

# SANAD fund announces the first cycle of grants in support of Arab filmmakers 2014

## ***SANAD celebrates fifth anniversary and over 100 films and projects***

**Abu Dhabi, UAE (May 15, 2014)** – Abu Dhabi Film Festival’s fund, SANAD, today announced the first cycle of grants for 2014 to support the development and post-production of several films by filmmakers from across the Arab world.

Projects receiving post-production grants are *Cat*, directed by Ibrahim El Batout; *The Valley*, directed by Ghassan Salhab; *The Wanted 18*, directed by Amer Shomali and Paul Cowan; *Um Ghayeb*, directed by Nadine Salib; and *Pirates of Salé*, directed by Merieme Addou and Rosa Rogers.

Projects receiving development grants are *Money Babe*, directed by Hiner Saleem - who was previously awarded both a SANAD Development Grant in 2012 and Post-Production Grant in 2013 for his film *My Sweet Pepper Land*.

*Hedi*, directed by Mohammed Ben Attia, and produced by Dora Bouchoucha - who was previously awarded a SANAD Development grant in 2010 for the film *Foreign Body* which was directed by Raja Amari, and a Post-Production Grant in 2012 for the film *Cursed by The Phosphate*, directed by Sami Tlili, and received the “Best Film from The Arab World” at The Abu Dhabi Film Festival’ Documentary Film Competition.

Additional projects include *Catch the Moon*, directed by Sameh Zoabi; *Kiss Me Not*, directed by Ahmed Amer; *Sons of Sunday*, directed by Rami Kodeih; *The Golden Harvest*, directed by Alia Yunis; and *The Bird of the Mountains*, directed by Daoud Aoulad-Siyad

“SANAD seeks out bold, remarkable projects with the aim of encouraging intercultural dialogue and artistic innovation, while building strong networks within the region,” said Ali Al Jabri, Director of Abu Dhabi Film Festival. “SANAD also offers ongoing support and publicity for selected projects to connect filmmakers to potential partners, funding opportunities and audiences.”

Al Jabri added: “SANAD has enabled the production of original films that might not have made it past the concept stage without support, and supported filmmakers who have gone on to build successful careers in the industry. The fund has fueled creative talent and supplemented twofour54’s work in developing a major media hub in Abu Dhabi and the region.”

Abu Dhabi Film Festival (ADFF), which is powered by twofour54, the commercial arm of the Media Zone Authority – Abu Dhabi, will be celebrating SANAD’s fifth anniversary this October. ADFF has funded over 100 film projects as part of its mission to drive the emergence of a filmmaking hub in the UAE and the Arab World.

Both established and upcoming filmmakers with challenging and innovative projects applied for the grant. SANAD provides financial advice and technical guidance and encourages the successful applicant’s participation in festivals around the world. The successful projects this year were from Palestine, Iraq, Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, and Lebanon.

SANAD supported films have continually been featured at several international film festivals and have received international recognition by winning numerous awards and accolades. Some of these

films have been showcased at Cannes, 'After the Battle', directed by Yousry Nasrallah was in competition for the 2012 edition, 'My Sweet Pepper Land' by Hiner Saleem was shown in Un Certain Regard 2013, and 'On the Edge' by Leila Kilani was at The Directors' Fortnight 2011.

'The Good, The Bad, and the Politician' directed by Tamer Ezzat, Ayten Amin and Amr Salama and "As We are Catching the Copra" by Hala Al Abdallah, both funded by SANAD, were selected by the Venice Film Festival.

SANAD films have played a leading role in the selection of Arab films at the Toronto International Film Festival throughout the past four years. Some of these selected films were 'Death for Sale' by Faouzi Bensaïdi, and 'In My Mothers Arms' by Atia and Mohamed Jabarah Al-Daradji. The Arab films selected at last year's Berlinale included three films supported by SANAD; 'When I Saw You' by Annemarie Jacir, 'Coming Forth By Day' by Hala Lotfy and 'A World Not Ours' by Mahdi Fleifel, which was showcased at more than 100 international festivals, and gained more than 30 awards. This is a testament to SANAD's commitment in supporting projects by Arab filmmakers, while in development, and later as they begin post production.

Many films supported by SANAD have been recognised by leading international film festivals and have won prestigious awards globally. This is a testament to SANAD's commitment in supporting Arab projects with grants up to US\$20,000 for development and up to \$60,000 for post-production.

**-ENDS-**

**For further information, please contact:**

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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 films of Arab film directors are presented in competition with the ones of the most respected filmmakers from all over the world.

**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 260 local, regional and international companies, including Ubisoft, Cartoon Network, Sky News Arabia, CNN, BBC, 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 TROFPEST Arabia each year to drive the development of a vibrant film and entertainment industry.