

ADFF Announces Second Round of SANAD Grant Recipients for 2011

Abu Dhabi, UAE — August 24, 2011

The Abu Dhabi Film Festival (ADFF) announced today the latest group of projects to receive financial support from SANAD, the Festival's fund for filmmakers from the Arab world. Each year, SANAD awards a total of \$500,000 in development and post-production grants to feature-length narrative and documentary projects.

Twelve new projects were chosen for the second cycle of SANAD, bringing the total to 23 projects for this year. The next deadline for submissions is February, 2012 and winners will be announced in April.

Launched in 2010, SANAD supports films at two key stages of the production process: development (up to US\$20,000 per project) and post-production (up to US\$60,000 per project). SANAD (which means "support" or "help" in Arabic) is committed to benefitting established filmmakers as well as newcomers.

Several films produced with the help of SANAD have gone on to critical acclaim at international festivals. Leila Kilani's *On the Plank* (Morocco) was selected for the 2011 Directors' Fortnight in Cannes. *Death for Sale* by Faouzi Bensaïdi (Morocco) and *In My Mother's Arms* by Atia and Mohamed Al-Daradji (Iraq) are both set to celebrate premieres at the Toronto International Film Festival next month. Both films have also been selected for ADFF's upcoming fifth edition (October 13-22, 2011).

This year's second cycle is also off to a good start: the Egyptian documentary *Tahrir 2011: The Good, The Bad & The Politician*, by Amr Salama, Ayten Amin and Tamer Ezzat, was included in the official selection of the Venice Film Festival just weeks after its completion.

"Through SANAD, we have the opportunity to support an exciting range of talents and there are few things that make us happier than seeing a project go on to international success, as has already been the case several times since the fund's launch," said Peter Scarlet, ADFF's Executive Director. "We've seen an interesting continuation and development of the trend that we noticed in the first rounds of SANAD: Experimentation, daring artistic choices and bold subjects stand out among this crop of projects. We're particularly thrilled that a number of films that reflect the vitality of Arab cinema right now will be included in this year's Festival lineup, which we will announce next month."

"We launched SANAD in response to the lack of funding opportunities from within the Arab world for films from the region. Europe, Asia and the Americas have many film funding sources and we wanted to help create a regional alternative. SANAD is now an important source of support for Arab filmmakers, providing a strong platform to present, promote and share their work with the international film community," said Eissa Saif Rashed Al Mazrouei, Director of Special Projects for ADACH.

"The twelve selected projects come from all over the region including, for the first time, Mauritania, Saudi Arabia and Yemen. Selecting them was as tough as it was exciting because of the high quality of the submitted projects, which hailed from all over the Arab world. The selection process confirmed the vitality and creativity of Arab cinema as it pushes for artistic independence and begins to reflect the Arab Spring," commented Marie-Pierre Macia, Director of SANAD. "We are also proud to have a large number of women filmmakers among the winning projects and are happy to be able to provide support to new films by acclaimed directors such as Hala Alabdalla, Joana Hadjithomas & Khalil Joreige, Annemarie Jacir, Jocelyne Saab, Samir and Abderrhamane Sissako."

The complete program of the fifth edition of the Abu Dhabi Film Festival (October 11-23, 2011) will be announced on September 21. Online sales and redemption of Festival and Elite passes start September 25. Online ticket sales start September 28.

Tickets will be available for purchase at all three Festival venues. Fairmont Bab Al Bahr and Marina Mall box offices open October 3. Abu Dhabi Theater box office opens October 13.

SANAD Winners, Second Cycle 2011:

Post-Production - Narrative

- *When I Saw You*, by Annemarie Jacir, Palestine/Jordan

Post-Production - Documentary

- *In Search of Oil & Sand*, by Philippe Laurent Dib, Egypt
- *After the Last Goal*, by Mahdi Fleifel, Lebanon/United Kingdom

- *Lebanese Rocket Society: The Strange Tale of the Lebanese Space Race*, by Joana Hadjithomas & Khalil Joreige, Lebanon/France
- *Tahrir Square 2011: The Good, The Bad & The Politician*, by Amr Salama, Ayten Amin and Tamer Ezzat, Egypt

Development - Narrative

- *Poisonous Roses*, by Fawzi Saleh, Egypt
- *Nothing Doing in Baghdad*, by Maysoon Pachachi, Iraq/United Kingdom
- *The Wall*, by Faouzi Bensaidi, Morocco
- *99*, by Hicham Lasri, Morocco
- *The Guest*, by Naji Abu Nowar, Jordan

Development - Documentary

- *The Pirates of Sale*, by Merieme Addou and Rosa Rogers, Morocco/United Kingdom
- *The Wanted 18*, by Amer Shomaly, Palestine/France/Canada

SANAD Winners, First Cycle 2011:

Development - Narrative

- *I Am Nojood, 10 Years Old and Divorced*, by Khadija Al Salami, Yemen
- *Mettou*, by Abderrahmane Sissako, Mauritania/France
- *Origins*, by Malek Bensmail, Algeria

Post-Production - Documentary

- *As If We Were Catching a Cobra*, by Hala Alabdalla, Syria/France
- *El Gusto*, by Safinez Bousbia, Algeria/Ireland/France

Development - Documentary

- *Iraqi Odyssey*, by Samir, Switzerland/Iraq/Germany
- *Miss Hissa Hilal*, by Stefanie Brockhaus, Saudi Arabia/Germany
- *My Love Awaits Me by the Sea*, by Mais Darwazeh, Jordan
- *No Direction Home*, by Guy Brooks and John Hollingsworth, UAE/Palestine/Jordan
- *Woman in Mediterranean Sea* (working title), by Jocelyne Saab, Lebanon/France

- *Yasmina and Mohammed*, by Regine Abadia, Algeria/Lebanon/France

ABOUT SANAD

SANAD (the term means "support" or "help" in Arabic) is an integral part of the Abu Dhabi Film Festival's commitment to independent, auteur and original filmmaking in the Arab world. Much more than just a film fund, SANAD is dedicated to providing year-round support and advice to grant recipients. Through the SANADLab, ADFF works closely with SANAD grantees, running workshops and panel discussions, and scheduling meetings with film experts and mentors during the festival each October. In 2010, SANAD awarded development and post-production grants to 27 productions, 11 of which were debut features. Altogether, 20 narrative and 7 documentary films received SANAD grants.

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. Presented each October by the Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage (ADACH) under the patronage of H.E. Sheikh Sultan Bin Tahnoon Al Nahyan, Chairman of Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage, the event 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.

To contact the Press Office, email press@adff.ae or call +971 2 556 4590.

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