

# Uniting Brazilians and Arabs Through Film

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The Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Relations wishes to organize a cinema exhibit in parallel to the summit between Arab and South American heads of state, scheduled for May 2005.

To start this project, Carlos Augusto Calil, director of the São Paulo Cultural Center (CCSP), went to Tunisia for the 20th edition of the Carthage Film Festival, considered one of the most important festivals of the sort in Africa and the Middle East.

The objective at the Itamaraty, the Brazilian Foreign Office, is to bring many films from various Arab countries to be exhibited in Brasília, São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro.

"We wish to bring Arabs and Brazilians culturally closer together. There are many Arabs in Brazil, we must show how our culture was affected by them," said José Emídio Guimarães, cinema advisor at the Itamaraty. According to him, the ministry will also send Brazilian films showing Arab culture to some festivals in the Arab region.

According to Calil, it is important to choose the Arab films to be exhibited in Brazil carefully, since the event will take place parallel to the summit.

"We must have a politically balanced show," he stated. He will stay in Tunisia for about 10 days to talk to festival director Nadia Attia to sort out which films could be brought to Brazil.

The duration of the exhibit in each city has not yet been decided, however, Calil believes it could be of one week. In relation to the repertoire, the director wishes to bring in films with contemporary, historical and classical themes from many Arab countries.

Culture is one of the five pillars at the summit, hence the Itamaraty interest in organizing the festival. The curatorship will be under the responsibility of the CCSP director. The organization has arranged cinema, dance, theatre, music and visual arts festivals and exhibits for 22 years.

As well as culture, the other four main themes for the summit are science and technology, the information society and digital inclusion, joint actions in international forums, and investment promotion and trade.

Preparatory events have already been held in a few of these areas, such as the seminar about Arab culture, which took place in São Paulo during September, and the conference on hydric resources (science and technology) which happened in the city of Fortaleza, in the northeast of Brazil, last week.

In the following months other events of the sort will take place, like a seminar on South American culture in Morocco and one in Quito, capital of Ecuador, to discuss economic cooperation, and another one in Argentina.

## The Carthage Exhibit

The Carthage Film Festival takes place every two years, in the city of Tunis, capital of Tunisia (Carthage is the name of a historic city destroyed in 146 b.C.). It is the most important film festival in Africa and the Middle East. Created in 1966 by the Tunisian Ministry of Culture, the festival aims to promote Arab and African films.

The exhibit's 20th edition started on the 1st of October and ends on October 9. In total, 254 films from 44 countries are competing for prizes, which will be awarded by seven judges from Morocco, Syria, Iran, Tunisia, France, Senegal and

Gabon.

The films are competing for the gold, silver and bronze prizes in various categories, such as best director, actor, actress, image, editing and sound track.

In each edition, the festival board chooses a country to pay homage to. In 2002 it was Brazilian cinema, and this year the chosen one was German cinema.

At the previous edition, the Brazilian film producer Márcia Lellis de Souza Amaral, also known as Tatá Amaral, was one of the judges at the festival.

The event had seven Brazilian films, amongst them, one of her films ("Um Céu de Estrelas" meaning in English, "A Sky of Stars").

An Arab cinema exhibit recently took place in São Paulo, organized during the first half of the year by the Museum of Modern Art (MAM), supported by the Arab Brazilian Chamber of Commerce (CCAB).

The exhibit showed six films produced in Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon and Tunisia, as well as a series of video-documentaries of the Arab countries.

São Paulo Cultural Center

Inaugurated in 1982, the CCSP holds in the same physical installations archives and many forms of art and culture.

The place has five libraries and a multi-means archive (visual, sounds, etc.) containing more than 900,000 documents, registering the artistic production in São Paulo for the last 25 years.

The space also offers a multidisciplinary agenda with cinema, theatre, dance and visual arts, which in most cases are free or at very reasonable prices. The Center also holds guided tours and art exhibits.

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