

THE RED SEA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL CHAMPIONS A NEW WAVE OF CINEMA FROM PROMISING SAUDI TALENT

The films in the New Saudi/New Cinema selection will fly the flag for Saudi cinema showcasing the best from the rapidly flourishing filmmaking scene.

Jeddah, Saudi Arabia – 08 November 2021 –

The Red Sea International Film Festival (RedSeaIFF) which will run 6-15 December, today announced the brand new and distinctive films from Saudi filmmaker's films making up its **New Saudi/New Cinema: Features** slate.

The program will showcase the world premieres of the selected films from Saudi's most exciting up-and-coming talent, looking at work from the young voices shaping the filmmaking culture of Saudi Arabia. The program is the latest selection of films to be announced amongst the 27 strong slate of films being presented at the Festival's inaugural edition.

Each screening will be accompanied by a Q&A from the filmmakers or cast involved, aiming at showcasing and celebrating emerging Saudi talent, providing an opportunity for Festival goers to discover new films and hear directly from the talent behind the camera

Mohyee Qari, Program Manager at the RedSeaIFF, said: "The Saudi programme of feature and short films of which many are directed by female filmmakers speak to the very best of Saudi filmmaking. They don't hesitate to explore the different genres of cinema ranging from suspense to thriller, to social themes and relationships to show us the Saudi society in its richness. They indicate an industry that is flourishing, both in terms of the diversity and content on screen, and point to the bright future that this young film industry has. We are thrilled to be able to give these filmmakers a platform to share their work on the international stage."

Junoon is the feature directorial debut of directors Maan B. and Yaser B. Khalid, played by Maan B., is a wannabe vlogger, who travels with his wife and best friend from Saudi Arabia all the way to Southern California, hoping to catch some great footage of paranormal happenings. When his wish comes true, the question becomes whether the three of them will have the presence of mind to turn the cameras off and flee.

Route 10 is the latest feature from director Omar Naim, co-written with Khalid Fahad. Jamal and Maryam are set to travel from Riyadh to attend their father's wedding in Abu Dhabi, until the flight is cancelled, and they plan to make the journey by car instead. They underestimate the many hazards of the desert road, including an angry stranger whose terrifying pursuit has the brother and sister driving for their lives. Naim's 2004 film *The Final Cut*, starring Robin Williams, was nominated for the Golden Bear for Best Film at the 2004 Berlinale.

The omnibus film **Quareer** is a collection of five Saudi women's stories. The five female filmmakers, Ragheed Al Nahdi, Norah Almowald, Ruba Khafagy, Fatma Alhazmi, and Noor Alameer explore themes of abandonment, neglect, control, abuse and shame in a conservative society. In a captivating portrayal of a harsh reality, these women don't hesitate to carve out their own spaces.

Fay's Palette is the feature directorial debut from writer and director Anas Ba-Tahaf and produced by the leading actor Hisham Fageeh. Fay lives in a cloistered apartment, which she can't leave because her only obstacle to the outside world is her brother. She expresses all of her obsessions through painting, but when she orders a new paint palette, matters get complicated.

Directors Sara Mesfer, Jawaher Alamri, Noor Alameer, Hind Alfahhad and Fatima Al-Banawi tell five women's stories in **Becoming** which was produced by the Red Sea Film Festival Foundation. Stories of a female infertility healer, an 11-year-old girl raised in a conservative household, a disappearing bride, a forty-year-old hairdresser contemplating an abortion, and a divorced mother are beautifully illustrated in this omnibus film from the five female filmmakers.

Kayan directed by Hakeem Jomaah takes us to an almost deserted hotel where a couple is stranded with their baby, here they are confronted with their obsessions. This only strengthens the circle in which they find themselves.

Cinema Al-Hara directed by Faizah Ambah follows the lives of three teenagers whose lives are changed forever when cinema come to the old neighborhoods of Jeddah. Shot during the Festivals community outreach program Saudi filmmakers and talents hosted workshops that contributed to the performance of the teenagers in addition to film screenings in the heart of the city.

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 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.