

ArteEast Announces  
THE FIRST ANNUAL CINEMAEAST FILM FESTIVAL OPENING NIGHT FILM:

**I LOVE CINEMA (BAHEB AL-CIMA)**

**Friday, November 4, 2005 at the Quad Cinema**

The CinemaEast Festival runs from November 4 to November 10, 2005, and is sponsored by NYU's Kevorkian Center, HSBC, Aramex, Royal Air Maroc, Arabianny.com, Columbia University, Bidoun, Lufthansa, Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, Call it Kismet, and Emirate Airlines

"If I go to hell, will I see all the famous actors there?" So goes young, movie-mad Naïm's hopeful response to his strict father's lectures on the evils of cinema. But while he pines for onscreen exploits in 1966 Cairo, Naïm has plenty of drama to watch right at home—illicit courtships, his mother's repressed desire to pursue her art, and his father's crisis of faith when he becomes disillusioned with the Nasser regime's failure to live up to its ideals. Showing the daily life of an Egyptian Christian family, *I Love Cinema* is a nostalgic look at the recent history of Egypt and a shout for creative freedom. With his big glasses and thick mustache, Naïm's father Adly is full of contradictions: At home, he is a tough father who instructs his seven-year old son Naïm that watching cinema is a major sin. But as a social worker at school, he lends money to the poor students who are in need for financial support. His wife Ne'emat, is a school supervisor caught in the daily work routine that made her lose her artistic touch as a painter and a drawing teacher. Adly's increasingly fanatical Coptic Christian views hamper his career progress and threaten his marriage as he unknowingly pushes a frustrated spouse into the arms of an artistic, politically leftist coworker.

Director Osama Fawzi's occasionally explicit film is a hilarious and tender family portrait as well as a refined critique of rigid religiosity, which has triggered an ongoing heated debate of national proportion. Its unprecedented representation of the daily life of a conservative Coptic family during the 1960s (based to a great extent on autobiographical elements from the script writer's own childhood) reveals the religious, political, family and cultural institutions of the sixties that have shaped the present. The makers of I LOVE CINEMA have described their film as one that is against all forms of oppression where "cinema" in the title is synonymous with "freedom".

**Filmmaker Bio:**

Born in 1961 in Cairo, Oussama Fawzi graduated from Egypt's High Cinema Institute in 1984. After working as an assistant to directors such as Hussein Kamal, Ashraf Fahmy and Niazi Mostafa, he set up his own company, producing Sherif Arafa's THE DWARVES ARE COMING. In 1996 he made his directorial debut with THE ASPHALT KINGS, which was awarded the Golden Pardo at the

Locarno Film Festival.

I LOVE CINEMA has won several international awards including the Silver Prize at the Rotterdam Arab Film Festival (2005), the Minneapolis-St Paul International Film Festival (2005), the National Film Festival of Egypt (2005), the Shanghai International Film Festival (2005), the Tiburon Film Festival (2005), the Festival Cinema Africano, Milan (2005), and the Carthage Film Festival (2004)

**I Love Cinema (Baheb al-Cima**

Filmmaker: Oussama Fawzi

Country: Egypt, 2004

Running Time: 125min

Format: 35mm

In Arabic, Subtitles: English

Cast: Laila Alawi, Mahmoud Hemeida, Mena Shalaby, Aida Abd el-Aziz, Youssef Osman, Zaki Abd El Wehab, Edward Fouad, Riad Gouhar, Jasmine.

Story & script: Hany Fawzy

Editing: Khaled Marei

Director of Photography: Tarek el-Telmissany

Directed by: Oussama Fawzi

Produced by: Many Girgis

Source:

Al Arabia Cinema Productions and Distribution  
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