



Press Release

Berlinale 2012:

Focus on the Arab Spring - "From and About the Arab World"

A little more than a year ago, radical political and social changes in the Arab world were triggered by a series of mass uprisings and demonstrations. At times bloody, the revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt were only the start. Gaddafi's fall in Libya followed, as did unrest in other countries of the Maghreb and Mashreq. Civil war-like conditions still prevail in Syria today.

Social networks as well as the many films of these major protest movements and the ensuing violence have contributed substantially to the perception of these uprisings in the Arab world. Pictures from Tahrir Square in Cairo have already become a part of our collective visual memory.

The programme of the Berlinale 2012 addresses what has become known as the "Arab Spring", and examines its developments from different perspectives and in a variety of forms:

There are documentary films that depict the region and recent events from the viewpoint of Arab directors and of filmmakers from other parts of the world. Though there are also fictional and documentary films by Arab directors that explore these regions without directly addressing the revolution. Instead they deal with crucial existential questions and the need to define their identity; in some cases this has been done with much humour. Besides the films screening in the different Berlinale sections, Arab cinema will be making a good showing at the *European Film Market (EFM)*.

The Berlinale is also organising a number of panel discussions on the Arab world and filmmaking. Guests include writer Tahar Ben Jelloun (Morocco/France), filmmakers Mahmoud Hojeij (Lebanon) and Nadia El-Fani (Tunisia/France), filmmaker and journalist Mohamed Ali Atassi (Syria/Lebanon), artist and curator Maha Maamoun (Egypt), curator Sarah Rifky (Egypt), director and film activist Hala Al Abdallah (Syria/France), producer and filmmaker Hala Galal (Egypt), and producer Javier Bardem (Spain).

Berlinale Talent Campus - Panel discussions

Indie Filmmakers Guide to Cross-Media II:

Engaging 21st Century Audiences Across Multiple Platforms

With Jigar Mehta, video journalist,

Inga von Staden, Filmakademie Baden-Württemberg (Germany),

Timo Vuorensola, director (Finland)

Moderated by Liz Rosenthal (founder and director of "Power to the Pixel")

**62. Internationale
Filmfestspiele
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Beirut Calling: Contemporary Video Art from Lebanon

With Mahmoud Hojeij, director (Lebanon),

Ahmad Ghossein, director (Lebanon),

Gheith Al-Amine, director (Lebanon),

Moderated by Marcel Schwierin (filmmaker, curator, artistic director "Arab Shorts")

Changing perspectives: The Arab World Defining Its Future

With Tahar Ben Jelloun, writer (Morocco/France),

Nadia El-Fani, filmmaker (Tunisia/France),

Viola Shafik, documentary film maker, film scholar, writer (Germany/Egypt)

Moderated by Vincenzo Bugno (*WCF*)

Supported by the Euromed Audiovisual Programme of the European Union

World Cinema Fund

On February 15, 2012, *World Cinema Fund Day* will address the topic "Filmmakers and the Arab Spring / Insurgency, Poetry and Engagement" in two panel discussions:

Focus Syria

With Hala Al Alabdallah, filmmaker, producer, film activist (Syria/France)

Mohamed Ali Atassi, filmmaker, journalist (Syria/Lebanon)

Alaa Karkouti, film journalist (Syria/Egypt)

Moderated by Vincenzo Bugno (*WCF*)

Documenting Revolution

With Hania Mroue, festival organiser, producer (Lebanon)

Nadia El Fani, filmmaker, (Tunisia/France)

Hala Galal, filmmaker, producer (Egypt)

Nora Younis, journalist, activist, blogger (Egypt) TBC

Moderated by Vincenzo Bugno (*WCF*)

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Forum Expanded

Cairo: The City, the Images, the Archives

With Khalid Abdalla, actor, producer, co-founder of Zero Film Productions (Egypt),

Hala Galal, filmmaker, producer, director of SEMAT production & distribution, new director of Cinematheque Cairo (Egypt)

Maha Maamoun, artist, curator and co-founder of Contemporary Image Collective (Egypt)

Sarah Rifky, curator of Townhouse Gallery, founder of Cairo International Resource Center for Art, documenta 13 agent (Egypt)

Moderated by Marcel Schwierin

Forum Expanded Short Films

As they say by Hicham Ayouch, Morocco/United Arab Emirates

Bye Bye by Paul Geday, Egypt

King Lost His Tooth by Gheith Al-Amine, Lebanon

My father is still a communist - Intimate secrets to be published by Ahmad Ghossein, Lebanon/United Arab Emirates

T.S.T.L. by Gheith Al-Amine, Lebanon

Installations (Gutschow-Haus)

On Love and Other Landscapes

Palestine 2011

Yazan Khalili

Road Movie

Canada 2011

Elle Flanders, Tamira Sawatzky

Films in *Panorama*

Death For Sale by Faouzi Bensaidi,

Belgium/France/Morocco/United Arab Emirates (funded by *WCF*)

Three young men living in Tétouan: Malik is in love with Dounia and wants to help her give up her job as a prostitute. Soufiane spends his days pilfering.



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Allal is a drug runner. The three friends hope that a raid on a jewellery shop will be their path to a new life.

In The Shadow of a Man by Hanan Abdalla, Egypt

In the wake of the Egyptian revolution four women describe events from their perspective and talk about what it means to be a woman in Egypt on the way to another life in a new society. A courageous, intimate and politically explosive portrait.

La Vierge, les Coptes et Moi (The Virgins, the Copts and Me)

by Namir Abdel Messeeh, France/Qatar/ Egypt (also screening at *EFM*)

Against the background of the recent Egyptian revolution the director explores the phenomenon of alleged appearances of the Virgin Mary to Coptic Christians. His sceptical search leads to a fictional reinterpretation of reality that turns his film into a comedy about documentary filmmaking.

My brother the Devil by Sally El Hosaini, United Kingdom

Two Arab brothers in London. Fourteen-year-old Mo idolises his nineteen-year-old brother Rashid, who is a gang member and drug dealer. When Rashid decides to lead a completely different life Mo has to face his own prejudices to save his brother's life.

The Reluctant Revolutionary by Sean McAllister, Great Britain

Yemeni tour operator Kais is at first reluctant to get involved in the protests that engulf Sana'a in the wake of the Arab Spring uprisings. But when a friend is shot dead he too decides to rise up against the president and join the revolution.

Wilaya by Pedro Pérez Rosado, Spain

After living in Spain for sixteen years Fatimetu returns to the Saharan refugee camp where she lived as a child, and where she and her sister now find a way of earning a living together. But Fatimetu is torn between life in the desert and her memories of Spain.

Words of Witness by Mai Iskander, USA

This documentary follows a young Cairo journalist named Heba Afify. An impressive portrait of one woman's attempt to give a voice to the new diversity of opinion in Egypt and struggle for her own place in society.



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Al Juma Al Akheira (The Last Friday) by Yahya Alabdallah, Jordan/
United Arab Emirates

Taxi driver Yousef is forced to bring some order into his failed existence.
This lovingly photographed film casts a laconic and occasionally humorous
gaze on daily life in the Jordanian capital Amman.

Berlinale Special

Althawra... Khabar (Reporting ... A Revolution) - Documentary by
Bassam Mortada, Egypt

A film about the pivotal role played by independent media during the recent
Egyptian revolution. Six journalists share their intense, shocking experiences
- and admit to the impossibility of maintaining a neutral stance in the face
of such brutal oppression.

Followed by a discussion with the director and other guests.

*Hijos de las nubes, La última colonia (Sons Of The Clouds, The Last
Colony)* - Documentary by Alvaro Longoria, Spain

The story of a forgotten colonial war in Western Sahara and the dedication
of an internationally renowned actor. A documentary that examines the fate
of a neglected people and explores the opaque and often callous paths of
international diplomacy.

Followed by a discussion with director Alvaro Longoria and producer Javier
Bardem.

Films at the EFM

Documentaries:

5 Broken Cameras by Emad Burnat, Guy Davidi, The Netherlands/
France/Israel/Palestine

Cinema Jenin by Markus Vetter, Germany/Israel

El Gusto by Safinez Bousbia, Ireland

Gate #5 by Simon El Habre, Lebanon/Germany/Canada

Half Revolution by Omar Shargawi, Karim El Hakim, Denmark

In My Mother's Arms by Mohamed Jabarah Al Daradji, Atia Jabarah Al
UK/Iraq/Netherlands



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Feature films:

Asmaa by Amr Salama, Egypt

How big is your Love by Fatma Zohra Zamoum, Algeria/Morocco

Rough Hands by Mohamed Asli, Morocco

The Last Friday by Yahya Al-Abdallah Jordan/United Arab Emirates

The Rif Lover by Narjiss Nejjar, Morocco/France/Belgium

Films screening at the *EFM* as well as in one of the festival sections:

Panorama:

Death For Sale by Faouzi Bensaïdi

In The Shadow of a Man by Hanan Abdalla

La Vierge, les Coptes et Moi (The Virgins, the Copts and Me)
by Namir Abdel Messeeh

My brother the Devil by Sally El Hosaini, United Kingdom

Wilaya by Pedro Pérez Rosado

Words of Witness by Mai Iskander

Forum:

Al Juma Al Akheira (The Last Friday) by Yahya Alabdallah

Members of this year's juries from Arab countries are:

International Jury: **Boualem Sansal**, writer (Algeria)

International Shortfilmjury: **Emily Jacir** (Palestine)

Jury for the Best First Feature: **Hania Mroué** producer, festival organiser
(Lebanon)

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January 24, 2012