

THE RED SEA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL INVITES AUDIENCES TO DISCOVER A SELECTION OF MASTERPIECES

*The **Treasures** selection celebrates seminal and innovative classics from the Arab world and beyond, many of which will be seen for the first time in Saudi Arabia on the big screen*

Jeddah, Saudi Arabia – October 27th, 2021

The Red Sea International Film Festival (RedSeaIFF), which will host the first edition from 6-15 December, today announced the eight films making up its **Treasures** section which will be shown for the first time on the big screen.

The **Treasures** section celebrates award-winning and ground-breaking classics from both the Arab and international world with a renewed vigour and in an exciting new context.

Edouard Waintrop, Artistic Director of the (RedSeaIFF) said: “Although these films are considered classics, this will be the first time they will be seen on the big screen in Saudi Arabia. This is a particularly exciting time to show them, as it allows not only the celebration of these films once again, but also shows the ways in which they have inspired the latest generation of filmmakers.”

Antoine Khalife, Director of Arab Programs & Film Classics of the RedSeaIFF said: “These films represent not only classics of the Arab world, but also some truly iconic international gems. The mission of the Foundation is to preserve the heritage of cinema and so we are proud to be contributing to the restoration of many Arab films and global classic titles. The Festival gives us the opportunity to celebrate these films with a renewed attention that such pioneering works of cinema are worthy of, given their disruptive and boundary-pushing nature. We are thrilled not only to be able to share such a diverse collection of stories on the big screen, but also stories which are worthy of as much celebration now as they were when they were initially released.”

The 1994 classic ***Strawberry War***, directed by legendary Egyptian director Khairy Beshara, tells the story of Thabet, played by the renowned Sami El Adl. Thabet is a wealthy businessman who owns multiple factories, and lives alone in his huge mansion. After losing his only son, Thabet doesn't know the meaning of happiness anymore. He meets the peddler Hamama, played by Mahmoud Hemeida, and Farawla, played by iconic actress Yousra, and they decide to go to the mansion, where they embark on a journey to discover the true meaning of happiness. A special film for its unique story, fantastical setting, and its sense of humour, the film has been restored with the support of the Red Sea Film Festival Foundation.

Raafat El-Mihi's 1995 classic ***A Little Love Much Violence*** is considered one of the most daring in the history of Egyptian cinema. Personally selected by the iconic Laila Eloui, one of most versatile actresses of her generation delivers a powerhouse performance in the film. Based on the novel by Fathi Ghanem, and presents two films in one: one of which is a superficial film, and the other, a realistic film that is occupied with well-being. A son decides evade his father's control and divorce his wife from their arranged marriage. He then starts a relationship with another girl, in pursuit of influence and power. The film breaks several cinematic and dramatic traditions through various elements, making it a truly iconic piece of work.

The 1979 Bengali-language mystery ***The Elephant God*** (Bengali: *Joi Baba Felunath*) is one of the most popular films from Indian director Satyajit Ray, who is widely considered to be one of the greatest filmmakers of all time. The story introduces a private investigator, Felu, who arrives in the holy city of Benares for a holiday. On a visit to a strange holy man, Felu is told that a rare, valuable gold statuette of Ganesh, the Elephant God, has been stolen. Felu is engaged to unravel the mystery of the missing Ganesh and, thus, the adventures begin.

Directed by notable director Henry Barakat, the 1959 Egyptian drama ***The Nightingale's Prayer*** is based on the novel by modernist writer Taha Hussein. The film tells the story of two young women and their mother who are banished from their idyllic, isolated village by an uncle who is shamed by his brother's adulterous behaviour. The film competed at the 10th Berlin International Film Festival, and was selected as the Egyptian entry for Best Foreign Language Film at the 32nd Academy Awards. The film was personally selected by filmmaker Haifaa Al Mansour who cites Henry Barakat as an inspiration

Wadjda is the 2012 feature directorial debut of Saudi Arabian writer and director Haifaa Al-Mansour. It is through the escapades of Wadjda, a young teenager of twelve, that the audience discovers daily life in the suburbs of Riyadh. Through the fate of several female characters, the film approaches the different aspects of the female condition, such as forced marriage or polygamy. The multi award winning film was selected as the first ever Saudi Arabian entry for Best Foreign Language Film at the 86th Academy Awards, and was nominated for Best Foreign Film at the 2014 BAFTA Awards.

1970 rare classic **The Choice** is among the most essential films of legendary Egyptian filmmaker Youssef Chahine. The masterpiece was restored by the Red Sea Foundation with the support of Egypt's Ministry of Culture in 2020. Written and directed by Chahine, the film tells the story of Sayed, a famous writer and social climber, who, when he learns of his twin brother's death, delays his life plans in order to find his brother's killer. The film is an immersion into a human soul that appears calm on the surface, but has constant turmoil lurking beneath.

French writer and director Thierry Frémaux's 2016 documentary **Lumière!** takes audiences back to witness the birth of cinema. Frémaux, director of the Institut Lumière and of the Cannes Film Festival, sheds light on all the dimensions that cinema has occupied and continues to occupy in everyone's daily lives, by inviting the audience to witness the birth of Cinema and the genius of the Lumière brothers.

The Red Sea International Film Festival will also pay tribute to one of the most popular French actors, **Jean-Paul Belmondo**. Unforgettable in *A bout de souffle*, *The man from Rio* or *Itinéraire d'un enfant gâté*, Jean-Paul Belmondo has played under the direction of the greatest European cineastes. Beginning with Jean-Luc Godard and the New Wave, it did not take long for him to take the turn of comedy and action film, with more than 80 films to his name. The Festival pays homage to this exceptional actor by presenting a montage of his main roles, prepared by the Lumière Institute, and by programming **Pierrot le Fou** in a restored version.

Pierrot le Fou, the 1965 classic from French New Wave director Jean-Luc Godard, is based on the 1962 novel *Obsession* by Lionel White. Selected as the French entry for the Best Foreign Language Film at the 38th Academy Awards, the film tells of the adventure of Ferdinand, played by Belmondo, cynically married to a rich woman, who decides one evening to flee his dreary existence with Marianne, a girl once loved and found by chance. This joyous and desperate run through sunny France gives the film the appearance of a road movie, tinged with musical comedy, film noir and flamboyant melodrama.

The inaugural edition of the Red Sea International Film Festival will run in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia from December 6-15, 2021.

Registration is open for the Festival and ticket packages are now on sale: For more information [Red Sea Film – Red Sea Film Festival](#)

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.