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For Immediate Release

## 18th Annual Boston Palestine Film Festival October 18-27, 2024



Stills from *The Teacher* and *Palestine Islands*

**What:** 18<sup>th</sup> edition of the Boston Palestine Film Festival

**When:** October 18-27, 2024

**Where:** The Museum of Fine Arts Boston, Coolidge Corner Theater, Regent Theatre, and MassArt

**Website:** <https://bostonpalestinefilmfest.org>

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

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

*Boston, Mass., [September 10, 2024]* –While we mourn the hundreds of thousands of Palestinian lives lost and millions displaced during the continued Israeli assault on Gaza, we believe that it is vital for our community to hear Palestinian voices and find a space to gather in these trying times. The Boston Palestine Film Festival (BPFF) will return for the 18<sup>th</sup> season this year with a selection of the best films by and about Palestinians. Screening at multiple locations across Boston, including the MFA, MassArt, Regent Theatre, and the Coolidge Corner Theater, this year's festival will take place from October 18 to 27. Our opening film **The Teacher** will screen at the MFA with a recorded introduction by the Oscar-nominated, Bafta-winning, British-Palestinian director **Farah Nabulsi**. The BPFF will close at the Coolidge Corner Theater with **To a Land Unknown**, directed by Mahdi Fleifel and starring Mahmood Bakri. This year's program will also include multiple premiers including the world premiere of **Mawtini (My Homeland)** and the North America premier of the **Deer's Tooth**.

Our opening film, **The Teacher** tells the story of Basem a Palestinian schoolteacher (Saleh Bakri) who struggles to hide his risky political involvement from his student mentee (Muhammed Abed El Rahman) and his British girlfriend (Imogen Poots). Fatal Israeli settler violence, the destruction of Palestinian homes by Israeli edict, and a hostage operation set in 2014 make this film a very topical artistic production. **The Teacher**, Farah Nabulsi's feature directorial debut, has been well-received by national and global audiences. It has earned multiple awards, including Best International Film at the Galway Film Fleadh and the Audience Award at the Washington DC Filmfest. Our closing film **To a Land Unknown** follows the journey of Chatila (Mahmoud Bakri) a Palestinian refugee living on the fringes of society in Athens who gets ripped off by a smuggler and sets out to seek revenge.

In addition to these two award-winning films, the BPFF is looking forward to sharing with our local audiences a wide range of documentaries, such as **Bye Bye Tiberias** by Lina Soualem, which follows actress Hiam Abbass's return home with her daughter, the film director, in an intimate documentary about four generations of women and their shared legacy of separation (10/20 at the MFA). Our shorts program this year will also screen at the MFA on 10/20 and will feature such titles as **Mar Mama** (Boston Premiere), **The Deer's Tooth** (North America premiere), **Palestine Islands**, and **An Orange from Jaffa**. Two of the BPFF's documentary films will screen at MassArt on 10/21; **Three Promises** by Yusuf Sruji and the experimental film **Familiar Phantoms** by Larissa Sansour and Søren Lind. For full program, details and tickets, visit [www.bostonpalestinefilmfest.org](http://www.bostonpalestinefilmfest.org).

Press screeners are available upon request; please contact us at [pr@bostonpalestinefilmfest.org](mailto:pr@bostonpalestinefilmfest.org).

## **2024 Program (Films + Live Events)**

**Opening Film:** *The Teacher* (Farah Nabulsi), Narrative Feature, 2023

A Palestinian school teacher (Saleh Bakri) struggles to reconcile his risky political commitment with his emotional support to one of students (Muhammad Abed El Rahman) and the chance for a new relationship with a volunteer worker (Imogen Poots).

- Winner: The Critics Awards for Arab Films, Arab Cinema Center, 2024
- Winner: Best Actor for Salah Bakri, Arab Cinema Center, 2024
- Winner: Audience Award Brooklyn Film Festival, 2024
- Winner: Best International Film, 36<sup>th</sup> Galway Film Fleadh, 2024
- Winner: Best Actor, Belgrade International Film Festival, 2024
- Winner: Jury Award, Red Sea Film Festival, Best Actor, 2023
- Winner: Best Actor, for Salah Bakri, Red Sea Film Festival, 2023

*"absorbing first feature by British-Palestinian director Farah Nabulsi"* Vogue.

*"an intimate exploration of life in occupied Palestine"* The Hollywood Reporter.

Screens 10/18 at 7pm at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston MA.

**Featured Film: *Bye Bye Tiberias*** (Lina Soualem, Documentary, 2024):

In her early twenties, Hiam Abbass left her native Palestinian village to follow her dream of becoming an actress in Europe, leaving behind her mother, grandmother, and seven sisters. Thirty years later, her filmmaker daughter Lina returns with her to the village and questions for the first time her mother's bold choices, her chosen exile and the way the women in their family influenced both their lives.

- Winner: Jury Award, Marrakech International Film Festival, 2023
- Winner: the Grierson Award in the Documentary Competition, London Film Festival, 2023

*"Bye Bye Tiberias cements Soualem's status as a documentary filmmaker to watch."* Variety.

*"Filmmaker Lina Soualem's sentimental journey with her actress mother Hiam Abbass becomes a powerful celebration of lives marked by separation, exile and erasure."* Screen Daily.

Screens 10/20 at 3pm at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA

**Featured Film: *No Other Land*** (Basel Adra, Hamdan Ballal, Yuval Abraham & Rachel Szor), Documentary, 2024

Basel Adra, a young Palestinian activist from Masafer Yatta, has been fighting his community's mass expulsion by the Israeli occupation since childhood. Basel documents the gradual erasure of Masafer Yatta, as soldiers destroy the homes of families -the largest single act of forced transfer ever carried out in the occupied West Bank. He crosses paths with Yuval, an Israeli journalist who joins his struggle, and for over half a decade they fight against the expulsion while growing closer.

- Winner: The Berlinale Documentary Award, The 74th Berlin International Film Festival, 2024

- Winner: The Panorama Audience Award for Best Documentary Film, The 74th Berlin International Film Festival, 2024

*“No Other Land is a vérité project and a witness testimony. It operates within the logic that visual evidence will galvanize the public to acknowledge the brutality faced by Palestinians.”* The Hollywood Reporter.

*“A frank, devastating protest against Israel’s West Bank occupation.”* Variety.

Screens 10/23 at 7pm at the Regent Theatre, Arlington, MA

**Closing Film: *To a Land Unknown*** (Mahdi Fleifel, Narrative Feature, 2023):

Chatila and Reda are saving to pay for fake passports to get out of Athens. But when Reda loses their hard-earned cash to his dangerous drug addiction, Chatila hatches an extreme plan, which involves them posing as smugglers and taking hostages in an effort to get him and his best friend out of their hopeless environment before it is too late.

- Winner: Galway Film Fleadh, Best Film, World Cinema Competition, 2024
- Winner: CineCoPro Award, Munich film Festival, 2024
- Winner: Audience Award, Focus Mediterraneo, Taormina International Film Festival, 2024
- Winner: Jury’s Choice, Golden Bee Award, Mediterrane Film Film, 2024

*“A modern tragedy with the pacing and the tension of an action thriller, To a Land Unknown is an uncompromising look at the living conditions of migrants.”* The National

*“Mahdi Fleifel delivers a confident, fully-realized drama featuring a lead performance from Mahmood Bakri.”* Variety.

Screens 10/27 at 3pm at the Coolidge Corner Theater, Brookline, MA

**Featured Shorts Series:** This year’s shorts program, which screens at the MFA on 10/20, focuses on Palestinian youth. The shorts we curated examine the traumas and dreams of children living under occupation as they try to navigate the world with the little mobility they have. Narratives include the award-winning **Mar Mama** (dir. Majdi al-Omari), **the Deer’s Tooth** (dir. Saif Hammash), **Palestine Islands** (dir. Julien Menanteau and Nour Ben Salem) and **an Orange from Jaffa** (dir. Mohammed Almughanni).

***Distinguished Guests at our screenings include:***

*Ramy Younes* (director and producer, **Lyd**)

Ramy Younes is a Palestinian filmmaker, writer, journalist and activist from Lyd.

*Sarah Ema Friedland* (director and cinematographer, **Lyd**)

*Sarah Ema Friedland* is a documentary filmmaker and media artist based in New York.

*Will attend the screening of Lyd on 10/20 at 7pm at the Coolidge Corner Theater*

**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 Week.

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