

Fimlab: Palestine

Reviving Cinema Culture

By Brigitte Boulad

“To revive the culture of cinema in Palestine and let the Palestinians tell their story is the vision and mission of Fimlab: Palestine,” says its founder and artistic director Hanna Atallah.

Fimlab: Palestine was founded in 2014 as a non-profit company inspired by the personal experience of Hanna Atallah in empowering Palestinian youth in refugee camps in Jordan. He introduced them to the art of filmmaking as a creative and unconventional method to tell their own personal history and document their Palestinian collective memory.

Today, Fimlab has grown into an important pillar of the Palestinian film scene. It offers a suitable workspace for Palestinian filmmakers, with production equipment and post-production facilities. Fimlab organizes regular short and extended workshops on storytelling, scriptwriting, and film production, and offers two to three residency opportunities per year in cooperation with international partners. Fimlab also offers year-round film screenings together with cultural organizations in various cities in Palestine. Furthermore, Fimlab is one of the first organizations in the Arab world to develop a local children’s curriculum for film literacy and actively tries to shine a light on both the need for film education for children and the necessity of producing suitable content.

Fimlab’s Cinema Culture programs have been expanding in the past years. This year, Fimlab is celebrating the fifth anniversary of Palestine Cinema Days (previously Days of Cinema) – the only international film festival of its kind and magnitude in Palestine. Palestine Cinema Days offers a week of daily public film screenings, Q&As, and panel discussions, as well as a

varied screening program for children and youth. The festival reaches Ramallah, Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Nablus, and Gaza, bringing a diversity of international and regional films that reflect more than ever the challenges that our societies are facing. “The festival’s main goal is to promote film in Palestine, to invite Palestinians to the cinema, and to foster the local film industry,” says Atallah. Five years in the making, Palestine Cinema Days is a success story.

This year’s festival will open with the animation film *The Tower*, by the Norwegian director Mats Grorud, which tells the story of the Nakba through the eyes of a young girl in a Palestinian refugee camp in Lebanon. The opening ceremony will take place in the presence of the director and the film team at 7:00 p.m. on October 17 at Ramallah Cultural Palace.

In order to give prominence to Palestinian films within the festival, Fimlab will continue to grant the Sunbird Awards: three competitions that showcase the finest new Palestinian short and documentary films as well as promising short film projects. The festival will also again be home to Palestine Film Meetings (PFM), the festival’s cutting-edge industry platform. Founded in 2017, PFM aims to bring together key industry professionals from Palestine and abroad, creating a creative, open space to think and discuss film, to pitch and develop projects, and to network. Atallah adds, “By empowering Palestinian filmmakers, producers, and professionals, we can help create change and foster the cultural landscape of Palestine. By telling our stories, cinema can change the status quo.”

Fimlab Palestine

PALESTINE CINEMA DAYS

أيام فلسطين السينمائية

5th EDITION
النسخة الخامسة

17 ~ 23
OCTOBER

2018

JERUSALEM القدس
RAMALLAH رام الله
BETHLEHEM بيت لحم
NABLUS نابلس
GAZA غزة