

OKTOBER 11-13 | SPUTNIK KINO

SOURA FILM FEST

QUEER MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICAN FILM FESTIVAL

Friday 11

Kino 1

19:00 **Martyr**
21:00 **Shorts 1**

Saturday 12

Kino 1

19:00 **They**
21:00 **Jonathan Agassi Saved My Life**

Sunday 13

Kino 1

19:00 **Shorts 2**
21:00 **Room For a Man**

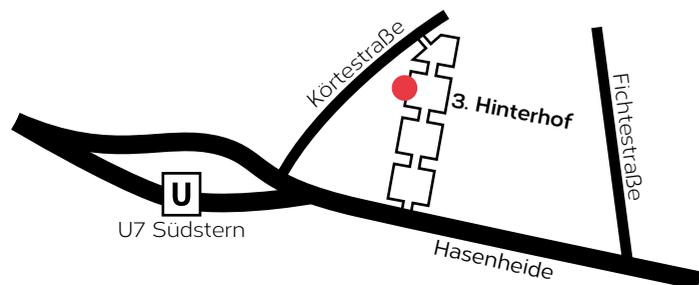
Monday 14

Kino Bar

20:00 **The Wedding**

Tickets: 8€
Kino Bar: 6€

SPUTNIK KINO
Hasenheide 54
Hof 3 / 5th floor
10967 BERLIN



In many of the countries in the Middle East and North Africa, homosexuality remains illegal with severe punishment. Degrees of tolerance vary from one state to the other, but LGBTQI communities often face regular harassment and crackdowns from state authorities, with religion and morality often evoked to arouse public sentiment.

Soura—which means ‘image’ in Arabic, is about sharing a vision of life that is joyful, poignant, defiant and unique. Therefore, the festival’s mission is to create a safe and welcoming space for LGBTQI filmmakers who are often shunned or persecuted in their home countries, their stories too often suppressed or censored. It is essential that these voices be heard and these visions shared. So we believe having a platform for queer cinema from the Middle East and North Africa, a region commonly known as MENA, is very essential to complement the evolution of this movement.

The festival presents a programme curated with the idea to address queer culture, filmmakers and characters relevant to the region; and aims to step across borders and set aside political conflicts, to weave together those threads that connect queer experience throughout the vibrant and complex diversity of the MENA region.

An extra day of screening will take place on Monday 14 at the Kino Bar with the film “The Wedding”.

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Fri 11 19:00

Martyr



Dir. Mazen Khaled
84 min | 2017 | Fiction | Lebanon
Arabic | Eng subs
Premiere: 74th Venice International Film Festival

The strange drowning of a young man at Beirut' seaside sparks a mob funeral and causes his friends, who hail from different communities, to grapple with loss and with the struggle to participate in his community's rites and ceremonies. The life and death journey that the young man takes on the last day of his life exposes the schisms of the city and the fault lines dividing its society, and reveals some of the forces pushing the lives of those marginalized young men.

In Islamic tradition, drowning is considered grounds for Martyrdom. What does that word really mean? Is it an effort to console a bereaved family and preclude its grief? Is it an empty attempt by a marginalized group to evoke heroism and mythology in order to compensate in death for what they never achieved in life? In this film, raw verité images intermingle with abstract scenes to present us with a world where the lines separating reality from fiction, authenticity from fabrication, have ceased to exist.

Sat 12 21:00

Jonathan Agassi Saved My Life



Dir. Tomer Heymann
106 min | 2018 | Documentary | Israel
Hebrew and English | Eng subs
Premiere: Jerusalem Film Festival

When Jonathan Agassi arrived on the gay porn scene, in the 2000s, a new superstar of adult entertainment had arrived. He was hot, hard, playful and loved sex. Propelled into fame by Michael Lucas, Agassi was sometimes at odds with an industry that demanded a certain type of masculinity (Agassi is also known for his inclusion in Michael Lucas's porno-propaganda Men of Israel).

The film finds Agassi splitting his time between Tel Aviv and Berlin, surviving through paid appearances and escorting. But amidst the thrill of hedonism is a pain that can't be satisfied through sex or drugs. With his ever-loving mother by his side, Jonathan Agassi Saved My Life is a searing and shocking documentary, handled with sensitivity by master documentarian Tomer Heymann, never shying away from the reality of what it means to live constantly in the extreme.

Sat 12 19:00

They



Dir. Anahita Ghazvinizadeh
80 min | 2017 | Fiction | USA, Qatar, Iran
English and Persian | Eng subs
Premiere: 70th Cannes Film Festival

Fourteen-year-old non-binary teenager J lives in the suburbs of Chicago. Unsure of their gender identity, J uses the pronoun "they" and has been taking hormone blockers to postpone the onset of puberty. Unfortunately, after a visit to their doctor, J learns that the hormones are starting to have concerning effects on their health. After two years of therapy and treatment, J has reached a turning point: they must decide whether or not to continue on their hormone treatment and what path to take with their gender identity. As they face these decisions, J's sister Lauren and Lauren's boyfriend, Azaz, arrive to look after J while their parents are out of town for a long weekend. Iranian-born filmmaker Anahita Ghazvinizadeh crafts a beguiling, thoughtful drama that sensitively explores a unique turning point in a teenager's self-realization.

Sun 13 21:00

Room for a Man



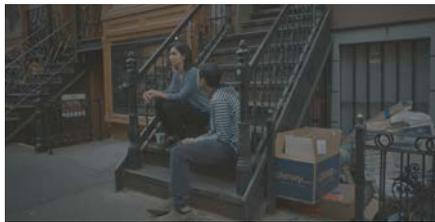
Dir. Anthony Chidiac
77 min | 2018 | Documentary | Lebanon
Arabic and French | Eng subs
Premiere: Montreal International Documentary Festival

Young gay Lebanese filmmaker Anthony Chidiac explores identity and family history, first through discussions with the Syrian builders refurbishing the Beirut apartment he shares with his mother; then by travelling to Argentina with his formerly estranged father. The documentary is a hypnotic personal essay that meditates on masculinity, sexuality and a lifelong quest for acceptance.

In carefully composed shots of his immediate surroundings, reflections on moments in his life, conversations with the Syrian builders who are renovating his house, and a trip with his father to Argentina, Chidiac constructs an intriguing self-portrait. Insecure as he might be about his own identity, his documentary debut is remarkably self-assured.

Mon 14 20:00

The Wedding



Dir. Sam Abbas
75 min | 2018 | Fiction | Egypt
English OV
Premiere: Theatrical release in Egypt

Rami, a young Muslim man, is preparing for his wedding with Sara while fulfilling a queer sexuality in secret due to a strict religious and cultural upbringing.

The film is the debut feature from director and screenwriter Sam Abbas who plays the protagonist in the story. Born in Egypt but raised in New Jersey, Abbas based the story closely on his own life. Indeed when it was released, his family did not even know about the film, turning the episode into one of the most unusual coming-out declarations in history.

The Wedding is the inaugural production from ArabQ, a boutique operation dedicated to promoting queer cinema and LGBT filmmakers from the Middle East. The company is bravely headquartered in Egypt, despite the risks associated with promoting gay rights in such a conservative Islamic society, where even waving a rainbow flag can lead to an arrest.

Fri 11 21:00 Shorts Program 1 (88 mins)

3 Centimetres

Dir. Lara Zeidan
9 m | Lebanon
Arabic | Eng subs

Four Lebanese girls go on a Ferris wheel ride to make their friend feel better about her breakup. Their conversation drifts to a less fun place.



Sun 13 19:00 Shorts Program 2 (94 mins)

Marco

Dir. Saleem Haddad
22 min | UK, Iraq
English and Arabic, Eng subs

When a banker invites a male sex worker to his apartment, he finds himself coming face to face with one of the world's largest humanitarian crises.



Half A Life

Dir. Tamara Shogaolu
12 m | Egypt
Arabic | Eng subs

After a traumatic encounter, a young Egyptian must choose whether to stay in the country he loves or seek asylum elsewhere.



Life in Darkness

Dir. Ali Raheem
9 m | Iraq
Arabic | Eng subs

A young man wakes up on his birthday in Mosul only to deal with destruction in his relationship, as well as in his homeland.



Hard Shadow

Dir. Neda Khanifar
3 m | Iran
Persian | Eng subs

A transgender woman is getting ready for her date when a message arrives and changes everything.



Ablution

Dir. Omar Al Dakheel
15 m | United States
English and Arabic | Eng subs

The bond between a disabled Muslim father and his son is tested when love is pitted against religion.



Breakup in 9 Scenes

Dir. Leil Zahra Mortada
15 m | Lebanon, Germany
English

How does one live disappointment? The film is an experimental essay as a response to a breakup message.



Night of Love

Dir. Omri Loukas
25 min | Israel
Hebrew and English | Eng subs

Yonatan abandons the army and goes on a wild night's journey looking for shelter and consolation.



Tonight

Dir. Emily Shir Segal
14 mins | Israel
Hebrew, Eng subs

Tom comes over to meet her girlfriend's group of friends for the first time. As the evening unfolds, she is confronted with the nature of this relationship.



Set Me As a Seal Upon Thine Heart

Dir. Omer Tobi
13m | Israel
Hebrew, Eng subs

A gay sauna encounter between a young man and an older man becomes an unexpected lesson about love.



Chromophobia

Dir. Bassem Ben Brahim
6 min | Tunisia
No dialogues

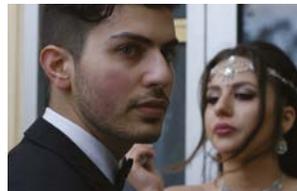
The journey of a man who is ostracized by society and to what extent he has to go to defend his freedom.



You Deserve Everything

Dir. Goran Stolevski
18 m | Australia
English

A doctor's romance with the hospital's Arabic interpreter is evolving into something deeper and tragic.



Run(a)Way Arab

Dir. Amrou Al-Kadhi
12 min | Egypt, UK
Arabic, Eng subs

Nazem, a queer Egyptian-Iraqi drag-queen, prepares for a performance informed by childhood memories of her mother.



Parking

Dir. Ahmad Seyfipour
9 m | Iran
Persian, Eng subs

Two men having sex in the back seat of a parked car are surprised by a burglar with twisted intentions

