



## Glamorous Premiere

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The film challenges her relationship with Cairo and her own identity

Last night at the GFF Plaza sparked with glamor as it hosted the red carpet for the world premiere of *The Inevitable Journey to Find a Wedding Dress*, directed by the talented Egyptian filmmaker Jaylan Auf. She was accompanied by her film's stars—Asmaa Galal, Salwa Mohamed Ali, Yasmin Raeis, and Ahmed Khaled Saleh—alongside producers Mohamed Hefzy and Tarek Nasr, and DOP Omar Aboudoma. Competing in the GFF Feature Narrative Competition, the film follows Warda, whose frantic

search for a wedding dress on the eve of her ceremony transforms into a profound journey of self-discovery, challenging her relationship with Cairo and her own identity. Following the red carpet festivities, the highly anticipated film screening began. Jaylan Auf is an accomplished independent filmmaker, field producer, and assistant director. She completed her German Abitur in Cairo in 2005 before earning a bachelor's degree in Political Science at the American University in Cairo,

with double minors in Film and Theatre. She holds a Screenwriting and Production Diploma from the University of Southern California. Since graduating, she has contributed to diverse projects, including films, animations, news coverage, and documentaries. Jaylan has produced content for prominent news channels during and after the revolution, covering significant events and creating documentaries like *We Are the Giant* and *Baha'i Minorities in Egypt*.

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# Today

## ★ Red Carpet



Join us today at **7:00 PM** at the **GFF Plaza** for the red carpet and MENA premiere screening of *Thank You for Banking with Us!* The event will feature Palestinian director Laila Abbas, award-winning actor Kamel El Bash, and Egyptian editor Heba Othman. Competing in the GFF Feature Narrative Competition, the film had its world premiere at the London Film Festival.

## ★ CineGouna Closing Night



Tonight marks the closing ceremony of the GFF CineGouna, where the winning projects of the CineGouna Funds in development and post-production will be announced. This year, 13 projects were selected from over 230 submissions.

Filmmakers are eligible for cash prizes of **US \$15,000** each and additional awards from local and international partners, along with mentorship and industry exposure.

Winners of the CineGouna Shorts Awards, powered by O West, will also be revealed, awarding **EGP 2,250,000** for three projects. Eight finalists will pitch their projects to a jury of industry experts.

## ★ Meet the Filmmaker

### SHORT PROGRAM 3

#### DAWN EVERYDAY

**Director:**  
Amir Youssef  
**Cast:**  
Selim Mostafa  
**DOP:**  
Amir Youssef

#### DANCING IN THE CORNER

**Director:**  
Jan Bujnowski

#### THE MAN WHO COULD NOT REMAIN SILENT

**Producer:**  
Bostjan Virc

#### AN ORANGE FROM JAFFA

**Director:**  
Mohammed Almughanni  
**Cast:**  
Kamel El Basha  
**Sea Cinema 2**  
12:00pm

#### MEMORY BOX

**Directors:**  
Joana Hadjithomas  
Khalil Joreige  
**Sea Cinema 2**  
2:00 pm

### SHORT PROGRAM 4

#### THE LAST MESSAGE

**Director:**  
Seif Madbouly  
**DOP:**  
Mahmoud Shahin

#### LEES WAXUL

**Director:**  
Yoro Mbaye

#### THE EGGREGORES' THEORY

**Director:**  
Andrea Gatopoulos

#### HOW WE GOT MOTHER BACK

**Cast:**  
Simao Fumega  
**Sea Cinema 1**  
2:00pm

### DISORDER

**Directors:**  
Lucien Bourjeily  
Bane Fakh  
Areej Mahmood  
Wissam Charaf  
**Producers:**  
Pierre Mouzannar  
Bechara Mouzannar  
**Sea Cinema 2**  
4:15pm

### TINY LIGHTS

**Director:**  
Beata Parkanova  
**Cast:**  
Mia Banko  
**Sound Designer:**  
Krystof Blabla  
**Sea Cinema 1**  
5:00pm

### CILAMA

**Director:**  
Hady Zaccak  
**Sea Cinema 3**  
5:30pm

### TATA

**Directors:**  
Lina Vdovii  
Radu Ciorniciuc  
**Sea Cinema 2**  
7:00pm

### A NEW KIND OF WILDERNESS

**Protagonists:**  
Nik Payne  
Falk Payne  
**Sea Cinema 3**  
7:30PM

### ALGIERS

**Director:**  
Chakib Taleb Bendiab  
**Sea Cinema 1**  
9:15pm

# Tomorrow

## ★ Meet Nahed Nasrallah

Join us tomorrow at **1:00 PM** at **CineGouna Theater** for a conversation with Nahed Nasrallah, a renowned costume designer in Arab cinema.

Nahed studied costume design in Paris and began her career as an assistant director to Youssef Chahine. Her breakthrough came with *The Immigrant* (1994), followed by acclaimed films like *The Blue Elephant* and *Ibrahim Al-Abyad*.

In this discussion, moderated by Mariam Naoum, Nahed will share insights into her creative process and the role of costume design in storytelling. Don't miss this chance to explore her artistry!





# Marianne Khoury the GFF Artistic Director: With the Growing Roles of Film Festivals, the Artistic Director Extends Beyond Film Curation

“It’s essential to recognize the pivotal role of Amr Mansi, the GFF’s executive director and co-founder. Despite our different backgrounds, we share a synergy that complements our mission. Amr encourages ideas aligned with the festival’s vision and has a remarkable ability to draw out your best qualities, transforming ideas into tangible projects in a remarkable way”

## Nahed Nasr

**What do you consider to be the key highlights of the 7<sup>th</sup> GFF edition as it nears its conclusion?**

The heart of any festival lies in its audience, and the El Gouna Festival truly embodies this. The event’s vibrancy is reflected in the energy and engagement of attendees, especially the diverse residents of El Gouna—business professionals, young people, children, and workers.

This year, we’ve strengthened our bond with the community, which was once hesitant but now actively participates with enthusiasm and pride. Our programs and activities celebrate the aspirations of our audience, making El Gouna not just a venue but a vibrant partner in the festival’s mission. Every day, the festival is a hub of activity, offering a diverse range of events that cater to its broad and varied audience, which is experiencing significant growth this year. I envision next year establishing a nursery for new mothers at the festival, so they can fully enjoy its activities while their babies are cared for.

**With the growing presence of young attendees this year, how do you believe this will influence the festival and its overall mission?**

This year, El Gouna Festival is experiencing a remarkable influx of youth, which is vital for its success as they bring energy and creativity.

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Young attendees come to learn and share their enthusiasm, exemplified by the “Egyptian Cities Embracing Cinema” exhibition, inspired by a young participant from last year’s CineGouna Emerge. The interaction between the audience and youth sparks innovation and fresh ideas. The exhibition not only attracted attention for its beauty but also conveyed a vital message: “Come back and film in Egypt.” Supporting the filmmaking process boosts the economy and strengthens the national film industry. Ultimately, the festival serves as a powerful platform to promote and advance cinema, fostering an environment that embraces all aspects of the film industry.

**The festival features a noteworthy presence of celebrities who actively participate in various activities throughout its duration, not just on the red carpet. How do you evaluate their involvement?**

The presence of celebrities is a vital element of our festival, as they not only add prestige to the events but also play a crucial role in illuminating the diverse aspects of the film industry. They connect with emerging filmmakers, engage with young audiences, and participate in a wide array of activities that enrich the experience. For instance, it was truly inspiring to see Yousra lead a captivating conversation with Esaad Younis in a masterclass; such interactions create invaluable opportunities for connection through a diverse range of initiatives. This reflects the essence of our vision: to nurture dynamic activities and innovative ideas that contribute to the growth of a vibrant cultural landscape and foster the development of our artistic community.

**With the growing significance of film festivals as pivotal players in the film industry, how do you see the role of the artistic director evolving in response to these changes?**

Film festivals have evolved beyond mere showcases for films; they are now powerful platforms for networking within the industry. As a result, the artistic director’s role has expanded beyond programming films to fostering communication among stakeholders. This involves creating optimal conditions for screenings and supporting the industry from concept to execution.

The artistic director is responsible for all aspects of the festival, including its positioning, overall image, and the cinematic environment that supports filmmaking. This role aligns with the growing significance of film festivals today.



In this context, it’s essential to recognize the pivotal role of Amr Mansi, the GFF’s executive director and co-founder. Despite our different backgrounds, we share a synergy that complements our mission. Amr encourages ideas aligned with the festival’s vision and has a remarkable ability to draw out your best qualities, transforming ideas into tangible projects in a remarkable way.



## Joanna Hadji Thomas and Khalil Joreige On Memory in Cinema

**Roba Hesham**

In a captivating session at the CineGouna theater, acclaimed filmmakers Joanna Hadji Thomas and Khalil Joreige, recipients of the GFF 2024 Career Achievement Award, engaged in a thought-provoking dialogue about the intricate relationship between storytelling and memory in cinema. Moderated by esteemed film critic and professor John Michel Frodon, the conversation delved into their artistic journey, the unique challenges of filmmaking in Lebanon, and how personal narratives profoundly influence their work.

Joanna shared insights from her personal experiences, illustrating how connections and memories can inspire creative expression. This theme is particularly evident in their film *Memory Box*, which addresses the complexities of familial relationships and the act of rediscovery. Set against the backdrop of Lebanon, the film explores the lives of three generations, centering on a mother who aspired to be a photographer. The narrative unfolds when her daughter uncovers a box filled with her mother's notes—intimate writings that were never intended for public view.

Khalil emphasized their commitment to authenticity, highlighting the extensive visual research he undertook, capturing nearly 10,000 photographs to enrich the film's storytelling. Both filmmakers acknowledged the difficulties inherent in the Lebanese film industry but remain dedicated to creating narratives that resonate with their audience. Their innovative approach to scriptwriting involves sharing only the final version with actors, fostering a unique collaborative dynamic. Through their dedication to memory and narrative, Joanna and Khalil continue to make a significant impact on the film industry, both locally and internationally.

## Reviving NutShell

Yesterday, the GFF 7<sup>th</sup> Classics program featured a special screening of *Nutshell* (1995), a restored version of the film directed by the iconic Khairy Beshara. The restoration was expertly undertaken by Sameh Fathy, a film critic renowned for his encyclopedic knowledge of Egyptian cinema. The event took place at the GFF Auditorium, with the esteemed presence of Beshara, actress Rania Mahmoud Yassin—who made her debut in the film—and Fathy himself.

Among the audience were students from the German Hotel School in El Gouna, who engaged thoughtfully with the film's themes during the Q&A session. Beshara reflected on the film's long period of neglect, stating, "This film was very underrated. It's a rebellious film that the media doesn't like." He expressed gratitude for its restoration, emphasizing that *Nutshell* is a timeless work that transcends its era. Yassin echoed this sentiment, highlighting how the film gave voice to a new generation of actors, many of whom have since become prominent figures in the industry.

Fathy shared his joy in fulfilling Beshara's dream of restoring this cherished film. Audience members praised the film for its relevance, with one student noting the effective use of music to enhance its atmosphere. Beshara was pleased to learn that, despite its realistic portrayal of everyday life, the film also resonated with a surreal quality. At its core, *Nutshell* explores the decline of a hotel run by Raouf, who hosts a food-eating contest that inadvertently reveals profound social struggles.



## The Cost of Public Persona

**Youssef Sarhan**

Huda El Mufti remarked during the "Building Actors' Persona on Social Media" panel: "Celebrities reveal only what they wish. I'm not someone who enjoys sharing my failures." This statement underscores the tension between authenticity and curated online personas. Moderated by Mohamed Omar, the discussion

explored how to navigate public identity on social media. Ahmed Malek emphasized the importance of distinguishing constructive criticism from negativity, highlighting the need for resilience. The panel illuminated the unique challenges artists face in balancing personal truths with the pressures of their digital presence.





## Film Restoration: A Longer Life

### Bashayer AlBaker

On the seventh day of the GFF, a distinguished panel convened to discuss film restoration and its vital role in preserving cinematic history. Moderated by Egyptian filmmaker Ahmed Nabil, the



session titled "Film Restoration: A Longer Life" featured insights from experts including French film programmer Mathilde Rouxel, Egyptian director Khairy Beshara, GFF's Artistic Director Marianne Khoury, and UNESCO's Nuria Sanz Gallego.

Marianne Khoury emphasized the importance of film restoration in reviving classic works and safeguarding intellectual property. Ahmed Nabil stressed the necessity of quality preservation, while Nuria Sanz Gallego discussed UNESCO's Memory of the World (MOW) program, which promotes the preservation and accessibility of documentary heritage, particularly focusing on Egypt's audiovisual legacy.

The discussion included Nabil's recollection of a lost French film shot in Egypt and efforts to restore

works by filmmaker Youssef Chahine. The panel addressed the transition from film reels to digital cinema, underscoring the cultural significance of preserving original cinematic experiences.

Mathilde Rouxel reflected on her restoration work for Lebanese director Jocelyne Saab, highlighting how these projects connect new generations to historical narratives. Tamer El Saeid discussed the advantages of modern technology in restoration while cautioning against altering a film's original essence. Khairy Beshara concluded by sharing the story of Abdelhamid Saeed, a pioneer in developing Egypt's Cinematheque, stressing the cultural importance of restoration. The session reaffirmed that film restoration preserves not just images, but also the cultural values they represent.

## GFF: Bridging Business and Art

### Aya El-Haddad

Yesterday at the GFF Hub, a panel titled "The Two Businesses: How Can the Corporate World Contribute to Art and Culture in GFF" featured prominent industry leaders, including Mohamed Amer, CEO of El Gouna; Yasser Shaker, CEO of Orange Egypt; and Mohamed Abou Ghaly, Senator and CEO of Abou Ghaly Motors Group. The session was moderated by Amr Mansi, Co-founder and Executive Director of GFF.

Mansi opened the discussion by expressing gratitude for the panelists' presence and support, emphasizing the significance of collaboration between the corporate sector and the arts. Amer remarked on the intrinsic connection between business and art in Gouna, stating, "This is something in the DNA of Gouna."

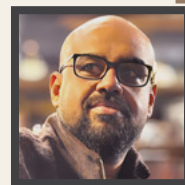
He highlighted the need for investment

in diverse events that benefit both businesses and the cultural landscape. Amer also stressed the importance of "place making," aiming to position Gouna as a unique destination over the next two decades, blending commercial interests with artistic endeavors.

Abou Ghaly emphasized societal responsibility, noting that supporting initiatives like GFF enhances employee engagement and fosters a culturally rich workplace. Shaker discussed the complexities of choosing brand ambassadors, highlighting that mutual benefit should take precedence over commercialization.

As the discussion concluded, the panelists reiterated that corporate support is essential in cultivating a vibrant arts scene, enhancing creativity and innovation, and ensuring that art continues to thrive in Egypt and beyond.

# 7 Editions Questions



**Ahmed Atef Megahed**  
Art Director of Publications

- This year, we enhanced the visual design of the festival's print materials, film schedules, and CineGouna publications, incorporating dynamic elements that reflect the festival's vibrant spirit. This cohesive artistic identity was achieved through the hard work of my dedicated team, to whom I extend my heartfelt gratitude, especially Ahmed Mokhtar, our design tem manager.
- **GFF's** success over seven editions stems from a commitment to quality and innovation, providing a unique cinematic experience with world-class films and events. Driven by the team's passion and founders' vision, it fosters creativity and cultural exchange.
- **GFF** has evolved into a powerful catalyst for talent development through the CineGouna and its diverse programs, making a substantial impact on the film industry and opening new doors for creative professionals.
- What I enjoy most about **GFF** is the collaborative spirit, where each team member uniquely contributes to the festival's vision. Together, we create something impactful and inspiring.
- An unforgettable moment each year is seeing the festival catalog and guide in our guests' hands. After months of work, holding the final printed version celebrates the team's dedication.
- In the next seven years, I hope **GFF** becomes a leading center for regional and international cinema, expanding its influence with more workshops and support for young talents.
- To the festival audience: Enjoy every moment! There's so much to discover, from incredible films to inspiring discussions. Your support makes this festival truly special.



