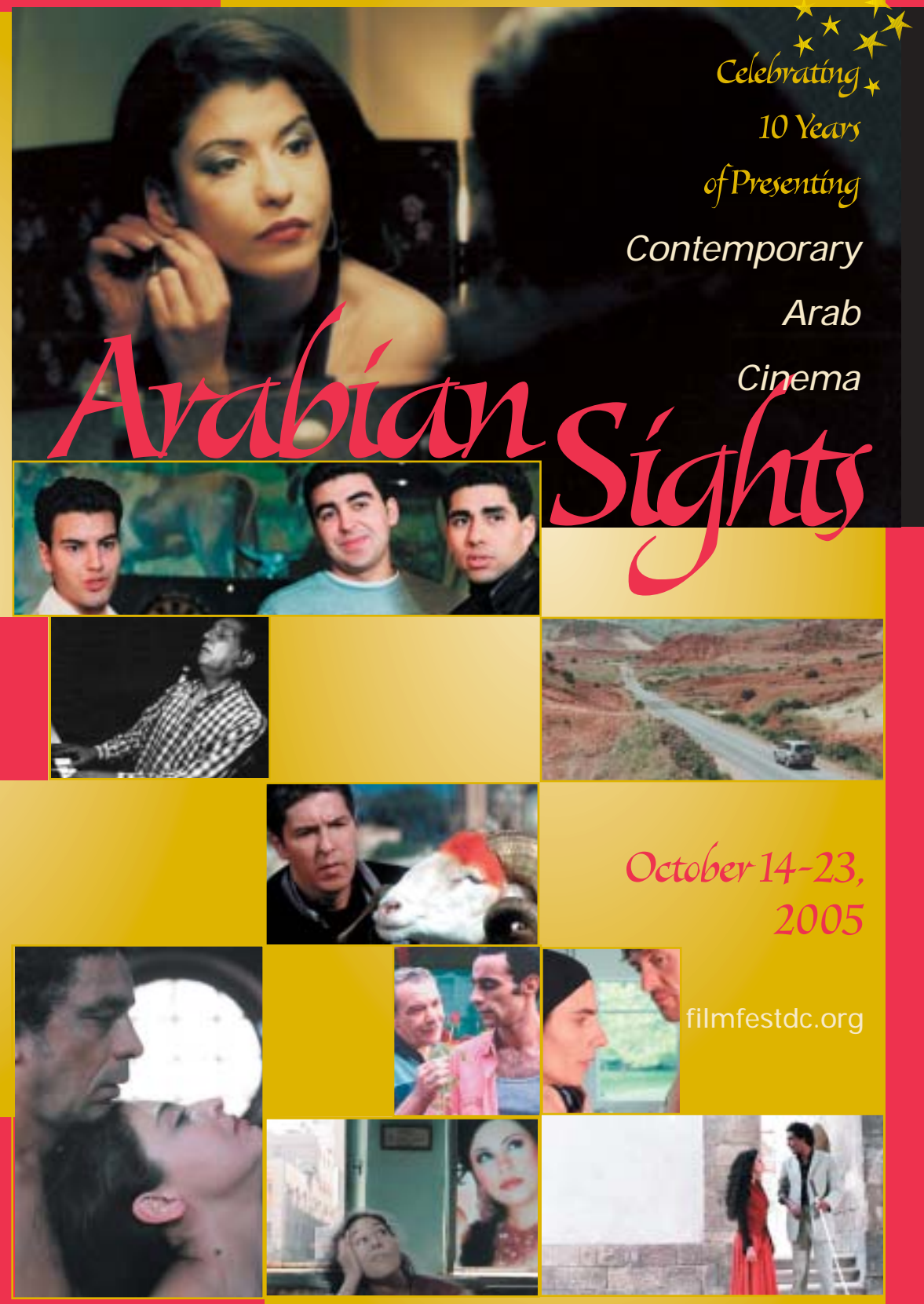




Celebrating  
 10 Years  
 of Presenting  
 Contemporary  
 Arab  
 Cinema

# Arabian Sights



October 14-23,  
 2005

[filmfestdc.org](http://filmfestdc.org)

Celebrating 10 Years

# Arabian Sights 2005

October 14-23

## Presented by

The Washington, DC International Film Festival

Please join us for some of the newest, most provocative and fun films from and about today's Arab world as we mark our Tenth Anniversary! Several film directors will be present to introduce their work and discuss it with our audience. All films will be screened with English subtitles.

## Admission

Admission is \$9.00 per person for each screening, unless otherwise noted.

Tickets for any film in the series may be purchased at the theater starting one hour before the first show.

## Festival Pass

A special package of 9 tickets for all films is available for \$72.00. Reserve by calling 202-724-5613.

## Location

All films will be shown at the Loews Cineplex Wisconsin Avenue Cinemas, 4000 Wisconsin Ave., NW. Take Metro Red Line to Tenleytown.

## Parking

Available in the theatre building along Upton Street for \$2.00 with a validated parking ticket.

## For More Information

For updates and announcements visit [www.filmfestdc.org](http://www.filmfestdc.org) or call 202-724-5613.

## Film Schedule

### Friday, October 14

7:30 pm *Sabah*  
Immediately followed by an Opening Night Party

### Saturday, October 15

6:30 pm *Kiss Me Not*

7:00 pm *The Liberace of Baghdad*  
shown with *Saddam 17*

9:00 pm *Sabah*

9:15 pm *Viva Algeria*

### Sunday, October 16

6:00 pm *Viva Algeria*

6:30 pm *Reel Bad Arabs*

8:30 pm *Kiss Me Not*

8:30 pm *The Liberace of Baghdad*  
shown with *Saddam 17*

### Friday, October 21

6:30 pm *Tenja*

8:30 pm *The Prince*

### Saturday, October 22

6:30 pm *The Prince*

7:00 pm *The Best Times*

9:15 pm *Bab El Web*

9:30 pm *Hush Hush Baby!* shown with  
*The Kitchen Conqueror*

### Sunday, October 23

6:00 pm *The Best Times*

6:30 pm *Bab El Web*

8:15 pm *Hush Hush Baby!* shown with  
*The Kitchen Conqueror*

8:30 pm *Tenja*

## Opening film Sabah

### In Person: Director Ruba Nadda

Friday, October 14th at 7:30 pm

Immediately followed by an Opening Night Party  
4000 Wisconsin Ave., NW

Saturday, October 15th at 9:00 pm

Sabah lives a quiet life in Canada, where her Syrian family moved some 20 years earlier. Her conservative family dominates her life, from the mother she lives with and takes care of, to her bossy brother who doles out the money drop by drop. At 40, she is dismissed as an old maid who will always do their bidding. But when she treats herself to a trip to the local indoor swimming pool, she meets single, red-haired carpenter Stephen. After much hesitation she accepts his lunch invitation and romance blooms. Keeping him secret from her family, she embarks on a whirlwind affair before both culture and love collide. Writer/director Ruba Nadda has created a very appealing and pleasantly calibrated story that balances conservative elements with gender, liberation and sensuality. Sabah is beautifully played by actress Arsinée Khanjian who brings strength and conviction to the title character. An audience favorite at the Rotterdam and Seattle International Film Festivals.

(Canada, Directed by Ruba Nadda, 2005, 90 minutes)

Opening Night festivities are co-presented with the Embassy of The Syrian Arab Republic and

**GDG**  
The Georgetown Design Group, Inc.



## Bab El Web

Saturday, October 22nd at 9:15 pm

Sunday, October 23rd at 6:30 pm

Kamel and his brother Bouzid live in Bab El Oued, a working class neighborhood of Algiers. Kamel is a disillusioned, brooding loner. The more jovial Bouzid is an internet fanatic. He spends all his time in a cyber café "chatting" with girls all over the planet, inviting them to Algiers in the hopes that one of them will in turn invite him to her country

so he can leave Algeria. One day Laurence, one of his French correspondents, accepts his invitation. She will arrive in Algiers next week. Bouzid is frantic. He never imagined this would happen. How can he receive Laurence in style, when he is penniless and lives with his entire family in a tiny apartment? Despite himself, Kamel will become his accomplice in organizing the French guest's visit.

(Algeria, Directed by Merzak Allouache, 2005, 99 minutes)





## The Best Times

Saturday, October 22nd at 7:00 pm

Sunday, October 23rd at 6:00 pm

One of the latest box-office hits from Egypt. Salma, lonely after the unexpected death of her mother, begins

receiving a series of anonymous letters, complete with old pictures and cassettes of her beloved singer Mohammed Mounir. Moving between the contrasting neighborhoods of uptown Maadi and sprawling Shobra, Salma sets off with her two girlfriends to unravel the mystery. Hala Khalil, one of the new wave of young Egyptian directors, masterfully describes Salma's set of friends and family plus Cairo's various social circles in a bold, original, yet highly accessible, picture. Cast includes Hanan Turk, Hend Sabri, Menna Shalabi, Amr Waked and Hassan Hosny.

(Egypt, Directed by Hala Khalil, 2004, 113 minutes)

## Hush Hush Baby!

Saturday, October 22nd at 9:30 pm

Sunday, October 23rd at 8:15 pm

A cross-cultural, record-breaking box office hit, *Hush Hush Baby!* follows the uproarious ups and downs of Abdullah and his uprooted Moroccan family as they cope with new lives in contemporary Holland. Ab, as he is known by his friends, bounces through a series of hilariously misguided "opportunities"—jobs in an office and a Muslim butcher shop, bank robbery, possible marriage, and his conviction that post-9/11 Hollywood is desperate for the Middle Eastern star power only he can offer. Ab's errant attempts to march to his own drumbeat jostle with a chaotic household. His marriage-minded father fumes over Ab's feisty, fashion design-aspiring sister Leila, now liberated by her newfound freedom. Meanwhile, his younger brother Driss embraces Western capitalism with an impressive, if unscrupulous, fervor. Touching on generational conflict and cultural dislocation, *Hush Hush Baby!* achieves an appealing, sympathetic tone that has connected with worldwide audiences. —*Chicago International Film Festival*

(The Netherlands, Directed by Albert ter Heerdt, 2004, 89 minutes)



Shown with:

## The Kitchen Conqueror

**In Person: Director Shereen Abdul-Baki**

Reem wanders the aisles of her neighborhood market, slipping into dreams of fortune-telling teacups and chicken-slaughtering aunts, who offer advice on cultural identity, love, and independence.

(USA, Directed by Shereen Abdul-Baki, 2003, 8 minutes)



## Kiss Me Not

**In Person: Director Jocelyn Saab**

Saturday, October 15th at 6:30 pm

Sunday, October 16th at 8:30 pm

Dunia, a beautiful young Egyptian woman of 23, has the world at her feet as she completes her university degree in literature in Cairo. She also is committed to pursue her dream to become a professional dancer. It is during a casting for an oriental dance contest that she meets the illustrious and charming Professor Beshir, a leading intellectual who is to be the supervisor of her thesis. The Professor is drawn to the young woman's speech, as she dares speak of pleasure and the difficulties of

being a woman in today's society. But she soon learns that the burden of women in Egyptian society is heavier than she suspects. Cast includes Hanan Turk and Mohamed Mounir.

(Egypt/Lebanon, Directed by Jocelyn Saab, 2005, 110 minutes)

## The Liberace of Baghdad

Saturday, October 15th at 7:00 pm

Sunday, October 16th at 8:30 pm

With two inches of ash perpetually dangling off his cigarette and his thinning hair pulled into a rakish ponytail, Samir Peter looks more like a '50s beatnik than a classically trained concert pianist who once enjoyed celebrity status in his country. He was, in fact, a musical phenomenon in pre-Saddam Iraq. The self-proclaimed Liberace of Baghdad (or the Chopin of Iraq) is an incredibly likeable character whose life, like so many in that war-torn country, has been put on hold by dictatorship and war. Samir provides an ironic, near-fatalistic window into the daily horrors of his occupied nation, while never losing sight of his dreams and personal aspirations, which include living in America—the country his daughter and many other Iraqis blame for their nation's chaos, perilous lack of security, and rising death toll. In this film, shot over an eight-month period, director Sean McAllister follows and befriends Samir as he documents the downward spiral of violence, and the heartbreak, fear, and anger of Samir's family. It is a brave and moving story that shows us the human face of war that we all too rarely see. — *2005 Sundance Film Festival*

(U.K., Directed by Sean McAllister, 2004, 75 minutes, Beta SP)

Shown with:

## Saddam 17

Saddam 17, an out-of-work Saddam Hussein double, moves to Los Angeles and is overwhelmed by America's consumer culture.

(USA, Directed by Ross Venokur, 2005, 14 minutes)





## The Prince

**In Person: Director Mohamed Zran**

Friday, October 21st at 8:30 pm

Saturday, October 22nd at 6:30 pm

Adel works at a flower stand on the main boulevard in Tunis. Living with his struggling family and blowing more money than he should on drink, he's merely coasting through life. Amidst all the commotion at the flower stand, Adel still finds time to daydream and watch the pedestrians walk by. One day, a beautiful lady, Donia, catches his eye and she becomes the object of his dreams. A chance delivery of flowers puts him in touch with her and he learns that she manages a bank. Not knowing any other way to make her notice him, Adel continues to deliver flowers to her office, claiming they come from an anonymous source. His circle of family and friends are wildly split regarding his seemingly hopeless amorous endeavor. Director Mohamed Zran builds a portrait of an entire people searching for something better, yet uncertain how to articulate their desires in this film that *Variety* has described as "unpretentious and thoroughly winning".

(Tunisia, Directed by Mohamed Zran, 2004, 100 minutes)

## Reel Bad Arabs

**In Person: Film Specialist Dr. Jack G. Shaheen**

Sunday, October 16th at 6:30 pm

★ FREE

Out of 1000 pre-9/11 Hollywood films that have Arab Muslim characters, 12 were positive depictions, 52 were even handed, and the other 900-plus films were negative.

Dr. Jack G. Shaheen, the world's foremost authority on film images of Arabs, has documented in several books Hollywood's portrayal of Arabs as Public Enemy #1 – brutal Bedouin bandits, sinister sheikhs, machine-gun wielding and bomb-blowing "evil" Arabs bent on terrorizing the west. In his most recent book "Reel Bad Arabs, How Hollywood Vilifies a People", Shaheen examines how and why this one stereotype has, for more than a century, prowled movie screens worldwide.

Join Dr. Shaheen for a candid in-depth overview and discussion of stereotypical Arab images. He will explain why the Arab images persist, and how the images impact individuals, public opinion, and public policies. Clips will include *Planet of the Arabs*, a fast action adventure montage directed by the talented filmmaker Jaqueline Salloum. The film projects Hollywood's stereotyped images of Arabs over the past 30 years, from "Back to the Future" to "True Lies."

*This event is offered FREE on a first come, first serve basis. No reservations or tickets are required.*



## Tenja

Friday, October 21st at 6:30 pm

Sunday, October 23rd at 8:30 pm

French-born Nordine (Roschdy Zem), devoted son of a Moroccan immigrant miner, sets off from his home in northern France to fulfill his patriarch father's last wish – to be buried in his family village in the Atlas Mountains. He meets the competent and alluring Nora (Aure Atika), in search of new horizons as she escapes from a comfortable life as a kept woman. Nora joins him on the road, and they progress south with the corpse of his deceased father in the back of the van, a situation that leads to some wry humor. Before too long, a tentative but mutual attraction develops between Nordine and Nora, as Nordine works through his sometimes idealized, sometimes erroneous ideas of what it means to be Moroccan. *Tenja* is a highly satisfying and memorable film. –*Seattle International Film Festival 2005*

(Morocco, Directed by Hassan Legzouli, 2004, 80 minutes)



## Viva Algeria

Saturday, October 15th at 9:15 pm

Sunday, October 16th at 6:00 pm

A richly drawn portrait of three women in the heart of Algiers, which brims with human drama, touching details, poignancy and humor. Headstrong 27-year-old Goucem leads a double life working for a photographer by day and spending steamy weekend evenings in nightclubs. Her extravagantly bold widowed mother, Papicha, oscillates between her present fears and her nostalgia for the time when she was a famous cabaret dancer. Goucem's faithful friend and neighbor, Fifi, is a vivacious prostitute who entertains gentleman callers around the clock, including a local police official.

Director Nadir Moknèche, known as the "Algerian Almodovar", weaves a vivid tapestry of women exiled in their own country.

(Algeria, Directed by Nadir Moknèche, 2004, 113 minutes)

## Sponsors

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## Special Thanks To

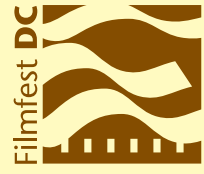


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*Arabian Sights* is programmed and coordinated by Shirin Ghareeb, Assistant Director of the Washington, DC International Film Festival.



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