

# A TREASURE CHEST OF TIMELESS CLASSICS HANDPICKED FOR THE RED SEA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

*Seven widely acclaimed iconic global films from legendary filmmakers make up the Red Sea: Treasures selection*

Jeddah, Saudi Arabia – 25 October 2022: The Red Sea International Film Festival (RedSeaIFF), which will hold its second edition from 1-10 December, announced today the seven films making up its Red Sea: Treasures section.

Antoine Khalife, Director of Arab Programs & Film Classics of the RedSeaIFF said: “Red Sea: Treasures is a celebration of some of the iconic and widely acclaimed cinematic storytelling ever to grace the screen. I’m thrilled that through the Red Sea Film Festival Foundation, we have been able to restore two Egyptian classics which have been meticulously restored for a new generation of audiences to enjoy.”

Kaleem Aftab, Director of International Programming for the RedSeaIFF, said: “Red Sea: Treasures has been designed to unlock film heritage and reintroduce a diverse selection of masterpieces that have made an important contribution to cinema history. These influential films have impacted our lives, and we’re delighted to share them with new audiences.”

## The line-up includes:

One of the most iconic and highest-grossing soccer films of all time, the cultural phenomenon smash hit **‘Bend it Like Beckham’** (2002), directed by Gurinder Chadha and starring Parminder Nagra and **Keira Knightley**, is celebrating its *20th anniversary*. 18-year-old Jess Bhamra (Parminder Nagra) dreams of playing professional football like her idol David Beckham, but her Punjabi Sikh parents have more conventional plans for her: a law degree and marriage. Jules (Keira Knightley), a fellow female striker, spots Jess playing park football and invites her to join the local women’s team.

Jean Renoir’s **‘La Grande Illusion’** (1937) is considered one of the greatest films ever made. It was released over 80 years ago and still stands up today. The film follows French prisoners of war in two German camps during World War I. The core group of officers includes the working class Maréchal (Jean Gabin), the aristocrat de Boeldieu (Pierre Fresnay), the wealthy bourgeois Rosenthal (Marcel Dalio), and the comic music-hall actor Cartier (Julien Carette). Their attempt to tunnel out of the first camp (Hallbach) is foiled at the last moment by a transfer to the forbidding fortress of Wintersborn, where they meet again the German officer glimpsed in the film’s prologue, Captain von Rauffenstein (Erich von Stroheim).

**‘Sambizanga’** (1972), is a searing, indelible portrait of the anti-colonial struggle in 1970s Africa, filmmaker Sarah Maldoror’s adaptation of a novella by the Angolan writer José Luandino Vieira was banned by the Angolan government until the country obtained its independence from Portugal in 1975. *Sambizanga* follows Maria as she tries to pick up the pieces after her husband, a secret anti-

colonial activist, who becomes a political prisoner. This passionate drama illustrates the cruelty of the Portuguese administration alongside the courage and sacrifice of ordinary Angolans during colonial rule.

**'Stranger than Paradise'** (1984) is the striking debut from pioneering American indie filmmaker *Jim Jarmusch*, who is now into the fourth decade of his career. The breakthrough film is a superbly crafted urban tale set in the bleak American landscape, where work is little and opportunity is diminishing. Jarmusch follows rootless Hungarian Willie (John Lurie), his pal Eddie (Richard Edson), and his visiting sixteen-year-old cousin, Eva (Eszter Balint), as they drift from New York's Lower East Side to the snowy expanses of Lake Erie and the drab beaches of Florida, always managing to make the least of wherever they end up. The film will screen with the short-animated documentary **'Stranger than Rotterdam'** (2022), which tells of the length's producer Sara Driver had to go to get the financing for Jarmusch's classic. Told by the co-directors with the use of hand-drawn puppets, it depicts the good old days when films travelled in cans, and nobody knew exactly what was in them.

The epic historical war feature **'Lion of the Desert'** (1980) by Moustapha Akkad starring Anthony Quinn will be screened in a beautiful new 4k restoration, that will delight both fans of the film and new audiences. Set in 1929, it tells how rebel guerrilla leader Omar Mukhtar led the Libyan nationalist resistance against the iron rule of the colonizing Italian fascists.

Additionally, two Egyptian classics celebrating more than 50 years since their release have been lovingly restored and will be screened as part of the programme for audiences to discover or see again on the big screen.

Beloved by generations of Egyptian and Arab filmgoers, **'Khali Balak Min Zouzou'** (Watch Out for Zouzou) directed by Hassan Al-Imam (1972) is the story of a young student who falls in love with her college professor. When the professor calls off his marriage to be with her, the enraged fiancée discovers the young woman's shameful secret: she comes from a family of entertainers. When the secret is exposed, complications ensue for all. Taking on the social changes of the 1970s in a typically Egyptian style, **'Khali Balak Min Zouzou'** combines drama, comedy, and music. Considered one of the highest grossing Arab films of all time, the film features two of Egypt's most loved cinema stars; actress Soad Hosny and actor Hussein Fahmy.

In **'Gharam Fil Karnak'** (Love in Karnak) directed by Ali Reda (1967), a group of young dancers struggle to stay financially afloat. The situation is further complicated by the rocky love affair between Amina, the lead dancer, and Salah, the troupe director – in a series of misunderstandings. The film holds legendary status in the history of Arab filmmaking: its restoration and screening serve as both an inspiration to future filmmakers and a testament to the long and established Arab film industry.

The second edition of the Red Sea International Film Festival will take place at the Ritz Carlton in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, from December 1-10, 2022.

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## **About The Red Sea International Film Festival**

The second edition of the Red Sea International Film Festival will screen the best of the Arab and international cinema in Jeddah. Alongside the Festival will also showcase a retrospective program to celebrate the masters of cinema. The Festival is a platform for Arab filmmakers and industry professionals from around the world to connect, host competitions for short and feature films, and organize masterclasses to support emerging talent. The Red Sea International Film Festival will take place from December 1 — 10, 2022.

## **About Majid Al Futtaim**

Founded in 1992, Majid Al Futtaim is the leading shopping mall, communities, retail and leisure pioneer across the Middle East, Africa and Asia.

A remarkable business success story, Majid Al Futtaim started from one man's vision to transform the face of shopping, entertainment and leisure to 'create great moments for everyone, every day'. It has since grown into one of the United Arab Emirates' most respected and successful businesses spanning 17 international markets, employing more than 43,000 people, and obtaining the highest credit rating (BBB) among privately-held corporates in the region.

Majid Al Futtaim owns and operates 29 shopping malls, 13 hotels and four mixed-use communities, with further developments underway in the region. The shopping malls portfolio includes Mall of the Emirates, Mall of Egypt, Mall of Oman, City Centre malls, My City Centre neighbourhood centres, and five community malls which are in joint venture with the Government of Sharjah. The Company is the exclusive franchisee for Carrefour in over 30 markets across the Middle East, Africa and Asia, operating a portfolio of more than 375 outlets including City+, the region's first checkout-free store, and an online store.

Majid Al Futtaim operates more than 600 VOX Cinemas screens as well as a portfolio of world-class leisure and entertainment experiences across the region including Ski Dubai, Ski Egypt, Dreamscape, Magic Planet, Little Explorers and iFLY Dubai. The Company is parent to a Fashion, Home and Specialty retail business representing international brands such as Abercrombie & Fitch, Hollister, AllSaints, lululemon athletica, Crate & Barrel, Maisons du Monde, and LEGO and THAT, a Majid Al Futtaim fashion concept store and app. In addition, Majid Al Futtaim operates Enova, a facility and energy management company, through a joint venture operation with Veolia, a global leader in optimised environment resource management.

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