

A pair of film festivals range far and wide

10



BOSTON PALESTINE FILM FESTIVAL

“Like Salt” star Jessica Damouni will attend a screening at the Boston Palestine Film Festival.

By Loren King GLOBE CORRESPONDENT **OCTOBER 11, 2018**

The Boston Palestine Film Festival celebrates its 12th year Oct. 19-28 with a host of features and shorts of various genres that explore Palestinian identity throughout the world. The opening feature, “The Reports on Sarah and Saleem” (7 p.m., Museum of Fine Arts), brings director Muayad Alayan and producer-screenwriter Rami Alayan back to the BPF. The filmmakers, who are brothers, attended the BPF in 2015 with their first feature, the dark comedy “Love, Theft and Other Entanglements.”

“The Reports on Sarah and Saleem,” which won the Audience Award at the recent International Film Festival Rotterdam, is a thriller centered on an extramarital affair between Palestinian delivery driver Saleem (Adeeb Safadi), who lives in East Jerusalem, and Israeli cafe owner Sarah (Sivane Kretchner), from West Jerusalem. The personal becomes political as the lovers are caught on opposite sides of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It screens again on Oct. 20, at 2 p.m., at the MFA followed by a conversation with Muayad Alayan.

Other highlights include “Writing on Snow” (Oct. 27, MFA), director Rashid Maharawi’s drama about five Palestinians of different political, social, and religious backgrounds who are trapped inside a small apartment one night as fighting rages in the Gaza Strip.

“Shorts II: The Immigrant Experience” (Oct. 28, MFA) presents six films, including “Like Salt,” Darine Hotait’s 25-minute drama about Hala, an Arab-American female boxer, and Kendrick, an African-American jazz musician. Hotait and Jessica Damouni, who plays Hala, will be in attendance. Also participating in a post-screening conversation is Hana Chamoun, star of director Claire Fowler’s 14-minute drama, “Salam.” Chamoun plays a Lyft driver who works the night shift in New York while waiting to hear life-or-death news from her family in Syria. Other titles in this program include Catherine Prowse and Hannah Quinn’s award-winning five-minute animated short, “Laymun,” in which a woman in a Middle Eastern war zone fights the destruction around her by growing a lemon garden; “Rupture,” about four Syrian youths navigating relocation to Canada, which director Yassmina Karajahco co-created with first-time actors and war survivors; “The Dead Die Once,” from Alex Morelli and Max McGillivray, about a Syrian refugee adjusting to her new life in America; and Mahdi Fleifel’s “A Drowning Man,” which follows a young man in a strange city as he struggles to survive the day.

Go to www.bostonpalestinefilmfest.org.

BAAFF looks back and ahead

The Boston Asian American Film Festival hits its 10-year milestone, starting Oct. 18 at the Brattle Theatre with a 25th anniversary screening of “The Joy Luck Club” (1993) and continuing to Oct. 28, at the Paramount Center and other venues. Rosalind Chao, star of “The Joy Luck Club,” will be on hand to open the festival and commemorate director Wayne Wang’s groundbreaking film of Amy Tan’s best-selling novel. “The Joy Luck Club” focuses on four Chinese immigrant women living in San Francisco (played by Tsai Chin, France Nuyen, Lisa Lu, and Kieu Chinh) and their complicated relationships with their American-born daughters (Chao, Ming-Na Wen, Tamlyn Tomita, and Lauren Tom).

The festival’s centerpiece film, “Fiction and Other Realities” (Oct. 26, Paramount Center, 6 p.m.), is the debut feature from singer-songwriter Bobby Choy of the band Big Phony, who co-directed with Steve Lee. In the semi-autobiographical film, Choy plays a Korean-American musician from New York who goes on tour in Seoul. A chance meeting with a busker, Ina (Hwa Young-Im), leads to a personal and professional relationship with music at its center.

Director Alex Chu will be in attendance with the festival’s closing film, “For Izzy” (Oct. 28, Paramount Center, 4 p.m.). It’s about Dede, a photojournalist and recovering addict, who befriends her neighbor Laura, a young woman with autism. Dede is inspired to create a documentary, using animation and found footage, that explores getting sober and dealing with family, friendship, love and forgiveness.

Go to www.baaff.org.

Loren King can be reached at loren.king@comcast.net.