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“THE BEST OF FESTIVAL CINEMA INVISIBLE” BRINGS WORLD, NATIONAL AND REGIONAL PREMIER FILMS TO REDDING, CA

Friday, January 6 and Saturday, January 7, 2017 at Old City Hall, Redding, CA

Program celebrates contemporary films from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA)

Schenectady, NY (November 3, 2016) – Festival Cinema Invisible (FCI) and the Redding chapter of the Euphrates Institute, in partnership with the Shasta County Arts Council, will host the international film festival “The Best of Festival Cinema Invisible” January 6-7, 2017 at Old City Hall (1313 Market Street, Redding, CA 96001). FCI is a New York-based film venue in its sixth year, and this special edition of the annual festival is exclusive to Redding, CA. “The Best of Festival Cinema Invisible” will showcase films from the previous five annual festivals as well as premier films exclusive to Redding and sneak-preview films set to be screened at the April 2017 New York festival.

“The Best of Festival Cinema Invisible” program includes feature and short films (including animations) from the Middle East and North Africa. The line-up includes world, North America, US and regional premier films.

Films will screen on Friday, 1/6 from 6p-10p and Saturday, 1/7 from 12p-10p. The full program and screening schedule will be available in November at <http://cinemainvisible.org/fci-in-redding-ca/>

Tickets are available for purchase online at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/the-best-of-festival-cinema-invisible-tickets-27799538167>. Full festival passes (which include all films on Friday and Saturday) are \$40, individual day passes are \$25 and single session tickets are \$10. Tickets and passes will also be available at the door (cash only).

FCI founder and President Mahmood Karimi-Hakak commented, “We hope our audience will come away with a greater understanding of the people of the MENA region, and that FCI can play a role in facilitating communication and understanding among nations, peoples and communities.”

Director of Public Affairs and Cultural Exchange Candace Burnham said, “I grew up in Redding and my family still lives here, so I’ve seen the arts community flourish over the years. It’s a really exciting time to bring this festival to Redding and we hope film enthusiasts will love our program of compelling MENA films.”

“We are thrilled to present these moving, captivating and thought-provoking films in Redding,” said Festival Cinema Invisible Artistic Director Scott Collins. “Film is a unique medium in that it’s accessible and can transcend borders and help break stereotypes. ‘The Best of Festival Cinema Invisible’ program

features films that are based in historical and cultural traditions, but also unpack sensitive ideas of identity, childhood, disability, exile, conflict, gender, immigration, political upheaval and censorship.”

About the Organizers

Festival Cinema Invisible (FCI) is an independent, not-for-profit venue dedicated to the celebration of Middle Eastern arts and cinema. FCI believes there are several characteristics that can make a film “invisible”- hidden themes, being subjected to censorship in its country of origin and/or forgotten or ignored subject matter (among others). During its previous five annual festivals, FCI Festivals featured over 150 films from Iran and the broader region that were world, North America, national and regional premiers. More information about FCI and “The Best of Festival Cinema Invisible” can be found on its website, <http://cinemainvisible.org/> or its Facebook, www.facebook.com/FestivalCinemaInvisible

FCI President **Mahmood Karimi-Hakak** is a poet, author, translator and theatre and filmmaker, who has written, produced, directed, and designed over 50 stage and screenplays in the U.S., Europe and Iran. His plays and films have received international acclaim and awards at festivals such as Edinburgh, Netherlands, Berlin, Delhi, Montreal, New York, Ft. Lauderdale, Los Angeles and Tehran. A recipient of the 2009 Fulbright, and 2005 Raymond Kennedy awards, Karimi-Hakak’s literary credits include six plays, two books of poetry, several translations from and into the Persian language and numerous articles and interviews both in English and Persian.

Founded in 2006, the **Euphrates Institute** is a response to the critical national interests at stake in the Middle East, coupled with the troubling lack of public awareness about the region--especially regarding the local grassroots efforts to elevate society, reduce terrorism, and promote freedom. More information is available at www.euphrates.org.

Film stills, festival images, select film screeners and press passes available upon request.

For further information please contact:

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Festival Cinema Invisible Founder and President Mahmood Karimi-Hakak will be in Redding Jan 5-8 and Candace Burnham, Director of Public Affairs and graduate of Shasta High, will be in Redding Dec 31-Jan 9 for in-person media interviews. Mahmood Karimi-Hakak, a university professor, is available to present to organizations/groups in Redding during his stay. Possible topics include: "The role of Iranian youth in the political evolution of the country," "Shakespeare and globalization," "Peace building through the arts," "Artist as change agents," Iranian Cinema of the 21st century," and readings in Persian/English of original poetry and of the masters Hafez, Forough and Iraj.