

*For Immediate Release*

**Red Sea International Film Festival welcomes Edouard Waintrop  
as Artistic Director**

*Former Artistic Director of the Directors' Fortnight joins Red Sea International Film Festival to  
lead the team into the inaugural edition as Artistic Director*

*Julie Bergeron (Red Sea Souk Consultant) & Faiza Ambah (Special Program Manager) join the  
main festival team*

**Monday, June 14th, Jeddah – Saudi Arabia.**

The Red Sea International Film Festival (RSIFF) has announced Edouard Waintrop as its Artistic Director ahead of the inaugural edition in November 2021. Waintrop is an esteemed critic and former Artistic Director of the Directors' Fortnight (2011 – 2018), an independent program running parallel to the Cannes Film Festival.

RSIFF Artistic Director, Waintrop said: "It is a great privilege and honor to be leading the Red Sea International Film Festival. This new and great Festival will celebrate all aspects of cinema, from the creatives telling stories to the technical craftspeople putting imaginative ideas onto the big screen, celebrating filmmaking as force for positive change. The Festival is set to reflect that metamorphosis and to be the place for the leaders and visionaries of Arab cinema, both established and emerging, to meet, celebrate successes, and look forward to a bright future."

Also joining the RSIFF team as Special Program Manager is Faizah Ambah, the award-winning writer/director and former Washington Post correspondent.

Waintrop will join a team of programmers from across the world, including film critic Kaleem Aftab (Director of International Programming), Antoine Khalife (Director of Arab Programs & Film Classics), and Mohyee Qari (Program Manager).

The programming team also welcomes *Marta Balaga, Alice Kharoubi, Leigh Singer, Carmen Thompson, Badih Massaad,* and Kim Young-Woo as programming consultants.

Julie Bergeron returns to the RSIFF as Red Sea Souk Consultant, moving from her previous role as Head of Red Sea Souk. Bergeron has been head of industry programs at the Cannes Marché du Film as well as the project manager of its Ventana Sur Latin American offshoot.

The November 2021 Festival is led by a team of Saudi and international curators, film specialists, and industry veterans, including Managing Director Shivani Pandya, Jumana Zahid heads 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 operations team is led by Ibrahim Modir (Head of Shared Services).

The Festival will be held from 11 to 20 November 2021 in Jeddah Old Town, Saudi Arabia. Under the theme of "Metamorphosis," it celebrates film as a force for positive change and reflects on the local context, as well as the blossoming Middle East and North African film scenes.

The eleven program sections will showcase contemporary international and Arab cinema, Saudi features, shorts and experimental films, retrospectives, and future-oriented AR and VR experiences.

### **Red Sea International Film Festival - Artistic Director**

The new Artistic Director, Edouard Waintrop (born in Paris, 1952), has lived cinema – as a critic, programmer, cinema manager, and festival curator. He joins the Red Sea International Film Festival after two years as president of a commission helping and financing the development of feature films, as part of the Centre national du Cinéma, Paris, and as the programmer of the international section at The Bordeaux International Independent Film Festival.

From 2012–2018 he was the Artistic Director of the Directors' Fortnight, an independent program that runs parallel to the Cannes Film Festival, founded in 1969 by the French Directors' Guild. During his tenure, he was credited with revamping the event, elevating its profile, inviting acclaimed directors, championing emerging names, and overseeing the 50th-anniversary edition.

### **Red Sea International Film Festival 2021 – Programs**

*The 11 program sections are:*

#### ***Red Sea: Competition***

Featuring works from Asia and Africa, including the Arab world, the competition values cinematic forms that push limits across fiction and documentary, presenting daring productions by emerging and established voices, with generous prizes awarded by an international jury.

#### ***Red Sea: Shorts Competition***

Featuring works of less than 60 minutes from Asia and Africa, including the Arab world, the competition values cinematic forms that push limits across fiction and documentary, presenting daring productions by emerging and established voices, with generous prizes awarded by an international jury.

#### ***International Spectacular***

Cinema from around the globe featuring celebrated auteurs and star names. This section will feature some of the most highly anticipated and talked about films of the year shown for the first time in the Arab world.

### ***Arab Spectacular***

Find the pulse of Arab creativity in this carefully curated selection of commercial and independent movies, award winners, and regional premieres.

### ***New Saudi / New Cinema***

A curated introduction to the most vital new filmmakers and artists from Saudi Arabia. Diverse and dynamic, the voices shaping the scene; from arthouse features and shorts to documentaries, these are the films primed for launch on the international circuit.

### ***Tajreeb***

Dynamic, extroverted, and impressionistic, Tajreeb is a program of experimental films from Saudi artists pushing limits with form and content, finding new ways to tell stories.

### ***Red Sea: Festival Favourites***

An expansive roundup of the year's international hits – audience and critics' favourites hot from the Festival circuit and films discovered and specially curated by the Festival team.

### ***Red Sea: Immersive Future***

Celebrating technological advances in cinema, from new modes of viewing, immersive experiments and the latest in audio-visual experiences, this strand features the best in Augmented and Virtual Reality.

### ***Red Sea: Treasures***

A focus on the classics, including acclaimed titles from across the ages, and across the world. A selection of unmissable gems, these are the masterpieces that have inspired generations of directors – many screened for the first time in Saudi Arabia.

### ***Red Sea: Next Generation***

Entrancing stories for younger audiences with a big appetite for film, featuring leading studios, networks, and filmmakers from around the globe.

### ***Red Sea: Episodic***

The best in episodic storytelling from around the globe. Up to two episodes of series made for broadcast on television, streaming or web platforms. The place to discover the best in episodic screened for the first time in the Kingdom.

### ***About Red Sea Foundation***

The Red Sea Film Foundation is an independent, non-profit organization created to support the film industry in Saudi Arabia in the production, distribution and education of cinema. Established in 2018 by the Kingdom's first Minister of Culture, Prince Badr bin Farhan Al Saud, the Red Sea Foundation's official mandate is to promote film culture in Saudi. The initiatives support the ambitious plans for Saudi in the entertainment industries as part of the Saudi Vision 2030, with its pillars of a vibrant society, an ambitious nation and thriving economy.

### ***About Red Sea Film Festival***

The Red Sea International Film Festival brings the best in Arab and World Cinema to Jeddah Old Town. The Festival showcases exciting new films on the Saudi big screen, alongside retrospective programs celebrating the masters of cinema, the latest Saudi films as well as feature and short film competitions. There are also industry events and workshops nurturing the next generation of talent.