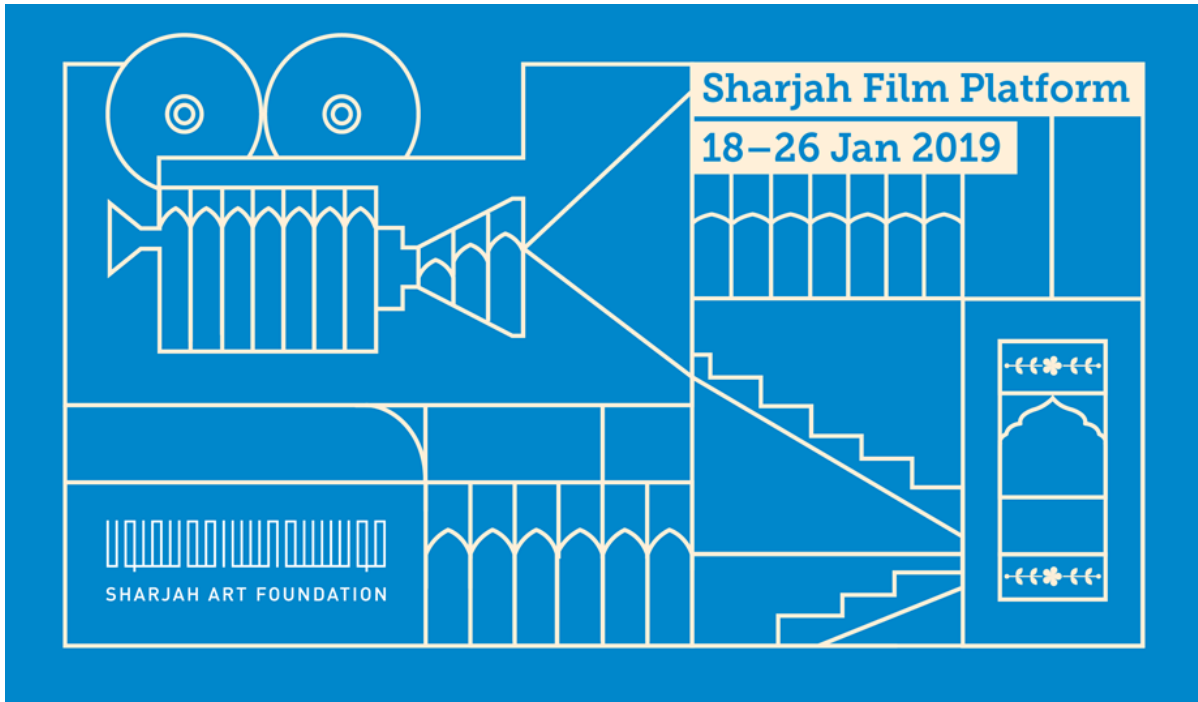




SHARJAH ART FOUNDATION

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Sharjah Art Foundation Announces Inaugural Awards Granted to Narrative, Documentary and Experimental Films

**First-ever Sharjah Film Platform Featured Screenings
of Over 140 Films, Talks and Workshops**

Sharjah Art Foundation (SAF) today announced the films presented with awards at the first edition of its new annual film festival, Sharjah Film Platform (SFP), held from 18 to 26 January 2019. The award for **Best Narrative Film** went to ***Cherries*, directed by Dubravka Turic**, with *A Vacation*, directed by Deniz Eroglu, receiving an honourable mention. ***I Have a Picture: Film No. 1001 in the Life of the Oldest Extra in the World*, directed by Mohamed Zedan**, was awarded **Best Documentary Film**, while ***A Stroll Down Sunflower Lane*, directed by Mayye Zayed**, was selected as **Best Experimental Film**.

A jury of international filmmakers, producers, and critics selected the awardees. They included: Ali Mostafa (filmmaker, director and producer); Kong Rithdee (filmmaker and film critic); Ghassan Salhab (screenwriter, film director and producer) in the narrative film category; Jihan Al Tahri (filmmaker and artist); Manthia Diawara (filmmaker, cultural theorist and art historian); Lina Matta (Director of MBC 2, MBC 4, MBC Max and MBC



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Variety and Curator of ANA Contemporary Arab Cinema series) in the documentary film category; and Kamal Al Jafari (experimental filmmaker); Steven Cairns (Curator of Artists' Film and Moving Image, Institute of Contemporary Arts, London); and Rania Stephan (filmmaker and video artist) in the experimental film category.

Hosted in four venues across the city of Sharjah, United Arab Emirates, the inaugural edition of Sharjah Film Platform featured screenings of over 140 short and feature-length narrative, documentary and experimental films made by local, regional and international filmmakers as well as awards, talks, and workshops exploring the latest techniques and theories in film. Among the films screened were newly-created works by the awardees of the first annual SFP Short Film Production Grants, following an international open call held by Sharjah Art Foundation last year.

During the Sharjah Film Platform closing ceremony, Hoor Al Qasimi, Director of Sharjah Art Foundation, spoke about the importance of film to the foundation. 'As you may know, Sharjah Art Foundation has worked with film in various ways for over a decade....Now, this new platform reinforces our long-term focus on film and reminds us how important it is to continue exploring new ways of supporting the cultural vitality of the communities in which we live and work.'

Building on over a decade of SAF support for film, SFP launched in 2018 as a three-pronged programme – encompassing the annual festival and Short Film Production Grants as well as a programme of talks and workshops. SFP continues and expands SAF's commitment to serving as an advocate and catalyst for artists and cultural producers, including emerging and established filmmakers, film producers, critics and students.

Selected from an international open call, the inaugural edition of SFP included the screening of more than 140 films, including both short and feature films in the documentary, narrative and experimental categories. Over 40 countries and 30 languages were represented. Among the 32 films making their premieres at SFP, two made by the SFP Short Film Production Grant awardees were screened on opening night: ***Laymoon*** by director **Abdulrahman Al Madani (UAE)** and ***Maryam*** by director **Mohammed Al Hammadi (UAE)**. The full programme of films is available [here](#).

In conjunction with the film screenings, SFP presented a public programme of talks and workshops exploring conceptual and practical issues in the film industry. Kicking off with a session on the new technologies of moving image, sessions ranged from discussions on VR and the future of the moving image to funding sources for MENASA artists and more. SFP's programme of talks was accompanied by a series of hands-on workshops on the process of filmmaking from screenwriting to editing and digital effects. The full programme of talks and workshops is available [here](#).

For more information, visit sharjahart.org.



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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.

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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