

Beirut Art Film Festival: An act of faith in the renaissance of Lebanon

December 6, 2019



A month and a half after the announcement of the Beirut Art Film Festival (BAFF) and despite the difficult situation in Lebanon, the opening of the 5th edition was held at the American University of Beirut (AUB) – Bathish Auditorium under the theme of “Change”, in the presence of the Director of the Istituto Italiano di Cultura Monica Zecca, the assistant professor of the Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Media Studies at AUB Josh L. Carney, the Founder of the Beirut Art Film Festival Alice Mogabgab Karam, the members of the committee Maria Chakhtoura, Soraya Karam and Alia Karam, as well as representatives of partner institutions and festival guests.

The kickoff of the 5th edition was held with the screening of *Leonardo, the Works* (2019, 85', EOS/Phil Grabsky, English, French, Italian with French subtitles). This film is a very exclusive journey into every single attributed painting to Leonardo da Vinci, in Ultra HD quality, as never seen before. Worldwide experts, curators and art historians take us into the most celebrated artworks, among them the Mona Lisa, the Last Supper, Lady with an Ermine, Salvator Mundi and others.

During her opening speech, Alice Mogabgab Karam said: “It is indeed a hard launching of this BAFF – Edition V; no less hard than the difficult circumstances we are living through. It is our conviction and will however, to declare this launching as an integral part and determined participation into the revolt of Lebanese women and men, aiming at a better future for them and their children.”

“Despite the heartbreaking tragedy of fellow citizens taking their own lives, when unable to take any more the abject consequences of extreme poverty; these screenings are meant to highlight the thrive of Lebanese towards beauty and creativity; through their participation to the international celebration of a giant figure from the Renaissance. To honor Leonardo da Vinci, is an act of faith in the renaissance of Lebanon, thanks to the heroic revolt of his people; thanks to the valiance and determination of Lebanese men and women in the public places of Tripoli, Batroun, Jbeil, Zouk Michael, Jal el Dib, Beirut, Saida, Tyre, Nabatiyeh, Arsal and all other towns. Towns and villages that we visit year after year; together with all the others across the land; in their colleges, schools and cultural centers; where we offer our films, in an act of communion and hope”, she added.

She also declared: “The disruption of Bisri dam, the project of corruption and criminal environmental catastrophes is a major achievement of the October 17 revolt. Inspired by this success of the protests, and faithful to our line of raising Lebanon’s environmental issues, edition after the other; we are honored to present “The Battle for the Cedars”. This documentary highlights the relentless fight of a small group of villagers, in the defense of the ancestral heritage.”

At the end she confirmed that as every year, and despite all adverse circumstances, BAFF is proud to take its message of sharing into beauty, protecting the environment, bringing hopes into all Lebanese cities, towns, universities and schools.

Details of film screenings at other universities will be announced later.

BAFF 2019 at AUB – Free screenings, no bookings, no fees, 1st come, 1st seated.

1. **Friday, December 6th:**
2. *Coming Back to Life* at 7:00 pm
3. *The Great Buster – A Celebration* at 7:05 pm
4. **Monday, December 9th:**
5. *Backstage Vienna State Opera* at 7:00 pm
6. **Tuesday, December 10th:**
7. *John Ford, the Man Who Invented America* at 7:00 pm
8. *Vertigine* at 8:10 pm
9. *Hitchcock Confidential* 8:20 pm
10. **Wednesday, December 11th:**

11. *The Unanswered Ives – Pioneer of American Music* at 7:00 pm
12. *Degas: Passion for Perfection* at 8:00 pm
13. **Friday, December 13th:**
14. *Amon Amarth. The Pursuit of Vikings: 25 Years in the Eye of the Storm* at 3:30 pm
15. *Mourad Merzouki, l'alchimiste de la danse* at 7:00 pm
16. *Vertikal* at 8:05 pm

Full program on <http://bit.ly/ProgramBAFF2019>

The Patrons of the Beirut Art Film Festival

The Robert A. Matta Foundation, The Alexis & Anne-Marie Habib Foundation, Embassy of the United States in Lebanon.

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