



AGAPS
Association for Gulf
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Studies

proudly presents films from the Gulf at the

MESA FILMFEST 2025



THREE

United Arab Emirates, 2024; color; 93 minutes; English and Arabic with Arabic and English subtitles; dir. Nayla Al Khaja
A young boy's mental health crisis prompts his desperate mother to seek help from an unexpected source, a man who must abandon his Western mindset and embrace a powerful, ancient ritual to save her son.



THE WATER THAT ASKED A FISH

Bahrain, 2025; color; 26 minutes; dir. Mariam M. Alnoaimi

The Water that Asked for a Fish contextualises the Gulf's relationships with water, bringing to focus their precarious nature in sustaining human and ecological life and offers insights into regional customs such as putting eyeliner on fish, the practice of wrapping its body in a white shroud before returning it to the sea and why palm leaves are set aflame by women with pearl-diver ancestry.



FRAGMENTATION

تشظي

Kuwait, 2025; color; 20 minutes; Arabic with English subtitles;
dir. Mohamed Saadoun

Fragmentation portrays a woman's struggle with her painful past and memories, highlighting how social constraints lead to the disintegration of her identity. Atheba revisits a past love that was destroyed by societal pressures. Through memories triggered by a mysterious box, the film explores how rigid cultural norms fractured her identity, forcing her to sacrifice personal happiness and love for tradition's sake.

Films by and about citizens and residents in southern Iran, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and UAE

- 1 feature-length documentary film
- 6 short documentary films
- 1 short experimental film
- 6 short narrative films

Filmmaker contact information and trailers available on AGAPS website

Please contact Dale at dale.hudson@nyu.edu with recommendations for filmmakers to invite for next year's festival

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proudly presents 14 films from the Gulf at the
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<p>SARKHA Feature UAE 2024 color, Arabic with English subtitles. Dir. Nida al-Nadabi Based on a true story from the Palestinian Nakba of 1948, a young Palestinian teacher prepares for her graduation ceremony, as an airplane lies near her home.</p>	<p>TOHFA (PRESENT) UAE/Feature 2024, color, Urdu with English subtitles. Dir. Rashid Masud Two days before his birthday, Nadir attempts to convince his teacher to find him a worthy gift. His attempt is interrupted by an unexpected realization.</p>		
<p>HAMLLOUL UAE 2024, color, Arabic with English subtitles. Dir. Hossain de Haq Alkhatib Hamed is a young man caught between an unrequited love and an injury. Under Bencherouf's lens, he begins to work on raising his confidence again.</p>	<p>MEEZAN (SCALE) میزان Canada 2023, color, Urdu with English subtitles. Dir. Shabab Al-Masoudi Set in the province of Khuzestan in Iran, bordering Iraq, Mezzan is an observational and immersive experience about the embodiment of work at the margins of the oil industry.</p>	<p>SET PIECES ركلة حرة Qatar 2024, color, 12 minutes, Arabic with English subtitles. Dir. Bentley Brown and Nadia Marwan Set Hesse reflects on the World's criticism of the 2022 World Cup in Qatar, and, through the viewpoint of an attendee, ponder a defining of the world's geopolitical center.</p>	<p>UMM SALAMA: THE MATCHMAKER UAE 2024, color, Arabic with English subtitles. Director: Dr. Hossain Alkhatib As Umm Salama Hossain prepares for mother's daughter, Salama to consider marriage, the center is a journey to find the perfect match with unexpected outcomes.</p>
<p>IT'S NOT ABOUT KETCHUP UAE 2024, color, Arabic and English with English subtitles. Dir. Hossain de Haq Alkhatib A documentary on the intricate lives of a couple facing a challenge in their relationship. The film explores the nuanced dynamics of love and understanding.</p>	<p>MHAYER UAE 2024, color, Arabic with English subtitles. Dir. Hossain de Haq Alkhatib Set in QATAR, this contemporary film follows a young boy who struggles with his father's "misreading". Each story sharpens his senses and deepens his thoughts, turning a simple walk into a profound philosophical journey.</p>	<p>SHAME UAE 2024, color, Arabic with English subtitles. Dir. Hossain de Haq Alkhatib Nadia's testimony to her is deeply rooted by her mother. In the ensuing intense confrontation, Nadia is faced with a pivotal choice: accept her predetermined fate or embrace the strength to assert her independence and forge her own destiny.</p>	<p>AN UNEXPECTED TURN UAE 2024, color, English, 15 minutes. Dir. Yusef Al-Najjar A look into the lives of delivery drivers reveals a world hidden behind the convenience of our fast-paced world. The documentary opens with a reflection on delivery, setting the stage for a closer look at the individuals behind the wheels.</p>
<p>MAY WE TALK ABOUT LOSS? UAE 2024, color, English and Arabic with English subtitles. Dir. Yusef Al-Najjar Five women bravely relate their own words of importance while standing out against tradition and preserving authenticity.</p>	<p>REVIVING EMAN UAE 2024, color, Arabic with English subtitles. Dir. Yusef Al-Najjar Inspiring story of an immigrant paragon: when career was unexpectedly abandoned by a debilitating injury. A tale of resilience and courage.</p>	<p>SUGAR LIES Saudi Arabia 2024, color, Arabic with English subtitles. Dir. Yusef Al-Najjar Step into the deceiving world of Alkhatibana, full of life as his late son in his everyday routine. As each day passes, we witness his relentless pursuit of social acceptance and his evolving web of deception, mostly to himself.</p>	<p>VHS TAPE REPLACED Saudi Arabia 2024, color, Arabic with English subtitles. Dir. Yusef Al-Najjar In 1985, a young Saudi man attempts to impress his crush by showcasing his favorite pop songs. After recording the video tape, it goes to the wrong hands.</p>

For filmmaker contact info and trailers, visit www.agaps.org