ARABIAN SIGHTS
Contemporary Arab Cinema

presented by
The Washington, DC International Film Festival
and the
Center for the Global South – American University

Arabian Sights offers Washingtonians a first-hand opportunity to view new films from the Arab world. Arab cinema is very much alive, providing unique insights into societies rich in historical, cultural and social dynamics. This series offers a diverse selection of works that combine compelling characters with situations influenced by current and historical realities. Arab cinema is a progressive and continuously evolving art form, with each new film expressing distinct dimensions of Arab creativity. The Washington, DC International Film Festival is pleased to present this series in cooperation with the Center for the Global South – American University.

Algeria
Salut Cousin!
Friday, January 24th at 6:00 pm
Saturday, January 25th at 8:45 pm
(1996, Monac Alouache, Algeria/Tunisia, 102 min.) Set in Paris, this film is about Algerians on both sides of the Mediterranean. It portrays a delightful and zany picture of cultural collision taking two Algerian cousins. One is Mok, an irrepressible would-be rap star and pathological liar, who is seeking to escape from his past and create a new reality in Paris. The other is the naive cousin, Allo, a country boy from Algeria who has been sent to Paris to pick up a suitcase full of fancy dresses. Allo loses the address of his contact and embarks on a 5-day chase to track down the suitcase he is supposed to take back to Algeria. During this untoward stay, Mok and Allo become involved in a series of misadventures in one of Paris’ fringe neighborhoods.

Syria
Dreams of the City
Friday, January 24th at 8:30 pm
Saturday, January 25th at 9:15 pm
(1983, Muhammad, Madeen, Syria, 126 min.) From the director of The Night, this partly autobiographical first feature by Muhammad makes its US debut. Muhammad makes up with life on the streets during the 50’s and 60’s, a crucial period in modern Syrian and Arab history. Mahas challenges the image of the virtuous poor and describes the emotionally gripping effect, particularly on women, of the idealized Arab family’s strong emotions.

Egypt
The Asphalt Devils
Friday, January 31st at 6:30 pm
Saturday, February 1st at 6:30 pm
(1995, Ossama Farouk, Egypt, 105 min.) The pressures of life in lower-middle class Cairo come vividly to the screen in Director Ossama Farouk’s debut film about three ambitious drivers who spend their off-hours engaged in audacious liaisons with various neighbors and friends. They represent a brotherhood of proud men who value honor and manliness above all else and who at the same time are aware of their own vulnerabilities. Asphalt Devils reflects the ambitions, thoughts and problems of ordinary people. In what are normally considered taboo subjects in Egyptian cinema, Fara addresses his topics with meticulous sensitivity.

Tunisia
Swallows Never Die in Jerusalem
Friday, January 31st at 7:30 pm
Saturday, February 1st at 6:30 pm
(1994, Reda Belg, Tunisia, 85 min.) In this timely film, Richard, a French TV journalist, arrives in Israel to do a report on the state of Israel-Arab relations on the eve of the Madrid-Arab peace accord and to see his old girlfriend Esther, an Israeli psychologist. Richard's love driver is Hammed, nicknamed "Local Mafia", whose family had been displaced in 1948. Hammed recently saw a photo of his long-lost grandmother in an Arabic newspaper and he and his entire family decide to look for her. Richard attempts to bring together on TV Hammed’s elderly father, Awa, and Esther’s father Mofe, a Holocaust survivor. But Middle East conflicts are not so easily overcome...

Palestine
Haifa
Friday, January 31st at 8:45 pm
Saturday, February 1st at 7:30 pm
(1996, Rashid Mashrawi, Palestine/The Netherlands, 75 min.) In Haifa Director Mashrawi returns to a subject he knows best — life in a Palestinian refugee camp as illustrated in this feature where internecine stories offer timely insights into the current Palestinian mindset. Abu Said, a former policeman, tells political developments like the signing of the peace accord, and even for him, it will all come down to the personal in the end. His wife, Umm Said, hangs her hopes on the imminent release of their oldest son from prison, and buses herself finding him a bride. At the center of the film is Haifa, an enchanting character who reams the streets of Gaza and is privy to all its stories.
Admission is $6.00 per person for each screening. Tickets for any film in this series may be purchased at the theatre starting one hour before the first show.

**Location:** All films will be shown at the Cineplex Odeon Foundry Theatres 1055 Thomas Jefferson Street, NW (Georgetown, off M Street between 30th and 31st Streets)

Take Metro Orange or Blue Lines to Foggy Bottom.
Paid parking is available in parking lot across from the theatre.

**For more information on this series call 202/724-5613.**

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**January 24 to February 1**

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The Washington, DC International Film Festival
P.O. Box 21396
Washington, DC 20009

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The Official Radio Station of Filmfest DC

Arabian Sights is programmed and coordinated by Shirin Ghareeb, Assistant Director of The Washington, DC International Film Festival.