



Film screening of *Theeb*, 2017. Directed by Naji Abu Nawar. Image courtesy of Sharjah Art Foundation.

SHARJAH ART FOUNDATION EXPANDS COMMITMENT TO FILMMAKING WITH MAJOR NEW INITIATIVE

Sharjah Art Foundation announces the launch of the new Sharjah Film Platform (SFP), an annual programme that provides a critical platform for filmmaking in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and the surrounding region. The multi-pronged programme offers film production grants, workshops and discussions as well as curated film screenings and filmmaking awards. Building on the foundation's long history of film programming and commissions, the SFP continues and expands the foundation's commitment to serving as an advocate and catalyst for artists and cultural producers, including emerging and established filmmakers, film producers, critics and students.

The SFP launches with an open call for the foundation's first annual **Short Film Production Grant**, and [online](#) applications from emerging filmmakers will be accepted through **28 February 2018**. Up to three winners will receive a total of \$30,000, and their

original films will be screened as part of the SFP's film programme in January 2019. The winners, who will be assessed on the creativity and technical skill demonstrated in their submissions, will be announced in March 2018. Complete details of the open call and the application are available [here](#).

Through a variety of year-round programming in film, and as part of the Sharjah Biennial, Sharjah Art Foundation has long supported filmmaking in the UAE and the surrounding region and has contributed to the development of a stronger infrastructure for local, regional and international filmmaking. The foundation offers regular screenings of independent, experimental, award-winning and artist films in Mirage City Cinema, Sharjah's only dedicated outdoor cinema; production grants; commissions and co-commissions; a film club; and educational programmes for film enthusiasts and emerging filmmakers. The foundation has also partnered with film festivals such as Reel Palestine and the Dubai International Film Festival, among others, to screen films by upcoming directors.

In addition to the Short Film Production Grants, the Sharjah Film Platform is comprised of two other major programmes, following below. All events are free and open to the public.

The SFP Curated Film Programme and Award

Each year, a guest curator will be invited to organise a programme of both short and feature films that focus on a particular concept or theme. Including documentary, experimental, narrative and animated productions, the selected films will be screened at the foundation's Mirage City Cinema and other film venues across the Emirate of Sharjah. An internationally recognised jury of film professionals will select winning films in each category. The first curated film programme will take place in January 2019.

The SFP Public Programme of Talks, Workshops and Discussions

The Sharjah Film Platform will offer workshops, talks and discussions on both practical filmmaking skills such as screenwriting, cinematography and editing, and more theoretical subjects such as film theory and film criticism. SFP will also host focused sessions with guest speakers and experts in the film and production industry, who will address major concerns in the film market, including funding and distribution.

About Sharjah Art Foundation

Sharjah Art Foundation is an advocate, catalyst and producer of contemporary art within the Emirate of Sharjah and the surrounding region, in dialogue with the international arts community. Under the leadership of founder Hoor Al Qasimi, a curator and artist, the foundation advances an experimental and wide-ranging programmatic model that

supports the production and presentation of contemporary art, preserves and celebrates the distinct culture of the region and encourages a shared understanding of the transformational role of art. The foundation's core initiatives include the long-running Sharjah Biennial, featuring contemporary artists from around the world; the annual March Meeting, a convening of international arts professionals and artists; grants and residencies for artists, curators and cultural producers; ambitious and experimental commissions and a range of travelling exhibitions and scholarly publications.

Established in 2009 to expand programmes beyond the Sharjah Biennial, which launched in 1993, the foundation is a critical resource for artists and cultural organisations in the Gulf and a conduit for local, regional and international developments in contemporary art. The foundation's deep commitment to developing and sustaining the cultural life and heritage of Sharjah is reflected through year-round exhibitions, performances, screenings and educational programmes in the city of Sharjah and across the Emirate, often hosted in historic buildings that have been repurposed as cultural and community centres. A growing collection reflects the foundation's support of contemporary artists in the realisation of new work and its recognition of the contributions made by pioneering modern artists from the region and around the world.

Sharjah Art Foundation is a legally independent public body established by Emiri Decree and supported by government funding, grants from national and international nonprofits and cultural organisations, corporate sponsors and individual patrons. All events are free and open to the public.

About Sharjah

Sharjah is the third-largest of the seven United Arab Emirates and the only one bridging the Arabian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman. Reflecting the deep commitment to the arts, architectural preservation and cultural education embraced by its ruler, Sheikh Dr Sultan bin Mohammad Al Qasimi, Sharjah is home to more than 20 museums and has long been known as the cultural hub of the United Arab Emirates. In 1998, it was named UNESCO's 'Arab Capital of Culture' and has been designated the UNESCO 'World Book Capital' for the year 2019.

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