

## **Photography Exhibit part of LAND & CONFLICT program during Planet in Focus Environmental Film Fest**

Toronto, October 15, 2009 –**Land & Conflict**, an unprecedented collaboration between the **10<sup>th</sup> annual Planet in Focus International Environmental Film & Video Festival (October 21-25)**, the **International Diaspora Film Festival (November 1-8)** and **Voices Forward**, presents a program of artistic works encompassing photography, poetry and music as well as film that focuses on people and land in contested terrain. It begins, as previously announced, **during Planet in Focus and segues into International Diaspora Film Festival.**

In detailing the **Land & Conflict** events taking place **during** the Planet in Focus environmental film festival (PIF), Artistic Director **Candida Paltiel** notes: “Common to all three festivals is the exploration of land and conflict and the direct impact on the lives of individuals and communities at the heart of a tempestuous environment. One finds that regardless of the points of view, there is a yearning for a sense of place, justice and dignity on the patch of earth portrayed. Filmmakers, photographers, writers and musicians shed light and hope in the darkest of corners in this unique program.”

Palestinian, Israeli, Bedouin, Burmese and diasporic viewpoints are represented in a rich panoply of artistic expression that **launches during PIF on Saturday, October 24 at Arta Gallery in the Distillery District** with a **photography** exhibit with famed Canadian photographer **Anne Bayin** and Iranian-born Montreal photographer **Babak Salari** as well as a screening of ***Kalandia - A Checkpoint's Story (59/Israel/2009)***, a film by **Neta Efrony** that documents Kalandia, an Israeli military checkpoint on the road between East Jerusalem and Ramallah over six years.

The **Land & Conflict** screenings **during PIF** include such **films** as the **Canadian premiere** of ***Voices from El Sayed*** (2008, Oded Adomi Leshem), a multi-layered Israeli film that delicately documents the reactions and dilemma of villagers to an impending cochlear implant on a child in the Bedouin village of El Sayed, home to the largest community of deaf people in the world; and the **Canadian premiere** of ***Jerusalem Moments 2009*** featuring 7 young Palestinian and Israeli directors in a series of shorts that reflect the complexity of urban life in Jerusalem in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Further details on the presentations during the Planet in Focus International Environmental Film & Video Festival follow:

### **LAND & CONFLICT VISUAL ARTS EVENTS DURING PLANET IN FOCUS FILM FEST**

***Land & Conflict Launch & Opening Reception for Photography & Video Exhibition.***

**Saturday, October 24, 2:00pm-6:00pm. Artists in attendance.**

**Arta Gallery in the Distillery District, 55 Mill Street, Suite 102, Bldg. 9. 416-364-2782 FREE.**

**Babak Salari – *Off the Wall* (October 21 to 28 and November 1 to 6)**

**Anne Bayin – *The Liberty Project* (October 21 to 28)**

**Also featuring Neta Efrony's documentary *Kalandia – A Checkpoint's Story* (from 3pm-4pm)**

#### ***Off The Wall***

**Babak Salari**, an Iranian documentary photographer and cultural activist in exile, presents a photographic chronicle of the wall separating Israel and Palestine in 2004. Originally from Iran, he has been living in Montreal for the past 22 years and has been exhibited internationally including at Macedonian Museum of Contemporary Art of Thessaloniki; National Library of Bulgaria; Centro Historico Merida, Yucatan, Mexico; Provincial Centre of Fine Arts and Design, Havana, Cuba; and many other venues. His two main publications *Faces, Bodies, Personas: Tracing Cuban Stories* and *Remembering the People of Afghanistan* were published by Janet 45 in Bulgaria in 2008 and 2009 respectively.

#### **About “Off the Wall”**

“What I saw in Palestine was a defenseless people holding up their land, dignity, culture and pride in the face of dire conditions: relentless attacks by the Israeli army against their young and old, against their livelihood - their vineyards and farms, against their schools, hospitals and houses! I was deeply moved by the extent of Israeli atrocities against a defenseless population, as well as by the depth of Palestinian resistance, and humanity.”

#### ***The Liberty Project***

Canadian photographer **Anne Bayin** presents her latest exploration of social justice and liberty, with portraits of high-ranking politicians and artists wearing a mask of Aung San Suu Kyi, the imprisoned opposition leader of Burma. The notables include Vaclav Havel, Margaret Atwood and many more.

**Anne Bayin** is a photographer and writer of Burmese and Scottish descent. In the mid-90's, during her extensive career as a television journalist, Bayin co-produced *The Prisoner*, a documentary on Aung San Suu Kyi for CBC's *Man Alive*. Her photographs and writings have appeared in many national and international publications. Her artistic work is part of the acclaimed M.I.L.K. collection, where her award-winning portrait Kim Phuc and Thomas was exhibited in New York, London, Sydney and featured in *Family: A Celebration of Humanity*.

***Kalandia - A Checkpoint's Story (59/Israel/2009)***

Over a span of six years, filmmaker **Neta Efrony**, a member of MACHSOM Watch (Checkpoint Watch), documented Kalandia (an Israeli military checkpoint) on the road between East Jerusalem and Ramallah that grew and expanded into becoming a Terminal. *Followed by a post-screening discussion.*

**LAND & CONFLICT FILMS DURING PLANET IN FOCUS FILM FEST**

**Saturday, October 24, 9:00pm-11:00pm, At the Royal Ontario Museum, 100 Queen's Park, South Entrance.**

***Voices From El Sayed (75/Israel/2008)***

**Tickets \$10/\$8 students, seniors**

The Bedouin village of El Sayed houses the largest community of deaf people in the world. When Salim, a villager, is presented with an opportunity to offer his son Muhammad a cochlear implant, the close-knit community has mixed reactions in this beautiful and layered documentary by award-winning filmmaker Oded Adomi Leshem.

*Producer Itay Ken-Tor will be in attendance for a post-screening discussion.*

**Sunday, October 25, 3:00pm-5:00pm, At Innis College, 2 Sussex Drive.**

***Jerusalem Moments 2009 (88/Israel/Palestine, 2009)***

**Tickets \$10/\$8 students, seniors**

Seven young Palestinian and Israeli directors create short documentaries that reflect the complexity of urban life in Jerusalem in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The series was commissioned by Ir Amim (City of Nations), a non-profit and non-partisan organization in Jerusalem founded to actively engage in issues impacting Israeli-Palestinian relations in Jerusalem and the political future of the city.

*A post-screening discussion includes participating filmmakers Amber Fares and Daniel Gal.*

---

The tenth annual **Planet in Focus** film festival **features over 85 films on environmental issues from 25 countries**. It also features facilitated pre- and post-screening discussions and panels, a film industry symposium as well as special programs for children and schools. It hosts a Green Market and presents three Eco-Hero Awards (Canadian, International and Industry), film awards and the Mark Haslam Award. Environmental artistic expression is presented to audiences as a catalyst for public awareness and action, but each film stands as a unique work of cinematic art devoted to the ecological and social health of the planet. **[www.planetinfocus.org](http://www.planetinfocus.org)**.

**Planet in Focus International Environmental Film & Video Festival October 21-25:**

**Tickets \$10** (\$8 seniors and students, \$5 under 12): **416-967-1528** OR

visit the Box Office in person at 2 Carlton St., West Mezzanine. Tickets at venues one hour prior to show. **[www.planetinfocus.org](http://www.planetinfocus.org)**

**For Land & Conflict events after October 25: [www.diasporafilmfest.com](http://www.diasporafilmfest.com) and/or [www.voicesforward.org](http://www.voicesforward.org)**

---

**LAND & CONFLICT EVENTS & VENUES**

**Films at Royal Ontario Museum:** 100 Queen's Park, Toronto, South Entrance

**Films at Innis Town Hall:** 2 Sussex Drive, Toronto

**Arta Gallery in the Distillery District:** 55 Mill Street Suite 102, Bldg. 9, Toronto | 416-364-2782.

**All events at Arta Gallery are FREE.**

**Saturday, October 24, 2:00pm-6:00pm. Artists in attendance.**

***Land & Conflict Launch & Opening Reception for Photography & Video Exhibition.***

**Babak Salari – *Off the Wall* (runs from October 21 to 28 and November 1 to 6)**

**Anne Bayin – *The Liberty Project* (runs from October 21 to 28)**

**Also featuring Neta Efrony's documentary *Kalandia – A Checkpoint's Story* (Saturday, October 24, from 3pm-4pm)**

**Sunday, November 1, 5:30pm-7:30pm.**

***Perspectives on the Wall.* A reading with Palestinian-Canadian writer and activist **Hanadi Loubani**.**

**Revival Bar:** 783 College Street (at Shaw), Toronto | 416-535-7888.

**Tuesday, November 3, 8:00pm. Tickets \$25** (\$20 in advance)

***At Home around the World - A Musical Mosaic with David Amram and Friends.***

Info: **[www.smallworldmusic.com](http://www.smallworldmusic.com) / [www.diasporafilmfest.com](http://www.diasporafilmfest.com)**