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9TH ANNUAL BOSTON PALESTINE FILM FESTIVAL SET FOR OCTOBER 16 – 25, 2015

Boston, Massachusetts, September 24, 2015 - The Boston Palestine Film Festival (BPFF), co-presented with the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, returns for its ninth year this fall. The festival runs from October 16 - 25, 2015. Since 2007, the festival has showcased Palestinian-related cinema to New England audiences to bring these narratives into the mainstream dialogue.

Opening Film – Eyes of a Thief by Najwa Najjar: Inspired by a true event, Eyes of a Thief opens at the height of the second Intifada, in 2002. Wounded and on the run, Tareq initially eludes Israeli forces but is eventually imprisoned for a decade. Upon his release, he returns to a world dramatically transformed and sets out to find the daughter he has never known. Tareq’s search pitches him into a realm of dangerous secrets and moral uncertainties. Eyes of a Thief weaves its tale of love and loss into a political thriller aimed at the suspicions and sacrifices lurking beneath the surface of contemporary Palestinian society. Starring Egyptian superstar Khaled Abol Naga and Algerian singer-songwriter Souad Massi. Screens October 16 with director in conversation following film.

Palestine’s submission for an Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film, 2015

Closing Film – On the Bride’s Side by Antonio Augugliaro, Gabriele Del Grande, and Khaled Soliman Al Nassiry (documentary): After a perilous passage across the Mediterranean fleeing the Syrian war in a desperate attempt to reach Sweden, five Syrian and Palestinian refugees find renewed hope in Milan when a Palestinian poet and an Italian journalist offer to stage a wedding procession with friends to help them cross borders and complete their illegal journey. United in sharing the risk and a great dream, the “bride and groom” and their “guests” traverse from Milan to Stockholm in four, hair-raising days in November of 2013. Along the way, an intimate portrait of the migrants emerges as stories of sorrow, regret, hopes, and dreams come to life in this fascinating 3,000-kilometer road movie. Screens October 25 with director Del Grande in conversation following film.
Winner:
- **Collateral Award** - Human Rights Nights Award
- **Venice International Film Festival**, Venice Italy, 2014
- **FEDIC Award**, Italian Federation of Cineclubs Venice International Film Festival, 2014
- **Social Critic Award**, “Sorriso Diverso”
- **Best Documentary Award**, Terra di Cinema Film Festival, France, 2015
- **Grand Prize of Geneva**, FIFDH Film Festival, Switzerland, 2015

**Featured Film** – *The Wanted 18*, by Paul Cowan and Amer Shomali: 18 Palestinian cows become “wanted” by Israel due to the “Intifada milk” they produce. A true story that captures the spirit of the first (1987) Intifada through the voices of those who lived it. Employing an impressive mixture of media—clayation, comic strips, reenactment, archived video footage, sketches, photographs, interviews and voiceover narration, this ingenious documentary provides an enchanting, inspirational tribute to the ingenuity and power of grassroots activism. *Screens October 18 with director Shomali invited to engage in conversation following film.*

*Palestine’s submission for an Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film, 2016 (Nominations to be announced January 2016)*

Winner:
- **Best Documentary from the Arab World**, Abu Dhabi Film Festival, 2014
- **Gold Tanit for Best Documentary Film**, Carthage Film Festival, 2014
- **Special Jury Prize**, Human Rights Film Festival, Geneva, Switzerland 2015
- **Best Documentary**, Traverse City Film Festival, Michigan, 2015

**Featured Film** – *Love, Theft, and Other Entanglements*, by Rami and Muayad Alayan. A Palestinian car thief gets into the trouble of his life when he steals the wrong car. What he thought was an Israeli car and an easy way to make money in his impoverished refugee camp turns out to be a load of misfortune when he discovers a kidnapped Israeli soldier in the trunk. Caught between the Israeli intelligence and Palestinian militants, Mousa must chart a delicate path. This black-and-white drama, thriller, and fairytale is a universal story set in Palestine of an anti-hero and his journey towards redemption. *Screens October 22 at 7:30 pm with Directors Alayan and Alayan in conversation following film.*

**Featured Film** – *Villa Touma*, by Suhra Arraf. An orphaned niece arrives to live with three spinster sisters in Ramallah, unleashing a torrent of family secrets in this absorbing family drama. *Screens October 23 at 7 pm with Director Arraf in virtual conversation following film.*

**Formats and Themes** | This year’s festival features films in a wide range of genres, from shorts and documentaries to dramas, comedies, and experimental/video art pieces. Major themes of this year’s programs are refugees and Palestinian stories.
Distinguished Guests at our MFA screenings* include:

Najwa Najjar (dir. *Eyes of a Thief*) is a Palestinian writer-director who grew up in Saudi Arabia, was educated in the US, and currently resides in Palestine. Her work includes the award-winning films *Yasmine’s Song* (2005) and *Naim and Wade’a* (2000). Her debut feature film, *Pomegranates and Myrrh* (2008, BPFF 2009) won 10 international awards. In 2000, together with Hani Kort, Najjar established Ustura Films Ltd. in Ramallah, which aims to produce both documentaries and fictional films in an effort to present alternative narratives. **Attends screening of her film on Opening Night, October 16 at 7:00 pm.**

Hind Shoufani (dir. *Trip Along Exodus*) is a Palestinian writer/filmmaker currently residing between Dubai and Beirut in the Middle East. Born in Lebanon as a refugee in 1978, she was raised in Amman, Beirut, and Damascus. In 2002, she was awarded a Fulbright scholarship from Jordan to complete a Master of Fine Arts from NYU in film writing and directing from the Tisch School for the Arts. For the past 17 years, she has been a reporter, a writer, a producer, a director, a translator and an editor, working in NYC, DC, Beirut, Amman, and Dubai. **Attends screening of her film October 17 at 2:30 pm.**

Amer Shomali (dir. *The Wanted 18*) is a Palestinian multidisciplinary artist, using painting, digital media, films, installations and comics as tools to explore and interact with the sociopolitical scene in Palestine focusing on the creation and the use of the Palestinian revolution iconography. He holds a master’s degree in animation from the Arts University Bournemouth in the United Kingdom and a bachelor’s degree in architecture from Birzeit University, Palestine. He was born in Kuwait in 1981, and is currently based in Ramallah, Palestine. **Invited to attend screening of his film October 18 at 2:30 pm.**

Tamara Erde (dir. *This Is My Land*) is a French-Israeli filmmaker living and working in Paris. She was born in Tel-Aviv in 1982. She graduated from Bezalel Academy, Jerusalem, and later attended the Le Fresnoy Film School, France. Tamara creates documentary and fiction films, performances, and video installations. **In virtual conversation following her film screening October 20 at 7:00 pm.**

Rami Alayan (co-dir. *Love, Theft, and Other Entanglements*) is a designer and filmmaker based in San Francisco. Alayan’s debut as a film director was in 2012 with his short film, *Private Sun*. Alayan co-founded PalCine Productions, a collective of filmmakers and audiovisual artists based in his hometown of Jerusalem and in Bethlehem to facilitate collaboration on film and media projects as well as to promote film as an art form among youth. Alayan is currently a senior principal designer at Progress Software. He is also the co-writer, art director, and co-producer of the narrative feature *Love, Theft, and Other Entanglements*. **Attends screening of his film October 22 at 7:30 pm.**

Muayad Alayan (co-dir. *Love, Theft, and Other Entanglements*) is a Palestinian film director and cinematographer based in Jerusalem. After completing his studies in San Francisco, Alayan returned to Palestine with the goal of making organic cinema by and about Palestinians as a community. Alayan co-founded PalCine Productions, a collective of filmmakers and audiovisual artists based in Jerusalem and Bethlehem to facilitate collaboration on film and media projects as well as to promote film as an art form among youth. *Love, Theft and Other Entanglements* is Alayan’s first feature-length narrative film. **Attends screening of his film October 22 at 7:30 pm.**

Suha Arraf (dir. *Villa Touma*) was born in the Palestinian village of Me’lia, near the Lebanese border. She began her filmmaking career as a documentary producer. Among her works, she directed and produced the documentary *Women of Hamas* (2010). She wrote the screenplays of *The Syrian Bride* (2004) and *Lemon Tree* (2008), both directed by Eran Riklis. For the latter, she won the Best Screenplay Award at the Asia Pacific Screen Award and was nominated for Best Screenplay
at the European Film Awards. *In virtual conversation following her film screening on October 23 at 7:00 pm.*

**Carole Mansour** (dir. *We Cannot Go There Now, My Dear*) founded Forward Film Production in 2000 in Beirut, Lebanon. With over 20 years in documentary production, Mansour has covered the world from Sri Lanka to Lebanon to Uzbekistan. Her films have won numerous prestigious awards. Mansour’s work reflects her concern for human rights and social justice, covering issues such as migrant workers, refugees, environmental issues, mental health, war and memory, right to health, and child labor. Mansour is Lebanese of Palestinian origin. She studied in Montreal, Canada, and is currently living and working from Beirut, Lebanon. *Attends screening of her film October 25 at 12:30 pm.*

**Gabriele Del Grande** (dir. *On the Bride’s Side*) was born in Italy in 1982. In 2006, he founded the observatory of the victims of the borders Fortress Europe. Since 2011, he has been covering the Arab Spring and the wars in Libya and Syria as a writer and independent journalist.

*Additional screenings with more guests at other venues.*

**The full program is available at [www.bostonpalestinefilmfest.org](http://www.bostonpalestinefilmfest.org).**

**About BPFF |** Since 2007, the Boston Palestine Film Festival has been introducing Palestine-related cinema, narratives, and culture to New England audiences. The festival has featured hundreds of compelling and thought-provoking films, including documentaries, dramatic features, animated films, rare early works, video art pieces, and new films by emerging artists and youth. These works from directors around the world have offered refreshingly honest, self-described, and independent views of Palestine and its history, culture, and geographically dispersed society. The Executive Committee works year-round on a volunteer basis to sustain the festival.

**For more information, or to schedule an interview with any of the invited guests, contact pr@bostonpalestinefilmfest.org.**