

ADFF Presents Fun Films for Kids and Poignant Works about Childhood for Grownups

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Today, the Abu Dhabi Film Festival's popular **Family Day** returns with a fun-filled lineup of free screenings and hands-on activities, including face painting, live entertainers and the chance to walk the red carpet.

Launched with great success last year, Family Day allows parents to relax and catch one of the day's films for grownups while kids enjoy cinema magic in one of the special screenings for young audiences. Part of ADFF's "On Location" at Marina Mall, Family Day 2011 takes place at VOX Cinemas from 1:00 p.m. onwards.

Family Day films are not just for young audiences: Early film pioneer and visionary **George Méliès's short *A Trip to the Moon (1902)***, the world's first science fiction film, will be screened in a newly restored hand-colored version featuring a new original soundtrack composed by the French band Air - an absolute highlight of the Festival this year.

The 16-minute masterpiece will be presented by Serge Bromberg, a film historian and showman in the tradition of George Méliès himself. Bromberg's "Saved from the Flames" program, kindly supported by the French Embassy in Abu Dhabi, also includes silent films with live piano accompaniment, an early color film by the creator of Mickey Mouse, and Buster Keaton's long-lost final short, *The Love Nest (1923)*. Family Day 2011 also features a selection of animated short films by Swedish director Johan Hagelback at 3:45 p.m. at VOX 3.

Revered storyteller **Hirokazu Kore-Eda's new film *I Wish*** is a wistful fable about brothers separated by their parents' divorce that will enthrall audiences of all ages. When the boys hear a rumor that a miracle will occur at the moment that the new bullet trains connecting their cities first pass, they hatch a plan to fix their family plight. Kore-Eda's charming tribute to youthful spirit and optimism is screened at 3:15 p.m. at VOX 1.

Outside of the Family Day line-up, today's Festival program features a



number of **heartrending films about childhood and youth aimed at a grown-up audience**. Maiwenn's character-driven, gritty narrative *Poliss* follows the daily grind for the officers of the Child Protection Unit in northern Paris, showing the dedicated cops on and off the beat, facing their work and lives with a requisite dose of humor. Screening at 9:15 p.m., VOX 6.

Two films on today's program deal with the fate of orphaned children growing up in precarious circumstances. *In My Mother's Arms* is the highly anticipated **new film by Iraqi brothers Atia and Mohamed Jabarah Al Daradji**, a documentary about a makeshift foster home for orphaned boys in Baghdad. Faced by eviction, the boys find distraction by staging a musical performance, giving voice to their longing for a mother's unconditional love. Part of the Documentary Competition and supported by the Festival's SANAD film fund, *In My Mother's Arms* is screened tonight, 6:45 p.m. at VOX 8.

Lucky is the affecting story of an orphaned Zulu boy struggling to find a future in the harsh urban landscape of Durban. Based on director Avie Luthra's BAFTA-nominated 2005 short, the film is both a spirited coming-of-age drama and **a frank portrait of contemporary South Africa**. (6:30pm, VOX 1).

Capping off the day's films is a **Gala Screening of *The Double***, one of the highlights of this year's Showcase section. Director/writer Michael Brandt, actor Topher Grace and screenwriter Derek Haas will be taking to the red carpet for the film's world premiere here in Abu Dhabi. Richard Gere, Topher Grace and Martin Sheen star in Michael Brandt's new spin on the classic spy thriller. When the legendary – and supposedly dead – Soviet assassin "Cassius" resurfaces, CIA boss Tom Highland (Martin Sheen) calls in retired operative Paul Shepherdson (Richard Gere) and pairs him up with rookie FBI agent Ben Geary (Topher Grace) to track the Russian killer down. This screening takes place at 9:30 p.m., at Abu Dhabi Theater.

Nicolas Godin and Jean-Benoît Dunckel of the French electronic band air host **Scoring the Moon: A Master Class with Air** this afternoon. Godin and Dunckel have been creating ethereal, genre-defying music since their debut in 1998 with the album *Moon Safari*. Fittingly, these musical pioneers were selected to compose and perform a new score for the Cannes premiere of



the landmark full-color restoration of Georges Méliès' 1902 masterpiece, *A Trip to the Moon*. Air are no strangers to the film world, having won critical and popular acclaim for their score to Sofia Coppola's 2000 debut *The Virgin Suicides*. Co-presented by the French Embassy, Abu Dhabi. This special event take place at Fairmont Bab Al Bahr, Saker Ballroom A, at 2:00 p.m.

One of the films in this year's **Narrative Feature Competition** is *We Need to Talk About Kevin*, in which Tilda Swinton delivers a searing performance as Eva, a woman who never really wanted to be a mother – and certainly not the mother of an unlovable, manipulative boy who cruelly taunts her for her inability to impose her authority. Beautifully adapted by director Lynne Ramsay (*Ratcatcher*) from Lionel Shriver's international bestseller, the film is screened at 9:00 p.m., VOX 1.

Tonight's Waterfront Film is *Rough Hands*, Mohamed Asli's bold follow-up to his acclaimed debut *In Casablanca, Angels Don't Fly*. Populated by characters who bend the system to get by in a corrupt police state, the plot revolves around a barber with an underground business pushing paperwork through government officials, who conspires to help a neighbor to emigrate to Spain so she can reunite with her fiancé. Screening at the open-air cinema at the Fairmont Waterfront, at 7:30 p.m.

Another new film from Morocco is *The Source*, part of the Festival's **Showcase of recent feature films from around the world**. Directed by Radu Mihaileanu, *The Source* is a song-filled crowd pleaser that fearlessly takes on the issue of female empowerment in the Arab world. For the women of a remote village in Morocco's Atlas Mountains, fetching water means a dangerous daily trek high into the mountains and back. That is until Leila (Leila Bekhti) organizes a "love strike" – no affection toward the men until they build a water pipeline (5:45 p.m., Abu Dhabi Theater).

David Dusa's feature debut *Flowers of Evil*, also in the Showcase line-up, is a kinetic film that personalizes a historic event by setting an intimate love story squarely in the middle of it. After fleeing to Paris in the wake of the 2009 elections, Iranian student Anahita meets the free-spirited parkour dancer Rachid. As Anahita obsessively tracks real video footage from the frontlines of the protests, the turmoil in Tehran threatens to contaminate



their budding romance. Showing at 9:15 p.m. at VOX 2.

Saturday night also brings a special screening of *The Beginning and the End* (1961), part of the Festival's retrospective **Naguib Mahfouz – Man of Cinema**, in celebration of the 100th anniversary of the birth of the seminal Egyptian writer, who was the first Arab to win the Nobel Prize for Literature. Directed by Salah Abu Seif and based on Naguib Mahfouz's much-loved novel of the same name, the film is a masterpiece of Egyptian cinema, starring Farid Shawki and Omar Sharif. It tells the tragic tale of a penniless widow, who attempts to keep her family from sliding into misery. Screening tonight at 9:00 p.m., VOX 3.

The **Documentary Feature Competition** features the world premiere of SANAD grantee Safinez Bousbia's *El Gusto*, Algeria's version of *Buena Vista Social Club*. Told through the story of a group of Muslim and Jewish musicians who meet 50 years after being separated by the Algerian War, the film is a celebration of the power of music to transcend boundaries. Screening today at 4:30 p.m., VOX 5.

Two films selected for New Horizons Competition, the Festival's section for first- and second-time filmmakers, are screened today. This includes the world premiere of *Almost in Love*, by Sam Neave (Sundance pick *Cry Funny Happy*). Flush with indie spirit and shot in two uninterrupted 40-minute takes, *Almost in Love* tracks a love triangle among a group of thirtysomething New Yorkers on the universal quest for love and identity (9:30 p.m., VOX 4).

Stories Only Exist When Remembered, Julia Murat's elegant first feature, is reminiscent of a piece of haute couture: carefully cut and lovingly assembled. In a remote valley of northeastern Brazil, life moves along slowly for a community of aging citizens, until a young photographer arrives, opening a new set of eyes on the village. This screening takes place at 7:00 p.m., also at VOX 4.

If a Tree Falls: A Story of the Earth Liberation Front, by Academy Award® nominee Marshall Curry (*Street Fight*), is part of the Festival's **Our World Competition** for films that raise awareness about global environmental issues. The film explores the controversial Earth Liberation Front through



Daniel McGowan, whose past ties to ELF land him on trial for terrorism, turning his story into a harrowing examination of the consequences of political activism in post-9/11 America. 6:30 p.m., VOX 3.

Today's line-up also offers captivating insights into current Emirati filmmaking, with two programs of short films from the **Emirates Film Competition** being screened at Marina Mall this afternoon (2:45 p.m. and 6:00 p.m., both VOX 2).

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.

ADFF 2011 is made possible in part through the generous support of its partners: MAKE UP FOR EVER (Principal Partner); Jaeger-LeCoultre and Emirates Motor Company/Mercedes-Benz (Major Partners); Etihad Airways, VOX Cinemas, TwoFour54, YahLive, Blackberry and Abu Dhabi Media (Official Partners); CNN, Radio 1, Radio 2, OSN, MUBI, Synaxis Media and Variety (Media Partners) and Masdar (Our World Partner).

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