

# MESA '19 FilmFest Preview

MESA in New Orleans will have lots of attractions apart from those in the French Quarter. Whether you're looking for a break from the hubbub or seeking out a specific film, the FilmFest will have some eye-popping films to add to your MESA experience. Here are some of the films we expect to screen.

## House in the Fields



Set in an Amazigh community in Morocco's High Atlas Mountains, **House in the Fields** presents an everyday portrait of a village and community confronted by sudden social change. The central focus is on the intimate lives of two sisters. The eldest has dropped out of school in preparation for her wedding. She is engaged to a man she barely knows and once married will move to Casablanca. She hopes to find work in the city but doesn't know whether her husband will permit it. Her younger sister enjoys school and dreams of becoming a judge, contrary to village attitudes.

## Women with Gunpowder Earrings



Iranian director Reza Farahmand's film **Women with Gunpowder Earrings** confronts the dilemma facing Noor al-Helli, an Iraqi journalist covering the war against the Islamic State on the Iraq-Syria border. She is a reporter with an anti-IS stance and takes great risks to show the cruelty of the Islamists. Her perspective changes when she meets women and children captured as IS sympathizers. Confronted with women living in misery and holding antithetical views she attempts to understand what led them to adopt this worldview.

## Imprisoning a Generation



Much has been said about the effects of Israeli occupation on Palestinian lives. **Imprisoning a Generation** presents the impact on four young Palestinians. This low-key film does not scream at the audience but instead simply shows what it is like to live in Aida refugee camp near Bait Jala, in East Jerusalem, in Hebron and in Bethlehem. Each of the stories reveals a facet of life under Israeli control. This beautifully crafted film documents the plight of youthful detainees in the Israeli prison system as well as Palestinian resistance. It analyzes how Israeli occupation forces attempt to intimidate the next generation into fear, silence and complicity.

## And There was Israel



Regardless of one's point of view, today Israel, as a country, is a "fact on the ground." But this was never inevitable. **And there was Israel** merges historic American, British and French newsreel footage with the commentaries of seven scholars from different disciplines who provide engaging analyses of the path from Zionist ambition through to the expulsion of Palestinians from the newly created state. Invented history and clever manipulation helped avert potentially disastrous pitfalls, yet these actions set the pattern for the conflict that exists today.

## 10 Days Before the Wedding



**10 Days Before the Wedding** is a feature length romantic comedy filmed amid the destruction of war-torn Aden. Even though fighting in the area ended several years ago, the prospective couple face numerous obstacles to getting married. Social and economic problems arise within the groom's family. Their landlord decides he would like the bride for his own. Despite these setbacks the couple perseveres. In addition to a delightful story, 10 Days speaks out against wartime conditions, the government, families that "pimp" out their daughters for financial security and war profiteering.