



PRESS RELEASE
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**THE WASHINGTON, DC INTERNATIONAL
FILM FESTIVAL
PRESENTS**

**ARABIAN SIGHTS 2009
CONTEMPORARY ARAB CINEMA
October 9 – 18**

Washington, DC, September 15, 2009 - **The 14th Annual Arabian Sights Film Festival** kicks off **Friday, October 9** to present 13 diverse selections of the newest, boldest, and most inspiring films from today's Arab world. Running through **Sunday, October 18**, the Festival features films from **7 Arab countries** including Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, and Yemen.

The Arabian Sights Film Festival showcases films that demonstrate the range and commitment of directors who invariably manage to tell moving stories while exploring issues facing their region. **The Arabian Sights Audience Award** will be awarded to the film voted the most popular by the audience. **All films in this series are Washington, DC premieres and have English subtitles.**

Highlights include **LONDON RIVER**, winner of a Special Jury Prize and Best Actor (Sotigui Kouyaté) at the Berlin International Film Festival. Starring award-winning actress, Brenda Blethyn, **LONDON RIVER** is directed by world-renowned Franco-Algerian filmmaker, Rachid Bouchareb. **MASQUERADES** was Algeria's submission to the 2009 Academy Awards and won Best Film at the Dubai International Film Festival. The second screening of **MASQUERADES** will be followed by a reception, co-sponsored by the Embassy of Algeria, at the National Geographic Society.

From Morocco, **A FIANCÉ FOR YASMINA**, swept the Malaga Spanish Awards including Best Film, Best Actress, and the Audience Award. **FAWZEYA'S SECRET RECIPE**, from acclaimed Egyptian filmmaker **Magdi Ahmed Ali, who will be present for Q&As**, won Best Actress at Abu Dhabi Film Festival and features veteran belly-dancer Nagwa Fouad. French film, **WELCOME**, winner of two awards at the Berlin International Film Festival, was a French box-office hit and stars leading actor Vincent Lindon. Syria's **THE LONG NIGHT** won the prized Best Film award at Italy's Taormina Film Festival.



Also featured: Back by popular demand, Egypt's **HASSAN & MORCOS**, stars Omar Sharif in this Filmfest DC hit; From Iraq, documentary **OPEN SHUTTERS IRAQ** looks at contemporary Iraq through the female lens; Yemen's first locally produced film, **THE LOSING BET**; Morocco's comedic hit, **NUMBER ONE**; and **LAILA'S BIRTHDAY**, from prolific and award-winning Palestinian filmmaker, Rashid Masharawi.

CONFIRMED TALENT scheduled to present and discuss their films at the Festival, include (in chronological order):

- Iraqi documentary filmmaker **Maysoon Pachachi** with her film **OPEN SHUTTERS IRAQ** on **Friday, October 9 at 9:00** and **Saturday October 10 at 9:00 p.m. at Landmark's E Street Cinema.**
- Acclaimed Egyptian director **Magdi Ahmed Ali** with his film **FAWZEYA'S SECRET RECIPE** on **Thursday, October 15 at 6:30 p.m. at Landmark's E Street Cinema** and **Friday, October 16 at 9:00 p.m. at the National Geographic Society.**

SPECIAL EVENTS during the Festival include:

- **Saturday, October 17 at 8:30 p.m.** The Embassy of Algeria co-sponsors a reception following the screening of **MASQUERADES** at the National Geographic Society. ***Tickets are \$15 for the screening and reception.***

Tickets for 2009 ARABIAN SIGHTS FILM FESTIVAL are \$10.00 per person for each screening, unless otherwise noted. **A Festival Pass is available for 10 tickets for a discounted rate of \$85.** This package does not include the October 17 screening of **MASQUERADES** and reception. Tickets may be purchased online through the Festival web site (www.filmfestdc.org/arabiansights) until midnight the day before the show; tickets also available at the theater starting one hour before the first show. Cash or check sales only at the theater. For more information call 202-234-3456 or visit <http://www.filmfestdc.org/arabiansights>.

Screenings will be held at Landmark's E Street Cinema (555 11th Street, NW, Metro Center or Gallery Place/Chinatown Metro) and **The National Geographic Society** (1600 M Street, NW, Farragut North. Free parking available in the National Geographic Society garage).

The full schedule of films is available online at <http://www.filmfestdc.org/arabiansights> with a downloadable PDF of the full program.



Arabian Sights is presented by the Washington, DC International Film Festival. FFDC would like to thank our sponsors University of the District of Columbia; The Mosaic Foundation; National Geographic All Roads Film Project; Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, Georgetown University; Center for the Global South, American University; Language Flagship Programs, University of Maryland; The Jerusalem Fund; DC Internationals and Ross Kaplan; Hotel Madera, The Official Hotel of Filmfest DC; and WAMU 88.5FM, The Official Radio Station of Filmfest DC.

About FFDC

Since its inception in 1987, Filmfest DC has become one of Washington's major cultural events, enhancing the profile of the nation's capital both nationally and internationally. Filmfest DC is a District-wide event, bringing together the city's major cultural institutions in a spirit of cooperation and celebration. Films that have premiered at past Festivals encompass a broad range of international cinema. Arabian Sights is one unique annual festival created and administered under the FFDC umbrella. For more information, visit www.filmfestdc.org.

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