



## ARABIAN SIGHTS 2018

CONTEMPORARY ARAB CINEMA, OUTSTANDING FILMS AND EXCITING GUESTS

October 18 – 28

WASHINGTON, DC- The 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Arabian Sights Film Festival kicks off Thursday, October 18 to present 10 new and exciting films plus a shorts program by and about women from the Arab world. Running through Sunday, October 28<sup>th</sup>, the Festival features captivating films from numerous Arab countries including Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Tunisia, and the UAE, plus other European, Canadian and Arab co-productions.

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. **All features in this series are Washington, DC premieres. All films have English subtitles.** The complete schedule of films, events, and guests is available at [www.filmfestdc.org/arabiansights](http://www.filmfestdc.org/arabiansights).

Highlights include an Opening Night event featuring the UAE film **ON BORROWED TIME**. This film is a tender comedy about a group of feisty men in a retirement home in Dubai. A party will follow the film sponsored by the Embassy of the United Arab Emirates. Tickets are \$20. (**On Borrowed Time** will be screened on Thursday, October 18 at 7:00 pm).

The festival wraps with a Closing Night event that features the timely and raucous Egyptian comedy **INDUCED LABOR** about an Egyptian couple who will go to unexpected lengths to obtain an American visa. Closing Night is co-presented with the Middle East Institute and there will be a party to finish the evening. Tickets are \$20. (**Induced Labor** will be screened on Sunday, October 28 at 7:00 pm).

Highlighting the growing participation of women in the film industry, **Filmfest DC+** and the **Arabian Sights Film Festival** are pleased to present **ASWAT: Short Films By & About Arab Women**. *Aswat* means *voices* in Arabic. Featured will be the latest short film by **WADJDA** director Haifaa Al-Mansour, **The Wedding Singer's Daughter**. The director of **Battalion to My Beat**, Eimi Imanishi, will be present for a post-screening discussion with the audience. The full list of short films can be viewed at [filmfestdc.org/arabiansights](http://filmfestdc.org/arabiansights). (**ASWAT: Short Films By & About Arab Women** will be screened on Sunday, October 28 at 2:00 pm and is a free program).

### CONFIRMED GUESTS

- Friday, October 26 & Saturday, October 27: Lebanese filmmaker and Fulbright grant recipient Lucien Bourjeily discusses his multi-faceted social drama **HEAVEN WITHOUT PEOPLE** during a post-screening Q&A.
- Saturday, October 27 & Sunday, October 28: Syrian-Canadian filmmaker Amar Chebib will be on hand to answer questions about his new documentary on traditional Sufi music, **WAJD: SONGS OF SEPARATION**.
- Sunday, October 28: Director Eimi Imanishi talks about a young Saharawi girl in her short film **BATTALION TO MY BEAT**.

### HIGHLIGHT SUMMARIES OF ARABIAN SIGHTS 2018 FILMS

#### OPENING NIGHT FILM, Arabian Sights Film Festival, 2018

- **ON BORROWED TIME** dir. by Yasir Al Yasiri | UAE  
Fares and his four equally grumpy friends who spend the days in their retirement home grumbling about uncaring children, swapping medications, acting as matchmakers and watching movies they've see before, but can't remember. Until Fares receives a \$14 million windfall courtesy of a deceased nephew. **Winner of the Audience Choice Award at the Minneapolis St. Paul International Film Festival**. Opening Night is co-presented with the Embassy of the United Arab Emirates. *On Borrowed Time will be screened on Thursday, October 18 at 7:00 pm and will be followed by an Opening Reception. Tickets are \$20.00.*
- **EL GUSTO** dir. by Safinez Bousbia | Algeria/France/Ireland  
Disbanded after the Algerian Revolution, Arab and Jewish musicians reunite as "El Gusto" to play *Chaabi* music, literally "the music of the people", in this moving documentary about friendship. **This screening is co-presented with the Smithsonian's Freer|Sackler Galleries of Art. *El Gusto* will be screened on Sunday, October 21 at 2:00 pm. This program is free and no tickets are required.**
- **HEAVEN WITHOUT PEOPLE** dir. by Lucien Bourjeily | Lebanon  
An engaging and thought-provoking drama which offers a social and political commentary in contemporary Lebanon. **Winner of the Special Jury Prize at the Dubai International Film Festival and the World Vision Award at the Cinequest International Film Festival**. This film is co-presented with the Fulbright Program and AMIDEAST. *Heaven Without People will be screened on Friday, October 26 at 6:00 pm and Saturday, October 27 at 8:30 pm.*
- **LOLA PATER** dir. by Nadir Moknèche | France  
When his mother dies, Zino decides to go looking for his father, Farid. But 25 years ago, Farid transitioned into Lola! With Fanny Ardant. *Lola Pater will be screened on Saturday, October 20 at 8:15pm and Sunday, October 21 at 7:00 pm.*
- **THE MAN WHO STOLE BANKSY** dir. by Marco Proserpio | Italy  
World renowned street artist Banksy made headlines last week when one of his most recognized works *Girl With Balloon* sold for \$1.4 million at auction and then automatically shredded itself. *The Man Who Stole Banksy* focuses on another work which sparked controversy, *Donkey Documents*, which shows a black spray-painted donkey whose documents are checked by an Israeli soldier and how one day it went missing from its concrete wall. Narrated by pop star Iggy Pop. *The Man Who Stole Banksy will be screened on Sunday, October 21 at 5:00 pm and Saturday, October 27 at 4:00 pm.*

- **ORCHESTRA CLASS** dir. by Rachid Hami | France  
Comedy/drama. Stars Kad Merad as a disillusioned professional violinist who rediscovers his love of music when he takes a job as the conductor-tutor for an orchestra class in a disadvantaged neighborhood. *Orchestra Class* will be screened on Friday, October 19 at 8:30 pm and Friday, October 26 at 8:30 pm.
- **SOFIA** dir. by Meryem Benm'Barek | France  
When a 20-year old Moroccan single woman gives birth, the hospital grants her 24 hours to name the child's father before alerting authorities. **Winner of the *Un Certain Regard* prize for Best Screenplay at the Cannes Film Festival.** *Sofia* is co-presented with the Embassy of the Kingdom of Morocco. *Sofia* will be screened on Friday, October 19 at 6:30 pm and Saturday, October 20 at 6:30 pm.
- **VOLUBILIS** dir. by Faouzi Bensaïdi | Morocco/France/Qatar  
Newlyweds Abdelkader & Malika struggle to make ends meet. One day at work, Abdelkader, a shopping mall guard, experiences an incident that will turn their destiny upside down. *Volubilis* is co-presented with the Embassy of the Kingdom of Morocco and the Middle East Institute. *Volubilis* will be screened on Saturday, October 20 at 4:15 pm and Sunday, October 21 at 2:45 pm.
- **WAJD: SONGS OF SEPARATION** dir. by Amar Chebib | Canada  
In 2010 Syrian-Canadian filmmaker Amar Chebib traveled to Syria just before chaos broke out to make a documentary about Sufi music. Five years later he re-connects with the musicians, now dispersed around Europe. What unites them all is a love of Syrian music and a devotion to their country. **Wajd: Songs of Separation** will be screened on Saturday, October 27 at 6:00 pm and Sunday, October 28 at 4:30 pm.
- **ASWAT: SHORT FILMS BY & ABOUT WOMEN**  
**Battalion to My Beat** dir. by Eimi Imanishi | Algeria/USA/Western Sahara  
**Black Mamba** dir. by Amel Guellaty | Tunisia  
**Listen** dir. by Rungano Nyoni & Hamy Ramezan | Italy/USA  
**The Neighbor** dir. by Nayla Al Khaja | UAE  
**The Parrot** dir. by Darin J. Sallam & Amjad Al-Rasheed | Germany/Jordan  
**Salam** dir. by Claire Fowler | USA/Wales  
**The Wedding Singer's Daughter** dir. by Haifaa Al-Mansour | Italy/USA  
*ASWAT: Short Films By & About Women* will be screened on Sunday, October 28 at 2:00 pm. This program is free and no tickets are required.

**CLOSING NIGHT FILM, Arabian Sights Film Festival**

- **INDUCED LABOR** dir. by Khaled Diab | Egypt  
In order to obtain an American visa, an Egyptian couple expecting twins come up with what they believe to be the perfect plan: Hijack the U.S. embassy in Cairo to give birth on U.S. territory, granting their children American citizenship in the process. Closing Night is co-presented with the Middle East Institute. *Induced Labor* will be screened on Sunday, October 28 at 7:00 pm and will be followed by a Closing Party. Tickets are \$20.00.

Please visit [filmfestdc.org/arabiansights](http://filmfestdc.org/arabiansights) for additional descriptions on films, special events, film trailers and complete schedule. Click the catalog cover image on our homepage for a downloadable PDF of the catalog.

The **Arabian Sights Audience Award** will be awarded to the film voted the most popular by the audience. The **Arabian Sights Jury Award** is a competitive award to go to one of four participating films.

**PRESS RELEASE**  
**For October 12, 2018**

**Muna Abdulkader, Press Relations**  
**202.274.5782 or [filmfestdc@filmfestdc.org](mailto:filmfestdc@filmfestdc.org)**

**Tickets** are \$14 per person for each screening, unless otherwise noted. **A Festival Pass is available, 10 tickets for a discounted rate of \$100.** This pass does not include the Opening Night or Closing Night films. Tickets may be purchased online through the Festival web site [filmfestdc.org/arabiansights](http://filmfestdc.org/arabiansights) until noon the day of the show; tickets are also available at the theater starting one hour before the first show of the day.

**Theater Locations**

**AMC Mazza Gallerie**

5300 Wisconsin Ave., NW

Washington, DC 20015

*Take Metro Red line to Friendship Heights.*

*Street parking and the garage at Mazza Gallerie are available.*

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

**About Filmfest DC:**

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](http://www.filmfestdc.org).

Sponsors

Arabian Sights Film Festival

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