14 UPCOMING ARAB FILMS CHOSEN FOR THE 2020-2021 SELECTION BY THE RED SEA FUND TO RECEIVE GRANTS

The 2020-2021 first cycle of projects announced to receive production and post production funding

Venice – September 6th, 2021
The Red Sea International Film Festival (RSIFF) today announced the 14 recipients of its funding in its 2020-2021 programme for Arab filmmakers that will receive production and post-production funding from the Red Sea Fund. The fund aims to support projects that require immediate and crucial financing to help bring films to life and shine a light on important narratives from exciting and emerging filmmakers from the Arab world.

This round of funding is an accelerator to the official Red Sea Fund initiative which launched in June and received an encouraging 650 projects which are currently being reviewed and will be announced in December.

The fiction features and documentaries hail from Palestine, Jordan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Qatar, Iraq, Algeria,Tunisia and Morocco.

Two of the films have already found their way onto the international festival circuit.The much-anticipated feature debut from Short Palme d'Or winner and Oscar-nominated director Ely Dagher, *'The Sea Ahead'* was presented as part of Cannes Director's Fortnight. Jordanian writer and director Darin J. Sallam will have her world premiere for her debut feature *'Farha'* at the Toronto International Film Festival this month.

The 14 backed films are:

- Farha, directed by Darin J. Sallam (Jordan, Sweden) Fiction Feature
- The Sea Ahead, directed by Ely Dagher (France, Lebanon, USA, Belgium, Qatar) Fiction Feature
- Communion, directed by Nejib Belkadhi (Tunisia) Fiction Feature
- Take Me To The Cinema, directed by Albaqer Jaafar (Iraq, Egypt) Feature Documentary
- Soula, directed by Salah Issaad (Algeria) Fiction Feature
- Quareer, directed by Ragheed Al Nahdi, Norah Almowald, Ruba Khafagy, Fatma Alhazmi, Noor Alameer (Saudi Arabia) Fiction Feature
- Life Suits Me Well, directed by Al Hadi Ulad-Mohand (Morocco, France) Fiction Feature
- Recovery, directed by Rashid Masharawi (Palestine) Feature Documentary
- Route 10, directed by Omar Naim (Saudi Arabia) Fiction Feature
- Basma, directed by Fatima Al-Banawi (Saudi Arabia, Egypt) Fiction Feature

- I Am Arze, directed by Mira Shaib (Lebanon)_ Fiction Feature
- Inshallah A Boy, directed by Amjad Alrasheed (Jordan) Fiction Feature
- The Arabic Interpreter, directed by Ali Kareem (Iraq, Germany, Qatar) Fiction Feature
- The Wind Also Sings, directed by Hadi Ghandour (Lebanon, Tunisia) Fiction Feature

Edouard Waintrop, Artistic Director of the Red Sea International Film Festival, explained: "Arab cinema continues to captivate audiences around the world with unique and authentic stories that showcase the extraordinary creative talent who bring to life the region's rich cultural tapestry. Supporting films out of the traditional cycle gives us the means to develop and nurture Arab talent throughout the year and fund even more compelling projects. It's wonderful to see such incredible Arab films in the selection at Venice this year, and with initiatives such as ours which give filmmakers that all-important support, I have no doubt we will witness a surge of films claiming the international spotlight in the coming years."

Editors Notes:

Red Sea International Film Festival
The inaugural edition of the Red Sea International Film Festival is set to bring the best in Arab and World Cinema to the UNESCO world heritage site of Jeddah Old Town.

The Festival will showcase a compelling slate of new and diverse films, alongside a retrospective programme celebrating the masters of cinema as well as introducing audiences to exciting new voices from the region and beyond. The Festival will provide a platform for Arab filmmakers and industry professionals from around the world to connect, host feature and short film competitions, and present a series of events, masterclasses, and workshops to support emerging talent.

The Red Sea International Film Festival will take place from December 6 -15, 2021.