hichame Alaouie
Editing: Thomas Marchand, Marion Monnier, Lila Desiles
Producer: Justin Taurand

Synopsis

1956. Algeria is a French colony. Fernand and Helene are madly in love. Fernand is an activist, fighting for independence alongside the Algerians. Helene is fighting for Fernand's life. History will irrevocably change the course of their destiny.

Director's Biography

Héliel Cisterne was born in 1981 and grew up in Lot, France. During his higher education, he directed his first short "Dehors". After three other films, he went on to direct his first feature-length film, the award-winning "Vandal". Afterwards, he directed 9 episodes of the hit TV series "The Bureau". "Faithful", is his second feature-length film. He also co-created a mini-series about the origins of the group NTM and the arrival of hip-hop in France, which is currently in production. He is a member of the SRF10 and of the 50/50 collective, which campaigns for equality and diversity in cinema.





The October Cedar (Le Cèdre D'Octobre)

Director: Salim Saab

Documentary – 2020 – 58 minutes – +13 – Jordanian Premiere
France, Lebanon

Language: Arabic – subtitled in English

Screenplay: Salim Saab

Cinematography: Salim Saab

Editing: Mickael Jarry

Producer: Salim Saab

Synopsis

On October 2019 ,17, an unprecedented upheaval took place in Lebanon. A large number of people descended upon the streets to denounce the increase in taxes and demand social justice and the fall of a corrupt system. This documentary is by no means a political analysis of the protest movement. It revisits the first four months of the revolt and gives the floor to the militants, artists, and demonstrators from all ages and religions.

Director's Biography

Former rap artist, movie director, journalist and radio host, Salim Saab is a real hip hop activist. This -40year-old French-Lebanese has a rich professional background. He released three rap albums and works as freelance journalist for several magazines. In 2017, he directed and produced the documentary "Beirut Street: Hip Hop in Lebanon". Screened in various countries and festivals, the movie attracted significant international media coverage. In 2018, he released "Forte", a -31minute documentary about women artists in the Arab world.





Spring Blossom (Seize printemps)

Director: Suzanne Lindon

Drama – 2020 – 73 minutes – +13 – Jordanian Premiere
France

Language: French – subtitled in English

Screenplay: Suzanne Lindon

Cast: Suzanne Lindon, Arnaud Valois

Cinematography: Jérémie Attard

Editing: Pascal Chavance

Producer: Avenue B Productions

Synopsis

Suzanne is 16. She is bored with people of her age. Every day on her way to high school, she passes a theatre. There, she meets an older man, and becomes obsessed with him. Despite their age difference, they find in each other an answer to their ennui and fall in love. But Suzanne is afraid she's missing out on life – that life of a -16year-old, which she had struggled so much to enjoy in the same way as her peers.

Director's Biography

Suzanne Lindon was born in 2000 in Paris. At 15, she enrolled at the prestigious French high school Henri IV, and at the same time began writing "Spring Blossom". Lindon graduated high school with honours in 2018, and decided to take a one-year preparatory course in sketching before joining l'Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Arts Décoratifs of Paris. It's in 2019, the summer of her 19th birthday, that she decided to dive into preparation for her first feature film as both director and lead actress.



Franco-Arab Short Film Competition

The 15th Jordanian Short Film Festival is organised by the Franco-Arab Film Festival. Four awards (falcon sculptures created and sculpted by Jordanian artist Hazem Alzoubi) will be presented to the winning directors in the following categories: Jury Award for Best Documentary, Jury Award for Best Fiction, Public Award for Best Documentary, and Public Award for Best Fiction. This year, Shima Al-Tal, the Cultural Manager at the Greater Amman Municipality, will preside over a jury also comprised of Mona Shehabi, winner of the Jury Prize for Best Documentary in 2019, and May Al-Ghoti, winner of the AIFF Arab Short Film Competition in 2020. As part of this occasion, two short films that received the Jury Prize for Best Fiction and the Jury Prize for Best Animated Film at the Franco-Arab Film Festival in Noisy-le-Sec will be screened.



Souvenir, souvenir

(Jury Prize for Best Animated Film - Noisy-Le-Sec)

Director: Bastien Dubois

Animation – 2020 – 16 minutes – +13

France

Language: French - subtitled in English

Screenplay: Bastien Dubois

Cast: Bastien Dubois, Bernadette Dubois, Bruno Dubois

Producers: Blast Production

Synopsis

For ten years, I wanted to make my grandfather talk about the Algerian War. Today, I'm not sure I want to hear what he has to say, nor do I want to make this film.



Director's Biography

After studying Applied Arts and receiving a Superior Technician's Certificate in Visual Communication, Bastien Dubois joined the 3D animation school Supinfo.com. After a brief period in the video game industry, he spent a year in Madagascar where he directed his first short film, "Madagascar, carnet de voyage". The film won numerous awards and was nominated for an Academy Award in 2011. His second short film, "Cargo Cult", covers a philosophical fable built around the cult of the cargo ship somewhere in Melanesia during World War II. In parallel to his work as a director, he is also a visual artist.



Summer Fast (Jeûne d'été)

(Jury Prize Best Fiction - Noisy-Le-Sec)

Director: Abdenoure Ziane

Comedy – 2020 – 18 minutes – +13

France

Language: French – subtitled in English

Screenplay: Abdenoure Ziane

Cast: Sabri Ouamar, Timi-Joy Marbot, Younès Bouab, Naidra Ayadi

Production: Melocoton Films

Synopsis

On a sunny day, 11-year-old Kader tries to celebrate Ramadan for the first time. He is accompanied by his best friend Rudy who is not Muslim and takes fasting Ramadan as a challenging game. To survive this day, the two children will have to overcome hunger, thirst, and boredom.



Director's Biography

After earning his degree in Applied Modern Literature, Abdenoure Ziane was trained in cinema by joining the first Screenplay class of the École de la cité in Saint-Denis. Following this, he expanded his writing projects and experiences as a technician and assistant on shoots. He is a founding and active member of the Sans Gêne collective, which organises exhibitions and cultural events around gender and sexuality. In 2019, he directed his first short film, "Manifesto".

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Youssef Lafi – IT Specialist

Rawan Al-Zubi – Web developer, kindly seconded by EDGO

Mohammed Salem – AV technical support

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