

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 characterizations 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, Merzak Allouache, Algeria/France, 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 facing 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, Alilo, a country boy from Algeria who has been sent to Paris to pick up a suitcase full of fancy dresses. Alilo 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 Algiers. During this unforeseen stay, Mok and Alilo become involved in a series of misadventures in one of Paris' fringe neighborhoods.



Syria
Stars in Broad Daylight

Friday, January 24th at 7:00 pm
Saturday, January 25th at 6:30 pm

(1988, Usama Muhammad, Syria, 115 min.) In his debut feature, Director Usama Muhammad depicts a wedding that becomes a funeral as the divisive dynamics of patriarchal forces, both familial and political, are actualized in violence. Muhammad's classic work underlines the desires and attempts of individuals to escape their realities and their search for the noon stars which never come out.

Tickets: Admission is \$6.00 per person for each screening. Tickets 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)

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

Syria
Dreams of the City
Friday, January 24th at 8:30 pm
Saturday, January 25th at 9:15 pm

(1983, Muhammad Malas, Syria, 126 min.) From the director of *The Night*, this partly autobiographical first feature by Muhammad Malas is also an outstanding film teeming with life on the streets during the 50's and 60's, a crucial period in modern Syrian and Arab history. Malas challenges the image of the virtuous poor and describes the emotionally gripping effect, particularly on women, of the idealized Arab family's strong embrace.



Tunisia
Honey and Ashes

Friday, January 24th at 9:15 pm
Saturday, January 25th at 7:00 pm

(1996, Nadia Fares, Tunisia/Switzerland, 85 min.) Director Fares' first feature film is an intelligent and dramatically involving story focusing on three Tunisian women caught between tradition and modernity. Naima is a doctor, Amina an academic, and Leila a young student. Although their age and social backgrounds differ, their paths cross, bringing to light the multiple obstacles which society had placed in their way.



Egypt
The Asphalt Devils

Friday, January 31st at 6:30 pm
Saturday, February 1st at 8:30 pm

(1995, Ossama Fawzi, Egypt, 105 min.) The pressures of life in lower middle-class Cairo come vividly to the screen in Director Ossama Fawzi's debut film about three minibus drivers who spend their off hours engaged in adulterous 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, Fawzi 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, Ridha Behi, Tunisia, 88 min.) In this timely film, Richard, a French TV journalist, arrives in Israel to do a report on the state of Israeli-Arab relations on the eve of the Rabin-Arafat peace accord and to see his old girlfriend Esther, an Israeli psychologist. Richard's taxi driver is Hammoudi, nicknamed "Local Radio", whose family had been displaced in 1948. Hammoudi recently saw a photo of his long-lost grandmother in an Arabic newspaper and he and his elderly father decide to look for her. Richard attempts to bring together on TV Hammoudi's elderly father, Anis, and Esther's father Moshe, 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 interwoven stories offer timely insights into the current Palestinian mindset. Abu Said, a former policeman, hails political developments like the signing of the peace agreement, but 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 eldest son from prison, and busies herself finding him a bride. At the center of the film is Haifa, an endearing character who roams the streets of Gaza and is privy to all its stories.



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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.

Special thanks to:

The Museum of Fine Arts in Houston for presenting
Arabian Sights from February 28 to March 9, 1997
The League of Arab States
National U.S. - Arab Chamber of Commerce
American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee
Pacific Film Archive and The Rockefeller Foundation
Cineplex Odeon Theatres

The Official Radio Station of Filmfest DC



AMERICAN UNIVERSITY RADIO

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

January 24 to February 1

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1997 Contemporary Arab Cinema



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