



BPFF Audience Survey Results 2007

The Boston Palestine Film Festival asked members of its audience to tell us about their experience attending the 2007 festival and provide feedback for future events.

The survey was conducted on the closing weekend of the festival during the remaining six screenings on Saturday and Sunday, October 6th-7th at the Museum of Fine Arts and Kendall Square Cinema. Nearly 80 respondents filled out the survey answering most of the ten questions posed, though nearly a quarter of the respondents only answered partially. The survey has been posted online on the film festival website, so additional responses may come later.

The following summarizes the current results of the survey, as of October 11, 2007. With only 80 respondents of the nearly hundreds of festival participants, while this is only a small fraction of the audience it may be considered a representative sample.

The survey was conducted and compiled by Nitin Sawhney, Ph.D. on behalf of the BPFF organizing committee.

SUMMARY OF SURVEY RESPONSES

Q1. How did you hear about this festival?

(responses ordered by most cited sources; aggregate stats provided at the end)

a. Email announcements (when and what lists?)

1. General BPFF email announcements (11)
2. MFA Friend of Film mailing list (2)
3. Boston Coalition of Palestinian Rights (BCPR) mailing list (2)
4. Activist mailing list (1)
5. Tawassul mailing list (1)
6. Boston-to-Palestine mailing list (1)
7. Jewish Voice for Peace email mailing list (1)
8. ACT-MA mailing list (1)
9. From link in announcement for Pete Seeger film (1)
10. Muslim Students Association (MSA) at Tufts University (1)
11. Email announcement from Sara Roy at Harvard (1)
12. Jericho Boston mailing list (1)
13. Center for Arabic Culture (CAC) mailing list (1)
14. Network of Arab-American Professional (NAAP) mailing list (1)
15. Professor at Northeastern University (1)
16. Sol Slapikoff, Professor at Tufts University – mailing list for Jewish/Palestinian issues (1)
17. Somerville Divestment Project mailing list (1)

Total for email announcements: 29 **(36.25%)**

b. Print / Media advertising (which paper or radio station)

1. MFA Film Program Printed Schedule / Newsletter (8)



2. Boston Globe newspaper article (4)
3. BPFV Brochure (3)
4. BPFV Poster/Flyer (3)
5. Boston Metro Ad (3)
6. On Radio Program: This Week in Palestine, WZBZ, Boston. (1)
7. Poster/flyer at Falafel Palace in Cambridge (1)
8. CCTV, Cambridge (1)
9. Newspaper review (1)
10. Weekly Dig newspaper (1)
11. Berkeley College of Music (1)
12. MFA Posters (1)
13. Kendall Square Theatre Brochure (1)
14. Boston Phoenix newspaper (1)

Quotes:

"Saw Festival Program schedule on table at community organization."

Total for print/media advertising: 30 **(37.5%)**

c. Word of mouth (when and how)

1. General word of mouth through friends (22)
2. Personal Contact from Organizers & Volunteers (9)
3. Through one of the Festival Filmmakers (2)
4. Word of mouth through Palestinian friends (2)
5. Rania Matar – Palestinian Artist/Photographer (1)
6. Friend in NAAP (1)
7. Muslim Students Association (MSA) in Boston (1)
8. Middle East activists (1)
9. Person connected to Birthright Unplugged (1)

Total for word of mouth: 40 **(50%)**

d. Presentation at an event (when and where?)

1. Center for Arabic Culture Music Retreat with Simon Shaheen (1)
2. BPFV Fundraiser (1)
3. Preview of films @ MFA (1)

Total for presentations at events: 3 **(3.75%)**

e. Websites / Blogs and Internet search (which sites?)

1. BPFV Website (5)
2. Arab Professional Network (1)
3. BPFV Facebook (1)
4. Internet search (2)

Quotes:

"After hearing about it, saw the excellent website for the calendar of events etc."



"Excellent website!! Comes out with Google search."

Total for Websites/Internet: 9 (11.25%)

Ranking of Festival Publicity Sources:

1. Word of Mouth (50%)
2. Print/Media Advertising (37.5%)
3. Email Announcements (36.25%)
4. Websites/Internet (11.25%)
5. Presentations at Events (3.75%)

Q2. Should the festival reach out to broader or diverse audiences in other ways? If so how?

"Yes! More media advertising, possibly on mainstream TV or NPR radio etc."

"Yes, at universities, graduate schools of all types (political science, sociology, social work, public health etc), anti-war groups (Iraq), Jewish (progressive/reform) temples."

"Yes, seems like finding mainstream venues – how about in Newton and Brookline.?"

"Trust advertising"

"More to communities of color, inner-city youth."

"Send info. to bookstores in communities surrounding the city, i.e. on the commuter rail lines."

"Well the folks in my city Somerville behaved so badly to intimidation of divestment - I'd love to see you come to Somerville Theater."

"Yes – geographically speaking, we're from New Hampshire (Concord). Though its relatively far to drive, people there would be interested."

"You are doing a wonderful job. Keep going."

"Yes - newspaper ads?"

"Absolutely, perhaps through wider advertising."

"Yes and to people who (are) neutral minded about this topic."

"It is expensive but radio like NPR, WZBZ, WMBR plus Sundance channel etc."

"It would be great, if non-activist/political people knew about it."

"Yes more publicity"

"Yes through other film festivals"



"Yes, I didn't see any advertisements, even at the theatre!"

"No, it is great already"

"Yes, is there any chance of "building" a bridge to public television?"

"Many communities of people in struggle are here in Boston – Mexican, Indian popular movements etc. Maybe outreach can be done to bring these communities in and also to strengthen each others movements."

"Web"

"Invite" (audiences)

"Yes, try to link up with other organizations and universities."

"Email listserves"

"All universities, high school, churches and other social organizations, unions."

"Yes, through universities."

"Always good to reach out (to) other communities under siege? Immigrant, urban, youth, etc."

"I'm unaware of your "marketing" strategy. I imagine trying to appeal to a diverse but young group through ads on university campuses."

"Yes, schools, churches, activist communities. Perhaps the organization did."

"Schools, universities, best would be TV."

"Was ok."

"The theatre was full – so that's broad enough for me."

"Yes to other Arabs in the Boston area. Do you think you could make it a traveling film festival? (like the Human Rights Watch film festival)"

"Why not? The theatre wasn't totally full, it couldn't hurt! ☺"

"Good question – need to think about it."

"Yes – send info. to community change inc – janet@communitychangeinc.org"

"Yes colleges and universities in the U.S., first."

"Yes ... needs to be in NYC, San Francisco, TV commercials."

"More people of color – particularly African-American."



"It (BPF) should attempt to advertise more publicly at universities and schools."

"Greater media coverage."

"Yes – not sure but I'll think about it and let you know."

"College students (more posters, brochures at Harvard – where I live)."

"Absolutely, probably to campuses and community centers."

"Good idea but don't know how."

"Yes. Some films were just great films."

"Yes. Perhaps you can co-present a movie with the Boston Jewish film festival?"

"From what I could see on opening night hundreds lined up to see "Leila Khalid: Hijacker", organizers did a brilliant job with outreach. Of course more publicity is always a good thing but this was a great start!"

"Yes! Yes! Don't be timid. You know now, Palestinian art has a place at the table. Be confident."

Q3. Why did you come to see the films at this festival?

"To watch the movies and see the turnout and their reactions, since I myself am Palestinian."

"I am always looking for new ways to learn about the human side of the conflict."

"To see friend's film and to learn about the current circumstances/conditions/reality."

"Time and interest in subject matter. I liked seeing three shorts."

"Ongoing interest in the issue, and trying to find ways to contribute to finding peace."

"To further educate myself, to support efforts to bring a fuller picture of Palestinians and Apartheid and the U.S. support of invasion/occupation."

"We were in Jordan and Israel this summer visiting a Palestinian friend who grew up in a refugee camp in Amman. We're both writers and have written essays on this subject."

"This topic is interesting."

"To inform myself through seeing / visual documentation, and to motivate myself to become more engaged as an Armenian Jew in thinking about, learning about, discussing, and taking a vocal stance in my community, and perhaps to find a way to become more involved in the Palestinian cause. I am a professional musician



(clarinet / flute) and if my skills can be of use in any way, please feel free to contact me."

"Very interesting subjects."

"I thought it would be interesting and educational."

"I love films. I was curious and some of the films I know about and hadn't seen yet."

"Excited about films on Palestinian experience."

"To learn"

"I'm so excited that finally the Palestinian voice is being heard in such a public way."

"Interest in Palestine, connection with Director."

"My mother invited me"

"I never saw Palestinian movies"

"Deep concern for Palestinian people and our responsibilities to them."

"To see authentic Palestinian point of view of Middle East history and present circumstances."

"Rare films are always special – thanks so much."

"To encourage the effort to increase awareness of the Palestinian plight."

"Interest in the Middle East, Israel-Palestine (I am Jewish)."

"Wanted information about Palestinian/Israeli situation, since the media either fails to cover/show events or skews facts to show Israeli side."

"(1) Show support for people of Palestine, (2) Interest, and (3) To counter the propaganda of U.S. media."

"Interest in Palestinian issues and Palestinian Arts."

"To be politically aware."

"Interest in culture and music."

"I am interested in politics."

"Supporting the festival and justice for Palestinians."

"I am involved in some social activism and a strong advocate for Palestinian rights, so it was appropriate (and enjoyable) for me to support."



"Interested in art films and the story of Palestine."

"Because I am interested."

"To become more familiar with the issue."

"I have liked many films shown at the MFA."

"My story."

"(1) Personal heritage; am Palestinian, (2) Looking for ways to get involved; meet people with similar interests, (3) Learn more about Palestine."

"Want to learn more about current problems from a Palestinian perspective."

"I loved "Paradise Now" (previously released film not screened in BPF)"

"Sounded interesting"

"Entertainment and education"

"Important interest"

"I heard of the top quality"

"(I am) Palestinian American"

"To support the committee, to support the politics, to support the education inherent in it all."

"My roommate from college is Palestinian."

"Because I wanted to see and learn about Palestinian culture."

"Interest in a rarely represented perspective."

"I plan to be a director/screenwriter and I am Palestinian-American."

"I am an ex-social studies teacher and have been interested in the Palestinian-Israeli situation since 1967 and taught about it in history classes and great decisions classes."

"Because I care about Palestinians I saw 17 films!"

"Curious"

"My friend is a Palestinian."

"To inform myself of the full perspective because I know that we get a very narrow perspective through the American media."



"Concerned with the Occupation (Jewish, lived in Israel, etc)"

"I am interested in seeing movies produced by Palestinians and by Israelis."

"Saw trailer for Zigzigland. Would have liked to see more."

"(1) Documentary (Topic), (2) Originality of films."

"Being a Jewish Israeli I felt that this is an important opportunity to hear the voices that Israeli media will not air."

"To be better informed about another perspective on Israel/Palestine."

"I have been a Palestine solidarity activist for a long time, but I have never been to Palestine and have seen very few films by Palestinians. This was a perfect opportunity!"

"I only know of Palestine from what I've heard from non-Palestinians."

"Curious about these perspectives. Some reviews on quality of films."

Q4. How many film screenings did you attend in this festival?

1. One screening (22)
2. Two screenings (15)
3. Three screenings (6)
4. Four screenings (5)
5. Five screenings (1)
6. Six screenings (2)
7. Seven screenings (3)
8. Eight screenings (3)
9. Twelve screenings (3)
10. Seventeen screenings (1)

Quotes:

"Unfortunately I could only come to one film – Driving to Zigzigland."

"Two – much fewer than I wanted to."

"All but two at the MFA, I think eight."

"Only 1, unfortunately (I heard late and had class)."

"Just one (Driving to Zigzigland) because it was a weekend"

"As many as possible. 6-12. we got a pass."

Q5. Which were the films you liked most and why?

1. Driving to Zigzigland (22)
2. Palestine Blues (8)
3. Leila Khalid: Hijacker (4)
4. Occupation 101 (4)
5. Arna's Children (3)
6. USA vs. Al-Arian (3)
7. Belonging (3)



8. Since You Left (3)
9. The Iron Wall (3)
10. 9 Star Hotel (2)
11. Jenin Jenin (2)
12. All that Remains (2)
13. Dying up Palestine (2)
14. Confronting the Wall: Art and Resistance in Palestine (2)
15. La Ultima Luna (1)
16. Palestine Revolutionary Cinema (1)
17. The Color of Olives (1)
18. Exiles in Jerusalem (1)
19. Private (1)
20. Shorts by Emerging Palestinian Directors (1)
21. This Body is a Prison (1)

Quotes about why:

1) Driving to Zigzigland

- a) "I used to drive a cab"
- b) "Clever, poignant, entertaining."
- c) "Good film"
- d) "A+"
- e) "Great, poignant, realistic, funny."
- f) "Fabulous"
- g) "because it was funny, informant, and great."
- h) "very entertaining, strong message, appealing to a broader audience."

2) Palestine Blues

- a) "Loved Palestine Blues – worked as a compelling story!"
- b) "I liked them both (and Palestine Revolutionary Cinema) enormously for different reasons."
- c) "Living experience"

3) Leila Khalid: Hijacker

- a) "New perspectives for me"

4) Arna's Children

- a) "The kids."

5) 9 Star Hotel

- a) "Felt authentic in construction sites"
- b) "Living experience"

6) Drying up Palestine

- a) "The film about the water problem – for me it was highly informative."

7) Confronting the Wall: Art and Resistance in Palestine

- a) "About family separated on 3 sides – all the while resisting."

8) La Ultima Luna

- a) "A great movie, stands on its own for storytelling and cinematography."



9) Palestine Revolutionary Cinema

- a) "I liked them both (and Palestine Blues) enormously for different reasons."

10) The Color of Olives

- a) "Living experience"
b) "Poorly made film (too bad because the topic deserved better!)"

11) Exiles in Jerusalem

- a) "Exposed pressing current problems."

General Quotes:

"All equally."

"Both good; neither perfect."

"It's hard to say since all are different."

"All were valuable – hard to watch older films (quality)."

"Generally I like the ones that appeal to the emotions without being preachy or polemical."

"All that I saw – they spoke the truth."

"Enjoyed all three."

Q6. Which screening venues and times did you prefer going to, and why?

Preferred Venues:

1. Museum of Fine Arts (13)
2. Kendall Square Cinema (5)
3. Harvard University (4)
4. Coolidge Corner Theatre (2)
5. Harvard Film Archive (2)

Preferred Timings:

1. Evenings in General (7)
2. Weekday Evenings after 6:30 PM (4)
3. Weekday Evenings after 8:00 PM (1)
4. Weekends (11)
5. Weekend Nights (1)
6. Sunday PM (1)

Quotes:

"Early evenings, day times on weekends"

"Evenings and weekends. More convenient with work."

"Free screenings at Harvard Law School are great, but I can't get there till after 8pm."

"Harvard Film Archive (HFA) – close to my place. A nice institution."

"Evenings (work)"



"All excellent venues"

"Museum of Fine Arts (MFA), more food sources."

"They were all good."

"Harvard Film Archive (HFA) – closer."

"Evening and weekend – easier to attend."

"Museum of Fine Arts (MFA) – most preferred because (I) wanted to support a non-profit with excellent programming. (Coolidge Corner Theatre also great for same reason)."

"Evening"

"All good. Museum of Fine Arts (MFA) probably useful for cache!"

"University and Museum of Fine Arts (MFA)"

"7:30 and 9:30 pm – I would have liked to come to more but some of us have jobs ☺"

"Museum of Fine Arts (MFA) is a classy joint and easy to get to."

"Weekend times - MFA and Coolidge"

"The 6:30 and 8:30 pm weekdays. 5:30 pm and later weekends."

"I only went to MFA which was great."

"Weekends – I was not aware of other venues (other than MFA)."

"Kendall (Square Cinema)"

"Best Harvard, MFA, Coolidge – Kendall ok"

"Since it is Ramadan, it's difficult to go to the ones during the day."

"Scattered venues was good. (MFA was convenient for me)"

"Weekends - convenient"

"Kendall (Square Cinema) – best theater in Boston."

"Friday / Saturday nights"

"N/A. Wasn't a factor."

"MFA 7:30 pm and later."



"We only attended films at Kendall (Square Cinema).

"For me any – For many weekend afternoons to allow travel back home."

"Anything close to public transportation."

"Only went to Kendall (Square Cinema) 3pm 10/6"

Q7. Did the festival organization, presentation and planning meet your expectations? If not, what could be improved?

"Very impressed. Far more professional and comprehensive than any major 1st year event I can remember."

"I felt that the moderator on Tuesday night was not very balanced - its not true that all Israelis support government policies towards the Bedouins or in Gaza. Many Israelis and Jews are working to change the situation too."

"In general, it was highly impressive. The beautiful brochure and website, the prestigious venues, the high attendance. It would have been good if the films began on time and if the presenters practiced using the computers to show the films in advance."

"Yes (great website and brochure)"

"It was well planned."

"Impressive venues and audience."

"Yes. Hopefully in the future you can draw bigger crowds."

"Yes, it did."

"Terrific, very professional materials and great email alerts."

"More than Wonderful."

"Exceptional!! You guys did a fabulous job – opening night could be significantly improved."

"Well organized."

"Yes – very professionally done."

"Excellent Job!"

"Excellent."

"Must sell DVDs especially Occupation 101, Iron Wall. With DVD can show to friends, schools etc larger audience."



"Exceeded expectations – excellent!"

"More"

"Exceeded my expectation."

"Yes. Timing should be late enough to be after work and after dinner."

"The 2nd page of the flyer sent via email was upside down (done so for brochure printing alignment). There was no signage for the festival outside the theater."

"It was excellent – thank you."

"Exceptional – thank you for your passion and dedication."

"Yes. Professional."

Q8. Compared to any other festivals or screening events you've attended, what was better, worse or different about this festival?

"The audience was more passionate about the cause."

"The obvious pride of the Palestinian people in presenting the festival. The pride and dignity were palpable, the air was very positive."

"It was awesome!"

"These movies are so depressing they do not offer much hope for the future."

"Do more and more of what this festival did and audiences will grow."

"Comparable to Jewish film festival, some French films at MFA etc."

"Some of the Jewish festivals have featured films that are properly critical – "Yellow Asphalt" comes to mind."

"It was comparable with other film festivals!! Congrats!!"

"Similar - good publicity"

"Fantastic"

"Everything was better!"

"Movies should be shown more often."

"Excellent."

"I am happy that Nicole and Bashar were able to come for Q&A; it added to the professionalism of the festival (great for a first!)."



"Not enough comparison."

"Very good – must sell DVD etc, flags, Palestine scarves etc. More Palestine should be present."

"Better – because it engaged current problems."

"Good variety of films and venues."

"I'd like more films that appeal to a broad audience like Paradise Now."

"It was good. Some technical issues with screenings at Harvard Law School – pre-runs to avoid in the future."

"My first one (festival)."

"Great"

"Not a usual attendee of festivals."

"I liked the varied locations. Discussions/questions too."

"Superin – Now more than ever we need to see the (Palestinian) people and hear their stories."

Q9. Do you have suggestions for changes or additions we can make to the festival next year? (types of events, films, awards etc)

"More publicity on films."

"Please add more cultural / less political movies to the festival that just flesh out Palestinian daily life."

"Thirst" (film?)

"It would be good if individual screenings and other activities could continue throughout the year. Would it be possible to create an archive of this and other films (on DVD) accessible to the public?"

"Repeat screenings of documentaries."

"Would be great to see more historical footage."

"Keep recruiting people of the type who presented here."

"Kids Shows!!!"

"Show more archive films (like Palestine Revolutionary Cinema). Reshow the series of short films (because not available for purchase separately) - the festival is the only way to see them."



"I think we can have more comedy movies."

"Add an art exhibition to your programming."

"Perhaps more places to get food or have food served and talk with others."

"Not plan it during the month of Ramadan."

"Make DVDs available for sale at all screenings. Will no US TV network dare show these films? Theaters? How to give voice to the Palestinians in this society?"

"More Israeli films showing Israeli-Palestinian cooperation."

"Awards maybe. Audience awards etc. Support by local or nationally well known people to promote exposure."

"Keep up the great work and do it on a regular basis."

"Fewer films spread over greater time, for example 30 films in 2 weeks."

"Possibly a forum to incorporate discussion of the themes, politics in the films and talking on reality – to share between filmmakers and audience. Provide some more context before screenings of topical films such as the documentary on Sami Al-Arian for those of us still unfamiliar."

"Lectures/Readings"

"I would have liked an in-depth discussion - how to make peace and land return in the west bank etc. Also what laws will Palestine have re woman's rights etc."

"Screenings in Roxbury, Dorchester and JP"

Q10. Would you like to get involved in assisting us with the festival in the future? If so, how would you like to contribute?

"Just let me know if Rocket Science Screen-printing can help you out. We're small but we're behind you."

"I'd be happy to preview movies to help choose what to show."

"As a secular Jew with a family history of Armenian communist and socialist activism in America (civil rights, labor rights, woman's rights), I am confused and feel helpless with the polarization, silence and almost willful ignorance of the Jewish community. I wish I knew a way to break through the silence. Your festival if it does nothing else shows the human face of the occupation and the real humanity of the Palestinian people. I will recommend these films, your website and related info. to all I know who refuse to look and listen. If I can be of any help in any way, please don't hesitate to contact me. I have not been active for much of my life, but this is the one reality I cannot ignore."

"Maybe, if he (organizers) permitted ..."



"Yes, keep in touch."

"Yes, any way possible."

"Yes, please let me know more about it!!"

"I would volunteer - email me."

"Would love to help. Not sure how I can best help – don't know your needs."

"Yes – send a list of needed help and I'll volunteer for what I'm qualified for."

"Yes. Organization."

"Yes. Volunteering."

"Could help with organizing and art exhibitions?"

"Yes – not sure; anything that is needed; contact by email."

"Yes – I don't know (how to contribute)"

"Yes, I'll talk to my Palestinian friend about this."

"No because I'm 14 and don't have time."

"Yes. Volunteering. Software expertise if needed."

"Yes. Volunteer time to organize."

"I left my P.O. Box (mailing address?) with a lady (volunteer?)"

"Yes. outreach, getting sponsors, showing films in area schools / youth groups."

"I will look at volunteer opportunities if posted / emailed."

"I am a professional musician (clarinet / flute) and if my skills can be of use in any way, please feel free to contact me."

"I drove all the way from CT just for the festival."