

Film Funding From Within the Arab World: A New Reality

By Rima Mismar
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'Arab film funding' was a phrase of little meaning until a few years ago. Prior to that, the funding of Arab non-commercial films relied almost completely on foreign productions. And despite the fact that that production model is called "co-production", the co-Arab producer was almost totally absent. Yet, the last few years witnessed some considerable change to that formula with the emergence of a number of Arab funds, institutions, production companies and creative producers all of whom constituted a local propelling force for film projects and a trusted reference for funders and filmmakers. These new players of the production sectors have helped conceive a large number of Arab films and are provide great moral support for Arab filmmakers.

Today there is a general sense of something new developing in the Arab world and its cinema, driven strongly by developments in political and social movements and renewed humanitarian awareness. Such brewing changes will do more than impact the local cinematic sphere, reckon many filmmakers, and they will break through boundaries that have separated Arab countries from each other. Supporting cinema in the Arab world today is akin to redrawing the map of the Arab region and how it sees itself. Can we speak of a plan to support Arab cinematic production on a regional level? What shape will cooperation and co-production be in this context?

This panel discusses with a number of acclaimed producers, directors and distributors from the Arab world the reality of these emerging Arab funds in the light of what had been achieved, posing questions about their ways of funding, problems, missing elements and the possibility of cooperation among the different funds to ensure the creation of a real film industry in the region.