

Abu Dhabi, UAE – October 13, 2010

The Abu Dhabi Film Festival 2010 Opens With Gala Screening of *Secretariat*

The Abu Dhabi Film Festival (October 14-23) is proud to celebrate the opening of its fourth edition with a Gala Screening of Randall Wallace's moving and thrilling new drama *Secretariat*. Screened at Abu Dhabi's iconic Emirates Palace hotel, the event kicks off ten days of exceptional cinema, featuring 172 films from 43 countries, 32 world premieres and 26 international premieres, as well as a packed program of special events, talks and workshops.

Adrien Brody, Gérard Depardieu, Clive Owen and many of the reigning stars of the Arab film world are travelling to Abu Dhabi for the event and are expected to grace the red carpet tomorrow (October 14). Fathy Abdel Wahab, Ghada Adel and Khaled Abol Naga lead a list of famous names that goes on to include Lebleba, Yehia el Fakharany, Yosra and many more.

Secretariat, starring John Malkovich and Diane Lane, is based on the remarkable true story of the 1973 Triple Crown-winning racehorse, whose success against all odds captured the imagination of people around the world. The plot revolves around housewife Penny Chenery (Lane), who agrees to take over her ailing father's stables, despite her lack of horseracing knowledge. With the help of veteran trainer Lucien Laurin (Malkovich), Chenery manages to navigate the male-dominated business, ultimately fostering the first Triple Crown winner in 25 years and what may be the greatest racehorse of all time.

In addition to the glitz and excitement of the red carpet, this year's Opening Night will offer a reminder of how festivals play a vital role in giving the members of the international film community an opportunity to meet and share ideas. Before the main film, there will be a screening of *The Accordion*, the latest work of the award-winning Iranian director Jafar Panahi, a short made as part of an international project in support of the Universal Declaration of Human rights. But Panahi, who was imprisoned last spring, is still not allowed to travel, so as happened recently at film festivals in Cannes, Venice and New York, the Abu Dhabi Film Festival will screen his film as a gesture of support for the importance of free expression and the open flow of ideas.

In addition to its roster of film screenings, the Festival also features a program of special events held in the Festival Tent at the Emirates Palace hotel and at the beautiful Abu Dhabi Theater. This year, numerous well-known actors and filmmakers from all over the world are coming to Abu Dhabi not just to attend the Festival, but also to share their experiences with the wider community. The Festival is pleased to host exclusive encounters with Abbas Kiarostami, Adrien Brody, Khaled Abol Naga, Lebleba, Julianne Moore, Uma Thurman, Yehia El Fakharany and Yosra. The program also includes a variety of free talks, master classes and live music performances, which will take place in the Festival Tent.

Moreover, the Festival features a return of the popular Family Day, sponsored by E-Vision. Taking place at Abu Dhabi Theater on Saturday, October 23, Family Day will present two special screenings, which are sure to delight both children and grown-ups: Charlie Chaplin's *The Circus* (1928) and a program of animated shorts selected from the highlights of the 2010 edition of the world's leading showcase of animated films, France's Annecy International Animation Film Festival.

"We look forward to welcoming our esteemed audience and guests here in Abu Dhabi for the fourth edition of our Festival, which represents each year the culmination of our efforts to nurture regional film culture and celebrate the spirit of cultural dialogue and excellence in filmmaking. Arab film is on the rise and, with the help of our newly established SANAD film fund, we are now able to help Arab filmmakers realize their full potential throughout the year," said Eissa Saif Rashed Al Mazrouei, the Festival's Project Director.

To find out the latest information about the Festival's program, please visit our website: www.abudhabifilmfestival.ae.

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. The event, presented each October by the Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage (ADACH) - recently described by Newsweek as the leading cultural organization in the Arab world - under the patronage of H.E. Sheikh Sultan Bin Tahnoon Al Nahyan, is committed to curating exceptional programs to engage and educate the local community, inspire filmmakers and nurture the growth of the regional film industry.

As the only Festival in the region where works by Arab filmmakers are represented equally in competition with 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 film.

The Abu Dhabi Film Festival is being held concurrently with the The Circle Conference, which takes place October 13-15, 2010. The Circle Conference is organized by the Abu Dhabi Film Commission. For more information visit: www.film.gov.ae.

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The Abu Dhabi Film Festival Press Office is at your disposal for any questions and further information. Email press@adff.ae or call +971 2 690 8339/+971 2 690 8340 to find out more.

Press Materials including pictures, biographies and press kits are available on: <http://www.abudhabifilmfestival.ae/en/press/press-center/>

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