



PRESS RELEASE: July 6, 2010

## The Culture and Arts Programme Announces Film Projects Nominated for Production Support

The new **Production Support Project**, launched recently by **A. M. Qattan Foundation** as part of its **Culture and Arts Programme** with co-funding from **the Kingdom of Netherlands Representative Office** in Ramallah, is pleased to announce the short-list of projects nominated for its production support grants. In its first round, the Project received twenty-three (23) short to medium length fiction scripts from various parts from Palestine and abroad. An independent jury composed of (in alphabetical order) film director Hany Abu Assad (Nazareth), casting director, Najwa Mubarki (Acre), film critic Erfan Rashid (Baghdad/Rome), and specialist in Arabic and European cinema, Menem Richa (Beirut/Paris), reviewed and evaluated the scripts, which were sent to them anonymously.

The jury, which represented a diverse range of experience in cinema, evaluated the scripts from an artistic perspective including the subject matter, treatment, characters, dialogue, etc, and the possibility of making the script into an exciting film that could represent a qualitative addition to Palestinian cinema.

The scripts reflected, in one way or another, from different angles and with varying success, Palestinian rich and diverse reality, whether collective or individual. Many were full of humor and irony, full of the authors' preoccupations, fears, hopes and memories while at the same time, some were surprisingly poor in comparison to the wealth of dramatic material available in the Palestinian context, which is filled with possibilities. The jury recommend to the authors to work on deepening their professional experience and skills through reading and watching of more works from various cinematic schools, languages and forms.

Although there was a variation in the members' evaluation of the various scripts, it was not difficult for them to agree on the following shortlist of projects, which are qualified for support from the **Production Support Project**:



**The Return:** by Mahdi Fleifel (Palestinian/Danish, lives in London)

After decades and in a period of no hope, suddenly a Palestinian is told that he is allowed to return to Palestine! The interesting point of this script is the way the Palestinian receives this news and how he deals with it! What to do? How to act with such an incredible and unexpected miracle! This script deals with the emotional complication of the ethnic cleansing and the return, in a very light and accessible manner. It is very difficult to touch on a complicated subject and make it accessible without trivializing it- this script succeeds in doing so and transmits the depth of the drama in a light tone.

**The Well:** by Ahmad Habash (Ramallah)

The script “freezes” a crucial moment in Palestine’s history and gives, in a very simple manner, the strong and natural relationship between the Palestinians and their land. It seems to say that nothing can destroy this relationship, but at the same time, it throws doubt on it. How could all this have happened? The script is powerful because it simply asks the question of the “beginning”, just as if nothing had happened! Approaching the period of 1948 from a modern perspective is very interesting and could give birth to a wonderful film.

**Flowers Have No Name:** By Ihab Jadallah (Jerusalem)

The script is a thriller centered around important and sensitive issues, with many turning points and deceptions, which fit the theme. It is brave to make a film about a bad man where you elicit ambiguous feelings towards him from the audience. The writer starts the script with a portrayal of a poor flower seller, lets the audience sympathize and identify with him, and then reveals that he is a collaborator....

The jury also commended the following proposals to which support could be given, if available:

**Transparent Black** by Ula Tabari (Nazareth/Paris)

The jury urges the writer to finish working on the proposal and complete it as a script, as it contains many interesting ideas and exciting situations.

**Haneen** by Ossama Bawardi (Nazareth)

The script is well written and the content is interesting, and may also work as a full-length feature film. The dramatic tension of a lonely woman, who lives in a



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state of nostalgia, waiting for a letter, fighting the day-to-day routine to express her rebellion, is well told, in a poetic but clear narrative structure.

**The Bundle:** by Abdelsalam Shihadeh (Gaza/Ramallah)

The script has the potential of becoming a really exciting film, if directed well. The theme revolves around a general idea. With more work on the dialogue, this can be a surreal and amusing short movie.

The **AM Qattan Foundation** will contact the writers/producers of the short-listed projects, nominated by the jury, in order to determine the size and form of support, which will rely on the budgets of these projects and the financial resources available to them. There will also be another opportunity for support and submitting applications for new projects next year.

The **Production Support Project** provides financial and in-kind support for the production of short and medium length feature films over a period of three years, with the intention to contribute to a more vibrant and sustainable film making industry in Palestine.