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For Immediate Release

17th Annual Boston Palestine Film Festival October 13-22, 2023



Stills from *Alam (The Flag)* and *A Gaza Weekend*

What: 17th edition of the Boston Palestine Film Festival

When: October 13-22, 2023

Where: the Museum of Fine Arts Boston, Coolidge Corner Theatre, MassArt Design and Media Center, and streaming online

Film Price Range: Free - \$20, streaming pass options

Website: <https://bostonpalestinefilmfest.org>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/bospalestinefilm/>

X: https://twitter.com/BPFF_Festival/

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/BostonPalestineFilmFestival/>

Cambridge, Mass., [September 7, 2023] – Curating the latest and most exciting films by and about Palestinians for our city since 2007, the Boston Palestine Film Festival (BPFF) is proud to host its 17th edition at a number of prominent venues across town and online. This year’s festival will open on October 13th at the Museum of Fine Arts Boston with **Alam (The Flag)**, a triumphant and youthful coming of age film about Palestinian students in an Israeli high school. This screening will be followed by a live Q/A session with **The Flag**’s director, the critically acclaimed Palestinian filmmaker **Firas**

Khoury. The BPF will close at the Coolidge Corner Theatre, with the award-winning comedy **A Gaza Weekend** (dir. Basil Khalil). We are also very excited to offer a streaming program for the third year in a row for all Palestinian cinema enthusiasts, with films available to stream across the USA, North America, and Worldwide.

BPF is also excited to present a diverse array of films, documentaries, and shorts, including the narrative feature **Mediterranean Fever** by Maha Haj (10/15 at the MFA Boston), **A House in Jerusalem** by Muayad Alayan (10/15 at the MFA Boston), **Notes on Displacement** by Khaled Jarrar (10/18 at the MassArt Design and Media Center) and the shorts series **Palestine Flexes: Stories of Palestinian Athleticism** (available via streaming). All films being presented via online streaming will be available to view continuously throughout the festival period (geographic restrictions apply). For full program, details and tickets, visit www.bostonpalestinefilmfest.org.

Press screeners are available upon request; please contact us at pr@bostonpalestinefilmfest.org.

2023 Program (Films + Live Events)

Opening Film: *Alam (The Flag)* (Firas Khoury), Narrative Feature, 2022

Palestinian student Tamer doesn't meddle in politics; at the same time, the memory of his uncle, an activist physically broken by imprisonment, weighs heavily on his mind. He is attracted to a new classmate, the beautiful, spontaneous and politically engaged Maysaa', the instant she appears. To impress her, Tamer drags along his buddies into Maysaa's "Operation: Flag". This act of resistance will replace the school's Israeli flag with the Palestinian flag on Israeli "Independence Day," which is a day of mourning for Palestinians when they commemorate the 'Nakba' – the catastrophe. Under Maysaa's influence, Tamer's political consciousness is sparked and he decides to participate in his first-ever demonstration.

- Winner: Golden Pyramid Award for Best Film at the 44th Cairo International Film Festival
- Winner: Best Actor Award for Mahmoud Bakry at the 44th Cairo International Film Festival
- Winner: Audience Award at the 44th Cairo International Film Festival
- Young Jury Award at Cinemamed Festival
- Best Debut Director & NETPAC Award for Best Asian Film at the International Film Festival of Kerala

"a work that crackles with the energy of both the insouciance of teenage rebellion and hedonism, and the awakening of political activism.." Cineuropa

"Alam, Firas Khoury's promising debut feature, is a smart interrogation of the very concept of nationalism—its symbols, its obligations, its intractable qualities that belie complex and very human realities." Chron

Screens 10/13 at 7 pm at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston MA

Closing Film: *A Gaza Weekend* (Basil Khalil, Narrative Feature, 2023):

The UN imposes an embargo on Israel following the outbreak of a deadly virus. However, due to its isolation, the only safe place is Gaza. Waleed, a wheeler-dealer from Gaza, accepts a fast-cash job smuggling a British man out of the country. Complications arise when the man's Israeli girlfriend tags along, and Waleed finds himself stuck with these fugitives hiding in his basement for longer than he'd hoped. Palestinian vigilantes, the Israeli army, and Waleed's prying neighbors are all after them. With all odds stacked against him, Waleed has to act fast to take advantage of any opportunity to get them out of Gaza.

- Winner: FIPRESCI Jury Award at the 2020 Toronto Film Festival

"The film is a fantastic example of how to broach serious subjects, with the darkest humour possible, plus a cast who deliver every single laugh." Filmhounds

"In his first feature, the London-based Palestinian director parodies the situation in Gaza by crafting a satirical and irreverent comedy." Cineuropa

Screens at 10/23 at 3 pm at the Coolidge Corner Theatre, Brookline MA

Afterparty follows at Hops N Scotch, Brookline MA

Feature Film: *Mediterranean Fever* (Maha Haj, Narrative Feature, 2022):

Waleed, a Palestinian man, lives comfortably in his sea-view home in Haifa with his wife and children. A former Hi-Tech engineer and aspiring writer, he knows the ins and outs of being a stay-at-home dad but cannot seem to figure out what it takes to be happy. One day, Waleed is introduced to his new neighbor, who soon becomes the most critical person in his life. Jalal, a kind but pretentious small-time crook with a big heart, quickly develops a close relationship with Waleed who has a strange plan; his desperate hope to have Jalal kill him, while making it look like a natural death. Jalal is furious by his new friend's insane request and ends all contact with him. On the other hand, Jalal continues to receive threats from the underworld to whom he owes money.

Screens 10/15 at 12:30 pm at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Feature Film: *A House in Jerusalem* (Muayad Alayan, Narrative Feature, 2022):

Young Rebecca is forced to move with her father from the UK to Jerusalem, in the hopes that a new beginning can help her heal from her mother's sudden death. Soon after settling into an old house in a neighborhood known as the Valley of the Ghosts, a series of mysterious events begin and Rebecca is blamed. Diving deep into the mystery of the house and the mystical city of Jerusalem, Rebecca sets out on an enigmatic journey to discover what hides in the shadows of the house.

Screens 10/15 at 3:00 pm at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Feature Film: *Notes on Displacement* (Khaled Jarrar, Documentary Feature, 2022):

In *Notes On Displacement*, the director behind the camera buys papers from a Syrian refugee in order to dig deep into their stories from zero distance. In doing so, he finds himself consumed by the fear

and disorientation experienced by a Palestinian family on their grueling journey to find a life beyond the Yarmouk refugee camp of Syria.

Screens 10/18 at 7:00 pm at the MassArt Design and Media Center

Featured Shorts Series: *Palestine Flexes: Stories of Palestinian Athleticism*. From pre-Nakba soccer players to modern day Palestinian climbers and female lifters, this selection of shorts showcases the challenges and triumphs of athletes living under occupation or in exile. Titles include **Touchline** (dir. Mohammed Saffouri), **Resistance Climbing** (dir. Austin Siadak and Tim Bruns) and **Heavy Metal** (dir. Edward Knowles and Timo Bruun)

Distinguished Guests at our screenings include:

Firas Khoury (director, ***Alam (The Flag)***)

Firas Khoury (born on May 6, 1982) is a Palestinian script writer and director, known for *Alam (The Flag)* (2022), *Maradona's Legs* (2019), and *Yellow Mums* (2010). *Alam (The Flag)* is his Narrative Feature debut.

Attends the screening of Alam (The Flag) on 10/13 at 7pm at the Museum of Fine Arts Boston

About BPF:

Since 2007, the Boston Palestine Film Festival has been introducing Palestine-related cinema, narratives, and culture to New England audiences and beyond. The festival has featured over 500 compelling and thought-provoking films, including documentaries, dramatic features, animated films, rare early works, video art pieces, and new films by emerging artists and youth. These works from directors around the world have offered refreshingly honest, self-described, and independent views of Palestine and its history, culture, and geographically dispersed society. The festival News page features original interviews with filmmakers and related content.

The festival has also presented other events throughout the years, including concerts, exhibits, film screenings, live storytelling events in partnership with *Palestinians Podcast* (2015-2020), and Arab Film Weekend.

The BPF Executive Committee works year-round on an all-volunteer basis to sustain the festival.