



Filmmakers Receive CineGouna Platform Awards of Over US \$250,000

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✧ **Don't Miss**

Today... Mohamed Henedy Receives GFF's Career Achievement Award



The Egyptian recipient of this year's Career Achievement Award is actor Mohamed Henedy. According to Intishal Al Timimi, Festival Director, Henedy represented a new and young generation that influenced a major change in the Egyptian cinema in the early 1990s. "We try to select those who have the biggest influence on the industry; those whose achievements have a value that goes beyond their personal limits," he said.

Henedy will receive his award at the closing ceremony of the third El Gouna Film Festival tonight on the stage of the Marina Theater.

Mohamed Henedy is an Egyptian actor known for his comical style. He began his artistic career through university theater, then took on small television roles, until he was chosen by director Youssef Chahine, who assigned him a role in some of his films during the late (1970s). In the late (1990s), Henedy had already become a staple name in the Egyptian cinema, confirming his talent and presence as a comedian. Henedy is also famous for his successful plays, some of which are considered theatrical hits in 20th century Egyptian theater.

✧ **Experts' Chat**

Master Classes The Documentary Journey: A Conversation with Mai Masri



Taher Roshdy

In the final day of El Gouna Film Festival's CineGouna Platform, an insightful conversation was held by Mai Masri, the brilliant Palestinian director and filmmaker. She described the artistic development of her documentary journey, along with the moderator Teresa Cavina, established Italian festival programmer.

Masri started the conversation by talking about the hardships she lived through as a Palestinian, which inspired her to find an artistic medium to talk about these experiences. The civil war in Lebanon in the 1980s –as well as being under siege in her own hometown "Nablus" in Palestine– triggered a need for her to share it with the world, through films like "War Generation" and "Children of Fire".

She also tackled another one of her works, entitled "3000 Nights", where she diverted from documentaries and created a narrative movie instead. It was, of course, inspired by real events, which made her want to create something so real and raw, while discussing the different layers of reality.

What makes Masri stand out as a filmmaker is her use of unique angles and methods of story telling that are not considered stereotypical in documentaries. She attempts to create poetry through the people and stories, which we saw in the multiple clips that she showcased.

In addition, Masri talked about how filmmakers need to adapt when filming documentaries, and be ready with a backup plan. When filming real events, one must expect to capture spontaneous moments, and sometimes, find a whole new perspective, in order to not miss out on opportunities.

Numerous filmmakers and actors were among the audience, including Asser Yassin, Yosra El Lozi, Amr Abed, Sarah Abdel Rahman, Youssef Osman, Suhaib Gasmelbari, as well as Festival Director, Intishal Al Timimi.

✧ **Meet the filmmaker today**

12:00
STATE FUNERAL
Guest(s) attending:
Vladilen Vierny
(Screenwriter)
.....
1:30
YOU ARE YOUNG YOU
ARE PRETTY
Guest(s) attending:
Franchin Don (Director)
Gerard Darmon (Actor)
.....

✧ **Schedule**

HAPPY BIRTHDAY Sea Cinema 2 11:00 AM	THE KINGMAKER Sea Cinema 2 2:15 PM	THEY SAY NOTHING STAYS THE SAME Grand Cinemas Hurghada 9:30 PM
TINY SOULS Sea Cinema 3 11:30 AM	THE WHITE SHEIK Sea Cinema 3 2:45 PM	
STATE FUNERAL Sea Cinema 1 12:30 PM	SORRY WE MISSED YOU Grand Cinemas Hurghada 4:15 PM	
YOU ARE YOUNG YOU ARE PRETTY Grand Cinemas Hurghada 1:30 PM	THE TRUTH Grand Cinemas Hurghada 7:00 PM	

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Filmmakers Receive CineGouna Platform Awards of Over US \$250,000

Taher Roshdy

The closing of CineGouna Platform has finally arrived, along with the awards ceremony as part of El Gouna Film Festival at the Marina Theatre. Various projects by directors and producers from the Arab world were in competition seeking creative and financial support. The participating works include projects in development and films in post-production.

The ceremony was initiated by Intishal Al Timimi, El Gouna Film Festival's Director, who thanked the Platform's team as well as mentors and the jury, and extended special thanks to Bushra, the Festival's COO. Presenting the awards was Nada Howaidy, the Senior SpringBoard Coordinator of CineGouna Platform. Siza Zayed, CineGouna Bridge Manager, also thanked her team including volunteers and festival organizers, as well as the sponsors.

The SpringBoard Jury consisting of experts in filmmaking from all over the world chose a winner in both the project in development and film in post-production categories. The winners received a CineGouna Platform Certificate and a cash prize of US \$15,000. Additional awards were presented through local and regional institutions for a total of US \$250,000.

The first award was presented to a project in development called 'Harvest, directed by Ely Dagher from Lebanon, along with a prize of US \$15,000. This project also won the award presented by the Drosos Foundation, by Omar Sameh, worth another US \$15,000. The producer of 'Harvest' expressed his gratitude and mentioned that El Gouna Film Festival was the best festival he's ever been to, and thanked the jury, "because they believe in cinematic documentary."

The second project to win an award worth US \$15,000 was a film in post-production entitled 'A Long Breath', directed by Remi Itani from Lebanon.

'Straight to The Goal', a project in development directed by Tamer Ashry from Egypt, won the greatest number of awards. It won awards from the sponsors iProduction for US \$10,000, Ergo Media Ventures for US \$10,000, Waraq powered by Magic Beans for US \$5,000. The project also won US \$15,000 from Film Independent and the U.S. Embassy, in addition to the opportunity for the screenwriter to participate in the Film Independent Forum Independent Spirit Awards Residency. And finally, unlimited location shooting services were provided by Dakhli West El Balad, presented by Moshira Adel.

El Taher Media Production sponsored an award worth US \$15,000, which they presented to 'Yalla, Baba!', a project in development from Lebanon, directed by Angie Obeid.



Mahmoud El Bat from the Arab Radio & Television Network (ART) awarded US \$10,000 to 'Daughters of Abdul-Rahman', a project in development from Jordan, directed by Zaid Abu Hamdan.

Intishal Al Timimi presented the award sponsored by Synergy Films worth US \$10,000 to 'The Fountain of Bakhchisarai', a project in development from Egypt and directed by Mohamed Taher. The film also won a US \$15,000 sponsorship from Film Independent and the U.S. Embassy for the creative producer to participate in the Film Independent Forum Residency.

'Captains of Za'atari', an Egyptian film in post-production directed by Ali El-Arabi, won an award worth US \$10,000 from New Century Production and another prize worth US \$10,000 from Cell Creative Media Solutions. It also won the chance to participate in IEFTA's Global Film Expression Initiative and a sponsorship to attend a partnering festival lab or workshop. 'Plum Season', a Moroccan project in development directed by Rim Mejdi, also won the IEFTA sponsorship.

Lagoonie Film Production sponsored an award worth US \$10,000 presented by Mohamed El A'ad to 'Severed Head', a Tunisian project in development directed by Lotfi Achour.

'Daughters of Abdul-Rahman', a project in development from Jordan, directed by Zaid Abu Hamdan, won an award presented by Lina El Rifai from Rotana, worth US \$10,000.

The biggest award—US \$50,000—was presented by OSN to 'Mica', a Moroccan project in development directed by Ismaël Ferroukhi. The filmmakers expressed that

they were humbled by this prize and "happy to see CineGouna Platform selecting a wonderful project."

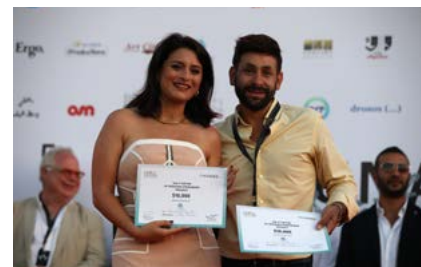
Sherif Fathy from Cell Post Production presented an award worth US \$10,000 and their post-production services to 'Our Dark 70s', a Moroccan film in post-production directed by Ali Essafi.

'Looking for Sa'adah', a Palestinian project in development directed by Areen Omari, won \$5,000 sponsored by Art City for Cinema and TV Production.

The ceremony was attended by Bushra, the Festival's COO, as well as filmmakers and actors including Saba Mubarak, Sara Abdel Rahman and renowned director Khairy Beshara.

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#اورنج_فرق_كبير

Mai Masri: Smooth Words and Deep Works

Nadim Jarjoura

Throughout her career, which began in the early 1980s, the commitment of filmmaker Mai Masri (born in Amman, April 2, 1959) reflects a humanitarian concern, based on examining the conditions of Palestinians and Lebanese together, in the face of the challenges of daily living, in camps or diaspora, in a country –Lebanon– not interested in providing the minimum basic human needs, neither for the Lebanese, nor the Palestinians.

Her humanitarian concern is permeated in the various details of these conditions, for Masri will not abandon the political, economic and social aspects in the films she worked on with her late Lebanese filmmaker husband, Jean Chamoun (1944 - 2017). Whether as producers or directors, the cooperation between them remained focused on these two professions, without forgetting the others, such as writing and photography, among others. The political, economic and social themes were always exposed, whether in the aspects of the narrative itself, or in the visual body of their work.

At the same time, however, the political, economic and social aspects remain marginal, for Mai Masri is always more concerned with capturing the pulse of the people, their environment, surroundings, history, emotions, situations, concerns and reflections. The individual, Palestinian or Lebanese, has a priority in her film productions, which emanates from the diary their life, as well as the depths of their suppressed desires or impossible dreams. In Masri's work, the individual remains an essential nucleus to tell tales that reflect facts and realities, especially that Masri and Chamoun's characteristic signature was that of follow-up, as they built their relationships with their subjects, even after the completion of their projects. It is as if the cinema is their way to establish a professional and human relationship, before the relationship becomes a friendship that would not end with the film.



All of this just might have stemmed from Masri's life, and her cultural and social experiences. Her birth in Amman (Jordan) represented the beginning of a path that took her to Palestine, Lebanon and the United States of America, before she was allowed to roam in countries and societies where she made friends, widened her horizons, and scooped out what helped her complete her cinema projects, which mainly emanates from documentary and narrative fusions. Her films, produced in cooperation with Chamoun, document stories, life situations and biographies of many people, while equally reinforcing the art of visual narrative, which reflects whatever is concealed in between the folds of an individual's character and life. This is the kind of language Masri wants to use and reveal, revolving her work around an

individual to tell of their life, as a vehicle she uses to tell the story of entire nations, societies, environments, feelings and histories.

For many years, Masri has made documentaries, leading her to the first test in her career: working on her first feature-length fiction, «3000 Nights», which premiered in 2017, and did not vary much from her documentary works. In the film, she studied the conditions of Palestinian women detained in an Israeli prison. The transparency of the picture, the smoothness of the narrative, and the depth and urgency of women's experiences are intertwined issues, creating a film that complements her documentary portfolio, confirming that a fiction filmmaker is able to document real stories, while using a different film language.

Hinde Boujemaa, Director of 'Noura's Dream': Women Will Continue to Inspire Me

Nahed Nasr

During a chat with Hinde Boujemaa, Tunisian director of 'Noura's Dream', she let us in on the following...

- I am proud to return to El Gouna Film Festival with a film that was born here as a project that won the production award of CineGouna SpringBoard. In three years, El Gouna Film Festival became a big festival, and an established name on the Arab festival map. One of the most interesting things about the Festival is the diversity of its guests, and its extremely enthusiastic team, especially in CineGouna Platform. I am really pleased to return to Egypt, and to the charming city of El Gouna.
- To create a narrative feature after an award-winning documentary is only about the nature of the subject itself. Each film, and each story, has its very own way to be told; there is no one way, or a better way, to tell a story. It is a very interesting experience for me, to have a narrative feature as my second feature film, and I am open to all the possibilities the future holds.
- Working with Hinde Sabry is very interesting, because she is an intellectual actress with a great deal of awareness. She was convinced with the film project, which was the most difficult step. But the moment she agreed to take the part, she was very cooperative, and sincerely gave the film her all, with all her talent and experience.
- Based on this film, and my previous films, I believe that women and their conditions is the core of my cinematic projects. Noura, her community, this social class, and all the stories I have heard and lived with them, were my source of inspiration in this film. Women will continue to inspire me in the future.
- The obstacles or difficulties I face are the same as any Arab filmmaker's. Funding is on top of the challenges, and after that



comes other –although not any less difficult–challenges, such as convincing film stars to play roles; finding the right distribution opportunities; and making your film accessible for the audience.

- The cinematic scene in Tunisia is developing and progressing. In recent years, we have been able to observe that from the Tunisian films' participation in many regional and international film festivals.

- Filmmaking is a tough but interesting career. My dream is to be able to continue making the films that I love. I also hope that Tunisian cinema grows to become a stronger film industry, with more film theaters in every Tunisian street. I also hope that the Arab female filmmakers get to enjoy a wider space, and more opportunities.



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we will get there, so that our stories can reach everyone.



Oualid Mouaness, Director of ‘1982’: Breaking Western Stereotypes About Lebanon

Nahed Nasr

In a conversation with Oualid Mouaness, the Lebanese director behind ‘1982’, he shared with us the following...

- It is incredible to be premiered at El Gouna Film Festival, with the support that we have already received, which was fundamental in finishing the film, and given the new platform, the lineup and everything... It is quite an honor to be a part of this. We are very thankful for El Gouna Film Festival, and pleased to participate in the 2019 edition, for the film is only here because of participating in GFF’s supportive platform.
- It was quite hard to secure financing for this film – a film about kids, with war in the background... a film that –while I have produced a lot– would be my debut as a director, writer and producer. So, it was a very challenging process, so I figured I should build the financing structure on both equity financing and institutional financing. That was a very hard obstacle to bridge, and a tough gap to fill. It took time, but eventually, we got what we needed and managed to make the film happen.
- I had an initial intention to secure the film funding from the Arab world, which also proved quite tough because we don’t really have an established culture of investing in films. So, I could say we succeeded –on some level– but not on the whole film. That is why the film is a co-production between many countries, with many different investors from the Middle East, the US, Europe, Australia, and Brazil.
- Why I made an autobiographical story as the first feature, well, it is kind of strange because I did not think that I want to start with an autobiographical story. I think it has more to do with wanting to say something about that specific moment in time in the Middle East, and that is what really drove me. So, I think tackling the subject this way came from my desire to go to a familiar space, which is basically my childhood, and how I saw it, and how I remember it, and I wanted that to be at the center.
- I love coming-of-age narratives. I think I do relate most to those times in my life, when I learned the most – they made me grow up in a way, even though I was just a kid. I am fascinated by those moments, because at the same time, I think children are smart, and as everything happens around them, they absorb it all, and they somehow learn something from everything they witness.

- How difficult it was to work with kids? Well, it had its challenges for sure, but the most important thing for me was to create a space in which the kids themselves could feel that they were bringing something to the table, and learning more about themselves. So, as challenging as it was, it was also quite fascinating.
- It was not at all challenging to work with Nadine Labaki, she is a team player and she genuinely wanted to participate in this film. As an actor, she was incredibly generous, and you can see it, it is quite clear in the film.
- The way I show Lebanon in my films is very important to me. I don’t want to follow the stereotypical pattern that the Western world would really like to see, or used to see, of the Middle East or Lebanon. I feel like I have the skills and tools to be able to break those stereotypes, and I believe I did that very well in ‘The Rifle, the Jackal, the Wolf, and the Boy’ (2016), and I continue to do that in ‘1982’. I work from a sort of very realistic space, and I really try to put things out the way I see them and the way I know them.
- ‘1982’ is quite a simple narrative in its core, and yes, less is always more, I think, in the narrative sense... but at the same time, life is complex, so it is also an attempt to find that complexity in simplicity. In ‘1982’, I try not to complicate the narrative, but to actually just simply state things, and I think the simplicity somehow creates an openness to some of the deeper matters in all the narratives that I work on.
- To be frank, first of all, I have to say that we in the Arab world, have cinemas that

are witnessing an amazing renaissance, and many filmmakers are now trying to make a statement. There is something very collective going on, bringing along a lot of stories to the front, which I think is great. I think they are very brave people, who definitely see the value in bringing the Arab cinema to the Arab public. The biggest and first challenge is definitely financing, so people can actually make the films; and secondly, having the market to distribute their films... I know some people are working towards trying to create that, and hopefully, we will get there, so that our stories can reach everyone.



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I really try to put things out the way I see them and the way I know them.