Beat: Lifestyle

13-STRONG LINEUP OF WORLD PREMIERE EMIRATI FILMS CONFIRMED FOR DIFFS

Muhr Emirati category

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USPA NEWS - The UAE´s most talented filmmakers have had their work selected to form a 13-strong film lineup, all of which are world premieres, for the Muhr Emirati competition at the 14th edition of the Dubai International Film Festival (DIFF) which runs from 6-13 December. The Muhr Emirati category celebrates rising local talent from the UAE and shares their projects with a global audience. Since its inception in 2010, the competition has witnessed year on year growth as the local film industry continues to flourish.

Award-winning Emirati filmmaker Waleed Al Shehhi, whose script for "˜Dolphins´ won him the IWC Filmmaker Award at DIFF 2013, returns to the Festival with "˜Dimmed Light´ by the Emirati writer Ahmed Salmeen. Continuing his passion for animation, Al Shehhi´s latest short explores light and darkness in a mysterious way. An extinguished wick and a broken lantern sit in a devastating space. Will the wick be able to repair the lantern and bring it to what it once was, a source for light in the darkness?

Acclaimed Ahmed Hasan Ahmed returns to DIFF with his short "˜Wudu´, written by Ahmed Salmeen too. "˜Wudu´ is a tale of two very different siblings trying to live under the same roof. Baheet is a lively chef during the day and oud musician at night, choosing to fill his world with noise and celebrations. Bahia is a female corpse shrouder that lives between perfumes, scents and camphor, choosing to find the beauty of life through the darkness of desolation. Living under the same roof, the two will discover if their intellectual differences and contradicting lifestyles lead to the end of their relationship. The film stars Salem Al Ayan and Samira Al Wahaibi.

Making his debut at the Festival´s 14th edition is Emirati filmmaker Abdulaziz Almannaei with the short film "˜Goldfish´. Celebrating the multiculturality of Dubai, the short showcases brief, often seemingly mundane and mostly off-beat vignettes of the city and its diverse people.

Pioneering Emirati filmmaker and producer Nujoom Alghanem presents her latest feature "˜Sharp Tools´, which is also competing in the highly anticipated Muhr Feature category. A two-time award-winning director at the Festival, her latest film tells the story of Hassan Sharif, the founder of the conceptual art movement in the Emirates and one of the most influential, and controversial, artist of his time. Yet throughout the changing tides, Sharif remains tied to the sincerity that drove his significant artwork three decades earlier; his sharp tools and the philosophy they represent.

"˜Sarmad´, is a short from Emirati actor, screenwriter and director Abdullah Alhemairi, who makes his return to the Festival. Omran, played by Alhemairi, wakes in hospital with no recollection of how or why he is there. He discovers a car in the parking lot under his name and with his new home address inside. Omran decides to follow the mysterious path and arrives at the house to find a recorded film of himself, which reveals many surprises of his past that could help reveal his lost identity.

Making his DIFF debut is first-time Emirati filmmaker Obaid Al Hmoudi with "˜Match´. The film follows two brothers living hard lives, which are made more difficult after the murder of their father. "˜Match´ follows the different paths taken by the brothers after the death, and the consequences that come from their actions. The film stars Mahmood Bin Shamsan, Waleed Al Yasi, Sawsan Saad, Neven Madi, Abdullah Aljunaibi, Abdulla Bo Abed and Ashjan.

Actor Mohammed Al Hammadi, who made his DIFF debut in 2015 with Humaid Alsuwaidi´s "˜Abdullah´, returns to DIFF as the director of "˜The Remaining Time´. After aliens invade Earth, a girl is held in a room with a stranger and tries to survive the night.

Emirati director Aisha Alzaabi returns to DIFF with her latest feature, "˜Ghafah´. Written by Eman Alyousuf, "˜Ghafah´ is the story of

Emirati women across three generations: Mahra, a young bride; Najla, a wedding organizer in her forties; and Um Ali, a 70-year-old who takes care of her grandson Rashid. Each one is in their own despair and yet somehow, they are all connected and through their sadness, find their inner strength. The film stars Alaa Shaker, Moza Al Mazrouei, Abdullah Al Hosani and Abdullah Saleh Al Rumaithi.

The Emirati filmmaker Abdullah Aljunaibi brings the psychological thriller "˜Camera´ to DIFF audiences. After discovering an abandoned mobile phone in the desert, a group of friends let their curiosity get the best of them and they play what the camera recorded. What it shows is another group going on a road trip that quickly turns into a bloody tale of survival. The film stars Humaid Alawadi, Yaser Alneyadi, Omar Almulla, Ibrahim Ustadi and Abdullah Almaqbali.

Award-winning filmmaker, actor and TV presenter Yaser Al Neyadi will make his mark on the Festival with "˜Watermelon Club´. The film follows six men that meet one night to practice strange and mysterious rituals at a farm outside of the city. The rituals make them face their shocking past and, soon, internal conflicts start to rise. The film stars Khaled Almaani, Khaled Alnaimi, Mohamed Saleh, Eissa Arab, Saeed Rashed, Sultan Alshamisi and Huda Alghanem.

Yaser Al Neyadi brings another film to the lineup, in collaboration with Emirati filmmaker Hana Alshateri, "˜Escape´. The film is a collection of human and social stories that pass through a group of unrelated characters, who are trying to face several options in life. The film stars Sheikha Abdulmotaleb, Fatima Hasan, Jassim Alkharaz, Fatima Altaei, Abdulla Alhemairi, Shabu Tk, Alaa Shaker, Abdullah Buhajoos, Shamma Almehairbi and Mohamed Yahya.

Renowned filmmaker Abdullah Hasan Ahmed, the winner of the IWC Filmmaker Award 2016 and the Ministry of Interior Award for Best Societal Screenplay at DIFF 2015, presents "˜Birth´, supported by Enjaaz. The film, written by Yousef Ibrahim, is a tale about a simple Emirati family living in a mountain village. Taking place over a single day, each member of the household tells their story:

The mother, who is worried about her camel; the father, who is stuck on a journey with a silent man; and the son, who loves football star Cristiano Ronaldo. What begin as separate tales slowly intertwine over the course of the day, as the family is brought together through destiny and birth. The film stars Abdulrahman Al Muraqab, Nora Alabeed, Ali Jamal, Saleh Zaal, Khalid Albannai, Ashwaq and Ayesha Al Suwaidi.

The final film in the Emirati lineup, "˜Arasian´, comes from filmmaker Ahmad Al Tunaiji. Khalifa struggles to hide his half-Filipino identity from his Emirati schoolmates, and goes to great lengths to ensure they never meet his Filipina mother. Conflicted, he also secretly befriends the Filipina cleaner at school. When the school bullies discover his secret, Khalifa is forced to make a choice. Will he stand up for his Filipino heritage or will he succumb to peer pressure?

DIFF´s artistic director, Masoud Amralla Al Ali comments on the Emirati Muhr programme: "DIFF´s ongoing commitment to nurture and support regional filmmakers is maybe best shown with our Emirati category, where UAE filmmakers get a chance to showcase their craft to an international audience and highlight the talent, depth and diversity of Arab filmmaking. We hope that this year´s lineup of world premieres and unique stories will serve as an inspiration for other aspiring filmmaker´s right here in the UAE."

Ticket packages are on sale now for the 14th edition of the Dubai International Film Festival which will take place from 6 "" 13 December, 2017. For more information on ticket packages and registration for media, students and industry professionals, visit the DIFF website at diff.ae.

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