

STATE OF CONCEPT ATHENS

State of Concept Athens
Tousa Mpotsari 19, 11741

Opening Hours: Wednesday – Friday 16:30 – 20:30, Saturday 12:00 – 17:00

Email: info@stateofconcept.org

www.stateofconcept.org

PRESS RELEASE

Arab Feminist Films

7-21 October 2019

State of Concept Athens

As the world is turning right, and xenophobic discourse is taking centre stage, stereotypes and racist rhetorics on different cultures, religions and their constituencies are again coming to the fore.

In Greece, these rhetorics have accentuated from 2014 onwards, when large numbers of persons that fled war, conflict and climate disaster, or were on a quest for better living conditions, arrived at its shores. What has been mainly known as the refugee crisis, is however a condition, that is not new. War, conflict and financial crises have been for eons creating new waves of refugees. The (current) global migrant crisis, is the most tangible manifestation of a trajectory that has been slowly building since colonialism.

The role of culture in sustaining narratives that are based in concepts of equality, hospitality, solidarity and understanding, is now more urgent than ever. For this reason, State of Concept has decided to inaugurate a new program chapter entitled “Xen(i)os” addressing the problematics between the binary of guest-host, in a world that is becoming all the more xenophobic. It will further address the histories of hospitality, care and hosting, in relationship to the multicultural policies that have defined the modern West. The title derives from the concept of “Xenios Zeus” the hospitable god Zeus, but also from the concept of “xenos” (l’etranger, the stranger). We will be looking at otherness from a feminist intersectional perspective, stemming from both the local and the global.

As Greece is defined as part of the “Global South” we will be tracing "South to South" synergies that look into feminist forms of practice of hospitality, solidarity and care. One of the iterations of this trajectory is a new screening program entitled Arab Feminist Films.

Many artists and documentary filmmakers took the opportunity to tell the world about the social and political struggles that peoples of the Arab region have been enduring. The Arab Feminist Films program is a tribute to women from the Arab world.

The Arab Feminist Films - AFF is an initiative of State of Concept, which aims to become a festival staple event in the cultural scene of Athens.

NEW SCREENING PROGRAM

● Monday 7 October

6pm: *Feminism Inshallah: A History of Arab Feminism* (2014/ 54 min)
Director: Ferial Ben Mahmoud, Tunisia

The struggle for Muslim women's emancipation is often portrayed stereotypically as a showdown between Western and Islamic values, but Arab feminism has existed for more than a century. This groundbreaking documentary recounts Arab feminism's largely unknown story, from its taboo-shattering birth in Egypt by feminist pioneers up through viral Internet campaigns by today's tech-savvy young activists during the Arab Spring. Moving from Tunisia to Egypt, Algeria, Morocco, Lebanon and Saudi Arabia, filmmaker and author Ferial Ben Mahmoud tracks the progress of Arab women in their long march to assert their full rights and achieve empowerment. Featuring previously unreleased archival footage and exclusive multigenerational interviews, FEMINISM INSHALLAH is an indispensable resource for Women's Studies, Global Feminism, Middle East and Islamic Studies.

7pm: *Becoming Jamila/ Have you Ever Killed a Bear* (2013, 25 min)
Director: Marwa Arsanios, Lebanon

How to embody an iconic female freedom fighter? How to dive into her imaginary and comprehend how it affected the political significance of her gestures? Gravitating around the Algerian freedom fighter Jamila Bouhired, performance and video are used to look at the history of socialist projects (Egypt), anti-colonial wars (Algeria), and the way they have promoted and marginalized feminist projects.

● Tuesday 8 October

6pm: *The Feeling of Being Watched* (2018, 1h 27 min)
Director: Assia Bouandaoui, Algeria /USA

*In the Arab-American neighborhood outside of Chicago where director Assia Boundaoui grew up, most of her neighbors think they have been under surveillance for over a decade. While investigating their experiences, Assia uncovers tens of thousands of pages of FBI documents that prove her hometown was the subject of one of the largest counterterrorism investigations ever conducted in the U.S. before 9/11, code-named "Operation Vulgar Betrayal." With unprecedented access, *The Feeling of Being Watched* weaves the personal and the political as it follows the filmmaker's examination of why her community fell under blanket government surveillance. Assia struggles to disrupt the government secrecy shrouding what happened and takes the FBI to federal court to compel them to make the records they collected about her community public. In the process, she confronts long-hidden truths about the FBI's relationship to her community. *The Feeling of Being Watched* follows Assia as she pieces together this secret FBI operation, while grappling with the effects of a lifetime of surveillance on herself and her family.*

7:30pm: *Radiance of Resistance* (2017, 60 min)
Director: Jesse Roberts

Radiance of Résistance tells the story of Janna Ayyad 9 years old, and Ahed Tamimi 14 years old that live under military occupation in Nabi Saleh, Palestine. Janna Ayyad has been called the youngest journalist in Palestine. Ahed won the Handala Courage Award from Turkey when she was 13 and met with Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan. This film will take an intimate look at their everyday lives and their importance as the new generation of Palestinian non-violent resistance.

● Monday 14 October

6:00pm: *A Feeling Greater Than Love* (2010, 94 min)

Director: Mary Jirmanus Saba, Lebanon

Dreams of popular revolution, erased by civil war. A young girl martyred at a factory strike in Beirut in 1972 - her identity shrouded in mystery. A meditation on revolution, cinema and their possibilities, past and present.

A car with a loudspeaker on its roof is driving through southern Lebanon. The old man at the wheel is calling for people to join a demonstration to support their brothers and sisters who've occupied a tobacco company and are now being besieged by the army. His words come from the past, as he's referring to events from 1973 – events that few remember today. Neither the protests made by the tobacco farmers from the south against the large landholders' monopoly nor the strike for better working conditions by workers at a Beirut chocolate factory are anchored in the country's collective memory. All recollection of this social movement was erased by the civil war and society has since been marked by deep sectarian divisions. Looking for both a lost era and strategies able to be applied to current struggles, the filmmaker sets out in search of clues. Starting from the death of a young woman killed during the strike, she asks questions of the activists of the time, archival photos, documentaries from the 1970s, her own person and the possibilities for militant action in film and society. The layering of these diverse materials allows the old man's pleas to reverberate in the present day.

7:30pm: Records from the Excited State Chapter3: Lost Referents of Some Attraction (2012, 6:56 min)

Director: Malak Helmy, Egypt

"Records from the Excited State" (2010-present), a chaptered work, is an ongoing study of "the rhythms of the site of leisure" along Egypt's coastline. Since the 1970's the government has pushed the development of local tourism encouraging the building of compounds along the North Coast. She uses many methods to mine the site: visits, walks, people, studies, traveling with birds.... "Chapter 3: Lost Referents of Some Attraction" (2012) revolving around five characters wandering on the edge of a narrative, anticipating employment into meaning along three scenes in landscape: a salt flat, a beach, and an empty plot consigned to a nuclear power plant in the future.

● Tuesday 15 October

6pm: Prêt-à-porter, Imm Ali (2003, 27 min)

Director: Dima El-Horr, Lebanon

Imm Ali lives with her family in a village in South Lebanon, a few kilometers from the Israeli border. She sells women's clothes in her house. In a final effort to expand her business, she installs a luminous sign, the first in the village. But a few hours later, the neon sign goes out.

6:30pm: Frontiers of Dreams and Fears (2001, 56 min)

Director: Mai Masri, Palestine/ Libanon

Frontiers of Dreams and Fears tells the story of two Palestinian teenage refugee girls, Mona from Shatila camp in Lebanon and Manar from Dheisha camp in Palestine. Living in refugee camps miles apart, the two girls manage to communicate with each other despite the overwhelming barriers separating them. Shot in 2000 in the aftermath of the liberation of south Lebanon from Israeli occupation and the beginning of the second Palestinian Intifada, the film explores the intense connections formed between young refugees whose insights about displacement and occupation defy their age.

● Monday 21 October

6pm: TAN (2017, 1h 10min)

Director: Elika Hedayat, Iran

TAN (body in farsi) is an experimental documentary which confronts the relationship between the physical body and the social body of two generations observed in contemporary Iran. The first generation having participated in the Iran-Iraq war sacrificed their body to the service of their ideas, while the younger generation, on the contrary, lives in a cult of the body. The film illustrates this point through the meeting of Ismail, Alireza and Hadi. Throughout the film, the real life of the living models and the plastic universe of the artist's drawings intertwine.

For full details and updates of the program please visit: stateofconcept.org
and our respective event on our facebook page/ instagram for updates of times and screenings

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