



Abu Dhabi, UAE – FOR RELEASE ON OCTOBER 20, 2011

ADFF Hosts Awards Ceremonies for Emirates Film Competition, Short Film Competition and *Variety's* Middle East Filmmaker of the Year

Tonight (October 20) the Abu Dhabi Film Festival 2011 presents two awards ceremonies ahead of the features awards night on October 21. The official **Awards Ceremony for the Emirates Film Competition (EFC) and International Short Film Competition** celebrates the best in short-filmmaking from across the region and around the world. Taking place at the Fairmont Bab Al Bahr, the event will award a total of 23 filmmakers (17 in the EFC and six in the Short Film Competition).

Also taking place today is a special lunchtime reception in honor of Iranian director **Asghar Farhadi, *Variety's* Middle East Filmmaker of the Year Award 2011**. Farhadi's most recent work, *A Separation*, is Iran's official entry for the 2012 Foreign Language Academy Awards and Farhadi is in Abu Dhabi to attend its Gulf premiere at the Festival tonight. The photo call, award ceremony and reception take place at 12:30 p.m. at the Fairmont Bab Al Bahr's Cedars Restaurant.

Farhadi's *A Separation* is a gripping family drama that revolves around issues of loyalty, truth and honor. The film celebrated a triumphant premiere at Berlin, where it was named Best Film and its skilled ensemble cast received both the major acting prizes – a sweep no previous Iranian film has ever earned at a Western film festival. *A Separation* is screened tonight at 9:00 p.m., at VOX 5.

Day eight at the Festival begins with **From Shorts to Features**, a panel discussion that brings together a group of directors to share their experiences, offer advice for budding filmmakers, and discuss current trends and issues facing the short film industry. What are the challenges of making the leap from shorts to features? What new artistic demands are placed on the writer, director and others? These and other questions will be addressed at this special event, taking place at the Fairmont Bab Al Bahr's Saker Ballroom A at 11:00 a.m.

Award-winning **British director Michael Winterbottom** (*In This World, The Road to Guantanamo*) **is in Abu Dhabi to present the Middle East premiere of his new feature *Trishna***, part of the Narrative Feature Competition lineup. This afternoon, festivalgoers have the opportunity to join Winterbottom as he shares anecdotes and insights into the making of *Trishna* at a press conference at 1:00 p.m. at the Fairmont Bab Al Bahr's Saker Ballroom A.

With *Trishna*, Winterbottom brilliantly transposes the Victorian melodrama of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, setting the tale of a woman's naïve rise and tragic downfall amid all the beauty and blight of contemporary India. When Trishna (Freida Pinto), a rural Indian woman who lives with her father, and Jay, the son of a wealthy London businessman, fall in love, they find their bond cannot withstand the pressures of rural

society as it clashes with modern life. *Trishna* plays at 9:45 p.m., at the Abu Dhabi Theater.

Tonight marks the **last screening in the Festival's popular new series of Waterfront Films**, shown outdoors on a giant screen on the Fairmont Bab Al Bahr's beach. Capping off the program is revered Italian filmmaker Nanni Moretti's new film *Habemus Papam!* Preceding the feature is *The Wholly Family*, a riveting short film set in Naples, directed by former Monty Python Terry Gilliam. This screening takes place at the Fairmont Bab Al Bahr's beach at 7:30 p.m.

***Elena*, by acclaimed Russian director Andrey Zvyagintsev**, is also part of the Narrative Feature Competition. *Elena*, second wife of the wealthy Vladimir, finds herself facing a difficult choice when she realizes she may be left with nothing as her husband reconnects with his disaffected daughter as he recovers from a heart attack. Outstanding performances and masterful direction make this unsettling family drama one of the most critically lauded films of the year. *Elena* is screened at 6:15 p.m. at the Abu Dhabi Theatre, followed by a Q&A session.

The Documentary Feature Competition continues today with a screening of **Gemma Atwal's *Marathon Boy***, a shocking saga of greed, corruption, exploitation and political conspiracy that revolves around an unlikely little subject: Budhia, an abandoned four-year-old boy who is molded into a champion marathon runner by his foster father, Biranchi Das. *Marathon Boy* plays at 9:30 p.m., VOX 4, followed by a Q&A session with the director.

***This Narrow Place*, by Sooney Kadouh**, is one of 12 films competing in this year's New Horizons Competition for first and second narrative features. In this sharply observant, confidently stylized debut, Hasan, a young Palestinian man, smuggles himself to the U.S. to obtain bomb parts for a terrorist plot back home. Screening at 6:45 p.m., VOX 4, followed by a Q&A session with the filmmaker.

Pedro Pérez Rosado's film *Tears of Sand* tells the story of Fatimetu, who – after 16 years in Spain – returns home to Samara in the Western Sahara, following her mother's funeral. Here she reunites with her brother and sister, who requires special care. Reluctantly, Fatimetu becomes her sister's caregiver, inspiring a family separated by different cultures to adapt and rediscover their identities. *Tears of Sand* is shown at 9:30 p.m., VOX 8, followed by a Q&A session.

Today, the Our World Competition presents ***Eco Pirate: The Story of Paul Watson*, Trish Dolman's personal portrait of the bad boy of the environmental movement**, who co-founded Greenpeace and then split when he thought they had gone soft. Now stalking the oceans in a raven-black titanium pirate ship waiting to ram whaling vessels and with his own cable TV show (*Whale Wars*), Watson is a rebel on a mission to save the oceans. *Eco Pirate* is screened tonight at 6:15 p.m., VOX 3, followed by a Q&A session.



The Festival's retrospective program **Naguib Mahfouz – Man of Cinema** features a special screening of the Mexican remake of one of Mahfouz's early masterpieces. *The Beginning and the End*, by Arturo Ripstein, tells the story of the Botero family, who find themselves facing poverty and the near impossibility of maintaining bourgeois respectability after the death of the paterfamilias. Ripstein seamlessly substitutes Mexico City for Cairo, removing the politics and inserting Freud and an operatic emphasis on the inexorability of fate. *The Beginning and the End* plays at 9:00 p.m., VOX 3.

The day's screenings also include two titles from the Showcase section, which highlights films that were celebrated at festivals around the world. One of them is **directing legend Martin Scorsese's *George Harrison: Living in the Material World***. Scorsese recounts the artist's journey, from the whirlwind of rock stardom to the quest for meaningful spirituality, through an incredible cache of never-before-seen footage and unreleased songs as well as emotionally charged interviews with intimates like Harrison's wife Olivia, Paul McCartney, Ringo Starr, Yoko Ono, Phil Spector, Eric Idle and Terry Gilliam. Screening at 7:30 p.m., VOX 1.

You might not expect "Wim Wenders" and "3-D" to appear in the same sentence, but in his most recent work ***Pina*** the revered German director uses the multidimensional format to pay stunning tribute to the late Pina Bausch, the most innovative choreographer in modern dance. **Germany's pick for the 2012 Foreign Language Oscars™** is both a eulogy to a formidable genius and a timeless tribute to the ecstatic power of dance. 7:30 p.m., VOX 6.

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



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