

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****HIGH BRINGS MIDDLE EAST AND HONG KONG  
TO SCREEN IN FEBRUARY**

*Films from the Arab World, February 2–23;  
Spotlight Hong Kong Film, February 29*

ATLANTA, January 11, 2008 – In February the High Museum of Art will present five films representing the Middle East as part of *Films from the Arab World* from February 2 through 23. The films explore difficult relationships and changing social mores in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, including the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and post-9/11 attitudes in America. *Films from the Arab World* is made possible with support from the Alif Institute and the Swedish Film Institute. A special presentation, *Spotlight Hong Kong Film*, will offer “My Mother Is a Belly Dancer” on February 29. *Spotlight Hong Kong Film* is co-sponsored by the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office.

“One of cinema’s most powerful aspects is its ability to serve as a window into other cultures,” said Linda Dubler, Curator of Media Arts. “In both *Films from the Arab World* and *Spotlight Hong Kong Film*, the filmmakers explore aspects of their cultures that rarely make it into the daily headlines. Though their films look at the personal impact of particular political events and social pressures, the feelings experienced by their characters are universal.”

**Films from the Arab World**

*Films from the Arab World* begins February 2 with “Zozo,” a film by Lebanese-Swedish director Josef Fares that draws on Fares’ childhood memories. In 1987 Zozo’s family plans to flee Beirut and its civil war. But when their home is bombed just hours before their intended departure, Zozo must travel to Stockholm alone. There, his loving grandparents help him confront his past and learn to make a new life.

On February 9 see the film *New York Times* reviewer Anita Gates described as “assured, thoughtful and clear-eyed.” “Encounter Point” is a documentary centering on the Bereaved Families Forum, a support group of veterans, teachers, former prisoners and other citizens who have experienced loss in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The film follows the search for reconciliation, exploring non-violence while avoiding oversimplification.

Immediately following “Encounter Point” on February 9, there will be a screening of “West Bank Story,” Ari Sandel’s Academy Award–winning short musical comedy set in the world of fast food, centering on competing falafel stands. David, an Israeli soldier, falls in love with the beautiful Palestinian cashier, Fatima, despite the animosity between their families’ competing restaurants. **Actress Noureen DeWulf, who plays leading lady Fatima, will be present to introduce the film.**

Tunisian director Nacer Khemir’s visually ravishing “Bab’ Aziz—The Prince Who Contemplated His Soul” screens on February 16. The film focuses on a blind dervish named Bab’ Aziz and his spirited granddaughter, Ishtar, who traverse the desert in search of a dervish reunion that takes place every thirty years. Bab’ Aziz tells his granddaughter tales of a prince who gave up his kingdom, and they meet other travelers with stories of their own.

The festival closes on February 23 with “AmericanEast,” a look at Arab Americans in post-9/11 Los Angeles. Moustafa, a beleaguered Muslim restaurant owner struggling to keep his business afloat, has dreams of opening a high-class place with his friend Sam (*Monk’s* Tony Shalhoub), an observant Jew. Family tensions and societal pressures weigh on Moustafa in a film *Variety* praised for “a tricky balance between comedy and disaster.”

### Spotlight Hong Kong Film

Spotlight Hong Kong Film features “My Mother Is a Belly Dancer” on February 29. With great sensitivity and a dash of humor, this bittersweet film explores the lives of four women from a shabby Hong Kong housing estate who meet at a community-sponsored belly dance class. The class is a departure from the traditional Chinese dance that they signed up for, but the women will not be deterred. Director Lee Kung-Lok focuses less on how the women become confident dancers, choosing instead to present their need for escape, accomplishment and friendship.

### Film Series Schedule

All films are screened at 8 p.m. (unless otherwise noted) in the Richard H. Rich Theatre, located in the Memorial Arts Building, adjacent to the High at Peachtree and 15<sup>th</sup> Streets in midtown Atlanta.

### Films from the Arab World

“Zozo” Saturday, February 2 (Sweden/Denmark, 2005, 102 minutes) In Arabic and Swedish with subtitles	“Bab’ Aziz—The Prince Who Contemplated His Soul” Saturday, February 16 (France/Iran/Germany/Tunisia/Hungary/UK, 2005, 96 minutes) In Arabic with subtitles
“Encounter Point” Saturday, February 9 (U.S., 2006, 85 minutes) In Arabic and Hebrew with subtitles <i>with</i>	“AmericanEast” Saturday, February 23 (U.S., 2007, 111 minutes) In English
“West Bank Story” Saturday, February 9 (U.S., 2005, 22 minutes)	

### Spotlight Hong Kong Film

“My Mother Is a Belly Dancer”  
Friday, February 29  
(Hong Kong, 2006, 100 minutes)  
In Cantonese with subtitles

### Support

Films from the Arab World is made possible with support from the Alif Institute and the Swedish Film Institute. Spotlight Hong Kong Film is co-sponsored by the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office. 35mm projection facilities in the Rich Auditorium were provided by a gift from George Lefont.

### Tickets

Tickets can be purchased in advance by visiting the Woodruff Arts Center Box Office, calling 404-733-5000, or going online at [www.High.org](http://www.High.org). Admission prices are \$5 for the public and \$4 for Museum members, students and seniors. Patron-level members enter free. Tickets may also be purchased at the door on the night of the screening.

### Film Information

The public may call the High’s film hotline at 404-733-4570 for up-to-the-minute information about visiting directors, receptions, changes or cancellations and a free subscription to the quarterly film calendar. The Museum’s website is [www.High.org](http://www.High.org).

**High Museum of Art**

The High Museum of Art, founded in 1905 as the Atlanta Art Association, is the leading art museum in the southeastern United States. With more than 11,000 works of art in its permanent collection, the High Museum of Art has an extensive anthology of 19<sup>th</sup>- and 20<sup>th</sup>-century American art; significant holdings of European paintings and decorative art; a growing collection of African American art; and burgeoning collections of modern and contemporary art, photography and African art. The High is also dedicated to supporting and collecting works by Southern artists and is distinguished as the only major museum in North America to have a curatorial department specifically devoted to the field of folk and self-taught art. The High's Media Arts department produces acclaimed annual film series and festivals of foreign, independent and classic cinema. In November 2005 the High opened three new buildings by architect Renzo Piano that more than doubled the Museum's size, creating a vibrant "village for the arts" at the Woodruff Arts Center in midtown Atlanta. For more information about the High, please visit [www.High.org](http://www.High.org).

**The Woodruff Arts Center**

The Woodruff Arts Center is ranked among the top four arts centers in the nation. A not-for-profit center for performing and visual arts, its campus comprises the Alliance Theatre, the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, the High Museum of Art, Young Audiences and the 14<sup>th</sup> Street Playhouse.

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