



# ARABIAN SIGHTS

FILM FESTIVAL

*Contemporary  
Arab Cinema*

*OCTOBER 18-28, 2018*

*FILMFESTDC.ORG*

# ARABIAN SIGHTS

Presented by



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UNITED ARAB EMIRATES  
WASHINGTON, DC

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## THANK YOU

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

Special thanks to **Muna Abdulkader**, *Coordinating Assistant, Press Relations*; **Mary Pettigrew**, *ampersand graphic design*; **Tuan Tran**, *Webmaster*; and all **Theater Managers, Assistants, and Volunteers.**

The **Washington, DC International Film Festival** is the parent organization of the **Arabian Sights Film Festival.**

OCTOBER 18-28, 2018

# FILM FESTIVAL

*Contemporary Arab Cinema*

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## INTRODUCTION

The **Arabian Sights Film Festival** returns for its 23rd year with a program of some of the most outstanding works from the region's most innovative filmmakers.

In recognition of the movement for increased participation of women in the film industry, there will be a **Filmfest DC+** presentation of *ASWAT: Short Films By & About Arab Women*. ASWAT means *voices* in Arabic. This program is free and open to the public.

An *Audience Award* for favorite film will be presented in addition to the *Arabian Sights Jury Award*.

Select directors will accompany their films to conduct post-screening audience discussions. **Please visit [filmfestdc.org](http://filmfestdc.org) for updates on films, guests, and events.** All films will be screened with English subtitles.

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## TICKET INFORMATION

\$14.00 per person for each screening, unless otherwise noted. Opening and Closing Night events (film and party) are each \$20.00 per person.

### Advance Sales

Purchase tickets at [filmfestdc.org/arabiansights](http://filmfestdc.org/arabiansights)  
Online sales available until noon on the day of show.  
Advance sales are subject to a convenience fee.

### Day-of Sales

Tickets can be purchased at the theatre starting one hour before the first show.

### Festival Pass

A special package of 10 tickets is available online and at the theater for a discounted price of \$100. Advance sales are subject to a convenience fee. This package does not include the Opening or Closing Night events.

### Student Discount

1 ticket for \$10 on day-of-showing at door only.  
Valid with proper student ID.

## LOCATION

All film screenings to take place at AMC Mazza Gallerie Theatre unless otherwise noted.

### AMC Mazza Gallerie Theatre

5300 Wisconsin Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20015

*Parking: \$2 for 3 hours or \$5 for 4 hours of reduced-rate parking available in garage with validation.*

FOR MORE  
INFORMATION

[Filmfestdc.org](http://Filmfestdc.org)

202-234-FILM

# FESTIVAL SCHEDULE

## Thursday, October 18

★★ *Opening Night* ★★

7:00 pm *On Borrowed Time*

*Followed by a Reception*

\$20.00

## Friday, October 19

6:30 pm *Sofia*

8:30 pm *Orchestra Class*

## Saturday, October 20

4:15 pm *Volubilis*

6:30 pm *Sofia*

8:15 pm *Lola Pater*

## Sunday, October 21

2:00 pm *El Gusto*

2:45 pm *Volubilis*

5:00 pm *The Man Who Stole Banksy*

7:00 pm *Lola Pater*

## Friday, October 26

6:00 pm *Heaven Without People*

*Followed by a Reception*

8:30 pm *Orchestra Class*

## Saturday, October 27

4:00 pm *The Man Who Stole Banksy*

6:00 pm *Wajd: Songs of Separation*

8:30 pm *Heaven Without People*

## Sunday, October 28

2:00 pm *ASWAT: Shorts By & About Arab Women*

4:30 pm *Wajd: Songs of Separation*

★★ *Closing Night* ★★

7:00 pm *Induced Labor*

*Followed by a Party*

\$20.00

FOR MORE  
INFORMATION

[Filmfestdc.org](http://Filmfestdc.org)

202-234-FILM



# OPENING NIGHT

## *ON BORROWED TIME*

Thurs., Oct. 18, at 7:00 pm

*Followed by a Reception, \$20.00*

Even with Dubai's towering Burj Khalifa dominating the skyline outside their windows, life in a retirement home isn't very exciting for the "Four Musketeers": ex-soldier Fares, upbeat astrologer Hasan, retired pharmacist Abdullah, and wheelchair-bound Hamad. This quartet of variously afflicted grumpy old men spend their days grumbling about uncaring children, swapping medications, acting as matchmakers for the local staff, and watching movies they've seen before (because they can't remember the endings). What they don't do is adhere to Hasan's *carpe diem* philosophy urging them to squeeze the best out of their dwindling time on earth. Until, that is, Fares receives a 50 million dirham (nearly \$14 million) windfall, courtesy of a deceased nephew. —*Palm Springs International Film Festival*

*United Arab Emirates, Directed by Yasir Al Yasiri, 2018, 93 min.  
In Arabic with English subtitles.*

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# CLOSING NIGHT

## INDUCED LABOR

Sun., Oct. 28, at 7:00 pm

*Followed by a Closing Party. \$20.00*

Many go to great lengths to obtain an American visa. Some enter lotteries, others get married, but in this bold and entertaining satire, an Egyptian couple expecting twins come up with what they believe to be the perfect plan: hijack the US embassy in Cairo to give birth on US territory, granting their children American citizenship. This raucous comedy is written and directed by acclaimed Egyptian filmmaker Khaled Diab with his two siblings Mohamed Diab (*Clash*, Filmfest DC '17) and Sherine Diab penning the screenplay alongside him. —*Various sources*  
*Egypt, Directed by Khaled Diab, 2018, 90 min. In Arabic with English subtitles.*

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Arts & Culture Program

# ASWAT

## SHORT FILMS BY & ABOUT ARAB WOMEN

Presented by Filmfest DC+ and the Arabian Sights Film Festival

Sun., Oct. 28, at 2:00 pm



### LISTEN

An Arab woman in a burqa files a complaint against her abusive husband, but the translator is unwilling to convey the true meaning of her words.

Denmark/Finland, Directed by Rungano Nyoni and Hamy Ramezan, 2014, 13 min. In Arabic & Finnish with English subtitles.



### THE WEDDING SINGER'S DAUGHTER

A new short from the director of *Wadjda*. It's nighttime in 1980s Riyadh. All eyes and ears are on the wedding singer, until the electricity cuts out suddenly.

Italy/USA, Directed by Haifaa Al-Mansour, 2018, 8 min. In Arabic with English subtitles.



### SALAM

Salam is a woman, a Muslim, a Palestinian-Syrian, a New Yorker, a wife....a Lyft driver.

USA, Directed by Claire Fowler, 2018, 13 min. In Arabic & English with English subtitles.

### THE NEIGHBOR

Sarah moves to Dubai and finds herself feeling lonely until she receives a visit from her neighbor, an old Emirati woman who doesn't understand a word she says.

United Arab Emirates, Directed by Nayla Al Khaja, 2013, 18 min. In Arabic & English with English subtitles.

### BLACK MAMBA

Sarra, a young woman from Tunis, is engaged to a well-to-do boy. But she is hiding a secret plan to escape her current life.

Tunisia, Directed by Amel Guellaty, 2017, 20 min. In Arabic with English subtitles.

### BATTALION TO MY BEAT

A restless and rebellious teen girl in a Saharawi refugee camp runs away to join the army, seeking to liberate both her people and herself.

Algeria/USA/Western Sahara, Directed by Eimi Imanishi, 2017, 13 min. In Arabic with English subtitles.



### THE PARROT

1948 Palestine. A Mizrahi Jewish family from Tunisia settles into their new life, but is haunted by a disturbing houseguest - a parrot left behind by the former residents.

Germany/Jordan, Directed by Darin J. Sallam & Amjad Al Rasheed, 2016, 18 min. In Arabic, Hebrew, & Yiddish with English subtitles.

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Washington, DC International Film Festival

Filmfest DC+ is made possible by a grant from the DC Commission on the Arts & Humanities.



## EL GUSTO

Sun., Oct. 21, at 2:00 pm

Freer Gallery of Art, Meyer Auditorium  
1100 Independence Ave., SW

CO-PRESENTED WITH THE *Smithsonian's Freer|Sackler Galleries of Art*

It all started in a small mirror shop during director Safinez Bousbia's visit to Algiers in 2003. She came across 1940s photographs of a music class and her curiosity inspired her to learn more about the classmates, Muslim and Jewish, now between the ages of 70 and 100. Their musical genre *Chaabi*, literally "the music of the people," defied class, religion, and ethnicity. When the Algerian Revolution began the group disbanded; some of the Jewish musicians left 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." —*Various sources*

*Algeria/France, Directed by Safinez Bousbia, 2011, 88 min. In French & Arabic with English subtitles.*

## ARABIAN SIGHTS JURY AWARD

# HEAVEN WITHOUT PEOPLE

Fri., Oct. 26, at 6:00 pm

*Followed by a Reception*

Sat., Oct. 27, at 6:30 pm

Lebanese director and Fulbright grant recipient Lucien Bourjeily takes us on a journey of family secrets and the rift they can cause with this award-winning film.

Josephine, the matriarch of a sprawling family, is delighted to gather



everyone together for Easter lunch for the first time in years. The festive meal survives tensions bubbling just under the surface. However, bit-by-bit the facade of the happy family gathering begins to fall away after an unexpected event changes their joyful mood and lives. A renowned theatre director and social activist in Lebanon, Bourjeily's feature debut builds on his desire to dig into taboo topics to forge space for discourse—even if that comes at great cost. —*Various sources*

*Lebanon, Directed by Lucien Bourjeily, 2017, 91 min. In Arabic with English subtitles.*





## LOLA PATER

Sat., Oct. 20, at 8:15 pm

Sun., Oct. 21, at 7:00 pm

Zino (Tewfik Jallab) leaves Paris and embarks on a search for his missing father, Farid, after the unexpected death of his mother. Unbeknownst to Zino, Farid transitioned into Lola (Fanny Ardant) 25 years ago, which not surprisingly complicates his search. After learning of his father's gender reassignment, it is Zino's challenge to negate his resentment and ingrained prejudice to find a place for Lola who is keen to foster a closer relationship with her son. In this refreshing and spirited take on the well-worn family reunion trope, *Lumière* Award-winning writer-director Nadir Moknèche places the incandescent French legend, Fanny Ardant, at the heart of the film as the parent trying to reconnect with her son.

—Alliance Française French Film Festival



France/Belgium, Directed by Nadir Moknèche, 2017, 95 min. In French with English subtitles.

## THE MAN WHO STOLE BANKSY

Sun., Oct. 21, at 5:00 pm

Sat., Oct. 27, at 4:00 pm

In 2007, world-renowned street artist Banksy traveled to Palestine and painted politically charged works on walls and buildings. One specific piece depicting an Israeli soldier checking a donkey's ID created substantial controversy. Some viewed it as a nuisance; others hailed the work as high art; and still more saw a business opportunity. Specifically, a bodybuilder and local taxi driver known as Walid the Beast came up with an entrepreneurial plan: cut out the entire cement wall containing the art and sell it off to the highest bidder. *The Man Who Stole Banksy* is a provocative story about how works that are created illegally can be stolen, sold, and collected legally. As viewers follow Banksy's work, they discover a secret art market of stolen walls from around the world. It's a stylish examination of public space, appropriation, and the commodification of street art and of what happens when Middle East politics meet the Western art market.

—Tribeca Film Festival



Italy, Directed by Marco Proserpio, 2018, 90 min. In Arabic, English, and Italian with English subtitles.

## ARABIAN SIGHTS JURY AWARD

### ORCHESTRA CLASS

Fri., Oct. 19, at 8:30 pm

Fri., Oct. 26, at 8:30 pm

The compelling power of music and artistic expression reverberates through the heart of this lovable tale of triumph against the odds.

Directed by Algerian auteur Rachid Hami, *Orchestra Class* tells the story of a distinguished but disillusioned violinist Simon (Kad Merad) who ekes out a living teaching a rowdy orchestra class at a Parisian middle school. One young student, Arnold, is painfully shy, but finds that he has a natural talent for the violin. Inspired by Arnold's raw talent and warm enthusiasm of the class, Simon regains his *joie de vivre* and rediscovers his love of music. Hami's film offers an inspiring story about an underdog rising from the ashes. —*Various sources*

France, Directed by Rachid Hami, 2017, 101 min. In French with English subtitles.



## ARABIAN SIGHTS JURY AWARD

### SOPIA

Fri., Oct. 19, at 6:30 pm

Sat., Oct. 20, at 6:30 pm

Winner of the *Un Certain Regard* prize for Best Screenplay at the Cannes Film Festival this year, *Sofia* is the feature debut from Morocco-born, Belgium-educated Meryem Benm'Barek. A pregnant 20-year-old single Moroccan girl faces the tough local laws on sex outside of marriage when she suddenly gives birth. In order to avoid arrest, she must move quickly and make contact with the child's father. But as the story

progresses, the film reveals itself to be far more than it first seems. Benm'Barek's lean, nuanced script clearly picks apart class hypocrisy where the haute bourgeoisie are hellbent on preserving status and their aura of European sophistication no matter the individual consequences. —*Various sources*

France/Qatar, Directed by Meryem Benm'Barek, 2018, 80 min.  
In Arabic & French with English subtitles.

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## VOLUBILIS

Sat., Oct. 20, at 4:15 pm  
Sun., Oct. 21, at 2:45 pm

In the Moroccan city of Meknes, recently married Abdelkader, a security guard in a shopping center, and Malika, a housekeeper, struggle to make ends meet. They dream of starting a life of their own, but one day at work, Abdelkader experiences a

violent and humiliating incident that will turn their lives upside down. Moroccan director Faouzi Bensaïdi's fourth feature is a powerful fable about human dignity and the demanding nature of economic liberalism.

—Various sources

Morocco/France/Qatar, Directed by Faouzi Bensaïdi, 2017, 106 min. In Arabic with English subtitles.

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## ARABIAN SIGHTS JURY AWARD

### WAJD: SONGS OF SEPARATION

Sat., Oct. 27, at 6:00 pm  
Sun., Oct. 28, at 4:30 pm

In 2010, Syrian-Canadian filmmaker Amar Chebib headed to Syria, just months before chaos broke out, to film a documentary about traditional Sufi music. Five years later, the friends he encountered on his trip are dispersed around Europe, and have become refugees like so many others who were forced to flee Aleppo.

*Wajd: Songs of Separation* introduces us to three talented musicians who share a love of Syrian music and a devotion to their country. —Doxa Documentary Film Festival

Canada, Directed by Amar Chebib, 2018, 89 min. In Arabic, English & Turkish with English subtitles.



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