



CONTEMPORARY ARAB CINEMA

ARABIAN SIGHTS

Film Festival 2011

October 27 – November 6

ARABIAN SIGHTS 2011

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presented by
The Washington, DC International Film Festival

The Sixteenth Annual *Arabian Sights Film Festival* returns with another exceptionally vibrant collection of new films from the Arab World. This year we are delighted to focus on Egyptian Cinema by featuring five entertaining works cutting across all genres and subjects, including the first film about the 2011 Revolution. The festival will also feature films from other Arab countries. Special events will be held and 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, events, and more.

ADMISSION

\$11.00 per person for each screening unless otherwise noted.

Advanced 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 of the day. Cash or check sales only at the theater.

MISSIONTIX

1-888-996-4774

FESTIVAL PASS

Purchase a special package of 10 tickets online or at the theater for a discounted price of \$95.00. Advance sales subject to a small convenience fee. This package does not include special events.

LOCATIONS

AMC Mazza Gallerie

5300 Wisconsin Ave., NW
Washington, DC
20015

Embassy of France

4101 Reservoir Rd., NW
Washington, DC
20007

Goethe-Institut

812 7th St., NW
Washington, DC
20001

FESTIVAL SCHEDULE

Opening Night

Thursday, October 27

7:00 pm ***The Italian***

Embassy of France

Followed by reception

Friday, October 28

6:30 pm ***An Ideal Family***

8:30 pm ***Rough Hands***

AMC Mazza Gallerie

Saturday, October 29

1:30 pm ***Sira: Songs of the Crescent Moon***

3:30 pm ***Microphone***

6:30 pm ***Rough Hands***

9:00 pm ***Operation Casablanca***

AMC Mazza Gallerie

Sunday, October 30

1:15 pm ***Sira: Songs of the Crescent Moon***

3:30 pm ***Microphone***
Followed by reception

6:30 pm ***Operation Casablanca***
Followed by reception

AMC Mazza Gallerie

Thursday, November 3

6:45 pm ***Man Without a Cell Phone***

8:30 pm ***Cairo Exit***

Goethe-Institut

Friday, November 4

6:30 pm ***An Ideal Family***

8:30 pm ***Cairo Exit***

Goethe-Institut

Saturday, November 5

4:15 pm ***18 Days***

6:45 pm ***6,7,8***

8:00 pm ***Arabian Sights Social Hour***

9:00 pm ***Balls***

Goethe-Institut

Sunday, November 6

12:45 pm ***Man Without a Cell Phone***

2:30 pm ***6,7,8***

4:30 pm ***18 Days***

7:00 pm ***Balls***

Goethe-Institut

**For more information
and updates:**

filmfestdc.org

202-234-FILM

Opening Night



— AMERICAN PREMIERE —

The Italian

Thursday, October 27 at 7:00 pm

Dino Fabrizzi is the number one salesman at the Maserati dealership in Nice in this light-hearted comedy by writer/director Olivier Baroux. At 42 years old, he's at a high point in his life – he's inches away from being promoted to a senior position at the dealership and his beautiful girlfriend of a year, H el ene, has every intention of marrying him. Life is perfect for Dino. But this perfect life was built on a lie. His real name is Mourad Ben Saoud. Neither his boss nor his girlfriend – and even less so his parents – are aware of his false identity. In ten days, Ramadan will begin and Mourad, who usually skips it every year, will observe the religious rite to honor a promise made to his sick father: To observe Ramadan in his name...For Dino "The Italian," this most certainly won't be a cakewalk.

*France, Directed by Olivier Baroux, 2009, 102 min., 35mm
In French with English Subtitles*

Embassy of France, followed by a wine and cheese reception, \$20.00

Co-presented with the Embassy of France

La Maison
Fran aise

6,7,8

Sat., Nov. 5 at 6:45 pm, Goethe-Institut

Sun., Nov. 6 at 2:30 pm, Goethe-Institut

In this bold film, three women from different ends of Cairo's complex social hierarchy converge as they each do their part to combat sexual harassment in the city. Fayza is a traditionally-minded mother in search of justice. Seba is a wealthy jewelry designer recovering from a vicious gang assault. Nelly, an aspiring stand-up comic, draws national outrage for daring to file a sexual harassment lawsuit. The film follows this trio as, frustrated by the lackadaisical response from authorities, they decide to take the law into their own hands and begin exacting violent revenge on men foolish enough to try and harass them. Screenwriter Mohamed Diab effortlessly tackles this sensitive subject in his directorial debut, sculpting a remarkable feminist drama that echoes the fight for empowerment and freedom coursing through the region. Winner of multiple awards including Best Actress (Bushra) and Best Actor (Maged El Kidwaany) at the Dubai International Film Festival.

*Egypt, Directed by Mohamed Diab, 2010, 100 min., Digital
In Arabic with English Subtitles*



Arabian Sights Social Hour

Enjoy complimentary refreshments and mingle with fellow festival attendees:
November 5, 8:00-9:30 pm,
between the screenings of
6,7,8 and **Balls**

— EAST COAST PREMIERE —



Balls

Sat., Nov. 5 at 9:00 pm, Goethe-Institut

Sun., Nov. 6 at 7:00 pm, Goethe-Institut

The latest from Arabian Sights favorite, Josef Fares (*Jalla! Jalla!*), *Balls* is a heart-warming comedy about love, friendship and the art of being a man. Aziz is a cheerful, carefree guy looking forward to soon becoming a grandfather. Life is good, or at least better than for his co-workers: Juan has his way with the local women but worries excessively about his aging Labrador, Dino, while Jörgen fears his wife might be flirting (or worse) with the contractor who is remodeling their house. However, for Aziz, all is not as it seems. His son and daughter-in-law have faked their pregnancy as they await an adopted child. In order to divert his attention from their ruse, the couple suggests the long-widowed Aziz start dating again. He soon plunges into the local singles' scene, with plenty of assistance from Juan and Jörgen. Just as in his previous comedies, Fares skillfully balances oddball, sometimes even absurdist humor with the bittersweet truths of everyday life. —*Seattle International Film Festival*

*Sweden, Directed by Joseph Fares, 2010, 98 min., 35mm
In Swedish with English Subtitles*

— AMERICAN PREMIERE —

18 Days

Sat., Nov. 5 at 4:15 pm, Goethe-Institut

Sun. Nov. 6 at 4:30 pm, Goethe-Institut

18 days. That is what it took for Egyptians to change the course of history. It is also the title of a collective work on the revolution of January 25th in Egypt. A group of ten directors, including two women, and their crews agreed to act fast and shoot, ten short films about the revolution. Ten stories they have experienced, heard or imagined. With the participation of well-known filmmakers such as Yousri Nasrallah, (Filmfest DC 2010 hit *Scheherazade, Tell Me a Story*), and the new generation of Egyptian filmmakers like Kamla Abu Zikry (*One-Zero, Arabian Sights 2010*), and Ahmad Abdalla (*Microphone, Arabian Sights 2011*), *18 Days* includes films about kidnapped revolutionaries, love torn apart and brought together by the action, citizens motivated to participate and others frightened enough to lock themselves inside and listen. From Facebook to the Battle of the Camels, these stories mark the first collection of films about the 18 days that changed Egypt forever.

*Egypt, Various Directors, 2011, 125 min., Digital
In Arabic with English Subtitles*

Sponsored by



Cairo Exit

Thurs., Nov. 3 at 8:30 pm, Goethe-Institut

Fri., Nov. 4 at 8:30 pm, Goethe-Institut

A pair of star-crossed lovers struggle to achieve a better future in this powerful, raw drama about life in contemporary Cairo. 18-year-old Amal lives with her mother and step-father, a compulsive gambler, in the poor neighborhood of Bashtel where day-to-day existence is difficult for everyone. When Amal tells her Muslim boyfriend, Tarek, she's pregnant, he gives her an ultimatum — have an abortion or run away with him to Italy. Despite her love for Tarek, Amal rejects both choices. When Amal is fired from her job, her already uncertain future looks bleak. In desperation, she takes a low-paid job as a hairdresser, a job which leads her into a seedy underworld of crime and vice. Is it too late for Amal to escape the sordid, dead-end world of exploitation and misery in Cairo's darkest corners? Heralding a bold new shift for contemporary Egyptian cinema, *Cairo Exit* is a gritty and uncompromising work from a major new cinematic talent, Hesham Issawi (*AmericanEast*, Filmfest DC 2008).

—Dubai International Film Festival

Egypt, Directed by Hesham Issawi, 2010, 96 min., 35mm

In Arabic with English Subtitles



— AMERICAN PREMIERE —

An Ideal Family

Fri., Oct. 28 at 6:30 pm,
AMC Mazza Gallerie

Fri., Nov. 4 at 6:30 pm,
Goethe-Institut

Within the walls of an ideal home, in one of the city's upscale districts, lives the Mickey family. A father with a military background, a mother (played by Lebleba) who

juggles her home responsibilities with her job as a legal investigator, a grandmother and five children, all start an average day one morning. The supposedly "normal" family competes to win the title of the "Ideal Family" on a television show, aiming to prove to society that they are just that — The Ideal Family. Needless to say, reality is not as it seems and hilarity ensues as the television show films them throughout the day. As a series of unexpected events comically unveil the truth about each family member, the question on everyone's mind is: what really makes an ideal family?

Egypt, Directed by Akram Farid, 2010, 90 min., 35mm

In Arabic with English Subtitles



Man Without a Cell Phone



Thurs., Nov. 3 at 6:45 pm, Goethe-Institut

Sun., Nov. 6 at 12:45 pm, Goethe-Institut

With the smooth, sure-handed direction by Sameh Zoabi in his feature debut, *Man Without a Cell Phone* presents a humorous, sharp take on the social milieu of a Palestinian village inside Israel. Jawdat, a restless young concrete worker, just wants to have fun with his friends, talk on his cell phone and find love - a near impossible task in a place where politics and traditional values

dominate. Adding to Jawdat's problems is his curmudgeonly father, Salem. Dragging Jawdat and the entire village into his outrageous battle against an Israeli cell phone tower that he fears is poisoning them with radiation, the father's hysterical behavior stands in stark contrast to his son's cool attitude to win the hearts of Muslim, Christian and even Jewish girls while wrestling with college entrance exams. Salem establishes the film's irreverent tone well with his opening pronouncement of his people's dilemma: "Co-existence, my ass!" -*Doha Tribeca Film Festival*

*Palestine/France/Israel, Directed by Sameh Zoabi, 2010, 78 min., Digital
In Arabic and Hebrew with English Subtitles*

— AMERICAN PREMIERE —

Operation Casablanca

Sat., Oct. 29 at 9:00 pm, AMC Mazza Gallerie

Sun., Oct. 30 at 6:30 pm, AMC Mazza Gallerie
Followed by reception, \$18.00

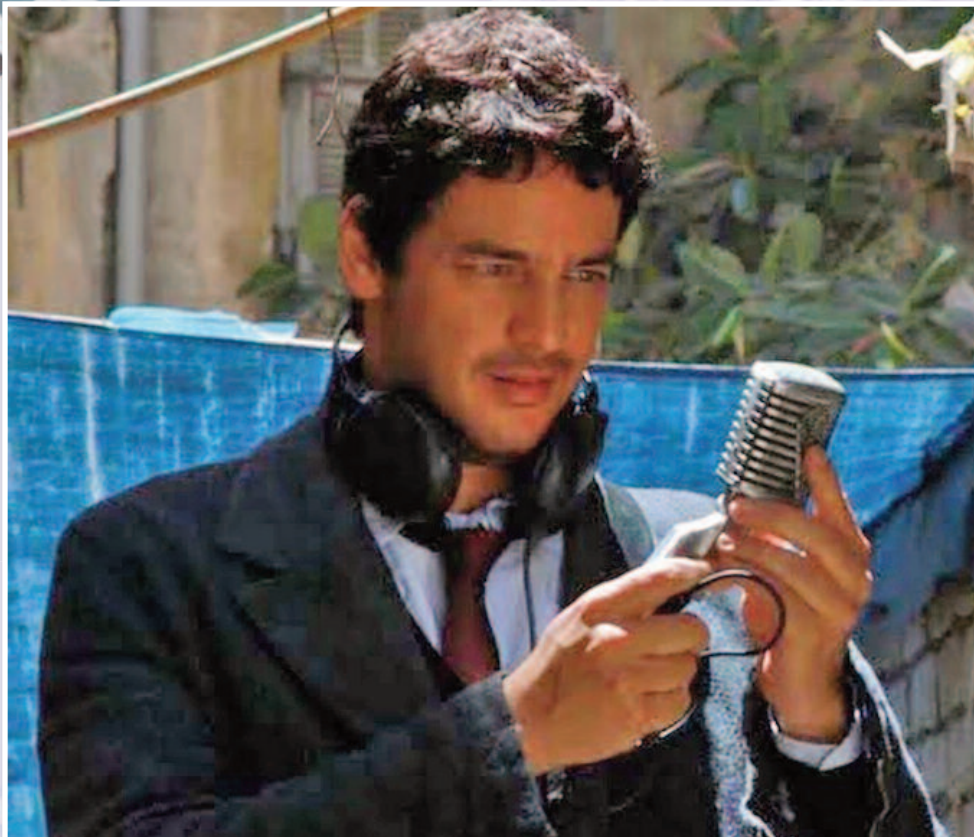
In this satirical and action-packed comedy by the Swiss filmmaker Laurent Nègre, renowned Moroccan actor Tarik Bakhari plays Saadi - a regular guy who happens to be an illegal Arab immigrant - who is mistaken for a terrorist and sets out on the most dangerous day of his life. After losing his job as a hotel dishwasher, he heads to the outskirts of Geneva, Switzerland only to become engulfed by crossfire. Before he knows it, he is being arrested by the police as the prime suspect of a terrorist group. Comically and inevitably, the spider web he's in keeps on widening, as the police send him undercover. With both the terrorists and the police gunning for him and desperate to keep from going under in this vortex of insanity, all the while trying to impress his beautiful police partner, Saadi bumbles along as the situation moves frantically from absurd to totally delirious.



*Switzerland/Canada/France, Directed by Laurent Nègre, 2010, 88 min., 35mm
In French with English Subtitles*

Sponsored by the Embassy of Switzerland





Microphone

Sat., Oct. 29 at 3:30 pm, AMC Mazza Gallerie

Sun., Oct. 30 at 3:30 pm, AMC Mazza Gallerie, *Followed by reception, \$18.00*

Winner of numerous awards including Best Arab Film at the 2010 Cairo Film Festival and the first Egyptian film to win Best Film at the Carthage International Film Festival in 2010. Inspired by Alexandria's new generation of artists, *Microphone* is an urban musical drama that tells the tale of artists who fight to share their work where neither independent artists nor art in general are often supported. Award-winning actor, Khaled Abol Naga plays a young musician who returns to Alexandria after many years to find his previous relationships damaged or nonexistent. As he restlessly roams the city searching for his next move, he chances upon the city's hidden subculture — rappers, rockers, graffiti artists — a whole world of creativity and expression. He soon finds himself immersed in the city's counterculture of music, film and art. *Microphone* features appearances by actual Alexandrian musical groups Masar Egbary, Mascara, and Soot Fel Zahma.

*Egypt, Directed by Ahmad Abdalla, 2010, 116 min., 35mm
In Arabic with English Subtitles*

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— AMERICAN PREMIERE —

Rough Hands

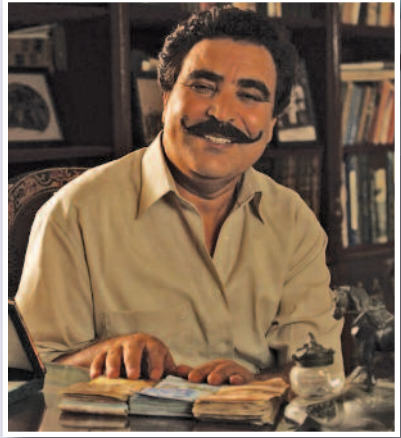
Fri., Oct. 28 at 8:30 pm, AMC Mazza Gallerie

Sat., Oct. 29 at 6:30 pm, AMC Mazza Gallerie

Mustapha (played by comic Mohamed Bastaoui) is Casablanca's barber to retired high-ranking government officials, former cabinet ministers and power brokers. Using his access to the retired bigwigs, Mustapha also runs an underground business greasing the wheels of bureaucracy. He agrees to help his school-teacher neighbor, Zakia (Houda Rihana), forge papers to emigrate to Spain and reunite with her fiancé for whom she longs, but cannot get an official visa to visit. While his two business operations thrive and he cares for his blind, but sly mother, Mustapha keeps a shameful secret: he is illiterate. As in his debut film (*In Casablanca, Angels Don't Fly, Arabian Sights* 2004), Mohamed Asli's *Rough Hands* incorporates a mixture of comedy, drama and music in this bold and sharp social commentary on how to bend the system.

Morocco, Directed by Mohamed Asli, 2011, 97 min., 35mm

In Arabic with English Subtitles



— EAST COAST PREMIERE —

Sira: Songs of the Crescent Moon

Sat., Oct. 29 at 1:30 pm, AMC Mazza Gallerie

Sun., Oct. 30 at 1:15 pm, AMC Mazza Gallerie

80-year-old Sayyed el-Dawwy is the last living interpreter of the Sira, the most significant Arabian epic poem. He is the only one alive who knows all 5 million verses by heart and performs them across Egypt in its original musical form. Now, he wants to pass this knowledge down to his grandson Ramadan. While Sayyed wants to teach the Sira the way he knows and loves it, Ramadan is more interested in modern interpretations of the Sira,

influenced by pop music and soap operas. As this intimate and enlightening documentary – a collaboration of the Swiss filmmaker Sandra Gysi and Egyptian born Ahmed Abdel Mohsen – follows the struggle of generations over the meaning of the Sira, a picture emerges of a world caught between tradition and modernity; a world in search for its respective heroes – in the past as well as in the present.

Switzerland, Directed by Sandra Gysi & Ahmed Abdel Mohsen, 2011, 77 min., 35mm

In Arabic with English Subtitles



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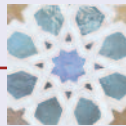
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Shirin Ghareeb, *Arabian Sights Festival Director and Programmer, and Deputy Director of the Washington, DC International Film Festival*

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The Washington, DC
International Film Festival

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