

PRESS RELEASES

RELEASE 2

Red Sea International Film Festival announces Tamheed Fund award winners

The Red Sea International Film Festival has unveiled the two projects selected for the Tamheed Fund, each receiving production grants of \$500,000.

Two aspiring filmmakers, Faris Godus and Mohammed Alholayyil, will be supported to produce their first films, *The Book Of Sun* and *Forty Years and a Night*, respectively.

Sohayb Godus joins his brother Faris' project, *The Book of Sun* as the producer, while Abdulrahman Khawj will produce *Forty Years and a Night*.

The competition received 24 submissions, two of which were by female directors. Projects covered diverse geographic and social environments, from major cities to villages and deserts. A range of schools and approaches were represented, including realism, neorealism, psychodrama, sci-fi, and fantasy, with one animation project. The entrants tackled various themes, exploring cultural heritage in the Kingdom, complicated family relationships, passion for art, as well as self-realization. Several films focused on the changes taking place in contemporary Saudi society, exploring and documenting its transformation.

The Tamheed Fund was established to support the realization of Saudi-led feature films to premiere at the inaugural Red Sea International Film Festival, taking place in March 2020. The open call targeted filmmakers from Saudi and focused on films telling authentic local stories, with innovative visual approaches and daring narrative tools.

The Fund is part of the Red Sea International Film Festival's broad slate of programs and initiatives designed to support the rapidly developing Saudi film industry by encouraging a robust and sustainable infrastructure. It is added to the mentoring and development program including the **Red Sea Lodge**, as well as a **special omnibus film** project directed by the new wave of Saudi female directors. With further programs to be announced.

Synopsis of the awarded films:

Knowledge Sun tells the story of Hussam, a teenager set to graduate high school in 2010, until he becomes distracted by the wave of Saudi YouTube content creation reaching its peak. As he decides to make a no-budget feature film, he puts his whole educational future at risk.

Forty Years and a Night is the story of a family gathered together on Eid al-Fitr, discovering deep secrets hidden from each other for decades. The revelations will poison relationships, threaten the stability of the family, transforming their memories forever.

About the awarded filmmakers:

The Godus Brothers

Sohayb and Faris Godus came to fame through YouTube and digital media collective Telfaz11, working primarily in their Jeddah office. The brothers have also established their own pathways in film: Fares has created a name for himself directing and editing, while Sohayb developed his acting and production skills. Together, the Godus brothers made the short film *Depressing Scene* (2016) and recently participated in *Another Planet*, a TV series on Saudi TV for the 2019 Ramadan season.

Mohammed Alholayyil

Born in 1997 in Al-Ahsa, the young writer and filmmaker has made several short films including *Mator* and *300KM*. Screened in multiple Arab and regional film festivals to critical acclaim, his work is characterized by its in-depth analysis of issues with a dark sense of humor.

Abdulrahman Khawj

Among the pioneers of the independent Saudi film movement, Khawj founded Cinepoetics film production company in Jeddah. He has produced and directed two feature films: *Poetry Bride* (2017) and *Physical Specifications of Coffee* (2019). He has contributed to multiple short and feature films and lectures in screenwriting in Effat University.