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## **Arabian Sights Returns with Award-Winners and Virtual Reality October 18-27, 2019**

**WASHINGTON, DC** – **Arab Blues**, winner of the Venice Film Festival's Audience Award and **It Must be Heaven**, winner of the Cannes Film Festival Special Jury Prize, headline the 24<sup>th</sup> Annual *Arabian Sights Film Festival*. Also highlighted will be **Advocate**, which premiered at the Sundance Film Festival, **Adam**, Morocco's first Oscar submission by a women director, and the moving Iraqi **virtual reality** documentary **Home After War**. All films are screened with English subtitles.

**WHAT:** 24th Arabian Sights Film Festival

**WHEN:** October 18 – 27, 2019

**WHERE:** Screenings will be held at AMC Mazza Gallerie Theatres, 5300 Wisconsin Ave., NW, Washington, DC

**WEBSITE:** [filmfestdc.org/arabiansights](http://filmfestdc.org/arabiansights)

**TICKETS:** \$14 per ticket unless otherwise noted. Discount Package – 10 tickets for \$100 (does not include Opening Night). Student discount available at the theater. Tickets can be purchased on our website, [filmfestdc.org/arabiansights](http://filmfestdc.org/arabiansights).

**WHY:** The *Arabian Sights Film Festival* showcases the newest and most intriguing films exploring issues facing the Arab region. The festival highlights quality cinema from a region often overlooked in mainstream American theaters. Select guest film directors will be present at their screenings to offer a unique insight to the filmmaking process. The Washington, DC International Film Festival is the parent organization of *Arabian Sights*. This year, *Arabian Sights* is presented by the Embassy of the United Arab Emirates in Washington, DC.

**MORE INFORMATION:** For more information visit [filmfestdc.org/arabiansights](http://filmfestdc.org/arabiansights). A complete slate release with updates on additional special events and guests, as well as descriptions, sponsors, and schedule will follow in early October.

This year's festival includes:

### **OPENING NIGHT EVENT**

#### **It Must Be Heaven**

Directed by Elia Suleiman | France, Palestine

The promise of a new life turns into a comedy of errors when a man leaves Palestine, seeking an alternative homeland. Winner of the Jury Special Prize at the Cannes Film Festival.

#### **Adam**

Directed by Maryam Touzani | Morocco, France

Audience Award winner at the Angoulême French Film Festival and Morocco's submission to the Academy Awards. The beautiful story of two women in Casablanca who transform each other's lives.

#### **Advocate**

Directed by Rachel Leah Jones & Philippe Bellaïche | Israel, Canada, Switzerland

A documentary portrait of Israeli human rights lawyer Lea Tsemel who has represented Palestinian political prisoners for nearly 50 years.

#### **Arab Blues**

Directed by Manele Labidi | France

Winner of the Audience Award at the Venice International Film Festival. After years abroad, a woman returns to Tunis with the dream of opening up her own psychotherapy practice.

#### **Baghdad in My Shadow**

Directed by Samir | Switzerland, Germany, UK, Iraq

From award winning director Samir, this thrilling drama sets his characters the challenge of contending with the three greatest taboos of Arab society: atheism, adultery and homosexuality. American Premiere.

#### **Diamond Dust**

Directed by Marwan Hamed | Egypt

Marwan Hamed's (**The Yacoubian Building**, Filmfest DC '07) Egyptian box office hit follows a man seeking to avenge the death of his father, but gets caught in a web of corruption in the process.

#### **Escape from Raqqa**

Directed by Emmanuel Hamon | France

Understanding that the French services are powerless to help, Sylvain recruits a few friends to carry out a high-risk exfiltration operation to save his wife and son, who left Paris to join ISIS in Syria.

#### **The Guest**

Directed by Hadi El Bagoury | Egypt

Amidst his troubles facing trial, Dr. Yehia welcomes his daughter's suitor Osama into his home to get to know him better. This guest, however, brings more harm than good.

### **Home After War**

Directed by Gayatri Parameswaran | Iraq, Germany, US

An award-winning interactive virtual reality experience which chronicles the ever-present dangers for civilians like Ahmaied Hamad and his family, who have returned to their villages in Iraq after the war against IS finally ended.

### **New Biz in the Hood!**

Directed by Mohamed Hamidi | France

An unexpected bond results when a young French Algerian employee has to teach his boss how to maneuver in their newly located offices located in an underprivileged suburb of Paris.

### **Rashid & Rajab**

Directed by Mohammed Saeed Harib | UAE

A freak accident causes a wealthy Emirati executive and a carefree Egyptian fast-food deliveryman to switch bodies. The unlikely pair gain a different perspective into each other's lives as they desperately look for a way to revert to their former selves.

**What Have We Done To Deserve This?** dir. by Eva Spreitzhofer | Austria  
Wanda, an atheist feminist from Vienna, faces her worst nightmare when her teenage daughter Nina announces that she has converted to Islam and from now on should be called Fatima. A comic search for explanations, a sense of belonging, and identity.

### **Short Cuts**

**Ambience** directed by Wisam Al Jafari | Palestine

**Are You Volleyball?!** directed by Mohammad Bakhshi | Iran

**Aziza** directed by Soudade Kaadan | Lebanon/Syria

**Dunya's Day** directed by Raed Alsemari | Saudi Arabia/USA

**The President's Visit** directed by Cyril Aris | Lebanon/USA/Qatar

**What Remains** directed by Areej Mohmoud | USA

The *Arabian Sights Film Festival* is presented by the Embassy of the United Arab Embassy and supported by the University of the District of Columbia, Crescent Enterprises, the Embassy of the Kingdom of Morocco, Georgetown University's Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, The Middle East Institute, The Arab Gulf States Institute, The Jerusalem Fund, El Gouna Film Festival, Sahouri Insurance & Financial, Georgetown Design Group, and Hartford Technology.

**The full festival schedule and further details are posted on our website at [filmfestdc.org/arabiansights](http://filmfestdc.org/arabiansights)**

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