



GFF 7
Youthful, Inspiring, Impactful

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We are on the path to becoming one of the world's most important festivals



GFF Closes Its 7th Edition Honoring Empowering Narratives

The 7th edition of the El Gouna Film Festival concluded last night, capping nine days of vibrant celebrations in El Gouna. The closing ceremony featured festival founder Eng. Naguib Sawiris, city founder Eng. Samih Sawiris, and Executive Director Amr Mansi, alongside a dazzling array of stars and filmmakers from around the globe.

Prominent figures from the film industry gathered to present awards to winning films across various categories, including narrative features, documentaries, short films, and Arab cinema. The evening celebrated exceptional creativity and the year's outstanding cinematic achievements.

The ceremony, hosted by Annabella Hilal, opened with the national anthem and a tribute presented by actors Salwa Mohamed Ali and Sayed Ragab, honoring the late legendary artists Hassan Youssef and Mostafa Fahmy. A moment of silence paid homage to their profound impact on Egyptian and global cinema.

Hilal expressed gratitude to the festival's sponsors for their essential support. Eng. Samih Sawiris then delivered an inspiring speech about the El Gouna Film Festival's commitment to nurturing talent and providing a platform for cinematic expression across the Arab region. Amr Mansi followed with a heartfelt address, joined by former festival director Intishal Al-Tamimi, who shared his message via video, highlighting this year's achievements and reaffirming the festival's enduring mission.

A highlight of the evening was the presentation of the GFF Creative Achievement Award to Lebanese artists Joana Hadjithomas and Khalil Joreige, recognizing their exceptional

contributions to contemporary art and cinema. Renowned for their pioneering work in film, photography, and art installations, Hadjithomas and Joreige were celebrated with a video showcasing their artistic journey before accepting the award on stage.

Eng. Samih Sawiris, president of the festival and founder of El Gouna, highlighted its role as a platform for creativity, stating, "El Gouna Film Festival fosters creativity, dialogue, and cultural exchange." He expressed pride in the festival's growth, noting its impact in inspiring filmmakers to push boundaries and tell powerful stories that resonate globally.

Amr Mansi, co-founder and executive director of the festival, welcomed guests, sharing that he would speak from the heart. He said, "This year, we fulfilled the vision we started last year to spotlight the film industry." He highlighted that perceptions of the festival as an elite event have changed, with concrete results this year: "We sold 5,500 badges and booked 22,500 tickets, proving our significant impact on cinema in Egypt and the Arab world."

Mansi expressed pride in their achievements, saying, "We are on the path to becoming one of the world's most important festivals." He acknowledged Intishal Al-Tamimi for his key role in the festival's success and thanked contributors, including the Egyptian government, the Ministry of Culture, Eng. Naguib Sawiris, Eng.

Samih Sawiris, and the entire GFF team, concluding with, "Thank you all." Marianne Khoury, artistic director of the El Gouna Film Festival, expressed pride in this year's selections, stating, "Our choices showcase diverse cinematic perspectives from emerging and established talents." She added, "It's an honor to present impactful works that celebrate humanity, and I look forward to our audience experiencing these stories." Following that, a captivating performance by singer Noel Kharman took place, setting the stage for the announcement of the award winners.

The ceremony continued with the announcement of this year's NETPAC Award for excellence in Asian cinema. The NETPAC Jury at GFF 2024, led by filmmaker Asif Rustamov (Azerbaijan) and including curator Ludmila Cvikova (Slovakia) and journalist Kais Kasim (Iraq/Sweden), named the winner for Best Asian Film. The award was presented to *We Are Inside* (Lebanon, Qatar, Denmark), directed by Farah Kassem, for its exceptional storytelling that enhances the festival's global perspective.

The FIPRESCI Jury at GFF 2024 selected outstanding debut works from filmmakers in Africa, Asia, and South America. Comprising critics Arwa Tag Eldeen (Sudan), Francisco Ferreira (Portugal), and Leticia Alassé (Brazil), the jury awarded the FIPRESCI Prize to *Girls Will Be Girls* (India), directed by Shuchi Talati.

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Eng. Naguib Sawiris presented the annual “Cinema for Humanity” award, expressing joy in honoring the audience’s passion for impactful stories: “This award embodies the heart of our festival.”

Making its World Premiere at GFF 2024, *Disorder*, directed by Lucien Bourjeily, Bane Fakh, Wissam Charaf, and Areej Mahmoud, captivated audiences and won the Cinema for Humanity Audience Award.

El Gouna Green Star Award recognizes films that highlight environmental issues and promote sustainability. This year, the jury—actress Tara Emad, actor-director-producer Ahmed Magdy, and producer Annemiek van der Hell—reviewed impactful entries. A special mention went to *A New Kind of Wilderness* for its touching portrayal of Nik Payne, a widower living off-grid with his children in Norway. The El Gouna Green Star Award was presented to *The Battle for Laikipia*, a compelling documentary directed by Daphne Matziaraki and Peter Murimi, co-produced in Kenya, Greece, and the United States.

The Short Films Competition featured four awards, presented by a diverse jury including actress Amina Khalil (Egypt), actor Amir El-Masry (Egypt-Britain), actress-filmmaker Lina Soualem (France-Palestine-Algeria), producer Sam Manacsa (Philippines), and actress Rakeen Saad (Jordan).

Awards included a Special Mention for *Dawn Every Day* (Egypt) by Amir Youssef and *Voiceless* (Switzerland) by Samuel Patthey. El Gouna Star for Best Arab Short Film, went to *A Promise to the Sea* (Egypt, Sweden) by Hend Sohail. El Gouna Bronze Star for Short Film, was awarded to *Ebb & Flow* (Lebanon, Qatar, United States) by Nay Tabbara. El Gouna Silver Star for Short Film, was jointly awarded to *How We Got Mother Back* (Portugal) by Goncalo Waddington and *An Orange From Jaffa* (Palestine, Poland) by Mohammed Almughanni. Finally, El Gouna Golden Star for Best Short Film, was awarded to *Upshot* (Palestine, Italy, France) by Maha Haj.

The Feature Documentary Competition Jury, led by Lebanese filmmaker Eliane Raheb and including Moroccan director Hicham Falah, French consultant Jérôme Paillard, Tunisian filmmaker Nejib Belkadhi, and German director Steffi Niedertzoll, celebrated innovative storytelling at GFF 2024.

Winners included El Gouna Star for Best Arab Documentary Film, awarded



to *The Brink of Dreams* (Egypt, France, Denmark, Qatar, Saudi Arabia) by Nada Riyadh and Ayman El Amir, and *My Memory Is Full of Ghosts* (Syria) by Anas Zawahri. El Gouna Bronze Star for Documentary Film, went to *A New Kind of Wilderness* (Norway) by Silje Evensmo Jacobsen. El Gouna Silver Star for Documentary Film, was awarded to *Soundtrack to a Coup D'état* (Belgium, France, Netherlands) by Johan Grimont. El Gouna Golden Star for Documentary Film, went to *We Are Inside* (Lebanon, Qatar, Denmark) by Farah Kassem.

The Feature Narrative Competition Jury at GFF 2024, chaired by acclaimed Indian actress and director Nandita Das, included French critic Charles Tesson, German actress Sibel Kekilli, Algerian director Sofia Djama, and Egyptian actress Menna Shalaby.

The jury presented several awards, including Special Mentions to Charles Peccia Galletto for *My Everything* (France) by Anne Sophie Bailly, and to Kani Kusruti and Preeti Panigrahi for their performances in *Girls Will Be Girls* (India, France, Norway, United States) by Shuchi Talati.

El Gouna Star for Best Actress went to Laura Wismar for *Salve Maria* (Spain) by Mar Coll, while El Gouna Star for Best Actor was awarded to Adam Bessa for his role in *Ghost Trail* (France, Germany, Belgium) by Jonathan Millet.

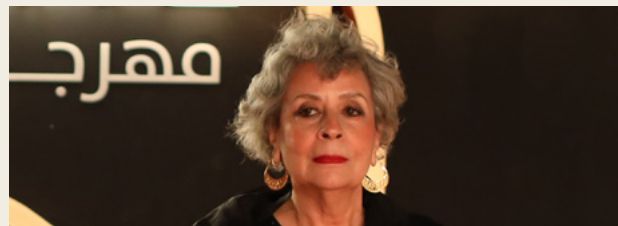
El Gouna Star for Best Arab Narrative Film, was jointly awarded to *Thank You for Banking With Us!* (Palestine, Germany, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Egypt) by Laila Abass, and *Who Do I Belong To* (Tunisia, France, Canada) by Meryam Joobeur.

El Gouna Bronze Star for Narrative Film, went to *Girls Will Be Girls*, while

El Gouna Silver Star for Narrative Film, was awarded to *The Kingdom* (France) by Julien Colona. El Gouna Golden Star for Narrative Film, went to *Ghost Trail*.

The evening was enriched with a vibrant entertainment show, rounding off the festivities and celebrating the filmmakers’ accomplishments. The 7th edition of the El Gouna Film Festival has once again proven to be a dynamic platform for storytelling, supporting artistic innovation and bringing visionary films to an international audience.

GFF Art Behind the Scene Awards



Powered by Abou Ghaly Motors, the El Gouna Film Festival (GFF) launched its inaugural “Art Behind the Scene” awards to honor the often-overlooked contributors to filmmaking. This new award features two categories: the “Art Behind the Scene Career Award” and the “Art Behind the Scene Nominations Award.”

The Career Award celebrates enduring contributions in areas like editing, costume design, and cinematography, with this year’s honor going to costume designer Nahed Nasrallah. The Nominations Award recognizes recent achievements in the same fields, as well as music composition and art direction. This year, it was awarded to cinematographer Abdelsalam Mousa and musician/composer Ahmed El Sawy.

The awards jury included Yousra, Yousry Nasrallah, Marwan Hamed, and Hend Sabry. GFF Executive Director Amr Mansi described the award as an important annual event honoring essential behind-the-scenes talent, thanking his team members Mariam Naoum, Aya Dawara, and Sarah Bissada. Senator Mohamed Abu Ghali expressed pride in supporting these awards as a tribute to dedicated professionals in cinema.

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GFF's 7th edition has set a benchmark for cultural infrastructure development



Amr Mansi, The GFF Co-Founder & Executive Director:

GFF's 7th Edition Had the Highest Attendance Ever

“We aim to modernize the film festival experience to meet contemporary needs. Our redesign of the Plaza aligns with the scale of El Gouna Film Festival and the aspirations of its guests. By providing dedicated workspaces for filmmakers, journalists, and audiences, we foster collaboration and nurture emerging talents, ensuring we remain flexible to the evolving demands of the industry”

Mohamed Kandeel

How was the Gouna conference center redesigned into the GFF Plaza, a cultural cinema hub?

The seventh edition of El Gouna Film Festival featured significant achievements, notably the transformation of the Plaza conference center into a cultural hub. This redesign enhanced its capacity to host diverse events for filmmakers, journalists, and audiences. The updated screening halls now provide exceptional viewing experiences, equipped with advanced technologies, while dedicated press spaces facilitate work and conferences. Interactive areas for workshops and seminars encourage audience engagement with filmmakers, fostering the exchange of fresh ideas.

How does the Plaza's development impact the festival?

The Plaza's transformation into a comprehensive cultural center has enhanced the festival's role, evolving it into a hub for culture, thought, and creativity rather than just a film screening venue. This development has increased opportunities for audiences to interact with filmmakers and understand their visions while fostering better communication between journalists and filmmakers. As a result, the GFF's 7th edition has set a benchmark for cultural infrastructure development, aligning with the event's needs and elevating Egypt's status as a regional and international center for cinema and culture.

How does this statement reflect the festival management's ability to respond to the evolving demands of the cinematic landscape?

El Gouna Film Festival is a leading cultural initiative in the Arab region. Since its launch in 2017, it has significantly impacted the film industry, adapting flexibly to contemporary demands. The festival management has effectively met the aspirations of audiences and filmmakers while addressing challenges like advanced technology and the COVID-19 pandemic. By embracing digital media and supporting independent films, the festival has expanded its reach and provided emerging filmmakers with new creative opportunities. Balancing live and interactive screenings

enhances audience engagement and fosters cultural dialogue. Ultimately, the festival aims to redefine the film festival concept, offering a platform for global filmmakers to exchange ideas and address pressing industry issues.

How important do you think innovation is in organizational and management practices?

The management employs flexible organizational methods that embrace innovative ideas, allowing for screenings and events that reflect the cultural diversity of the audience. By thoughtfully designing screening spaces and creating dedicated areas for audience interaction, the festival effectively addresses the varied



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I am very pleased and satisfied with this edition's overall quality



needs of its attendees, all driven by a dynamic team committed to creativity and innovation.

What is El Gouna Film Festival's role in keeping pace with the evolving film industry?

Thanks to its adaptive management, the El Gouna Film Festival has evolved into a platform that addresses global film industry needs while modernizing festival models. By integrating technology and fostering participant interaction, it balances entertainment and thought, aligning with the aspirations of future filmmakers. The festival remains a dynamic cultural hub that inspires new generations of filmmakers and audiences through its flexible approach to content and structure.

What role does the GFF play in nurturing emerging talent and shaping the next generation of filmmakers?

GFF is committed to nurturing young talent by empowering them and providing a platform for their ideas. Through initiatives like CineGouna, the festival connects emerging filmmakers with industry professionals, offering financial support, mentorship, and workshops led by experts to enhance their skills.

By addressing funding challenges with awards and co-production grants, the festival helps young filmmakers showcase their work to a global audience. This effort aims to build a new generation of Arab filmmakers, promote cultural identity, and share local stories internationally, equipping young talents with the resources and confidence to succeed in the film industry.

We also aim to enhance cultural identity by showcasing films that address community issues and present unique perspectives from Arab youth. The festival promotes local stories to a global audience and provides young talents with the confidence and resources to pursue their careers through financial support and connections with international companies.

How do you view the impact of GFF on the film industry?

GFF has emerged as a model for supporting young talent, actively contributing to the development of a new generation of filmmakers who can compete globally. By offering opportunities to showcase ideas and fostering connections with creators and financiers, the festival serves as an essential starting point for aspiring filmmakers and effectively supports creative projects. Thus, the festival is not only a platform for showcasing films but also a comprehensive hub that nurtures new filmmakers, enriching Arab cinema with works that reflect the community's concerns and aspirations through a youthful lens.

How do you evaluate the 7th edition of the Gouna Film Festival?

On a personal level, I am very pleased and satisfied with this edition's overall quality. From a professional standpoint, I believe it has accomplished many of the goals we set during the initial planning stages. Moreover, it's exciting to note that this edition recorded the highest attendance in the festival's history, attributed to the diverse array of events, films, and panels, both in terms of quantity and engagement.

Nahed Nasrallah: Celebrating a Legacy in Costume Design

Aya El-Haddad

On the final day of the GFF's 7th edition, In Conversation with Nahed Nasrallah—the GFF 2024 Art Behind the Scenes Career Winner—honored the remarkable journey of costume designer Nahed Nasrallah. Led by screenwriter and CineGouna Forum head Mariam Naoum, the discussion explored Nahed's transition from a student of Economics and Political Science, with aspirations of becoming a tour guide, to an influential figure in Egyptian cinema.

Nahed recounted how a brief role at Swiss Air and a chance encounter steered her into costume design, despite being the younger sister of filmmaker Youssef Chahine. Her first experience in the field came with *Goodbye Bonaparte* by Youssef Chahine, a pivotal moment that solidified her calling to shape characters and narratives through costume.

Describing her approach, Nahed emphasized the importance of thorough research to capture each character's cultural and social background, collaborating closely with directors, cinematographers, and set designers to enhance authenticity. "Costume design is more than aesthetics," she explained. "It's about deepening the story."

Throughout her career, Nahed gained invaluable insights from luminaries like Chahine, who encouraged her to perfect her craft. She reflected on *Bab el Shams* as a highlight, where every detail—from fabric to accessories—contributed to the film's visual language.

The event concluded with tributes from industry peers who praised Nahed's dedication, attention to detail, and impact on Egyptian cinema. Actress Salwa Mohamed and actor Sayed Ragab both highlighted her meticulous care for every character, setting her work apart as truly transformative.









