

ARAB FUND FOR ARTS AND CULTURE 2010 ANNUAL REPORT



Vista from Darat el Funun terrace, Amman, November 2011



Mission & Values

AFAC envisions a thriving Arab art and cultural scene that is confident in its expression, open to dialogue, accessible to all, and sustained locally by committed patrons.

AFAC will play a leading role in achieving this vision and serve as a catalyst for homegrown philanthropic initiatives across the Arab world, by listening to and engaging with artists and cultural practitioners, analyzing and assessing their needs, facilitating cooperation and exchange, identifying and educating patrons on the social impact of arts and culture, advising stakeholders on necessary interventions, and supporting projects with direct independent funding. Two fundamental principles guiding AFAC's operations are transparency in the grant giving process and independence through a diversity of funding sources.

Objectives

- Increase and enhance cultural production and research
- Support capacity-building and training
- Perpetuate cultural exchange and collaboration across the Arab region and globally
- Deliver a sustainable source of funding for independent cultural work
- Identify and develop distribution channels for Arab cultural work

AFAC's work is made possible through the generous donations of:

Sawsan Al-Fahoum Jafar - Hani Kalouti - Nabil Qaddumi - Abbas (Eddy) Zuaiter - Mohammed Abduljawed - Ghazwa Abu Suud - Lamia Gergash - Outaiba Al Ghanem - Omar Ghobash - Khaled Ahmad Juffali - Rana Sadik - Walid Yousef Zahid - Open Society Foundations - Ford Foundation - DOEN Foundation - Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development

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I. INTRODUCTION



Installation at Darat el Funun, Amman, November 2011

I. INTRODUCTION

Executive Summary

In 2010, AFAC has taken stock of the first four years of its operations, realizing the need to optimize the tools and refine the process with which it supports quality cultural production across the Arab region.

2010 grant cycle

AFAC made one open call for project proposals in 2010 in six categories (Cinema, Performing Arts, Visual Arts, Literature, Music, and Research, Training and Regional Events (RTR)) with applications accepted from April through August 2010. Launched in late 2009, the Arab Documentary Film Program (ADFP) continued its work, with seven grantees closing their grants at the time of writing, seven projects remaining open and 1 grant canceled due to the untimely passing of Syrian director and grantee Omar Amiralay. A new special program, the Arab Graphic Novel Program (AGNP) was designed and approved by the Board of Trustees at the annual meeting in December 2010, with the first open call set to launch during the second half of 2011.

AFAC received 480 applications for its 2010 General Grant, including 120 proposals for projects in Cinema, 97 in Literature, 26 in Music, 59 in Performing Arts, 65 in Visual Arts and 113 in Research, Training & Regional Events. 230 of the applicants were male, 103 female, and 147 were institutions. Applicants hailed from 28 countries, with just under 10 percent of applications received from Europe and North America, while the rest came from Arab countries.

The 2010 General Grant was awarded to 54 grantees from 11 Arab countries with 16 grants distributed to projects in Literature, 10 in Research, Training & Regional Events, 8 in Cinema, 7 each in Performing Arts and Music, and 6 in Visual Arts. Forty-four percent of the grantees were male, 26 percent female, and the remaining 30 percent were institutions. Twenty-five percent of the total awarded grant amount-- \$848,000 -- was allocated towards projects in Cinema; 20 percent to Visual Arts; 15 percent each to Literature and Research, Training & Regional Events (RTR); and 13 percent each to Performing Arts and Music.

2011

In 2011, AFAC will make two separate calls for proposals for its General Grant, with each call open to proposals in three categories. In February 2011, AFAC launched a call for proposals in Performing Arts, Visual Arts and Literature, as well as a second cycle of its Arab Documentary Film Program (ADFP). In August 2011, AFAC will announce the winners of the General Grant in these first three categories and in the ADFP, and launch another open call in the categories Cinema, Music, and Research, Training & Regional Events, as well as a first cycle of the AGNP.

Operations

In order to ramp up its efforts and engage more effectively with constituents and stakeholders, AFAC has hired a more experienced and engaged staff and relocated its central office from Amman to Beirut. Oussama Rifahi replaced Fairouz Tamimi as Executive Director in August 2010 and hired an experienced grants manager, a programs & communications consultant, a business development manager, a content manager, and an office manager, in addition to working with a number of freelance consultants-- designers, editors and a web developer -- brought in to perform specific tasks.

AFAC changed and revamped its operational tools, with the launch of a new interactive website; the introduction of online applications; the creation of a comprehensive up-to-date database of applicants and grantees and a database of potential local donors; and the production of a range of marketing and communications materials. Consolidating its work of the past four years, AFAC's team has reached out to current and past grantees, maintaining regular contact through alumnae reunions and gatherings staged across the region, and by participating in grantees' openings, screenings and events.

Marketing

In September 2010, AFAC began to develop a new set of marketing and communications materials to increase the organization's visibility, credibility and to capitalize on and consolidate the achievements of the past four years. A new

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Executive Summary

communications strategy was developed to target AFAC's beneficiaries, potential donors and the greater public and media. With a new website; a range of attractive brochures, booklets and other materials; participation in high-profile festivals and panel debates, as well as local community events; liaising with the press and shoring up our networks, AFAC has substantially improved its visibility in the region over the course of a few short months.

Increasing its appeal through quality content, increased transparency over its operations, professionalism in its grants management and selection process, and a personable, forthcoming and engaged team have laid the groundwork for AFAC to launch a new fundraising drive in the coming year. AFAC is now in a good position to develop and promote its achievements towards potential future donors and to facilitate their active engagement in the local arts and cultural scenes.

AFAC on the ground

Over the past six months, AFAC's team have reached out to the public, its grants beneficiaries and future patrons by publishing press releases, news stories and profiles on its grantees; through speeches, TV and radio interviews; and a series of field visits to various Arab cities, including Sharjah, Dubai, Damascus, Tunis, Rabat, Cairo, Alexandria, Beirut and Amman. Listening to the concerns and needs of its constituents has afforded AFAC a warm reception and many fruitful exchanges, as well as a number of promising partnerships, both in the region and at

festivals and events abroad. In the coming year, AFAC will continue to build on the efforts of this last period.

The Year Ahead

While continuing the general call for proposals across all categories, optimizing the process of disbursing grants, publicizing its operations and achievements, reaching out to potential applicants outside the established circles of cultural practitioners, and embarking on field visits Arab cities across the region, AFAC is also responding to the new realities on the ground by designing new initiatives for special programs. AFAC is currently seeking funding for a new Arab Film Initiative (NAFI), which would provide funding, as well as soft support through capacity building and training to emerging filmmakers in the Arab World from the development through the distribution phase of their film projects.



2009 ADFP grantee Ahmed Fawzi Saleh and his wife Eyman in Cairo, May 2011

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Message from the Chairman

The first four years of AFAC have allowed us to gauge the requirements of artistic communities and the needs of the cultural arena to define the path ahead. 2010 has been a year of consolidating our achievements and building upon the groundwork laid since AFAC's inception, as we transition to the second phase of our mission – to strengthen our impact on the arts and cultural scene in the Arab region.

Moving forward, we seek to expand our activities by reaching out to new generations of artists and increasing our capacity to support Arab cultural production. This will require securing additional resources to facilitate our growth. Towards this end, AFAC strives to increase local and regional support of the arts and to sow the seeds for a homegrown and sustainable patronage culture.

The latest events in the region have only confirmed the Arab peoples' desire for self-expression and self-realization. In this time of upheaval, when the region's citizens are voicing their political demands, building on the precious gains for which they have sacrificed and navigating the myriad new realities, arts and culture have maintained their importance. Artistic production expresses and communicates a desire for change in its own subtle, organic and profound way. While the path ahead in many countries remains uncertain, the creativity and energy of the region's people has never been less in doubt.

In this climate and momentous period, AFAC's presence as an independent, Arab institution that listens to its constituents and is governed by transparency and professionalism is more important than ever.

- Dr. Ghassan Salame, May 2011



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Message from the Director

Since the beginning of the year, when AFAC moved its main operations from Amman to Beirut, we have focused on getting out our call for proposals, following up with existing grantees, and strengthening our presence and visibility on the ground through a new website, fresh marketing material and a series of week-long trips to various capitals in the region.

Based on the experience of the last four years, we have continued to streamline the grant-giving process with applications accepted online for the first time. The turn-around time between launching the call, evaluating and selecting the winners, all the way to contracting grantees and disbursing the first payments has been substantially reduced compared to previous years. In parallel, a constant channel of communication is now being maintained with our alumnae grantees through AFAC's grants and content managers, ensuring a good flow of know-how between grantees, the press and our donors.

The historic shifts that are taking place around us have created a new situation on the ground, simultaneously presenting new opportunities as well as new challenges to art practitioners in the region. While we are excited by the creative forces unleashed by this new openness, we are also keenly aware of the fragility of these gains and the complexity of the conditions on the ground moving forward.

The long-term effects of these changes remain unclear but positive momentum in the field of arts and culture must be maintained through support that is both flexible and stable. Many of our current grantees, for example, have requested deadline extensions in order to reshape their projects to reflect recent events in their countries. Others have expressed a need for more re-granting funds to support a broader array of local cultural initiatives, in light of the absence or collapse of traditional support structures, and the spirit of openness sweeping the region.

Today, political struggles are taking center stage, but we are exerting all efforts possible to convince our stakeholders, future donors and philanthropists of the necessity of supporting the arts: cultural initiatives are vital to the health of society during times of stability; they take on an even greater importance during these periods of turmoil.

AFAC will continue to support quality work, and relevant and innovative projects from across the region. Much of what we see today reflects the spirit of, and lends expression to, the creative *zeitgeist* of this period. By facilitating culturally and politically relevant projects at this critical juncture, we are also communicating powerful narratives to local and global audiences alike. Nonetheless, it remains necessary as always, to stay loyal to genuine forms of cultural expression rather than cater to trends driven by international media attention.

In conclusion, the recent wave of change has re-invigorated a sense of common fate amongst the region's inhabitants from the Maghreb to the Levant and the Gulf, making the original concept of AFAC, a fund covering a vast geographical expanse, which is home to a complex mosaic of cultural traditions and expressions, even more relevant.

- Oussama Rifahi. Beirut, May 2011



I. INTRODUCTION

Board of Trustees



AFAC's Board of Trustees and staff at the annual board meeting in Beirut, December 2010

AFAC's board members represent a geographical diversity and hail from a multitude of backgrounds, contributing a breadth of expertise to the initiative. Convening twice a year, the board has supported AFAC's reach in their own countries, cities and cultural communities. Moving into the next year, AFAC will work to expand its board by inviting new members who can contribute additional fundraising capabilities and leadership to our efforts.

Ghassan Salamé, Chairman

Dr. Salame is a Professor of International Relations at the Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Paris (Sciences Po) and a former senior adviser to the United Nations Secretary General. He is also a former minister of culture in Lebanon and holds PhDs in literature and political science. Salame was appointed Chairman and Spokesman of the organization committee of the Arab Summit and the Francophone Summit (2002) in Beirut. He is currently a board member of the International Crisis Group, the International Peace Academy, Bibliotheca Alexandrina, The Arab Anti Corruption Organization, and the Bassel Fuleyhan Foundation, the High Level Experts Group for the Community of Democracies (2006-), and Le Haut Conseil de la Francophonie. He is the

author of a dozen books on social and political issues including *Democracy without Democrats*, *The Foundations of the Arab State*, *The Politics of Arab Integration*, *Society and the State in the Arab Mashreq*, and *America and the World*.

Nabil Qaddumi, Vice Chair & Treasurer

Dr. Nabil Qaddumi combines private and public sector roles. He is Chairman of Projacs International, the region's leading Arab project management firm; Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Welfare Association; Palestine's governor at the Board of Governors of the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development; a co-founder of the Hani Qaddumi Scholarship Foundation; and a board member of the Institute for Palestine Studies.

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Board of Trustees

Suzanne Wettenschwiler, Statutory Secretary

A member of the Swiss Bar Association, Dr. Wettenschwiler is a commercial and not-for-profit attorney based in Zug, Switzerland. Having earned a PhD from the University of Zurich Law School, she is a member of the HDV Canton of Zug (Trade and Services Association), the SRO VQF (Association of Quality Assurance in Financial Services) and the International Bar Association (IBA). Dr. Wettenschwiler is also a member of the board of the Open Society Institute Zug and various other Swiss charitable foundations.

Zeina Arida, Secretary

Zeina Arida was raised and educated in Beirut and Paris. After serving as Program Officer at UNESCO and Communications Manager at the French Cultural Center, Arida was involved in the setup and launching of the Arab Image Foundation (AIF) in 1997. The Arab Image Foundation is a not-for-profit organization established in Beirut to locate, collect, preserve, interpret and present the photographic heritage of the Middle East and North Africa. She is currently the Director of the AIF.

Mohamed Berrada

Mohammed Berrada is a Moroccan novelist, literary critic and translator. He is considered one of Morocco's most important modern authors. From 1976 to 1983, Berrada was the president of Morocco's writers union. He teaches Arab literature at the Faculté des Lettres at Mohammed V University in Rabat and is a member of the advisory board of the Moroccan literary magazine "Prologue."

Ferial Ghazzoul

Ferial Ghazzoul is an Iraqi scholar, critic and translator. She is a professor of English and Comparative Literature at the American University in Cairo, and editor of "Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics." She has written extensively on gender issues in modern and medieval literature and is the author of *Nocturnal Poetics: The Arabian Nights in Comparative Context* (AUC Press, 1996).

Sawsan Al-Fahoum Jafar

Sawsan Jafar was born to a Palestinian family and holds a B.S in Economics from the American University of Beirut. She is a founding member of the board of The Friends of Cancer Patients Society in the United Arab Emirates and acted as its chairman from 2000 to 2008. She is a member of the Baden-Powell organization, as well as a board member for the Welfare Association, the Institute for Palestine Studies and the Chairman of the Board for MIFTAH - The Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Global Dialogue & Democracy. Jafar also won a prize for voluntary work in the Emirate of Sharjah, UAE.

Hani Kalouti

Hani Kalouti is the president and founder of HBK Investments Advisory S.A. based in Geneva, Switzerland. HBK is a multi-family asset management firm providing independent expert advice to high net worth individuals, their families and foundations. Mr. Kalouti started his career with Citibank, New York in 1981 and was chief investment officer of their Swiss Private Bank in Geneva when he left in 1996 to establish HBK. He holds a B.S. degree in Civil Engineering from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and an MBA from Syracuse University, New York. He is a member of the Board of Trustees and Management Committee of the Welfare Association.

Adila Laidi-Hanieh

Adila Laidi-Hanieh is a writer and cultural critic. She is the author of *Palestine: Rien ne nous manque ici* (Palestine: We Lack for Nothing Here), the first book on contemporary Palestinian culture, and a number of scholarly articles and essays on Arab arts and culture. She ran the Khalil Sakakini Cultural Centre in Ramallah from its establishment until 2005, and curated the international touring memorial art exhibition "100 Shaheed-100 Lives." She taught at Bir Zeit University and is the recipient of Bethlehem University's 2005 «International Woman's Day Award». Laidi-Hanieh has an MA in Arab Studies from Georgetown University, and was a Fulbright scholar in Cultural Studies at George Mason University.

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Amin Zaoui

Amin Zaoui is a writer and bilingual scholar (Arabic and French), former general-manager of the National Library of Algeria and the author of five novels that have been translated into many languages.

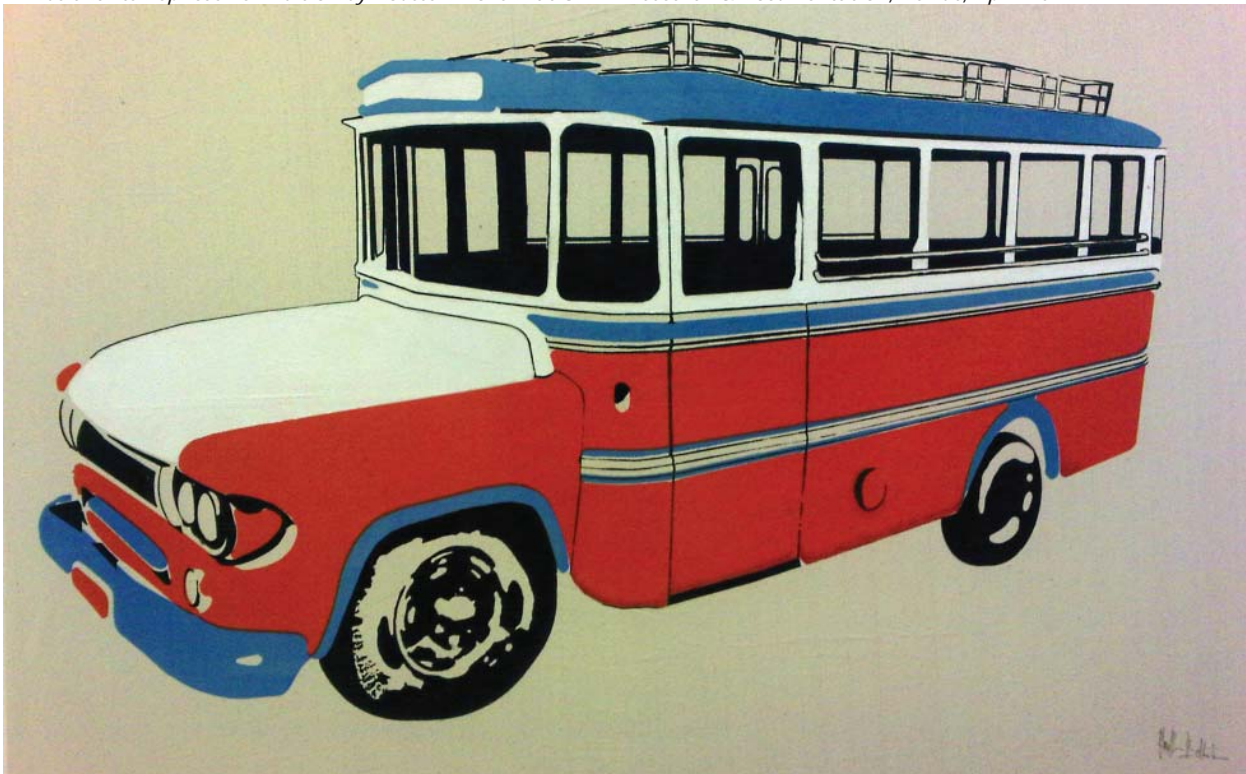
Abbas Zuaiter

Abbas Farouq "Eddy" Zuaiter is the chief operating officer and a member of the management committee of Soros Fund Management LLC («SFM»), a private investment management firm founded by financier and philanthropist George Soros. He is also the chairman of the firm's Valuation and Brokerage Committees and a member of its Oversight Committee. Zuaiter is a Certified Public Accountant and a member of the AICPA and the NYSSCPAs. He is also a board member of the Arab Bankers Association of North America and a member of the Managed Funds Association («MFA»).

Oussama Rifahi, Executive Director

Oussama Rifahi joined AFAC as Executive Director in July 2010. Previously, he was Managing Director for Museum Development in New York with Global Cultural Asset Management, and provided cultural consultancy services to governments, cities, foundations and private collectors in Europe, the Middle East and Central Asia. As Director of Special Projects for the Guggenheim Foundation, Rifahi managed international feasibility studies of contemporary museums in Lithuania and France in 2007. From 2003 to 2006, he was project manager at Mubadala and an advisor to the chairman of Tourism Development and Investment Company. Rifahi managed the market analysis, strategy definition and development of the business model for tourism and culture in Abu Dhabi and supported the first architectural developments on Saadiyat Island, as well as the initial negotiations between Abu Dhabi and the Louvre and Guggenheim museums.

"A Bus and its Replicas" exhibition by Houssam Bokeili at UMAM Research & Documentation, Beirut, April 2011



II. GRANTS



A work by Walid Raad at the Mathaf opening in Doha, December 2010

II. GRANTS

2010 Open Call for Proposals

The open call for AFAC's general grant was launched on April 1st, 2010, closing five months later on August 31st, 2010. In total, AFAC received 480 applicants, including 120 proposals for projects in Cinema, 97 in Literature, 26 in Music, 59 in Performing Arts, 65 in Visual Arts and 113 in Research, Training & Regional Events. 230 of the applicants were male, 103 female, and 147 institutions. Applicants hailed from 28 countries, with just under 10 percent of applications received from Europe and North America, while the rest originated from Arab countries.

2010 General Grant Statistics

In 2010, AFAC's general grant was awarded to 54 grantees from 11 Arab countries with 16 grants distributed to projects in Literature, 10 in Research, Training & Regional Events, 8 in Cinema, 7 each in Performing Arts and Music, and 6 in Visual Arts. Forty-four percent of the grantees were male, 26 percent female, and the remaining 30 percent were institutions. Twenty-five percent of the total awarded grant amount-- \$848,000 -- was allocated towards projects in Cinema; 20 percent to Visual Arts; 15 percent each to Literature and Research, Training & Regional Events (RTR); and 13 percent each to Performing Arts and Music.

The awarded grants represent about 70 percent of the total amounts requested by applicants and about 30 percent of the total value of their projects. The minimum grant amount was \$2,300, while the maximum grant amount remained unchanged at \$50,000. The average grant amount was about \$16,000, slightly higher than last year, which stood at \$14,000. The average age of the 2010 grantees was 39.3 years old. Sixty-five percent of the awarded grants ranged between \$5,000 and \$20,000, with only three grants above \$40,000 distributed in 2010.

The 2010 grantees included one US citizen, who is researching the effects of urbanization on Bedouin music traditions in Jordan, and one Italian institution, which is representing the Iraqi



2010 Literature grantee Khalil Swelih talks about AFAC's work at a presentation in Damascus, March 2011

Pavilion at the 2011 Venice Biennale. The rest of the grantees were Arab nationals, some of whom reside in the diaspora. Grantees from Lebanon, Palestine and Egypt together made up almost sixty percent of this year's grantees.

By mid-May 2011, almost half of the 2010 grants budget has been distributed to grantees. Eighty percent of the amounts awarded in 2009 have been distributed to that year's grantees and 93 percent to the 2008 grantees. From of a total of 206 general grants awarded by AFAC to date, 114 have closed. The rest are in various stages of completion.

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2010 Grantees

The 2010 grantees and their project descriptions are arranged by category. AFAC's website provides additional updates and news on each project. The new website set to launch in June 2011 will feed all grantee-related news posted on AFAC's site to the grantees' profiles.

Cinema

Name: Bassem Fayyad (Lebanon)

Title: "Treatment"

Project Description: "Treatment" is a cinematic self-examination of the psychology of fear, and the healing bond between a man and his dog, within the context of Lebanese society.

Name: Damien Ounouri (Algeria)

Title: "Fidai"

Project Description: "Fidai" is a documentary film that explores the bloody history of the Algerian civil war through the eyes of Hadi, who, like many of his generation, took part in the conflict as a fighter with the National Liberation Front. The film examines Hadi's story to probe the boundaries between personal narrative and official histories.

Name: Diana Jeroudi (Syria)

Title: "What's bothering Dr. Rami?"

Project Description: "What's bothering Dr. Rami?" is a full-length feature film that takes a closer look at a man who appears to have it all. Having left Syria to pursue his dream of becoming a doctor, Rami is living in a German city, with a new passport, a new wife whom he loves, and a new job at the premier center for genetic research where he is on the verge of a major breakthrough. But the contrast between his new existence and his old one raises questions about identity, personal fulfillment and the search for meaning in life, which transcends geography, language and culture.

Name: Hazem Berrabah (Tunisia)

Title: "Insane Elsa"

Project Description: "Insane Elsa" is an experimental short film that uses modern dance to give form to the poetry of love, which transcends cultural and linguistic divides.

Name: The Independent Film and Television College Baghdad (Iraq)

Title: Traveling Student Film Festival

Project Description: The Independent Film and Television College is a non-profit, non-governmental institution that provides training to aspiring filmmakers in Iraq who have suffered for years under oppression, war and economic hardship. The student film festival will travel to three regions in Iraq--Basra, Baghdad and Erbil--where former and current filmmakers of the college will have a chance to discuss their work with local audiences.

Name: Marwa Zein Al Abdin Fadl (Sudan)

Title: "A Lake the Size of a Papaya"

Project Description: "A Lake the Size of a Papaya" is a short film based on a story of the same name by Sudanese writer Estella Gaytanou, who worked with the screenwriter on a script that brings to life the southern Sudan through the story of a young girl and her grandmother. The film examines the meaning of family, memory, love, and the enduring scars of

imperialism that continue to affect the people of the south Sudan.

Name: Nidal Abu Diab (Palestine)

Title: "Storm in the Selwan Valley"

Project Description: "Storm in the Selwan Valley" is a feature film that tells the story of Fakhri Abu Diab as he fights to save his house in Jerusalem from destruction by the Israeli municipality, which is planning to build a garden for settlers on the ruins of 88 Palestinian homes. The film explores competing narratives of the holy city and the ongoing Palestinian struggle to preserve not only their history, but their future, in the face of Israeli expansionism.

Name: Safaa Fathy (Egypt)

Title: "Saving Mohammad from Water"

Project Description: Inspired by the near death of her younger brother, Safaa Fathy's film "Saving Mohammad from Water" delves into popular concepts of death and the body, in the context of public health and pollution in modern Egypt. The fictional Mohammad is dying of renal failure, but refuses on moral grounds to have a kidney transplant. Through his five-year journey, the film explores the government's complicity in the contamination of food and water supplies and how poverty and social pressure influence approaches to death.

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2010 Grantees



ADFP grantees at Abu Dhabi Film Festival, October 2010

Literature

Name: Akram Musallam (Palestine)

Title: "Confusing the Stork"

Project Description: "Confusing the stork" is the third novel in a series by Akram Musallam, continuing the exploration of Palestinian identity and the desire to transcend the loss of territory and the erasure of history.

Name: Ghada al-Halawani (Egypt)

Title: "The Testament Writer"

Project Description: "The Testament Writer" is a novel, which explores the relationship between a grandfather and his grandson—a professional testament writer who writes wills for people at the end of their lives. The story examines man's anticipation of death and how people deal with the final moments of their lives.

Name: The House of Poetry (Morocco)

Title: "The First Gathering of African Arab Poets"

Project Description: "The First Gathering of African Arab Poets" seeks to strengthen and explore

the bond between Arab and African cultures with a special event for 14 poets from Africa and the Arab world, to be held in Morocco.

The gathering will take place over three major poetry evenings and two seminars, which will be attended by poets and critics specialized in leading poetry seminars. At the end of the event, an anthology of the participating poets' work will be published along with a special feature on the gathering in the literary journal Bayt.

Name: Iman Humaydan Younes (Lebanon)

Title: "Journeys"

Project Description: "Journeys" tells the story of May Shahine, an architect in her forties who specializes in the restoration of old buildings. May returns to Lebanon after living abroad to work on an old building in downtown Beirut, which was destroyed during the Civil War. There, she discovers a mysterious purse containing the remnants of another life, another love and another time, forcing May

to question her own past and her memories of the war.

Name: Jamal Naji (Jordan)

Title: "The Gasp of Creatures"

Project Description: "The Gasp of Creatures" is a novel that examines how people today deal with the rapid changes brought on by the accelerated pace of human development over the last two centuries, the resulting psychological tensions, loss of principles, and mis-readings of history.

Name: Khalil Swelih (Syria)

Title: "The Gazelle Will Come to You"

Project Description: "The Gazelle Will Come to You" is a novel that reexamines the mythology of the Bedouins and their relationship to the land between Turkey and Iraq through the eyes of a small boy. The book weaves themes of tribalism, colonialism, nature and urbanization into an epic drama spanning the modern history of Syria.

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2010 Grantees

Name: Lahcen Bakour (Morocco)
Title: "The Forest of Knowledge"
Project Description: "The Forest of Knowledge" is a children's book about a group of insects and animals, who seek refuge from a storm inside a tree trunk and end up befriending each other. The story addresses concern for the environment, education, and the quest for knowledge.

Name: Lena Merhej (Lebanon)
Title: "Jam and Yoghurt—Or How My Mother Became Lebanese"
Project Description: Merhej's first graphic novel tells the story of her mother, a German woman and educator living in Lebanon. Through the long years of the civil war until today, the author's mother remains resilient, despite the hectic pace of life, the politics and sectarianism.

Name: Maher Sherif Hassan (Egypt)
Title: Handmade Literary Pamphlets
Project Description: This initiative to print and bind quality texts by hand has produced 9 books from 1996 to 2009. The process takes about a month and supports the idea of local, interdisciplinary production and craftsmanship.

Name: Mansoura Ezzeddine (Egypt)
Title: "The Mountain of Life"
Project Description: In Ezzeddine's novel "The Mountain of Life," a young Cairene woman discovers that her father's family is originally of Druze origin, sending her on a journey to Lebanon and Syria that parallels her family's own relocation to Canada. Weaving together reality and mythology,

"The Mountain of Life" explores themes of emigration, family and identity.

Name: Nadya Alkawkabani (Yemen)
Title: "My Sana'a"
Project Description: The novel "My Sana'a" is a work of historical fiction, which revisits the tumultuous period of the Yemeni civil war during the 1970s, as the crucible that formed many of the rich and sometimes contradictory aspects of the capital city today. The book will seek to correct many of the misconceptions regarding this period of the revolution, drawing on the rich social details and visual vocabulary of Sana'a to tell the story of modern Yemen.

Name: Najim Al Dyni (Iraq)
Title: "Icons of Illusion"
Project Description: "Icons of Illusion" examines the influence of Western art criticism on Arab cultural practices.

Name: Rania Ahmed Kamel (Egypt)
Title: "Dawar el-Barr"
Project Description: "Dawar el-Barr" is a novel about simple craftsmen, whose trades are looked down upon by Egyptian society, and how they share the same dreams, fears and pain as the rest of humanity.

Name: Rashid al Daif (Lebanon)
Title: "Feris Drinks Orange Juice With America"
Project Description: The novel "Feris Drinks Orange Juice with America" is a work of historical fiction that follows best friends Feris Hashem and Jergis Zeidan as they navigate Beirut on the cusp of

the 20th century, first as children in a rapidly modernizing city and later as medical students caught up by historical forces beyond their control. Their adventures take them abroad to Egypt and the United States, where they witness the seismic shifts in politics and identity that later shape the two regions and their relationship to each other.

Name: Taha Adnan (Morocco)
Title: "Happy Birthday"
Project Description: The novel "Happy Birthday" opens with Tariq al Ziadi celebrating his own fortieth birthday alone on the outskirts of Bruxelles, nearly twenty years after relocating to Belgium from Morocco to attend university. The adventures of Tariq and his friends expose the stereotypes through which Arab and Europeans view each other, using humor to playfully examine the meaning of homeland, coexistence and assimilation.

Name: Yasser Shaban (Egypt)
Title: "The Shadows"
Project Description: "The Shadows" is a novel in five-chapters, exploring the conflict between the writer and the subject matter of his stories— from his father's relationship with his fallen comrades in the Sinai War to the degradation of social values in Egyptian society.

II. GRANTS

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Music

Name: The Edward Said National Conservatory of Music (Palestine)

Title: "Festival of Spring and Festival of Tarab Nights in Jerusalem"

Project Description: These two festivals, to be staged in March and October 2011 in Jerusalem, aim to encourage dialogue between cultures through music. By inviting renowned musical acts from abroad to collaborate with Palestinian musicians and interact with local audiences, these festivals will galvanize the Palestinian music scene and promote its musicians, both locally and internationally.

Name: Fathy Adly Salama (Egypt)

Title: Untitled

Project Description: Fathy Adly Salama's Untitled is an album of songs that address political and gender issues in Arab society, sung and recorded by Algerian singer Karima Nayt.

Name: The House of Arts, Knowledge and Culture (Palestine)

Title: "The Bride of Galilee Music Festival"

Project Description: A month-long calendar of artistic and cultural events will culminate in the "Bride of Galilee Music Festival," a celebration of traditional Arabic music to be staged over three days in the historic squares and alleyways of the villages of the Galilee. The House of Arts, Knowledge and Culture seeks to make this an annual event to attract visitors and provide opportunities for local artists and musicians.

Name: Houtaf Maroun Khoury (Lebanon)

Title: "Clouds of Memory"

Project Description: "Clouds of Memory" is an original symphonic composition and recording: an untitled concerto for violin and

orchestra, and two symphonies entitled "Reminiscenza" and "Time of Fear."

Name: Maias Al Yamani (Syria)

Title: Maias al Yamani musical performance

Project Description: This performance by musician Maias al Yamani, accompanied by the Syrian National Symphony Orchestra, will be recorded for TV broadcast.

Name: Rima Khcheich (Lebanon)

Title: Untitled

Project Description: Untitled is an album of 12 old mowashat from Syria and Egypt sung by Rima Khcheich.

Name: Sobhi Al-Sharqawi (Jordan)

Title: Untitled

Project Description: Al Sharqawi will execute the second half of a project to collect, document and archive 350 popular children's songs and games from different areas all across Jordan.

Research, Training & Regional Events

Name: Arab Resources Center for Popular Arts (Lebanon)

Title: "Jinan Summer Gathering"

Project Description: The "Jinan Summer Gathering" is an annual platform for regional experts, activists and organizations to come together and share their experiences working in cultural production with young people and marginalized populations. The event, which spans 10 days, attracts roughly 140 participants from around the Arab world.

Name: Association for the Promotion & Progress of Children in Khenchela (Algeria)

Title: Training Workshop for Popular Dance

Project Description: This training workshop for popular dance seeks to encourage young people from the Khenchela province to appreciate their rich heritage and perpetuate the region's local cultural traditions. Forty young participants, between the ages of 6 and 18, will be trained in singing, playing instruments and wearing

traditional clothing. Algerian rap musicians will help facilitate the workshop, encouraging participants to appreciate these traditions.

Name: Kathleen Ann Hood (USA)

Title: "Sustainability and Change in Bedouin Music of northern Jordan"

Project Description: This research project will examine the affects of lifestyle changes on the Bedouin communities of the northern Jordan, their music

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and cultural production. The goal of this project is to record a musical tradition that is rapidly disappearing as formerly nomadic tribes settle in villages where they are influenced by globalization, Western culture, and tourism.

Name: Khayal Cooperative Association for Arts and Education (Lebanon)

Title: "Caravan 2011"

Project Description: "Caravan 2011" is a traveling children's theater and puppet festival, bringing together troupes from Lebanon, the Arab world and Europe for a series of shows, workshops and events for young people around Lebanon.

Name: Mahmoud Abdelghani (Morocco)

Title: "An Anthology of Autobiography in old Arab Literature"

Project Description: This research anthology will trace the origins and roots of the autobiographical genre, beginning with the Hijari period in the fourth Century. The methodology for analyzing these texts will draw on methods from contemporary literary analysis, probing the relationship between first person narratives and other forms of expression.

Name: Metropolis Art Cinema (Lebanon)

Title: "Beirut Animated Workshop"

Project Description: The Metropolis Art Cinema and the comics magazine Samandal will partner for a second time to offer aspiring Lebanese and Arab animators the chance to participate in an animation workshop, held over

several days during the 2011 Beirut Animated Film Festival.



A poster for the Beirut Animated festival by 2010 RTR grantees Metropolis Cinema

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Roger Assaf, the director of 2010 Performing Arts Grantee Dawar Shams Theater

Name: Mohammad Eid Youssef (Egypt)

Title: "Women's Theater Workshop"

Project Description: The Women's Theater Workshop aims to empower women in the theater between the ages of 18 and 30, through trainings that cover all aspects of the creative process, including acting, directing, modern dance, and script writing. At the completion of the workshop, the women will present their final projects before a live audience.

Name: Najwa Barakat (Lebanon)
Title: "Muhtaraf --How to write a novel"

Project Description: Following the success of the 2006 workshop

"How to Write a Novel," writer Najwa Barakat will build on this experience by founding an official organization in Beirut to bring together young writers of different ages from all across the Arab world. Trainings will include three annual workshops: one for aspiring novelists, another for screenwriters and a third for playwrights. Upon completion, the best novel, script or screenplay will be selected by a publisher for publication and distribution.

Name: Nawafez Society for Translation, Development and Dialogue (Egypt)

Title: "Found Object Art"
Project Description: These 2-month long workshops for

children between the ages of 8 and 12 years will see them engage in group work, encouraging cooperation, instilling a healthy sense of competition, and teaching them about re-appropriated materials and their use in making art.

Name: Qarawiyyin Association (Morocco)

Title: Scriptwriting Support

Project Description: The Qarawiyyin Association will offer training and support to 20 aspiring young script writers of different nationalities through a series of workshops.

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Performing Arts

Name: Adel Mohammad Ismail (Egypt)

Title: "The Time of Shadows"

Project Description: "The Time of Shadows" is a play that explores the effect of darkness on five characters from both a literal and a philosophical perspective. The use of darkness and light is used for dramatic effect to contrast the conflicting inclinations hidden within each person.

Name: Ahmad Issa Almograbi (Jordan)

Title: "An Autobiography"

Project Description: "An Autobiography" is an hour-long performative meditation on the state of theater in the Arab world and the ability of actors, directors and playwrights to enact change in society.

Name: Amir Nizar Zuabi (Palestine)

Title: A stage adaptation of Jose Saramago's novel "Blindness"

Project Description: The Nobel prize winning Portuguese author Jose Saramago gave personal permission for his novel "Blindness" to be adapted for the stage by the Free Inch Troupe, which will perform ten times throughout the West Bank and Palestine. This staging will push the boundaries of performance by creating a unique sensory experience for the audience, while raising questions about humanity in the face of disaster and the metaphorical and moral implications of "blindness."

Name: The Arabic House of Music (Syria)

Title: "The Seventh Arab Monodrama Theater Festival"

Project Description: This seventh edition of the Arab Monodrama Theater Festival, titled "Take Me With You to Palestine," will take place over seven days and be devoted to promoting Palestinian performers and theatrical pieces about Palestine. The festival will also feature a photography exhibition on the theme of Palestine, a Palestinian music performance, and symbolic tree planting for the occupied land.

Name: Chamat Theater (Morocco)

Title: "The Alienation of Hassan al Wazzan"

Project Description: This play is a theatrical re-telling of the life of the famous 15th century north African ambassador, traveler and writer Hassan al Wazzan, otherwise known as the Lion of Africa, who travelled throughout Africa before settling in Rome and converting to Christianity. In addition to being a fascinating figure in his own rite, Hassan al Wazzan also faced the same issues as Arab society today, concerning religion, interfaith dialogue and the meaning of civilization.

Name: The Cooperative Cultural Association for Youth in Theater and Cinema SHAMS (Lebanon)

Title: "The 50 Days/50 Years Festival"

Project Description: The 50 days/50 Years theater festival seeks to fuse the artistic dramatic tradition of the 1960s with the

dynamism of contemporary theater. Four events to be held in March and April 2011 will bring together artists of different generations to explore the possibilities of theater.

Name: Fadi Alghoul (Palestine)

Title: "A Children's Theater Review of the Wizard of Oz"

Project Description: Fadi Sayed Alghoul partners with other leading artists, dancers and actors in Ramallah to stage a version of the colorful classic musical the Wizard of Oz. "The Wizard of Oz Review" will fill an important gap in live children's theater and draw on local talent for all creative and technical aspects of this large production.

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Visual Arts

Name: Basma Al Sharif (Lebanon)
Title: "Legend"

Project Description: "Legend" is an artistic visual reimagining of the life of the artist's grandmother 20,000 years in the future, in order to bring fresh perspective and humanity to the current political situation in Palestine.

Name: Birzeit University (Palestine)
Title: Support for a third installation in a series of art exhibits on Palestinian cities at Birzeit University's Ethnographic and Art Museum

Project Description: After two successful art exhibitions on the cities Jerusalem and Ramallah, the Birzeit University Ethnographic and Art Museum will launch a third show on the city of Khalil in spring 2011. This exhibition will focus on the relationship between people and place, and the tension between collective and personal memory as expressed through visual arts.

Name: Al Mahatta Gallery (Palestine)
Title: "My Neighbor is Going"
Project Description: The Mahatta Gallery in Palestine is launching an ambitious experiment in alternative cartography to explore notions of travel and mobility under occupation. Ten young Palestinian artists will set out for different Palestinian cities, recording their experiences navigating checkpoints, road closures and other artificial, social and natural barriers, and translating them into works of art. The resulting show will tour



"Cactus Borders" by Mohammah el Hawajry, January 2011

Palestine, making a stronger, collective statement on the right to movement.

Name: Mohamad Allam (Egypt)
Title: "My Nineties"
Project Description: "My Nineties" is a multi-phased project exploring the effect of media and technology on identity in Egypt in the 1990s. The project will incorporate pop culture video references to critically examine the advertising and visual culture of this period.

Name: Sala 1 Cultural Association (Iraq)
Title: "Wounded Water" Iraqi Pavilion at the Venice Biennale
Project Description: The Iraqi pavilion at the 54th Venice Biennale will include work from six Iraqi artists on the theme of water in the Middle East, under the title

"Wounded Water." The artists include Ali Assaf, Adel Abdeen, Halim Al Karim, Walid Siti, Ahmad al Sudani and Azad Nankali. In addition, there will be a separate wing called "A Window into Iraq" dedicated to young artists living and working in Iraq.

Name: Sarah Ahmed Rifky (Egypt)
Title: "Jump Cut Curate"
Project Description: "Jump, Cut, Curate" seeks to galvanize the modern art movement in Egypt by providing a platform for aspiring curators to pitch ideas and discuss developments and challenges in the art field, specifically related to curating. Five participants will be selected to participate in a three-week program of events in Cairo, culminating in the publication of a catalogue of the group's projects and findings.

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Selection Process



Preparing juror packages at AFAC's Amman office, October 2011

AFAC's current application evaluation process consists of the following steps:

STEP 1: Registration and Administrative Check of Applications by AFAC

AFAC's staff conducts a registration and administrative check to screen the received applications and ensure that they comply with AFAC's grant guidelines and requirements (for example: if the application is complete, samples have been submitted, the budget is clear, projects fit the call category, the proposal topic is relevant to AFAC's mission, etc.)

Applications that pass the primary screening are sent to the jurors by the end of September.

STEP 2: Evaluation of Applications by Individual Jurors

AFAC selects 3 jurors per category specialized in each discipline. Each juror evaluates all applications according to the following four criteria in the Evaluation Grid: relevance (R) quality (Q) innovation (I) and cost (C). Each criteria will be given a score between 1 and 5, quantified as follows: 1 = very poor, 2=poor, 3 =adequate, 4=good, 5=very good.

Along with the evaluation for all the applications,

AFAC requests that the jurors recommend their top 5 proposals.

The following are guidelines for the juror criteria above:

Relevance: assessing the proposal's significance and importance to current events in the Arab world. How relevant is the proposal to the mission and objectives of AFAC?

Quality: assessing the grantee's methodology in implementing the proposed project. Are the project results specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and do they meet a specific deadline? To what extent is there coherence among the identified project objectives, and the expected outcome and results? Is the applicant (institution or individual) capable of implementing the project, in terms of talent/experience/professional background/education?

Innovation: assessing whether the proposal would contribute to each respective field. How original is the proposal idea? How creative is the implementation methodology? Are applicants utilizing new tools for expression? Would the project be visible? Will relevant collaborations and networks be employed?

Cost: assessing the match between the project's total cost and the project's output. AFAC requests

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Selection Process

the jurors to consider the following: Is the budget reasonable and suited to the project's stated objectives? Are the estimated project expenditures justified?

STEP 3: Analysis of Jurors' Recommendations by AFAC

AFAC staff collects and analyzes the recommendations of each individual juror by ranking the applicants scores and pinpointing discrepancies between the various evaluations. This process ensures productive and focused discussion during the juror committee meetings.

STEP 4: Selection of Grantees by the Jurors Committee at AFAC's offices

The three jurors in each category are invited to

AFAC's offices to discuss and select the awarded proposals. AFAC will present its analysis of the evaluation grids to guide the discussions. All sessions are moderated by the executive director.

STEP 5: Approval by AFAC Board and Winner Announcement

AFAC's team compiles the final selection of the winning grantees and prepares a report for the board of trustees indicating applicant statistics, grantee statistics and selected grantees. Upon board approval, the winners are announced to the press.

STEP 6: Notification and Contracting Grantees

Winners are contacted and a grant contract is negotiated and signed with AFAC.



2010 Literature grantee Lena Merhej signing her contract at AFAC's offices in Beirut, January 2011

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Grant Highlights



2009 Visual Arts grantee Mohamed Hawajri's exhibition "Cactus Borders" opened in Gaza, January 2011

2010 was a successful year for AFAC's grantees, with many grantees receiving prestigious prizes, participating in festivals, staging performances, exhibiting their work and publishing novels:

2010 cinema grantee "The Independent Film & Television College" launched its first Documentary Film Festival in Iraq with AFAC's support. The college aims to support Iraqi filmmakers through its free-of-charge training center established in Baghdad in 2004.

2009 AFAC literature grantee Hala Salah Eldin Hussein published the twenty-eighth issue of *Albawtaka Review* in December 2010. *Al Bawtaka Review*, a quarterly publication, is the only print and online periodical that publishes excellent translations of contemporary English short fiction into Arabic.

In October 2010, the Moroccan city of Fes hosted the fourth edition of the International Dance Festival entitled "l'Eloge du Corps" or "In Praise of the Body", which was hosted by 2009 Performing Arts grantee Babylon Cult-Art. In an interview with AFAC, festival director Aziz El Hakem said, "AFAC's support for this festival encouraged us to host troupes with a long-standing tradition in choreography, which enriched our program with distinguished and remarkable performances."

2009 Visual Arts grantee Mohammed Hawajri launched a new exhibition entitled "Cactus Borders" in Gaza in early 2011. Hawajri chose the native cactus plant as the theme for his exhibition to symbolize the plight of the people of Gaza who remain under siege.

2009 Literature grantee Soha Bechara published her second book "I Dream of a Prison Made of Cherries," a novel based on her life and that of fellow prisoners at Al Khiam Prison, during the Israeli occupation of South Lebanon. AFAC attended the launch of Bechara's novel at the Beirut Book Fair in December 2010.

With AFAC's support, 2010 RTR grantee Metropolis Cinema hosted the second edition of the animation festival "Beirut Animated" from May 2nd-7th, 2011 in Beirut. In addition to screening feature-length documentary from around the region and world, as well as a showcase of animated short films by Arab artists, Beirut Animated ran a series of workshops for Lebanese and Arab animators, designers, and comics novelists.

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In April 2011, 2010 Visual Arts grantee Al-Mahatta Gallery hosted the “Back and Forth” workshop exhibition, with AFAC’s support. The workshop held by the gallery under the supervision of Belgian artist Emilio Lopez, aimed to document the difficulties Palestinians face moving between West Bank cities. The exhibition included works on this theme by 10 Palestinian artists who participated in the workshop, following two-week trips between Ramallah, Birzeit, Bethlehem and Nablus.

Following the success of his feature-length documentaries, “Chronicles of Return,” “Women

of Hezbollah,” and “Shatila Roundabout,” 2008 Cinema grantee Maher Abi Samra released his latest film “We Were Communists” to critical acclaim in mid-2010.

The film screened at MOMA in New York, the Venice International Film Festival, the Abu Dhabi International Film Festival, Beirut DC, The Carthage Film Festival in Tunis, Doc Buenos Aires and Corsica DOC. In October 2010, “We were Communists” was awarded the Black Pearl Award for Best Documentary by an Arab Director at Abu Dhabi.



2009 Literature grantee Souha Bechara signs copies of her book “A Prison Made of Cherries” at Beirut Book Fair in December 2010

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Grantee Stories

AFAC grantees' work has been reviewed in the local and international press; they have been invited to participate in high-profile festivals, artist exchanges and residencies, and have, in turn, inspired hundreds of other residents of the region to pursue artistic endeavors through workshops and trainings; despite these successes and a measure of international recognition, AFAC awardees have overwhelmingly continued to work in the region and focus their cultural production in a local context.

Leila Hotait Salas: Finding Color in the Dark

04 May 2011

Filmmaker Leila Hotait Salas could easily be mistaken for an optimist, or even a Pollyanna. She makes beautiful films about the ability of people to overcome unimaginable pain, violence and oppression. But her touch is gentle, and her eye for detail enhances her stories and helps

Lebanon, Laila first studied filmmaking as a Fulbright scholar at San Francisco State University in California. Her first work, a short documentary titled "Beirut, coming back to you is not so painful," which she shot in 2005 together with her sister Nadia, explores the experiences of



A scene from *The Crayons of Askalan* by 2009 ADFP grantee Laila Hotait Salas

illuminate the deeper subtleties within themes of exile, migration and memory that preoccupy many artists of the Lebanese diaspora.

Born and raised in Spain but profoundly influenced by her family roots in southern

three Lebanese filmmakers who use cinema to renegotiate the relationships to their home country after having left in the midst of the civil war.

"Almost all my work deals with Arab issues, either about Palestine or Lebanon, mostly, but also, of

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course, there are other cultural elements," says Hotait of her diverse background. "Having lived in different places...I probably have a different approach or way of saying things than that of somebody who has lived his or her whole life in Lebanon."

Most recently, her fictional short, "Absent Spaces," based on her experience in southern Lebanon during an Israeli bombing campaign, and another piece titled "Baseeta" ('simple' in Arabic) were screened at the Los Angeles Film School's "Women's Voices from the Muslim World," with Baseeta winning the best experimental film award.

Laila is currently focused on her first feature film, *The Crayons of Askalan*, which she is making with AFAC's support. *Crayons of Askalan* is a docu-drama based on the life story of Palestinian artist Zuhdi Al-Adawi, who was imprisoned in Israel from age 15 to 30, but managed to transcend his cell walls by drawing on scraps of pillow using crayons smuggled in by friends, family and fellow prisoners.

"It was a story of somebody overcoming something you think is totally impossible to overcome," says Hotait. "It's a story about finding light and color and life in absolute darkness and fear. This juxtaposition of the will of the oppressor and the will of one single human being to be free, that contrast is very, very powerful."

Much of Laila's work draws inspiration from this dichotomy between light and dark. But her skill as a storyteller and artist shines through in the moments of suspended beauty that punctuate even the most dire scenes, whether it is the soft glow of the evening sky over an Israeli watchtower or the reflection of a woman's tilted head as she brews coffee while listening to the news.

"This is what fascinated me and this is exactly why I wanted to make films, to understand the capacity people had to overcome the everyday violence," says Laila. "There is more peace in the

South of Lebanon than in any other place I have ever been, and at the same time, there is the most violence I have ever seen."

As a first-time feature filmmaker, Hotait knows first-hand the difficulties faced by emerging artists, especially in the Arab world -- funding structures are weak or nonexistent, and experienced editors and producers are often not interested in taking on projects by non-established filmmakers. Hotait, who recently participated in the Berlinale's Talent Campus as well as the DoxBox film festival in Syria, says she's benefited from access to leading figures in the industry facilitated by such programs, and would like to see more comprehensive support that extends beyond the production phase to include marketing and visibility.

"Regional emphasis is indeed very practical and totally needed nowadays," she says. "And of course, the main issue I see and the most vital thing today that could encourage cultural production is visibility, both within the Arab region and internationally."

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"Jam and Yogurt" - A New Graphic Novel Supported by AFAC

20 January 2011

Lena Merhej questions war, exile, and identity through comics. She takes questions and turns them into sequential images and text, or comics. Mulling them in in her mind, she puts pen to paper. Having lived through war and exile, the "here" and the "there," Lena remains faithful to reality in all its fragmentation and erosion. Combining writing and drawing in order to delve into questions, the answers always come to her on paper. Lena considers comics to be a cumulative art form, incorporating linguistic and literary elements that are both classical and modern, Arabic and foreign. She also believes comics draw on academic theory in that they rely on "our critical view of reality and our observations of everyday life."

According to Lena, if you have paper and pen, you are already in possession of the greatest story; all you need is imagination. Lena's imagination has developed over time and with study and experience. She was influenced by her foreign mother who lives in Lebanon and who instilled in Lena a love of discovery, which, in turn, encouraged her to turn to writing and drawing.

"Yogurt and Jam" or "How my mother became Lebanese" is her new project, which she has been working on since March 2010, after receiving a grant from the Arab Fund for Arts and Culture (AFAC). Lena recently signed a contract with AFAC to continue the project, so we met up with her to see what she had to say:

How did you hear that you had been awarded the AFAC grant and what does this grant mean to you?



2010 Literature grantee Lena Merhej at the book signing of her graphic novel *Mrabba w Laban (Jam and Yoghurt)* in Beirut, March 2011

I wasn't in Lebanon when they announced the grantees but one of my friends told me over the Internet that I had won. Honestly, this news completely changed my day, and the first thing I thought was that my book will finally be published in Lebanon and will no longer have to wait to see the light of day. I was really excited when I read the names of the grantees and found that they were from all over the Arab world--Yemen, Tunisia, etc.--and many of them were luminaries, so of course I was very pleased.

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Your new project is a comic titled "Yogurt and Jam" or "How my mother became Lebanese." How would you describe this project and what is the story about?

"Yogurt and Jam" or "How my mother became Lebanese" is about the life of a foreign woman in Lebanon, my mother, her relationship to her surroundings and how she brought with her many of her own customs and adopted local ones. In short, it examines the experience of foreigners, particularly Europeans, in Lebanon. This woman lived through the Lebanese Civil War with five children, raised a mixed-faith family, and held a variety of jobs including work as a doctor, a teacher/nanny, and a social worker for people with disabilities. She interacted with her surroundings and home, trying to put something of herself in this place. So the project is based on a real story.

What is it like to create art based on personal experiences?

The project is made up of excerpts dealing with my relationship with my mother and my mother's relationship to Lebanon and her experiences here. My mother taught me to use my imagination, which is perhaps the most important element of any creative work. She taught me how to use my imagination through her everyday actions, especially during the war. For example at the height of the fighting she would take us to visit archaeological sites. She had her own way of removing us from the reality of the war. But one day I came home and she had dyed her hair black because she was afraid that as a foreigner she might be kidnapped, so even she had certain anxieties during the war. The book explores the psychological side of this woman and the various conditions she lived through. I always try to work in a particular spontaneous way, especially with this kind of work because for me it's a personal examination of my mother. Every one of us harbors a special love for our mothers, and this book is a chance for me to express that in my own way. As with any research, I have questions and exerted quite a lot of effort to get specific answers. I would sit for hours with my mother

and try to understand how she thinks. I called my brothers and sisters to ask them about specific incidents until I had collected all these stories. Then I started blogging in order to put all my thoughts down on paper and to think about them and translate them into a special language.

How far along are you and when do you think you will finish?

The project was ready two years ago but I am rewriting and redrawing it and it will be ready by March.

How would you describe your style of comic book storytelling and what drawing techniques do you employ?

When I started studying graphic design, there was a debate over drawing on the computer or on paper, and which is better, but young people today do not have this problem. I do not consciously rely on a particular style but it is a cumulative process resulting from my experience drawing children's comic books and my work with Samandal. I often change the language in my comics and even the style of drawing, depending on the subject. The last story I wrote and illustrated for Samandal was two pages about a bird. I once tried to create a story within a story or a memory inside a memory. Each time I needed a new style of drawing to match the subject.

In "Yogurt and Jam," I tried to be as honest and realistic as possible, so as soon as I felt that I was forcing myself to draw I stopped immediately. The best part of "Yogurt and Jam" is that the text and images came together naturally.

How do you balance between the text and the images in your work and which takes up more space?

It varies from one book to another. Some illustrators work with writers, or, in my case, I am both writer and illustrator, and the text and images always go hand in hand and complement each other. The important thing is to come up with a general idea, and then I design a page and

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after that, I work on the language. But the idea is there. How much of it is carried by the drawings or the text, this comes at another level and that is the aesthetic of the work. But the balance is always there and it can be played with, like, for example, the image can show the opposite of what the text says or differ from it, or the picture shows the subject in the past and the text is in the present or vice-versa, and it's nice to try all of these.

Would you describe your work as experimental?

I always try to understand the relationship between drawing and text and how they come together to make a story. Of course, there is experimentation in that I am always trying to improve, but it's not experimental in the sense that I distance myself from certain topics in order to be "experimental." I care about the idea and I look for the best way to implement it and sometimes different styles serve the work.

Tell us how you began and why you chose comics as a mode of expression?

I was always drawing cartoons on the back of my math books in school and then I decided to study graphic design and worked on a number of children's books and posters. In the beginning, I wanted to design websites and I worked for a while in animation. Then I wanted to make an electronic game to teach kids about the war, so I started gathering information from people who lived through the civil war and I asked them to send me words that have special meanings to them related to the images, sounds, smells and tastes of the war. I took these lists of words and turned them into a film titled "Drawing the War," in which I drew a diary of the war from a child's perspective.

But I always wanted to do comics, so when the July War broke out in 2006 I felt moved to start writing about my daily life during the war in illustrated stories that I published on the Internet. I wrote notes, diaries, extracts, jokes and just thoughts about the war. I felt then that I had to document this experience. Later, "Dar

Onboz" published it in a book titled, "I Think We Will Stay Calm During the Next War."

But don't you think that comics are still not appreciated as a form of literature, especially among adults? They are not very popular in the Arab world and where they are appreciated, they are imported in foreign languages by a few fans. Why did you choose to do comics and do you think they are starting to catch on among young people?

Mazen Kerbaj became the first to publish this kind of book with a real publishing house when he released "This Story Takes Place." Joumana Medlej and Zeina Abi Rashid were self-published. But today, and especially after the success of Samandal in Beirut, we are starting to see similar initiatives like "Tok Tok" in Egypt. There is also the problem of readership. A lot of people think that comics are for children when in fact this art is largely for adults and can have a political and social effect like any other art form. It can illuminate realities of life by introducing abstract ideas, ideologies, and existential questions. Comics are a broad art form with many levels that mixes the detailed and the general. In the end, yes this is a form of literature, because it is read and not watched: it is sold in bookstores and this means that it is a narrative form with its own set of rules. Its power lies in the fact that it uses both images and text, but the reader must imagine everything in between, and this builds imagination and urges people to think deeply and in new ways. Making art is always a political act and comics in particular carry a lot of bias. The thoughts are found in the space between the picture and the text; it is a rich art form that can include a lot of pointed messages. "Tintin in Congo" for example is a story that still to this day is a source of debate because it shows the history of French colonization and France's relationship with black Africans.

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Interview with Hala Salah Eldin of Al-Bawtaka Review

22 December 2010

AFAC talks to Hala Salah Eldin, the editor of Al Bawtaka, [the Crucible], an Egypt-based independent online quarterly magazine that translates contemporary English literature into Arabic. In the following interview, Hala reveals how, more often than not, funding for cultural projects in the Arab world goes hand in hand with censorship, or at least the imposition of an agenda. "I don't feel any kind of editorial pressure from AFAC," she said. "I feel as if I am working by myself, and the magazine is still completely independent. There have been no conditions imposed on the magazine by any funder or interference in the selection of the texts." With AFAC's support, Al Bawtaka has published issues 25, 26, 27 with issue 28 on the way, in addition to three printed editions featuring stories from the electronic issues. And the interview...

Al Bawtaka's readers notice the intelligence, the keen literary sense, as well as the diversity in the selection of stories that are translated into Arabic. How do you decide which stories to include?

Despite the confines set foremost by loyalty to the literary text, I believe that the translator still enjoys a large margin of freedom when choosing to translate a text. I choose the stories that go into the magazine based on a standard, which allows for the most creativity, and each text must stand on its own. It should contain an element of surprise, and raise more questions than the reader can answer. The text should employ contrast, literary agility, clever technique, creative narrative and believable characters. The story speaks for itself as to why it was chosen. There are certain universal elements in each story, something that connects the people of a village in Asia with the people of Africa, white and black people, [a story] expresses the feelings and instincts shared by all mankind. The kind of story that moves me weaves together raw human emotions and exposes the suffering of others. I also look for stories that speak for the

dispossessed, the marginalized, the foreign, the untouchables, those who do not fit in or feel left out. I also try to include genres that have not been popular in Arabic, such as horror, fantasy, self-help, and science fiction. I also look at works



Cover of 'Sharp Senses' by 2009 Literature grantee Hala Salah Eldin Hussein

and authors that have not been translated into Arabic, such as the late Paul Bowles, and his contemporary, Kazuo Ishiguro, who have never been published in Arabic in print or online, except for in Al Bawtaka. In the end, I try not to print texts that are too similar and include different points of view, especially since I choose them all myself. I admit I have failed in this at times. In the end I am the one who chooses, and Al Bawtaka is perhaps a mirror of myself.

On the first page of Al Bawtaka, there is an option to register an email address to receive the magazine. Has this helped increase the circulation of the magazine and do you communicate with readers via e-mail?

II. GRANTS

Grantee Stories

Of course. I make sure to periodically send out the magazine to readers. They depend entirely on the newsletter. Some of them have never been to the homepage. They think that the design on the site is the design of the publication, and when the publication is late, they don't check the site, but they write in and ask for links to more stories. If one of them changes his or her email, and doesn't visit the site again, he or she will email me personally. And because the readers know that I never publish their letters, they often write me to make corrections, give encouragement, or even reprimand me!

I also noted that the website says the 27th edition of Al Bawtaka will be published thanks to the Arab Fund for Arts and Culture. What is the role of AFAC in supporting this publication?

More often than not funding in the Arab world is tied to censorship or at least the imposition of some agenda. But I didn't feel any editorial pressure from AFAC, and I really felt like I was working by myself, and the magazine is still completely independent. There were no conditions imposed on the magazine by any funder or interference in the selection of texts. We published the 25, 26 and 27th editions and are working on bringing out the next one with AFAC's support, in addition to three printed books of stories that previously appeared in the online version of the magazine. On an editorial level, AFAC's funding helped increase the amount of material [we were able to make] available. Before I was busy trying to secure funding and it affected the size of the edition. Now I can dedicate more time to selecting material for each of the books we publish. And despite that fact that AFAC's funding was given only for the aforementioned projects, it indirectly encouraged me to found a publishing house--Dar al Bawtaka--and I self-published the paper edition without thinking of the financial loss. The publishing house has also printed the first book from Al Bawtaka titled, "Sharp Senses." We are preparing to publish two more with AFAC's support. AFAC undoubtedly provided vital support by allowing me to dedicate myself full time to the magazine, which in turn led to the publication of the first

book.

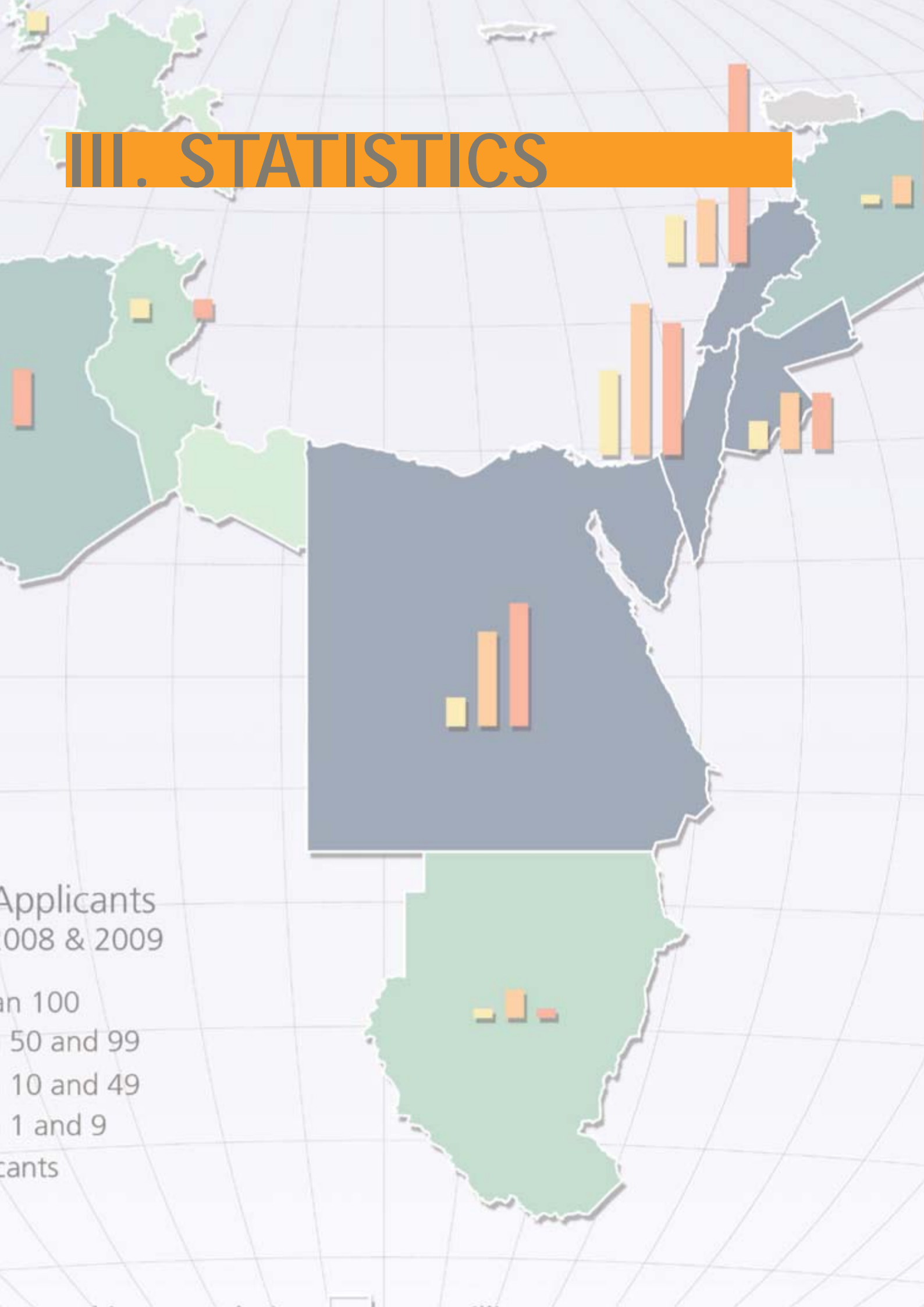
Is it possible to turn the electronic version of Al Bawtaka into a permanent paper edition by coming out with a book of translated stories that appeared in the magazine? What would it require to do this?

As I said, AFAC gave us a very generous grant to publish three books. Dar al Bawtaka published the first one under the title "Sharp Senses: Al Bawtaka's first book" and we are planning on publishing two more in January and April 2011, also with AFAC's support. The proceeds from these books will continue to help us publish the online magazine, but I cannot go backwards, so we will continue with the online publication.

What is the role of Al Bawtaka in supporting copyright law, seeing as it makes a point of prominently thanking authors who allow you to translate and publish their work in Arabic?

I cannot claim something that is not true: For the first year and a half Al Bawtaka was publishing stories without obtaining the rights until I decided to create a small fund in order to [buy the rights]. I do not blame those who publish materials without permission. Getting the rights to translation needs its own budget and an army of employees trained in dealing with publishing houses and agents. It took many months for me to hone my skills in this regard. It was difficult to gain the trust of foreigners, especially as I am working alone, without institutional support. Institutions are not used to dealing or signing contracts with individuals; they took a risk with me and I admire them for it, and I owe a lot to those authors for giving me the opportunity to work with them. But I still get rejected because agents are not satisfied with the amount I am offering, and sometimes they put me on the waiting list for many months. Al Bawtaka is the only periodical in the Arab world dedicated to regularly translating contemporary literature from English into Arabic. The first issue came out in April 2006, and in the 27 issues since then we have published 70 short stories, 62 biographies and one novel.

III. STATISTICS



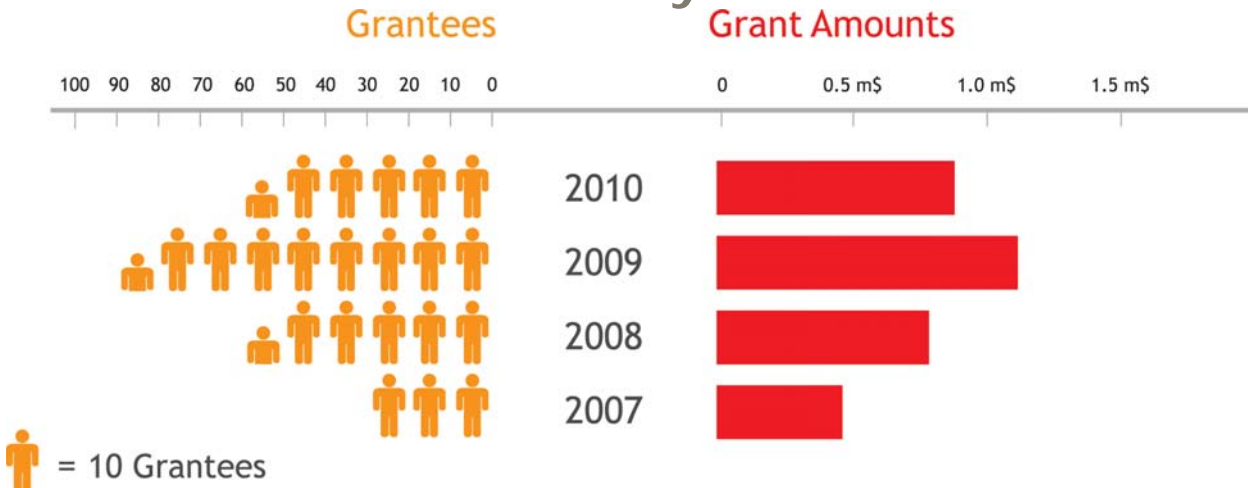
Applicants
2008 & 2009

more than 100
50 and 99
10 and 49
1 and 9

Applicants

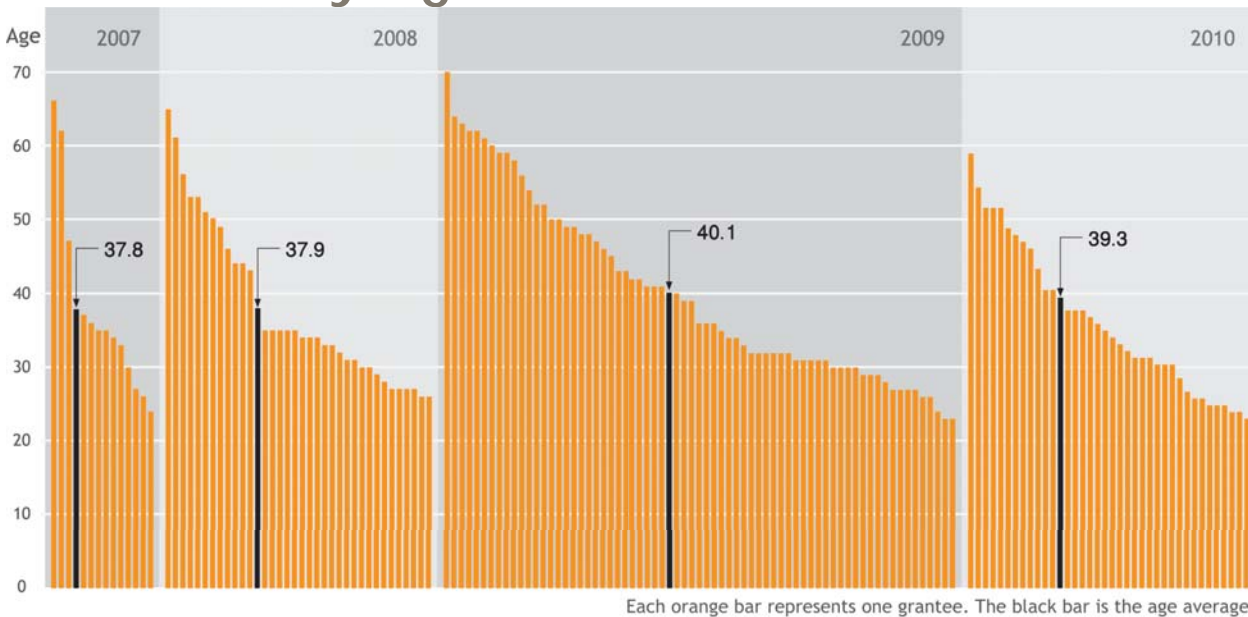
III. STATISTICS

Grants and Grantees by Year



AFAC provided 216 grants between 2007 and 2010: 29 in 2007; 50 in 2008; 83 in 2009; and 54 in 2010, distributing a total of \$473,500 in 2007; \$792,500 in 2008; \$1,181,200 in 2009; and \$847,000 in 2010.

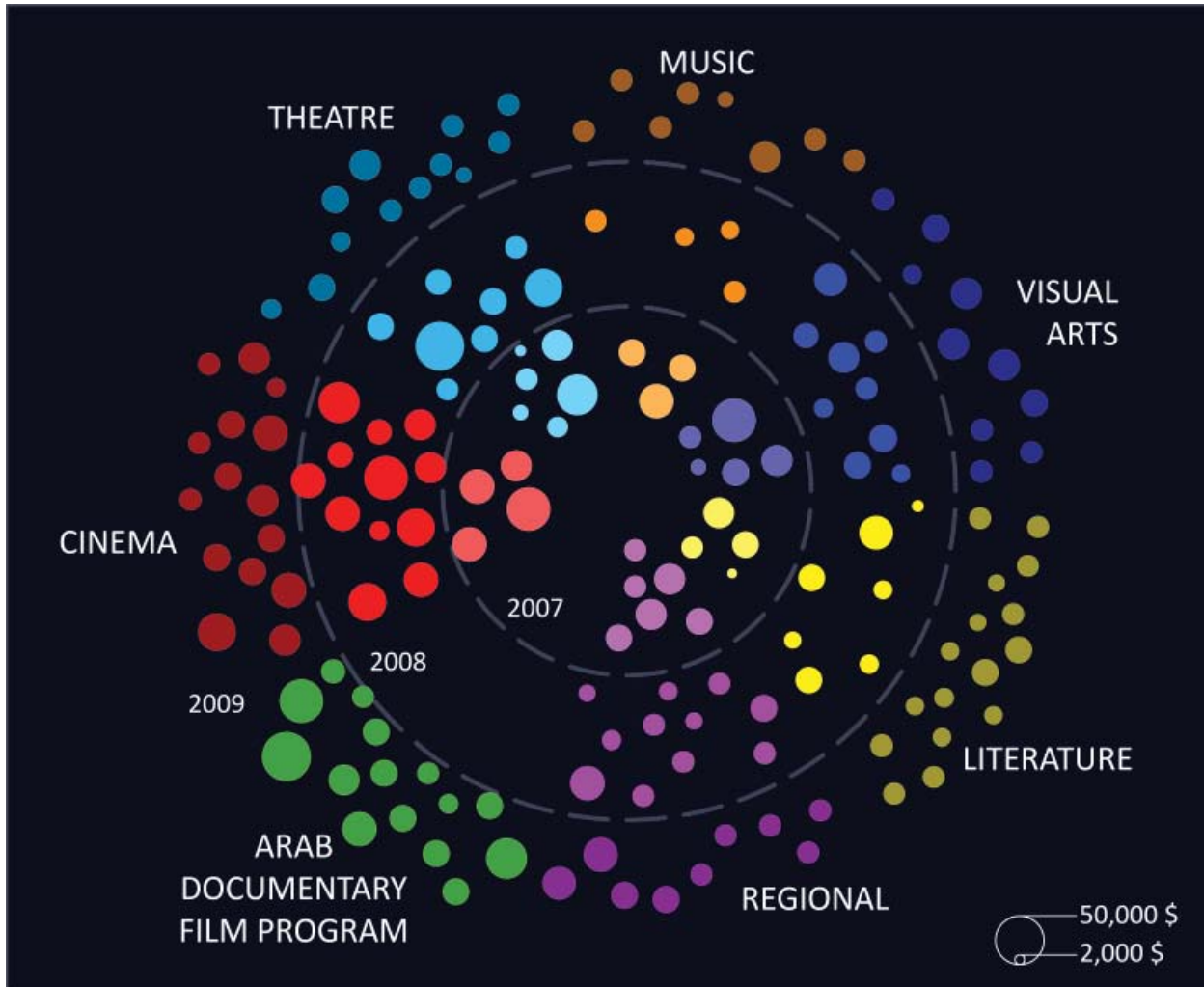
Grantees by Age



The average age of AFAC's grantees lies between 38 and 40, with more than two-thirds of grantees above the age of 30 in 2009. New Special Programs are being designed to reach out to younger segments of the population, for whom arts and culture are far removed from their daily realities.

III. STATISTICS

Grants by Category

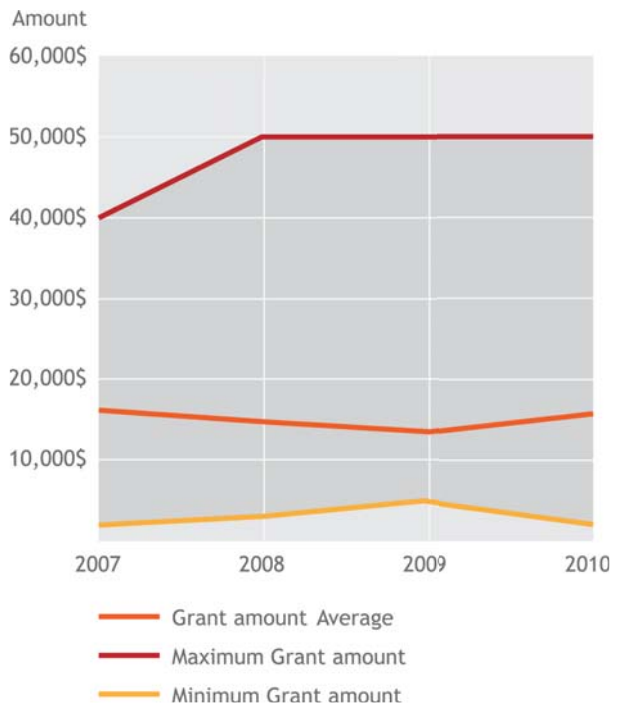
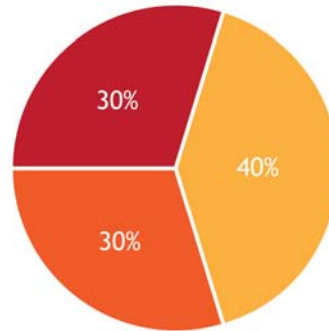
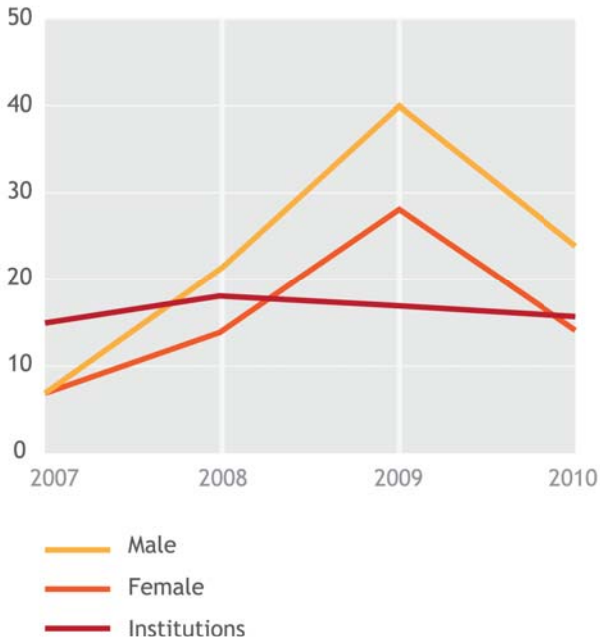


AFAC's focus has been broad, covering a wide range of genres. The number of grants provided has increased by 80% in 2008 and 60% in 2009 compared to the previous year. Special programs such as the Arab Documentary Film Program in 2009 will be launched annually to address relevant and current themes in the Arab world; one example is the Arab Graphic Novel Program, which will be launched in 2011.

III. STATISTICS

Grants by Gender and Average Grants by Year

Number of Grantees



About 40% of AFAC's grantees are male, 30% female and 30% institutional grantees. Between 2007 and 2010, the proportion of individual grantees rose in comparison to institutional grantees, while AFAC has steadily increased the number of beneficiaries. The average grant amounts have slightly decreased between 2007 and 2009 but remained stable in 2010 at around \$17,000.

III. STATISTICS

Geographical Distribution of Applicants and Grantees



IV. OPERATIONS



Exhibition at 2008 RTR grantee Makan House in Amman, September 2010

IV. OPERATIONS

In December 2010, AFAC moved its main office to Beirut and applied to register as a branch of AFAC Switzerland. To date, the registration, which requires approval by the Lebanese Council of Ministers, has not been granted due to a political vacuum that has persisted since the collapse of the last government in January 2011.

The General Grant call for proposals was divided into two separate calls per year, with each call open to project proposals in three categories, in addition to a call for one of two special programs. Increasing the frequency of the open calls will help distribute the work load across the year for AFAC's grants managers, as well as allow the organization to respond to developments on the ground, and to assess the needs for additional programs.

In February 2011, a call was launched for project proposals in Literature, Performing Arts and Visual Arts, in addition to the second cycle of the Arab Documentary Film Program (ADFP.) In July 2011, a second call for projects in the Cinema, Music, and Research, Training and Regional Events will open, in addition to the first round of AFAC's new special program, the Arab Graphic Novel Program (AGNP.)

In 2011, all proposals are submitted through an online application, allowing easy input into our database and reducing considerable processing time for the grants manager and AFAC's staff, which previously had to manually assess, categorize and organize applications, as well as perform tedious data entry. Applications can be submitted in either English or Arabic, except for Literature and Performing Arts, for which Arabic is mandatory. After the close of the open calls, the data from the applications is migrated to a database and PDF versions of each application are made available



AFAC آفاق
The Arab Fund For Arts and Culture
الصندوق العربي للثقافة والفنون - آفاق

**دعوة عامة
لتقديم الطلبات**

يعلن الصندوق العربي للثقافة والفنون (آفاق) عن بدء استقبال الطلبات في برنامج المنح العام ضمن ثلاث فئات وهي: **الأدب، والفنون البصرية، والفنون الأدائية**. كما يعلن الصندوق عن دعوته المفتوحة الثانية، وبالتعاون مع معهد (صن دانس) للفيلم الوثائقي، عن فتح باب قبول الطلبات في **برنامج منح الفيلم العربي الوثائقي**.

ويقدم الصندوق العربي للثقافة والفنون (آفاق) لجميع العاملين في الحقل الثقافي والفنون ممن تستهدف مشاريعهم الجمهور في المنطقة العربية، لتقديم طلبات الحصول على منحة بغض النظر عن العمر أو عدد سنوات الخبرة أو الجنسية أو بلد الإقامة (الوطن العربي أو المهجر) أو العرق أو الديانة أو أية عوامل أخرى.

www.arabculturefund.org

حلال مدة أقصاها ١٣ أيار ٢٠١١

open call for projects

The Arab Fund for Arts and Culture (AFAC) is launching an open call for proposals for its general grant in the categories Literature, Visual Arts and Performing Arts. Moreover, AFAC is launching a second open call for proposals for its Arab Documentary Film Program, in partnership with the Sundance Documentary Institute.

All individuals and organizations working in the cultural and artistic spheres, whose projects target the Arab region, are invited to send their project proposals regardless of age, years of experience, nationality, country of residence (domestic and abroad), ethnicity, religion or any other factor.

For more info please visit the following AFAC's websites:
http://www.arabculturefund.org/English/01
http://www.arabculturefund.org/Arabic/01

before May 13, 2011

online for the jurors (see VII. Website/Portal.)

In addition, AFAC's team has embarked on a number of field visits to familiarize itself with the cultural terrain and local artistic communities across the region. This has helped AFAC garner visibility for its operations, diversify its applicant pool, facilitate partnerships with local initiatives, and provide the basis for a rigorous needs assessment of its target beneficiaries. Additionally, these trips will assist fundraising efforts, as potential donors—particularly in the diaspora—have expressed interest in supporting arts and cultural initiatives in their home countries.

IV. OPERATIONS

Human Resources



From L to R: Artist Nada Sabet, consultant Racha Najdi, Grants Manager Racha Salah and Content Manager Rachad Chamoun in Cairo, May 2011

In July 2010, Oussama Rifahi replaced Fairooz Tamimi as AFAC's new executive director. Since moving AFAC's central office to Beirut, Rifahi is joined by a new core staff and a number of consultants. In addition to a grants and office manager, AFAC has hired a fulltime content manager for its website and marketing materials and a fulltime business development manager. A fulltime consultant has been helping devise new programs, manage the documentary program and oversee quality control of communications material.

Emily Dische-Becker, Programs & Communications Consultant

Emily Dische-Becker joined AFAC as a consultant in September 2010. She grew up in Berlin and Dublin, and has lived in Beirut since 2005. Emily studied history and human rights at Bard College, was a Harper's Intern and editorial assistant, and has written for *Der Spiegel*, *Die Zeit*, *Menassat*, *Executive* magazine and *Al Akhbar*. She has produced radio features for Pacifica radio and has appeared on CBC radio, and a host of local stations in Europe and the US as a commentator. Her blog "Anecdotes from a Banana Republic" was widely read and republished, including by the BBC, Huffington Post and dozens of other outlets, earning her a book deal for a set of creative non-fiction short stories with the German publisher, Eichborn. She has also taught writing for the Bard

IV. OPERATIONS

Human Resources

Prison Initiative's college-in-prison program in New York and is currently directing a new online publication, *The Arab Media Review*, set to begin in late 2011.

Nahed Mokdad, Office Manager

Nahed joined AFAC as Office Manager in January 2011. Previously she worked as an account at Management & Development Company (MDC), a company specialized in managing telecom and real estate projects and services, from January 2006 to December 2010. Nahed graduated from the American University of Science & Technology (AUST) - Beirut with a BA in Finance in 2005.

Racha Salah, Grants Manager

Racha joined AFAC as Grants Manager in November 2010. She has worked with the United Nations Agencies (UNRWA and UNRSD), the European Union, the Lebanese Ministry of Displaced Persons and a number of International NGOs in Lebanon. She has managed projects in social and humanitarian development, youth project management, and has worked in journalism and research. In addition, Racha has 4 years experience in industrial projects management with SNCF and TOTAL companies in France.

A graduate of the University of Bordeaux in France with a BA in Socio-cultural Development in 1994 and an MS in Anthropology in 1996, Racha worked for the Canadian organization "Right To Play" as Regional Deputy Director for the Middle East & North Africa from 2007 to 2010, where she was responsible for the overall quality and success of the organization's regional programs.

Racha is the author of the biography "L'An Prochain a Tiberiade" (Next year in Tiberias), published in 1996 by Albin Michel. In 1998, she authored a study about "The Reality and Needs of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon" for the German Friedrich Ebert Foundation. She co-directed and appeared in the documentary "Femmes Palestiniennes, Oubliees de la Paix" in 1997 and has participated in numerous conferences, lectures and debates, TV and radio interviews across Europe. Most recently, Racha worked on the study "The Reality of Palestinian Women in Lebanon" for the Spanish IEPALA Foundation.

Rachad Chamoun, Content Manager

Rachad Chamoun joined AFAC in March 2011 as Content Manager for the website. He has worked as a freelance facilitator and trainer for civil society organizations like The Youth Advocacy Process, and The Social Movement, and international organizations like UNESCO. He also worked as a compliance office/ internal auditor for the Belgium NGO ACTED. A graduate of the Lebanese American University in Beirut with a BA in Economics/ Political Science, Rachad worked at UNESCO as a project assistant for the "Youth empowerment and participation project" in Lebanon, where he drafted the youth policy briefs and project reports, translated the related policy papers, documented roundtables and workshops, and managed the website for the project.

Most recently, Rachad worked as a research assistant at UNDP where he helped building and managing the Program of Governance in the Arab Region online library database.

Steven Abdelatif, Business Development & Fundraising

For the past ten years, Steven has worked for civil society initiatives, as an area coordinator for South Lebanon for the French NGO ACTED following the July 2006 Israeli assault on Lebanon, as well as in the private sector, as an analyst for Energy Intelligence, a news and research company that tracks the global energy market. His passion, however, has been to promote and produce contemporary Arab art, and he has served in various capacities in the grassroots art scene in both the Middle East and New York. Most recently, Steve worked on the 2011 Sundance winning film *Circumstance*, as a liaison to the local Beirut arts world. He has done production work for the award winning film *Slingshot Hip Hop*, the Gorillaz, DAM, The Narcicyst, Immortal Technique, Jean Marie Riachi, the Axis of Evil Comedy Tour, Ramallah Underground, and others. He recently made the jump from arts as a hobby to a profession.

V. EVENTS



2007 Music grantee Makan- the Egyptian Art Center

V. EVENTS

AFAC on the Ground



AFAC's field visit to Cairo, May 2011

During the reporting period, AFAC's team co-hosted or participated in workshops, festivals, pitching sessions, museum openings and conferences across the region, as well as being present at many of its grantees' performances, screenings, book signings and events.

As part of its commitment to broadening its pool of beneficiaries and familiarizing itself with the institutions, initiatives and individuals active in the cultural scene across the region, AFAC has also undertaken week-long field visits to a number of

Arab countries since the beginning of 2011. These visits allow our core team to discover, map and engage with local arts and cultural communities across the region, and to garner visibility and publicity for AFAC's operations. In addition to participating in local cultural events and presenting AFAC's work and call for proposals to potential applicants, AFAC gives interviews to local media, and hosts dinners and meetings, as well as one-on-one discussions with cultural practitioners from every field and genre to discuss their needs and concerns.

V. EVENTS

Calendar 2010/2011

2010

January

February

March

April

First round of ADFP grantees announced

AFAC launches 3rd open call for proposals for its general grant

May

General Board Meeting in Beirut

June

July

August

4th open call for proposals for AFAC's general grant closes

September

October

ADFP regional meeting at Abu Dhabi Film Festival

November

Selection committees meet in Amman

December

AFAC participates in Arab World Donors Conference in Beirut

AFAC moves to Beirut

AFAC at Mathaf opening in Doha

Annual board meeting in Beirut

AFAC announces winners of 2010 general grant

V. EVENTS

Calendar 2010/2011

2011

- January *AFAC at Sundance International Film Festival*
- February *AFAC launches 5th call for proposals in 3 categories and 2nd call for ADFP*
- March *AFAC at Dox Box documentary film festival in Damascus*
AFAC at March Meeting, Sharjah Biennale and Art Dubai
- April *OSF Meeting in Istanbul*
AFAC participates in Conference on Cinema & Human Rights in Rabat
AFAC field visit to Tunis; Documentary Days film festival in Tunis
- May *Arab Foundations Forum Annual Meeting in Beirut*
Week-long field visit to Egypt
AFAC closes general grant open call in 3 categories and 2nd call for ADFP
- June *AFAC at Venice Biennale*
Supervisory board meeting in Kuwait
AFAC at Sunny Side of the Doc in La Rochelle
- July *Selection committees meet in Beirut*
AFAC launches second annual call for general grant
AFAC launches first call for Arab Graphic Novel Program (AGNP)
- August *AFAC announces winners of general grant in 3 categories and ADFP*
- September
- October *ADFP at DOK Leipzig*
AFAC closes 2nd annual call and AGNP
AFAC at Algiers-FIBDA Comics festival
- November
- December *AFAC announces winners of 2nd annual call and AGNP*
Annual board meeting in Beirut

V. EVENTS

General Board Meeting - Beirut, May 2010

AFAC's Board of Trustees convened in Beirut on May 31st, 2010 with nine board members present. Dr. Ferial J. Ghazzoul of the American University of Cairo was nominated to join the board. The board discussed funding for the 2010 grant cycle, as well as AFAC's new membership in the Arab League. Some amendments to the grants administration process were voted on, as well as strict enforcement of a conflict of interest policy, which prohibits the family members, business partners and close relations of AFAC board members and employees from applying for grants.

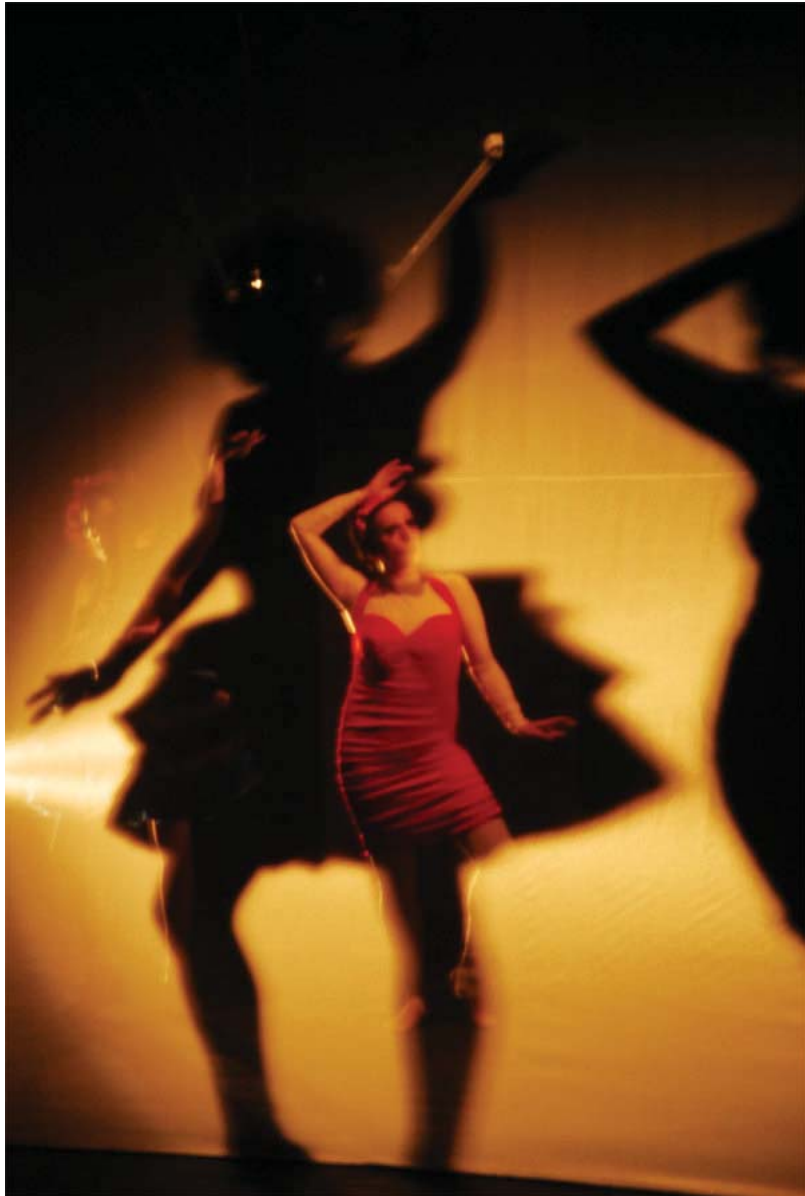


2008 grantee Ghassan Kanafani association, "al khayyat al saghir" publication, 2008

V. EVENTS

Arab World Donors Conference - Beirut, November 2010

On November 29th and 30th, 2010, representatives of sixteen different grant-making organizations met at the Beirut Art Center for two full days of presentations and discussions. This was the fourth informal meeting of arts and culture donors in the Arab region to take place in the past five years. The discussions touched upon the financial crisis, which has left many funders grappling with budget cuts, reviewing strategy and shifting the directions of their agendas and examining the resulting impact on the regional cultural scene. Additional topics included capacity building in the arts and culture sector, the long-term sustainability of local organizations and developing the leadership skills of the next generation; ways of tapping into new sources of funding in the Arab world and attracting fresh players to the field with the objective of strengthening local organizations, diversifying their sources of support and improving their abilities to fundraise within their communities; and knowledge sharing and the lack of sufficient data in the field of culture in the region. AFAC joined a newly formed steering committee to develop coordinated responses to the issues at hand and accepted to host the next meeting in Beirut in 2012, as part of its advocacy mandate.



2008 grantee Nehmeh Nehmeh, "Vitrine" theatre play, 2008

V. EVENTS

Mathaf Opening - Doha, December 2010



Mathaf opening in Doha, December 2010

Conceived as a gathering place where questions are asked, ideas are explored and creativity is fostered, Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art was open to a group of art and culture practitioners on December 16th- 17th and to the larger public on December 30th in Doha, Qatar.

Participating in the event allowed AFAC to meet with a large segment of the visual arts community in the region as well as explore the interaction and possible mutual benefits between new large cultural institutions and museums in the Gulf countries on the one hand, and the community of Arab artists at large (recipients of AFAC's grants) on the other hand.

V. EVENTS

Annual Board Meeting - Beirut, December 2010



Mohammed Berrada, a Moroccan writer and member of AFAC's Board of Trustees, is interviewed by Al Akhbarieh TV station after an AFAC press conference in Beirut, December 2010

AFAC's annual board meeting was held in Beirut from December 20th to 21st. With seven board members in attendance, AFAC's new executive director Oussama Rifahi introduced the board to the new team, before presenting AFAC's new marketing, fundraising and visibility strategies; proposed changes to the call for proposal cycles and application process; and the launching of a new special program for graphic novels in 2011.

AFAC's board voted to approve 54 new grantees nominated by the selection committees, awarding around \$850,000 for projects in six categories. After the meeting was adjourned, AFAC's board members and team were joined by a number of grantees, cultural figures and critics for dinner and live music at the Tawlet el Tayeb restaurant. The following day, AFAC staged a press conference to announce the names and projects of its 54 new grantees, the unveiling of its new website and the relocation of its central operations to Beirut. A number of local and regional print and TV outlets covered the event.

V. EVENTS

Sundance Film Festival - Utah, January 2010



New Frontier exhibition at the Sundance Film Festival in Park City, Utah, January 2011

AFAC and the Sundance Institute established a partnership and launched the Arab Documentary Film Program in 2009. One of the main objectives of the program is to become a launch pad for Arab filmmakers, providing them with the financial and professional resources to create influential work that is globally recognized.

In this context, Oussama Rifahi was invited to participate in the Sundance Film Festival held from the 21st - 24th January to network with documentary decision makers, explore collaborations with festivals and distributors, and promote the program and its grantees. Contacts were brokered with

Claas Danielsen, director of DOK Leipzig, and this festival will now host the first workshop of ADFP 2011 on its sidelines.

Also, following discussions with Yves Jeanneau, CEO of Sunny Side of the Doc, AFAC will participate in the festival in June 2011 and moderate a panel on "Springtime for the Arab Docs." Additional meetings were held with Orlando Bagwell, director at the Ford Foundation to explore potential support for AFAC's new film initiative, and with various documentary directors and producers that could play a role as jurors or advisors in future initiatives.

V. EVENTS

Damascus Field Visit, March 2011

AFAC's core team spent 4 days in Damascus from March 5-9, coinciding with the 4th edition of the DoxBox documentary film festival, which AFAC helped fund in 2008 and 2009. On the sidelines of the festival, AFAC hosted 'Coffee with AFAC,' introducing its activities to an assembled audience of interested parties and potential applicants; a number of Syrian past grantees took part in the presentation, discussing AFAC's work and describing their projects. The trip allowed AFAC to bring together and get to know all of its Syrian grantees—past and present-- over dinner and subsequent discussions. The team toured cultural spaces and met with dozens of artists, writers

and filmmakers, in addition to hosting a cocktail at the Art House for potential patrons and the directors of foundations, cultural agencies and local institutions. As a result of this visit, AFAC has forged close relationships with its grantees in Syria and a number of leading figures in the Damascene cultural scene. It also highlighted AFAC's crucial role as an independent Arab funding body in a country where access to outside funding is stigmatized and restricted, as well as its position as a facilitator of exchange and collaboration amongst artists whom are often isolated from each other even within their own communities.



AFAC grantee Orwa Nyrabia, the director of DOXBOX film festival, at an AFAC fundraising event at Art House in Damascus, March 2011

V. EVENTS

Sharjah Biennale, March Meeting & Art Dubai - UAE, March 2011



A controversial work by Mustapha Benfodil on display at the Sharjah Biennale, which was later removed

From March 12th to 17th, Executive Director Oussama Rifahi and Grants Manager Racha Salah attended the Sharjah Biennale and conjunctional March Meeting forum, as well as Art Dubai, the region's leading contemporary art market. A number of AFAC grantees work was included in the Biennale and forum, including Adel Abidin, Joana Hadjithomas & Khalil Joreige, Khaled Hourani, Rania Stephan and Raed Yassin. AFAC was also invited to present its vision, strategy and future programs to the March Meeting audience.

V. EVENTS

OSF Meeting - Istanbul, April 2011

In response to an invitation from OSF for new program proposals, AFAC's Executive Director joined a group of other local grant-giving institutions active in the region to discuss best ways to support the emergence of new entities, programs and activities in the wake of the changes sweeping the region and across a broad range of thematic areas and sectors, including arts and culture. AFAC is currently formulating a series of programs including a new film initiative and a general re-granting program in response to the initiative.




آفاق AFAC

The Arab Fund For Arts and Culture
الصندوق العربي للثقافة والفنون - آفاق

Open Call Cinema Project Proposals

July all applications
are welcome
Visit arabculturefund.org

Since 2007, AFAC has awarded grants to 55 film projects through an open call for proposals.

The Arab Fund for Arts and Culture (AFAC)
AFAC is a Beirut-based, independent Arab initiative launched in 2007 to provide direct funding to projects in cinema, visual arts, performing arts, literature, music, as well as research, training and regional events. In addition, AFAC's Arab Documentary Film Program supports documentary film projects that are relevant to the Arab region. The second call for documentary film proposals closed in May, with 15 winning projects to be announced in August 2011.

Photo credit:
Boy and a ball by Laila Hattar, 2010
Book cover of Strange Harbours, 2010 AFAC Literature & Film Initiative of Beirut

V. EVENTS

Conference on Cinema & Human Rights - Rabat, April 2011



AFAC's Executive Director Oussama Rifahi along with political scientist Abdelhay Mouden, human rights activist Kamal Jendoubi, and the French sociologist and philosopher Edgar Morin

As part of the second edition of the «Mediterranean Meetings on Cinema and Human Rights,» a panel entitled "Democracy and Human Rights in the Arab World" was held on April 9th, 2011 in Rabat. The panel included AFAC's Executive Director Oussama Rifahi along with political scientist Abdelhay Mouden from Morocco, human rights activist Kamal Jendoubi from Tunisia, and the French sociologist and philosopher Edgar Morin.

The panel addressed the latest political events and the re-emergence of human rights as a critical dimension to the changes occurring in the Arab region. Rifahi emphasized the importance of supporting the fresh wave of artistic expression in the cinema industry and addressing the funding gap that has emerged in the wake of regime change and upheaval. The plans to design a specific program in cinema in response to these needs were described and resulted in much interest and questions by audience and press. The panel is part of an on-going effort to further promote AFAC both to the community of artists and filmmakers and potential donors and the press at large, specifically in the Arab Maghreb.

V. EVENTS

Tunis Field Visit, April 2011

AFAC spent a week in Tunis from April 9-15, meeting with local cultural practitioners of all ages, levels of experience, and from all fields.

In addition to two public presentations on our grant activities and the open call process, AFAC's executive director and grants manager

also appeared on Tunisian national television to discuss AFAC's work and call for proposals and were interviewed by a local radio station. AFAC toured a number of smaller independent cultural spaces, attended a documentary film festival, and participated in extensive discussions about the

state of the cultural sector in post-Ben Ali Tunisia with visual artists, cultural activists, theater directors and young filmmakers. The trip allowed AFAC to do a needs assessment and to make valuable contacts, as well as garner visibility for its operations in a country where cultural practitioners have traditionally leaned towards Europe and France, rather than the Middle East, for funding. AFAC subsequently published a photo essay of its trip on its website, as well as an internal assessment for the board and potential donors from the Tunisian diaspora who are dedicated to supporting the local cultural scene.



AFAC presentation at Beit el Hikma, Carthage, Tunisia, April 2011

V. EVENTS

Arab Foundations Forum Annual Meeting, Beirut, May 2011



AFAC Executive Director Oussama Rifahi at the Arab Foundations Forum meeting in Beirut, May 2011

Under the title “Towards Effective Philanthropy in the Arab Region” the Arab Foundations Forum (AFF) Annual Meeting 2011 was held on May 4 - 6, 2011 at the Bristol Hotel in Beirut, Lebanon. The meeting was co-hosted by AFF members in Lebanon: AFAC, Makhzoumi Foundation, Albert Nassar Foundation, American University of Beirut, and the Arab Human Rights Fund. Oussama Rifahi spoke at the first plenary session “The Role of Arab Donors in Supporting Civil Society Organizations” moderated by Rami Khouri with the participation

of Dr. Gannat El-Samalouty, Executive Director of the Sawiris Foundation for Social Development and Farida Allaghi, Executive Director of Mentor Arabia. The annual meeting was a good opportunity to network with colleagues in the region and to promote AFAC’s advocacy role in the region. AFAC also integrated the Members Development Committee within AFF to help the expansion of the institution and the inclusion of more arts and culture foundations from across the region.

V. EVENTS

Egypt Field Visit, May 2011

As part of its extensive survey of the arts and cultural communities across the Arab region, AFAC's team visited Egypt from May 15th-21st, 2011.

The weeklong visit was extremely fruitful and informative, including more than 20 meetings with cultural institutions and artists. In addition, AFAC held two information sessions in Cairo and Alexandria, presenting AFAC's history, grant programs, new projects, and evaluation process to the assembled audiences.

AFAC also organized a reception for its Egyptian grantees, and discussed their latest projects, expectations and concerns for the cultural sector in post-revolution Egypt.

The visit was extremely helpful in identifying the areas where support is most needed. Throughout the trip, the lack of resources for establishing new spaces was cited as a major obstacle to pursuing creative endeavors. Cultural management and artistic management institutions also seemed largely absent from the Egyptian cultural sector. Moreover, the rapid rise in the number of art practitioners only emphasized the need for independent local funding bodies like AFAC. The feedback received by AFAC's team will help improve the user-friendliness and effectiveness of the grants applications, website, and marketing tools.



AFAC presentation at Rezodance in Alexandria, May 2011

VI. COMMUNICATIONS



AFAC's Grants Manager Racha Salah during an interview with Tunisian national television, April 2011

VI. COMMUNICATIONS

AFAC has pursued a three-prong communications strategy, targeting 1) its beneficiaries—cultural practitioners, applicants and grantees; 2) donors and potential patrons—both regionally and internationally; and 3) the broader public and media.

Grantees

The prime objective of AFAC's communications strategy vis-à-vis its grantees has been to listen and learn from their needs, encourage feedback on the application and grants management process, to follow up with their projects, and maximize exposure for their work. Over the past year, AFAC has taken on an active role in assisting grantees with networking opportunities, seeking avenues to distribute their work, connecting them with festivals and institutions, and providing advice at various stages of their projects and careers. AFAC's team has responded to a number of grantees who requested assistance with budgets and advice for financing their projects, as well as feedback on their individual publicity materials and presentations of their work. AFAC's new communications and marketing materials incorporate and showcase grantees work—online on its website and in print. The team also maintains close communications with its alumnae grantees, meeting with them in Beirut and abroad, and building on the networks and contacts they have in their home cities and communities to reach out to an ever greater number and breadth of cultural practitioners. Through its field visits and by bringing together grantees on a number of occasions in different Arab capitals, AFAC actively facilitates collaborations amongst its grantees. This has helped ensure that AFAC exceeds its role as a mere funding body, by fostering a sense of community amongst grantees and providing opportunities for exchange, growth and mentorship. It has also lent credibility to AFAC's mission as an organization supporting arts and culture from the entire Arab region. AFAC's new website/portal is in part a response to a demand for a platform for grantees to exhibit their work and advertise their events, and to connect with other cultural practitioners in their fields.

Donors

AFAC strives to become a model for a cultural philanthropy that is tolerant, sustainable and local, finding common cause between funders and cultural practitioners. It is AFAC's mission to engender awareness of the transformative power of culture, and the need for sustainable local patronage of the arts. By showcasing the impact of the organization's work and its achievements over the past four years, AFAC seeks to emphasize the importance of supporting cultural production, particularly to a local constituency of potential donors. To increase our local funding base, we are identifying and working to convince new stakeholders that culture is a necessary catalyst for social change; sustainable funding for the arts fosters a community of cultural practitioners, promotes debate and public involvement, and is an exportable resource that reaps tangible social and economic returns. Towards this end, AFAC is inviting potential patrons to our grantees events, and bringing artists and patrons together whenever possible. Patrons need to feel they have an active stake in, rather than providing a charitable crutch to, the region's cultural scenes. AFAC seeks to inspire confidence among and excite donors through the quality of its materials, its professionalism and its transparency.

VI. COMMUNICATIONS

Press and Public Outreach

The past year has garnered significant press coverage from the regional media for AFAC's operations and its grantees. The organization's move to Beirut and announcement of the 2010 grantees at a press conference in December was written up in a dozen regional and local newspapers, and covered by two regional TV stations. Participating in high-profile festivals, such as the Abu Dhabi Film Festival, AFAC published press releases and material prior to and after events, which has helped generate attention for its work. Being present at grantee book signings, award ceremonies and openings has also ensured that AFAC receives mention in press reviews. On its field trips to cities like Tunis, Cairo and Rabat, AFAC has given interviews to TV and radio stations. AFAC's executive director has participated in a number of panels and conferences, increasing our visibility as experts in the cultural sphere. AFAC's team has also reached out to the heads of cultural pages and journalists covering the arts scene, with local newspapers offering to run free ads for AFAC's call for proposals. By generating its own daily news stories, profiles and photo essays on its website, AFAC aspires to become an information hub on regional arts. Only a few months after launching our new website, a Google search for a grantee's name in many cases already returns an AFAC news story on the first page.

Marketing Materials

Over the past year, AFAC has created marketing materials targeted towards all three audiences, in addition to re-branding its logo, its logo guidelines for grantees, and all its materials. In March 2011, AFAC published "4 years of AFAC," a 150-page overview of its operations and achievements since 2007. Distribution to potential donors has begun, particularly to regional figures who have been identified as suitable to court by AFAC's business development manager and board of trustees. AFAC published a number of brochures—for its general grants and special programs—which have been widely distributed on trips around the region and at cultural events. In addition to using its burgeoning mailing list of over three thousand contacts, social media platforms, and the traditional press to broadcast its call for proposals, AFAC also designed poster announcements, which were distributed and hung in key locations, including universities, galleries, cafés, cultural institutions, cinemas and theaters across Syria, Lebanon, Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt and the Gulf. AFAC created a number of slideshow presentations with graphs, maps, photos and information about its operations, as well as DVDs with selections of its grantees work, which have been included in teaser packages to potential patrons. In 2010, AFAC published 5 newsletters, which were distributed to Arab cultural institutions, grantees, applicants, governmental and nongovernmental organizations in the Arab world, as well as donors and international institutions working in the cultural field.

VI. COMMUNICATIONS

AFAC in the News

While AFAC has dramatically increased its visibility in the regional and international media in recent months, sustained effort and the filling of a fulltime communications staff position are required to capitalize on our contributions to the region's arts and cultural production. A couple dozen stories in the press have covered AFAC's activities and our grantees' achievements.

e-flux

Acqua Ferita / Wounded Water

May 18, 2011

Pavilion of Iraq at the Venice Biennale

Acqua Ferita / Wounded Water
Six Iraqi artists interpret the theme of water
4 June–27 November 2011

Opening:
Tuesday June 2, 6–9 pm

Genesisti Foundation
Fondamenta S. Anna (Via Garibaldi) Castello 995 Venezia
(vaporetto Arsenale or Giardini)

Commissioner: Ali Assaf
Co-Commissioner: Vittorio Urbani
Curator: Mary Angela Schroth
Organization: Nuova Icona and Sala 1
www.pavilionsofiraq.org

Iraq's experimental contemporary artists have never had a chance to present their work for an Iraq Pavilion at the Venice Biennale; the first and last major appearance in 1976 outlined only some of their "modern" artists. The Iraq Pavilion for 2011 will indeed show the world an exciting professionally-curated selection of 6 Iraqi artists from two generations, including various artistic media (painting, performance, video, photography, sculpture/installation).

ARTINFO.COM

Bahrain and Lebanon Withdraw From the Venice Biennale
Due to Mideast Turmoil, While Egypt's Participation Remains Uncertain

It is no surprise that the popular uprisings sweeping the Middle East should have an impact on the Venice Biennale, the international showcase of art, culture, and political soft power, and now the first embattled countries have begun to withdraw from participation. Bahrain, the tiny Gulf nation that was to make its first appearance at the Biennale this year, has backed out amid recent crackdowns at home, and Lebanon has likewise called off its sophomore pavilion, Maanulhi, Egypt's participation remains uncertain at a guesswork.

Bahrain's inability to send its art to Venice is especially unfortunate since last year the country had its first appearance at the Venice Architecture Biennale and worked away with the Golden Lion for best Jordan. Curator by architect Nour Al-Sayeh and Faad Al-Aman, the national display focused on plans to develop areas along its shores where water has receded and polluted from industrial effluents. The jury was impressed with its "fast and painful self-analysis of the nation's relationship with its rapidly changing coastline." It is unclear whether Bahrain had already chosen a curator and artist for its appearance in the Venice Biennale this year.

As for Lebanon, it skipped the 2009 Biennale but had its own national pavilion for the first time in 2007, curated by Saleh Baramand and Sandra Daghe with the participation of artists Fouad Elkoury, Lama Jozegh, Waleed Sedek, Mounira Al Solh, and Ahran Zaitani. The artist had the official support of Lebanon; he was funded by private donations from the Lebanese community. The 2007 curators' statement said that Lebanon was joining the Biennale "at a time of grave political crisis in the country — when the concept of the nation has once again been called rather roughly, even violently into question."

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NEW ART CENTER

GALERIE JEROME
de NOIRMONT

VII. WEBSITE/PORTAL



VII. WEBSITE/PORTAL

AFAC's online presence constitutes the cornerstone of its communications strategy.

Launched in 2007, the first version of AFAC's website offered only sparse information about the fund and its programs, was not updated regularly and provided users with little content or news outside of an annual announcement about AFAC's open calls.

Under AFAC's new management and more ambitious visibility and communications strategy, AFAC is developing its website to become a tool that can realize the following goals:

1. Establish and improve the image of AFAC
2. Develop an optimized and rich one-stop information and communication platform to serve the target audience
3. Complement traditional media in terms of communication
4. Provide cost-efficient marketing and communication platforms
5. Achieve a modern and vibrant appeal
6. Provide visitors with a highly informative, interactive and user-friendly tool that will enable them to easily retrieve the information they need about AFAC's programs and projects.

In order to realize these goals, AFAC has developed a work-plan consisting of two phases. The first phase started with the launch of the second version of the website in December 2010. Although it was developed in a short period of time ahead of the announcement of the 2010 grantees, this version substantially improved the services offered by the



website and accomplished many of its goals.

Currently, the website provides the visitors with daily news about AFAC's grantees and the organization; all information relating to current open calls—including guidelines, FAQ and grant evaluation criteria; a step-by-step description of the grant evaluation process, followed by the selection committee; and information about new programs and upcoming activities. In addition, the website regularly publishes general arts and culture news from the Arab world, as well as upcoming events and reviews. All stories are archived in the website's newsroom, laying the foundations for AFAC to become a hub for arts and culture news in the Arab world, and providing a basic for future research and reporting on Arab cultural life. Another feature dedicated to our grantees available on this version of the website is the Grantee stories section, which features interviews, reviews, and artists profiles. The 'Mapping AFAC' feature provides statistics, graphs and maps about AFAC's grant distribution. A list of all grantees and project descriptions by year is also included in this

VII. WEBSITE/PORTAL

version of the website. The 'Resources' section hosts AFAC's reports, marketing materials and other resources in PDF format.

The second website version has also played an important role in the publicity for the open calls for proposals and in facilitating the application process for AFAC's grants, through an online portal, which enables applicants to fill in their applications directly through the website. Applicants can also benefit from the online application to upload required documents and work samples. Hence, the cost and time of sending the applications to AFAC is reduced.

During the second phase of the website development (from February to mid-June 2011), a new refined version of the website is being developed. Improving glitches in the current website and based on user feedback, the new version is expected to fulfill all our website goals. This latest version will be more appealing in design, more user-friendly, and interactive.

The most important additions to the website are the following:

- An event box, which will serve as a calendar to announce all the upcoming events and activities related to AFAC's work.

CONTACT US SUPPORT AFAC ARABIC

AFAC آفاق

HOME | ABOUT AFAC | GRANTS & PROGRAMS | OUR GRANTEES | **NEWSROOM** | RESOURCES | FAQ

CALENDAR

- ▶ January 2011
- ▼ February 2011
 - 18 Submissions in film are open
 - 22 Submissions in music are closed
- ▶ March 2011
- ▼ April 2011
 - 03 Cactus Borders Exhibition
 - 12 Conference at THYU Beirut
 - 27 Submissions in film are closed
 - 27 Submissions in painting are open
 - 29 Conference at Hall 68 Dubai
 - 03 Cactus Borders Exhibition
 - 12 Conference at THYU Beirut
- ▶ May 2011
- ▼ June 2011
 - 18 Submissions in film are open
 - 22 Submissions in music are closed
- ▼ July 2011
- ▼ August 2011
 - 03 Cactus Borders Exhibition

NEWSROOM

Grantee's film wins a prize at the SCW Festival in Egypt.
2008 AFAC grantee Ismail Elnazer won an award for the film "Hokm Qaraqush" or "The Rule of Qaraqush" at the Egyptian festival, the 3d Sakia...
Posted on 27 Jan 2011 [read more ▶](#)

Grantee's film wins a prize at the SCW Festival in Egypt.
Al Bawtaka released a new issue of its review in January. Below is how they covered the news on their website: The twenty-eighth issue...
Posted on 27 Jan 2011 [read more ▶](#)

Grantee's film wins a prize at the SCW Festival in Egypt.
For its 2010 general grant, AFAC has awarded a total of around \$850,000 to 54 new grantees for projects in six categories music, film...
Posted on 27 Jan 2011 [read more ▶](#)

MEMBER LOGIN

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PASSWORD:

[forgot you password?](#)

MAPPING AFAC

GRANTEE STORIES

▶ A NEW ISSUE OF "AL BAWTAKA" IS OUT
Al Bawtaka released a new issue of its review in January. Below is how they covered the news on their website: The twenty-eighth issue...
Posted on 27 Jan 2011 [read more ▶](#)

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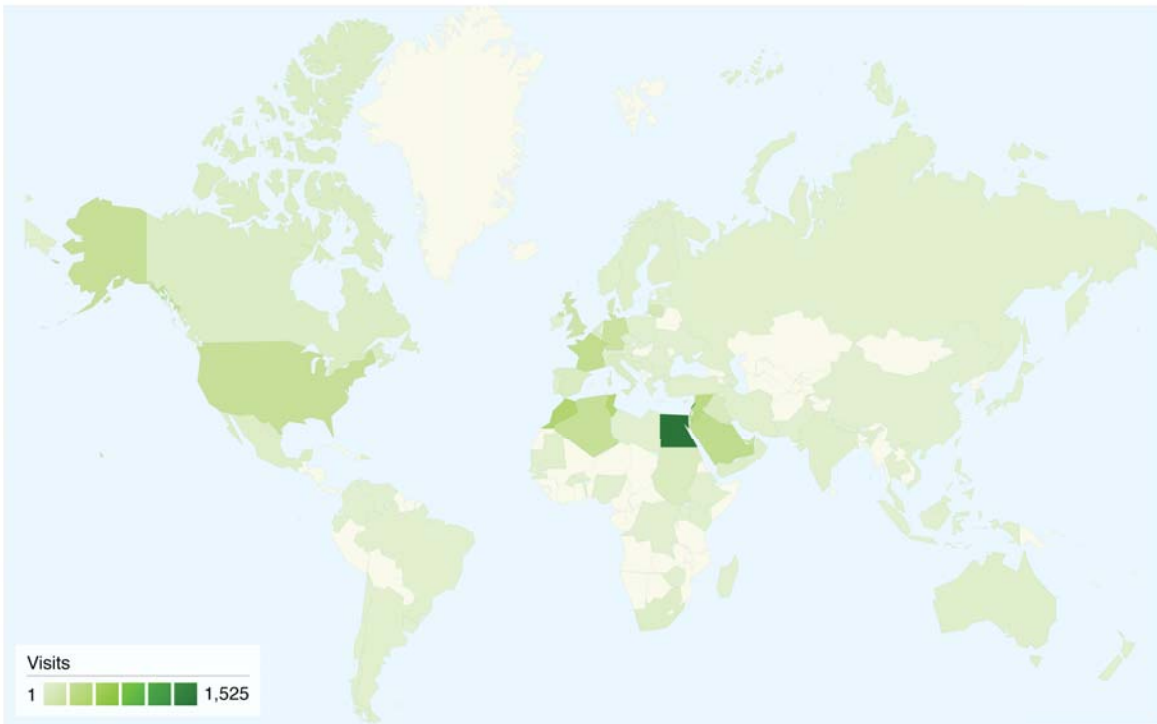
AFAC's new website will launch in June 2011

VII. WEBSITE/PORTAL

Website Statistics

arabculturefund.org - AR
Map Overlay

1 Feb 2011 - 26 May 2011
Comparing to: Site



8,566 visits came from 95 countries/territories

- Users will be able to subscribe to AFAC's newsletter.
- A database of AFAC grantees, their projects, bios, contact information, and latest updates, events, reviews and photos
- Grantees will be able to update their profiles and publish announcements and news about their latest projects.
- Book reviews, research, and other resources related to AFAC's scope of work will be available in the "Resources" section.

Furthermore, the online application will be upgraded to enable jurors to rate the project proposals directly online, speeding up and facilitating the evaluation process and work of the juries. This upgraded website version will also enable AFAC's grant manager to follow up on the

jurors' progress and to process the preliminary evaluation of the proposals.

Preliminary statistics for the period from February through April 2011 indicate 28,000 page views and 9,000 visits to AFAC's new website, a third of which originated from search engines, 40 percent from referrals from other sites, and 30 percent from direct traffic (e.g. visitors were referred directly to the website via e-mail or a direct link.) The website's most visited pages are the grants page, the guidelines and AFAC's newsroom, with an average time of 4:12 minutes spent on our site. Visitors came from 95 countries with the highest visitor numbers originating in Lebanon and Egypt, followed by Palestine, Morocco, Tunisia, Jordan, Syria, Saudi Arabia and France.

VIII. FUNDRAISING



Jazz Club in Cairo, during AFAC field visit to Egypt in May 2011

VIII. FUNDRAISING

AFAC has created a short term strategic plan designed to boost the organization's name recognition among both potential donors and leading cultural figures in the arts world, in the region and internationally. To date, about a hundred contacts have been made with potential donors who range from high net worth individuals from the region who have demonstrated an interest in the arts, to celebrities connected to local cultural production, and curators, collectors, as well as CEOs of large institutions. These contacts were primarily identified through the chairman and board members' personal networks, as well as from the personal contacts of AFAC's team.

AFAC is positioning itself as a local Arab institution in the arts world that needs to be sustained through community support. Promoting its grantees in parallel to its own achievements, AFAC can take advantage of press, accolades, and other media exposure to raise awareness of the organization and its support for meaningful projects across various genres.

As the organization moves into its fifth year, AFAC's development strategy entails a two-pronged approach. On the one side, AFAC will engage with individuals and institutions from its potential donors database. At the same time, AFAC will start running targeted, specialized campaigns at high-profile events. While individuals and institutions will primarily be targeted for financial support, certain institutions will be solicited for in-kind

support, which will help raise AFAC's brand and name recognition.

In light of the enthusiasm for supporting AFAC at a community level, AFAC intends to establish "Friends of AFAC" committees in several Arab capitals as well as in cities in the West with significant diaspora communities. These committees will support AFAC's visibility and fundraising efforts and will act as satellites for AFAC's campaigns and communications activities.

AFAC intends to realize these committees through a 5-step process that begins with identifying a core group of supporters, who come from backgrounds that promote arts and culture; meeting with these supporters and securing their support; expanding the network; establishing a regular reporting structure and communications framework with each network; holding an annual event in each city, which will be attended by an AFAC board member or the director together with local grantee(s).

We have made contact with one hundred individuals and institutions and supplied them with marketing packages about our grants. A subset of these have already been contacted a second time, and discussions are currently ongoing about providing financial support to AFAC. Several meetings with the chairmen of Arab banks have been held; a fundraising event took place in Damascus; and two fundraising events are planned for the coming weeks—in Paris and in Kuwait.



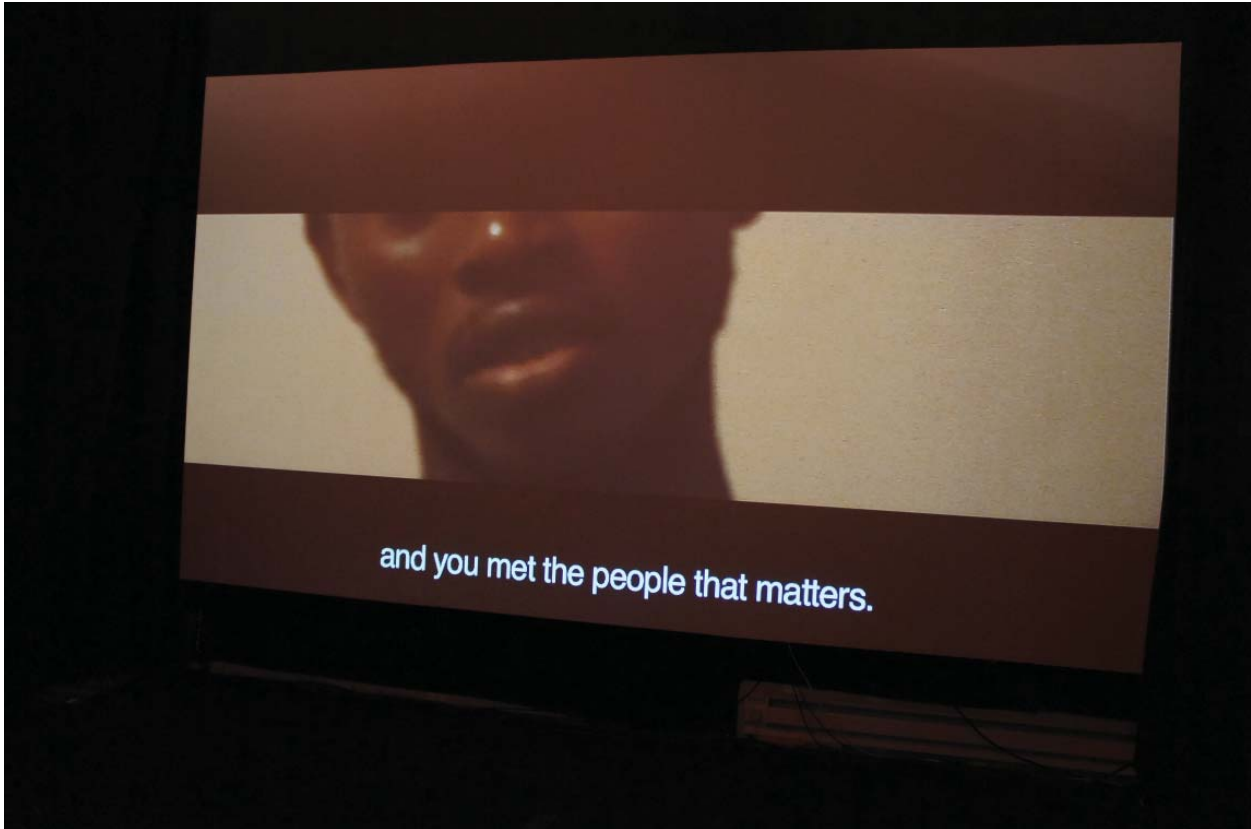
Informal meeting with Moukhtar Kocache from the Ford Foundation and Renata Papsch from the Anna Lindt Foundation

IX. SPECIAL PROGRAMS

The image shows a close-up, low-angle view of a heavily damaged and rusted metal structure, likely the interior of a bus. The metal is twisted and bent, with significant rust and peeling paint. The colors are a mix of brown, orange, and blue. The background shows a dark, industrial-looking interior with some structural elements visible.

"A Bus and its Replicas" exhibition by Houssam Bokeili at UMAM Research & Documentation, Beirut, April 2011

IX. SPECIAL PROGRAMS



New Frontier exhibition at the Sundance Film Festival in Park City, Utah, January 2011

In parallel to the general open call, AFAC devises additional programs to support an increase in cultural production in genres that are promising and warrant their own call for proposals. The Arab Documentary Film Program (ADFP), launched in partnership with the Sundance Documentary Institute in 2009, provides an excellent model for such programs. Responding to the vast number of excellent cinema proposals received during the open call in the first two years of its operation, AFAC decided to establish an additional program for filmmaking. Documentaries are a very popular and accessible medium in the Arab world, allowing filmmakers to broach current issues as well as investigate the recent past. The program provides funding and consultation, networking and training opportunities for documentary filmmakers.

AFAC intends to address genres that exist on the peripheries of classical cultural expressions, by developing programs that will engage new artistic constituents and resonate with a broader audience. Many hybrid genres, such as Arabic hip-hop or comics, appeal to younger people in the region, and are flourishing as modes of expressions for marginalized communities, emulating their popularity among disempowered communities outside the Arab world. Exploring such themes will enrich and diversify local narratives, as well as resonate internationally. In the summer of 2011, AFAC is launching a Graphic Novel Program to support an important genre that has so far received little attention, while providing a large constituency of young and creative artists with an appropriate outlet to address current and relevant themes.

X. Arab Documentary Film Program



Still from trailer for 2009 ADFP grantee Elias Moubarak's film My Uncle, "The Terrorist"

X. Arab Documentary Film Program



ADFP grantees and advisors at Abu Dhabi Film Festival, October 2010

The Arab Documentary Film Program (ADFP) provides funding, consultation, networking and training opportunities for documentary filmmakers. Over 145 applicants from the region responded to the first call for proposals. A jury made up of leading regional and international figures selected the top fifteen applicants—both well-known and up-and-coming filmmakers from across the region—for their pertinent and original proposals.

In May 2010, AFAC finalized agreements with the 15 grantees, which included 6 for script/development, 8 for production/post-production, and 1 for both script/development and production/post-production. Grantees hailed from 7 Arab countries—Lebanon, Egypt, Palestine, Algeria, Morocco, Syria and Tunisia-- and were equally split between male and female directors (with one project directed by a director team.) Typically, a significant number of the awarded projects are concerned with probing identity politics, telling personal stories that push the boundaries on gender issues, family histories, and urban mythologies. Most of these intimate portrayals are framed within broader socio-political narratives or are contrast against official histories. A number of the awarded projects are investigative documentaries -- films that probe governmental corruption, expose labor violations and explore forgotten or suppressed

histories. Many of the 2009 ADFP grantees are creatively employing reenactments or animated and mixed-media sequences to tell their stories, particularly where access to archived or official materials are restricted.

In addition to managing the grants throughout the reporting period, AFAC has worked closely with individual grantees and has involved a number of seasoned film professionals to act as advisors, particularly for less experienced filmmakers, which make up roughly half of the 2009 grantee pool. In October 2010, AFAC and the Sundance Documentary Institute partnered with SanadLab to stage a series of workshops and provide networking opportunities to its grantees on the sidelines of the Abu Dhabi Film Festival. With AFAC's support, a number of the 2009 ADFP grantees also participated in the Dox Box Film Festival in Damascus in March 2011.

X. Arab Documentary Film Program

AFAC's first regional meeting in Abu Dhabi provided a springboard for collaborations and intensive engagement. A number of grantees forged close working relationships with the advisors brought on board for the workshops, who have continued to guide them through the filmmaking process, delivering feedback on scripts, treatments, and rough cuts, as well as connecting grantees with producers, distributors and potential broadcasters.

AFAC's partnership with the Sundance Documentary Institute and particularly its director Cara Mertes has been very fruitful. In the past year, Mertes has made a number of trips to the region to participate in events with AFAC and its grantees. AFAC and SDI have been working closely to plan the next year's events and regional meetings, designing additional modules to the program, as well contributing to the ADFP's mission of strengthening the visibility of Arab documentary filmmakers internationally.

AFAC's team remains in regular communication with the grantees and stays abreast of all developments pertaining to their projects and careers, listening to and learning from their needs and challenges, even

after closing their grants. AFAC provides feedback on presentations and trailers and maintains updated project presentations, connecting our grantees with the growing number of international festivals and industry event leaders who have reached out to forge partnerships with AFAC and who are interested in supporting talented filmmakers from the region. In addition, AFAC has profiled and interviewed a number of the ADFP grantees on its new website and regularly posts grantee news on the organization's social media pages and in the website's newsroom.

Since launching the ADFP and commencing advisory activities, it has become clear that a number of projects require additional direct support. The ADFP grantees are roughly equally divided between seasoned filmmakers, who need little to no assistance, and less-experienced grantees, whose projects show great potential but require additional guidance and resources. In order for these projects to succeed, a more structured, intensive support system is required for the next cycle and workshop curricula are being designed that will help AFAC grantees successfully realize their projects.



ADFP grantee Orwa Nyrabia on a panel at the Abu Dhabi Film Festival, October 2010

X. Arab Documentary Film Program

Grantees

Below are the ADFP grantees, their project descriptions and project statuses:

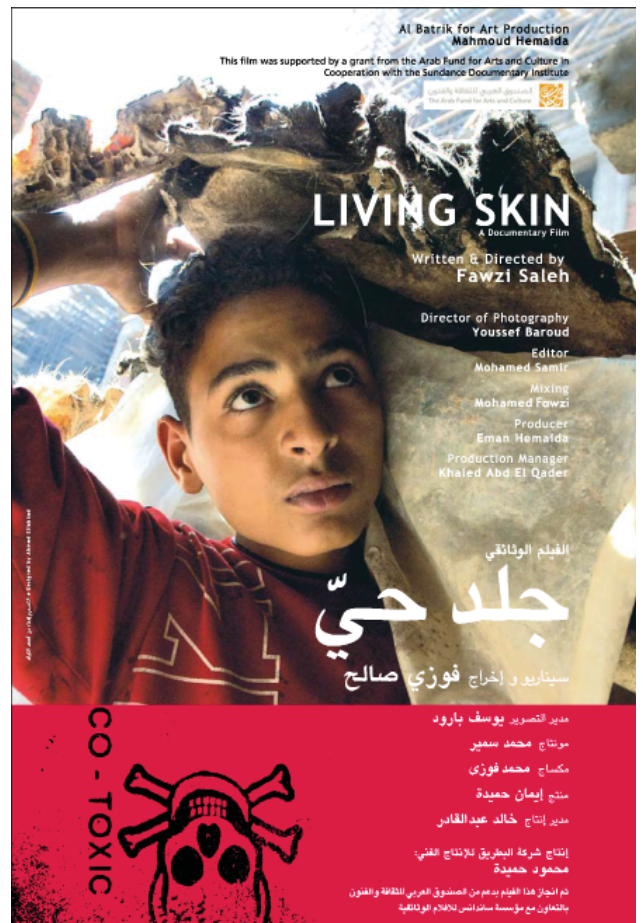
• **Name:** Ahmad Fawzy Saleh
Title: *Living Skin* [48', Arabic with English subtitles, Egypt 2010]
Grant: Script/Development and Production/ Post-production
Description: *Living Skin* is a documentary that explores the lives of "Shoushou" and "Mohammad Farag," two children who live and work in the Tanneries in Egypt. Through their stories, we witness the workers' inhumane living conditions, surrounded by hazardous chemicals in a harmful environment, as they try to enjoy what remains of their childhood.
Status: AFAC grant closed in October 2011.
Trailer: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bazq5hylos8>

• **Name:** Akram Zaatari
Title: *Twenty Eight Nights and a Poem* [120', HD/Super 8, Arabic with English subtitles, Lebanon]
Grant: Production/Post-Production
Description: *Twenty Eight Nights and a Poem* is a documentary about an old photo studio named Studio Shehrazade, founded in Saida, South Lebanon, in 1953. The film recounts the story of a photographer, Hashem el Madani (1928-), a city (Saida), and the photography industry. Touching on the socio-politics of image making and consumption, it examines the role photography played in the lives of the city's inhabitants.
Status: The project is in the post-production phase and is expected to be completed by the end of the summer, in time for submission to the 2012 Berlinale.

• **Name:** Amer Al Shomali
Title: *The Wanted 18* [75', Arabic with English subtitles, Palestine]
Grant: Development/Script
Description: *The Wanted 18* is a partially animated documentary that tells the story of the Palestinian civil resistance in 1987 during the Intifada. The film depicts a cow farm cooperative, pitched against the most powerful army in the Middle-East chasing 18 cows. It is a story about the collective resistance and losing faith and trust in the Palestinian leadership.
Status: AFAC grant closed in February 2011. Development completed with funding from Radio Canada, ARTE, Procirep and AFAC. Full treatment and 10-minute trailer. Pre-production began in March 2011.
Trailer: 10 mins. OV with English subtitles: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TJcfJTELmoM&feature=share>

• **Name:** Dima Abu Ghoush
Title: *Emwas* [52', Arabic with English subtitles, Palestine]
Grant: Development/Script

Description: *Emwas* is a documentary about Amal, a Palestinian woman from Emwas, whose hometown was razed by the Israeli army in 1967. Amal decides to create a model of the village before it was demolished, based on the memories of people who lived there, and the village's only remaining inhabitants, the monks of the Latrun Monastery.
Status: In late development phase; co-produced by Marie Guttman (France)



A poster for 2009 ADFP grantee Ahmed Fawzi Saleh's film "Living Skin"

X. Arab Documentary Film Program



on his decisions in the context of the times.

Status: AFAC grant closed in May 2011. Development complete with trailer. Production set to begin in May, with film completed in late 2011. Currently deliberating co-production offers from the Francophone Fund, Koncern and the BBC.

Trailer: <http://dl.dropbox.com/u/12322275/My%20Uncle%20The%20Terrorist.mp4>

• Name: Habib Attia (Producer) / Kaouther Ben Hania (Director)

Title: *Challatt of Tunisia* [95', HDV, Arabic with English & French subtitles, Tunisia]

Grant: Production/Post-production
Description: *Challatt of Tunisia* is a documentary/mockumentary. Set in 2003, it revisits the legend surrounding Challatt, a moped rider who prowled the streets of Tunis, razorblade in hand, slashing the buttocks of women. During that time, the shadow of Challatt changed the dress code of Tunisian women: no more tight jeans, no mini-skirts, no carefree strolls around the city. Sidewalks were deserted and the mere sound of a moped provoked unrest.

Status: A French-Tunisian co-production between Avenue B (France) and Cinetelefilms (Tunisia), the project is currently in the advanced pre-production stage with shooting scheduled to begin in August 2011. Fifty percent of funding has been secured to date, including through grants from AFAC, Fonds Sud Cinema and the Georges Foundation (Switzerland.)

Trailer: 4mins, in OV with English subtitles:

<http://vimeo.com/20099851>

2009 ADFP grantees Kaouther Ben Hania and Habib Attia's *Challatt of Tunisia*

Name: Elias Mikhael Moubarak

Title: *"My Uncle, The Terrorist"* [52', Arabic with English subtitles, Lebanon/Jordan/France]

Grant: Development/Script

Description: *"My Uncle, The Terrorist"* is a documentary about a filmmaker searching for the truth

about his uncle, Fouad Shemali -- a sensitive poet, a dedicated brother, a silent martyr and a violent "terrorist". The filmmaker investigates Fouad's life through his family's stories, the people who supported and opposed him, and those who can help shed light

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Password for screening the trailer:
challattctfavb

• Name: Joana Hadjithomas and Khalil Joreige

Title: *The Lebanese Rocket Society* [75', Arabic with English subtitles, Lebanon/USA]
Grant: Production/Post-production
Description: *The Lebanese Rocket Society* is an investigative documentary about a space project that was launched by a group of scientists, university students and military experts in Lebanon from 1960 to 1967 and was supported by the Lebanese state.

Status: in post-production
URL: <http://www.hadjithomasjoreige.com/>

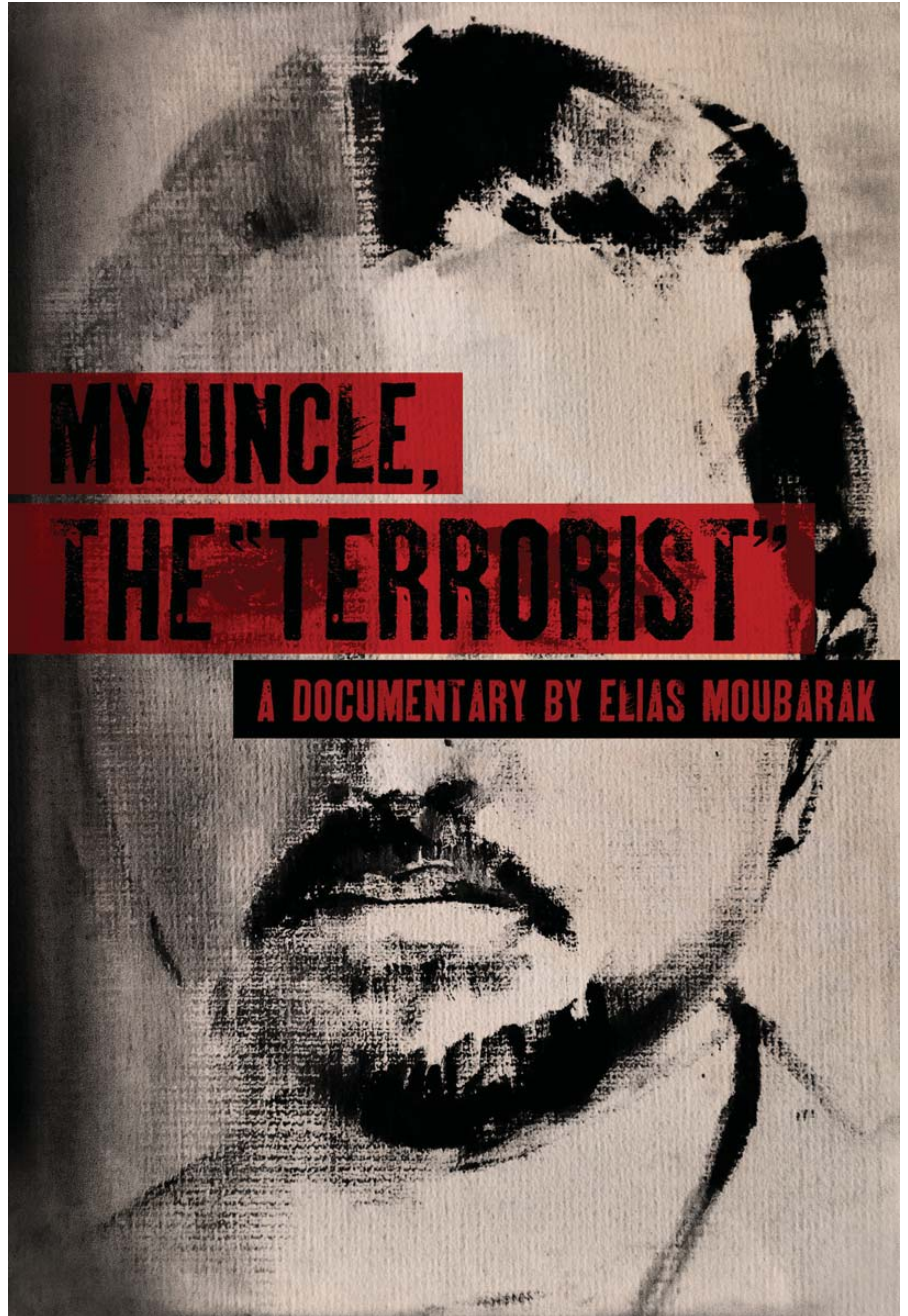
• Name: Karima Zoubir (Morocco)

Name: *Woman with a Camera* [52' & 80' versions, Arabic with English subtitles, Morocco]
Grant: Production/Post-production
Description: *Woman with a Camera* is a documentary set in Morocco that takes the audience to a world where men are not allowed. The film portrays Mrs. Fenan, a traditional and illiterate woman, who films private parties where only women are present and finds a way to become financially independent and make her own decisions.

Status: In production

• Name: Laila Hotait Salas

Title: *The Crayons of Askalan* [52', Arabic with English subtitles, Lebanon/Syria]
Grant: Production/Post-production
Description: *The Crayons of Askalan* is a docu-drama based on the harrowing experience of Palestinian artist Zuhdi Al-



2009 ADFP grantee Elias Moubarak's film *My Uncle, "The Terrorist"*

Adawi, who was imprisoned in Israel from age 15 to 30. With his imagination he is able to surpass the prison darkness and walls, creating drawings done on scraps

of pillowcases. With the help of his fellow prisoners and their families, they improvise ways to smuggle in color crayons, and smuggle out his allegorical artwork, so it finds its

X. Arab Documentary Film Program

way to the outside world.

Status: In post-production.

Trailer: <http://vimeo.com/16444410>

<http://vimeo.com/5646147>

• **Name: Louly Seif**

Title: *Take Me Back to Sydney* [52', Arabic/English with subtitles, Egypt/UK]

Grant: Production/Post-production

Description: *Take Me Back to Sydney* is a documentary about a young Egyptian woman. While exploring her own gender identity issues, she discovers that her grandfather, a prominent Cairo physician, performed sex change operations on Sydney's transsexuals in the 1960s and 1970s.

Status: In production.

• **Name: Malek Bensmail**

Title: *Origins* [90', Algerian/ Arabic/French/Japanese with English & Arabic subtitles, Algeria/ Japan]

Grant: Script/Development

Description: *Origins* is a film, set in Algeria that mixes documentary and fiction. It tells the story of a well-known Algerian actor's encounter with a Japanese actress who wants to adapt for the stage the story of Ibrahim Oulema, a Muslim theologian who traveled to Japan at the turn of the last century and pondered 'Arabo-Muslim' fascination with the West and the failure of his country's own modernization. Together, they retrace Oulema's journey and ask themselves the same questions one century later.

Status: AFAC grant closed in April 2011. In pre-production phase. Has received funding from AFAC (Lebanon), CNC, Fonds

Sud Cinema. Scheduled to begin shooting in 2011.

URL: <http://malek.bensmail.free.fr/>

• **Name: Nahed Awwad**

Title: *The Mail* [70', Arabic with English subtitles, Palestine]

Grant: Script/Development

Description: *The Mail* is a documentary that follows the official documents of 3 Palestinians through the corridors of the Israeli Interior Ministry, which controls the Palestinian civil registration. It is a story about the official documents Palestinians need to enroll in school, to work, get married, register their children, to travel and die.

Status: in pre-production

Trailer: <http://nahedawwad.com/>

• **Name: Rania Stephan**

Title: *The Three Disappearances of Soad Hosni* [70', Lebanon/Egypt 2011]

Grant: Production/Post-production

Description: *The Three Disappearances of Soad Hosni* is a documentary about Soad Hosni, the star of Egyptian cinema from 1959 to 1991, who committed suicide in London in 2001 at the age of 59. Her tragic end and taboo death moved the Arab world. The film reveals the tensions around representations of Arab women today, in the Orient as well as in the West. Pieced exclusively from VHS footage of Egyptian films starring Soad Hosni, *The Three Disappearances of Soad Hosni* is constructed as a tragedy in three acts where the actress tells her imagined life story through dialogues from her films. Irreverent, playful, marvelous and serious, the film underscores the saving grace of

fiction and proposes a singular and poetic rewriting of a golden period of Egyptian cinema as enacted by an exceptional artist, tragic star and symbol of modern Arab womanhood.

Status: AFAC grant closed in March 2011.

• **Name: Regine Abadia**

Title: *Yasmina and Mohammed* [90', French with Arabic subtitles, Algeria/France]

Description: *Yasmina and Mohammed* is a documentary about contemporary Algeria through the writings of one of the world's best known French language authors: Yasmina Khadra, whose real name is Mohammed Moulessehoul, a commanding officer in the Algerian Army during the bloody civil war of the 1990s.

Status: AFAC grant closed in February 2011. In pre-production stage.

X. Arab Documentary Film Program

Events



ADFP grantee Ahmed Fawzi Saleh receiving the award for “Best Narrative Film by a New Director from the Arab World Jury Special Mention” at the 2010 Abu Dhabi Film Festival, October 2010

Aside from providing filmmakers with direct funding, one of the ADFP’s main objectives is to deliver additional support to documentary filmmakers through workshops, advising and networking opportunities. For each cycle of the ADFP, Sundance and AFAC cooperate with an established festival or institution to bring together grantees with experts and professionals who can provide tailored support on the sidelines of major film industry events. The intention is to make the meeting a high-profile event for AFAC, its grantees and advisors, and to ensure visibility and increase our grantees’ chances of finding co-producers and international distributors for their films.

During the first cycle of the ADFP, AFAC and Sundance staged an initial regional meeting at the 2010 Abu Dhabi Film Festival, which all the 2009 grantees were invited to attend, and subsequently provided

additional support to the grantees who desired further assistance and input. Khalil Benkirane, a producer for Al Jazeera and the current head of finance for the Doha Institute, was brought on board as a general advisor for the program and grantees in October 2010.

In October 2011, AFAC and Sundance will bring together grantees from the 2009 and 2011 ADFP cycles at the DOK Leipzig festival, which has offered AFAC a partnership deal. While, two regional meetings per cycle of the program were initially planned, AFAC and Sundance have agreed that one of the two meetings could bring together all the grantees from concurrent cycles. This will allow AFAC to pool its resources and stage workshops that are tailored specifically to the needs of the ADFP grantees—seasoned and up-and-coming filmmakers, development and production/

X. Arab Documentary Film Program

post-production projects— and also provide possibilities for collaboration and exchange amongst the filmmakers, while fostering a sense of community amongst the ADFP grantees, alumnae, program advisors and workshop participants.

Abu Dhabi Film Festival, October 2010

In October 2010, AFAC and the Sundance Documentary Institute invited the grantees to participate in a three-day series of workshops and networking events

on the sidelines of the Abu Dhabi Film Festival, in cooperation with the festival's Sanad Lab. Nine of the 15 grantees attended the workshop and festival. The workshop was facilitated by leading figures in the documentary film industry, including the current director of the Sundance Institute Documentary Film Program, Cara Mertes, and award-winning documentarians Laura Poitras, Kirsten Johnson and Khalil Benkirane. During one-on-one meetings, pitching sessions, roundtable discussions, and over lunch and dinner, grantees received coaching and advice, and the opportunity to get to know AFAC's team and their fellow grantees. At the close of the festival, AFAC's team recorded interviews and feedback with the workshop participants in order to learn from the experience and tailor subsequent curricula to the grantees' needs. At the festival awards ceremony on October 23rd, ADFP grantee Ahmad Fawzi Saleh's documentary "Living Skin" was awarded Best Narrative Film by a New Director from the Arab World Jury Special Mention (\$25,000), "for a promising uninhibited and passionate director who took us in a poignant journey into the dire living and working conditions of laboring children."

The following workshop advisors participated in the Abu Dhabi Film Festival:



Danya Alhamrani and 2009 ADFP grantee Karima Zoubeir at DOX BOX film festival in Damascus, March 2011

Cara Mertes is the current director of the Sundance Institute Documentary Film Program overseeing the activities of the Documentary Film Program and Fund, including granting between \$1 and \$2 million per year to independent documentarians globally, directing three Creative Documentary Labs at Sundance Resort, supporting documentary programming and panels at the Sundance Film Festival and the Sundance Independent Producers Conference, and curating work-in-progress screenings with partner organizations and other initiatives of the DFP. For her work as a documentary film producer, she has been recognized with eight Emmy Awards, three George Foster Peabody Awards, two DuPont-Columbia Awards and three Academy Award Nominations.

Khalil Benkirane was an Executive Producer for Al Jazeera Children's Channel in Doha and is the current head of financing for the Doha Film Institute. He graduated in film production and studies from San Francisco State University, has worked on various film projects, ran the San Francisco Arab Film Festival (Cinemayaat) and curated programs for various institutions and festivals worldwide. He has produced and directed a feature-length documentary entitled "The White Thread" on Moroccan music and is currently production fiction

X. Arab Documentary Film Program

and documentary films for Al Jazeera.

Kirsten Johnson is a documentary filmmaker and cinematographer. Her cinematographic work includes *Derrida*, a 2002 documentary on French philosopher Jacques Derrida, the 2006 documentary *Darfur Now*, and the 2008 *Pray The Devil Back to Hell*, which won the Tribeca Film Festival Best Documentary. She co-directed the documentary *Deadline*, which premiered at Sundance in 2004, was broadcast on primetime NBC, and won the Thurgood Marshall Award. Her most recent work is *The Oath*, directed by Laura Poitras, about Osama bin Laden's driver, Abu Jandal, which was awarded the Sundance Documentary Competition Cinematography Award.

Laura Poitras was nominated for an Academy Award, an Independent Spirit Award and an Emmy for *My Country, My Country* (2006.) She received a Peabody Award and was nominated for an Emmy and an Independent Spirit Award for *Flag Wars* (2003), and is the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship and a Media Arts Fellowship from the Rockefeller Foundation/Tribeca Film Institute. Her documentary *The Oath* shot in Guantanamo and Yemen was featured at the 2010 Abu Dhabi Film Festival.

Dox Box- Damascus, March 2011

From March 2-6, AFAC's core team was joined by Cara Mertes of the Sundance Documentary Institute to participate in the Dox Box documentary film festival in Damascus, hosted by 2008 and 2009 grantees Proaction Film. A number of ADFP grantees enrolled in the festival's Campus, a 7-day intensive program for enhancing projects' structure, filmmakers' visions and production potential, guided by Arab and international mentors, consultants and "film doctors". Filmmakers also listened to their peers projects, attended screenings, master-classes, information sessions, in addition to matchmaking sessions with industry figures and commissioning editors. AFAC presented its documentary film program to an audience of about 70 people, and attended screenings and dinners with the festival participants. AFAC's Executive Director acted as a juror in pitching sessions with the Campus' filmmakers. ADFP grantee Elias Moubarak was

awarded the Dubai Film Connection award at the festival's closing ceremony.

Documentary Days- Tunis, April 2011

AFAC's six-day trip to Tunis coincided with the three-day "Documentary Days" festival staged at the independent CinemAfricArt theater in downtown Tunis. Upon the invitation of the festival's director, cineaste Hichem Ben Ammar, AFAC attended a number of screenings of new Arab and Tunisian documentaries about secularism and religion, followed by discussions, and gave a presentation of its work to the audience. AFAC also met with a number of directors, producers and young cinema activists to discuss the needs and challenges facing filmmakers and developments in the cinema sector. These discussions helped provide the basis for a program AFAC is designing for young filmmakers from North Africa, as well as avenues for distributing our calls for proposals and potential future partnerships with local initiatives. AFAC met extensively with the Collectif Indépendant d'Action pour le Cinéma en Tunisie, a group of young filmmakers and producers, founded in 2009 as a public and participatory pressure group to challenge government's plans for reforming the audiovisual sector, as well as leading established figures from the Tunisian filmmaking scene.

Marketing & Visibility

During the reporting period, AFAC created a number of marketing materials for the ADFP, including a sample reel of its grantees work, brochures, call for proposal posters that were displayed in public spaces and cultural institutions across the Arab region, and power point presentations.

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2011

AFAC launched the second cycle of the ADFP in February 2011 with an open call for proposals set to close at the end of May 2011. An online application was introduced, allowing filmmakers to upload budgets and samples of their work directly into the application, and to embed links to trailers, which will streamline the evaluation process and substantially reduce administrative tasks after the call closes.

The pre-selection and final selection committees will be able to review the applications and samples online. AFAC has recruited a number of new jurors to the selection committees, including a number of leading film industry figures who are already engaged as advisors for the program. The selection of the 2011 winners will occur in August in Beirut.

Sunny Side of the Doc

AFAC is a sponsor for this year's Sunny Side of the Doc festival in La Rochelle, France. One of the biggest documentary film markets in the world, the festival, which runs from June 20th to 24th, will afford AFAC high visibility and the opportunity to represent Arab documentary films, in general, as well as its own grantees work. Through its sponsorship agreement with the festival, AFAC's logo will appear on all the festival's publicity material, online, in its newsletter and will be displayed in the market hall. AFAC is also hosting a panel at the festival entitled "Springtime for the Arab Docs," moderated by Executive

Director Oussama Rifahi, which will debate the effects of the pro-democracy uprisings sweeping the region and the increased international interest on the Arab documentary scene. The panelists will include Al Jazeera Documentary's Mohammed Belhaji, and two 2009 ADFP grantees, Tunisian producer Habib Attia and Syrian cineaste and producer Orwa Nyrabia. Additionally, AFAC has



X. Arab Documentary Film Program

2011

registered three of its 2009 ADFP grantee films, which are currently in the production phase, as 'commissioned projects' and will represent them in the festival's market. The films will appear in the catalogue and library and will be reviewed by hundreds of commissioning editors, buyers, distributors and producers.

DOK Leipzig

In October 2011, AFAC is partnering with DOK Leipzig, one of the foremost international festivals dedicated to documentary films, to host a week-long series of workshops with its grantees on the sidelines of the festival. Under the motto "The Heart of Documentary," the DOK Festival has established itself as major industry meeting place since 1954, with platforms for professionals to sell films (DOK Market/Leipzig Screenings), pitch ideas (Pitching Session of the Documentary Campus Masterschool), create networking opportunities with international buyers and distributors (DOK Co-production Meeting), discuss current trends and developments (DOK Summits) and exchange with international commissioning editors and representatives of film funds on innovative ideas for reshaping the genre (Leipzig Forum on Innovative Documentary TV). AFAC is currently developing a curriculum for the workshops, and is cooperating with the festival to curate a showcase of Arab films. In addition, AFAC will do a press presentation on its work and host a panel discussion. Grantees will participate in pitching sessions and master classes, and network with buyers, commissioning editors and other industry professionals.

Statistics

In 2009, a total of 145 applicants applied to AFAC's Arab Documentary Film Program from around the region and the world. A majority of submissions came from Egypt, Palestine and Lebanon, followed by Jordan, Tunisia and Syria. Countries with the smallest number of submissions in the Arab region were from the Gulf and North Africa.

AFAC provided grants to 15 winning applicants. The nationality of the winning grantees still shows a concentration around the cluster of Palestine,

Lebanon, Egypt, and Syria, but a good number of winning applicants were also from Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia.

The grants are relatively evenly distributed among the two categories, script/development and production/post-production, and grantees were almost equally divided between male and female. The grant amounts ranged between \$8,000 and \$50,000 in 2009, with an average grant amount of \$20,000. Five grantees received \$15,000.

The grantees' documentaries also tackle a wide variety of issues in the Arab world, including social issues (harassment, child labor, modernization), gender (transsexuals, women and the veil), politics (Palestine/Lebanon), arts (photography) and culture (artists and historical figures i.e. writers, actors, singers) and science.

Grantee News

Ahmed Fawzi Saleh's *Living Skin* was awarded "Best Narrative Film by a New Director from the Arab World Jury Special Mention" at the 2010 Abu Dhabi Film Festival and "Best first Documentary" at the Festival International du Cinéma Méditerranéen de Tétouan. Since its release in October 2010, the film has participated in a number of international documentary festivals, including HotDocs (Canada), Documentary Edge Festival (New Zealand), and the upcoming DOK.fest Muenchen (Germany).

Amer Shomali's *The Wanted 18* participated in the Producers Network meeting at Cannes.

Karima Zoubir took home the Tamkin (Empowerment) Prize for best documentary at Syria's DOX BOX documentary film festival in March for *Woman with a Camera*.

Elias Moubarak's *My Uncle, "The Terrorist"* was awarded the first Dubai Film Connection Award by the Dubai International Film Festival in March 2011 and was profiled by the UAE daily *The National*: <http://www.thenational.ae/arts-culture/film/lebanese-filmmaker-to-make-a-documentary-on-his-controversial-uncle>

X. Arab Documentary Film Program

2011



2009 ADFP grantee Amer Shomali's partially animated documentary "The Wanted 18"

Habib Attia and Kaouther Ben Hania's *Challat of Tunis* was granted the Arte International Prize at the Berlinale Project Market 2011 and was developed in Eurodoc 2010, in FIDLAB 2010 and the producers' workshop training at EAVE/ Dubai 2009. The film has already secured funding for distribution in Tunisia and is currently negotiating an agreement with ARTE. It was selected to participate in the Best International Showcase Projects at Sunny Side of the Doc festival in La Rochelle, France in June.

Laila Hotait Sala's *The Crayons of Askalan* was among ten projects selected to participate in the Editing Studio at the 2011 Berlinale's Talent Campus, as well as the 2011 DoxBox film festival in Syria. It was registered as a commissioned project at Sunny Side of the Doc, La Rochelle in June 2011. In March 2011, Hotait's short film *Basita* won the Best Experimental Film award in The Women's Voices From the Muslim World short-film festival in Los Angeles.

Rania Stephan's *The Three Disappearances of Soad Hosni* was awarded the Artist's Prize at the 10th Sharjah Biennial (2011).

XI. Arab Graphic Novel

محطة القصص المصورة!

توك توك 2

حفل إطلاق وتوقيعات!

الأحد ١٠ أبريل ٢٠١١ الساعة ٧ مساءً

المعهد الفرنسي بالقاهرة

١ شارع مدرسة الحقوق الفرنسية، المنيرة

TOKTOK2

Lancement
et Dédicace

Dimanche 10 Avril 2011

Institut français au Caire
à 19h



Poster for the 2nd edition of the TokTok comics magazine in Cairo, May 2011

1, rue madrasset el huquq al ferenseya, Mounira, Le Caire.

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XI. Arab Graphic Novel

AFAC's Arab Graphic Novel Program (AGNP) will provide an opportunity for emerging comic artists from across the Arab region to produce, publish and distribute stand-alone graphic novels for adult readers. Following an open call for proposals launched in summer of 2011, a jury made up of regional and international comic book authors and experts will select the most promising and original projects. Over the course of a year, editors will advise and guide artists in producing a full-length graphic novel, which will be published by the AGNP and tour regional and international festivals in late 2012/early 2013.

The Arab Graphic Novel Program (AGNP) is aimed at nurturing the merging wave of comic artists from amateurs to professionals, by producing and publishing several graphic novels and bringing these books to the public eye. Capitalizing on the existing talent of artists who are currently producing shorter-form comics and illustrations, AGNP will provide the resources, expertise and platform for artists to produce full-length works that communicate local realities.

A program that supports full-length graphic novels will build on this creative output and garner visibility for the region's comic artists. Because of their accessible format, graphic novels can also easily be translated for foreign audiences to absorb and enjoy narratives and stories from the region. Like cinema, they carry a huge potential for sharing local perspectives with an international audience. Hybrid genres, such as comics, appeal to younger people and can build on and support a network of comic artists across the region, while resonating internationally. By expanding its reach in the Arab world, AFAC will also help capture interest for its core missions, and reach out to younger segments of the population, for whom arts and culture are far removed from their daily realities.

The Arab Graphic Novel Program will be open to all genres that combine sequential art and writing in a full-length narrative, with the objective of producing excellent work that lends greater depth to the medium and reflects a local context. Publishing a series of graphic novels will encourage local publishing houses to recognize the genre's potential

and replicate efforts to produce and support graphic novels. The extremely accessible format—easily translatable and marketable—permits foreign audiences to absorb and enjoy narratives and stories from the region.

A jury made up of comic writers from Lebanon, Egypt and Algeria, as well as leading international artists with knowledge of the region, will select three winners, who will receive funding and editorial guidance throughout the production process. Following the works' completion, the books will be published, launched locally and tour book and comic festivals across the region, prior to being translated for a foreign market.

In the summer of 2011, the AGNP will launch the first of three annual open calls for graphic novel proposals on its website, with parallel publicity in general and specialized publications, online and through festivals, and through the efforts of its board members. Artists, as well as teams of artists and writers, will be encouraged to apply. Applicants will be required to submit a portfolio of their existing work, a treatment for the proposed project, a synopsis and a sample chapter. When the call closes, AGNP's team will compile the applications and send them to jurors—2 international and 3 local experts. The selection process will follow AFAC's standard guidelines, with jurors instructed to assess the proposals for their relevance, quality, innovation and cost.

Three winners will be awarded grants to complete a graphic novel over the course of 9 months. Throughout these 9 months, artists will be guided by an advisor/editor who will work closely with them through the work's completion. The final product will clearly benefit by assigning more experienced artists and comic publishers as editors to the project.

Following the work's completion in late 2012, a local publishing house will publish initial copies in the original Arabic. The books will be launched locally and travel around the region to literature and comic festivals. At the same time, AGNP will pursue publishing agreements with foreign publishers to have the work translated and distributed abroad, taking the book to international festivals and garnering exposure from a foreign audience.

XII. Arab Film Initiative (AFI)



On the set of The Crayons of Askalan by 2009 ADFP grantee Laila Hotait Salas in South Lebanon, August 2010

XII. Arab Film Initiative (AFI)

In response to the unprecedented social and political changes sweeping the Arab world, the Arab Fund for Arts and Culture is establishing the New Arab Film Initiative, NAFI. NAFI seeks to support the fresh wave of artistic expression and address a funding gap that has been exasperated in the wake of regime change and upheaval by designing a specific program to benefit emerging filmmakers in the Arab World. Partnering with Arab and international institutions, AFAC will support fifteen film projects by emerging filmmakers, which will be selected at the end of a four-month open call for proposals, providing direct funding and intensive support from development through distribution. The first program of its kind in the

region, NAFI will run for 21 months.

NAFI will be open to a variety of film forms and genres: short narrative, animation, experimental, documentary and feature narrative films. Defying the prevalent notion that documentary is the ideal or unique tool of expression during times of crisis, NAFI will provide the means and support for ideas and narratives, closely connected with the filmmakers' concerns and urgencies. Rather than dictating the genre, NAFI is hoping to give select filmmakers the "luxury" to conceive experimental approaches, feature contemplations, short commentaries, animated expressions and creative documenting processes.



AFAC's field visit to Cairo, May 2011. The banner reads: "The people, the army and the police are one."

XIII. CHALLENGES



Bokra Ahla Festival in Alexandria, May 2011 Bokra Ahla

XIII. CHALLENGES

Funding

One of the greatest challenges facing the Arab arts and cultural sector is the absence of local funding opportunities to provide sustainable support for artistic endeavors. As a local, independent institution AFAC has begun to fill this gap, but its means remain limited. As a result, many excellent projects are excluded, due to our insufficient budget. One of the objectives for AFAC's open call for proposals is to provide an opportunity for less established cultural practitioners to receive funding for their artistic endeavors. While a few select past grantees, particularly small institutions, have applied for and received a grant for a second consecutive year, AFAC can not support many worthwhile initiatives over a longer period of time. With the current funding situation in the Arab region, institutions, initiatives and festivals, but also individual artists, musicians and filmmakers, have to expend valuable time and resources applying for funding each year, particularly from the west. As a result, the future of these endeavors remains uncertain. An absence of independent spaces and venues for artists to work and create freely in compounds this instability. Not only do these resource deficits hinder longer-term plans and initiatives from bearing fruit, but they also stymie cooperation, as arts practitioners wrangle for and compete to secure financial support.

This is particularly true in the cinema and documentary field, where high budgets are often requested that AFAC's limited budget simply can't meet. As a result of AFAC's grants policy, which stipulates that recipients of grants over \$10,000 must secure 70 percent of their remaining funding before receiving AFAC's contribution, some worthwhile projects have been canceled or put on hold. The need to build capacity and build on the region's plentiful filmmaking talent and creativity lacks financial resources, but also technical expertise, such as sound engineers, stage engineers, and editors, who are un-unionized, underpaid and unqualified in a number of national film sectors, particularly in countries where creative industries rely on support from and organization by the state. With the needed resources, AFAC could begin to support existing

and new local initiatives that endeavor to train and improve film professionals' skills.

Additional support

While AFAC has significantly expanded its reach over the past few months, with field visits to over a dozen countries, the organization is still restricted from reaching out to applicants and artists in countries such as Yemen, Bahrain, Libya and Palestine, due to political instability. Indeed, as the recent uprisings and rapid changes sweeping the region have shown, AFAC's practice of distributing funding through annual calls for proposals and a lengthy selection process does not permit the organization to respond quickly to developments and needs on the ground. While in 2011, AFAC has shortened the duration of the open call and has reduced the application processing time through a new online application and portal, there remains a need for additional support mechanisms that can distribute small funding amounts to initiatives on an as-need basis. AFAC is currently developing a proposal to address such cases through a specific fund and with a well-developed transparency mechanism, whereby small discretionary amounts could be distributed to initiatives on a one-time basis with board oversight and approval.

Website

In December 2010, ahead of announcing the winners of its annual call for proposals and only a few weeks after moving to Beirut, AFAC launched the first version of its new website. Due to the fact that AFAC was just hiring a new team and in the middle of moving to Beirut, the first website version was launched with limited resources and under time constraints, and could not yet fully utilize its online presence as a marketing and fundraising tool. This website version has been steadily improved upon in the months that followed, with AFAC hiring a fulltime content manager to preside over the application portal and news room, and to liaise with the web developers and designers in March 2011. In June 2011, AFAC will launch a full-fledged and far improved version of the website with mirror sites in English and Arabic, as described in the section VII. Website/Portal.

XIII. CHALLENGES



AFAC Executive Director Oussama Rifahi and Egyptian Minister of Culture Emad Abu Ghazi in Cairo, May 2011

however, AFAC is improving its application ahead of the next call for proposals and soliciting feedback from all applicants. AFAC has also established an efficient communications strategy to respond to applicants' questions, concerns and need for assistance in a timely manner. AFAC's team managed to overcome unforeseen technical problems due to inadequate telecommunications infrastructure in a number of countries across the region by assisting applicants manually with the online process.

Applications

Having run four open calls for proposals with applications submitted in hard copy form and by email for the past four years, before launching an online application for the first time in February, AFAC has gained valuable experience and insight into the application process.

In the past, a number of applicants have had trouble correctly filling out applications or abiding by guidelines for appropriate content. This was substantially improved through the online process, which limits word space and the sanctioned formats for uploaded work samples, while also generating an ID number that applicants can use as a reference when corresponding with AFAC's grants management. Nevertheless, through electronic feedback from applicants and conversations during our field visits and presentations across the region, there remains a need to improve application and proposal writing skills. While this pertains to any sector, it may be particularly apt in the artistic sphere, where creativity and originality aren't necessarily matched by an ability to persuasively convey the scope and importance of a project in writing. With the experience gained,

ADFP

For the first and second cycles of the Arab Documentary Film Program (ADFP), the application has only been made available in English, as two of the five selection committee members brought on board by Sundance were not fluent in Arabic. A number of potential applicants have complained that this limits access for non-English speaking filmmakers in the region. With the next call for proposals scheduled for 2012, AFAC plans to make the ADFP application available in both English and Arabic, with Arabic-speaking international industry experts to be recruited to the selection committee.