



## FrancoFilm Festival 2022 at Cinema Akil celebrates “Belonging” in its 12<sup>th</sup> edition

Dubai, United Arab Emirates | March 25, 2021 - [Cinema Akil](#), Dubai’s only independent cinema, and in collaboration with the Embassies of France, Switzerland, Belgium and Canada in the United Arab Emirates, announces the launch of the 12<sup>th</sup> edition of the **FrancoFilm Festival**, which will run from March 25-31, 2022, with a special screening at Manarat Al Saadiyat, Abu Dhabi on March 27.

The co-production-focused festival features ten regional premieres across genres, including critically acclaimed drama, documentary, and animated feature films.

FrancoFilm is an annual festival aimed at celebrating the French language through cinema. This year’s film lineup focuses on the theme of “Belonging” in recognition of immigrant and host societies.

The FrancoFilm Festival lineup will present co-productions from nine countries opening with a screening of the award-winning Ukrainian-French-Swiss co-production ***Olga*** by **Elie Grappe** winner of the SADC Award at the Critic's Week at the Cannes Film Festival 2021. The program includes Tunisian-French co-production; ***A Tale of Love and Desire***, Leila Bouzid’s latest feature and the closing film of the Critic’s Week at the Cannes Film Festival and Canadian-Vietnamese drama ***14 Days, 12 Nights*** by Jean-Philippe Duval. FrancoFilm’s 12th edition will also include a special screening of environmental documentary ***Bigger Than Us*** directed by Flore Vasseur produced by Academy Award Winner Marion Cotillard which had a Special Screening at the Cannes Film Festival 2021 a film that follows seven young climate activists from Malawi, Indonesia, Lebanon, Uganda, Brazil, Greece and USA fighting for their world against the perils of climate change.

### Quote

“We are proud to contribute to the evolution of FrancoFilm which has now been hosted at Cinema Akil for 4 editions; each edition featuring an important thematic reflecting our shared values with our partners participating in the festival in presenting challenging, timely and socially relevant contemporary films. Our partnership has encompassed four thematic editions including FrancoArab (2019), FrancoFilm: CineAfrica (2020), FrancoFilm: Sustainability Development Goals (SDGs) in Focus (2021) and now FrancoFilm: *Belonging* which in a forever-transformed world is more relevant than ever. Each of these editions have presented programming that sparked important conversations around issues requiring our immediate attention and honesty made accessible through the powerful medium of film.” - Butheina Kazim

Running until March 31, the festival will include films such *The Fam* by Fred Baillif, and the animated drama *Josep* directed by Aurel.

### The films:

(Opening film)



### **Olga**

Directed by Elie Grappe

2021 | PG14 | In French, Ukrainian, Russian with English subtitles | 85 minutes | Drama Feature

Synopsis:

In 2013, A 15-year-old gymnast finds herself torn between Switzerland – where she is training for the European Championship in preparation for the Olympics – and Ukraine, where her mother is a journalist, reporting on Euromaidan.

### **Une histoire d'amour et de désir (A Tale of Love and Desire)**

Directed by Leyla Bouzid

2021 | 21+ | In French with English subtitles | 102 minutes | Drama Feature

Synopsis:

Ahmed, 18, is French of Algerian origin and who grew up in the suburbs of Paris. At university, he meets Farah, a young Tunisian girl, who is full of energy and who has just arrived in Paris. While discovering a corpus of sensual and erotic Arabic literature he never imagined existed, Ahmed falls deep in love with Farah, and although literally overwhelmed with desire, he will try to resist it.

### **Soeurs (Sisters)**

Directed by Yamina Benguigui

2020 | PG13 | In French and Arabic with English subtitles | 99 minutes | Drama Feature

Synopsis:

How three sisters tear each other apart when one of them decides to tell the life of their dying father in the theater.

### **Madeleine Collins**

Directed by Antoine Barraud

2021 | PG13 | In French with English subtitles | 102 minutes | Drama Feature

Synopsis:

Judith leads a double life between Switzerland and France. On the one hand there is Abdel with whom she raises a little girl, and there is Melvil with whom she has two older boys. Little by little, this fragile balance, made of lies, secrets and back and forth, cracks dangerously. Caught in a trap, Judith chooses to flee, to climb to the top.

(Young audience screening)

### **Gagarine**

Directed by Fanny Liatard and Jérémy Trouilh

2020 | PG | In French with English subtitles | 98 minutes | Drama Feature

Synopsis:

Youri, 16, grew up in Gagarin, which is a huge city of red bricks in Ivry-sur-Seine and where he dreams of becoming a cosmonaut. When he learns that it is threatened with demolition, Youri decides to join in the resistance. With the complicity of Diana, Houssam and the inhabitants, his mission is to save the city, which has become his "spaceship".



### **Titan**

Directed by Valérie Carnoy

2021 | PG13 | In French with English subtitles | 19 minutes | Drama Short

Synopsis:

Nathan is a 13-year-old boy. Driven by his new friend Malik, he prepares himself for a strange ritual to become a member of a teens gang.

### **La Ruche**

Directed by Christophe Hermans

2021 | PG13 | In French with English subtitles | 81 minutes | Drama Feature

Synopsis:

As far as they can remember, Marion, Claire and Louise have been living at the pace of their mother Alice's ups and downs. Now, love is everything that they have left to fight the spiral of self-destruction in which Alice is sinking even more deeply. An unconditional love as violent as it is indescribable.

### **14 Jours, 12 Nuits (14 Days, 12 Nights)**

Directed by Jean-Philippe Duval

2019 | PG13 | In French and Vietnamese with English subtitles | 99 minutes | Drama Feature

Synopsis:

Isabelle Brodeur embarks on a journey to Vietnam, her adopted daughter's birthplace. Her path leads her to the woman who was once her daughter's nanny. Doing so, Isabelle learns the existence and whereabouts of her daughter's biological mother. Throughout this stunningly beautiful journey, Isabelle discovers her daughter's country through the eyes of the woman who brought her into this world. This pilgrimage of sorts, leads the two women to unveil their innermost secrets.

### **Bigger Than Us**

Directed by Flore Vasseur

2021 | PG | In French, English and Arabic with English subtitles | 96 minutes | Documentary Feature

Synopsis:

For six years, Melati, 18, has been fighting the plastic pollution that is ravaging her country, Indonesia. Like her, a generation is rising up to fix the world. Everywhere, teenagers and young adults are fighting for human rights, the climate, freedom of expression, social justice, access to education or food. Alone against all odds, sometimes risking their lives and safety, they protect, denounce and care for others. Melati goes to meet them across the globe. She wants to understand how to hold on and continue her action. At a time when everything seems to be or has been falling apart, these young people show us how to live. And what it means to be in the world today.

### **La Mif (The Fam)**

Directed by Fred Baillif

2021 | 21+ | In French with English subtitles | 96 minutes | Drama Feature

Synopsis:



A group of teenage girls have been placed in a residential care home with social workers. They live under the same roof but haven't chosen each other. This experience creates unexpected tensions and intimacies. An incident triggers a chain of over-reactions but their lust for life also strengthens bonds. Just like a family.

### **Josep**

Directed by Aurel

2020 | PG | In French and Spanish with English subtitles | 72 minutes | Animation Drama Feature

Synopsis:

In February 1939, Spanish republicans were fleeing Franco's dictatorship to France. The French government built concentration camps, confining the refugees, where they barely have access to hygiene, water and food. In one of these camps, separated by barbed wire, two men will become friends. One is a guard and the other is Josep Bartoli (Barcelona 1910 – NYC 1995), an illustrator who fights against Franco's regime.

The full calendar can be found on our website [www.cinemaakil.com](http://www.cinemaakil.com).

**-Ends-**

Press Contacts

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### **NOTES:**

- *Tickets are AED 52.5 (VAT included)*
- *Tickets are now available for sale online only [www.cinemaakil.com](http://www.cinemaakil.com). ▪ Schedules are subject to change, please check [www.cinemaakil.com](http://www.cinemaakil.com) for the most up-to-date schedule*
- *Box Office operating hours:*  
*6 pm to 10 pm Mondays to Thursdays*  
*3 pm - 10 pm Fridays - Sundays*
- *In accordance with authorities regulations, patrons are required to wear masks except while eating and abide by social distancing measures at all times. For more information on Cinema Akil's Safety Measures: <https://www.cinemaakil.com/faq/>*

Cinema Akil follows strict precautionary social distancing and sanitation measures in accordance with the guidelines set by the Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing, Department of Economic Development and Dubai Municipality. For more information visit <https://www.cinemaakil.com/faq/>

All non-English movies will have English, Arabic or French subtitles.

### **About FrancoFilm**

FrancoFilm is an annual festival aimed at celebrating the French language through cinema. In the framework of the "Month of Francophonie" that is celebrated every year in March worldwide, cinema



represents a powerful medium to celebrate the French language and its diversity. The first edition of FrancoFilm in the UAE was held in 2010.

### **About Cinema Akil**

Cinema Akil is an independent cinema platform that brings quality films from across the world to the audiences in the UAE. Showcasing directors and filmmakers across the decades, Cinema Akil aims to create awareness and interest in film and the cinematic arts. Launched in 2014 as a nomadic cinema, Cinema Akil has held over 60 pop-up cinemas attracting over 35,000 attendees in Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Sharjah. In September 2018, Cinema Akil opened its first permanent location in Al Quoz, Dubai making it the GCC's first arthouse cinema. Cinema Akil's flagship home is brought to you in partnership with Alserkal Avenue. Cinema Akil is a member of the Network of Arab Alternative Screens (NAAS) which includes members from the MENA region such as Metropolis in Beirut, Zawya in Cairo and Cinematheque du Tangier in Morocco. Follow us into the dark.

[www.cinemaakil.com](http://www.cinemaakil.com) // Facebook - Cinema Akil // Twitter - @CinemaAkil // Instagram - @CinemaAkil  
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### **Partners**

#### **About Institut Français**

The Institut Français in the United Arab Emirates is the cooperation and cultural department of the French Embassy. It is responsible for promoting French creation, thought and language, as well as fostering bilateral exchanges and cultural, artistic, educational, academic and scientific partnerships between France and the UAE. It follows the cultural and educative aspects of the French-Emirati strategic dialogue.

It is involved in a vast range of activities. It organizes cultural events in various fields such as visual arts, performing art, cinema and debates. It supports the French cultural and educative institutions, as well as cultural and creative industries in their development projects in the UAE.

The year of the "French-Emirati Cultural Dialogue" celebrates the historical ties of friendship and cooperation between France and the United Arab Emirates, established upon the foundation of the Federation in 1971 and growing stronger ever since.

#### **TV5 Monde**

More than 36 years ago, the strong will of those in France, Switzerland and Belgium, followed by Canada and Quebec, came together to make TV5MONDE a reality. A unique media that links all francophones and francophiles through-out the world. Lately with the launch of TV5Mondeplus platform, TV5MONDE pursues its public service mission of providing French-language audiovisual services and offers its ambitions a new digital turning-point. Developed by TV5MONDE and TV5 Québec Canada, TV5MONDEplus is financed by Canada, Quebec, France, Switzerland and the Wallonia-Brussels Federation. As with its linear channels, the mission of TV5MONDEplus is to promote French-language creation and to ensure the widest possible diffusion of the programmes produced by its partner



channels: Radio-Canada, TV5 Québec Canada, Télé-Québec, RTBF, RTS, France Télévisions and RFI, the TV5MONDE's own productions, notably magazine programmes, together with African co-productions and the many other programmes purchased world-wide.

### **The Embassy of the Kingdom of Belgium in the UAE**

Since the embassy's creation in 1971, the UAE and Belgium share good relations. Belgium recognized the UAE immediately after independence, however, the Belgian presence in the UAE had preceded the country. The first Ambassador of Belgium to the UAE was appointed in 1975 and in 1978 the first residing Ambassador came to the UAE. The Embassy of Belgium promotes the further strengthening of bilateral ties between Belgium and the UAE in diverse areas. The Embassy also fulfils many administrative roles towards the more than 3.500 Belgians living in the UAE, a growing and thriving community. In cooperation with our regional trade representatives a strong emphasis goes to the economic relations and support to our companies. The mission of Wallonia-Brussels International (WBI) is meant to increase the impact, the influence and the notoriety abroad of the Wallonia – Brussels space and its stakeholders (creators, artists, entrepreneurs, students, higher education establishments, researchers, etc.).

### **Embassy of Canada**

The diplomatic mission defines, shapes and advances Canada's interests and values in a complex global environment. It manages diplomatic relations, promotes international trade and provides consular support. It leads international development, humanitarian, and peace and security assistance efforts. It also contributes to national security and the development of international law.

### **Embassy of Switzerland**

Switzerland and the UAE have enjoyed good relations since 1971. The Embassy of Switzerland in Abu Dhabi was first opened as a trade office in 1976 and then converted into an official diplomatic representation in 1982. A Consulate (today Consulate General) in Dubai followed five years later and a Swiss Business Hub in Dubai was added in 2005. The UAE is Switzerland's most important trading partner in the region with economic cooperation at the heart of the bilateral relations for a long time. More than 200 Swiss companies have chosen the country as a hub for their Middle East and Asia business activities, and a diaspora of 3,000 Swiss nationals lives here. Today, this relationship has diversified to include education, research, innovation, financial affairs, energy cooperation, sustainable development and cultural diplomacy as well.