

Contemporary Arab Cinema
Arabian Sights
Film Festival 2010

filmfestdc.org

October
21-31



Arabian Sights

Contemporary Arab Cinema

October 21 – 31

presented by

The Washington, DC International Film Festival

The Fifteenth Annual *Arabian Sights Film Festival* returns with another exceptionally vibrant collection of new films from Egypt, Iraq, Morocco, Lebanon, the United Arab Emirates and more. Several directors will be present at their screenings to discuss their work. Special events will be held. An Audience Award for favorite film will be presented. All films will be screened with English subtitles. Please visit filmfestdc.org for updates on films, guests, film trailers, and more.

Admission

\$11.00 per person for each screening unless otherwise noted. Advance sales are subject to a small convenience fee.

TICKETS may be purchased at filmfestdc.org and at the theater starting one hour before the first show. Cash or check sales only at the theater.

MISSIONTIX
ONLINE

Festival Pass

Purchase a special package of 10 tickets online or at the theater for a discounted price of \$95.00. This package does not include the October 23 screening of *City of Life* or the October 29 screening of *OneZero*.

Location

All screenings and receptions will be held at the Goethe-Institut of Washington.

812 7th St., NW, Washington, DC 20001

Take Metro Red, Yellow, or Green Line to Gallery Place/Chinatown

Festival Schedule

All screenings and receptions will be held at the Goethe-Institut of Washington.

Thursday, October 21

- 6:30 pm **Kick Off**
Followed by after party
- 8:15 pm **Birds of the Nile**

Friday, October 22

- 6:30 pm **Kick Off**
Followed by after party
- 8:45 pm **City of Life**

Saturday, October 23

- 6:30 pm **City of Life**
Followed by reception
- 9:00 pm **The Barons**

Sunday, October 24

- 2:00 pm **Phatwa** shown with
**Stuck Between Iraq and
a Hard Place**
- 3:30 pm **The Barons**
- 6:00 pm **Birds of the Nile**

Thursday, October 28

- 6:30 pm **The Imperialists
Are Still Alive!**
- 8:30 pm **One-Zero**

Friday, October 29

- 6:30 pm **One-Zero**
Followed by reception
- 9:00 pm **Son of Babylon**

Saturday, October 30

- 5:00 pm **Iraq: War, Love, God,
and Madness**
- 7:00 pm **Son of Babylon**
- 9:00 pm **Stray Bullet**

Sunday, October 31

- 1:15 pm **Iraq: War, Love, God,
and Madness**
- 3:00 pm **The Imperialists
Are Still Alive!**
- 5:00 pm **Stray Bullet**

For Updates, Film Trailers, and More

filmfestdc.org

202-234-FILM



The Barons

Saturday, October 23 at 9:00 pm

Sunday, October 24 at 3:30 pm

This award-winning energetic and witty comedy follows three Moroccan friends living in Brussels who call themselves "The Barons." With a title to justify their indolence, Hassan, Mounir and Aziz ride around town with their unemployment money annoying shop owners and relatives and living true to their mantra that one lives longer by doing less. Hassan, however, starts to question their lifestyle. Wishing to be a stand-up comedian, he rehearses in secret at a cabaret, but his father has more practical plans for him. Meanwhile, he dreams about his childhood love, Malika, the sister of Mounir. Will Hassan betray his Baron lifestyle to follow his dreams of success and love? Or will he be stuck in his listless ways? In order to succeed you have to run. But when you run you aren't a Baron anymore.

*Morocco/Belgium, Directed by Nabil Ben Yadir, 2009, 111 min., 35mm
In French, Arabic and Dutch with English Subtitles*

★ AMERICAN PREMIERE ★

Birds of the Nile

Thursday, October 21 at 8:15 pm

Sunday, October 24 at 6:00 pm

The latest film from veteran *Arabian Sights* filmmaker, Magdi Ahmed Ali (*Fawzeya's Secret Recipe, A Girl's Secret, Life...My Passion*). Based on Ibrahim Aslan's novel by the same name, this film looks into the lives of a rural family that moves to Cairo and struggles to make a name for themselves. Over decades, the city turns hopelessly naive Abdel Rahim (Fathi Abdel Wahab) into one of its many victims as he suffers a broken heart over his beloved Bassima and fails to find true love again. Magdi Ahmed Ali's latest work is a fascinating and provocative look into urban life and the political and social issues of Egyptian society. Winner of Best Actor for Fathi Abdel Wahab at the Cairo International Film Festival.

*Egypt, Directed by Magdi Ahmed Ali, 2010, 120 min., 35mm
In Arabic with English Subtitles*

Co-Presented with the Egyptian Cultural & Educational Bureau, Embassy of Egypt





City of Life

Friday, October 22 at 8:45 pm

Saturday, October 23 at 6:30 pm, Followed by reception, \$18.00

★ *In Person: Director Ali Mostafa and Star Yassin Alsalman aka The Narcycyst*

In this first feature length film from the United Arab Emirates, *City of Life* presents an enthralling web of characters whose paths are all about to collide in the city of Dubai, where ambition is encouraged and dreams are achievable. A privileged young Emirati man is at odds with his identity and his less fortunate friend's free spirit. A Romanian flight attendant tries to find love while an Indian taxi driver, who bears an uncanny resemblance to a Bollywood star, seeks to make something of himself. *City of Life* immerses you in the excitement and danger of the emerging multicultural society's race, ethnic and class divides, and reveals how random interactions produce unexpected outcomes. True to Dubai's international makeup, the film features actors from around the globe, including Canadian-Iraqi rapper The Narcycyst, Northern Indian actor Sonu Sood, UAE national Saoud Al Ka'abi, and Egyptian-American comic Ahmed Ahmed.

United Arab Emirates, Directed by Ali Mostafa, 2009, 97 min., 35mm

In Arabic, English, and Hindi with English Subtitles

Co-Presented with



Reception Catered by



The Imperialists Are Still Alive!



Thursday, October 28 at 6:30 pm

Sunday, October 31 at 3:00 pm

A favorite at the Sundance Film Festival, *The Imperialists Are Still Alive!* is a refreshingly youthful, edgy, and atmospheric piece about the complications and humor of cultural fusion in everyday life. Asya, a young woman of Palestinian descent born and raised in Paris, is a successful artist working in post-9/11 Manhattan living the life of the hip and glamorous, replete with exclusive art parties, supermodels, and limousines. All the while she carefully follows the situation in the Middle East on television. Asya learns that her childhood friend has

disappeared – the victim of a purported CIA abduction. That same night, she meets Javier, a sexy Mexican PhD student. As her world becomes more intensely political, Javier finds Asya's conspiracy theories overly paranoid – but nothing in her world is as it seems. Zeina Durra's stylish and boundary-pushing directorial debut beautifully expresses a young, free-spirited multicultural New York lifestyle intricately infused with humor, love, and chaos.

USA, Directed by Zeina Durra, 2009, 91 min., 35mm

In Arabic, English, French, Korean, and Spanish with English Subtitles

Iraq: War, Love, God, and Madness



Saturday, October 30 at 5:00 pm

Sunday, October 31 at 1:15 pm

Mohamed Al-Daradji's intense documentary follows him through extreme trials and tribulations as he goes against all odds to make his film, *Ahlaam (Arabian Sights 2006)*, in 2003 Baghdad. Through bombings, military checkpoints, and dangerous roads, Mohamed and his crew struggle to create art in an area controlled by violence and consumed by unemployment,

poverty and madness. Repeatedly challenged physically and emotionally by unimaginable circumstances, the camera rolls as the world unravels around him. A struggle against time, persecution, imprisonment, terrorist attacks and the American army, Mohamed is determined to survive. This is one dangerous tale of endurance and hope you have to see to believe. Official Selection at the Tribeca Film Festival and the Rotterdam International Film Festival.

Iraq/UK/The Netherlands, Directed by Mohamed Al-Daradji, 2010, 82 min., Digital In English and Arabic with English Subtitles

Co-presented with the Iraqi Cultural Center; 1630 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20009

Kick Off

Thursday, October 21 at 6:30 pm, Followed by after party, \$15.00

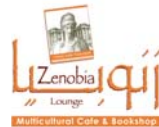
Friday, October 22 at 6:30 pm, Followed by after party, \$15.00

An unused soccer stadium is a makeshift home for hundreds of Kurdish, Arab, Turkish, and Assyrian refugees in this award-winning film from Kurdish filmmaker, Shawkat Amin Korki. Amidst the tragically abandoned but visually stunning environment, Asu (Kurdish singer Shwan Atuf) decides to lift the spirits of his injured brother and impress his neighbor, the lovely Helin, with activities to distract them from the grey world around them. Comic circumstances follow as he tries to arrange a soccer tournament, and struggles to get sponsors, jerseys, and even a ball, all in contrast with explosions going off just beyond. Stunningly shot in black & white and color, this entertaining tale of friendship and a growing sense of community earned the Grand Prize at both the Gulf and Taipei International Film Festivals and the International Film Critics Award in 2009.

*Iraqi Kurdistan/Japan, Directed by Shawkat Amin Korki, 2009, 81 min., 35mm
In Kurdish and Arabic with English Subtitles*

*Co-presented with the Iraqi Cultural Center; 1630 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20009
and the Kurdish Regional Government.*

After parties presented with the Washington Film Institute and catered by





One-Zero

Thursday, October 28 at 8:30 pm

Friday, October 29 at 6:30 pm, Followed by reception, \$18.00

On the day of a big game for the Egyptian national football team, a group of disparate characters find themselves inextricably drawn together. The kaleidoscope includes an alcoholic celebrity TV presenter, a sexy pop siren desperately trying to provide for her religiously devout family and a Christian woman barred from re-marrying by her church. Director Kamla Abu Zekri creates an entertaining portrait of contemporary Cairo. A big hit at the Egyptian box office and film festivals worldwide, *One-Zero* harks back to the heyday of Egyptian cinema when sophisticated dramas were the norm. The film's complex and controversial montage of class, gender, and religious conventions in contemporary Egyptian culture is a refreshing reminder of the vitality of Cairo in all its chaotic glory. Featuring Egyptian stars Ilham Shaheen (*Fawzeya's Secret Recipe*) and Khaled Abol Naga (*Heliopolis*), *One-Zero* won Best Arabic Film at the Muscat Film Festival.

— BFI London Film Festival

Egypt, Directed by Kamla Abu Zekri, 2009, 105 min., 35mm
In Arabic with English Subtitles

Co-Presented with the Egyptian Cultural & Educational Bureau, Embassy of Egypt

Phatwa shown with *Stuck Between Iraq and a Hard Place*

Sunday, October 24, 2:00 PM

★ *In Person: Join star Yassin Alsalman aka The Narcicyst in a post-screening dialogue.*

Narcy has a lot going against him as an Arab in the West and a Hip Hop artist trying to make it in the rap game. When he tries to board a flight to New York, Narcy faces the inevitable: Anxiety, paranoid thoughts and a ridiculous screening process by an overzealous agent. Bringing back the art of the epic music video à la Michael Jackson's *Bad*, *Phatwa* will make you laugh, bob your head and question the role of Americans and Arabs in the so-called 'War on Terror.'

Stuck Between Iraq and a Hard Place is a short essay film about Yassin Alsalman and his life as an Arab rapper in North America. A combination of performances and personal interviews, this is an intimate look into the world of politics and music that surrounds The Narcicyst and into the mind that creates such powerful art.

Canada, Directed by Hala Alsalman, Films and Dialogue: 70 min., 2009, Digital



Son of Babylon

Friday, October 29 at 9:00 pm

Saturday, October 30 at 7:00 pm

Son of Babylon, Iraq's submission to the Academy Awards®, is a beautifully poignant film about hope and the power of forgiveness. Just after the fall of Saddam Hussein, young Kurdish boy, Ahmed, begins a search with his grandmother for his father, who

has been missing since the first Gulf War. Their journey through northern Iraq leads them through the dust-filled chaos of small towns and secluded places where they meet many people on similar journeys also looking for lost souls and fallen soldiers. Ahmed retraces the footsteps of a father he never knew on this path that will connect him to the past and determine his life forever. Screened at the Berlin and Sundance Film Festivals and recipient of much deserved success and a multitude of awards.

Iraq/UK/Palestine/UAE, Directed by Mohamed Al-Daradji, 2009, 90 min., 35mm
In Kurdish and Arabic with English Subtitles

Co-presented with the Iraqi Cultural Center; 1630 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20009

★ AMERICAN PREMIERE ★

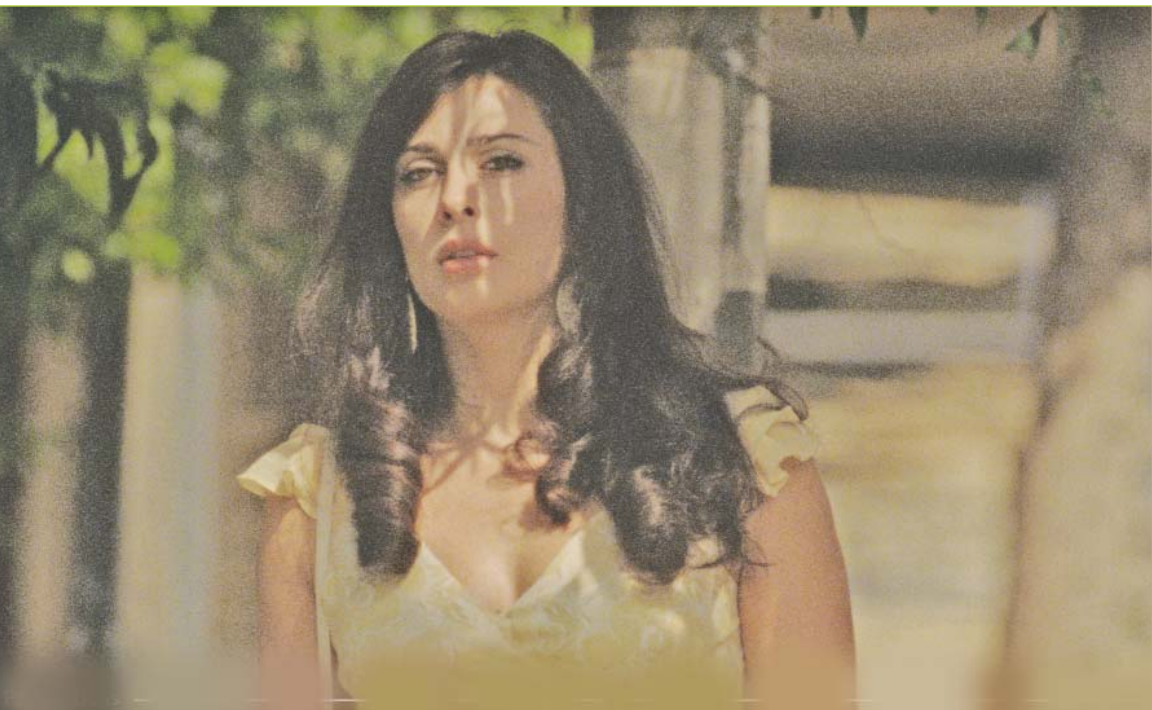
Stray Bullet

Saturday, October 30 at 9:00 pm

Sunday, October 31 at 5:00 pm

A gripping psychological drama starring award-winning Lebanese filmmaker and actress, Nadine Labaki (writer/director/star of *Caramel*), as Noha, a Beirut woman who is about to marry a man she doesn't love. Her family is relieved to see her take advantage of this last chance before officially becoming a spinster like her sister. All seems to be going well until Noha's former lover comes back into her life and she surprises her family by changing her mind about the marriage just days before the wedding. With the turmoil of the Lebanese Civil War as a backdrop, Director Georges Hachem presents an intimate depiction of family life and Nadine Labaki gives an astonishing performance as the vulnerable, wounded Noha.

Lebanon, Directed by Georges Hachem, 2009, 80 min., 35mm
In Arabic with English Subtitles



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Shirin Ghareeb, *Arabian Sights Festival Director and Programmer, and Deputy Director of the Washington, DC International Film Festival*

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The Washington, DC
International Film Festival

PO Box 21396

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