

# Stars light up the red carpet for 5th Dublin Arabic Film Festival hosted by Dubai Duty Free

By **Hibah Noor** on October, 9 2018 | Retailers



From left: Ross Keane, Irish Film Institute Director, Sinead El Sibai, Dubai Duty Free Senior Vice President – Marketing, Jim Sheridan and Festival Director Zahra Moufid at the red carpet opening night of the Dublin Arabic Film Festival



From left: Sinead El Sibai, Dubai Duty Free Senior Vice President – Marketing, Jim Sheridan, Festival Director Zahra Moufid and Liam Cunningham, Irish stage and screen actor - known for playing Davos Seaworth in the HBO epic-fantasy series Game of Thrones

Stars from the entertainment world joined Oscar-nominated filmmaker, Jim Sheridan on the Red Carpet October 5 at the Irish Film Institute for the fifth edition of the Dublin Arabic Film Festival Presented by Dubai Duty Free.

The festival, which ran until October 7, featured six of the best new movies from the Arab world. One of the key themes of this year's Dublin Arabic Film Festival was the championing of female filmmakers, a theme that carried through many of the films.

Among the stars who joined Jim Sheridan and DAFF festival Director, Zahara Moufid on the red carpet were Game of Thrones star, Liam Cunningham, Love/Hate writer Stuart Carolan, actress, Neili Conroy and director, Terry McMahon.

Sinead El Sibai, Senior Vice President of Marketing at Dubai Duty Free flew in from Dubai to represent the presenting sponsor of the festival, Dubai Duty Free. The airport retailer has supported the festival and has been the presenting sponsor since its inception in 2014 when the legendary actor, Omar Sharif officially opened in the inaugural edition. Also, in attendance were several ambassadors and business people from the Arab world, and representatives of the Arab Irish Chamber who also sponsor the festival.

Guests arrived for a drink's reception before being invited to a private screening of the opening movie of the festival, Looking for Oum Kulthum - Shirin Neshat and Shoja Azari's drama about Oum Kulthum,

the legendary Egyptian singer and diva. After the screening, a VIP party was held for guests at the exclusive Stephen's Green Hibernian Club where guests enjoyed some exquisite Arabic food and wines from Bacchus Vinos.

"We are delighted to see so many well-known faces coming out to support the Dublin Arabic Film Festival presented by Dubai Duty Free. Now in its fifth year, the festival continues to grow and once again we will show a wonderful collection of movies at the Irish Film Institute and the Chester Beatty Library this weekend," said Jim Sheridan, DAFF President.

"We are proud to continue our support of this wonderful festival. Sponsorship has been a major part of our marketing strategy since our inception in 1983. Key sponsorships of various sporting and cultural events around the world allow us to communicate and engage with international audiences through local events and through digital, print, outdoor and broadcast media. There is a strong Irish community in the UAE, and there are an increasing number of Irish people visiting Dubai for both business and leisure and we want to continue to place our brand in front of them and to remind them that Dubai is a great place to visit and to do business," said Sinead El Sibai, Senior Vice President of Marketing at Dubai Duty Free.

"We always look forward to welcoming the Dublin Arabic Film Festival Presented by Dubai Duty Free to the Irish Film Institute. It is certainly a popular event for those who are looking for some brilliant, cultural movies that will not be seen on screens in other cinemas throughout Ireland. Once again, the six movies featuring at DAFF are exceptional," said Ross Keane, director at the Irish Film Institute.

Looking for Oum Kulthum, the festival's opening film, tells the story of Mitra, an ambitious artist in her forties who embarks on her dream project of making a film about the legendary Egyptian singer and diva Oum Kulthum. The film explores the struggles, sacrifices and the price of Oum Kulthum's success as a female artist in a male-dominated society. Affecting drama, Sheikh Jackson tells the story of Khaled, a respected junior cleric in Alexandria whose seemingly stable life becomes derailed by the news of Michael Jackson's death. Succumbing to long-suppressed feelings of turmoil and anxiety, he begins neglecting his wife and child and experiences flashbacks to his teenage years, when he was nicknamed 'Jackson' on account of his love for the King of Pop.

Ziad Doueiri's *The Insult*, which was shortlisted for this year's Best Foreign Language Oscar, tells the story of how a minor altercation between a Lebanese Christian and a Palestinian refugee escalates into a public dispute that comes to encapsulate the lasting legacy of the Lebanese Civil War. *Documentary House in the Fields* centres on an isolated rural Amazigh village in the High Atlas Mountains in Morocco. A portrait of a community that has remained unchanged for hundreds of years despite the rapidly accelerating socio-political realities of the country, the film observes and faithfully records the lives of the villagers.

*In Until the Birds Return*, past and present collide in the lives of three people, in this gripping film that exposes the soul of contemporary Algerian society. Finally, the Chester Beatty Library will show *Caramel*, a comedy set in a beauty salon in Beirut which provides a haven for five women, each with busy and complex personal lives. With the support of their friends in their familiar salon, the women search for the answers to questions of life, love, and happiness in Nadine Labaki's charming 2007 film.



Audience at the Irish Film Institute