

Toronto Palestine Film Festival

September 26-October 2, 2009
102A-1075 Bay St., Ste 148
Toronto, ON M5S 2B2



MEDIA ADVISORY
For Immediate Release
August 24, 2009

TPFF: Toronto's Other September Film Festival

EVENTS: Toronto Palestine Film Festival & Contemporary Art Exhibition

DATE: September 26 – October 2, 2009

WHERE: Toronto and Mississauga: Bloor Cinema, AGO Jackman Theatre, the Revue, Square One Theatre, Beaver Hall Art Gallery

The second annual Toronto Palestine Film Festival (TPFF) is coming to GTA theatres in September. The festival will showcase 34 films, many of which are Canadian and North American premieres. TPFF is pleased to be opening and closing the festival with the critically acclaimed feature films **Amreeka** and **Laila's Birthday**. TPFF will also preview segments from **Road Movie**, the epic twelve-screen multi-media installation by Elle Flanders and Tamira Sawatzky, at the beginning of the weekday programs throughout the festival.

TPFF 09 will offer audiences a wide selection of award-winning short, feature, documentary, experimental and animation films. The films cover many different topics including Gaza, immigration, environment, childhood, music, food, media, sexuality, human rights and exile. The festival will also feature the work of prominent Canadian filmmakers including Larry Towell, Mary Ellen Davis, Taghreed Saadeh and Sidrah Laldin.

Running from September 28 – October 3, 2009 at the Beaver Hall Art Gallery is the contemporary art exhibition entitled **Jewels in the Machine: New Media Works at TPFF**. Curated by Reena Katz, the exhibition will display innovative and provocative video, audio and visual artistic installations from eminent Canadian and international artists.

On the morning of September 27, 2009, TPFF will be hosting **Sahtain! Film & Food Brunch** at 93 Harbord. The morning will commence with the screening of food-themed short films, which will be followed by a cooking lesson and tasting of a traditional Palestinian brunch.

During the course of the festival, TPFF will host several discussion panels featuring distinguished speakers including Palestinian filmmaker and academic Sobhi Al-Zabaidi. Topics of discussion range from stereotypes in cinema; film and the art of resistance; Palestinian cultural production; environmental issues; and life in the Gaza strip.

Presenting non-stereotypical cinema, TPFF celebrates film as an art form and means of expression by showcasing the extraordinary narrative of a dispossessed people living in exile and under occupation. TPFF is proud to be sponsored by the Ontario Arts Council and Toronto Arts Council and many other generous supporters.

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www.tpff.ca

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FESTIVAL BACKGROUNDER

Amreeka

Cherien Dabis - Fiction - 2009 - USA - 96 min - Canadian Premiere

Comedy-drama about Muna, a single mother who leaves Ramallah with her teenage son, Fadi, to provide him with a better future in small-town Illinois. As Fadi learns to navigate high school hallways, Muna, a former bank employee, scrambles together a new life cooking up hamburgers at the local White Castle.

Grand Jury Prize Nominee Sundance Film Festival 2009, Winner FIPRESCI International Federation of Film Critics Award Cannes 2009

Laila's Birthday

Rashid Masharawi - Fiction - 2008 - Palestine/Tunisia/The Netherlands - 71min

Abu Laila is a judge turned taxi driver who must purchase a cake and present for his daughter Laila's birthday. This becomes an epic task as Abu Laila navigates the chaos of daily life in Ramallah. The film is a revealing and humorous portrait of a city and decent man at the breaking point.

Official Selection Toronto International Film Festival 2008

Road Movie

Elle Flanders + Tamira Sawatzky - Multi-Media Installation - 2009 - Canada

TPFF is proud to preview a selection of segments from Road Movie, the epic twelve-screen multi-media installation by Elle Flanders and Tamira Sawatzky. Continuing their work on landscape and its relationship to shifting political geographies, each segment traces a single journey on Palestinian or 'Jewish only' roads – all shot in stop-motion animation in single takes. One segment of Road Movie will premiere before individual programs throughout the Festival.

SAHTAIN! Film & Food Brunch

Sunday Sept 27, 11:00-1:00 pm

93 HARBORD, 93 Harbord Street, Toronto

Traditional Palestinian brunch with talk and demo by acclaimed chef Isam Kaisi. Screening two food-themed short films.

Missing Gaza

Sobhi Al Zobaidi

Documentary - 2005 - Palestine/Israel - 13 min

A group of friends, originally from Gaza but unable to return because of the siege, meet for lunch in Ramallah. While making a traditional meal of molokheya, their conversation inevitably turns to politics and homesickness. The lunchtime discussion is inter-cut with footage from Gaza of their friends, families and homes.

Daggit Gazza

Hadeel Assali / Iman Saqr

Documentary – 2009 – US – 8 min

Politics, food, and family are the topics of a phone conversation between Houston and Gaza that serves as voice-over commentary to the preparation of a spicy tomato salad.

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ART EXHIBIT '09

Jewels in the Machine: New Media Works at TPDF

Sept 28 - Oct 3, 12:00pm - 6:00pm

Beaver Hall Gallery, 29 McCaul St., Toronto

Exhibit Opening: Tuesday Sept 29, 4:00pm - 6:00pm

Exhibit Curator: Reena Katz

Artists and Works:

Jamelie Hassan – London, ON

The Oblivion Seekers, 1985 (*2009 DVD format premier of film-installation work*)

John Kameel Farah – Toronto, ON

New Piano Composition (*TPDF Commission*)

Project Hope – Nablus, Palestine

The West Bank: A Collection of Graphic Novels (*Cells from upcoming book*)

Sandi Hilal + Alessandro Petti – London, UK + Bethlehem, Palestine

Decolonizing Architecture (*Silent Projections*)

Jumana Manna – Oslo, Norway + Jerusalem

Familiar + Ramallah Computer Game (*Video Works*)

FORUMS '09

Not Your Harem Girl: Cinema and Stereotypes

Monday Sept 28, 4:00-6:00 pm

William Doo Auditorium, 45 Willcocks Street, Toronto

Panellists: Dana Olwan, Nahed Mansour, Natalie Kouri-Towe

As this year's festival theme is "non-stereotypical cinema," this panel will look at the history of stereotypical representations of Arabs in film, particularly Arab woman. The panel will also discuss how young Arab artists are subverting these stereotypes through filmmaking and literature.

Cinema Politica: Film and the Art of Resistance

Wednesday Sept 30, 3:30-5:30 pm

Beaver Hall Gallery, 29 McCaul Street, Toronto

Panellists: Vicky Moufawad-Paul, Ali Kazimi, John Hupfield

Three documentary filmmakers who use filmmaking to tell unheard stories will discuss their art together. The evening will include a screening of shorts by Vicky Moufawad-Paul, Programming/Exhibition Coordinator of A Space Gallery, and John Hupfield from 7th Generation Image Makers, an arts and mural program for Native youth in Toronto.

Steel for the Spirit: Palestinian Cultural Production Today

Friday Oct 2, 3:30-5:30 pm

Beaver Hall Gallery, 29 McCaul Street, Toronto

Panellists: Sobhi al-Zobaidi, Rafeef Ziadah, Yafa Jarrar

The closing panel features three emerging Palestinian artists discussing what drives Palestinian cultural production today. The panellists will examine art forms ranging from spoken word to satiric filmmaking to *dabke* (Palestinian folk dancing), and how each is used to tell the stories of the Palestinian people.

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