

PRESS RELEASES

RELEASE 1

THE RED SEA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL SETS 2020 DATES

AND LAUNCHES 'THE RED SEA LODGE' SCRIPT & FEATURE LAB

*The inaugural Saudi Flagship Film Festival will run in Jeddah
from 12 - 21 March, 2020*

*Submissions will open for The Red Sea Lodge: "The New Arab Wave" Script & Feature Lab on 1 July,
2019*

Jeddah: 27 June, 2019 – The Red Sea International Film Festival announced today that the inaugural edition will be held from March 12 - 21, 2020 in the old town of Jeddah, on the Saudi Arabian Red Sea coast led by Festival Director and CEO Mahmoud Sabbagh and his newly appointed senior personnel. The first edition will bring the regional and international community together to experience the world's best films, educational workshops, informative industry master classes, immersive art experiences, experimental projects and other cinematic events.

The Red Sea International Film Festival's ambitious mandate is to develop and promote the film industry in Saudi Arabia and become a vital event to discover up-and-coming talent from the region and support a new wave of cinema from around the world with a focus on the Global South. The Festival will welcome local festival goers, filmmakers, actors, media and industry professionals to Jeddah to celebrate cinema over the course of 9 days.

With supporting and showcasing emerging talent from the Kingdom at the forefront, The Red Sea International Film Festival has launched The Red Sea Lodge: “The New Arab Wave”, a script & feature lab in collaboration with the TorinoFilmLab which will open for submissions on 1 July, 2019.

The Red Sea Lodge: “The New Arab Wave” will select 12 Arab projects of which at least 6 will be from Saudi filmmakers. Filmmakers will participate in a five-month support programme designed to develop their projects with national and international film industry experts.

The Red Sea Lodge will assign two \$500,000 awards to the best projects from the Script & Feature Lab and additional awards to financially support the further development of the projects.

The festival's film program aims to be robust and energetic, launching feature-length and short film works with an emphasis on diversity in storytelling styles that push narrative form, embrace risk-taking in their ideas, and value craft. With a focus on the Global South, the program will also showcase the best of Arab and international cinema across several program sections.

Hussain Currimbhoy, who previously served as a documentary programmer at the Sundance Film Festival, joins the Festival as Artistic Director, and Shivani Pandya Malhotra, who brings a wealth of experience from the Dubai International Film Festival after managing it for 15 years, joins as Managing Director. Industry veteran Antoine Khalife joins as Director of the Arab Programme, Samaher Mously as Director of Marketing and Communications and Ibrahim Modir as Head of Operations. They join acclaimed filmmaker Sabbagh and a team of Saudi and international programmers and executives with the mission to launch a dynamic platform for new films, energize the culture of cinema, develop talent, build a local industry, promote Saudi films regionally and internationally, create an active market and increase cultural exchange and understanding.

The Festival is supported by The Red Sea Film Festival Foundation, an independent, non-profit organization chaired by the Minister of Culture Prince Badr bin Abdullah bin Farhan Al-Saud, the first in the Saudi civil society law promoting the film culture. The Foundation aims at championing

the local new film industry in the country that focuses on nurturing national storytellers and local original narratives through the Festival and it's all year long education, grants programs and market initiatives.