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*Arabian Sights*  
CONTEMPORARY ARAB CINEMA

presented by

**THE WASHINGTON, DC INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL**

The fifth annual *Arabian Sights* film series offers some of the newest and finest cinema from the Arab world today. All films in this series are provided with English subtitles.



### WASHINGTON, DC PREMIERE

## The City

*El Medina*

With Special Guest Director Yousry Nasrallah

Friday, September 22<sup>nd</sup>, 8:30 pm  
Saturday, September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 6:30 pm

(1999, Egypt/France, Yousry Nasrallah, 105 min.) An entertaining and elegant story of Ali, a handsome, aspiring young actor constrained by his family and friends in Cairo. Co-written by Claire Denis, the celebrated French filmmaker, *El Medina* is the classic narrative of someone who wants to break out of a narrow world, even if his home is the colorful hustle-and-bustle of Cairo. Moving to Paris, Ali joins the twilight community of illegal Arab immigrants. With a deft nod to his mentor, internationally acclaimed filmmaker Youssef Chahine, Nasrallah has his characters break into exuberant song and dance numbers, reminiscent of American musicals.

☆ Discussion immediately follows both screenings with the film's director, Yousry Nasrallah. ☆

Reception (\$25.00 per person) with Director Yousry Nasrallah prior to September 22nd screening. Sponsored by Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP). Call 202-223-3677 for reception tickets.

### EAST COAST PREMIERE

## Around the Pink House

*Autour de la maison rose*

Saturday, September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 9:15 pm  
Sunday, September 24<sup>th</sup>, 6:30 pm

(1999, Lebanon/France/Canada, Joana Hadjithomas, Khalil Joreige, 92 min.) The war is over in Lebanon, and in the midst of an economic boom, refugees from war in Beirut become refugees from reconstruction in this probing, comic parable. In the fictional quarter of Matba'a stands an old mansion – the "Pink



House" – a once elegant, now shell-scarred mansion where the Nawfal and Adaimi families found refuge during the war. When a real estate developer announces his plans to gut the house and turn it into a commercial center – keeping the façade as a token memento – neighborhood rifts start to show as clearly as the cracks in the walls. A TV reporter quietly encourages squabbling factions to stage their conflicts for the camera. Protests, petitions, militias and money all prove inadequate substitutes for memories and ineffective defenses against change.

### AMERICAN PREMIERE

## Les siestes grenadine

Friday, September 29<sup>th</sup>, 6:30 pm  
Sunday, October 1<sup>st</sup>, 8:30 pm



(1999, Tunisia/France/Belgium, Mahmoud Ben Mahmoud, 92 min.) Tunisian by nationality but raised in Paris and Dakar, twentysomething Soufiya feels half-European and half-African. Soufiya arrives in Tunis steeped in her African heritage... much to the annoyance of her father, Wahid Haydar, who wants her to be "Tunisian born and bred" through and through. But

the country has changed considerably during their absence, and Wahid soon comes up against shady encounters and treason. His daughter, meanwhile, finds herself caged in and undertakes a difficult but determined battle to impose her individuality in a Tunisian society. An engrossing story punctuated by rousing African music and dance sequences.



### WASHINGTON, DC PREMIERE

## Date Wine

*Arak El-Balab*

Friday, September 29<sup>th</sup>, 8:30 pm  
Saturday, September 30<sup>th</sup>, 6:30 pm

(1998, Egypt, Radwan El-Kashef, 110 min.) This rich parable is filled with life, music and myth. In a small oasis surrounded by palm trees in an Upper Egyptian village, a bizarre caravan passes by and lures all the able men away in search of wealth. Ahmed, on the threshold of adolescence, insists on staying behind to fulfill his own dream to climb the highest palm tree in his oasis village and use its dates to make a wine that could restore the health of his grandfather. The women gradually start to regard Ahmed as the man of the village, and although reluctant at first, Ahmed grows into this role. When the men finally return, they realize that everything has changed in their absence.

### WASHINGTON, DC PREMIERE

## Women's Wiles

*Keid Ensa*

Saturday, September 30<sup>th</sup>, 9:00 pm  
Sunday, October 1<sup>st</sup>, 6:30 pm

(1999, Morocco, Farida Benlyazid, 90 min.) In this delightful tale originally from Andalusia, Lalla Aïcha, the daughter of a rich merchant, one day encounters the King's son while on her terrace. This encounter launches a verbal sparring match, which in time is followed by a number of incredible acts the likes of which can only be matched in Arabian Nights. Lalla Aïcha makes the Prince jump through hoops of emotion, arousing his interest and ultimately earning his respect. This is a tale about the battle of the sexes, full of piquancy, imagination and intelligence.



### WASHINGTON, DC PREMIERE

## Living in Paradise

*Vivre au paradis*

Friday, September 22<sup>nd</sup>, 6:30 pm  
Sunday, September 24<sup>th</sup>, 8:30 pm

(1998, Algeria/France/Belgium/Norway, Bourlem Guerdjou, 105 min.) Set in a shantytown near Paris in the early 1960's, the Algerian War was creating tensions among the Arab community in France. The story centers on a husband, Lakhdar, who works himself to the bone to buy an apartment for his family while his



wife turns to political activism. As the ironic title suggests, this life is far from paradise; high winds blow the roofs off the huts, while racists and unsympathetic police make life difficult for these immigrant workers.

All films will be shown at the Loews Cineplex Foundry Theaters, 1055 Thomas Jefferson Street, NW (Georgetown, off M Street between 30th and 31st Streets) Take Metro Orange or Blue Lines to Foggy Bottom.

For more information on this series call 202-724-5613  
or visit [www.filmfestdc.org](http://www.filmfestdc.org)



## Admission

\$8.00 per person for each screening.  
Tickets for any film in the series may be purchased at the theater starting one hour before the first show.

## Festival Pass

Tickets for the six films will be available as a special package for \$40 at start of series only.

## Location

All films will be shown at the Loews Cineplex Foundry Theaters, 1055 Thomas Jefferson Street, NW (Georgetown, off M Street between 30th and 31st Streets)

Paid parking is available in the building along 30th Street and the parking lot across from the theatre.

## Special thanks to:



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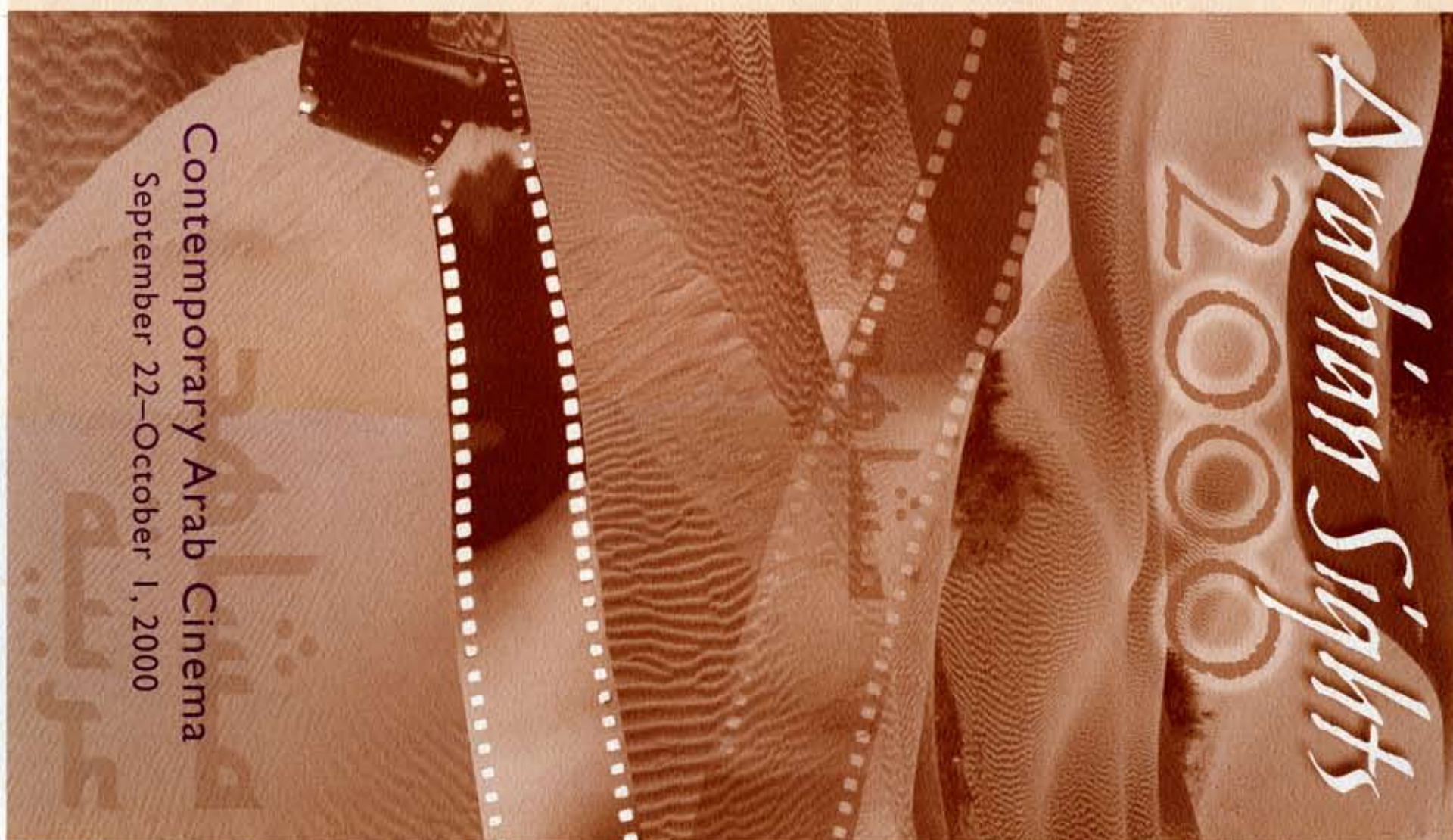
## For more information on

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



Filmfest DC



THE WASHINGTON, DC  
INTERNATIONAL  
FILM FESTIVAL  
P.O. Box 21396  
Washington, DC 20009