

Middle Eastern Film Festival comes to Edinburgh

✘ This year's Middle Eastern Film Festival, a partnership between the Middle East Festival, Edinburgh International Festival of Middle Eastern Spirituality and Peace , and the Filmhouse with support from Creative Scotland, runs from 6 to 20 February 2012 at [The Filmhouse, Edinburgh.](#)

This year's Middle Eastern Film Festival boasts the strongest line-up of films yet, with new releases by Nuri Bilge Ceylan, Jafar Panahi and Mohammed Rassoulof appearing alongside the work of rising filmmakers such as Morteza Farshbaf, Hesham Issawi and Lelyla Bouzid, and a succinct retrospective on Kurdish cinema which, despite the groundbreaking efforts of Yilmaz Guney in the seventies, only really came to prominence over the last decade and half.

Anita Clark, Portfolio Manager – Festivals, Touring and Dance, Creative Scotland commented:

'Scotland has become a stage for world cinema and we are excited to welcome back the Middle Eastern Film Festival to once again take its place in the spotlight. This important festival gives Scottish audiences the opportunity to experience the perspective of Middle Eastern film makers and artists in this time of incredible change and current conflux in that area. With its strongest programme to date showcasing its strength in film and visual art, Creative Scotland is proud to have invested in this inspiring and diverse festival.'

The purpose of the Middle Eastern Film Festival is to provide a focus for the study and promotion of Middle Eastern cinema. The geographic area covered by the Festival broadly covers that outlined in Oliver Leahman's 'Companion Encyclopedia of Middle Eastern and North African Film,' which includes Central Asia, North Africa, Turkey, Israel, Egypt, Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, Iran and Iraq. Following on from the retrospective on Iranian cinema in 2009, and Egyptian cinema in 2010, and Turkish cinema in 2011, this year's retrospective will be on the highly regarded Kurdish cinema.

The retrospective on Kurdish cinema takes as its starting point Yesim Ustalogu's poetic masterpiece, Journey to the Sun, a film that announced the arrival of a new Kurdish cinema, then takes its own journey through a remarkable selection of works that places Kurdish filmmakers within the context of Middle Eastern cinema and the broader diaspora.

At its best Kurdish cinema not only evokes the sufferings and travails of its people, but also contains moments of great lyricism, humour and humanism, and it is these qualities that have struck such a resonant chord with moviegoers and critics alike.

Complementing the Kurdish season will be a day workshop, facilitated by Mustafu Gundogdu, one of the pre-eminent authorities on Kurdish cinema, a personal appearance and masterclass by acclaimed documentary filmmaker Yuksef Yavuz, and a talk and screening with Hakan Akçura.

For the first time the festival will also be showcasing visual

artists with a connection to the region, in a programme of works curated in association with [the internet channel The Agent Ria:registeredinart.](#) Featured artists will be Hakan Akcura and Erkan Ozgen.

Contact and Booking: 0131 228 2688, www.filmhousecinema.com

The Middle Eastern Film Festival is part of the [Edinburgh International Festival of Middle Eastern Spirituality and Peace](#). From Sunday 29 January – Saturday 24 March 2012 the 9th Annual Edinburgh International Festival of Middle Eastern Spirituality and Peace, MESP 2012, will bring together people from a wide range of spiritual backgrounds, people working with peace, conflict, reconciliation and justice, educators, teachers, scholars and students, people from artistic and cultural backgrounds, people working with health, wellbeing and healing experiences and concerns, people from diverse cultures, traditions and communities, and people from across Scotland and internationally.