

Abu Dhabi, UAE - September 14, 2010

The Abu Dhabi Film Festival's New Fund for Arab Filmmakers Announces First Round of Grant Recipients

The Abu Dhabi Film Festival today announced the first round of recipients of its recently launched *Sanad* film fund. A total of US\$500,000 in grants for development and post-production is being provided to 28 outstanding feature-length narrative and documentary films by both new and established filmmakers from all over the Arab world. A list of the selected projects follows below.

Sanad is the Abu Dhabi Film Festival's development and post-production fund. It provides talented filmmakers from the Arab world with meaningful support from within the region towards the development or completion of their feature-length narrative and documentary films.

Established in April 2010, *Sanad* (a synonym for "support" or "help" in Arabic), provides grants to both upcoming and established Arab filmmakers in two categories: development funds of up to US\$20,000 and post-production funds of up to US\$60,000 per project. The film world responded with great enthusiasm to the launch of *Sanad*, with dozens of submissions being made in the first few weeks alone.

During the selection process, the *Sanad* team was excited to discover a fascinating new trend in Arab film: a large number of filmmakers from all over the region are developing experimental, daring films. Describing 2010 as the 'Year of the Independents', the team noted that there was a marked trend towards artistic innovation and radical departures from the conventional in style, language and approach.

Interestingly, young directors are not the only ones taking thematic and stylistic risks; seasoned directors are also straying from the beaten path. Broken narrative structures, off-kilter characters and unconventional image composition are used to pose serious questions about the status quo. Even though political engagement remains mostly abstract and indirect, these films are bound to surprise viewers

"We are privileged to be the first-hand witnesses of such an exciting trend and we want to transmit this passion to audiences in Abu Dhabi and beyond. Artistic films can be difficult, but the courage of the directors, screenwriters, editors and actors to step away from formulas is one of the most reassuring signs of the vitality and potential of Arab filmmaking," said Marie-Pierre Macia, head of *Sanad*.

Peter Scarlet, executive director of the Abu Dhabi Film Festival, added, "I am not sure there has been a comparable trend towards artistic independence here since the late 1960s. These filmmakers are breaking the mold and developing a new cinematic vocabulary that is unique to the Arab region. It is our mission to provide these inspired artistic experiments with the support they need."

"We are committed to fostering a vibrant regional film culture and the high number of applications for *Sanad* shows that independent films are an important and growing part of it. These daring films reflect Abu Dhabi's spirit of openness and innovation and we are proud to help Arab filmmakers explore new directions," commented Eissa Saif Al Mazrouei, the Festival's project director.

As the first film fund in the region to be connected to a festival, *Sanad* benefits recipients not only through generous funding, but also from the international exposure of festival screenings as well as year-round publicity and support. Every October, the Festival is committed to showing many of the

Sanad-funded films.

There are two open calls for applications each year. The second cycle of *Sanad* grants will be announced in February 2011.

ABOUT THE FESTIVAL

The Abu Dhabi Film Festival (formerly the Middle East International Film Festival) was established in 2007, with the aim of helping to create a vibrant film culture throughout the region. The event, presented each October by the Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage (ADACH) under the patronage of its chairman H.H. Sheikh Sultan Bin Tahnoon Al Nahyan, is committed to curating exceptional programs to engage and educate the local community, inspire filmmakers and nurture the growth of the regional film industry.

With its commitment to presenting works by Arab filmmakers in competition alongside those by major talents of world cinema, the Festival offers Abu Dhabi's diverse and enthusiastic audiences a means of engaging with their own and others' cultures through the art of cinema. At the same time, a strong focus on the bold new voices of Arab cinema connects with Abu Dhabi's role as a burgeoning cultural capital in the region and marks the Festival as a place for the world to discover and gauge the pulse of recent Arab filmmaking.

The Abu Dhabi Film Festival Press Office is at your disposal for any questions and further information. Email press@adff.ae or call +971 2 556 4000 to find out more.

SANAD

POST-PRODUCTION PROJECTS NARRATIVE

DEATH FOR SALE by **FAOUZI BENSAIDI**
MOROCCO | BELGIUM | FRANCE

IN THE LAST DAYS OF THE CITY by **TAMER EL SAID**
EGYPT | UNITED KINGDOM

OK, ENOUGH, GOODBYE by **RANIA ATTIEH, DANIEL GARCIA**
LEBANON

QUARANTINE by **ODAY RASHEED**
IRAQ | GERMANY

HERE COMES THE RAIN by **BAHIJ HOJEIJ**
LEBANON

MY BROTHER by **KAMAL EL MAHOUTI**
MOROCCO | FRANCE

ON THE PLANK by **LEILA KILANI**
MOROCCO | FRANCE

SUN DRESS by **SAEED SALMEEN**
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES | SYRIA

POST-PRODUCTION PROJECTS

DOCUMENTARY

IN MY MOTHER'S ARMS by **ATIA and MOHAMED AL-DARADJI**
IRAQ | UNITED KINGDOM

MOHAMMAD SAVED FROM THE WATERS by **SAFAA FATHY**
EGYPT | FRANCE

DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS NARRATIVE

AZIZA DOESN'T KNOW WHAT SHE SAYS by **NADIA EL FANI**
TUNISIA

DEAD SEA by **IHAB JADALLAH**
PALESTINE | FRANCE

ZANKA CONTACT by **ISMAEL EL MAOULA EL IRAKI**
MOROCCO | FRANCE

PLAYGROUND STORIES by **BRAHIM FRITAH**
MOROCCO | FRANCE

TRAIN STATION by **MOHAMED AL-DARADJI**
IRAQ | UNITED KINGDOM | NETHERLANDS

CHRONICLES OF MY VILLAGE by **KARIM BACHIR TRAUDIA**
ALGERIA | THE NETHERLANDS

IBN BATTUTA by **TARIQ TEGUIA**
ALGERIA | LEBANON | FRANCE | GREECE

MAY IN THE SUMMER by **CHERIEN DABIS**
JORDAN | FRANCE

THE STROKE by **HALA LOTFY**
EGYPT

VIA DOLOROSA by **SOBHI AL-ZOBAIDI**
PALESTINE

WHEN I SAW YOU by **ANNEMARIE JACIR**
JORDAN

WISH THE LIGHT HAS AN EYE TO SEE by **MOHAMAD MALAS**
SYRIA | FRANCE

FOREIGN BODY by **RAJA AMARI**
TUNISIA | FRANCE

DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS
DOCUMENTARY

LEBANESE ROCKET SOCIETY by **JOANA HADJITHOMAS, KHALIL JOREIGE**
LEBANON | FRANCE

MY JINN by **DALIA AL KURY**
JORDAN | GERMANY

IN SEARCH OF OIL AND SAND by **PHILIPPE LAURENT DIB**
EGYPT

AS IF WE WERE CATCHING A COBRA by **HALA ALABDALLA**
SYRIA | FRANCE

SEDUCTION by **OMAR AMIRALAY**
SYRIA