

For immediate release

Red Sea International Film Festival announces 2021 Festival dates

New appointments as Festival restructures

Theme of Metamorphosis celebrates cinema's ability to adapt to post-industrial, digital new normal and as an interface between Saudi Arabia and the world

25 February 2021, Jeddah:

The 1st edition of the Red Sea International Film Festival will take place from the 11th to the 20th of November 2021 in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

The 2021 theme of "Metamorphosis" celebrates cinema as a force for positive change. It reflects on the Festival's local context: the impact of cinema's triumphant return to Saudi Arabia since 2019, as well as the blossoming local and regional film scenes, exploring how cinema culture can create an interface connecting a new, outward-looking Saudi and the world.

The 10-day Festival looks at how cinema has successfully adapted from analog to digital and to the new platforms delivering content. It will also focus on the changing role of women in cinema

The Festival is delivered by a team of Saudi and international curators, film specialists, and industry veterans, including Managing Director Shivani Pandya and Director of Arab Programs & Film Classics Antoine Khalife – both formerly of the Dubai International Film Festival. Film Critic Kaleem Aftab joins as Director of International Programming, bringing distinctive global cinema to Saudi across In Competition, Out-of-Competition, and thematic categories. Jumana Zahid leads the Red Sea Lodge, the Foundation's incubator for Saudi and Arab filmmakers, now in its second edition. The Red Sea Souk, the Festival's industry platform for distributors, sales agents, and producers is helmed by Zain Zedan, Industry/Souk Manager. The senior team, which has a 50/50 gender split, is completed by Ibrahim Modir, Head of Shared Services.

Members of the Red Sea International Film Festival team shall be attending the Berlin Film Festival and more programming details are set to be revealed in the coming months.

The inaugural edition of the Festival will take place in the UNESCO world heritage site of Jeddah Old Town in the cosmopolitan city on the Red Sea Coast. The physical event looks to life beyond the Coronavirus pandemic that postponed the Festival's debut in March 2020 and will bring together local film lovers, filmmakers, and international industry leaders. The Festival provides a vital new platform to strengthen creative connections between Saudi and the world with a program of the best in global cinema, classic and contemporary Arab film, alongside professional and industry strands.

Established in 2019, the Red Sea Film Festival Foundation celebrates excellence in film and fosters the resurgent creative energy of Saudi and Arab filmmakers. Through cinema screenings, masterclasses, workshops, exhibitions, and archiving projects, the Foundation cultivates talents from Saudi and across the Arab World. The annual Festival is for film lovers, filmmakers, and the global film industry and will be the largest annual celebration of cinema in the region.