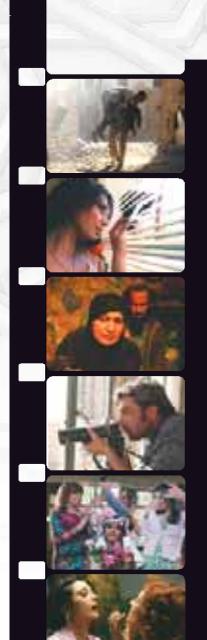


مهرجان السينما العربية

stories of love, loss and luminosity...



www.sydneyarabfilmfestival.com

2008
SYDNEY
ARAB
FILM
FESTIVAL

APRIL 10-13
RIVERSIDE THEATRES
PARRAMATTA

Whether it is about love, politics, dispossession, or the very ordinariness of life itself, the Sydney Arab Film Festival (SAFF) is testimony to the burgeoning creative output by Arabs across the globe.

Highlighting images and stories generated within Arab communities, rather than those propagated *about* them, can make crucial, creative interventions into the landscape of cultural politics today — made on Arab communities' own terms, rather than being imposed by others.

We at Information and Cultural Exchange (ICE) love turning cultural stereotypes inside out. So we're very proud to support SAFF, through our role in managing the Festival and giving it a 'home' in 2008.

I congratulate the Festival Committee and its energetic Directors, Mouna Zaylah and Fadia Abboud, who have curated a rich, diverse and sumptuous program of films.

This festival would not be possible without the support ICE and SAFF receive from our many sponsors (see back cover). In particular, ICE's core partners Arts NSW and the Australia Council, and the Festival's principal sponsors Parramatta City Council, NSW Film and Television Office, World Media International, Etihad Airways and Coast Clothing.

This year is particularly exciting for ICE as we will be launching *Changing Lives*, a selection of short videos by emerging young Arab Australians from Western Sydney, made for online distribution on video blogs. This exciting initiative adds very local Arab voices to the rich selection of offerings from around the world.

I hope that the 2008 Sydney Arab Film Festival is a place where people come together to exchange through and in-between films.

Lena Nahlous
Director, Information and Cultural Exchange (ICE)



www.ice.org.au



As Australian-born Arabs, the geographical distance between this home and our parents home is far, but in our hearts they are neighbours that share a coffee in the morning, attend each other's parties, and sometimes argue over who is going to fix the fence... their co-existence gives us the reason to bring you this festival.

Another reason the Sydney Arab Film Festival exists is that Arabic is the second most spoken language after English in New South Wales homes*. Too few Arab faces appear on screens in Australia, and when they do, we feel that these representations rarely reflect our lives, culture and experiences.

This year was an important year for Indigenous Australians to be acknowledged — and we too say Sorry.

To mark the 60 year anniversary of the Nakba, we dedicate this festival to the Palestinian people's dispossession past and present.

The Arab world is still in turmoil and from this landscape, stories of love, loss and luminosity are produced and we bring them to you.

With love, Mouna and Fadia

* Census 2006

The Sydney Arab Film Festival aims to showcase stories from Arabic speaking cultures to all Australian audiences that reflect the complexity and diversity of Arab experiences. We aim to address the (mis)representations of Arab culture through film by providing critical spaces and exposure to commentary and alternative representations and self-representation.



OUR HISTORY

The Sydney Arab Film Festival was first held in April 2001 over three days at The Roxy Parramatta. In 2004, A Big Night of Arab Shorts was held at Hoyts Merrylands. In 2005, the 2nd Sydney Arab Film Festival screened 48 local and internationally produced films

across Campbelltown, Parramatta and Bankstown. In 2007, the 3rd festival was presented in Parramatta over a month of Sundays, coordinating a program of films, forums, a multimedia exhibition, and hosting international filmmakers from Lebanon, Palestine and Egypt.

The Sydney Arab Film Festival has continued to grow and develop with the strong support of our partners, sponsors and funding bodies. ICE is committed to supporting the festival to become an independent and sustainable entity.

SAFF TEAM

FESTIVAL CO-DIRECTORS	Fadia Abboud and Mouna Zaylah
PUBLICIST	Sarah Goodes
GRAPHIC DESIGN	Soraya Asmar and Meiying Saw
SPONSORSHIP	Alissar Gazal and Mohamed Duar
VIDEO ARTIST	Fadle El Harris
WEBSITE MANAGER	Maissa Alameddine
MULTIMEDIA SUPPORT	Fatima Mawas

ORGANISING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Dr Paula Abood	Mohamed Duar	Alissar Gazal
Dr Phil George	Fatima Mawas	Firas Naji
Khaled Sabsabi		

SPECIAL THANKS

The 2008 Sydney Arab Film Festival has come together with the support and commitment of many individuals, our partners, funding bodies and sponsors. We would like to acknowledge the support of Tony Ishak and Rachele Sleiman from World Media International - Kon Gouriotis, OAM, Nicholas Tsoutas and Paola Niscioli from Casula Powerhouse - Robert Love, Pene Bloch, Elke Chapman, Jonathon Llewellyn, Ian Phipps and Zillah Morrow from Riverside Theatres Parramatta - Karly Smith, Tanya Sadeghi-Assl, Vivian Accardo and Jo-Anne Kew from Parramatta City Council - Consul General Tarek Abousenna, Vice Consuls Mohamed Nasr and Bassel Taman from the Consulate of Egypt in Sydney - Louise Balletti Collins and Sandie Don from Hopscotch Films - Ayman Ouda, Palestinian Film Festival (Melbourne) - Rasha Salti, CinemaEast - Sonia El Feki, San Francisco Arab Film Festival - David Moore, Port Restaurant and Bar - Layla Naji, Tamer Ezzat, Kamal Nassif, Louise Wadley, Mohamed Tohami, Eman Naggar, and Charlotte Harvey.

VERY SPECIAL THANKS to the ICE team and Management Committee and all the people that come and go from time to time, doing what they can to make things happen including all our volunteers, placements, consultants, family and friends.





AWARDS

Cannes Directors' Fortnight Selection, 2007
San Sebastian Film Festival Youth Award, 2007
San Sebastian Film Festival TCM Audience Award, 2007
San Sebastian Film Festival Sebastiane Award, 2007
Middle East International Film Festival, 2007
Abu Dhabi Black Pearl for Best Actress for Nadine Labaki, Yasmine Al Masri, Joanna Moukarzel, Gisele Aouad, Siham Haddad and Aziza Semaan.
Variety Middle East Filmmaker of the Year for Nadine Labaki
Nadine Labaki, voted one of Top Ten Directors to Watch, by Variety Magazine

Caramel / Sukkar Banat

Lebanon | 2007 | 96 mins | Dir: Nadine Labaki

Layale loves Rabih, but Rabih is married.

Nisrine is Muslim and her forthcoming marriage poses a problem: she is no longer a virgin.

Rima is tormented by her attraction to women and especially to this lovely client with long hair.

Jamale is refusing to grow old.

Rose has sacrificed her life to take care of her elderly sister.

In Beirut, five women meet regularly in a beauty salon, a colourful and sensual microcosm of the city where several generations come into contact, talk and confide in each other. Between haircuts and sugar waxing with caramel, their intimate and liberated conversations revolve around men, sex and motherhood.

SPECIAL THANKS TO HOPSCOTCH FILMS, THE AUSTRALIAN DISTRIBUTOR FOR CARAMEL.

Hopscotch



Caramel is proudly brought to you with the support of World Media International, a principal sponsor of the 2008 Sydney Arab Film Festival.

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FRIDAY 11 APRIL | 7pm



Beirut Diaries: Truth, Lies and Videos

Lebanon | 2006 | 80 mins | Dir: Mai Masri

Beirut Diaries follows a young woman's experience within a tent camp in downtown Beirut that served as the physical and emotional heart of the protest movement after the assassination of Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri. The film focuses on the young people's dream of changing the fundamental order of Lebanese politics, the division that threatened it and the tragic events that followed.

AWARDS

Best Documentary, Asia Pacific Screen Awards, Australia, 2007.
First Prize, Institut du Monde Arabe Film Festival, Paris, France, 2006.
Special Tribute, Ismailia International Film Festival, Egypt, 2006.

To subscribe call MySat on 02 9747 1011. www.mysat.tv

Palestine Films and Forum

To mark the 60th Anniversary of the Nakba, the catastrophe of 1948, we present films from Palestine, and guest speakers.



The Iron Wall

Palestine | 2005 | 52 mins | Dir: Mohammed Alatar
Feature documentary examining the occupation of Palestine, with particular focus on the settlements and construction of the apartheid wall. Prominent Israeli and Palestinian peace activists and political analysts shed light on both the historic and contemporary predicament.



Women in Struggle

Palestine | 2004 | 56 mins | Dir: Buthina Cnaan Khoury
Four women talk about their time in an Israeli prison, coming out of their regular roles as sisters, mothers and wives, to be involved in the Palestinian national struggle for independence.



Make a Wish / Itmanná

Palestine | 2006 | 12 mins | Dir: Cherien Dabis
What begins as a simple trip to the bakery turns into a journey that depicts not only the subtle tensions of a politically charged environment, but also illustrates the grief that can result from growing up under occupation.



Before the Wind Blows / Le Petit Oiseau Va Sortir

Canada | 2006 | 18 mins | Samer Najari
Three people prepare to depart on different suicide operations — a Japanese pilot during World War Two, a young Lebanese woman during the civil war of the 1980s, and a young Palestinian man from a refugee camp in the Occupied Territories. Before setting off on their missions, each has their portrait taken.

FORUM

Guest speakers will follow the screenings:

Maher Mughrabi Writer and journalist, *The Age*, Melbourne

Randa Abdel-Fattah Lawyer, writer and author of the acclaimed novel, *Does My Head Look Big in This?*

Seventh Heaven

Egypt | 2007 | 100 mins | Dir: Saad Hendawy

Hanan, a woman with a hidden past, gets into a relationship with Bakr, a Suffi dancer with his own history. They discover new horizons and meanings in their lives through this relationship whilst Bakr's son, a troubled boy, is trying to find his own path in life, frustrated with his day to day work. A spiritual and visually impressive experience.

"Come... whoever you are"

Galal El Deen El Roomy - Rumi.



Meet and Mingle with the filmmaker

Saad Hendawy is an Egyptian filmmaker who has directed seven short films, six documentaries and most recently, his first feature. He studied film directing at Higher Institute of Cinema, Egypt and holds a Bachelor degree and a Graduate Diploma.

Hendawy's love for films is inspired by his childhood and his mother's enthusiasm for Indian cinema, particularly the music and dance elements. Hendawy says, "Both India and Egypt have a very old culture and the stories that the films of each country tells are not dissimilar. His first feature film *Seventh Heaven*, shot during Ramadan in old Cairo, is based on Hendawy's inspiration of Sufism. His film not only shares the story of love between a woman and a male dancer, but shares the spiritual beauty of Sufism.

Hendawy's films cater to human interests, feelings and spirituality. They are about the needs that one feels obliged to fulfill, the needs of the body and the soul.



MADE POSSIBLE WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE CONSULATE OF THE REPUBLIC OF EGYPT, SYDNEY AND EGYPTIAN FILM CENTRE, CAIRO.



PRINCIPAL SPONSOR OF THE SYDNEY ARAB FILM FESTIVAL, BRINGING TO AUSTRALIAN SHORES EGYPTIAN FILMMAKER, SAAD HENDAWY



Red and Blue / Azraa Wa Ahmar

Egypt | 2006 | 12 mins | Dir: Mahmood Soliman

A young man and a girl face obstacles in their secret love affair.

SCREENED

Tribeca International Film Festival, US, 2007
International Short Film Festival, La Citadella, Italy, 2007
Rotterdam Arab Film Festival, Netherlands, 2007
Algeria Arab Film Festival, Algeria, 2007
Venice International Short Film Festival, Italy, 2007
International Euro Arab Film Festival, Spain, 2007



Rise and Shine / Sabah Elfoll

Egypt | 2006 | 9 mins | Dir: Sherif Elbendary

Sanaa is having a difficult morning. Frantically running around after her husband and family; she's late for work, the baby is crying and she can't find the keys to her apartment.

SCREENED

6th Rotterdam Arab Film Festival
4th Cinema Days, Beirut, Lebanon
4th Tangier Mediterranean Short Film Festival, Morocco
28th Mediterranean Cinema Festival, France
21st Carthage International Film Festival, Tunisia
12th Mediterranean Film Festival, Rome
3rd Dubai International Film Festival



The TV is Coming / Talfaza Jaya

Tunisia | 2006 | 95 mins | Dir: Moncef Dhouib

"The TV is coming! The TV is coming!" The small Tunisian village of el-Malaga erupts in excitement upon the arrival of a German television production. The town's cultural committee springs into action to welcome the imagined European and American audiences, each member attempting to impose a different version of the ideal history of el-Malaga. This hysterical film explores the peculiarities of a small town and its visions of the West.

SCREENED

Carthage Film Festival, 2006
Cairo International Film Festival, 2006
Dubai International Film Festival, 2006



Lebanon Films and Forum

Screening locally made documentaries that investigate the 2006 Israel war on Lebanon, followed by a discussion with the filmmakers. A selection of films by Australian and Lebanese filmmakers provide us with an insight as we continue to try and understand the political and social fabric of Lebanon, recovering from its past and looking to the future.

Lebanon Burning

Australia | 2007 | 52 mins | Dir: Peter Manning

In 2006, after ten years of stability, prosperity and relative peace, Israel wages war on Lebanon following the kidnapping of two Israeli soldiers. Israeli bombs targeted civilian factories and infrastructure, effectively setting back the cause of progress in Lebanon by twenty years. *Lebanon Burning* investigates the object of war, and provides a personal account of its effects from ordinary citizens who became the real targets. Produced by Mohsen Safieddin.



A Wishful Smile

Australia | 2007 | 12 mins | Dir: Mirna Nassar

Two residents of Qana in southern Lebanon speak of their loss and struggles, to make sense of the bombing of their village and the devastation it has brought to their lives.

FORUM

Following the screenings, the filmmakers will be present for a forum:

Mirna Nassar Filmmaker

Mohsen Safieddin Producer

Peter Manning Journalist, academic and author of *Us and Them:*

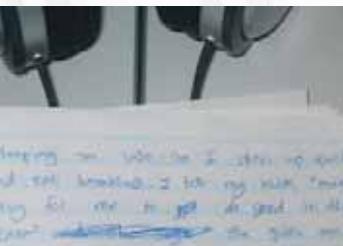
A Journalist's Investigation of Media, Muslims, and the Middle East.

Changing Lives Launch

Stories from young Australian women from Iraq

Be the first to experience these powerful shorts, made as part of the Changing Lives video blogging project. In this phase of the project, Iraqi young women from Western Sydney will screen digital stories created as part of their video blogs. Meet the video-makers as they share their stories of harrowing journeys by boat to Australia, their time in detention, stories of longing for family left behind, and dreams of future lives in a new land.

The films screen prior to our closing night feature, Underexposure.



A PROJECT OF INFORMATION AND CULTURAL EXCHANGE (ICE), WITH SUPPORT FROM AUBURN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT NETWORK. THIS PROJECT HAS BEEN MADE POSSIBLE THROUGH THE AUSTRALIA COUNCIL FOR THE ARTS, ARTS NSW AND SWITCH MULTIMEDIA AND DIGITAL ARTS ACCESS CENTRE.



Underexposure

First feature film made by an Iraqi since the US led invasion
Iraq | 2005 | 74 mins | Dir: Oday Rasheed

A cast of characters riddled with both hopelessness and promise — a determined filmmaker working with only expired film, a wounded soldier wrapped in bandages and prayers on the brink of death, an old man full of memories of Baghdad that are now only nostalgia, and most importantly, a city in rubble still filled with desire, compassion and perseverance. The stories of these fictional characters are woven together and set into real footage of the landscape of war-torn Iraq, resulting in a gripping view of the symbolic and the experienced realities of contemporary Iraqis.

SCREENED

Rotterdam International Film Festival, Netherlands, 2007 (World Premiere)
Febio Festival, Czech Republic, 2005
Arab Film Festival Japan, 2005
Singapore International Film Festival, Singapore, 2005
Arab Film Festival, The Netherlands, 2005
Durban International Film Festival, South Africa, 2005
Munich Film Festival, Germany, 2005
Osians Cinefan Asian Film Festival, New Delhi, India, 2005
Alexandria International Film Festival, Egypt, 2005
La Mostra de Valencia, Valencia, Spain, 2005

CALENDER OF ALL EVENTS

THURSDAY 10 APRIL

7pm Caramel **Opening Night**

FRIDAY 11 APRIL

7pm Beirut Diaries

SATURDAY 12 APRIL

3pm **The Iron Wall** **+ Forum on Palestine**
Women in Struggle
Make a Wish
Before The Wind Blows

7pm **Seventh Heaven** **+ Discussion with the director**
Red and Blue **of *Seventh Heaven*, Saad Hendawy**
Rise and Shine

SUNDAY 13 APRIL

12pm **The TV is Coming**

3pm **Lebanon Burning** **+ Forum on Lebanon and**
A Wishful Smile **discussion with the filmmakers**

7pm **Underexposure** **+ Launch of Changing Lives**
Changing Lives **screening digital stories**

All non-English language films are subtitled. All festival events begin at the advertised times, however ending times may vary according to the session program.

CLASSIFICATION The Office of Film and Literature Classification Board has approved the screenings of these films. Persons under 15 must be accompanied by a parent or adult guardian.



Be an Agent of Change

We believe that new stories and perspectives have the power to change our world for the better.

Information and Cultural Exchange (ICE) is a non-profit organisation that runs creative community projects with young people and diverse communities across Western Sydney.

ICE is working with Arabic-speaking youth on the Agents of Change project to build confidence and skills through film and digital media, and has produced two short films, by and about young Arab-Australians.

We share an ambition with the group to make a feature-length film by and about young people from Arabic-speaking backgrounds in Sydney.

Help us work with them to bring their stories to life!

Contact Mouna on 02 9897 5744
or mouna.zaylah@ice.org.au, or visit
www.ice.org.au/agentsofchange.

Donate to the ICE Public Fund
Account Name:
Information and Cultural Exchange Inc.
BSB: 032078 Account: 232334

ICE is a registered tax concession charity with deductible gift recipient (DGR) status. Donations of over \$2 are tax deductible.
Email accounts@ice.org.au to confirm your donation and get a receipt.

www.ice.org.au

THE SYDNEY ARAB FILM FESTIVAL IS MANAGED BY ICE AND DRIVEN BY AN ORGANISING COMMITTEE.

TICKET PRICES

Opening Night \$30 per person

Session Tickets \$15 / \$10 / \$5 under 12s (excludes opening night)

Marathon Package \$72 / \$48

(20% discount for six sessions Friday 11- Sunday 13 April)

Marathon Package provides tickets to all sessions excluding opening night, and can only be purchased by phone or in person.

Please note: Tickets purchased on-line and by phone will incur a booking fee of \$3.30.

HOW TO BOOK

ONLINE Bookings can be made online, via the Riverside Theatres website.

BY PHONE By calling Riverside Parramatta on: 02 8839 3399

IN PERSON By visiting the box office located on the Cnr of Church and Market Streets, Parramatta.

Riverside Theatres accepts VISA, Mastercard, Bankcard, American Express, cash and money order.

OPENING HOURS:

The Box Office is open Monday to Friday 9.00am to 5.00pm, Saturday 9.30am to 1.00pm and one hour prior to session times.

CONDITIONS

- All tickets purchased over the internet can only be collected from the Riverside Box Office. To do so you must be the credit card holder or have a letter of authorisation signed by the credit card holder.
- Dates and times are correct at the time of publication, but may need to be altered. We therefore reserve the right to withdraw, change and replace programs without notice.
- All seating is unreserved.
- Festival tickets once acquired are non refundable.
- We anticipate that door sales will be available for most festival sessions however this cannot be guaranteed. Patrons are urged to purchase their tickets well in advance to avoid disappointment.
- All films have English subtitles unless otherwise indicated on the program.
- Lost or stolen tickets will not be refunded or replaced.
- All festival films start at the advertised starting times.



VENUE

Riverside Theatres is located on the banks of the scenic Parramatta River in the heart of Parramatta — within walking distance to cheap parking and all major public transport.

FERRY It is a 50 minute ride by Rivercat Ferry from Circular Quay. The Parramatta ferry terminal is a 5 minute walk from the theatre. Follow the pathway along the river from the terminal.

BUS All major bus services are available in Parramatta. Take routes L20 or 520 from Circular Quay. The nearest bus stop to the theatre is in front of the Brandsmart Shopping Centre.

TRAIN Parramatta is linked from all directions by train. Catch the Western Line direct from Wynyard, Town Hall or Central, or if travelling on Northern or Southern lines change at Strathfield. The theatre is approximately an 8 minute walk from the station. Exit from Darcy Street, turn right in to Church Street and follow it up to the theatre, which is just on the other side of the Lennox Bridge.

PARKING The closest carpark to the theatre is the Brand Smart Shopping Centre carpark. Access is off Phillip Street, between the Crowne Plaza and the GE building.

DISABILITY ACCESS Riverside Theatres offers level access to all venues. Accessible bathrooms are also available. Wheelchair access is available in all theatres. A hearing loop is installed in the Riverside Theatre only. Hearing devices with a T-Switch can access this system. Limited paid parking is available at the venue for patrons with a current disability parking permit. Patrons with particular seating needs, parking requirements, guide dogs or other special needs should advise Box Office at the time of booking.

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THE SYDNEY ARAB FILM FESTIVAL IS DRIVEN BY AN ORGANISING COMMITTEE AND MANAGED BY INFORMATION AND CULTURAL EXCHANGE (ICE). ICE RECEIVES CORE SUPPORT FROM ARTS NSW AND THE AUSTRALIA COUNCIL FOR THE ARTS.



www.ice.org.au



www.arts.nsw.gov.au



Australian Government



www.australiacouncil.gov.au