



Press Release
February 2006

**Arab Cinema Weekend to screen at
the British Academy of Film & Television Arts on March 17-19, 2006**

The British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA) is hosting a showcase of the best in contemporary Arab cinema from **March 17 – 19**.

Organised by Zenith Foundation, an organisation dedicated to contemporary Arab arts, and hosted by the Academy at 195 Piccadilly, the event will feature the best of recent films from across the Arab world, including Egypt, Lebanon, Iraq and Syria. The Arab cinema showcase will include a number of UK premieres, and many of the filmmakers will attend to take part in public Q&A sessions. The event will also include a tribute screening to the late Moustapha Akkad, the Syrian director who was tragically killed in a terrorist attack in Jordan last year.

Mona Tayara-Deeley, the Director of Zenith, commented, “we are committed to providing regular exposure to Arab cinema. Our first season was a 10 year retrospective of Arab Cinema held at the National Film Theatre in August 2004 and attracted over 2000 viewers. This year’s BAFTA weekend will update audiences with the latest Arab cinema productions”. The three day event at the Academy aims to draw attention to Arab filmmaking, and spotlight the new generation of exciting and controversial directors, including Khalil Joreige and Joana Hadjithomas, Oussama Fawzi, Amer Alwan and Jocelyn Saab.

The event marks an important step in Zenith developing a permanent presence for Arab culture in the mainstream. As Deeley remarks, “Zenith brings visibility to contemporary Arab arts. Our objective is to encourage creativity and give Arab communities a renewed sense of cultural vibrancy. There is added urgency to this mission due to dangerous stereotyping of Arab culture, which will remain unchallenged for as long as Arab arts are absent from the wider cultural scene.”

Zenith is delighted to announce that the International Arab Charity, Syracuse University and Royal Lancaster Hotel have agreed to sponsor the Arab Cinema Weekend.

Booking information: tickets are £10 per film or £50 for a full festival pass. Please e-mail lubna@zenithfoundation.com to reserve your seats in advance

Media enquiries please contact Mariayah Kaderbhai mariayahk@bafta.org or info@zenithfoundation.com

For further information visit www.zenithfoundation.com and www.bafta.org

Notes to the editor

- British Academy of Film & Television Arts (BAFTA), 195 Piccadilly, London W1J 9LN Tel: +44 (0)20 7292 5800
- For programme times and synopsis please contact lubna@zenithfoundation.com or info@zenithfoundation.com
- **The International Arab Charity (IAC)**
The IAC is a Pan-Arab charity which helps to alleviate the suffering of those in need, promotes cultural awareness and furthers educational pursuits in the UK and abroad. For further information on the IAC's activities and projects, please visit www.iac67.com
- **Syracuse University London Program**
Syracuse University London Program (SULP) offers high-quality international education to more than 600 American undergraduates per year, enrolled in academic and co-curricular programmes designed to broaden their horizons and introduce comparative and global perspectives to their BA degrees. SULP supports the BAFTA Arabic Cinema Weekend 2006 as part of a series of initiatives aimed at countering cultural stereotyping through engagement and dialogue. For further information visit www.syr.edu/chancellor/speeches/faradaySpeech.pdf or contact p.leuner@syracuse-u.ac.uk

Royal Lancaster Hotel

With stunning views across Hyde Park, the 4-star deluxe Royal Lancaster Hotel enjoys one of the most spectacular locations in central London. With Marble Arch, Oxford Street and Bond Street shops just a short stroll and Knightsbridge, Harrods and the major museums 10 minutes away, the hotel is perfectly positioned for the capital's visitor. **T.** 020 7262 6737 **A.** LancasterTerrace, London W2 2TY **W.** www.royallancaster.com