

Middle Eastern Film Festival

7-21 February 2013

Middle Eastern Film Festival looks at Palestine through the lenses of Palestinian and Israeli filmmakers

This year's [Middle Eastern Film Festival](#), a partnership between the Middle East Festival and the Filmhouse, with support from Creative Scotland, kicks off from the 7th to 21st February 2013 at the Filmhouse, Edinburgh, looking at Palestine through the lenses of Palestinian and Israeli filmmakers, celebrating contemporary Iranian cinema, and providing a platform for festival favourites Nabil Ayouch, Merzak Allouache and Ibrahim El-Batout.

Palestinian cinema provides a visual articulation of Palestinian existence post-1948 and a way of resisting imposed identities. Taken together, this selection of films goes beyond the surface of stereotypes and presents a detailed and insightful look at the complexities, contradictions and human cost of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Opening with Michel Khliefi's film about marriage rituals and clashing cultures, *Wedding in Galilee*, and closing with Susan Youseff's film about forbidden love, *Habibi*, the festival presents a multi-faceted look at Palestine and the dreams of a nation, the line-up reminding us of the potency of cinema from the region and reading like a veritable who's who of world cinema, with films by Michel Khliefi, Rashid Masharawi, Elia Sulieman, Jayce Salloum, Hany Abu-Assad, Annemarie Jacir, Avi Mograbi, Erik Riklis and Yoav Shamir and featuring stars such

as Mohamed Bakri and Hiam Abbass.

Iranian cinema, despite reports of its demise, remains one of the most enduring of national cinemas and this year we profile six remarkable films from Seyyed Riza Mir-Karimi's delightful and visually sumptuous comedy *A Cube of Sugar* to Mani Haghighi's anarchic *Modest Reception*.

There will also be a selection of some of the best of contemporary Middle Eastern cinema from other Middle Eastern countries.

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

'The Middle Eastern Film 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. 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, Egyptian cinema in 2010, Turkish cinema in 2011, and Kurdish cinema in 2012, this year's retrospective will be on Palestine through the lenses of Palestinian and Israeli filmmakers.

The 2013 Middle Eastern Film Festival is part of the Edinburgh International Festival of Middle Eastern Spirituality and Peace. From Thursday 7 February – Sunday 17 March 2013 the 10th Annual Edinburgh International Festival of Middle Eastern Spirituality and Peace, MESP 2013, 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.

Middle East Festival Website: www.mesp.org.uk