Voices Breaking Boundaries

presented by

Houston Palestine Film Festival 2007

FotoFest
Houston Peace & Justice Center
KPFT Pacifica Radio 90.1 FM
Museum of Fine Arts, Houston
Rice Cinema
Station Museum
The first annual Houston Palestine Film Festival brings an honest and independent view of Palestine and its diaspora's society, culture, and political travails through the art of film. This festival is to directly expose our local community to the perspective of artists as a first step toward circumventing the many government and media filters that pollute our understanding of Palestine and the wider region. Browse this program for all film screenings and conversations with directors and political scientists.

About the festival

The Houston Palestine Film Festival has been officially recognized by Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee, a Festival Pass costs $20 and allows entry to all screenings and all events are $5 except May 7, which is $7. Information on venue locations are on the back of program.
friday, may 11, 7pm: Rice Cinema  
Kemo Sabe  
Director, Rana Kazkaz  
USA, 2006, 13 minutes

Yussef, a six-year-old Arab-American boy, dreams of being the Cowboy instead of the Indian on the playground. Daring to challenge the role his race has determined, Yussef learns the playground rules of becoming a Cowboy. But is being a Cowboy everything Yussef hoped it would be?

Leila Khaled, Hijacker  
Director, Lina Makboul (in attendance)  
Sweden, 2005, 58 minutes

Leila Khaled, Hijacker documents the life of activist Leila Khaled, who achieved international notoriety with two airplane hijackings in 1969 and 1970. For filmmaker Makboul, her teenage hero worship of the world’s first female hijacker served as the catalyst for her pursuit of the present-day Leila Khaled, a motherly but unrepentant 60-year-old who staunchly defends guerilla action in service of the Palestinian cause. In Makboul’s increasingly intimate conversations with Khaled, and in interviews with airline personnel, difficult questions elicit surprising answers. (In Swedish, Arabic, and English with English subtitles.) Opening comments by Sissy Farenthold; Q & A session with director Lina Makboul. Reception follows screenings.

About the speakers:
An attorney, former state legislator and gubernatorial candidate in Texas, Sissy Farenthold earned national recognition as the founding president of the National Women’s Political Caucus. In 1972, she was nominated for vice presidency of the United States at the Democratic National Convention.

Lina Makboul was born in Sweden by Palestinian parents who are from Nablus on the West bank. She started working as a journalist at the Swedish National Radio 1996. In 1998 she began working with television at the Swedish National Television, SVT. Leila Khaled: Hijacker is Lina’s debut film.

saturday, may 12, 7pm: Station Museum  
The Clothesline  
Director, Alia Arasoughly  
Palestine, 2006, 13 minutes

The Clothesline examines the war inside and war outside of an apartment during the 2002 Ramallah siege.

Bethlehem Bandolero  
Director, Larissa Sansour  
2004, 5 minutes

Bethlehem Bandolero features the artist herself as a Mexican gunslinger arriving in Bethlehem for a duel with the Segregation Wall. Wearing a big, red
saturday, may 12 (continued)

Waiting (Attente)
Director, Rashid Masharawi
France-Palestine, 2005, 72 minutes

Guest speaker, As`ad AbuKhalil

From the director of the highly regarded Ticket to Jerusalem comes another strong film about the contemporary Palestinian experience. In Waiting, the National Palestinian Theatre is about to open in a magnificent new building financed by the European Union in Gaza. Ahmad, a famed Palestinian stage director, sets out to hire actors for the new company despite his reluctance upon viewing the construction site. Enlisting a local television personality and her cameraman for his crew, Ahmad travels to refugee camps in Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon, where open casting calls have been issued. The resulting auditions are chaotic, funny, and poignant, revealing much about the lives of people who have been displaced from their homes and separated from their families.

About the speaker:
As`ad AbuKhalil was born in Tyre, Lebanon, AbuKhalil grew up in Beirut and received his education from American University of Beirut. After coming to the US in 1983, AbuKhalil received his PhD from Georgetown University and went on to teach at universities around the US. He also served as free-lance Middle East consultant for NBC News and ABC News, an experience that only served to increase his disdain for mainstream US media. He is now professor of political science at California State University, Stanislaus and visiting professor at UC, Berkeley.

sunday, may 13, 7pm: Museum of Fine Arts, Houston

Palestine Blues
Director, Nida Sinnokrot (in attendance)
USA, 2005, 80 minutes

The demolished house that is the site of the death of American peace activist Rachel Corrie is only the first of the troubling markers in the landscape charted by Palestine Blues as the director travels the route of the infamous security wall. A bereft farmer grieves for his ancient orchard as the bulldozers lay it to waste, but a new movement in nonviolent resistance grows in its place. (In Arabic and Hebrew with English subtitles.) Filmmaker and installation artist Nida Sinnokrot will discuss the film with the audience.

About the director:
Born and raised in Algeria, Nida Sinnokrot has exhibited installations at the Station (Made in Palestine, Houston, TX, 2002); Mexican American Cultural Council, Austin, TX, 2001; Cinematexas International (Austin, TX, 2000); The Chocolate Factory, (Annandale-on-Hudson, NY, 1999); the Fisher Arts Center (Annandale-on-Hudson, NY, 1998 and 1997). Sinnokrot has been part of the Whitney Independent Studio Program (2001-2002) and he lives in New York. His film Obstacle was released in 2005.

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**friday, may 18, 7pm: Rice Cinema**

**Mloukhieh (Soup Over Bethlehem)**
Director, Larissa Sansour
Palestine, 2006, 9 minutes

A young Palestinian girl will do whatever it takes to buy a birthday cake. Eleven year-old Mariam begs her mother for the extra money she needs to buy a cake at the local bakery. Her mother begrudgingly relents, but when Mariam arrives at the bakery, she realizes that she still doesn’t have enough. Determined to get the cake, she sets out to brave the obstacles and land for some cash. What begins as a simple trip to the bakery turns into a journey that depicts not only the subtle tensions of a politically charged environment, but also illustrates the grief that can result from growing up under occupation. (In Arabic with English subtitles.)

**Make a Wish**
Director, Cherien Dabis
Palestine, 2006, 12 minutes

In this documentary recording a Fall 2003 wedding in the north of Israel, two hundred guests dance to music. The bride in a white dress, 36-year-old Kifah Massarwi, an Israeli citizen, organized a wedding for herself, minus the groom as part of her bitter battle against the Israeli authorities, who forbid her spouse from entering the country. The Citizenship Law, effective since 2003, states that residents of the Palestinian Authority may not enter Israel, even if married to Israeli citizens. *Just Married* is the story of two Palestinian couples who decided to marry knowing that it would be impossible for them to bring their partners back to Israel.

**saturday, may 19, 7pm: FotoFest**

**FotoFest Introduction**
**Screenings**

**FotoFest tour of Guantanamo. Pictures From Home. Questions of Justice**

**Kings and Extras: Digging for a Palestinian Image**
Director Azza el-Hassan
2004, 62 minutes

In *Kings and Extras: Digging for a Palestinian Image*, Azza el-Hassan uses rare and 1970s and 1980s archival footage of the Palestinian national movement and a series of contemporary interviews with film-makers, archivists and historians...
to explore the role of film-making and photography during this period. At the heart of the film is her search for answers as to the apparently mysterious ‘loss’ of the central Palestinian cinema archive in Beirut during the Israeli occupation. Arabic with English subtitles.

**Summer 2006, Palestine**
A medley of short films by various Palestinian artists
35 minutes

**The Seventh Dog**
Director, Zeina Durra
USA, 2005, 21 minutes

The Seventh Dog, Durra’s New York University thesis, is a black comedy which portrays the poignant, sometimes funny, sometimes tragic truths of Soraya, a Parisian/Palestinian and Yusif, her Saudi boyfriend in a post-9/11 New York City lifestyle. One an encounter with Soraya’s superintendent turns an unfortunate accident into something more sinister. The couple’s lives spiral out of control. Broken-hearted and frustrated Soraya faces the complexity of cold reality.

Guided tour of *Guantanamo. Pictures From Home. Questions of Justice* by a FotoFest representative

Guantanamo. Pictures From Home. Questions of Justice, a rare glimpse inside life of the prison, the men who are detainees, and the U.S. lawyers who represent them. The exhibition presents nearly 100 previously unseen photographs, video vignettes gathered by photographer Margot Herster. The photographs portray detainees from Yemen, Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Bahrain, and are accompanied by narrative from their lawyers. Alongside the photographs there is also a video and audio installation.

**sunday, may 20, 7pm: Rice Cinema**

**Zero Degrees of Separation**
Director, Elle Flanders (in attendance)
Canada, 2005, 89 minutes

Guest speaker, Ussama Makdisi

The documentary feature *Zero Degrees of Separation* takes viewers on a unique journey through the complex lives of Israeli and Palestinian gays and lesbians in inter-ethnic relationships. Though living on the margins of society, these couples defy the odds, existing in the midst of conflict with a gentle humanity and mutual respect. Interwoven into these stories is director Elle Flanders’ own narrative of growing up with grandparents who were intimately involved in the founding of the state of Israel. *Zero Degrees of Separation* premiered at the Berlin International Film Festival and has toured extensively, winning
Houston Palestine Film Festival is curated by Hosam Aboul-Ela, Hadeel Assali, Said Assali, Hana El-Sahly, Iman Saqr, and VBB.

Houston Palestine Film Festival is presented by Voices Breaking Boundaries and cosponsored by FotoFest, Houston Peace and Justice Center, KPFT Pacifica Radio 90.1 FM, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Rice Cinema, and the Station Museum.

This film festival has been generously supported by AHCM, Arab American Education Foundation, Bilateral US-Arab Chamber of Commerce, the City of Houston through the Houston Arts Alliance, Free Press Houston, Houston Endowment Inc., HoustonSoReal, La Maison Tiles Inc., NAGAM, Reliable Business & Tax Service, and the Swedish Film Institute, and individual donors Issa B. Cook, Dania Dindashli, Hana El-Sahly, Dr. Tarek Hussein, Fady A. Joudah, Houston Neurocare, Said Abu Qartoumim, Ahmad Rabie, Aziz Shaibani, Bilal F. Shanti, Issa Skafi, Yaser Shaib, and Ahmad Yaseen.

Special thanks to the Chicago Palestine Film Festival and Aladdin’s.
FotoFest
1113 Vine Street, Suite 101, Houston, TX 77002

Rice Cinema (Rice Media Center)
Rice University campus, Entrance No. 8 off University Boulevard at Stockton Drive. Parking at Rice Cinema is 2$. Free Parking is available across from the Media Center, behind the campus police station building

The Station Museum
1502 Alabama, Houston, TX 77004

Museum of Fine Arts, Houston
1001 Bissonnet Street, Houston, TX 77005

VBB’s mission is to cross borders, sustain dialogue and incite change through living art.
voices breaking boundaries
po box 541247
houston, tx 77254-1247

t. 713.524.7821
info@vbbarts.org
www.vbbarts.org

design donated by Oskar Sonnen
sonnen@snowblind.us