

7TH ANNUAL

مهرجان
الفيلم
العربي
في تورنتو
TORONTO
ARAB
FILM
FESTIVAL

JUL. 24 - AUG. 1 2026

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LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Toronto Arab Film acknowledges that we live and work on the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples and that it is home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Mýtis peoples.

We also acknowledge that Toronto is covered by Treaty 13 signed with the Mississaugas of the Credit, and the Williams Treaties signed with multiple Mississaugas and Chippewa bands. We are forever grateful to be able to live and work on this land. We invite you to reflect more on this by evaluating your relationship with and contribution to the land we are on today and its peoples.

Learn more on the land you are on by visiting **native-land.ca**

ABOUT TAF

Toronto Arab Film (TAF) is a non-profit organisation bringing films from and about the Arab world to Toronto audiences. TAF began in 2017 with the goal of addressing the lack of Arab representation in Toronto film programming. TAF has since grown into a multifaceted organisation that promotes the diversity of Arab cultures, builds community, creates opportunities for exchange, and develops emerging artists. TAF is ultimately rooted in a desire to reinstate a tradition that has been lost over time: coming together to watch films.

OUR MISSION

To showcase the diversity of the Arab world and support emerging Arab filmmakers, while building connections between the Arab and non-Arab community.

OUR VISION

To spearhead a significant, positive shift in the image of the Arab world among both Arab and non-Arab film audiences.

WHAT WE DO

Our work is structured across three core initiatives.

THE ANNUAL FESTIVAL presents a curated selection of contemporary films across genres, highlighting both established and emerging Arab voices in cinema.

CINEMA NIGHTS hosts year-round screenings that bring Arab cinema to Toronto audiences beyond the festival period.

SHABAKA fosters connection and exchange among filmmakers, through professional development.

TAF BOARD

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MOE RAI

VICE CHAIR

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RUA WANI

ANTHONY YOUSSEF

TAF TEAM

AZZA ABBARO

GRAPHIC DESIGNER

YOMNA ABDELKAWY

YEAR-ROUND SCREENINGS
PROGRAMMER

AHMAD ALHAJ

FESTIVAL PROGRAMMER

KAREN HABIB

MARKETING & DEVELOPMENT
COORDINATOR

NADA HALAWI

DEVELOPMENT & OUTREACH
COORDINATOR

RENDALA MAJDALANI

DEVELOPMENT & OUTREACH
COORDINATOR

2026 FESTIVAL SCREENERS

YOMNA ABDELKAWY

GHALIA AL SAHEB

HUSSAIN DAWWAS

MONA MAARABANI

FATEMA NIAZY

A MESSAGE FROM THE TAF BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Welcome to the 7th annual Toronto Arab Film Festival!

This year's Festival brings together seven feature films, 17 short films, professional development events, and community socials, all to celebrate the breadth, creativity, and diversity of Arab storytelling from across the region and diaspora.

At a time when Arab voices must be bolder than ever, this year's program showcases filmmakers with fearless visions, bringing audiences daring stories, striking visuals, and unforgettable characters that challenge conventions and invite new ways of seeing the world. From intimate portraits to personal exposés and stories that question social expectations, these works introduce us to characters navigating friendship and family, migration and memory, resistance and self-discovery. Together, they offer a moving portrait of life in all its richness, complexity, and possibility. Our heartfelt thanks go to this year's filmmakers for sharing their visions with us. Through their creativity, courage, and commitment to storytelling, they have entrusted us with stories that challenge, inspire, and connect us across borders, generations, and experiences.

Our Festival is made possible by a community whose support extends far beyond the screen. We are deeply grateful to our volunteers, whose passion, generosity, and countless hours of work bring the Festival to life each year. We also extend our sincere thanks to our sponsors, funders, partners, and supporters for believing in our mission to showcase the diversity of the Arab world, support emerging Arab filmmakers, and build connections between Arab and non-Arab communities. Most importantly, thank you to our audience. Whether you're joining us for the first time or returning as a longtime supporter, your curiosity, engagement, and enthusiasm are what make this Festival worthwhile.

TAF BOARD OF DIRECTORS

JURY MEMBERS

Features Jury:

AHMED EL MAANOUNI | FILMMAKER

ANAM ABBAS | FILMMAKER

KARAM MASRI | FILM FUND MANAGER, RIVIERA CONTENT

Shorts Jury:

NOUR HADIDI | COMEDIAN AND WRITER

REEM MORSI | FILMMAKER

YOUSSEF MUTAWE | FILMMAKER

AWARDS

The Festival Awards celebrate artistic excellence, creative vision, and emerging talent across both feature and short film categories, recognizing standout works as chosen by our juries and audiences.

NAKHEEL JURY AWARD FOR BEST FEATURE FILM

Awarded to the best feature-length narrative or documentary film. The jury recognizes excellence in storytelling, artistic achievement, and cultural depth across all full-length submissions.

JUTHOUR JURY AWARD FOR BEST SHORT FILM

Recognizes outstanding talent in the short film category. This award celebrates filmmakers who demonstrate a distinctive voice and strong creative vision at an early stage in their careers..

QAYQUB JURY AWARD FOR BEST CANADIAN SHORT FILM

Honours exceptional short films from Canada's Arab diaspora and broader Canadian filmmaking community. The award highlights work directed, written, or produced by Canadian-based filmmakers.

YAMAMA AUDIENCE CHOICE AWARD FOR BEST SHORT FILM

Selected by festival audiences, this award is determined by audience vote and celebrates the most resonant short film screened during the Festival.

HOW TO EXPERIENCE THE FESTIVAL



TICKETS

Please visit arabfilm.ca for tickets, and the most up-to-date info.

PASSES	EARLY BIRD	REGULAR
Orouba - All Access Pass	\$135	\$140
Mezza - 5-Screening Pass	\$65	\$70
Shabaka - Industry Pass	\$55	\$60

SINGLE TICKETS	EARLY BIRD	REGULAR
Opening Feature	\$25	\$30
Opening Reception	\$25	\$30
Shorts Program	\$20	\$25
Closing Featyre	\$25	\$30
Closing Reception	\$25	\$30
Professional Development Days (per day)	\$30	\$35



VENUES

Please refer to your ticket for your screening or event's date, time, and location.

FILM SCREENINGS | JULY 24, 25 & 26 | JULY 30, 31 & AUG 1

SPADINA THEATRE | 24 SPADINA RD

SMALL WORLD CENTRE | 180 SHAW ST

REVUE CINEMA | 400 RONCESVALLES AVE

OPENING RECEPTION | FRI JULY 24

SPADINA THEATRE | 24 SPADINA RD

CLOSING RECEPTION | SAT AUGUST 1

MIRAKI LIFE WORKSPACE | 35 GOLDEN AVE UNIT 114

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAYS | JULY 25 & AUG 1

CENTRE FOR SOCIAL INNOVATION (CSI) | 192 SPADINA AVE

TAFF 2026 FEST

FRIDAY JULY 24

7 PM (OPENING FEATURE) - THE STORIES - *Abu Bakr Shawky (ST)*

9 PM - OPENING RECEPTION (ST)

SATURDAY JULY 25

9:50 AM - 1:10 PM PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAY 1 (CSI)

2 PM - SHORTS 1: THE THINGS WE INHERIT (ST)

"TESLAM IDEK"- BLESS YOUR HAND - *Joumana Baalbaki*

BUKRA - *Alex Aljouni*

LIKE A SPIRAL - *Lamia Chraïbi*

PRISONER - *Rame Ibrahim*

STILL PLAYING - *Mohamed Mesbah*

4:30 PM - FLANA - *Zahraa Ghandour (ST)*

7PM - HIJRA - *Shahad Ameen (ST)*

SUNDAY JULY 26

2 PM - SHORTS 2: THE CHARACTERS WE PLAY (SWC)

AMBUSH | KAMEEN - *Yassmina Karajah*

BETTER THAN A MUSTACHE - *Sameer W. Jafar*

MRS. FAIZA & DR. LOVE - *Anissa Daoud*

NADER'S GIRL - *Omar Mouallem*

NO HARISSA - *Saïfeddine Lahmar*

4:30 PM - LIFE AFTER SIHAM - *Namir Abdel Messeeh (SWC)*

IVAL SCHEDULE

THURSDAY JULY 30

7 PM - THE SILENCE THEY TAUGHT US - *Paula Sahyoun (ST)* **SCREENED WITH**
THE CATS, THE SEA, AND EVERYTHING IN BETWEEN - *Karel Malkoun*

FRIDAY JULY 31

6 PM - SHORTS 3: THE PLACES WE REMEMBER (SWC)
BENEATH WHICH RIVERS FLOW - *Ali Yahya*
KHALED AND NEMA - *Sohail Dahdal*
MY BROTHER, MY BROTHER - *Abdelrahman Dnewar and Saad Dnewar*
ONE LAST TIME - *Karim El Rahbani*
PERISHABLE IDOL - *Majid Al Remaihi*
TIGHRIST - THREADS OF EXILE - *Samia Dzair*

8 PM - SINK - *Zain Duraie (SWC)*

SATURDAY AUGUST 1

1:30 PM - 5 PM - PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAY 2 (CSI)

6:45 PM (CLOSING FEATURE) - CALLE MÁLAGA - *Maryam Touzani (RC)*

9 PM - CLOSING NIGHT RECEPTION (MLW)

📍 VENUE LEGEND

(CSI) CENTRE FOR SOCIAL INNOVATION | 192 SPADINA AVE
(MLW) MIRAKI LIFE WORKSPACE | 35 GOLDEN AVE UNIT 114
(RC) REVUE CINEMA | 400 RONCESVALLES AVE
(ST) SPADINA THEATRE | 24 SPADINA RD
(SWC) SMALL WORLD CENTRE | 180 SHAW ST

OPENING FEATURE



THE STORIES - *Abu Bakr Shawky*

Egypt (120 minutes) Drama // Arabic + English + German

FRI JULY 24 - 7 PM (ST)

Egypt. Summer 1967. Ahmed receives a letter from Austria - Liz has replied to his search for a pen pal. They begin a long-distance friendship that is viewed with suspicion by his relatives. From this summer onwards, Ahmed's efforts to become a pianist despite his humble social background will gain an unstoppable momentum, as Liz pushes him towards his elusive goal: a public concert. Together, with this shared dream always in mind, Ahmed and Liz will live through war, family joys, opposition and dramas, failures and triumphs that rocked Egypt until the 1980s.

CO-PRESENTED BY MARSM CANADA



JOIN US AFTER THE SCREENING FOR OUR OPENING NIGHT RECEPTION*
FRI JULY 24 (9 PM) SPADINA THEATRE | 24 SPADINA RD

*Please note that admission to the reception requires a separate ticket.



FEATURES

CO-PRESENTED BY DOCUMENTARY
ORGANIZATION OF CANADA



FLANA - *Zahraa Ghandour*

Iraq, France, Qatar (85 minutes) Documentary // Arabic

SAT JULY 25 - 4:30 PM (ST)

Flana is a term used in Iraqi dialect for a forgotten or anonymous female. In this personal doc, director Zahraa searches Baghdad for her childhood friend Nour who suddenly disappeared at the age of ten. The film is also a search for many forgotten girls: Zahraa's journey uncovers the dark secrets behind families abandoning their daughters and the heartbreaking separations of mothers and daughters—a fate she herself endured.



CO-PRESENTED BY TORONTO REEL ASIAN
INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

HIJRA - *Shahad Ameen*

KSA, Iraq, Egypt, UK (115 minutes) Drama //

Arabic, Urdu, Turkish, English

SAT JULY 25 - 7 PM (WITH Q&A) (ST)

Reel Asian

Twelve-year-old Janna sets off for Mecca with her strict grandmother, Sitti, and rebellious sister, Sarah, to perform Hajj. But before they reach their destination, Sarah vanishes — forcing Janna and Sitti into a tense, urgent search. Fearing Sarah's father will find out, Sitti and Janna push themselves to the limit, desperate to uncover why Sarah disappeared. Their journey spans from southern Saudi Arabia to its northern borders, crossing old pilgrimage routes and confronting strangers, harsh landscapes, and long-buried family secrets. As they grow closer, Janna begins to unravel stories from Sitti's rich and complex past.



THE CATS, THE SEA, AND EVERYTHING IN BETWEEN - Karel Malkoun

Canada, Lebanon, (73 minutes) Documentary // Arabic + English

THURS JULY 30 - 6 PM (WITH Q&A) (ST)

Documentary filmmaker Karel Malkoun comes from Lebanon, but has been living in Canada for the past few years. In 2022, when the economic crisis in her native country was at its peak, she decided to visit her family there. She turned her short trip into a collage-like diary in which she reflects on her relationship with her homeland, which is in a state of protracted decay. Malkoun has created an immediate, raw, and deliberately unsorted impression capturing the absurdity and suddenness of situations that took her by surprise as a native returning from abroad.

**CO-PRESENTED BY
LEBANESE FILM FESTIVAL OF CANADA**



THIS FILM WILL BE PRESENTED WITH THE FOLLOWING SHORT:



THE SILENCE THEY TAUGHT US - Paula Sahyoun

Canada, Palestine, (9 mins) Animated documentary - ARA, ENG

An autobiographical documentary short following Paula, a Palestinian-Canadian professional in Toronto, as she confronts the cost of silence in the face of anti-Palestinian racism. yearning for dignity and recognition.



CO-PRESENTED BY
CANADIAN ARAB INSTITUTE



CANADIAN ARAB
INSTITUTE | INSTITUT
CANADO-ARABE

LIFE AFTER SIHAM - Namir Abdel Messeeh

Egypt, France (76 minutes) Documentary // French + Arabic

SUN JULY 26 - 4:30 PM (SWC)

Siham is no longer alive, and yet she is still here: in the letters she wrote to her husband, Waguih, in the 1970s, and in the way he still feels her presence in the house. And in the films their son Namir made. In this layered family portrait, director Namir tells the story of his parents: their beginnings in Egypt, their relationship before his birth, and their move to France.



CO-PRESENTED BY
WORKMAN ARTS
RENDEZVOUS WITH MADNESS

SINK - Zain Duraie

Jordan (90 minutes) Drama // Arabic

THURS JULY 30 - 8 PM (SWC)

WORKMAN
ARTS
RENDEZVOUS
WITH MADNESS

When her teenage son, in his final year of school, is suspended after a troubling outburst, his mother, Nadia, is determined to help him, convincing herself he just needs guidance. But as Basil's mental state slowly unravels, she ignores the warning signs, sinking deeper into denial as disaster approaches.

CLOSING FEATURE



CALLE MÁLAGA - *Maryam Touzani*

Morocco, France, Spain, Germany, Belgium (117 minutes) Drama // Spanish + Arabic

SAT JULY 1 - 6:45 PM (RC)

María Ángeles, a 79-year-old Spanish woman, lives alone in Tangier, Morocco, and enjoys her daily routine. However, her life is turned upside down when her daughter arrives from Madrid to sell the apartment in which she has always lived. Determined to stay, she does everything she can to get her home and her belongings back and, unexpectedly, rediscovers love and sensuality.

CO-PRESENTED BY
EUROPEAN UNION FILM FESTIVAL



EUROPEAN UNION
FILM FESTIVAL

JOIN US AFTER THE SCREENING FOR OUR CLOSING NIGHT RECEPTION*
SAT AUG 1 (9 PM) - MIRAKI LIFE WORKSPACE | 35 GOLDEN AVE UNIT 114

**Please note that admission to the reception requires a separate ticket.*

SHORTS PROGRAM - THE THINGS WE INHERIT SAT JULY 25 - 2 PM (ST)



"TESLAM IDEK"- BLESS YOUR HAND -

Joumana Baalbaki *Egypt, Switzerland, UK*

(12 mins) Documentary - Arabic, English

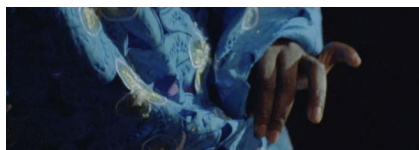
Teslem Idek (Bless Your Hand) follows seven Londoners of third-culture backgrounds as they explore identity, home, and belonging — with their hands as both subject and author quest for a lost gem.



BUKRA - Alex Aljouni

USA, Syria, (15mins) Drama - Arabic, Turkish

After winning a soccer ball in a sweepstakes, a young Syrian refugee must race to claim her prize and play one final game with her best friend before he's gone forever.

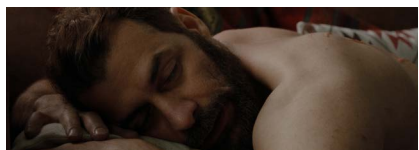


LIKE A SPIRAL - Lamia Chraïbi

Canada, Morocco, France (28 mins) Documentary,

- Arabic, French, Sinhala, Tagalog

Like a Spiral is a dialogue between Beirut and five women, migrant domestic workers, under the Kafala system.



PRISONER - Rame Ibrahim

Canada, Palestine (15 mins) Drama - Arabic, English

As Adam enters adolescence, he realizes his father's stories of adventure are actually horrors of torture, highlighting the psychological toll of intergenerational trauma on their family.



STILL PLAYING - Mohamed Mesbah

France, Palestine (37 mins) Documentary - Arabic English

West Bank, summer 2024. Rasheed, a video game creator, tries to raise his two sons amid Israeli army raids and the war in Gaza. At night, he creates games where mothers and fathers can no longer protect their children.

CO-PRESENTED BY DIASPORA FILM FESTIVAL

DIASPORA
FILM FESTIVAL

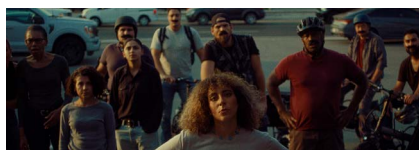
SHORTS PROGRAM - THE CHARACTERS WE PLAY SUN JULY 26 - 2 PM (SWC)



AMBUSH | KAMEEN - Yassmina Karajah

Canada (20 mins) Drama - Arabic, English

A pop-up techno club ambushes the streets of downtown Amman flooding a conservative neighborhood with heavy bass and unfamiliar faces. Jana arrives, newly sober, wrestling with intimacy. While across the street, Hasan watches from his family rooftop, anticipating a long-overdue encounter.



BETTER THAN A MUSTACHE - Sameer W. Jafar

Canada (17 mins) Drama, Dark Comedy - English

A shawarma courier quietly pines over his enigmatic boss, until a grieving customer snaps him out of his spiral.



MRS. FAIZA & DR. LOVE - Anissa Daoud

France (25 mins) Drama - French

In the modest family apartment, Faiza has 'a room of her own' where another part of herself unfolds—one that is unafraid of transgression and reconnects with her youthful ambitions.



NADER'S GIRL - Omar Moullem

Canada (18 mins) Dark Comedy - English

A lonely international student creates an imaginary girlfriend to impress his roommates—then struggles to let her go.



NO HARISSA - Saïfeddine Lahmar

Tunisia (17 mins) Fiction, Drama, Comedy - Arabic

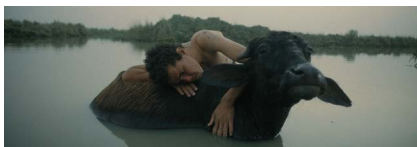
Born with a rare intolerance to harissa in a society that reveres it, a Tunisian man named Taher faces rejection and shame, forcing him to navigate a culinary landscape that rejects his existence.

CO-PRESENTED BY BREAKTHROUGHS FILM FESTIVAL



Breakthroughs
Film Festival

SHORTS PROGRAM - THE PLACES WE REMEMBER FRI JULY 31 - 6 PM (SWC)



BENEATH WHICH RIVERS FLOW - *Ali Yahya*

Iraq (17 mins) Drama, Fantasy, Thriller - Arabic
Ibrahim and his family's lives are tethered to the river, the reeds, and the buffalo they tend. But as the marshland waters dry and the landscape withers, Ibrahim faces unrelenting forces threatening the only life he has ever known, and the only creature he has ever understood.



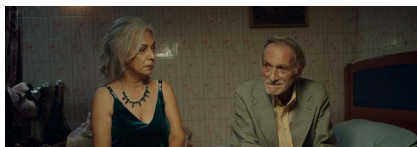
KHALED AND NEMA - *Sohail Dahdal*

Palestine (18 mins) Drama - Arabic
Khaled, a 10-year-old Bedouin boy, and his trusted goat Nema embark on a mission to bring Abu Mariam's memory back.



MY BROTHER, MY BROTHER - *Abdelrahman Dnewar*

and Saad Dnewar Egypt (20 mins) Animated, Drama - Arabic
Through a split, dual narrative, identical twins Omar and Wesam recount their shared memories—from their time in the womb to the moment they are tragically separated by death.



ONE LAST TIME - *Karim El Rahbani*

Lebanon (20 mins) Drama - Arabic
A solitary man in his 80s, mourning the loss of his friends and the monotony of his quiet life, experiences a late-life awakening when a younger neighbor's unexpected visit stirs a long-dormant desire for connection.



PERISHABLE IDOL - *Majid Al Remaihi*

Qatar, Kuwait (19 mins) Documentary - Arabic
As the blue sky meets the surrounding seas, the native-turned-archaeologist Hassan Al-Failakawy returns to the abandoned island of Failaka, off the coast of Kuwait. Between the desolation and the different ruins of the island after the Gulf War, Hassan is met with questions about return, restitution, and belonging.



TIGHRIST - THREADS OF EXILE - *Samia Dzair*

Algeria, KSA (20 mins) Animated documentary - Arabic
Drawing inspiration from traditional weaving techniques, oral storytelling, and contemporary modes of production, this film invites reflection on textile as a language of resistance and a vessel of memory—a sensitive archive.

CO-PRESENTED BY IMAGES FILM FESTIVAL **Images Festival**

**CAST YOUR VOTE FOR
THE YAMAMA AUDIENCE
CHOICE AWARD FOR
BEST SHORT FILM**



DGC  GCR
DIRECTORS GUILD OF CANADA
GUILDE CANADIENNE DES RÉALISATEURS

PROUD TO SUPPORT

TORONTO ARAB FILM



SHABAKA

Each year, TAF curates a selection of professional development opportunities designed to support both emerging and mid-career filmmakers. Through panels, masterclasses, workshops, and networking sessions, participants gain valuable insights into the evolving landscape of the film industry, and connect with leading professionals. These initiatives aim to foster growth, collaboration, and long-term career sustainability within the filmmaking community.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAY 1

SATURDAY, JULY 25 // CENTRE FOR SOCIAL INNOVATION (CSI) | 192 SPADINA AVE

PANEL: HOW TO FUND YOUR NEXT FILM

9:50 AM – 10:55 AM

PANEL: CAPACITY BUILDING WITHIN CANADIAN FILM UNIONS

10:55 AM – 12:00 PM

INDUSTRY MIXER

12:15 PM – 1:10 PM

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAY 2

SATURDAY, AUGUST 1 // CENTRE FOR SOCIAL INNOVATION (CSI) | 192 SPADINA AVE

WORKSHOP: FROM SCRIPT TO PITCH

1:30 PM – 2:50 PM

WORKSHOP: THE LIFE OF A BUDGET

3:00 PM – 4:00 PM

INDUSTRY MIXER

4:00 PM – 5:00 PM

For more information and to register visit www.arabfilm.ca

OPENING AND CLOSING RECEPTIONS

OPENING NIGHT RECEPTION:

FRI JULY 24 (9 PM) SPADINA THEATRE | 24 SPADINA RD

CLOSING NIGHT RECEPTION:

SAT AUGUST 1, 9 PM MIRAKI LIFE WORKSPACE | 35 GOLDEN AVE, UNIT 114

Filmmakers are invited to join us for the opening and closing receptions where they can connect with audiences, and industry peers, and professionals.

TICKETS CAN BE PURCHASED ONLINE

LAYALI EL CINEMA

Our revived year-round screening series returns as a space for discovery, conversation, and community. We present landmark works, emerging voices and enduring classics that illuminate the cultural, political, and artistic landscapes of the Arab world.

For more information on upcoming screenings and tickets visit arabfilm.ca/layali

WAYS TO SUPPORT AND CONTACT

The festival is shaped by a community of volunteers, filmmakers, collaborators, and audiences. We welcome those who wish to contribute to its growth through volunteering, partnerships, or financial support.

PARTICIPATE

For volunteering, collaborations, and co-presentation opportunities, contact: info@arabfilm.ca

DONATIONS

Individual contributions play a vital role in sustaining the festival and its year-round programming. To make a donation, please visit: arabfilm.ca

SPONSORSHIP

We welcome partnerships with organizations, institutions, and individuals who wish to support the festival through sponsorship or advertising. For sponsorship and advertising opportunities, please contact: development@arabfilm.ca

STAY CONNECTED VIA NEWSLETTER AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Subscribe to receive programming announcements, festival updates, and early access to ticket launches, including advance booking windows and preferred pricing upon release. To subscribe visit arabfilm.ca

Follow us on social media: [@torontoarabfilm](https://www.instagram.com/torontoarabfilm) [in](#) [i](#) [f](#) [v](#)

THANK YOU - شَكَرًا