

Toronto Palestine Film Festival

October 25-November 1, 2008
102A-1075 Bay St., Ste 148
Toronto, ON M5S 2B2



MEDIA ALERT / FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Poet Suheir Hammad to Open Toronto Palestine Film Festival (TPFF)

What: Suheir Hammad at Opening of Toronto Palestine Film Festival (TPFF); she is available for interviews.

When: Saturday, October 25 - 6:30 pm – 10:00 pm.

Where: Bloor Cinema (506 Bloor Street West, Toronto).

Contact: TPFF Media Liaison @ 647-882-9231 for more info.



The Toronto Palestine Film Festival (TPFF) is proud to announce that award winning Palestinian-American poet Suheir Hammad has been confirmed as the Guest of Honour for the Festival's opening night. Hammad is a popular poet, author and political activist who has published three books of poetry and performed widely, including appearances on the Def Poetry Jam and in a number of films, including *Lest We Forget* (2003), *The Fourth World War* (2004) and *Salt of this Sea* (2008).

Hammad will be on hand to introduce the Canadian premiere of Annemarie Jacir's critically acclaimed feature *Salt of This Sea* (2008), in which Hammad plays the lead role. The film was an "Official Selection, Un Certain Regard" at the Cannes Film Festival 2008 and tells the story of Soraya, born in Brooklyn to a family of Palestinian refugees, who discovers that her grandfather's savings were frozen in a bank account in Jaffa when he was exiled in 1948.

Stubborn, passionate and determined to reclaim what is hers, Soraya (i.e. Hammad) fulfills her life-long dream of "returning" to Palestine. Slowly, she is taken apart by the reality around her and is forced to confront her own anger. She meets Emad, a young Palestinian whose ambition, contrary to hers, is to leave forever. Tired of the constraints that dictate their lives, they know in order to be free, they must take things into their own hands.

Suheir Hammad is the recipient of the following awards:

- The Audre Lorde Writing Award, Hunter College (1995, 2000)
- The Morris Center for Healing Poetry Award (1996)
- New York Mills Artist Residency (1998)
- Van Lier Fellowship (1999)
- Emerging Artist Award, Asian/Pacific/American Studies Institute at NYU (2001)
- TONY Award – Special Theatrical Event – original cast member and writer for Russell Simmons Presents Def Poetry Jam on Broadway (2003)
- Suheir is also a talent associate for the Peabody Award winning HBO show Russell Simmons Presents Def Poetry (2003)

Suheir Hammad will be available for interviews while she is in Toronto. For more information contact the TPFF Media Liaison at (647) 882-9231.

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