

October 24 – November 2

www.filmfestdc.org

Arabian Sights

FILM FESTIVAL 2008

Contemporary Arab Cinema

Arabian Sights

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October 24 – November 2

presented by

The Washington, DC International Film Festival

in partnership with

The DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities

The Thirteenth Annual *Arabian Sights* Film Festival offers a dynamic and diverse range of new films from Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine and Syria. Several directors will be present at their screenings to discuss their work. An *Audience Award* for favorite film will be presented. All films will be screened with English subtitles. Please visit **www.filmfestdc.org** for updates on films and guests.

Admission

\$10.00 per person for each screening, unless otherwise noted.

Tickets may be purchased at www.filmfestdc.org and at the theater starting one hour before the first show. Cash or check sales only at the theater.

Festival Pass

A special package of 10 tickets is available online and at the theater for a discounted price of \$85.00. (This package does not include the October 26 screening of *Slingshot Hip Hop* and the concert).

Locations

Landmark's E Street Cinema

555 11th Street, NW

Take Metro Red, Orange or Blue line to Metro Center. Theater entrance on E Street between 10th and 11th Street. Three hours reduced rate parking available in adjacent garage with validation.

Goethe-Institut Washington

812 Seventh Street, NW

Take Metro Red, Green or Yellow line to Gallery PI-Chinatown and exit toward 7th & H St. Street parking available.

For More Information

www.filmfestdc.org

202-724-5613

Festival Schedule

Friday, October 24

7:00 pm *33 Days*

9:00 pm *33 Days*

Goethe-Institut Washington

Saturday, October 25

11:30 am *In the Heliopolis Flat*

12:00 pm *Life After the Fall*

2:00 pm *The Other Threat*

2:00 pm *Recycle*

Landmark's E Street Cinema

6:30 pm *The Aquarium*

9:00 pm *Waiting for Pasolini*

Goethe-Institut Washington

Sunday, October 26

12:00 pm *Recycle*

1:30 pm *The Island*

2:00 pm *Life After the Fall*

5:00 pm *Slingshot Hip Hop*

*Followed by a concert
with DAM at Hard Rock
Café*

Landmark's E Street Cinema

5:00 pm *Waiting for Pasolini*

7:30 pm *The Aquarium*

Goethe-Institut Washington

Saturday, November 1

11:30 am *In the Heliopolis Flat*

12:00 pm *Under the Bombs*

2:00 pm *The Yellow House*

2:00 pm *The Other Threat*

Landmark's E Street Cinema

6:00 pm *Captain Abu Raed*

Followed by a reception

9:00 pm *Out of Coverage*

Goethe-Institut Washington

Sunday, November 2

12:30 pm *Under the Bombs*

1:30 pm *The Island*

2:30 pm *The Yellow House*

Landmark's E Street Cinema

5:00 pm *Captain Abu Raed*

7:30 pm *Out of Coverage*

Goethe-Institut Washington

Contemporary Arab Cinema



33 Days

In Person: Director Mai Masri

**Friday, October 24 at 7:00 pm
Goethe-Institut**

**Friday, October 24 at 9:00 pm
Goethe-Institut**

Seasoned director and *Arabian Sights* veteran, Mai Masri's latest documentary follows the lives of four people in Beirut in the tumultuous summer of 2006.

A young theater director gives

children a refuge and the opportunity to express themselves when they have nowhere else to go; a journalist gives her sweat, blood and tears to her underground television station; an aid worker distributes emergency relief – a never-ending task; and a mother cares for her newborn child amidst the violence. These four individuals represent a small percentage of the population whose lives were turned upside-down by the war, yet who faced tremendous obstacles and never lost sight of their purposes.

(Lebanon, Directed by Mai Masri, 2006, 70 min., Digital)

The Aquarium



**Saturday, October 25 at 6:30 pm
Goethe-Institut**

**Sunday, October 26 at 7:30 pm
Goethe-Institut**

Youssef (Amr Waked) is a hotshot anesthesiologist who often sleeps in his car for privacy. Laila (Hend Sabri) is the careerist host of a late night radio call-in show. These two members of Cairo's elite, lost souls traveling parallel paths of longing and disconnection, are the principal fish in Yousry Nasrallah's *The Aquarium*, a meditation on the intellectual capital of the Middle East, now bent

under the sway of daily challenges in all its forms. – *Tribeca Film Festival*

(Egypt, Directed by Yousry Nasrallah, 2008, 111 min., 35mm)



Captain Abu Raed

In Person: Director Amin Matalqa and Producer David Pritchard

Saturday, November 1 at 6:00 pm
Goethe-Institut

*Immediately followed by a reception hosted by
the Embassy of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan*

Sunday, November 2 at 5:00 pm
Goethe-Institut

Captain Abu Raed is Jordan's entry to next year's Academy Awards. In a humble neighborhood in Amman, Jordan, Abu Raed lives a quiet life: during the day he's a janitor at the airport and in the evenings the widower sips tea on the roof, watching over the city below and the airplanes overhead. The pilot's cap he sports, which he found in a trash bin at work, leads the local children to believe he is a worldly pilot, and, seeing their hunger for stories of the globe, Abu Raed tells them of the adventures in which he only partakes in his dreams. In time, Abu Raed forges some unlikely friendships and entangles himself in the children's difficult lives.

(Jordan, Directed by Amin Matalqa, 2007, 104 min., 35mm)



Embassy of the
Hashemite
Kingdom of
Jordan

In the Heliopolis Flat



**Saturday, October 25 at 11:30 am
Landmark's E St. Cinema**

**Saturday, November 1 at 11:30 am
Landmark's E St. Cinema**

In the Heliopolis Flat is a true romance, filled with longing, lust and a sincere belief in the possibility that dreams of youth can

inspire strength, confidence and beauty in the future. Through her passion for music, Nagwa overcomes the restrictions of her upbringing and follows her heart on a quest to find her childhood music teacher and affirm her belief in true love. Acclaimed director Mohamed Khan delivers a timeless story, infused with the culture, sights and characters of modern-day Egypt—from the urban sophistication of Cairo to the traditional beliefs of rural Upper Egypt.

— *Cinema East Film Festival*

(Egypt, Directed by Mohammed Khan, 2007, 118 min., 35mm)



The Island

**Sunday, October 26
at 1:30 pm, Landmark's
E St. Cinema**

**Sunday, November 2
at 1:30 pm, Landmark's
E St. Cinema**

The Island swept Egyptian box offices and won 5 awards at the National Festival for Awards in Cairo. Based loosely on the true story of the recent downfall of drug lord Ezzat Hanafy and set on an isle in Upper Egypt whose economy

rests on opium cultivation and arms trade, *The Island*, is part Greek tragedy and part epic crime drama. Mansour Hefny, raised in a crime family, returns home after completion of his military service, and is tapped by his father to run the 'family business.' Prohibited from pursuing his sweetheart and pressured by the family, Mansour wastes little time developing his father's lust for power, money and blood.

(Egypt, Directed by Sherif Arafa, 2007, 150 min., 35mm)

Life After the Fall

Saturday, October 25 at 12:00 pm
Landmark's E St. Cinema

Sunday, October 26 at 2:00 pm
Landmark's E St. Cinema

Abid returns to Iraq shortly after the fall of Saddam in 2003, and some 30 years after living abroad. He finds his multiple siblings and their respective families slightly uneasy yet remarkably hopeful for the change to come. His nieces and nephews look forward to the days when they do not strain their eyes to study by candlelight and his siblings are eager to return to their careers. Abid spends the subsequent four years documenting his family member's daily lives in Baghdad and beyond. Abid's first-hand access to his subjects lends an intimate air to this documentary and his family's sincerity sheds a very personal perspective onto the fallen city and its inhabitants.

(Iraq, Directed by Kasim Abid, 2008, 100 min., Digital)



The Other Threat

In Person:

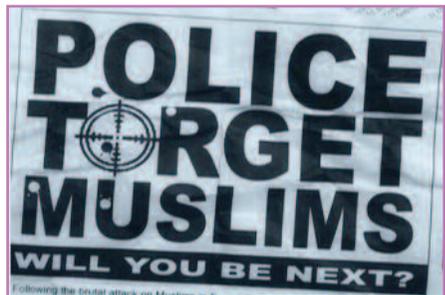
Director Bassam Haddad

Saturday, October 25 at 2:00 pm
Landmark's E St. Cinema

Saturday, November 1 at 2:00 pm
Landmark's E St. Cinema

It is said that after September 11th, 2001, the world "changed." But not for most Europeans, who still consider immigration to be a greater threat than terrorism. In a most subtle yet candid manner, this documentary reveals the reality of Arab/Muslim immigration in England and Spain, two European countries afflicted with terrorism for decades. The story is simple yet powerful, weaving together history, culture, politics, propaganda, psychology and racism, all within the context of capitalism and the demand for cheap labor. The result is an exhilarating and balanced presentation that serves as a record of the condition of Arab/Muslim immigration in Europe in the age of the "War on Terror."

(USA, Directed by Bassam Haddad, 2008, 75 min., Digital)





Out of Coverage

Saturday, November 1 at 9:00 pm, Goethe-Institut

Sunday, November 2 at 7:30 pm, Goethe-Institut

This audacious situation comedy follows Amer, a Damascus man who divides his attention between the two women in his life – his

nagging wife, Salma, and the beautiful Nada, the wife of Amer's wrongly imprisoned friend Zohair. Amer deftly manages the two families and households while he earnestly negotiates his intentions, trapped between his desires and his morals. When Amer learns of Zohair's imminent prison release date, he faces a critical crossroads – which family will he choose? Abdellatif Abdelhamid packs this fun snapshot of Syrian society with plenty of comical subplots.

(Syria, Directed by Abdellatif Abdelhamid, 2007, 100 min., 35mm)



Recycle

**Saturday, October 25 at 2:00 pm
Landmark's E St. Cinema**

**Sunday, October 26 at 12:00 pm
Landmark's E St. Cinema**

Zarqa, Jordan, is the birthplace of a handful of known terrorists including former Al-Qaeda leader Abu Musab al Zarqawi, killed by Americans in 2006. It is also home to Abu Amar, the father of eight and ex-mujahadeen soldier who struggles daily to provide

for his family. With the help of his inquisitive 4-year-old son Abu Bakr, Abu Amar collects cardboard from the street for the recycling plant. In Mahmoud al Massad's raw documentary, a weary Abu Amar strives to reconcile his faith and modern Middle Eastern society. As his life becomes more challenging, Abu Amar must make grave decisions.

(Jordan/Germany/Spain/Switzerland, Directed by Mahmoud al Massad, 2008, 80 min., Digital)

Slingshot Hip Hop

*In Person: Director Jackie Salloum,
Hip Hop artists DAM and Abeer*

**Sunday, October 26 at 5:00 pm
Landmark's E St. Cinema**

*Immediately followed by a concert with
DAM at Hard Rock Café, 999 E St., NW.*

▶ **\$15.00 film & concert, \$10.00 concert only**

Director Jackie Salloum follows a few clusters of Palestinian youth, divided by physical walls and limited by devastating poverty, who communicate through their art. Choosing words over violence, these talented young people craft intricate, poetic lyrics that funnel their energy and musically vent their concerns. Salloum first spotlights the original Palestinian hip-hop artists, the three members of *DAM*, who came together in the late 1990's against all odds. *DAM* has since attained international renown and has paved the way for other Palestinians to take their injustices to the microphone. This burgeoning Palestinian music revolution includes women like Abeer, who challenge gender roles and risk much to practice and perform.

(USA, Directed by Jackie Reem Salloum, 2008, 88 min., Digital)



*In support of Pinktober
at Hard Rock Café
Washington DC, a
portion of the proceeds
from this event will bene-
fit the American Cancer
Society "Making Strides
Against Breast Cancer"*

Under the Bombs

**Saturday, November 1 at 12:00 pm
Landmark's E St. Cinema**

**Sunday, November 2 at 12:30 pm
Landmark's E St. Cinema**

Immediately following the 2006 ceasefire during the war between Hezbollah and Israel, Zeina, a Shiite, manages to travel from Dubai to Beirut. Once there, she desperately seeks a cab driver to take her to a small village in devastated Southern Lebanon to find her 6-year-old son who is staying with her sister for the duration of Zeina's divorce. The only willing driver, Tony, a Christian, suppresses his reservations of driving through the precarious region for an attractive woman in need. The two embark on a risky and emotionally charged journey strewn with shredded bridges and razed buildings. This is Aractingi's second feature and, unlike his musical *Bosta* (*Arabian Sights* 2006), *Under the Bombs*' loosely scripted tale unfurls before a factual backdrop of soldiers, reporters and panic.

(Lebanon, Directed by Philippe Aractingi, 2007, 98 min., 35mm)





Waiting for Pasolini

Saturday, October 25 at 9:00 pm
Goethe-Institut

Sunday, October 26 at 5:00 pm
Goethe-Institut

The remote Southern Moroccan city of Ouarzazate, a quiet desert community, comes alive when word spreads that “the Italians are coming!” to shoot an epic film. Thami, a modest satellite dish salesman, further incites anticipation with his fond accounts of a previous Italian shoot in Ouarzazate – Pier Paolo Pasolini’s *Oedipus Rex* in 1966 during which Thami served as Pasolini’s personal assistant. Since then Thami has cherished their friendship and upon hearing of the Italians’ return, publicizes the boundless generosity and hefty actor-stipends of Pasolini’s production. The inhabitants of Ouarzazate beam with hopes of putting the paychecks towards their debts, construction or traveling to Mecca. When Daoudi, old friend of Thami and former extra from *Oedipus Rex*, informs Thami of Pasolini’s death, Thami struggles to come to terms with the painful news. The enormous Ouarzazate film studio with a kitschy, Egyptian-themed façade frequently occupies the backdrop in this bittersweet comedy.

(Morocco, Directed by Daoud Aoulad-Syad, 2007, 100 min., 35mm)



The Yellow House

Saturday, November 1 at 2:00 pm
Landmark’s E St. Cinema

Sunday, November 2 at 2:30 pm
Landmark’s E St. Cinema

A Berber family lives peacefully in the Aures Mountains in eastern Algeria until the police visit to inform them of the sudden death of their eldest son in an unfortunate accident. The tragedy sets the father on the long trip into town on his tractor in order to bring the son back home and bury him locally. After the burial, the family, especially the mother, grieves inconsolably. In his efforts to comfort her, the father schemes up an undoubtedly great idea. *The Yellow House* unfurls in a warm and poetic manner over a backdrop of stunning Algerian countryside. – *Rotterdam International Film Festival*

(Algeria, Directed by Amor Hakkar, 2007, 87 min., 35mm)

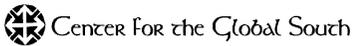
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Shirin Ghareeb, *Arabian Sights Festival Director and Programmer and Assistant Director of the Washington, DC International Film Festival*

Special thanks to Jared Traver, *Shipping Coordinator*; Tuan Tran, *Webmaster*; Michael Bandy, *Coordinating Assistant*; Regan Spurlock, *Film Notes*; Mary Pettigrew, *Ampersand Graphic Design, LLC.*; Connie Poole, *Conduit Productions Inc.*; Carolyn Naifeh, *March & Associates*; Mary Sadek, *Egyptian film liaison*



The Washington, DC
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