



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact:** Robyn Ehrlich  
Marketing Coordinator  
robyn@mkefilm.org

**RENOWNED MILWAUKEE MUSLIM FILM FESTIVAL RETURNS TO  
MILWAUKEE FILM'S ORIENTAL THEATRE THIS OCTOBER**

*Milwaukee Film and the Milwaukee Muslim Women's Coalition present the eighth annual  
Milwaukee Muslim Film Festival*



**10/19-10/22**  
**MILWAUKEE MUSLIM FILM FESTIVAL**

[mkefilm.org/mmff](https://mkefilm.org/mmff)

MILWAUKEE MUSLIM film festival | MILWAUKEE FILM

[DOWNLOAD MEDIA HERE](#)

**MILWAUKEE – Thursday, September 28, 2023** – Milwaukee Film and the Milwaukee Muslim Women's Coalition (MMWC) present the eighth annual [Milwaukee Muslim Film Festival \(MMFF\)](#), one of the country's leading Muslim film festivals, on October 19-22, at the historic Oriental Theatre (2230 N. Farwell Ave.).

The festival's programming includes eight carefully curated films—stories from across the globe that transcend countries, languages, and cultures while highlighting the common humanity among people of all races, ethnicities, and religious beliefs. Each film screening will feature local ethnic food offerings and a post-screening conversation with local leaders.

Launched by the [Milwaukee Muslim Women's Coalition](#) (MMWC) in 2015, the Milwaukee Muslim Film Festival shares films from around the world to encourage reflection, hold meaningful conversations, and celebrate the Muslim community and their experiences. In 2019, Milwaukee Film partnered with the MMWC to co-host the festival at The Oriental Theatre. The festival is one of only a handful of Muslim film festivals held throughout the nation and was founded by Janan Najeeb, the current executive director and founding member of the Milwaukee Muslim Women's Coalition.

"We are excited to continue our collaboration with Milwaukee Film," Says Najeeb. "Both organizations have a common goal of creating a more inclusive and diverse film landscape here in Milwaukee."

The Milwaukee Muslim Film Festival will open on Thursday, October 19 at 6:00 PM with the opening night film, [Wisconsin Life: The Wisconsin Muslim Project](#), presented by the Milwaukee Muslim Women's Coalition and Greater Milwaukee Mary Nohl Fund. This all-new PBS Wisconsin documentary invites audiences to journey into the riveting stories of Muslims nationwide.

Subjects include Brother Will Perry of the [Milwaukee Islamic Da'wah Center](#), who leads a legacy of service to help those who cannot afford food; [Asifa Quraishi-Landes](#), a law professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison who encourages her students to see things from a different perspective by role-playing scenarios acting as Alexander Hamilton, Thomas Jefferson, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, and Antonin Scalia, among others; Amal Azzam and Nayfa Naji, co-founders of [Fanana Banana](#), an organization dedicated to featuring Muslim art that often goes unnoticed, and [Isaak Mohamed](#), whose work as the Somali district liaison fostering community in Barron goes beyond small changes.

Beyond the film, The Wisconsin Muslim Project includes an immersive photo gallery and a classroom-focused profile in PBS Wisconsin Education's *Wisconsin Biographies* series on community leader Mahmoud Othman Otta, Najeeb's late father. "We are thrilled that this year we will be partnering with PBS-WI and showcasing Muslim community members here in Milwaukee and around the state," Najeeb shares. "This is a very unique project that highlights the vibrancy and diversity of Muslims."

October 19th's opening night screening is free and open to the public and will showcase its immersive photo gallery with works displayed by award-winning Milwaukee photographer Lila Aryan. The gallery will offer an intimate look inside the contemporary lives of 15 Muslim Wisconsinites and families.

"Along with the Milwaukee Muslim Women's Coalition and We Are Many – United Against Hate, PBS Wisconsin is proud that our partnership project, *The Wisconsin Muslim Project*, is a featured part of the 2023 Milwaukee Muslim Film Festival," PBS Wisconsin Director of Television Jon Miskowski said. "PBS

Wisconsin is the state's largest storyteller, and we look forward to celebrating this work and our state's Muslim community along with the impressive array of films in the festival."

**Tickets and information for The Milwaukee Muslim Film Festival are available at [mkefilm.org/mmff](https://mkefilm.org/mmff).**

Additional support for the Milwaukee Muslim Film Festival comes from the Presenting Sponsor, The Greater Milwaukee Foundation/Mary L. Nohl Fund, along with Supporting Sponsors: the Islamic Society of Milwaukee, Hayat Pharmacy, AABaker Realtor, Wisconsin Muslim Civic Alliance, Aladdin's, Max Bodyshop, Medpoint Clinic, Taqwa's Bakery and Restaurant, Prime Printing, Therapy at Home, Hanan Refugee Relief Group, Lebni House restaurant, and Dura Services.

###

### **The in-person cinema line-up includes (in chronological order)**

#### **[Wisconsin Life: The Wisconsin Muslim Project](#)**

**Thursday, Oct. 19 | 7:00 PM**

*(USA / 2023 / 26 min)*

In the all-new PBS Wisconsin special, *Wisconsin Life: The Wisconsin Muslim Project*, audiences are invited to join host Angela Fitzgerald as she shares the stories of Muslims across the state. In the program, Fitzgerald visits the Fox Valley Islamic Society in Neenah as she shares stories of Muslims from around the state. This special is part of the larger Wisconsin Muslim Project, a collaboration between PBS Wisconsin, the Milwaukee Muslim Women's Coalition, and We Are Many - United Against Hate.

#### **[In Search of Bengali Harlem](#)**

**Friday, Oct. 20 | 7:00 PM**

*(USA / 2022 / 84 min / Dir. Vivek Bald, Alaudin Ullah)*

As a teenager in 1980s Harlem, Alaudin Ullah was swept up in the revolutionary energy of early hip-hop. He rejected his working-class Bangladeshi parents and turned his back on everything South Asian and Muslim. Now, as an actor and playwright contending with the Islamophobia of post-9/11 Hollywood, Alaudin wants to tell his parents' stories. *In Search of Bengali Harlem* follows Ullah from the streets of New York City to the villages of Bangladesh to uncover the pasts of his father, Habib, and mother, Mohima. This film is a transformative journey, not just for Alaudin Ullah but for our understanding of the complex histories of South Asian and Muslim Americans.

#### **[A Gaza Weekend](#)**

**Saturday, Oct. 21 | 1:00 PM**

*(United Kingdom, Occupied Palestinian Territory / 2022 / 90 min / Dir. Basil Khalil)*

Set against a sealed-off Israel after the deadly virus outbreak, Gaza has become the safest place in the region, leaving a British journalist and his Israeli girlfriend trapped on the wrong side of the border. With no one else to turn to, they must entrust two Palestinian street merchants who promise a way out in exchange for much-needed cash. A hilarious culture clash comedy adventure follows as the couple desperately tries everything to get back home.

#### **[My Maysoon](#)**

**Saturday, Oct. 21 | 4:00 PM**

*(Netherlands / 2023 / 55 min / Dir. Batoul Karbijha)*

On 24 August 2014, 20-year-old Maysoon Karbijha disappeared on the Mediterranean Sea. Of the 712 people on board a boat from Syria to Europe, 488 were rescued, 24 were washed up on the Italian shore, and the 200 remaining people have been missing ever since. Maysoon is one of them. Batoul's search for her sister takes her from Sicily to Tunisia and Libya, confronting her with graveyards full of missing migrants in a labyrinth of ignorance, indifference, and powerlessness. The film portrays an intimate process in which loss, pain, and hope alternate.

**[Rabiye Kurnaz Vs. George W. Bush](#)**

**Saturday, Oct. 21 | 7:00 PM**

*(Germany / 2022 / 119 min / Dir. Andreas Dresen)*

Desperate to help her son, Rabiye Kurnaz, a housewife and loving mother from Bremen, goes to the police, notifies authorities, despairs at their impotence, and in the end, against all the odds, something truly remarkable happens.

**[The Neighborhood Storyteller](#)**

**Sunday, Oct. 22 | 1:00 PM**

*(United States, United Arab Emirates / 2022 / 49 min / Dir. Alejandra Alcalá)*

War tragically pushed Asmaa out of her home country of Syria, where her destiny had been written as a wife and mother at only 16 years of age. Asmaa rebuilt her adult identity as the neighborhood storyteller and began reading aloud to children for fun as a bridge to tackle critical issues in her new community at the Zaatari refugee camp in Jordan. Seven years later, as Asmaa's eldest daughter reaches adolescence, a flashback of her education-deprived past emerges, inspiring her to embark on a new read-aloud project to empower teenage girls to build a future of opportunities she never had.

**[Harka](#)**

**Sunday, Oct. 22 | 4:00 PM**

*(France / 2022 / 87 min / Dir. Lotfy Nathan)*

Dreaming of a better life, Ali makes a precarious living selling contraband gas on the streets of Tunisia. Forced to take charge of his two younger sisters after their father's sudden death and facing impending eviction, Ali will have to make a decision from which there is no turning back.

**[Draw Me Egypt - Doaa El-Adl, A Stroke of Freedom](#)**

**Sunday, Oct. 22 | 7:00 PM**

*(Egypt / 2023 / 54 min / Dir. Nada Riyadh)*

Doaa el-Adl is one of the most prominent of the very few female cartoonists in the Arab world. Draw Me Egypt - Doaa El-Adl, A Stroke of Freedom creatively blends documentary, cartoons, and animation to bring to life this courageous artist's thoughts on politics and feminism as she uses her talent to advocate for women's rights.

---

## **About The Milwaukee Muslim Women's Coalition**

In 1994, the MMWC began as a local outreach organization dedicated to promoting an accurate understanding of Islam and Muslim women. Their mission to lead positive community change through advocacy, dialogue, education, and outreach, using faith-based values to ensure dignity and equity for

all, shines through all aspects of the Milwaukee Muslim Film Festival. The organization also publishes the Wisconsin Muslim Journal, an independent online news service launched in 2018. Learn more about MMWC's work at [mmwconline.org](http://mmwconline.org).

### **About Milwaukee Film**

Milwaukee Film is a nonprofit arts organization dedicated to entertaining, educating, and engaging our community through cinematic experiences, with a vision to make Milwaukee a center for film culture. Milwaukee Film operates the magnificent Oriental Theatre, a historic cinema palace committed to high-quality and accessible film and education programming. The 16th annual Milwaukee Film Festival will be held April 11 - 25, 2024. For more information or to become a Member, visit [mkefilm.org](http://mkefilm.org).

Milwaukee Film Board of Directors: [mkefilm.org/board](http://mkefilm.org/board)

Facebook: [facebook.com/MilwaukeeFilm](https://facebook.com/MilwaukeeFilm) | Twitter: [@mkefilm](https://twitter.com/mkefilm) | Instagram: [@mkefilm](https://www.instagram.com/mkefilm)