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Fireworks & Surprises: 3rd GFF Kicks Off

The ceremony program had many surprises starting from the colorful show of the Lebanese dance group Mayyas

The third edition of El Gouna Film Festival kicked off last night September 20, in the Marina theater with the presence of the Festival organizers and international and Arab filmmakers and celebrities.

The ceremony witnessed the presence of El Gouna Founder Samih Sawiris, the Festival Founder Naguib Sawiris, and the festival team, CEO and Co-Founder Amr Mansi, COO

and Co-Founder Bushra Abdallah Rozza, CFO and Co-Founder Kamal Zadeh, Festival Director Intishal Al Timimi, Artistic Director Amir Ramses, and the rest of the GFF team. Many Egyptian stars attended the ceremony alongside with many Arab and international stars.

The ceremony program had many surprises starting from the colorful show of the

Lebanese dance group Mayyas, which stunned GFF audience with their enchanting moves, and also the announcement of the EDA first award by the Egyptian Canadian star Mena Massoud; in addition to the 5 years agreement between El Gouna Film Festival and the UNICEF which was announced by the Egyptian star Mona Zaki, the Goodwill Ambassador of UNICEF.

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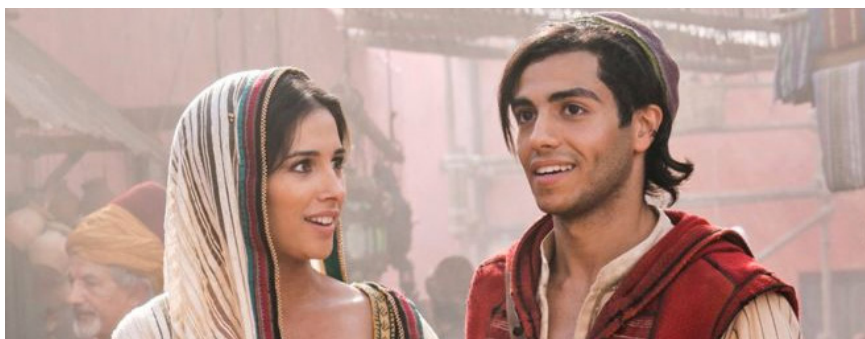
Graphic Team
Al Haitham Nagdy
Nermin El Banaa

Mena Massoud Acclaims 'Adam'

"You are great audience. I am very happy that I came back home to Egypt after 10 years thanks to El Gouna Film Festival," this was said in the happy voice of Mena Massoud, the Egyptian Canadian Star who is known for his leading role in Disney's live-action film Aladdin, while he was on the GFF opening ceremony stage.

Massoud announced the winner of first-time prize of the EDA Foundation, a non-profit and charitable organization founded by himself. The announced film was 'Adam' by Moroccan film director Maryam Touzani. He described the film as touching and familiar, for it reminded him of his mother and sister, "it makes me proud to have a North African mother," he said. Massoud praised the role of film director Maryam Touzani, and the two film stars Lubna Azabal (Abla) and Nisrin Erradi (Samia), saying: "you represent a generation of artists who will change the face of the entertainment in the world". Massoud invited Nisrin Erradi to the stage to receive the award.

'Adam' is about Abla who lives with her eight-year-old daughter, Warda, and runs a modest bakery from her home in Casablanca. One day, a knock on the door brings Samia, a pregnant young woman looking for a job and a place to stay. Initially reluctant to allow a stranger into her home, Abla has a change of heart and takes her in.



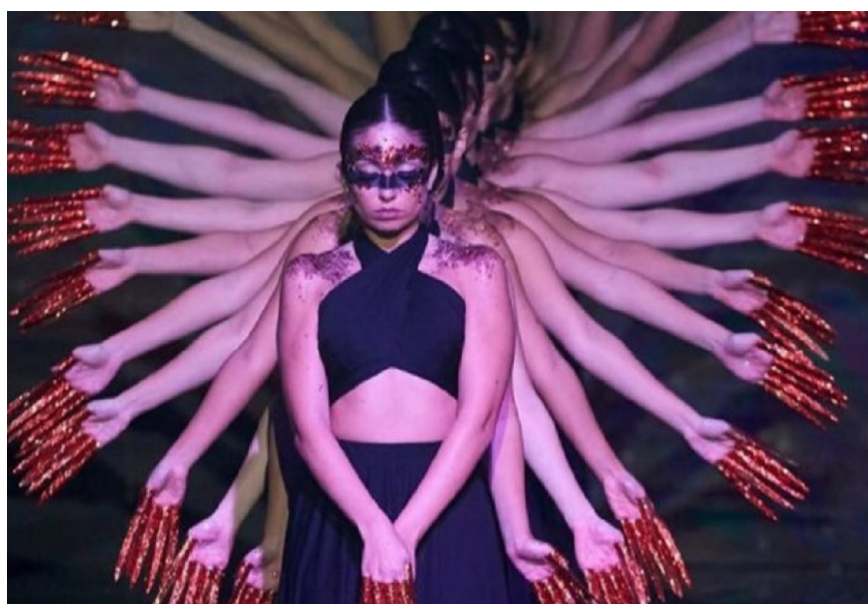
The film tackles taboo subjects in the Arab world through a poignant portrait of two women, which touches the heart due in large measure to the superb performances of Lubna Azabal (Abla) and Nisrin Erradi (Samia) working with the promising first-time director Maryam Touzani. The film had its world premiere at the

Toronto International Film Festival. It also participates in the GFF's Feature Narrative Competition.

EDA Foundation hopes to inspire inclusivity and diversity in the arts and entertainment industry, so that young, ethnically diverse artists can gain access to the tools they need to jumpstart their careers.

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“Mayyas” Stuns GFF Audience



At the end of the Festival's opening ceremony, Lebanese dance group "Mayyas" stunned El Gouna Film Festival audience with their enchanting moves. The performance saw over 30 women dancing in harmonious rhythm to a mixed Arab-Indian piece. They performed to the classic Arabic song "Enta Omry" by renowned Egyptian singer Umm Kulthum, in addition to a selection of exhilarating Indian melodies, while a magnificent vista of colorful fireworks filled the skies at the Marina Theatre.

"Mayyas", a group of 31 all-female performers aged 13 to 25, is the winner of the Golden Buzzer at the 2019 round of the "Arabs Got Talent" competition. They also wowed television audiences at "Britain's Got Talent" a few days ago with their superb synchronized moves during the third round of auditions.



Mona Zaki: All for the Future of the Children

While El Gouna Film Festival kicks off its 3rd edition, El Gouna, as a city, is celebrating its 30 year anniversary. On the other hand, UNICEF is celebrating 30 years of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Egyptian star Mona Zaki, Goodwill Ambassador of UNICEF, was welcomed to the Marina Theater Stage to speak about a five-year agreement between El Gouna Film Festival and UNICEF, where children's rights will be the focus of several activities.

Zaki acclaimed the role of GFF, for it has been concerned with human rights since its first edition. She also noted, with appreciation, that one of the short films in this year's GFF program is supported by UNICEF.

Additionally, Zaki shed light on the important role that many Egyptian film stars played in their films to promote children's and women's rights, such as film stars Faten Hamama and Magda, in addition to famous child stars, such as the young Fayrouz. At the end of her speech, Zaki said that "cinema revives our humanity; it gives us hope in the future. I believe that every child on earth deserves a future full of hope."

Mona Zaki is a remarkable leading star, known for her remarkable roles in cinema, television and theater.

Intishal Al Timimi: 9 Days of Challenges and Joy to Come

"Today the 3rd edition of El Gouna Film Festival kicks off with a lot of ambitions. Every day of the next 9 days carries challenges as well as joy and amusements," said Intishal Al-Timimi, the director of the Festival in his speech at the GFF opening ceremony. He refers to the festival line-up, which consists of 84 of the best international and Arab works of the year, of feature narrative, feature documentary, and short films. "In a short time, El Gouna Film Festival was able to be a source of attraction that we seek to improve and develop to be a real bridge between Arab filmmakers and audiences, as well as world cinema," he added, explaining that everything that took place during the preparation process of this edition "gives us an indication that we are on the right path."

Al Timimi also said that the festival seeks to achieve the equation of bringing together the best world films from the most recent world film festivals, such as the Berlinale, Venice, Toronto, and others, in addition to the film discoveries of the festival, as the program comprises several world premieres of films by aspiring filmmakers. He also mentioned the notable success of the CineGouna Platform with both of its segments, Cinegouna Bridge and Cinegouna Springboard. "This success was not to happen without the support



of our partners. Thanks to them, the awards of the film projects have been raised in this edition to up to 250 thousand USD".

In addition, Al Timimi shed light on the other activities in this year's Festival, including an exhibition celebrating the 100th anniversary of Ihsan Abdel Quddous' birth, and the Cinema in Concert event, which is "dedicated to paying homage to the timeless works of music that accompanied some of the most memorable films," conducted by Maestro Ahmed El Saedi.

"I also want to thank all those who put a stone in this wonderful city which hosts us now, welcoming many interesting art and culture activities," he concluded.



