

DAY 3: REGIONAL TALENTS MAKING IT BIG ON THE WORLD STAGE

Highlights Saturday, October 26 2013

RED CARPET PREMIERE FEATURING IRRFAN KHAN MIDDLE EAST PREMIERE FOR *QISSA*, *GIRAFFADA*, *RAGS AND TATTERS*

Abu Dhabi, UAE – October 26, 2013: One of the great Bollywood/Hollywood cross-over stars, Irrfan Khan leads the delegation down the Emirates Palace red carpet ahead of tonight's Middle East Premiere of Anup Singh's film ***QISSA***, screening at 9pm. Khan, seen recently in *LIFE OF PI* and *THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN*, will join Singh and fellow cast members Rasika Dugal and Tillotama Shome for a Q&A after the screening of the film which tells the story of a Sikh family in post-partition Punjab. *QISSA* has enjoyed acclaim around the world, taking out the NETPAC Award in Toronto.

Two other films garnering a great deal of international attention have their Middle East Premiers today. ***GIRAFFADA***, the debut feature by Director Rani Massalha, highlights the absurdity of life under occupation in Palestine through a story about a young boy and a giraffe. The director will attend the screening, along with the film's stars Saleh Bakri (son of Mohammed Bakri, who also appears in the film) and Laure De Clermont-Tonnerre, and producers Antony and Jiries Cobti. ***RAGS AND TATTERS***, an Egyptian film that looks at the fallout of the Arab Spring through the eyes of a prisoner on the run, will screen in the Narrative Competition, with Director Ahmad Abdallah and star Asser Yassin in attendance.

There is also a World Premiere in the Documentary competition, the first screening of a project that took more than 10 years to complete. ***WHISPERS OF THE CITIES*** looks at life on the streets in Ramallah, Baghdad and Erbil (Kurdistan). Director Kasim Abid and Producer Larissa Abid will attend the screening.

Day three of the Festival also includes four sessions perfect for families. Thierry Ragobert's **AMAZONIA**, which closed the Venice Film Festival, has its Middle East Premiere today with the Director in attendance. This remarkable live-action adventure in 3D tells the story of a capuchin monkey, raised in captivity, who suddenly finds himself fighting for survival in the wilds of the Amazon jungle. Families with older children will be interested to see **BLACKFISH**, a gripping documentary about the consequences of keeping killer whales in captivity. The film's producer Manuel Oteyza and a whale trainer, Jeffrey Ventre, will attend the screening, which should make for a fascinating Q&A.

Families of all ages should not miss the chance to see **THE THIEF OF BAGDAD** (1940) on the cinema screen, part of our Special Program of restored classics. The film, shot in Technicolor, marks the first major use of chroma key (green screen) in film. It won numerous Academy Awards. Young families will especially enjoy the Short Film programme, **LOL WITH CLASSICS**, featuring timeless films by Buster Keaton, Charlie Chaplin and Pierre Etaix.

In a day full of highlights, try not to miss the World Premiere of **LOVE ME**, a Norwegian film screening in New Horizons Competition. The director, Hanne Myren, will be at the screening. In the Showcase section there's two Middle East Premieres: **PHILOMENA**, the new film from acclaimed British director Stephen Frears (*THE QUEEN*), which was runner up for the People's Choice Award in Toronto and **RUN FOR YOUR LIFE**, starring Naseeruddin Shah, the first film from Pakistan to be submitted to the Oscars for more than 50 years.

In our programme of Debut Films by Arab Filmmakers, 2013 Variety Middle East Filmmaker of Year winner Merzak Allouache's first film **OMAR GATLATO** (1977) screens, with the director in attendance. Last, but by no means least, in the Documentary section we'll be screening Italian entry **WALLS**, which probes the growing number of artificial barriers that divide the human race, such as a wall on the Mexico/US border.

Audiences also have another chance to see the future of Emirati film-making when the films competing in the STUDENT SHORT NARRATIVE and SHORT DOCUMENTARY sections of the Emirates Film Competition screen, with filmmakers in attendance. What a day!

ADFF TALKS FILM

At 3.00pm the panel discussion “**LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION**” looks at the trend for MENA countries to open film commissions to attract international film productions and what benefits this offers to local film makers.

At 5.00pm be inspired by the story of how a boy from Chennai became one of Hollywood’s most successful producers at “**IN CONVERSATION WITH ASHOK AMRITAJ**”. Amritaj, a one-time professional tennis player, has made over 100 films, including Opening Night film *Life of Crime* (2013) and *Ghost Rider: Spirit of Vengeance* (2012).

ADFF TALKS FILM sessions are open to the public and are free to attend.

The Abu Dhabi Film Festival runs from October 24 until November 2. The Ceremony for the winners of the Black Pearl Awards will take place on October 31.

- End -

To contact the Press Office, email press@adff.ae

Pictures and Footage can be downloaded from our FTP server.

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About The Abu Dhabi Film Festival

The Abu Dhabi Film Festival (ADFF), powered by twofour54, is presented each October to help create a vibrant film culture throughout the region. With a focus on Arab cinema and the wealth of emerging and established film talent from around the world, ADFF has become one of the most anticipated cultural events in Abu Dhabi, helping to enhance the Emirate as a hub of creativity.

Abu Dhabi Film Festival is committed to curating exceptional programs and engaging and educating the local community with their own and other cultures through the art

of cinema. The work of Arab filmmakers is presented in competition with that of the international film industry's most acclaimed talent.

About twofour54

twofour54, the commercial arm of the Media Zone Authority-Abu Dhabi, is one of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region's leading media and entertainment hubs. As part of its mission, twofour54 is driving the development of the creative industries in the region, supporting talent and content development initiatives, creativity and young entrepreneurs.

Its initiatives are contributing to the growth and diversity of the Abu Dhabi economy and its campus is home to over 200 local, regional and international companies, including Ubisoft, Cartoon Network, Sky News Arabia, CNN, Flash Entertainment, Sport 360, Reed Exhibitions, Charisma, Tahadi and Jawaker.

twofour54 provides a range of services including: training across all media sectors; business development and funding support to UAE nationals and other Arabs with great ideas; a creativity lab that allows members to get involved in creative projects; and it facilitates world-class content through its production and post-production facilities. These services are supported by tawasol, facilitating easy business set-up and providing ongoing support services.

twofour54 powers the Abu Dhabi Film Festival, Abu Dhabi Media Summit and TROPPEST Arabia each year to drive the development of a vibrant film and entertainment industry.