

The 2012 London Palestine Film Festival

April 20th – May 3rd

palestinefilm.org



Man Without a Cell Phone, Sameh Zoabi, 2011

The programme for the 15th **London Palestine Film Festival** was launched this week by Festival organisers the Palestine Film Foundation. The largest event of its kind in Europe, since 1998 the annual Festival has showcased the finest in new docs and fiction from or about Palestine while also unveiling rare historic works. During this year's two-week run at the **Barbican Cinema** and **University of London** venues, a total of **41 films** will be shown, by directors working internationally in all genres. With **26 premieres** and some astonishing **archive works**, the Festival also boasts daily screen talks with a roster of **25 guest speakers**.

A CENTURY OF PALESTINE ON FILM

This year's Festival maps nearly one hundred years of film on Palestine. The early celluloid record comes to life with an unprecedented exploration of Palestine in the **British colonial film archives**, in the company of top scholars and artists **Kamal Aljafari**, **Francis Gooding**, **Ilan Pappé**, and **Christopher Pinney**. Other rare historic encounters include an airing of **Susan Sontag's** only documentary, *Promised Lands*, and the first known UK screening of 1976 **French Maoist cine-manifesto**, *L'Olivier*. Festival guest **Ella Shohat** also gives an exclusive illustrated talk marking the newly-updated edition of her seminal book, *Israeli Cinema*, exploring the history of Israeli film politics.

Plenty of contemporary work is on offer here too. Cracking new features include Opening Night premiere, *Man Without a Cell Phone*, **Sameh Zoabi's** quirky generational comedy, as well as taught emotional drama *Last Days in Jerusalem* from Cannes-awardee **Tawfik Abu Wael** (*Atash/Thirst*, 2004). The latest in fiction is further showcased with an event dedicated to **new Palestinian shorts** and another focusing on recent developments in **Palestinian women's filmmaking**.

Palestinian work is well represented, but the film programme remains emphatically global. Some striking fresh takes on Palestine come from international artists **Ursula Biemann**, **Mike Hoolboom**, and **Travis Wilkerson**. Elsewhere, screen events match new docs with expert panellists to hone in on regional and global topics, from the **30th anniversary of the fall of Beirut** to **Palestinian refugees in South America** and the **Druze minority in Israel**. Rounding off a programme packed with artistic, historic, and thematic variety are two "**Beyond Palestine**" events, with keynote speakers presenting fine works on **Syria** and **Western Sahara**.

In addition to book launches, artist talks, and daily films, the Festival boasts a groundbreaking **exhibition of Palestinian video art**, with contributions from more than a dozen key figures, including **Basma Alsharif**, **Ayreen Anastas**, **Mona Hatoum**, **Khalil Rabah**, **Larissa Sansour**, **Elia Suleiman**, and **Sharif Waked**.

*Read on for highlights, guest speakers, film titles, and some special **Pre-Festival Events**...*

FESTIVAL DATES AND VENUES

Barbican Cinema	Friday April 20 th – Wednesday April 25 th
Khalili Lecture Theatre, SOAS	Thursday April 26 th – Sunday April 29 th
Darwin Theatre, UCL	Monday April 30 th – Thursday May 3 rd

PRE-FESTIVAL EVENTS: March 29 – April 12

This year's Festival is preceded by **three warm-up events**: UK premieres, exclusive double-bills, and "in-conversations" with the most exciting directors from Palestine today, including **Kamal Aljafari** and **Tawfik Abu Wael**. In partnership with **Hackney Picturehouse**, **Cine Lumiere**, and **Amnesty International UK**, every Thursday from March 29th to April 12th, these prestigious events will offer audiences across London a taste of vital films and debate on Palestine.

Thursday March 29th, Hackney Picturehouse

Kamal Aljafari Double-Bill and Screen Talk with Omar Kholeif

Aljafari drew acclaim for *The Roof* (2006), his elegy to the eroding spaces of Palestinian life in Israel. But it was his astonishing *Port of Memory* (2009), a genre-defying homage to troubled home city Jaffa, that announced him as **the most adventurous Palestinian auteur of our time**. This is a chance to experience both these mesmerizing works with the director, who will speak with Omar Kholeif, Director of the Liverpool Arabic Film Festival and curator of Liverpool's FACT multi-arts venue.

Thursday April 5th, Amnesty International UK

Palestinian Citizens in Israel: Adalah Screen Talk

Adalah – The Legal Centre for Arab Minority Rights is the leading body in Israel dedicated to the rights of the Palestinian population. Working with award-winning directors including **Rachel Leah Jones**, it has made a series of powerful films on the increasingly precarious situation faced by the minority. Following a selection of shorts, senior **Adalah advocate Suhad Bishara** will discuss current challenges and priorities with Amnesty UK campaign manager Kristyan Benedict.

Thursday April 12th, Ciné Lumière

Gala UK Premiere: Tawfik Abu Wael's Last Days in Jerusalem

Abu Wael won the **International Critics Prize at Cannes** with his 2004 debut *Atash/Thirst. Sight & Sound* then heralded "the most exciting Arab filmmaker to have emerged in more than a decade". His hotly-anticipated follow-up is a captivating emotional drama about one couple's wrenching final days as they prepare to leave Jerusalem for Paris. Following this premiere screening, the director will be in conversation with film critic Ali Jaafar.

FESTIVAL HIGHLIGHTS: April 20 – May 3

***Man Without a Cell Phone* / 2011 / Sameh Zoabi** Barbican Cinema, 20th & 21st April

This year's Opening Gala is the UK Premiere of award-winning director Zoabi's quirky comedy debut, *Man Without a Cell Phone*. Director in attendance.

***Gaza Hospital* / 2009 / Marco Pasquini** Barbican Cinema, 21st April

Marking the 30th anniversary of the fall of Beirut, Pasquini's doc mines extraordinary film archives to chronicle the transformation of the PLO's 1970s medical centre in Lebanon into today's war-ravaged "vertical refugee camp". Followed by panel, director in attendance.

Palestine in the British Colonial Film Archives Barbican Cinema, 22nd April

Join a distinguished panel on a trip through the film archives of British colonial rule in Palestine. Curated with Francis Gooding of the Colonial Film project and with panellists including filmmaker Kamal Aljafari, historian Ilan Pappé, and anthropologist Christopher Pinney.

Beyond Palestine Barbican Cinema, 23rd & 24th April

In the first of two sessions on regional film and politics, on Monday 23rd, Syrian writer Wassim Al-Adel introduces Hatem Ali's searing critique of the Assad regime, *The Long Night*. On Tuesday 24th attention turns to the Western Sahara, with the eye-opening *The Problem* followed by a vital screen talk.

***Lacan Palestine* / 2012 / Mike Hoolboom** Barbican Cinema, 23rd April

Epic, complex, spectacular – award-winning Canadian artist Mike Hoolboom's presents the UK premiere of his *Lacan Palestine*, an extraordinary fusion of appropriated footage that re-imagines Palestine via the celluloid record as a space of perennial colonial-psychological projections.

***Promised Lands* / 1974 / Susan Sontag** Barbican Cinema, 25th April

Sontag's sole documentary, *Promised Lands*, is an unsettling and truly unique meditation on nationalism and trauma in Israeli society following the October 1973 war. This rare showing is introduced by Prof. Ella Shohat.

Book Talk: Professor Ella Shohat's *Israeli Cinema* SOAS, KLT, 26th April

With a new edition of her seminal work *Israeli Cinema: East/West and the Politics of Representation*, critical theorist Ella Shohat joins dissident Israeli director Eyal Sivan for this illustrated talk and drinks reception.

Druze in Israel: Screening & Talk UCL Darwin Theatre, 30th April

Overlooked outside specialist circles, the Druze minority in Israel is tackled in-depth with this screening of Bilal Yousef's doc *Back to One's Roots*, followed by a talk on the Druze today by Kais Firro of Haifa University.

The Spring of Young Palestinian Women Filmmakers UCL Darwin Theatre, 3rd May

Guest-curated by Palestinian women's cinema NGO *Shashat*, this showcase of shorts by new women directors is followed by a panel with *Shashat*'s Alia Arasoughly, Iraqi filmmaker Maysoon Pachachi, and filmmaker Laila Abbas.

FILM TITLES

Feature-length (>40min), alphabetical order

<i>Ashkenaz</i>	Rachel Leah Jones, 2007, Doc., Israel, 72'
<i>Back to One's Roots</i>	Bilal Yousef, 2009, Doc., Palestine / Israel, 47'
<i>Gaza Hospital</i>	Marco Pasquini, 2009, Doc., Italy / Lebanon, 84'
<i>Inshallah Beijing</i>	Francesco Cannito & Luca Cusani, 2008, Doc., Italy, 54'
<i>Lacan Palestine</i>	Mike Hoolboom, 2012, Art, Canada, 70'
<i>Last Days in Jerusalem</i>	Tawfik Abu Wael, 2011, Fiction, Israel / France / Germany / Palestine, 84'
<i>L'Olivier (The Olive Farmer)</i>	Groupe Cinéma Vincennes, 1976, Doc., France, 92'
<i>Man Without A Cell Phone</i>	Sameh Zoabi, 2011, Fiction, France / Palestine / Israel / Belgium / Qatar, 78'
<i>My Father From Haifa</i>	Omar Shargawi, 2009, Doc., Denmark, 52'
<i>My Land</i>	Nabil Ayouch, 2010, Doc., Morocco / Lebanon / Israel, 85'
<i>Palestine in the South</i>	Ana Maria Hurtado, 2011, Doc., Chile, 52'
<i>Promised Lands</i>	Susan Sontag, 1974, Doc., USA / Israel, 87'
<i>The Long Night</i>	Hatem Ali, 2009, Fiction, Syria, 93'
<i>Women in the Stadium</i>	Sawsan Qaoud, 2011, Doc., Palestine, 52'
<i>X-Mission</i>	Ursula Biemann, 2008, Art/Non-Fiction, Switzerland, 40'

Shorts

<i>Birth</i>	Dima Abu Ghoush, 2011, Fiction, Palestine, 9'
<i>Diary of a Male Whore</i>	Tawfik Abu Wael, 2001, Fiction, Israel / Palestine, 14'
<i>Displaced Lives</i>	João Marcelo Gomes, 2010, Doc., Brazil, 14'
<i>Eid</i>	Saaheb Collective, 2011, Art/Non-Fiction, Palestine / UK, 9'
<i>End of September</i>	Sama Alshaibi & Ala' Younis, 2010, Art/Fiction, Jordan / Palestine, 16'
<i>First Lesson</i>	Areen Omari, 2010, Fiction, Palestine / France, 15'
<i>Flower Seller</i>	Ihab Jadallah, 2011, Fiction, Palestine / UK / France, 17'
<i>Free Running, Gaza</i>	George Azar & Mariam Shahin, 2011, Doc., Palestine, 25'

<i>Girls and the Sea</i>	Taghreed El-Azza, 2010, Palestine, 7'
<i>Haneen</i>	Ossama Bawardi, 2011, Fiction, Palestine, 18'
<i>If U Say Yes or If U Say No</i>	Layali Kilani, 2008, Palestine, 3'
<i>Jerusalem on the Messenger</i>	Amani Al-Sarahnah, 2009, Palestine, 3'
<i>Just Forbidden</i>	Fadya Salah Aldeen, 2011, Palestine, 5'
<i>Kamkamah</i>	Areej Abu Eid & Eslam Alayan, 2011, Palestine, 6'
<i>Sand Creek Equation</i>	Travis Wilkerson, 2011, Art/Non-Fiction, USA, 25'
<i>The Beautiful Language</i>	Mounir Fatmi, 2010, Art, France, 17'
<i>The Choice</i>	Yasin Erik Bogнар, 2011, Fiction, UK / Palestine, 9'
<i>The Clothesline</i>	Alia Arasoughly, 2006, Palestine, 16'
<i>The Sister and her Brother</i>	Omaima Hamouri & Michael Krotkiewski, 2010, Palestine, 8'
<i>The Well</i>	Ahmad Habash, 2011, Fiction, Palestine, 15'
<i>Yala to the Moon</i>	Suhel Nafar & Jacqueline Reem Salloum, 2011, Fiction, Palestine, 7'

SPEAKERS IN ATTENDANCE

Laila Abbas: Filmmaker; works include *Visa* (2010), *Fruity Dreams* (2011), *5 Cups & A Cup* (2012).

Wassim Al-Adel: London-based Syrian writer and blogger: maysaloon.org

Kamal Aljafari: Filmmaker, head of directing programme, German Film & Television Academy; works include *The Roof* (2006), *Port of Memory* (2009).

Alia Arasoughly: Filmmaker and sociologist, director of film NGO *Shashat*, co-editor of *Strategies of Representation, Conditions of Production: Palestinian Women Filmmakers* (2011).

Ang Swee Chai: Surgeon, co-founder of Medical Aid for Palestinians (MAP), witness to the Sabra and Shatilla massacre, veteran of Gaza Hospital, author of *From Beirut to Jerusalem* (1989).

James Denselow: Communications and Advocacy officer, Medical Aid for Palestinians (MAP).

Kais Firro: Prof. Middle Eastern History, University of Haifa. Author: *A History of the Druzes* (1992) & *The Druzes in the Jewish State* (1999).

Francis Gooding: Director, MA in Film Curating, London Consortium. Researcher, Colonial Film project, author of *Black Light: Myth and Meaning in Modern Painting* (2009).

Carmen Gray: Film critic whose work appears in *Sight & Sound*, *Total Film*, *Dazed & Confused*, *Little White Lies* and *Under/current*.

Mike Hoolboom: Film artist, recipient of two lifetime achievement awards, twelve retrospectives, Bell Award for Video Art (2009), Tom Berner Award for community service.

Laleh Khalili: Senior lecturer, Politics of the Modern Middle East, SOAS; works include *Heroes and Martyrs of Palestine: The Politics of National Commemoration* (2007), and, as co-editor with Jillian Schwedler, *Policing and Prisons in the Middle East: Formations of Coercion* (2010).

Monica Maurer: Filmmaker in Palestine Film Unit, 1970s; films include *Palestine Red Crescent Service* (1979), *The Fifth War* (1979, with Samir Nimr), and *Born Out of Death* (1981).

Karma Nabulsi: Festival Patron, Fellow in Politics, Oxford; PLO representative from 1977-90; author of *Traditions of War: Occupation, Resistance and the Law* (2005).

Maysoon Pachachi: Filmmaker; works include *Iranian Journey* (2000), *Bitter Water* (2002), *Return to the Land of Wonders* (2004), and *Our Feelings Took The Pictures: Open Shutters Iraq* (2009).

Ilan Pappé: Prof. of History, Director of European Centre for Palestine Studies, University of Exeter. Works include *The Husaynis: The Rise and Fall of a Palestinian Dynasty* (2011), *A History of Modern Palestine: One Land, Two Peoples* (2004), *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* (2007).

Marco Pasquini: Filmmaker; works include *R-Existance: Women from the South* (2006) and *Gaza Hospital* (2009), winner of International Press Golden Globe, best Italian doc., 2010.

Christopher Pinney: Professor of Anthropology and Visual Culture, UCL. Works include *Photos of the Gods: The Printed Image and Political Struggle in India* (2004), *The Coming of Photography in India* (2008).

Abbas Shibliak: Scholar of Palestinian displacement, diasporic communities, and refugee rights. A founder of *Palestinian Refugee and Diaspora Centre* (Shaml), author of *Palestinian Communities in Europe* (2005).

Ella Shohat: Prof. Cultural Studies and Middle Eastern studies at New York University. Works include *Israeli Cinema: East/West and the Politics of Representation* (1989, 2010), *Taboo Memories*, *Diasporic Voices* (2006), and, as co-author with Robert Stam, *Unthinking Eurocentrism* (1994); *Multiculturalism, Postcoloniality and Transnational Media* (2003).

Eyal Sivan: Filmmaker, Israeli dissident, writer; works include *Izkor: Slaves of Memory* (1990); *The Specialist* (1999), *Route 181: Fragments of a Journey in Palestine/Israel* (with Michel Khleifi, 2004); and *Jaffa: The Orange's Clockwork* (2009).

Sameh Zoabi: Filmmaker; graduate of Columbia University's School of the Arts Film Direction programme; previous works include *Be Quiet* (2006).

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Funding and venue partners of the 2012 London Palestine Film Festival

