

RED SEA FUND ANNOUNCES 36 PRODUCTION AND POST-PRODUCTION GRANT WINNERS

The grants award funding to up-and-coming and established Saudi, Arab and African film projects

Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, January 18th, 2023

The Red Sea Film Festival Foundation today announced the recipients of the Red Sea Fund's 2022 production and post-production funding cycles. 36 films by Saudi, Arab and African filmmakers will receive grants to help complete films that shine a light on important narratives and new talents emerging from the region.

The Red Sea Fund's 2022 production cycle received a high volume of submissions of which 150 were reviewed by the team of professional readers and filtered down to a shortlist of 53 films. Of these 53 films, a final 25 across a range of formats, including feature fiction, feature documentaries, feature animations, episodic series, shorts and immersive films were selected.

Two of the films selected had previously been supported at the development stage by the Red Sea Fund, including 'Captain Mbaye' directed by Joel Karekezi and 'Aicha' directed by Mehdi M. Barsaoui. Also selected to receive funding, 'Yunan' directed by Ameer Fakher Eldin, participated in the Red Sea International Film Festival Project Market, designed to connect the producers of new film projects with international financiers in the industry.

Critically acclaimed filmmakers Haifaa Al-Mansour, Annemarie Jacir, Kaouther Ben Hania, and Cherian Dabis were awarded critical funds to support bringing their fresh narratives to the screen. This underpins the Red Sea Film Festivals mission to advocate for women filmmakers who are leading the way and inspiring a new generation of creatives such as Saudi filmmaker Sara Mesfer who receives funding for her feature debut.

Mohammed Al-Turki, CEO of the Red Sea International Film Festival Foundation Said: "We have been impressed by the quality of submissions received this year which subsequently made it a challenge to narrow the selection down to 25. We are confident the Red Sea Funds will support the winners through the creative process to help share these important stories and showcase a raft of exciting new and established Saudi, Arab and African talent."

The Post-production cycle resulted in 28 projects being short-listed, 11 of those received post-production grants, including 'Norah', a Saudi film shot in AIUla, directed by Tawfik Alzaidi and produced by Paul Miller. Also, 'BLACKLIGHT, directed by Karim Bensalah and produced by Oualid Baha, which won the Final Cut Prize at Venice Film Festival.

Mohammed Al-Turki added, "The 11 selected films show enormous potential as ground-breaking stories that will capture the imagination of global audiences and will benefit most from a final boost of funding to allow these films to reach their full potential."

Shivani Pandya, Managing Director of the Red Sea International Film Festival, added, "The quality of film proposals we receive improve exponentially year on year. It is our privilege and pleasure to be able to support these filmmakers from Saudi Arabia, Africa and the Arab region, bringing their work to a wider audience through the various initiatives supported by the Red Sea International Film Festival."

The full list of funded films is as follows:

Cycle 3 - Production

- MEHAL SEFARI, directed by Abraham Gezahagne. Feature Fiction (Ethiopia, Canada, Denmark).
- THE WANDERING SOULS OF KINSHASA, directed by Dieudo Hamadi. Episodic (Democratic Republic of the Congo, France).
- CAPTAIN MBAYE, directed by Joel Karekezi. Feature Fiction (Rwanda).
- SIDI KABA AND THE GATEWAY HOME, directed by Rony Hotin. Feature Animation (France, Luxembourg, Belgium, Germany).
- AICHA, directed by Mehdi M. Barsaoui. Feature Fiction (Tunisia, France, Saudi Arabia).
- THANK YOU FOR BAKING WITH US! directed by Laila Abbas. Feature Fiction (Palestine).
- BIG BOYS DON'T CRY, directed by Muhammad Mustapha. Feature Documentary (Egypt, Germany).
- SEEKING HAVEN FOR MR RAMBO, directed by Khaled Mansour. Feature Fiction (Egypt).
- MIME, directed by Kaouther Ben Hania. Feature Fiction (France, Tunisia).
- HOUNDS, directed by Kamal Lazraq. Feature Fiction (Morocco).
- AMINA, directed by Nora El Hourch. Feature Fiction (Morocco).
- THE PERFUMED HILL, directed by Abderrahmane Sissako. Feature Fiction (Mauritania, France, Luxembourg, Taiwan R.O.C.).
- THE VANISHING, directed by Karim Moussaoui. Feature Fiction (Algeria).
- YUNAN, directed by Ameer Fakher Eldin. Feature Fiction (Germany, Saudi Arabia, Palestine, France, Italy).
- FIFTY METRES, directed by Yomna Khattab. Feature Documentary (Egypt).
- THE WALLED OFF HOTEL VR EXPERIENCE, directed by Amer Shomali. Immersive (Palestine, Germany, Netherlands).
- SHE WAS NOT ALONE, directed by Hussein Al-Asadi. Feature Documentary (Iraq).
- MEN IN THE SUN, directed by Mahdi Fleifel. Feature Fiction (United Kingdom, Greece, Netherlands, Palestine, Denmark).
- THE 67TH SUMMER, directed by Abu Bakr Shawky. Feature Fiction (Egypt, France, Austria).
- HABIBI AND I IN EDEN, directed by Sara Mesfer. Short Fiction (Saudi Arabia, Qatar).
- MISS CAMEL, directed by Haifaa Al Mansour. Feature Animation (Saudi Arabia).
- AL-DAAR, directed by Abdullah Bamajboor. Feature Fiction (Saudi Arabia).
- 3 COLD DISHES, directed by Oluseyi Asurf and Apolline Traoure. Feature Fiction (Nigeria).
- ALL THAT'S LEFT OF YOU, directed by Cherien Dabis. Feature Fiction (Germany, Palestine, United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Qatar, Cyprus and Saudi Arabia).

- ALL BEFORE YOU, directed by Annemarie Jacir. Feature Fiction (Saudi Arabia, Palestine, United Kingdom).

Cycle 4 - Post-production

- NORAH, directed by Tawfik Alzaidi. Feature Fiction (Saudi Arabia).
- BLACKLIGHT, directed by Karim Bensalah. Feature Fiction (Algeria, France).
- BACKSTAGE, directed by Afef Ben Mahmoud and Khalil Benkirane. Feature Fiction (Morocco, Tunisia, Belgium, France).
- SPRING CAME ON LAUGHING, directed by Noha Adel. Feature Fiction (Egypt).
- HACKERS OF BORDERS, directed by Mohamed Ismail Louati. Feature Documentary (Tunisia, France, Germany, Lebanon).
- CONCRETE LAND, directed by Asmahan Bkerat. Feature Documentary (Jordan).
- LAND OF WOMEN, directed by Ayman El Amir and Nada Riyadh. Feature Documentary (Egypt, France, Denmark, Qatar).
- THIIIRD, directed by Karim Kassem. Feature Documentary (Lebanon).
- A CITY BELOW ZERO, directed by Medoo Ali. Feature Documentary (Iraq).
- A FIDAI FILM, directed by Kamal Aljafari. Feature Documentary (Palestine, Germany).
- FLOATING IN A VACUUM, directed by Mohamed Ben Attia. Feature Fiction (Tunisia).

END

About the Red Sea International Film Festival

Red Sea International Film Festival provides 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. Running alongside the Festival is the Red Sea Souk, the Festival's industry market, designed for global exchange and partnerships between the international and Saudi film industries. The four-day market will offer a packed program of curated events to foster co-production, international distribution, and new business opportunities. The Souk offers unbeatable access to the new vibrant Saudi scene, as well as the best of the Arab market through pitching sessions, one-on-one meetings, screenings, industry talks, and networking events.

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