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Sights

2012

CONTEMPORARY
ARAB CINEMA

October 25-
November 4



*PRESENTED BY
THE WASHINGTON, DC INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL*

The Seventeenth Annual *Arabian Sights Film Festival* returns with the newest and most innovative films from today's Arab world. Select directors will be present at their screenings to discuss their work. 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.

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50th Anniversary of
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Shirin Ghareeb, *Arabian Sights Festival Director and Programmer,*
and *Deputy Director of the Washington, DC International Film Festival*

Special thanks to **Molly Hubbs** and **Alexandria Kelly**, *Coordinating Assistants*; **Jared Traver**, *Print Traffic Coordinator*; **Regan Spurlock**, *Film Notes*; **Mary Pettigrew**, *ampersand graphic design, llc*; **Tuan Tran**, *Webmaster*; All Theater Managers, Assistants and Volunteers.



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CONTEMPORARY ARAB CINEMA

ADMISSION

\$12.00 per person for each screening,
unless otherwise noted.

Advanced sales are subject to a convenience fee.

Tickets may be purchased at
filmfestdc.org and at the theater
starting one hour before the first show.

MISSIONTIX
1-888-996-4774

Cash or check sales only at the theater.

FESTIVAL PASS

A special package of 9 tickets is available online and at the theater for a discounted price of \$95.00. Advance sales subject to a small convenience fee. This package does not include opening night.

LOCATIONS

Embassy of France

4101 Reservoir Rd., NW, Washington, DC 20007

National Geographic Society

1600 M Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036

Free parking available in the National Geographic Society garage

FOR INFORMATION & UPDATES

FILMFESTDC.ORG **202-234-FILM**

This year's festival will take place in conjunction with **1001 Inventions: Discover the Golden Age of Muslim Civilization**, The National Geographic Society's award-winning exhibit dedicated to the history of science and technology in the Islamic civilization during the Golden Age. Receive a special rate for the exhibition when you purchase tickets for *Arabian Sights*!

See more info at www.filmfestdc.org

FESTIVAL SCHEDULE

OPENING NIGHT

Thursday, October 25

7:00 pm **The Source**

EMBASSY OF FRANCE

FOLLOWED BY A RECEPTION

The following screenings will take place
at the National Geographic Society

Friday, October 26

6:30 pm **Taxi Ballad**

8:30 pm **Omar Killed Me**

Saturday, October 27

4:00 pm **Sea Shadow**

7:00 pm **The Rif Lover**

9:00 pm **Omar Killed Me**

Sunday, October 28

3:00 pm **The Reluctant
Revolutionary**

5:00 pm **Taxi Ballad**

7:00 pm **The Rif Lover**

Friday, November 2

6:30 pm **El Gusto**
followed by a reception

9:00 pm **Asma'a**

Saturday, November 3

4:00 pm **How Big is Your Love**

6:30 pm **Heels of War**

9:00 pm **El Gusto**

Sunday, November 4

3:00 pm **How Big Is Your Love**

5:15 pm **Asma'a**

followed by a reception

7:30 pm **Heels of War**



THE SOURCE

Thursday, October 25 at 7:00 pm

In an isolated and scenic Maghreb village, women carry the workload – literally! While their husbands leisurely sip tea and play cards, the wives painstakingly hike the treacherous mountain path to fetch water from the local spring. Young, beautiful and progressive Leila (Leila Bekhti) becomes concerned about the influx of injuries from the arduous hike and she decides to take action. Modern towns have running water, why can't they? With the support of her husband Sami and her widowed neighbor, Leila resolves to incite a small, but resonant strike to motivate the menfolk to ameliorate the situation. The women will withhold sex until the water is flowing into their village. Their empowerment grows beyond the strike at hand and they begin to aspire towards equal rights in other aspects of their world. Director Radu Mihaileanu gives latitude for a broad spectrum of opinions resulting in a tone of optimism and community growth.

France, Directed by Radu Mihaileanu, 2011, 136 min., 35mm, In Arabic with English subtitles

La Maison
Française

*EMBASSY OF FRANCE,
FOLLOWED BY A WINE & CHEESE RECEPTION, \$20.00*

Co-presented with the Embassy of France

ASMA'A

Friday, November 2 at 9:00 pm

Sunday, November 4 at 5:15 pm, followed by a reception

Asma'a is representative of a growing number of films using cinema to raise awareness of social issues in Egypt. In a society where HIV/AIDS is still stigmatized, 45-year-old Asma'a (Hend Sabri) stays under the radar by avoiding any situation that would reveal her positive status. In the big city, she keeps to herself while working as a janitor to make a meager living for herself and her teenage daughter. However, Asma'a wasn't always so introverted; before she moved to Cairo from a small village, she was outspoken and independent. Though her HIV remains asymptomatic, Asma'a needs an operation for a gall-bladder problem but no doctor will operate on her when they discover she is ill. Edgy TV talk-show host Mohsen (Maged El Kedwany) becomes aware of Asma'a's plight and encourages her to speak out publically on her own behalf and address the ignorance in the community. The film's haunting imagery speaks to the gravity of the subject. Winner of Best Director from the Arab World and Best Actor at the Abu Dhabi Film Festival.

Egypt, Directed by Amr Salama, 2011, 96 min., 35mm, In Arabic with English subtitles



Co-presented with
EGYPTIAN CULTURAL AND
EDUCATIONAL BUREAU,
EMBASSY OF EGYPT



EL GUSTO

Friday, November 2 at 6:30 pm, followed by a reception

Saturday, November 3 at 9:00 pm

It all started in a small mirror shop during director Safinez Bousbia's visit to Algiers in 2003 when she came across old photographs of a music class from the 1940s. Her curiosity inspired her to learn more, and she set out to track down the classmates, Muslim and Jewish, now between the ages of 70 and 100 and residing in Algeria and abroad. The photos were from sessions at the Conservatory of Algiers, where the students had studied under the legendary master El Hadj M'Hamed El Anka. Their musical genre Chabbi, literally "the music of the people," defied class, religion, and ethnicity. When the Algerian Revolution began the group could not sustain; the Jewish friends fled the country while the remaining band members scattered. Through years of detective work and extensive travel, Bousbia reunites the musician friends in this moving documentary to once again celebrate life and friendship as the group "El Gusto." Winner of Best Director from the Arab World at the Abu Dhabi Film Festival.

Algeria/France, Directed by Safinez Bousbia, 2011, 88 min., Digital, In Arabic with English Subtitles

Co-presented with



Algerian Embassy
50th Anniversary
of Algeria's
Independence

HEELS OF WAR

Saturday, November 3 at 6:30 pm

Sunday, November 4 at 7:30 pm

AMERICAN PREMIERE

History gracefully blends with magical realism in Joe Bou Eid's beautifully executed tale of his parents' first meeting and subsequent romance. Ever clad in high heels and red lipstick, Eid's mother (played by Joy Karam) along with her family evacuate Beirut and move to a small southern Lebanese village after the 1982 Israeli invasion. Among those awaiting their arrival is a local heartthrob, priest-in training and Eid's future father (played by Chady El Tineh). The palpable chemistry between the two develops rapidly and radiantly. The pair's friends and family consist of an eclectic and endearing cast of characters, many of whom also hazard their own romantic endeavors during this period of national turmoil. TV and radio clips of the invasion and even snippets of charming vintage Lebanese television commercials play in the background of moments of utter beauty and true love.

Lebanon/UAE, Directed by Joe Bou Eid, 2011, 98 min., Digital, In Arabic with English subtitles





HOW BIG IS YOUR LOVE

Saturday, November 3 at 4:00 pm

Sunday, November 4 at 3:00 pm

When his parents need some time to sort out their marriage, 8-year-old Adel goes to stay with his grandparents, Khadidja and Lounès, for a weekend. The grandparents, eager to spend time with the boy, welcome him in with loving and sympathetic arms. Grandfather Lounès introduces Adel to the adventurous world of

animals living in Algiers and the boy is especially fond of a little sparrow. Khadidja ensures that Adel feels comfortable in their apartment and encourages him, on a daily basis, to quantify the size of his love. Director Fatma Zohra Zamoum, sensitive to the nuances of the human relationship, taps into the uniquely tender bond that can arise between a very young person with fresh eyes and an older adult who thinks he's already seen it all.

Algeria/Morocco, Directed by Fatma Zohra Zamoum, 2011, 98 min., 35mm, In Arabic with English subtitles

OMAR KILLED ME

Friday, October 26 at 8:30 pm

Saturday, October 27 at 9:00 pm

In this gripping crime-and-courtroom drama adapted from true events, a Moroccan gardener, Omar Raddad (Sami Bouajila) becomes the prime suspect in the brutal beating and murder of a wealthy widow on the French Riviera. The bizarre clue that thrust him into the hot seat was the phrase "Omar m'a tuer," scrolled in the victim's blood at the crime scene which literally translates to the grammatically incorrect "Omar has kill me." With no forensic evidence and a cursory investigation, Raddad is convicted and goes to prison for 18 years. In Raddad's corner, a journalist named Pierre-Emmanuel Vaugrenard sets out to prove the gardener's innocence. Roschdy Zem, who starred with Bouajila in *Days of Glory*, steps behind the camera to direct this thrilling story riddled with injustice, classism and prejudice. *Omar Killed Me* was selected as Morocco's submission to the Academy Awards®.

Morocco/France, Directed by Roschdy Zem, 2011, 85 min., 35mm, In French and Arabic with English subtitles



THE RELUCTANT REVOLUTIONARY

Sunday, October 28 at 3:00 pm

In Sean McAllister's latest hard-hitting documentary (*Liberace of Baghdad played Arabian Sights '05*), he tracks the volatile cultural and political climate escalating towards revolution in contemporary Yemen. McAllister captures Sana'a through the eyes of 35-year-old tour guide and father-to-be Kais, who initially sympathizes with the President. As the country becomes too precarious for tourism and Kais spends more time in the city, he witnesses the growth of two camps lodged in the city center: one for the President and one against. With McAllister's encouragement, Kais ventures into the anti-President camp where he encounters a rational, weapon-free community. The camp's numbers only grow in strength and their turf expands throughout the city. Kais finds his political allegiance wavering as his visits to the camps occur more frequently and he witnesses the uprising from the front lines. McAllister becomes one of few foreigners left in the city, privileging us the real story.

UK/Ireland, Directed by Sean McAllister, 2012, 70 min., Digital
In English and Arabic with English subtitles



THE RIF LOVER

Saturday, October 27 at 7:00 pm

Sunday, October 28 at 7:00 pm

Aya, a flirtatious 20-year-old who lives in a small village with her mother and two brothers, spends her time catching rays with her best friend Raida and daydreaming of grand romance. Her keen interest in amorous affairs stems from her seeing a video of Bizet's *Carmen*, a gift from her cousin. She reveres *Carmen*'s power of seduction, overlooking the temptress's ultimate fate. With Aya's father working abroad as a fisherman, her brothers pursue less lawful employment under a local hashish trafficker named "The Baron." Hoping to move up in his career, Aya's oldest brother secretly makes a deal with "The Baron" offering his sister in exchange for his own field of cannabis. Aya, now unexpectedly and unwillingly caught up in her own perilous drama, must address her naive notions of romance. Writer/director Narjiss Nejjar once again tells a sumptuous tale of women boldly confronting patriarchal tradition.

Morocco/France/Belgium, Directed by Narjiss Nejjar, 2011, 90 min., Digital
In Arabic and French with English subtitles



sherbet to, derails his plan. Beautiful Kaltham is without a mother and struggles with unwanted attention from men. When her older brother Jasim returns from Dubai and learns this, her shame mounts. The two teens will have to find the courage to carve out their own destinies.

United Arab Emirates, Directed by Nawaf Al-Janahi, 2011, 98 min., Digital, In Arabic with English subtitles

SEA SHADOW

Saturday, October 27 at 4:00 pm

Teenagers Mansoor and Kaltham grapple with tradition and burgeoning romantic feelings in a small seaside village in Ras al-Khaimah. Mansoor comes from a poor family with a domineering mother. Ever thoughtful, he consults his more experienced pal Sultan to find out more about the mystery of love and what his courting strategy for Kaltham should entail. Sultan encourages his friend to pool his resources and buy her a present. Before Mansoor can deliver his gift, Owaish, a coquettish girl whose family he delivers iced

TAXI BALLAD

Friday, October 26 at 6:30 pm

Sunday, October 28 at 5:00 pm

AMERICAN PREMIERE

When Youssef (Talal El-Jordi) left his home and family in northern Lebanon for Beirut to pursue a career as a taxi driver, his real plan was to strategically position himself to be in the right place at the right time for his big break for a better life. He's a go-getter, traversing the city in his supremely well cared for '66 Mercedes Benz, networking with his calling card, shuttling strangers to their destinations, and making few friends along the way. If Youssef perceives a passenger would be receptive, he recounts stories of his life and the colorful characters from his hometown.

An American pilates instructor, Jordan, becomes one of his regular clients and shares a piece of her life story with him, as well. As Youssef becomes disillusioned with big city life and gives up his impatience for wild success, he settles into a routine through which he experiences the joys of every day life.

Lebanon/UAE, Directed by Daniel Joseph, 2011, 92 min., Digital, In English and Arabic with English subtitles





The Washington, DC
International Film Festival

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