

RED SEA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL PRESENTS STORIES FROM AROUND THE WORLD FOR THE 'NEXT GENERATION'

The Red Sea: Next Generation section will celebrate extraordinary films for younger audiences, amongst a wider program of activities and events for young people

Jeddah, Saudi Arabia – 17 November 2021 – The Red Sea International Film Festival (RedSeaIFF), which will have its inaugural edition from 6-15 December, is today announcing the five feature films and selection of shorts that will comprise the **Red Sea: Next Generation** section.

Red Sea: Next Generation celebrates the most exciting releases for younger audiences, shining a spotlight on animation films, dramas, and documentaries from all around the world, introducing future generations to world cinema, with the Arab world at the heart of the programme. As well as world and Arab premiere screenings, the Festival will present a wide variety of activities and events, aimed at including younger festivalgoers in the festivities.

Edouard Waintrop, Artistic Director of the RedSeaIFF, said: "We are proud to put such a strong focus on young people's cinema at the Festival. It is so important to us at the RedSeaIFF to remain inclusive of young people, given that these young people will undoubtedly play a crucial role in shaping the burgeoning Saudi film industry as it progresses into the future. **Red Sea: Next Generation** represents the very best filmmaking for younger people from across the world, and we are thrilled to be able to show these to young audiences in Jeddah, who may very well be the brightest Saudi filmmakers of the future."

The Festival will see the Arab premiere of Illumination's highly anticipated animated feature **Sing 2**, written and directed by award-winning English director Garth Jennings. This new chapter sees ever-optimistic Buster Moon, voiced by Matthew McConaughey, and his all-star cast of performers preparing to launch their most dazzling stage extravaganza yet. But they first have to persuade the world's most reclusive rock star—played by global music icon Bono, in his animated film debut—to join them. Starring Reese Witherspoon, Scarlett Johansson, Tori Kelly, Taron Egerton and many more, *Sing 2* features electrifying performances, breathtaking artistry and Illumination's signature humor and heart, as dreams of big-time success becomes an emotional reminder of the power of music to heal.

The closing night of the RedSeaIFF will see the world premiere of award-winning Egyptian writer and director Amr Salama's latest feature **Bara El Manhag**. Nour, a 13-year-old orphan living in the countryside in the early 1980s, is a compulsive liar with vision problems. To gain the respect of his fellow classmates, he ventures inside a haunted house where he finds a solitary old man who's hiding from the world. A friendship and apprenticeship are born between the boy and the old man, initiating a journey of self-discovery that lies at the very core of this light-hearted drama.

Spanish director Manuel Calvo presents his directorial debut **Champions** starring two of the most radiant Saudi actors Fatima el Banawy and Yasser Sagaf in a world premiere at the RedSeaIFF. Arrogant and easily riled, Khaled is assistant coach of a top Saudi Arabian football team. A show of temper after a match lands him in disciplinary court, and condemned to the worst punishment for his inflated ego: community service coaching a team of players with intellectual disabilities. It is only as his new team counters his bad attitude with good humour, kindness and an infectious innocence that Khaled realises how much he has to learn from them.

Belle: The Dragon and the Freckled Princess, written and directed by Academy Award nominated Mamoru Hosoda, will have its Arab premiere at the Festival. The anime feature tells the story of high school student Suzu, who lives with her father in a Japanese village. She discovers U, a virtual world where everyone's avatar reflects their secret strengths. Here she becomes Belle, a famous singer, and meets Dragon, an MMA-fighting cow monster, who joins her on a quest for their true selves.

In her second feature documentary, **Bigger Than Us**, French director Flore Vasseur focuses on a generation rising to fix the world: young people fighting for human rights, the climate, freedom of expression, social justice, and access to education and food. Melati is only 18, but she has already been fighting the plastic pollution ravaging her home, Indonesia, for six years. Melati travels the globe to meet others like her: a volunteer with Refugee Rescue in Lesbos, a young Ugandan campaigning for a ban on underage marriages, and an 18-year-old refugee, who founded a school in Lebanon, whose stories and spirit make them all beacons of hope.

Kiddomania is a selection of short animated films from directors Nicolas Deveaux, Benjamin Flouw, Remy Dupont, Paulin Cointot, Paul Emile Boucher, Gaspard Roche, Patrick Jean, Evalds Lacis, Paul Bush, Eric Montchaud and Antoine Robert. The selection will delight young children, and their parents, and will be an introduction to the joys of watching films in cinemas for the very youngest citizens in Jeddah. The screening will also be accompanied by fun and games.

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

Editors Notes:

Red Sea International Film Festival

The inaugural edition of the Red Sea International Film Festival in partnership with the MBC GROUP, Saudia Airlines and VOX Cinemas is set to bring the best in Arab and World Cinema to the UNESCO world heritage site of Jeddah Old Town from December 6-15, 2021.

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.