



Celebrating Palestinian Films, Arts and Culture

OCTOBER 4-12, 2008

BOSTON PALESTINE FILM FESTIVAL 2008 PROGRAM SCHEDULE

BOSTONPALESTINE
FILM FESTIVAL

www.bostonpalestinefilmfest.org

ABOUT THE FESTIVAL

The Boston Palestine Film Festival (BPFF) was established in 2007 to showcase the extraordinary narrative of Palestinians through the medium of cinema to audiences in the New England area. The festival is sponsored by Tawassul, an organization committed to sharing and celebrating Palestinian arts and culture.

BPFF showcases the diverse and creative work of all filmmakers exploring both historic and contemporary themes related to Palestinian culture, experience, and narrative. This festival features a range of compelling and thought-provoking documentaries, dramatic features, rare early works, and new films by emerging artists. These films from international directors bring an honest, self-described, and independent view of Palestine and its diasporic society, culture, and political travails. In 2008, the festival focuses on films related to the Palestinian refugee issue and themes of exile, to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Nakba.

The Boston Palestine Film Festival is a program of the Middle East Charitable and Cultural Society Inc., a 501(c)(3) organization.

Note: The festival program at Harvard is co-presented with Justice for Palestine at the Harvard Law School. All screenings at the Harvard Law School are in Langdell North, 1563 Massachusetts Ave, Cambridge, MA.

All university screenings are FREE events. No RSVP required for any festival events.



Thanks to all donors and volunteers for supporting this festival.

FRIDAY OCTOBER 3RD HARVARD UNIVERSITY 7:30pm

Festival Opening Reception with Expressions of Nakba Exhibit*

Come celebrate the launch of the film festival in conjunction with the opening of the Expressions of Nakba exhibition at Harvard. See visual artwork, spoken word, photography and short films and hear from distinguished speakers about the 60 year commemoration of the Nakba (Catastrophe). Event includes Arabic music and food.
Suggested Donation: \$20 General / \$10 Students

Photo by Anne Paq
Activestills.org

*Expressions of Nakba is an international competition and exhibition to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Nakba: the expulsion and dispossession of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians from their homes and land in 1948. Co-sponsored by the Harvard GSAS Alliance for Justice in the Middle East and Justice for Palestine at the Harvard Law School.

Location: Harvard CGIS North (Knafel Building), 1737 Cambridge Street, Cambridge.

SATURDAY OCTOBER 4TH

COOLIDGE CORNER THEATRE 12:30pm



Telling Strings - Documentary Feature

Anne Marie Haller, Palestine/Switzerland, 2007, 60 min

A Palestinian oud maker/player and his four adult children demonstrate a profound intergenerational continuity through musical expression. This film is an examination of the unique beauty of the oud (an Arabic lute-like instrument) and the enduring strength of Palestinian musical culture. Features well-known Palestinian performer Kamiliya Jubran.



Sons of Eilaboun - Documentary Short

The Hisham Zreiq, Palestine/Germany, 2007, 23 min

Survivors of Eilaboun, a small Palestinian village, speak about the 1948 massacres in their town and the ensuing expulsion of its inhabitants. The story of a village that tells the story of a nation.



Soup over Bethlehem (Mloukhiyah) - Experimental Short

Larissa Sansour, Palestine/Denmark, 2006, 10 min

A Discussion, at turns both light and serious, about the political reality of Palestinian life and Diaspora. The Palestinian national dish "Mloukhiyah" plays a starring role in this family reunion.



The View - Narrative Short

Hazim Bitar, Rifqi Assaf, Jordan, 2008, 16 min

An Israeli sniper suffers mission drift during a stakeout of a Palestinian couple. Here is the psychology of violence in the absence of restraints.

MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS 3:30pm



Maria's Grotto - Documentary Feature

Buthina Canaan Khoury, Palestine, 2007, 52 min

Director present along with Hip Hop performer Abeer.

An unflinching examination of the subject of "honor killings." Though not a common occurrence in Palestine, the risk is all too real for women who live with the possibility that even a suspicion of "impropriety" can put their lives in danger. Four women share stories that will horrify, enrage, surprise and inspire. Winner of a Silver Muhr Award at the Dubai Film Festival. Co-presented with Women in Film and Video New England.



First Picture - Documentary Short

Akram Al-Ashqar, Palestine, 2006, 26 min

A touching glimpse at the experience of a young Palestinian boy who can't help but miss the place where he was born, the place where his mother remains: her prison cell.

MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS 5:30pm



Territories - Documentary Feature

Mary Ellen Davis, Mexico/Palestine/Canada, 2007, 65 min

Director present.

Legendary photographer, Larry Towell, is known for his humanist and universal approach. Towell's breathtaking images are bound together thematically by multiple notions of territory - forbidden territories and territories of refuge, occupied territories and territories of creative release. Shot in multiple locations, including the walled borderlines of the West Bank and of the U.S., this film overflows with compelling photography and critical insights. Witness to both walls, Gabriel Camacho from AFSC will speak briefly about the Wall at the Mexican border and in Palestine. Co-presented with *The Boston Latino International Film Festival*.



Power - Documentary Short

Ayelet Bechar, Israel, 2006, 15 min

Despite being labeled a traitor, a young Bedouin man joins the Israeli Army in a bid to win recognition - and ultimately to provide for his ailing sister.



A Day in Palestine - Experimental Short

Will Eizlini, José Garcia-Lozano, Mary Ellen Davis, Palestine/Canada, 2007, 6 min

An impressionistic piece assembled from home-movie style footage that bestows a deceptive, almost nostalgic beauty.

MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS 7:30pm

OPENING NIGHT FILM



Slingshot Hip Hop - Documentary Feature

Jackie Salloum, Palestine, 2008, 82 min

Director present along with Hip Hop performer Abeer.

Inspired by American rappers, Palestinian hip-hop performers wield their talents as a form of resistance to political and cultural oppression. Salloum follows these young artists as they grapple with the day-to-day physical boundaries imposed by the occupation, not to mention the more subtle forms of division that conspire to restrict their lives. Their spirited, uncompromising music becomes the inspiration to transcend gender and generational divides, among others. This is the rousing, emotionally charged film that rocked the Sundance Film Festival

SUNDAY OCTOBER 5TH

COOLIDGE CORNER THEATRE 12:30pm



The Olive Harvest - Narrative Feature

Hanna Elias, Palestine, 2003, 89 min

Upon his release from an Israeli prison, older brother Mazen develops romantic feelings for his childhood friend, Raeda. However, Raeda is already engaged to Mazen's younger brother. Each of them finds themselves painfully torn between love and loyalty. Winner of Special Jury Prize Cairo International Film Festival.



Pasatin - Experimental Short

Raeda Adon, Israel/Palestine, 2002, 8 min

A haunting film based on photographs of black dresses in Lifta, a destroyed Palestinian village near Jerusalem. The houses have been empty since 1948. The filmmaker recreates the history of the source of these dresses and the female body that used to wear them.

MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS 4:00pm / 7:00pm



Bab Al-Shams: The Departure - Narrative Feature

Yousry Nasrallah, France/Egypt/Belgium/Denmark/Morocco, 2004, 135 min

Adapted from Elias Khoury's epic novel of the same name, called "the first true magnum opus of the Palestinian saga," this landmark film spans five decades, starting in the years just before the Nakba (or "Catastrophe") when hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were driven from their homes and land. Intricately structured, Bab Al-Shams weaves together the life stories of a collection of refugees with graceful yet haunting results. Critic Jenny Gheith calls it "a tour de force" and adds "Nasrallah not only succeeds in his large-scale recreations of demanding passages in Palestinian history, but he infuses intimate scenes with a nuanced tenderness."



Bab Al-Shams: The Return - Narrative Feature

Yousry Nasrallah, France/Egypt/Belgium/Denmark/Morocco, 2004, 135 min

The second installment of this not-to-be-missed saga. (See description above.)

MONDAY OCTOBER 6TH

COOLIDGE CORNER THEATRE 7:00pm



Soy Palestino - Documentary Feature

Osama Qashoo, Palestine/UK/Cuba, 2007, 65 min

Director present.

Palestinian filmmaker Osama Qashoo travels to Cuba and discovers Havana's own "Palestinos," as poor black migrants are labeled in local racist parlance. He befriends Luisito, a clown-singer-musician and homeless Palestino who lives in a wooden box. When, after many years away from home, Luisito sets off to reconnect with his family, Qashoo tags along for what becomes a musical-comedic journey into the politics of today's Cuba. Co-presented with The Boston Latino Film Festival.



Taste the Revolution Documentary Short

Buthina Canaan Khoury, Palestine, 2008, 27 min

Director present.

Taybeh is the first and only microbrewery in Palestine. Contending daily with random checkpoints and the general chaos and economic strife of the Occupation, Taybeh is still hanging in there.

TUESDAY OCTOBER 7TH

NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY 2:00pm



Fertile Memory - Documentary Feature

Michel Khleifi, Palestine, 1980, 100 min

The film recounts the lives of two very different Palestinian women: a widow living with her children and grandchildren, and a West Bank novelist. **Location:** Northeastern Room: 90 Snell Library

HARVARD LAW SCHOOL 6:00pm



GAZA SIEGE

Introduced by Darryl Li, Director Maryam Monalisa Gharavi present.

Gaza Strip - Documentary Feature

James Longley, USA, 2002, 74 min

A sobering look at life and death in the Gaza Strip. Longley's camera documents a wide variety of Israeli human rights abuses and apparent war crimes - from the wholesale destruction of Palestinian homes to an astonishing incident in which the Israeli Army appears to have attacked with nerve gas. An intensely instructive look at how the Israeli military has targeted this most confined and vulnerable population of Palestinians.



Inessential: Gaza in Three Pieces - Documentary Shorts
Maryam Monalisa Gharavi, Palestine/USA, 2008, 22 min

Three short pieces in which Gazans relate their experiences: A fisherman describes the Israeli-imposed economic stranglehold that threatens his livelihood; Farmers bemoan the effects of Israeli blockades on their ability to farm; a family tells of how their ability to meet their medical needs is hindered.

HARVARD LAW SCHOOL 8:00pm

OCCUPATION

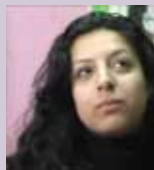
Introduction to B'Tselem shorts by DIALA SHAMAS.



Edge of Hope - Documentary Feature

Gerd Schneider, Palestine/Germany, 2006, 69 min

A cameraman in Ramallah must negotiate the many obstacles of Israeli occupation in order to get news footage for Al Jazeera. This means brushing up against armed Palestinian resistance fighters one day and being pushed around by Israeli soldiers the next. In between, he ruminates on possible sources of change for him and his fellow Palestinians, all of which currently appear elusive. Itself beautifully shot, this documentary elegantly depicts one man's attempt to capture the absurdity of everyday life in the occupied West Bank.



Against All Odds: Being a Young Arab Palestinian in Israel - Documentary Short

Oriol Poveda, Palestine, 2007, 18 min

Six young Arab citizens of Israel face the challenges of growing up amidst a prevailing culture that considers them a "threat" - even as they also critically examine their own inherited values.



B'Tselem Shorts: Documenting the Seldom Seen B'Tselem, Palestine, 2007, 39 min - Documentary Shorts

For the last few years, the Israeli human rights organization B'Tselem has provided video cameras to Palestinians so that they might document the extreme conditions of their own lives. We will show a selection of some of this rather revealing footage from inside occupied Palestine.

WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 8TH

NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY 11:45pm



The Zoo - Documentary Feature

Hayden Campbell, Palestine/New Zealand, 2005, 50 min

A day in the life of Palestine's one and only zookeeper, Dr. Sami Khader. Like the zoo itself, Qalqiliya is completely fenced off from the rest of the world by Israel's "separation" barrier. Campbell accompanies the voluble and entertaining Dr. Sami on a mission to rescue two baboons.

Location: Northeastern Room: 105 Shillman

HARVARD LAW SCHOOL 6:00pm



PALESTINE YOUTH MEDIA

This special program showcases selected work emerging from digital storytelling workshops conducted by Voices Beyond Walls in summer 2008, as well as selected student films from the Palestine Audio-Visual Project (PAVP) supported by the A.M. Qattan Foundation. Discussion with workshop organizers will follow the screenings.

Digital Media Shorts from Voices Beyond Walls

Nitin Sawhney, Raed Yacoub, Julie Norman, Anne Paq, Palestine 2008, 60 min

Workshop organizers present.

Creative media projects and video shorts (5-10 mins each) produced by Palestinian youth (ages 10 and up) living in refugee camps in the West Bank.

Films from the Palestinian Audio-Visual Project, Al-Qattan Foundation



Pickled - Narrative Short

Razi Najjar, Palestine, 2008, 16 min

When an unassuming produce merchant is suddenly accused by the police of being a thief, a surprising comic twist involving his grandmother's famous pickles brings this farcical tale to a madcap conclusion.



When Walls Speak - Documentary Short

May Odeh, Palestine, 2008, 16 min

The filmmaker and other women reminisce about the graffiti they read as youngsters and the role these messages and slogans of resistance played for their communities.

HARVARD LAW SCHOOL 8:00pm

FROM THE DIASPORA



Identity without a Homeland - Documentary Feature

Aseel Mansour, Adam Shapiro, Perla Issa, USA, 2008, 70 min

How is the Palestinian identity transmitted to new generations? How important are refugee camps today in preserving the Palestinian identity? Should Palestinian refugees obtain citizenship from the countries in which they reside? These and other quandaries are examined in interviews with Palestinians. Part of the six-part documentary series Seerat Al-Laaji (Chronicles of the Refugee).



Lebanon...Organized Chaos - Documentary Short

Katia Saleh, Lebanon/UK, 2007, 22 min

After surviving the 2006 bombing of Lebanon by Israel, Palestinian refugees face new trouble: Fateh al-Islam, a mysterious group that entered north Lebanon and based itself in the Nahr el-Bared refugee camp.



A Palestinian Mural - Documentary Short

Norma Shiheiber, USA, 2008, 12 min

Students attempt to have a mural depicting Palestinian culture displayed on a San Francisco State University building and must overcome the manufactured "controversy" that ensues.

THURSDAY OCTOBER 9TH

MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS 6:00pm



Nakba Dailies - Documentary Feature

Aseel Mansour, Adam Shapiro, Perla Issa, USA, 2008, 80 min

Director Adam Shapiro present.



A look at the global Palestinian refugee experience over the last sixty years. The film presents accounts by Palestinian refugees who experienced firsthand the displacement in 1948 and draws its subjects from a wide cross-section of Palestinian society. Part of the six-part documentary series Seerat Al-Laaji (Chronicles of the Refugee).

Bethlehem Checkpoint, 4am - Documentary Short

Anne Paq, Mimmi Nietula, Palestine/France, 2007, 9 min

Director Anne Paq present.

Made by youth from the Aida refugee camp, this film poignantly captures the routine inconvenience and indignity suffered by Palestinians trying to get to their jobs on the other side of a massive and dehumanizing checkpoint.

MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS 8:00pm



La Terre Parle Arabe (The Land Speaks Arabic) - Documentary Feature

Maryse Gargour, Palestine/France, 2007, 61 min

Director present.

In this documentary the birth of Zionism in the late 19th century is detailed with original source documents, rare archival footage, testimonies of witnesses and interviews with historians. All help to illustrate that the expulsion of the indigenous Arab population from Palestine was far from an accidental result of the 1948 war. This award-winning film shines a spotlight on the ethnic cleansing of Palestine by the Zionist movement.



Going Home - Documentary Feature

Omar Al Qattan, Palestine, UK, 1996, 48 min

May 15, 1948, marks the day the British government abandoned the Arab-Jewish battlefields and left both groups in the throes of war. As an officer in the British Army, Major Derek Cooper witnessed those final days. Almost 50 years later, he returns to speak with Palestinians and Israelis about the events of the 1948 war.



Land Confiscation Order 06/24/T - Experimental Short

Larissa Sansour, Denmark, 2006, 10 min

Video artist Larissa Sansour explores the notion of territory as constitutive not only of national but also personal identity. This work is both a requiem for a particular piece of stolen land and a wistful hymn for all of Palestine's lands.

FRIDAY OCTOBER 10TH

NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY 2:00pm

Wedding in Galilee - Narrative Feature

Michel Khleifi, Palestine, 1987, 117 min

Please see description on Saturday October 11th

Location: Northeastern Room: 19 Snell Library

NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY 5:00pm



"Palestinian Cinema" - A Lecture by Renowned Palestinian Director Michel Khleifi

Reception follows lecture.

Co-sponsored by the Program in Cinema Studies at Northeastern University.

Location: Northeastern: 20 West Village Building F

HARVARD FILM ARCHIVE 7:00pm



The Roof - Documentary Feature

Kamal AlJafari, Palestine, Germany, 2006, 60 min

The Roof is a lingeringly poetic film charting the director's journey back to his family and homeland Palestine. It explores the human capacity to imagine and create worlds across time and space. At the heart of the film is the belief that home is a feeling as well as a place.



Rico in the Night - Experimental Short

Mohanad Yaqubi, Jean Gaudin, Palestine/Belgium, 2007, 8 min

A nighttime tour of Ramallah is animated by French choreographer Gaudin's eccentric but gently propulsive movements.



Around - Documentary Short

Mohanad Yaqubi, Palestine, 2007, 3 min

A group of four young filmmakers in a blue Fiat make their way through the West Bank to have their favorite pizza- a trip considerably lengthened by Israeli checkpoints.

MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS 7:30pm

Music Concert by Simon Shaheen Trio



Along with his Trio, Simon Shaheen, a virtuoso on both the violin and the oud, infuses his music with elements from traditional Arabic music as well as from jazz and classical styles in the West. Simon Shaheen is one of the most significant Arab musicians, performers, and composers of his generation.

Location: Remis Auditorium. Purchase Tickets on-line.

Concert co-sponsored by the Center for Arabic Culture cacboston.org

HARVARD FILM ARCHIVE 9:00pm



33 Days - Documentary Feature

Mai Masri, Lebanon, 2007, 70 min

Mai Masri shows us life on the ground during and after the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 2006. Masri focuses on the experience of a small group of individuals, including a relief worker, a theater performer who organizes workshops and performances with traumatized and displaced children, and a television journalist.



The Shooter (El Takheekh) - Experimental Short

Ihab Jadallah, Palestine, 2007, 7 min

In response to the forces that compel only stories of violence, with good-guy and bad-guy narratives, the filmmaker offers this acidic parody.



Merely a Smell - Experimental Short

Maheer Samra, Lebanon, 2007, 10 min

In just ten minutes, without music or excessive gestures, this haunting film transmits the anguish of death during and in the aftermath of the 2006 Israeli war on Lebanon.

SATURDAY OCTOBER 11TH

MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS 2:30pm

RETROSPECTIVE ON FILMMAKER MICHEL KHELEIFI

Director present at all screenings.

Co-sponsored by the Program in Cinema Studies at Northeastern University.

2:30pm

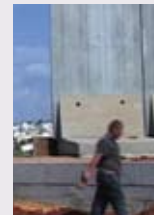


Tale of the Three Jewels - Narrative Feature

Michel Khleifi, Palestine, 1995, 107 min

Yussef is a twelve-year-old boy who escapes the violence surrounding him by retreating into an imaginary world of his own creation. One day he meets Aida, a ravishing gypsy girl with whom he falls in love. When Yussef declares his desire to marry her, she tells him that he must first find three missing jewels—and the adventure begins. An Official Selection of the 1995 Cannes Film Festival, the 1997 Human Rights Watch International Film Festival and The San Francisco Jewish Film Festival. **Note:** *Film is appropriate for young adults.*

5:30pm



Route 181: Fragments of a Journey in Palestine-Israel - Documentary Feature

Michel Khleifi, Eyal Sivan, Palestine/Israel, 2002, 82 min

Palestinian filmmaker Michel Khleifi and Israeli filmmaker Eyal Sivan set off on a two-month cinematic journey along the north-south axis of the land of their birth. By portraying both the divide of the physical landscape and that of the humans who inhabit it, the film elegantly conveys a fuller understanding of this part of the world.

7:45pm



Wedding in Galilee - Narrative Feature

Michel Khleifi, Palestine, 1987, 117 min

The elder of a Palestinian village is given permission to hold a traditional wedding for his son—on the condition that the Israeli military governor and his staff be guests of honor at the ceremony. This sensual, richly detailed allegory of marriage, tradition and national identity established Michel Khleifi as an extraordinary feature filmmaker. LA Times critic Michael Wilmington calls it, "A fine film beautifully shot... wonderfully acted."

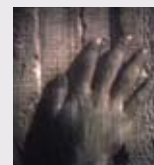
SUNDAY OCTOBER 12TH

HARVARD FILM ARCHIVE 3:00pm

The Roof - Documentary Feature

Kamal AlJafari, Palestine, Germany, 2006, 60 min

Please see description on Friday, October 10th



Jerusalem, the Adulterous Wife - Experimental Short

Matthias De Groof, Belgium, 2008, 8 min

This film juxtaposes archival footage of archaeological digs in Jerusalem with quotations of Biblical punishment for adultery. The result is an oblique portrait of a city claimed by both Palestine and Israel.



Two Houses and a Longing - Documentary Short

Dorit Naaman, Israel, Canada, 2007, 15 min

An Israeli filmmaker tells the story of two Palestinian homes whose owners fled during the 1948 war. The story tackles the workings of public and private memory and erasure, and the unearthing of these two houses' stories.

HARVARD UNIVERSITY 5:00pm



Expressions of Nakba Exhibit: Closing Reception (Free Event)

Closing reception for the Expressions of Nakba exhibition at Harvard: come see the artwork and meet filmmakers and artists who will discuss their work and how it relates to the Nakba. There will be a small reception with drinks and snacks for this exhibit closing event.



Special Screening: Collection of Testimonies from the Nakba Archive - Documentary Feature

Diana Allan and Mahmoud Zeidan, Lebanon, 2007, 40 min

Director present.

This video archive serves both an archival and pedagogical role by recording the collective memory of a passing generation of eyewitnesses, as well as functioning as a public act of witness to the legacy of 1948 and its continuing impact on the Palestinian refugee community in Lebanon.

Location: Harvard CGIS North (Knafel Building)

MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS 7:30pm

Closing Night Film: Special Pre-Screening



Salt of this Sea - Narrative Feature

Featuring poet, actress and performer Suheir Hammad. Annemarie Jacir, Palestine, 2008, 119 min

Director present.

The first feature film by a Palestinian woman, Salt of this Sea tells the story of Soraya, a third-generation, working-class Palestinian refugee living in Brooklyn NY. Soraya discovers that her grandfather's savings have been frozen in a bank account in Jaffa since he was expelled in 1948. Determined to reclaim what is hers, she fulfills her life-long dream to return to Palestine. Critic Deborah Young says Salt of this Sea "boldly grabs hold of the central issue at the heart of the Israel-Palestine conflict." Salt of this Sea "is undoubtedly one of the best films I've seen this year." -Michael Moore. Film critic Rasha Salti says "Ghassan Kanafani meets Bonnie & Clyde..." An official selection at the 2008 Cannes Film Festival.

CASABLANCA RESTAURANT 9:30pm - 12am Festival Closing Party

Come mark the conclusion of the festival at the Casablanca Restaurant by celebrating with the organizers and many of the featured directors. Light appetizers served. Admission: \$10 General / Students Free.