



El Gouna Film Festival's Cinema in Concert A Salute to Charlie Chaplin

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«The event came with a brand-new concept--perhaps the first of its kind in the Arab film festival scene--by showing a film accompanied by a live orchestra»

GFF celebrity guests walked the red carpet of the Festival Plaza last night celebrating the annual event, Cinema in Concert, which pays homage to the timeless works of music that accompanied some of the most memorable films. In its third round, the event came with a brand-new concept--perhaps the first of its kind in the Arab film festival scene--by showing Charlie Chaplin's film *The Kid* (1921) accompanied by a live orchestra. The concert was led

by renowned Egyptian Maestro Ahmed El Saidi, playing the film's score suite live during the show. The film, celebrated for its 100th anniversary, was the first feature-length by Charlie Chaplin, and was recently restored by the Charlie Chaplin Foundation. It is considered as one of the best-known cinematic masterpieces of all time.

Amir Ramses, filmmaker and artistic director of El Gouna Film Festival, invited Maestro Ahmed El Saidi to the festival

Plaza stage before hundreds of live music enthusiasts enjoyed a celebration of the magic of cinema and music.

Through Cinema in Concert, El Gouna Film Festival not only honors the exceptional talents of musicians in film, but also celebrates an integral element that has a unique and powerful influence on cinematic production: the music that holds everything together.

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Today

Red Carpet



The cast and crew of Listen will walk the red carpet of the Festival Plaza today as part of the MENA premiere of the award-winning film. The film director Ana Rocha De Sousa and actors Lúcia Moniz and Kem Hassan will be present at the event. Listen portrays the tireless battle of a couple of Portuguese immigrant parents and their three children--living on the outskirts of London--against strict laws, in

attempts to keep their children at home and their family intact. Trouble ensues when a misunderstanding arises with their deaf daughter at school, and the British social services become concerned for the safety of the children. The film won the Lion of the Future Award for a Debut Film, as well as the Special Orizzonti Jury Prize at the 77th Venice International Film Festival.

Meet the filmmaker



Falling

Narr. Competition

Guest (s) are attending

Director:

Viggo Mortensen

TUB

6:00 p.m.



Berlin Alexanderplatz

Out of Competition

Guest (s) are attending

Director:

Burhan Qurbani

Arena

9:15 p.m.



A Long Breath

Doc. Competition

Guest (s) are attending

Director:

Remi Itani

Sea Cinema 3

3:00 p.m.



Acasa, My Home

Narr. Competition

Guest (s) are attending

Director:

Radu Ciorniciuc

Sea Cinema 3

7:00 p.m.



Hopper/ Welles

Special Presentations

Guest (s) are attending

Producer:

Filip Jan Rymsza

Sea Cinema 3

7:45 p.m.

Changing the Hollywood Narrative

At TUB, a virtual panel discussion titled Equity and Access: Changing the Hollywood Narrative was held, presented by the US Embassy and Film Independent. The participants of film and television executives explored concrete methods to make a difference in Hollywood and beyond. They included Wei Chen, Program

Manager for the Rideback TV Incubator; Karin Chien, president of dGenerate Films; Mel Jones, producer, director and writer; Dani Melia, producer; and Tilane Jones, President of ARRAY, a multi-platform arts and social impact collective. The panel will be moderated by American director, Angel Kristi Williams.



Schedule

BEGINNING Sea Cinema 1 11:45 AM	THE WHALER BOY Sea Cinema 1 3:00 PM	QUO VADIS, AIDA? Sea Cinema 1 5:45 PM	LISTEN Festival Plaza 6:30 PM	BANKSY MOST WANTED Sea Cinema 2 9:00 PM	Short film program 2 BLUE FRONTIER - 20 min THE BATH - 15 min ROADBLOCK - 16 min SER BI - 21 min THE OTHER CHEEK - 11 min STICKER - 19 min
FATHER Sea Cinema 3 12:15 PM	HOPPER/WELLES Sea Cinema 3 3:30 PM	FALLING Audimax (TU Berlin) 6:00 PM	ACASA, MY HOME Sea Cinema 3 7:00 PM	NOWHERE SPECIAL Sea Cinema 1 9:15 PM	
A LONG BREATH Sea Cinema 2 2:45 PM	SPRING BLOSSOM Grand Cinemas Hurghada 3:30 PM	QUO VADIS, AIDA? Grand Cinemas Hurghada 6:00 PM	TRUE MOTHERS Grand Cinemas Hurghada 8:45 PM	BERLIN ALEXANDERPLATZ Tik Tok Arena 9:15 PM	
UNDER THE STARS OF PARIS Audimax (TU Berlin) 3:00 PM	SHORT FILM PROGRAM 2 Sea Cinema 2 5:30 PM	IN BETWEEN DYING Tik Tok Arena 6:15 PM	THE TIES Audimax (TU Berlin) 9:00 PM	THE BIG HIT Sea Cinema 3 9:30 PM	

Shorts Program 3



Tomorrow marks the screening of the 3rd group of the GFF 4th edition short films competition. The Shorts Program 3 consists of 6 films, including the world premiere of Obvious Offside by Tunisian film director Sami Tilili. It also includes Being My Mom by Italian film director Jasmine Trinca, which was selected in the Orizzonti section of the 77th Venice International Film Festival. This is in addition to Bullmastiff by Anastasiia Bukovska; Pilar by Yngwie Boley, J.J. Epping, and Diana van Houten; Death of the Official by



Artem Gilemyanov; and End of September by Valentina Casadei.

This year, 18 films are participating in GFF's Short Film Competition. The prizes are: El Gouna Golden Star, Certificate and US \$15,000; El Gouna Silver Star, Certificate and US \$7,500; El Gouna Bronze Star, Certificate and US \$4,000; as well as El Gouna Star for Best Arab Short Film Trophy, Certificate and US \$5,000.

Tomorrow's short film screenings will take place at Sea Cinema 1 at 6:30 p.m.



Bullet Points



Kamal Zadeh
GFF Co-Founder and Financial Advisor

- What was the most challenging part for me this year as we prepared for the 4th edition of GFF?

One of the most challenging aspects was that we had to have a special budget for Covid-19, to cover the preventive measures and testing procedures. There were also the technology requirements for virtual events that we had to add to accommodate those who could not physically attend. We had to work with the same budget, yet a whole new set of requirements.

- What is the key word that describes how we tackled this challenge?

Continuity!
We could not stop this festival. It was born big, and imagining a suspension was very difficult. We believed in our team, and thanks to them, it's happening.

- What do I think now that the 4th edition is upon us?

I thank God for making this edition possible!

- What would I like to say to GFF audiences and guests?

Thanks a lot for your trust. Thanks that you come to the 4th edition of the festival. Your being here is support, and an absolute honor.

Meet the filmmaker



Softie

Doc.Competition

Guest (s) are attending

Director:

Sam Soko

Producer:

Toni Kamau

Sea Cinema 2

3:15 p.m.



My Tender Matador

Out of Competition

Guest (s) are attending

Director:

Rodrigo Sepulveda

Urzua

Actor:

Leonardo Ortizgris

Sea Cinema 2

9:30 p.m.

7pm



Tragic Jungle

Out of Competition

Guest (s) are attending

Actress:

Indira Rubie Andrewin

TUB

3:15 p.m.



Listen

Narr. Competition

Guest (s) are attending

Director:

Ana Rocha De Sousa

Actors:

Lucia Moniz, Kem Hassan

Sea Cinema 1

12:00 p.m.

Arena

6:30 p.m.



Ismaël Ferroukhi, director of Mica

My Sofia is My Mother

Nahed Nasr

How do you evaluate having the MENA premiere of Mica at GFF?

I am very proud to have my premiere here. It is one of the most prestigious festivals in the region, and the first to happen in MENA after Covid-19. I am also moved to screen my film in Egypt, for the Egyptian audience, which is a knowledgeable and demanding audience who loves cinema.

“Each of us has a force deep inside; a magical power that can create miracles. It is the force of will, which allows us to believe in our wildest dreams.”

How helpful was GFF's support for Mica at the Final Cut workshop in Venice?

Actually it was a great help, because it allowed us to complete the post-production of the film, which had been interrupted for lack of funding. This award at that stage of the project was decisive. I would like to thank GFF and the Final Cut in Venice Workshop.

One of the distinguished components of Mica is the coherent and beautiful script where there is a touching backstory for each character. How did you get to know these characters?

The origin of the Mica project is based on the encounters of those young, unaccompanied minors who are illegally trafficked from Morocco to live in the streets of Paris. My motivation was to talk about these children, struggling with severe poverty in their country of origin, so they cross the Mediterranean risking their lives. I wanted to understand the conditions which lead them

to take that risk. But as much as I wanted to represent this tragic reality, I also wanted to create a kind of hope and brightness. Mica's character is inspired by the journey of several children that I have met in Morocco, who originally belong to poor backgrounds and work in the tennis clubs as ball collectors. For some reason, their destinies change by the force of will, and with an outstretched hand to become tennis players or coaches.

Your film presents alternatives to illegal emigration, so it is not only about its negative consequences. How was this vision developed?

The alternative to illegal emigration is real, but unfortunately, too rare. Whatever your talent is, it becomes impossible to have a real opportunity without an outstretched hand. That's why it was important for me to refer to classism, violence, social inequality and their consequences. The inequality becomes even harder when it falls upon children who are not covered by any protective measures in Morocco. I find it is essential for me, as a filmmaker, to point a finger at this problem, hoping to change the mentalities of people and institutions. I also hope my film inspires the younger audience.

Zakaria Inan was brilliantly able to play Mica, although he is a first time child actor. How was your experience with him?

I interviewed many children for the main role; over three or four hundred. I was looking for a good actor, but also a good tennis player from a poor family, which was a very difficult mission. When I met Zakaria, I knew that he was the one! It was important to develop a strong connection with him, since he was involved in all the shooting. During the shooting, the rule was that I am the only one who could talk to him, so that he does not get disturbed, being his first time in front of a camera. I was also happy to work with a talented Moroccan crew, and I would like to repeat the experience in the future.

Mica is more about inspiration than melodrama. How were you able to keep the balance between aspirations and realism?

It was very important for me to make a light and poetic movie. Each of us has a force deep inside, a magical power that can create miracles. It is the force of will, which allows us to believe in our wildest dreams. It is this power of belief that Mica has been able to develop, thanks to his relationship with nature, the sky and the birds. Mica carries within him this particularity, which allows him to see the world differently, and to move forward despite the difficulties.

You had a successful story as a filmmaker in France without officially studying filmmaking in an academic school. Who is your Sofia?

At a very young age, I realized that I wanted to tell stories, although I did not know that cinema was the medium. The first story I wrote was very visual, and that made me think about cinema. Later on, it became L'exposé (1993), my first short film. I owe my filmmaking education to many people, but my Sofia was my mother. She made me discover cinema, because she loved watching movies, although she had never been in a film theater. I remember when I was young, she used to watch movies in French on a Sunday night TV show called "Le cinema de minuit". She used to wake me up while the rest of the family slept, just to translate the movies for her. I watched a lot of French, Italian and American classical movies, thanks to my mother. She was the best school ever.

Mica is your third feature-length film in 17 years as a film director, following The Great Journey (2004) and Free Men (2011). Do you think screenwriting distracts you from directing?

I didn't make many films because of different reasons, one of them is that I make short films, and write screenplays for other people. I also wrote some scripts during a long time when I gave up. The thing is that it takes a long time to make a film, due to the lack of funding. For example, it slowed down the shooting of Mica. Although the film had obtained a grant from the Moroccan Cinema Centre in 2015, we were still not able to secure enough money from France to start shooting. First, the movie was a French/ Moroccan co-production between the French "Elzevir Films" and the Moroccan "La Prod", but as we didn't receive enough money from France, the movie became a Moroccan/French co-production. I take this opportunity to thank the Moroccan Cinema Centre, but also the Arab Fund for Arts and Culture, Orange studio, and the Doha Film Institute for their help, which made this movie possible.

Do you think you are tweeting out of tune in the eyes of foreign producers and distributors regarding your film subjects and treatments?

Yes, I think that is why it takes so long to make my movies. It took more than four years to shoot my first feature, The Great Journey which was a road movie about a father and his son during their car trip from France to Mecca. The thing is that I try to make human and universal movies about people who touch me, and not to make films to please the producers and distributors.

You moved to France with your family at a very young age. How were you able to keep a strong contact with the contemporary issues of your home society in Morocco?

My family moved to France when I was two years old, but every summer, we visited Meknes, North of Morocco. Those trips allowed me to stay in touch with the country, and 30 years ago, my parents returned to Morocco permanently. Since then, I have been used to traveling several times a year to Casablanca and Meknes. When I made The Great Journey, I shot part of the film in Morocco, especially for the scenes of Syria, Jordan and Saudi Arabia. And for Free Men, I also shot some scenes from the mosque of Paris in Rabat. For Mica, I really wanted to make a Moroccan movie with a Moroccan story, and I hope to make more films in Morocco in the future.



“Mica's character is inspired by the journey of children that I've met in Morocco, who belong to poor backgrounds and work in tennis clubs as ball collectors.”

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Rocha doesn't slip into the style of old-school realism while illustrating the family's harsh life. Nor does she give a major importance to the detailed structure of the plot,



Listen: The Quiet Sigh of Discontent

The hardships of displaced people have always been an intriguing subject for many filmmakers. But for Anna Rocha in her debut feature-length narrative *Listen*, the external factors that make the immigrants' lives harder is not the focus of her drama. Instead, she takes it from that point and moves with her plot to a larger scale, exploring the conflict between the family and the rules of the social service system. In her film, Rocha tackles the question of the unity of the family and the welfare state rules.

From the beginning of the film, Rocha is keen on expressing the artistic values of each frame, while following the details of one day in the life of a Portuguese family that emigrated to England. The family consists of a mother, who works as a domestic labourer on freelance basis; and the father, a jobless painter, which meant that the family suffers from economic distress. That was clear in a scene that shows the mother leaving her children outside a supermarket to buy a bottle of water, while shoplifting a few food items. Rocha doesn't slip into the style of old-school realism while illustrating

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A strong element in the film, in addition to cinematography, is the powerful performances, especially those depicting the mother and her deaf child

burden on their dire economic condition. On a much deeper level, the title is a metaphor, as the social service officials simply do not listen to the family's need to stay united. That was clear in a couple of scenes, when the parents visited their children in the social service facility. On the other hand, the mother managed to explain herself and the problem facing the family with the suffocating rules of social service during the court scene.

Listen won the prestigious Lion of the Future prize in the Venice International Film Festival--the same prize that was granted to Amjad Abu Alala for his debut feature *You Will Die At Twenty*, which was also screened at El Gouna Film Festival. *Listen* also received the special jury prize in the Horizons competition, in addition to other prestigious awards in Venice. Perhaps it also has a very good chance to win the El Gouna Golden Star in the Feature Narrative Competition of GFF.



the family's harsh life. Nor does she give a major importance to the detailed structure of the plot, like clarifying the reason behind the family's emigration. This information is of less importance, compared to the dramatic situation that develops during the custody of the children. A strong element in the film, in addition to cinematography, is the powerful performances, especially those depicting the mother and her deaf child. Perhaps the scenes that bring both actresses together can be considered the master scenes.

The filmmaker chooses the title *Listen* to assert on two main themes in the story. The first is the obvious notion of the title, which refers to the medical condition of the daughter. This line in the film develops with the damage of the girl's hearing aid device, making the need to replace it another



Hani Mustafa

Quo Vadis, Aida?

Where Will You Go, Bloody History?

Quo Vadis, Aida?, the latest film by Bosnian director Jasmila Žbanić, is an emotional war drama that tells the tragic story of a hideous war crime that resulted in a massacre of more than

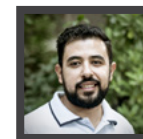
eight thousand men and boys. In Srebrenica during the Bosnian war in July 1995, Aida, a mother of two young men, works as a translator for the UN. The situation escalates after Serbian troops take over the town, forcing 30 thousand civilians (including Aida's family) to flee town seeking shelter in the UN base located out of town.

Aida, who has attended numerous negotiating sessions between the various conflicting parties, knows that there is a disaster to come. Torn between her family and her city's residents, she doesn't know where to go, and how to protect her family from looming death.

With the very first scene, we encounter images of military tanks entering the town, running over trees in its way. We can also see, from the early beginning, how simple

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the crime is not just murdering thousands of innocents, but terrorizing and traumatizing their relatives for years to come.



Mohamed Awad

yet unique the production design is, easily involving us in the dystopian environment on the screen, invested in the destiny of a whole population of a faraway town in such horrible circumstances.

Žbanić, however, refrains from investing any more in the war genre. Instead, she focuses on the fate of thousands of people so close to death, and the heavy psychological impact on those who are in charge of the lives at stake, even if this responsibility comes from having more information.

Town populations are a recurrent visual theme, with extras smoothly directed by Žbanić to capture the agony of the whole as one being. We see them in their stillness or movement, whether synchronized or chaotic. We witness them fleeing the town, crowded inside and outside the UN base, craving their basic human needs... we even see them giving life. The theme emphasizes on people as the main protagonist, reminding us that the crime is not just murdering thousands of innocents, but terrorizing and traumatizing their relatives for years to come.



Many years later, Aida returns to her house to find that it had been robbed by one of the same soldiers involved in the infamous massacre. He now leads a normal life with a wife and a child of his own, apparently devoid of any guilt.

Quo Vadis, Aida? premiered at the 77th Venice International Film Festival, competing for the Golden Lion, Best Film award. It was also screened in the Toronto International Film Festival, and is currently participating in the 4th edition of El Gouna Film Festival as part of the Feature Narrative Competition.

A CineGouna Panel on its Third Day

Digital Media in the Wake of a Global Pandemic

Nada Saad

A panel was held today as part of CineGouna's sessions to discuss how Covid-19 has affected media companies and the industry, and how they managed to survive or grow. Participants included Dominique Delport, VICE Media's President of International & Global Chief Revenue Officer; Tarek Hosny, co-founder and CEO of Minly; Jakob Mejlhede and Moon Baz, Strategic Partner Manager for Media Publishers for Facebook in the MENA region. It was moderated by Ahmed Abbas, founder and CEO of DigiSay.

During these troubling times, Netflix had 16 million users; documentaries on Vice were internationally successful; 2.6 billion users on Facebook; Zoom added 8 billion dollars to their fortunes; and Shahid saw exponential growth. In just 26 weeks, media companies enjoyed accelerated growth that would have otherwise taken years.

This data proves that content has been king for the masses during the pandemic. Streaming has put these experiences in context, where consumer habits have shifted and grown dramatically--simply, there is now no such thing as content that cannot be streamed. In one example, Shahid focused on dramatically expanding

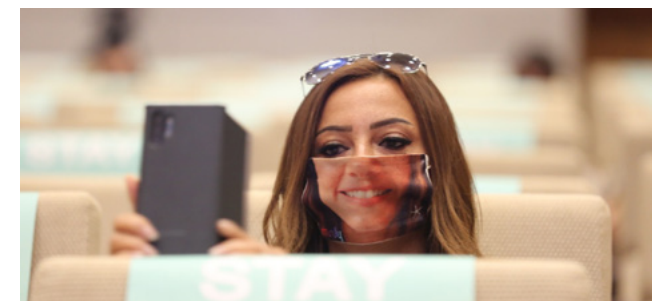
their content base to accommodate the expectations of consumers online. They resorted to producing their own--and acquiring external content--to ensure a diverse platform for all their users. Tiktok also reveled in massive success, proving to us that a mobile application can be more successful than entire companies.

With that said, the biggest success during the pandemic has been the gaming industry, as well as the integration between gaming and content development, creating a community.

On the downside, the pandemic has harmed many businesses, including the advertising agency field.

Minly, however, focused on creating positivity and bridging the gap between celebrities and their fans with their new mobile application. The video-shout-out application is set to grow exponentially, as online users are enthusiastic to connect with stars, sharing the content on respective social media platforms.

Whilst most media companies focused on content diversity, other business priorities during the global pandemic included



credibility. Facebook was a prime example of this, as they focused on providing accurate and credible information to their 2.6 billion users with the Facebook safety center. The Covid-19 safety center provides all sorts of updated information regarding the coronavirus, how they can support their communities, and much more.

On the Third Day of CineGouna: Visual Storytelling and Adapting to Changing Conditions

Raniya Yousif

In its 4th edition, El Gouna Film Festival held a master class by director of photography Ahmad Al Morsy entitled Visual Storytelling and Adapting to Changing Conditions. It was moderated by director Karim El Shenawy.

In his introduction of Al Morsy, El Shenawy said that, "He made a great leap in cinema over the past years, through many experiences with great film directing masters. When he started his career, e was one of the youngest directors of photography in Egypt."

Al Morsy, in turn, stated that he entered the field of photography by mere chance. "I did not seek to work as a photographer, but I started looking for a job opportunity that would allow freedom of movement when I was in high school. When I enrolled in the Institute of Cinema, I found photography to be very interesting. I fell in love with the world of cinema, astonished by it, and liked the idea of being able to create," he said, adding, "I consider my experience working with Tareq Al Telmissany as the most influential throughout my career. He taught me the most, being the great mentor that he is, and soon, we became friends. I see him as a person with great energy, variable and diverse, leaving his mark on everyone with whom he crosses paths."

Speaking about his first film, Al Morsy said: "When I loved this world, I found great passion for a profession in it. I tried to learn and participate in as many experiences as I could, for experimentation. When you have this passion and love for an industry, you create other opportunities. I worked with everyone I could in order to develop myself, I didn't exactly have the opportunity to choose. In the phase of initial exposure, you do anything and everything. Then for about five years, I halted everything and analyzed the situation. After that, came the opportunity for me to work on Dawood Abdel Sayed's *Letters of the Sea*—an experience that affected a massive change in my life. Working with Dawood Abdel Sayed is a big deal, and my relationship with him goes way back, since I had worked with him—while still a student—on *Land of Fear*. That, too, had been a big event for me at the time, and during the preparation, he handed me the keys to the film in simple sentences, and taught me how to read a script.

Al Morsy went on, saying: "Dawood Abdel Sayed is not only a filmmaker, but also a philosopher. He involved us in a long discussion circle, because he loves when the team participates with thought and opinion in everything related to the film. I do believe that he was keen benefiting from all of our views on the movie."



On how he chooses his films, Al Morsy said, "When I choose to work, I follow my sense in selecting the script, and the work must provoke me. The most difficult stage is choosing the method or situation in which I will work. Once the process begins, the idea is completed in my mind and the image becomes clear."

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Digital has created more opportunities to discover talents who have not academically studied, thanks to its ease of use

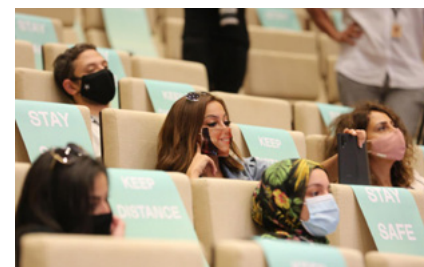
In reference to the transition from cinematography to digital, director of photography Ahmad Al Morsy emphasized that this change carries both many advantages and disadvantages. One of its upsides is the high quality of the image, which extends the life of the film. In addition, digital gives freedom to photography. Previously, photography was limited in size, and very expensive, but digital entails very sensitive cameras that allow the filmmaker to do things that were not possible in the past.

«Digital has created more opportunities to discover talents who have not academically studied, thanks to its ease of use. It also killed the fear of camera, and demolished the so-called old "sanctity of photography". I think that reverting to the use of negatives now is very difficult.»

Addressing his participation in the movie *The Blue Elephant* directed by Marwan Hamed, Al Morsy said that it is one of the closest experiences to his heart. He prepared for the film by first reading the, before formulating a vision for the scenes. He then discussed the project with director Marwan Hamed to agree on a specified perception, since the story and the topic were very rich, capable of provoking any filmmaker, pushing them to give it their best.

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Dawood Abdel Sayed is not only a filmmaker, but also a philosopher



MERCURY
FRAMESTORE

CREATING
WORLDS
THROUGH VFX
MASTER CLASS

MODERATED BY:
YASSER EL-NAGGAR
BY MEENA IBRAHIM

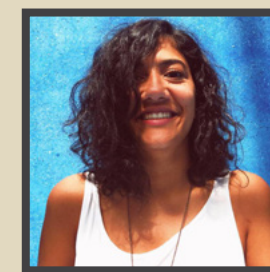
OCTOBER 28, 10:30- 12:00 @ TU BERLIN AUDIMAX

STARTING UP
IN DIGITAL
MEDIA PANEL
DISCUSSION

MODERATED BY:
MARIAM FARAG
OMAR HAMAMSY
BASSEM ELHADY
KAREEM ABOU GAMRAH
AHMED ABBAS

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 28, 12:30 P.M.
2:00 P.M., TU BERLIN (AUDIMAX)

Bullet Points



Abeer Mohamed,
Filmmaker & Celebrity
Liaisons Manager

- What was the most challenging part for me this year as we prepared for the 4th edition of GFF?

Uncertainty was the biggest challenge. We work a very tight timeline to deliver the festival at the standard our guests have come to expect. But with Covid-19 this year, there was a lot of global uncertainty that, naturally, affected us as well.

- What is the key word that describes how we tackled this challenge?
Two words: Flexibility and resilience. I don't think there was any way we could pull off this edition if my team wasn't willing to go above and beyond the call of duty.

- What do I think now that the 4th edition is upon us? It's a jumble of different emotions; but relief and pride are definitely dominating. Fingers crossed until the end though, when every guest has made it home safe and happy.

- What would I like to say to GFF audiences and guests?!

We hope you enjoy the program, and thank you for making the decision to come in such challenging times. We promise to do our best to make sure everything goes as smoothly as possible, and please bear with us as we maneuver this challenging edition.

