

# SIGNALS:

## Power Cut Middle East



INTERNATIONAL  
FILM FESTIVAL  
ROTTERDAM

# There is no Arab spring, it's all Photoshop

Raed Yassin, performance (Wed 1-2)

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# Busy making revolution

**Flashback to IFFR 2011: On the same day that the film festival in Rotterdam started, the first demonstrators made their way to Tahrir Square in Cairo and never left. Naturally, we had already seen the astounding events in Tunisia. On 17 December 2010, the 26-year-old Tunisian fruit seller Mohamed Bouazizi set fire to himself and this led to demonstrations and riots against the 23-year regime of dictator Ben Ali. In less than a month, the unheard-of happened: the dictator gave in and fled.**

At the time, however, no one expected there would be such an immense knock-on effect. For the first time in decades, cracks – both large and small – appeared in regimes around the Arab world. That Hosni Mubarak would resign only a few weeks later in Egypt; that Saudi women would ignore the ban on female driving en masse; that the people of Syria would revolt; and that, after a prolonged struggle, freedom fighters in Libya would pose next to the lifeless body of Muammar Gaddafi – in early February 2011 all this was still unthinkable.

Naturally, this edition of the film festival will pay attention to the Arab revolutions, whatever their outcome. As the IFFR has demonstrated for decades, filmmakers are the first to draw outside attention to the injustices in their countries – openly or concealed by metaphor.

Moreover, these contemporary revolutions are supported and fed by moving images. Thanks to the omnipresent cameras, such major historic events can now be, for the first time, experienced almost 'live' at street level. The moving image – the raw material for a film festival – plays an essential role. The filmmakers both record and participate in the protests. Egyptian artist Hala Elkoussy sent the following e-mail when she did not turn up for the première of her short film Mount of Forgetfulness. 'I didn't make it to the screening because I was busy making revolution.' And there are many others like her.

Power Cut Middle East intends to understand these moving images by turning them inside out. Because what are we really looking at? Not just the moving images that spread the Arab revolutions to neighbouring countries or even

farther afield over the past year. But also the images of what went on behind the news cameras: the video footage which filmmakers have been using to show the sentiments of Arab populations for quite some time.

Because one thing becomes abundantly clear from the films and installations that are part of Power Cut Middle East: this is not a sudden, Facebook or Twitter-powered revolution. The new social media played an important part as did,

## these revolutions are fed by images

for that matter, the rapid dissemination of news images, but large groups of demonstrators did not use Facebook or Twitter. Moreover: revolutions don't develop due to 140 character slogans.

There was a much longer run-up to these revolutions as well as a longer aftermath. Spring, even an Arab one, passes and true democratic change takes time. People's dissatisfaction

does not dissipate overnight. This is precisely the time at which a new, complex reality develops, which entails intense scrutiny of the new rulers.

Power Cut Middle East does not focus on the entire Arab world, but on two countries in particular: Syria and Egypt. Syria, because - in spite of continuous massive demonstrations - the regime is the only one in the Arab world to refuse to see that things have to change. Egypt, because the revolution seemed completed until violence erupted once more.

The English newspaper The Times named Tunisian fruit seller Mohamed Bouazizi the most influential person of 2011. The American weekly TIME opted to name not an individual, but 'the demonstrator' in general as its 'Person of the Year 2011'.

Over the course of a single year, a desperate, brave individual became a movement, a fearless mass. Power Cut Middle East demonstrates - in images, films, artworks and in visual culture – that this mass had been coming to the boil for some time.

*Sacha Bronwasser / Peter van Hoof*





# Nomadic Festival

## Visual Arts Festival Damascus at International Film Festival Rotterdam

At a time when the Arab world is undergoing important changes, with shifting power structures and civic movements gaining in strength, this IFFR Signals theme programme will take a close look at the cultural field in this region, and more specifically the film and visual arts scene. We will examine how signs of the changes to come were visible within the cultural production of the past decade, and while it is still too early to assess the ramifications of recent events, we present an attempted overview of how these changes will influence future works and affect film and video production in the region.

In addition to the screening of short films, documentaries and feature films and the presentation of installations and discussions, this programme features lectures and artists' talks that explore new opportunities for artists and filmmakers within the changing realities in the region.

The programme's format will be that of a nomadic festival: the Visual Arts Festival Damascus (VAF). VAF was initiated by Delphine Leccas and launched in 2010 with a programme

comprising exhibitions, screenings, multi-media performances, lectures and talks curated by Charlotte Bank and Delphine Leccas. With a focus on contemporary visual practices in the Middle East in dialogue with other regions of the world, the Visual Arts Festival Damascus aims to create a forum for meetings, exchange and discussion between young artists from Syria and neighbouring Arab countries.

The next edition of the festival was planned for autumn 2012. While we still hope VAF will be able to realize the project in Damascus, an alternative idea was born to turn the festival into a 'nomadic' event, at least temporarily, and in this way provide a platform for the festival to exist elsewhere, focusing on artistic and cultural practice in Syria in its regional and international context.

*Charlotte Bank / Delphine Leccas*





# Suspended Dreams

## Experimentation and documentary in Syrian cinema

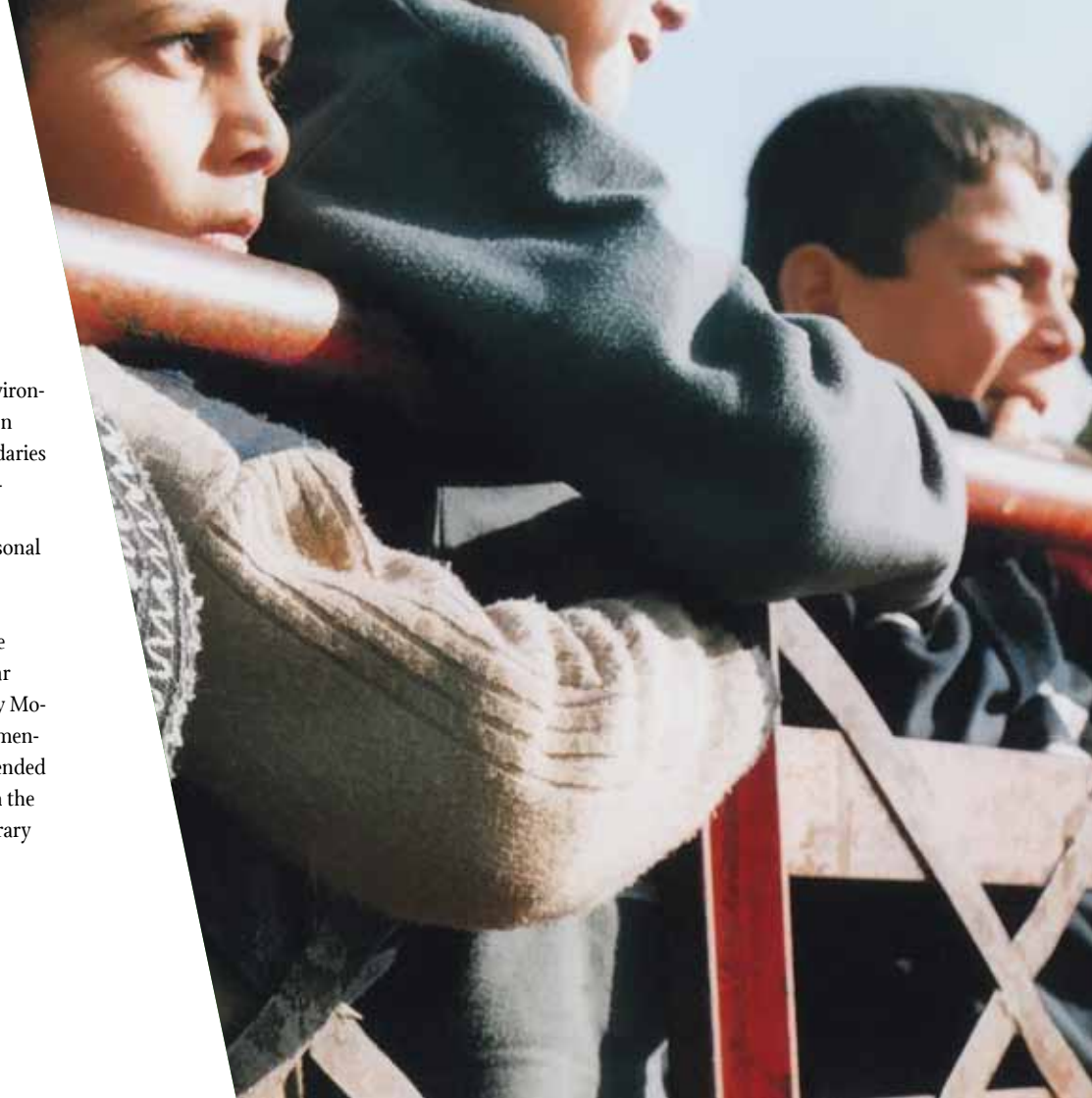
**The Suspended Dreams programme brings together films by Syrian filmmakers that explore alternative and experimental means of storytelling through the use of documentary. From very personal angles, they offer a variety of readings of different issues in Syrian society and concerns in the region.**

Syrian cinema has often been described as 'Arab cinema's best kept secret'. Until very recently, film production in the country was entirely state-sponsored, yet the films of the pioneers of Syrian auteur cinema, Omar Amiralay, Mohamad Malas and Oussama Mohammad, remain very far from the cliché of state-controlled propaganda films. Although all artistic and cultural production is subject to rigid censorship, filmmakers have developed highly individual visual universes through the use of metaphors and symbols and thus have created a space for critical approaches to the country's social and political issues.

This inventiveness born out of a restrictive political environment helped create unique works of cinema, both fiction and documentary, often consciously blurring the boundaries between the two genres. The specific term 'auteur documentary' was coined by documentary filmmaker Omar Amiralay to describe his own vision of an engaged, personal cinematographic style in documentary filmmaking.

This approach has been carried on by filmmakers of the young generation working in digital media since the year 2000. Along with the 1983 classic *Dreams of the City* by Mohamad Malas – a fine example of how fiction and documentary elements interweave in elegant storytelling – *Suspended Dreams* presents experimental documentary films from the past decade that explore different aspects of contemporary Syrian society.

*Curator: Charlotte Bank*



**Dreams of the City**  
Mohamad Malas, 1983, 120'  
A young widow and her two sons arrive in Damascus, only to find cruelty and rejection from her father. Dib, the eldest of the boys, comes of age while witnessing the successive military coups in Syria during the 1950s.  
**Tue 31-1 12:30 LantarenVenster 3**



**I Am the One Who Carries Flowers to Her Grave**  
Hala Alabdallah, Ammar Al-Beik, 2006, 105'  
Memories of shared political activism, dreams and ideals converge in an intimate portrait of four women. All have changed through harsh experiences of prison and exile, yet they also managed to stay true to themselves.  
**Wed 1-2 20:15 LantarenVenster 2**  
**Thu 2-2 12:15 Cinerama 7**



**Dolls. A Woman from Damascus**  
Diana El Jeiroudi, 2007, 56'  
By editing together conversations with Syrian housewife Manal and the marketing manager of the Arab Barbie doll Fulla, director Diana El Jeiroudi outlines how - in 2007 - hard-working housewives and the Muslim Barbie are in the same boat.  
**Tue 31-1 12:30 Cinerama 4**



**Compilation Behind Walls:**  
Two critical documentaries about how the prison system has been exploited in the recent past to suppress the protests in Syria.

**Cousin**  
Mohammad Ali Atassi, 2001, 50'  
A portrait of the Syrian dissident Riad al-Turk, who managed to maintain his ideals through long periods of extreme harshness as a political prisoner.

**On the Sand, Under the Sun**  
Mohamad Malas, Hala Alabdalla 1998, 32'  
Short documentary about political prisoners struggling to come to terms with haunting memories, produced for the anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.  
**Mon 30-1 10:00 Cinerama 4**

# Between the Lines

## Syrian Filmmakers: Between Censorship and Social Critique

**Syrian cinema is very little known throughout the world, but also in the Arab countries. Until very recently, film production in Syria was entirely controlled by the state, yet Syrian films are very far removed from the cliché of state-sponsored propaganda films. They are in fact highly critical and often surprisingly political. In light of the omnipresent censorship, this is particularly astonishing. Censorship might force a filmmaker or artist to search for particularly innovative means of expression, but it does not curb creative production. Thus, the Syrian filmmaker Mohamad Malas once remarked that 'censorship is a gift because it forces one to look for new and more interesting structures through which to speak'.**

In order to carve out a space for social and political critique and circumvent censorship, Syrian filmmakers have developed a complex visual language of metaphors and symbols in order to address issues of power, violence and social rigidity. But while films by filmmakers like Mohamad Malas and Oussama Mohammad have gained worldwide recognition on the inter-

national festival circuit, their films remain a rarity. And in their own country, they are either banned or hardly ever screened. One of the peculiarities of Syrian cultural politics is to allow the occasional production of critical films, and then let these films disappear in the archives of the National Film Organization, where they remain difficult to locate. Films frequently get lost and interested foreign programmers are often denied screening permission. Adding to this are inadequate conditions for conservation, which endangers the preservation of the films.

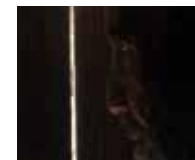
Since the middle of the past decade, Syrian filmmakers have increasingly begun using new digital media. This has opened up hitherto unknown possibilities, also for young emerging filmmakers. An independent film scene has arisen, strongly inspired by former generations of auteur filmmakers. Particularly Omar Amiralay (who sadly died in early 2011) has been an important reference figure with his highly personal style of documentary filmmaking, something he termed 'auteur documentary'. This legacy is carried on in works by the young generation of critical filmmakers in Syria, who through the aesthetic possibilities of the new media are addressing pressing issues of contemporary Syrian society.

### Short Syrian Documentaries 1

Since the middle of the past decade, Syrian filmmakers have been making increasing use of new digital media. This has opened up hitherto unknown possibilities, also for young emerging filmmakers. An independent film scene has emerged, strongly inspired by former generations of auteur filmmakers.

**Tue 31-1 14:45 LantarenVenster 6**

**Thu 2-2 17:30 Cinerama 6**



**Crack**  
Reem Ghazzi, 2007, 4'  
The film tells the story of an elderly tailor who has chosen to withdraw from the world after a traumatic incident. He is now observing his surroundings from behind the safety of the closed door of his shop.



**Two Cities and a Prison**  
Soudade Kaadan  
2008, 38'  
The film maker follows an experimental theatre project in Syria on their tour through rural Syria and in a prison for young delinquents.



**Foam**  
Reem Ali. 2006, 46'  
A Syrian family struggles with memories of imprisonment and their care for a mentally disabled member while preparing their emigration to Canada.

### Short Syrian Documentaries 2

**Tue 31-1 17:15 Cinerama 5**

**Thu 2-2 14:30 LantarenVenster 6**



**They Were Here**  
Ammar Al-Beik, 2000, 8'  
Homage to the old steam engine plant of Damascus, once a symbol of optimistic belief in development, but now a deserted and desolate place.



**Before Vanishing**  
Joude Gorani. 2005, 14'  
The Barada is Damascus' main river. Once it was the city's lifeblood which provided riches, but nothing now remains of that illustrious past.



**The Right Side of That Road**  
Hazem Alhamwi, 2004, 14'  
A thoughtful reflection on the working class district of the Old City of Damascus and the relations between the people and the built environment.



**City of Emptiness**  
Ali Sheikh Khudr, 2010, 8'  
A searching look back to another time and another place, filled with emptiness and void, where escape seems the sole solution.



**Silence**  
Rami Farah 2006, 40'  
An emotional investigation of sense and senselessness in the conflict over the occupied Golan and the events leading to its loss.

### Short Syrian Documentaries 3

**Wed 1-2 14:30 LantarenVenster 6**

**Thu 2-2 11:45 LantarenVenster 5**



**Flint Mountains**  
Nidal Hassan, 2009, 46'  
What does a sculptor need? A small village surrounded by rocks. Friends. And nature as the greatest artist of all.



**Stone Bird**  
Hazem Alhamwi, 2006, 30'  
The eccentric Abu Hajar has chosen a life in seclusion to escape an unsolvable personal conflict imposed on him by a rigid society.



# Shifting Shores

## Recent Arab video art

Shifting Shores presents recent video works by artists from different Arab countries. Centred on the concepts of memory, identity and change, the works represent individual investigations of how history, collective memory and transmitted images and narratives are closely linked to contemporary, fast-changing realities. While questioning established parameters, the works in this programme present new angles and invite an active re-thinking of preconceived ideas, often with much humour and irony.

*Curators: Charlotte Bank and Delphine Leccas*

### Shifting Shores 1

In the programme Shifting Shores, we present recent video works by artists from different Arab countries. Centring on a net of meaning around the concepts of memory, identity and change, the works represent individual investigations into how history, collective memory and transmitted images and narratives are closely linked to contemporary fast-changing realities.

**Tue 31-1 20:00 LantarenVenster 5**

**Wed 1-2 12:30 LantarenVenster 2**



#### Transparent Evil

Roy Samaha, 2011, 27'

Having travelled to Egypt to complete a commissioned work, the artist and his friend get caught up in the events of the Egyptian revolution.



#### The Sun's Incubator

Ammar Al-Beik, 2011, 12'

Life of a young family as they witness revolutions and birth, misery and hope, interlinked by the will to achieve change.



#### The Story of Milk and Honey

Basma Alsharif, 2011, 10'

An unknown author fails to write a love story as images and sounds develop into a search for human perception of history and truth.



#### Of Heroes, Football, and All That Remains of My Childhood (performance)

Lynn Kodeih, 2011, 25'

Questioning what it means to be a 'revolutionary' today, the artist explores hopes and disillusion in the context of recent Arab history in this live performance.



### Shifting Shores 2

**Wed 1-2 15:00 Cinerama 6**

**Thu 2-2 16:45 LantarenVenster 5**



#### Adam

Ali Heraize, 2011, 1'

A young man navigates through the cityscapes of contemporary Cairo with its contrasting crowds and finds himself out of place and struggling to be heard.



#### One Eye Open

Ikon, 2010, 18'

A search for the artist's roots as he travels to Japan and investigates a world that is partly foreign and fascinating, partly familiar.



#### E.D.L.

Siska, 2011, 21'

A video portrait of Lebanon's national electricity building as an homage to a modernist project, linked to the very construction of Lebanon's modern state.



#### Master-Slave Dialectic

Paul Hage Boutros, 2011, 7'

Who is the boss? The director, thinking and self-assured or the camera, a mindless machine? A power struggle with unexpected results.



#### Bombes

Sandra Ghosn, 2011, 6'

Why do we want to be seen on Facebook? And how? To find out, the artist decided to emulate the profile pictures of a number of Facebook members.

### Power Cut Installations

A journey to different parts of the Middle East. Images of war and peace and a phone call from Space. Three installations from the Shifting Shores section and one from the section Egyptian Timelines, brought together at the festival venue Ai Weiwei Café/Power Cut Installations.

**Tue 26-1 - Sat 4-2 12:00-20:00**

**Artist Talk: Monday 30-1: 17:00**

**Ai Weiwei Café / Power Cut Installations**



#### Pipe Dreams

Ali Cherri, 2011

A memorable phone call between the Syrian cosmonaut Muhammed Faris (part of a Russian space mission) and the late president Hafez al-Assad.



#### Trespass the Salt

Larissa Sansour / Youmna Chlala, 2011

An investigation of the nuanced relationship of Europe and the Middle East through a fictitious and lavish feast, where humour and the grotesque converge.



#### Out of Focus

Salah Saouli, 2011

A vision of the city of Beirut at a crucial moment of transition from war to peace that draws the observer into a quasi-physical engagement.



#### Remarks on a Square

Jasmina Metwaly, 2011

Remarks on a Square is a series of videos shot during and after the uprising in Cairo, Egypt in 2011. The series consists of twelve clips, 2-5 minutes in length, of particular moments shot during, after and around the Egyptian uprising.



# Egyptian Timelines

**In the past year, pictures of the streets of Cairo, Alexandria and other cities in Egypt – both professional and amateur – have filled the newspapers, and our TV and computer screens. Somehow this has allowed us to feel close to the action, and given us a sense of the concerns, battles, hopes and worries that have played themselves out on the Egyptian streets. But is it possible to genuinely understand and contextualise those telegenic images at a superficial glance? How can we place what we are seeing within a larger socio-historical, visual and cultural context? These are the questions we aim to address in the Egypt Timelines programme.**

To this end, we have specifically chosen to show films and videos that precede the uprising on January 25, 2011, and asked our filmmakers and artists to juxtapose their work to another Egyptian film of their choosing, so as to create a 'dialogue'. No formal criteria were set, other than that the chosen film be of particular inspiration or importance to the filmmaker's practice. The programme's material zooms in

on different formats of cinematic poetics, thematic narrative strands, and issues that concerned Egyptian artists, feature film and documentary makers in the years prior to the Arab Spring. As this obviously is a personal selection, it can only offer clues, and never the full picture.

Timelines insists that January 25th did not occur in a vacuum but was a catharsis, brought on by the success of the revolution in Tunisia as well as the 2008 Mahalla bread riots in Egypt, the brutal death of Khaled Said at the hand of the Egyptian police in 2010, and more than half a century of economic grievances and repression and exploitation of the Egyptian people by its military rulers. All of the latent and bubbling tensions underlying the eruptions and protests of the past year can be found in the films: sometimes poetic and subtle, sometimes harsh and confronting.

As civic dissent was predominantly – and occasionally still is – played out in metropolitan areas, in city squares and streets and on the facades of buildings, the Arab Spring was as much about calling for political reform as it was about reclaiming the streets. The Arab world is undergoing rapid urbanisation and massive urban expansion, unfortunately



## reclaiming the streets

not always with the population's interest at heart. It's no surprise, then, that so many films feature Egypt's two largest cities, Cairo and Alexandria, as their protagonists. In *Search of the City* (In the Papers of Sein) is Hala Elkoussy's dream-like ode to Cairo, in which the city functions as an imaginary construct. Her timeless protagonist, Sein, takes us on a journey through Cairo's urban history, reflecting on how the city has changed over the years and where it has remained marooned in time.

In Maydoun, Omar Robert Hamilton ponders the tensions between rural and urban life, land and family bonds, national belonging, home and homelessness. He questions the values of cultural and national identity in an increasingly globalised world. Tensions between the urban and the rural are also to be found in an episode of Ahmed Khaled's horror drama series for television, *Doors of Fear*. The first of its kind in the Arab world, the series translates old Egyptian folkloric tales into present-day mysteries. In the El Naddaha episode situated in the countryside, the 'Naddaha', a sea nymph-like creature dwelling in the Nile delta, calls men

to their death. Whereas in Hamilton's film the countryside features as a place of innocence, honesty and rootedness, here the countryside holds dark secrets and seductions.

Filmmaker and activist Philip Rizk, on the other hand, shows us in his short documentary *Sturm: Fayoum* how rural areas suffer from Egypt's centralised governance, and how corporate capitalism and governmental neglect have cut off villagers from their water supply.

Repressive regimes control their subjects' experience of time and individual agency. Desires, needs and dreams are managed by the state and pitted against tired dogmas of patriotic sacrifice and false nationalism. This results in paralysis and eventually in anger. Sherif El Azma's *Rice City* is a claustrophobic film noir in which time is suspended and the air is menacing and stifling. The three protagonists never leave the apartment and seem imprisoned in their respective roles. This feeling of *huis clos* echoes the lethargy of a population subjugated by authoritarian rule. At times, the cycle of inertia ruptures and discontent boils to the surface, as is quite literally the case in Hassan Khan's *Rant*, but also in the form of pent-up sexual frustration and a stratification of social mores according to class differences in Islam Kamal's *Local Copy*, set in conservative Alexandria.

In order to look at the present and towards the future, the Timelines programme retraces a few steps and pauses, acknowledging the fact there are no immediate quick fixes for complex processes of change.

*Nat Muller*



Egyptian Timelines 1

The revolution did not happen overnight - it was foreshadowed in Egyptian films, visual pamphlets, artworks and documents in recent years. In Egyptian Timelines, current events are placed in a larger socio-historical, visual and cultural context. In addition, some of the filmmakers show, beside their own work, a film of choice: influential or clarifying, but rarely shown abroad.

Mon 30-1 17:00 LantarenVenster 1  
Thu 2-2 19:30 LantarenVenster 5



**In/Out of the Room**  
Dina Hamza, 2010, 52'  
In Dina Hamza's latest documentary In/Out of the Room, a rare story unfolds of the life of a man whose job is to take lives.



**Dreams of Hind And Camilla (Fragment)**  
Mohammed Khan, 1989, 5'  
Two women attempt to break free from the brutality and hopelessness of their impoverished lives in Cairo.



**Sturm: Ahmonseto**  
Philip Rizk, 2010, 6'  
In the Ahmonseto textile factory, capitalism cuts to the bone and the workers pay the price.



**Sturm: Fayoum**  
Philip Rizk, 2010, 5'  
In the village of Abuxa in the governorate of Fayoum, the Nile's water isn't flowing like it once did. Here, capitalism cuts to the bone and some villagers get no water.

Egyptian Timelines 2

Tue 31-1 15:00 Cinerama 5  
Wed 1-2 17:00 LantarenVenster 6



**Maydoun**  
Omar Robert Hamilton, 2010, 13'  
A poised and elegantly executed ensemble piece of understated, emotionally-nuanced brilliance. When he hears his cousin is to sell his families' land, Sharif gets on the first plane to Cairo. Second short film by independent filmmaker Omar Robert Hamilton.



**In the Last Days of the City (Trailer)**  
Tamer El Said, 2011, 5'  
The lives of a group of friends from Egypt, Iraq and Lebanon have been shaped by their cities of birth and the instability of their region. Shot in Cairo, Baghdad, Beirut and Berlin.



**Blue Dive**  
Mostafa Youssef, 2011, 16'  
In this story about brief encounters set in the Mediterranean Alexandria, the filmmaker sheds his light on death and compares it to the sea.



**Another Passion**  
Heba Yossry, 2006, 20'  
Narrative film in which Yossry portrays her own struggle to study cinema, and the confrontations she had with her family.



**A Local Copy**  
Islam Kamal, 2010, 20'  
We follow four young people through Alexandria en route to the square outside the Bibliotheca Alexandrina. It slowly becomes apparent what this is all about.



**Neon Lamp**  
Emad Maher, 2008, 26'  
An exceptional debut in which Maher - who spent two years working on this project - gave sound an important role in the telling of the story.

Egyptian Timelines 3

Tue 31-1 17:00 LantarenVenster 6  
Wed 1-2 12:30 Cinerama 4



**Rant**  
Hassan Khan, 2009, 7'  
Developed through a series of intense workshops with an actress, the film investigates the psyche of an unspecified cultural operator - perhaps critic, perhaps curator.



**Rice City**  
Sherif El Azma, 2010, 20'  
Beautifully crafted suspense in this stylish, black-and-white experimental Egyptian short that features a strong score by Nahla Mattar.



**In Search of a City (in the Papers of Sein)**  
Hala Elkoussy, 2012, 34'  
Idler Sein's perambulations become a layered declaration of love to the city of Cairo. Shot before, but edited after the Egyptian revolution.

**Kit Kat (Fragment)**  
Daoud Abdel Sayed, 1991, 5'  
Kit Kat is one of the few films in contemporary Egypt that shed light on the lives of people living in the slums, including their dreams and problems.



**Doors of Fear: El Naddaha**  
Ahmed Khaled, 2011, 42'  
Doors of Fear is the first horror drama series in the Arab world. Dealing with different folkloric tales of horror from the Egyptian culture, the series is both innovative and relevant to the target audience.

Egyptian Frame



**The Three Disappearances of Soad Hosni**  
Rania Stephan, 2011, 68'  
A rapturous elegy to a rich and versatile era of film production in Egypt through the work of one of its most revered stars, Soad Hosni, an exceptional artist who from the early 1960s into the 1990s embodied the modern Arab woman in all of her complexity and paradoxes.

**A Resident of the City**  
Adham El Sherif, 2011, 15'  
Powerful documentary about big city life as a stray dog. Survival instinct and territorialism; dogs are just like humans.

**Mon 30-1 14:30**  
**LantarenVenster 6**  
**Tue 31-1 19:45 Cinerama 5**



**Back to the Square**  
Petr Lom, 2012, 83'  
A year after the euphoria on Tahrir Square, the demonstrators' goals have not even come close to being reached. The country is ruled with an iron fist and there is still no democracy. The 'eye of the world' has moved elsewhere. How things have been in Egypt since 25 January 2011, is explained using five portraits of people from various walks of life.

**Sun 29-1 21:15 Pathé 6**  
**Mon 30-1 12:15**  
**LantarenVenster 2**  
**Wed 1-2 18:30 Pathé 2**

**WORMyWOOD**  
Live performances by the Swiss/Lebanese duo Praed and the North African BooDoRoo Band, plus a special Sounds of the Middle East set by DJ Arc de Triomphe.  
**Mon 30-1 22:00 WORM**

# Debates

## Reading the Arab Image

This programme led by Chris Keulemans (writer, director of *Tolhuistuin*) takes a look at the images, both moving and still, that have come from the Middle East like a huge wave in the past few months. Due to the increase of mobile phone films and photos, we have a great deal of material whose origin is uncertain. It seems authentic, but who is coming to blows with whom? And who has made the films and taken the photos? Regimes are also aware of this, and use it to their advantage. Are we seeing actors, paid demonstrators, real people? How do we read and interpret these images? In three lectures/performances, we investigate the role of the image in the present movements and how images help in the construction of identity in times of crisis.

With lectures from journalist Ferry Biedermann (The National, Elsevier Magazine, former Middle East correspondent for *de Volkskrant*), Egyptian filmmaker and activist Jasmina Metwaly. And the performance 'There is no Arab spring, it's all Photoshop' by Lebanese artist/musician Raed Yassin.

**Wednesday 1 February**  
**19:30 LantarenVenster 5**  
**Free entrance**

## Smart Talk: The Road to Damascus

On Thursday evening, 2 February, it's time for The Road to Damascus - a multimedia debate on the best-kept secret of Arab cinema: Syrian films. The Visual Arts Festival Damascus cannot take place this year because of the continuing unrest in Syria and consequently is descending on Rotterdam as a nomadic festival for art and visual culture. Based on unique film excerpts, Bas Heijne will lead a discussion on independent Syrian films, the circumvention and acceptance of censorship, and the visual arts as a vehicle for social criticism. Is still possible to operate autonomously as a filmmaker? And can these films be seen as a harbinger of the present resistance?

With, among others, curator Charlotte Bank, filmmakers Hazem al Hamwi, Soudade Kaadan and Maher al Sabbagh. In collaboration with De Unie in Debat.

**Thursday 2 February 21:00**  
**Kleine Zaal Rotterdamse Schouwburg**  
**Free entrance**

# Ticket info

You can purchase tickets online at [filmfestivalrotterdam.com](http://filmfestivalrotterdam.com) or at the box offices of all festival locations.

A film ticket costs € 11 / discount tickets € 8.50 (for Tiger Friends, students or CJP). There are no online transaction costs nor is there a surcharge for purchasing tickets from the box office.

New this year is that every tenth ticket will be free both online and at the box office. The system automatically tallies the tickets that you purchase (even if you do so at various times) using your MyIFFR account.

Tickets that have not been sold one hour before the film screening starts are sold at the Last Minute Shop at Schouwburgplein and at the box office at a 50% discount!

## Program

The full IFFR 2012 lineup can be found online on [www.filmfestivalrotterdam.com](http://www.filmfestivalrotterdam.com) or download the special IFFR-app in the store.

## Locations

### de Doelen

Kruisplein 40 (central box office)

### Ai Weiwei Cafe / Power Cut Installations

Karel Doormanstraat 278

### Cinerama

Westblaak 18

### Rotterdamse Schouwburg

Schouwburgplein 25

### LantarenVenster

Otto Reuchlinweg 996

## Colophon

Programme concept: Sacha Bronwasser and Peter van Hoof / Curator Suspended Dreams: Charlotte Bank / Curator Shifting Shores: Delphine Leccas, Charlotte Bank / Co curator Egyptian Timelines, Reading the Arab image: Nat Muller / The Road to Damascus: Thijs Barendsen, Mieke van der Linden, Farid Tabarki / Contributors: Nat Muller, Charlotte Bank, Delphine Leccas, Sacha Bronwasser, Peter van Hoof, Ronald Rovers, Saskia Gravelijn, Afke Duinkerken / Copy editor: Jane Bemont, Mark Mallon / Guest Office: Inge Visser / Programme Department: Robert de Rek / Design: Scale to Fit / Print: Veenman+ / Published by: International Film Festival Rotterdam, 2012





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