

Online and onsite
Sharjah Art Foundation

Friday, 19 November

4:00 pm–4:15 pm

4:15 pm–5:15 pm

Welcome Remarks (online)

Roundtable—**Cinema of the Real: Perspectives on Observational Documentary** (online)

In this round-table session, five major documentarians discuss the unique dimensions of the 'observational' mode of documentary filmmaking. From the all-important concept of 'access', to questions of authenticity and truth, this session considers the complex interplay between subject and cameraperson. What does it mean to mediate unscripted life through the lens? Just how real is the reality unfolding on screen? And how can filmmakers foster the trust needed to enter the intimate spaces of other people's lives? This panel session will explore these questions and more, through a discussion of essential film works.

Speakers

Talal Derki – Filmmaker

Kim Longinotto – Filmmaker

James Longley – Filmmaker

Hanna Polak – Filmmaker

Kazuhiro Soda – Filmmaker

Moderator

Hana Makki – Head of Documentary, Image Nation

Saturday, 20 November

11:00 am–12:00 pm

Roundtable—**Beyond the Gatekeepers: Towards an Inclusive Film Industry** (online)

In this round-table session, leading film industry professionals and practitioners discuss the state of the global film industry and the current realities of diversity and inclusion. From equitable access to funding and production resources, to the distribution of diverse content beyond the mainstream, this session addresses critical questions such as who can break into movie-making and which films can reach audiences. What initiatives are being developed to change policies and practices with regard to diversity? How have digital platforms carved open new spaces of visibility for filmmaking talent beyond Hollywood and the mainstream? And how can we enter into meaningful dialogue with decision-makers to collectively overcome the barriers that exist?

Speakers

Abdulla Al Kaabi – Filmmaker

Mathilde Henrot – Co-founder and COO, Festival Scope and Deputy Artistic Director, Locarno Film Festival

Melanie Hoyes – Industry Inclusion Executive, British Film Institute (BFI)

Moderator

Elissa Ayoub – Interim Associate Dean, MBRSC and Assistant Professor of Digital Production and Storytelling, American University of Dubai

2:30 pm–3:30 pm

Out of the Shadows, Onto the Screen: Centring Marginalised Voices (Sharjah Institute of Theatrical Arts, Al Mureijah Square)

In this panel discussion, filmmakers and moving image artists discuss contemporary approaches to representing marginalised peoples and communities on screen. From migrants, minorities and indigenous communities to workers, smugglers and 'others' who occupy spaces of exclusion, this session will explore questions of agency and authorship regarding those normally rendered invisible or peripheral in mainstream visual culture. How can practitioners collaboratively co-represent these subjects and their lives in film? In what ways are practices of self-representation uncovering the complexity of writing these lived experiences into visibility? And how are the traditions of Third Cinema relevant to current practices beyond the Western canons of cinema?

Speakers

Akosua Adoma Owusu – Filmmaker

Alma Chauouchi – Art historian

Bani Khoshnoudi – Artist and filmmaker

Moderator

Surabhi Sharma – Program Head, Film and New Media; Associate Professor of Practice of Film and New Media, NYU Abu Dhabi

Wednesday, 24 November

8:00 pm–9:00 pm

Masterclass: The Art of the Film Score with A.R. Rahman (Mirage City Cinema, Al Mureijah Square, Sharjah)

In this masterclass on the art of the film score, two-time Oscar-winning music composer A.R. Rahman speaks about his prolific body of work and the craft of composing for cinema. He is most widely known for his notable scores for *Slumdog Millionaire* (2008) and *127 Hours* (2010) as well as for collaborations with leading Indian movie directors such as Anand L. Rai, Imtiaz Ali, Mani Ratnam and Ram Gopal Varma, to name a few. In this session, Rahman sits down for a candid conversation with William Mullally, film critic and Digital Editor of *Esquire Middle East*, to discuss his methodology and approach to composition, the musical and cultural influences on his work, and the highlights of his illustrious career. He will also share essential tips for budding composers and music producers and reveal why he believes intuition is essential to the creative process.

Speaker

A. R. Rahman – Composer

Interviewer

William Mullally – Film critic and Digital Editor, *Esquire Middle East*

Friday, 26 November

1:00 pm–2:00 pm

Limitation and Creativity: A Conversation with Thomas Imbach (online)

This conversation with director Thomas Imbach explores the power and creative potential of cinematic limitations. While constraints are usually regarded as obstacles to the filmmaking process, what happens when they are used to one's advantage? How can self-imposed limits free the imagination and liberate creativity? Imbach shot his award-winning feature documentary *Nemesis (2020)* on 35 mm film entirely from his window, the second film he has made this way. Over a period of seven years, he documented the replacement of Zurich's old railway station by a police station and a prison destined to house migrants facing deportation, resulting in a visually striking film with unexpectedly poignant layers of meaning. He joins us for a conversation that offers vital lessons on the creative process for every filmmaker.

Speaker

Thomas Imbach – Filmmaker (*Nemesis*, 2020)

Interviewer

Hana Makki – Head of Documentary, Image Nation

4:00 pm–5:00 pm

Contemporary Turkish Cinema Through the Female Lens (Mirage City Cinema, Al Mureijah Square, Sharjah)

Turkish cinema has experienced a revival in recent years with women directors increasingly at the helm of bold and visionary storytelling. In conjunction with the screening programme, *Her Journey*, curated by Istanbul Modern for the 4th edition of Sharjah Film Platform, this panel discussion brings together five women filmmakers who are making waves in Turkey's film scene. Against the backdrop of long-standing gender imbalances in the film industry globally, how are women in Turkey reclaiming the lens through which women's experiences are written and portrayed? What are their unique pathways to visibility and success? This session spotlights the rich diversity of female-centred stories in documentary and narrative filmmaking in Turkey and how women's lives, their struggles, dreams and triumphs, are being brought to the big screen.

Speakers

Kıvılcım Akay – Filmmaker

Şirin Bahar Demirel – Filmmaker

Azra Deniz Okyay – Filmmaker

Pelin Esmer – Filmmaker

Çağla Zencirci – Filmmaker

Moderator

Müge Turan – Film Curator, Istanbul Museum of Modern Art

5:00 pm–7:15 pm

Pitching Forum (by invitation only)

(Sharjah Institute of Theatrical Arts, Al Mureijah Square)

Returning for its third iteration, this year's Pitching Forum is offering one scriptwriter based in the UAE an opportunity to win 200,000 AED to turn his/her Arabic language feature-length script into a film. Shortlisted from a wider pool of applicants, 10 finalists will present their scripts to a panel of industry judges. Prior to this presentation, the finalists will receive intensive scriptwriting training and professional pitching coaching. The prize winner will be announced at the festival's closing ceremony on Saturday, 27 November, and production of the film will take place in Sharjah within 24 months of winning the prize. The Pitching Forum is supported by this year's industry partner, Sharjah Media City (SHAMS).

Saturday, 27 November

11:00 am–12:00 pm

Searching the Seams: Calamity, Place and Identity in Arab Film and Moving Image (online)

In this moderated session, two Arab filmmakers and an artist working in moving image discuss how the Middle East, and its complex past and present, is represented through their work. How can practitioners from within, make sense of a region thrust into unending calamity or capture a lived experience marred by precarity? How can the medium of film and video convey to those outside, the multiplicity of identities in the Arab World, of ways of life, fragile and resilient, and of modes of resistance, large and small? This conversation will explore how a new generation of Arab practitioners are excavating the political history that has brought us to the precipice as well as how a different future might at once be imagined and foretold.

Speakers

Mohamed Al-Daradji – Filmmaker

Basma Al Sharif – Artist

Ahmad Ghossein – Filmmaker

Moderator

Silvia Naef – Director, Middle East Master's Programme, Global Studies Institute, University of Geneva

12:30 pm–1:30 pm

Archive Alive! From Repository to Resource (online)

This panel discussion addresses the importance of audio-visual archives, both as a vital repository as well as a resource for filmmakers, scholars, curators, and researchers alike. Examining critical issues and questions pertaining to archives, including access, ownership and the status of the archival image, this session will delve into archival practices as they relate to different modes of creative and academic engagement, in addition to exploring what it means to dislocate and (re)contextualise such material in the process of discourse and narrative-building. Is there an essential 'truth' embedded within archival material? How have archives become sites of contestation and resistance? And how can such material, from analogue film clips to personal and historical news footage, be used creatively by practitioners?

Speakers

Philip Rizk – Filmmaker and writer

Stefanie Schulte Strathaus – Co-director of Arsenal Institute for Film and Video Art, Berlin

Mila Turajlic – Filmmaker and archive scholar

Moderator

Jihan El-Tahri – Filmmaker, writer and Director, DOX BOX