

## Red Sea International Film Festival | Red Sea Lodge announces the winners of it's two production grants worth \$500,000 each

*"Sharshaf"* directed by *Hind Alfahhad* wins Saudi Production Grant

*"Bullets & Bread"* By Mohammad Hammad wins Arab Production Grant

A Special Mention and development grant worth \$25,000 awarded to **Four Acts of Disruption**

September 25th, 2020, Jeddah , Saudi Arabia

The Red Sea International Film Festival announced the selection of twelve projects for its first edition of the Red Sea Lodge: Script & Feature lab. Today, an eminent jury composed of Nadia Turincev, Meinolf Zurhorst and Yousry Nasrallah selected and announced the winners of the two \$500,000 production grants.

The Red Sea Lodge Production Grant for a Saudi Project was awarded to ***Sharshaf*** by **Hind Alfahhad, written by Hana Alomair and produced by Talal Ayel**. The jury said they were enamoured by the "Touching and strong female character, and the bonds in a relationship that can bring us together and tear us apart." They were also intrigued that it was set in "A period of Saudi Arabia's history the world knows so little about, unveiled to us by Hind Alfahhad."

Hind Alfahhad's **Sharshaf** is set in 1978. Haila, the daughter of a conservative Imam, marries Mosa'ed, the son of a rich and well-known fabric stores owner. The young couple spend their honeymoon in Cairo. Sharshaf is a romantic drama that follows Haila as she gets to know what she wants through the magic of cinema and how this discovery is challenged later as extremism invades the society.

The Red Sea Lodge Award for an Arab Project was awarded to **Bullets & Bread** by **Mohammad Hammad, produced by Kholoud Saad and Mohamed Hefzy**. *Mohammed Hammad's* Bullets & Bread is about Youssef, a conscript serving his compulsory military service on the Egyptian eastern desert border who dreams of becoming a writer. Awad is a dangerous bandit from one of those tribes roaming that remote desert region who dreams of giving a better life for his family in Cairo. Their paths were not meant to cross but a true friendship will grow between them.

The jury enjoyed the dynamic at the film's heart which they described as "*Soldier and Gypsy; Laurel and Hardy; Friendship and Adversity. We can't wait to be part of this road trip, this cinematic voyage.*"

The Jury also gave a special mention to the Saudi Project **Four Acts of Disruption** directed by **Hussam AlHulwah** and produced by **Mohammad Alhamoud**, which will be awarded \$25,000 by the Red Sea Lodge for further development. The story is set in the 1930s while the newly formed Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is adjusting to the arrival of American oil prospectors. The jury gave special recognition to the

project and stated “*The film has huge potential and we hope that Hussam AlHulwah and Mohammad Alhamoud can continue to develop the project and bring it to fruition.*”

The six Saudi projects selected for the inaugural Red Sea Lodge: ***Basma*** written by Fatima Al-Banawi and directed by *Ali Alsumayin*, ***Practicing Polygamy*** directed by *Malak Qouta*, ***Four Acts of Disruption*** directed by *Hussam AlHulwah*, ***When The Star Goes Down*** directed by *Mohammed Salman*, ***Sharshaf*** directed by *Hind Alfahhad* and ***Hejj to Disney*** directed by *Maha Al-saati*.

The six Arab projects: ***Scheherazade Goes Silent*** directed by *Amira Diab*, ***Inchalla A boy*** directed by *Amjad Alrasheed*, ***The Arabic Interpreter*** directed by *Ali Kareem*, ***Bullets & Bread*** directed by *Mohammed Hammad*, ***The Basement Notes*** directed by *Hadi Ghandour*, and ***I Am Arzé*** directed by *Mira Shaib*.

In collaboration with the TorinoFilmLab, the Lodge hand-picked twelve emerging filmmakers, pairing each with an experienced mentor to support and enhance their work throughout the creative process. The comprehensive program is for directors and producers, with scriptwriters if on board, to hone and further all aspects of their vision. Every stage of filmmaking was explored, from script consultations to working with experts in the fields of directing, cinematography and sound, through to post-production as well as a commercial focus on financing, sales, and audience engagement.

On another note of exciting news: Director Maha Al-Saati’s Red Sea Lodge project ***Hejj To Disney*** was selected for TIFF Filmmaker Lab, and for the upcoming development programmes at Malmo Arab Film Festival (MAFF) and El-Gouna Film Festival. Saudi director Al Saati will also participate in The Hollywood Foreign Press Association (HFPA) Residency in 2021.

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