



The 17th Edition of the Marrakech International Film Festival, taking place in Marrakech from November 30 to December 8, 2018

*Marrakech Pays Tribute to the Great Moroccan Director
Jillali Ferhati*



An actor, director, and screenwriter of special pedigree on the honorary list of awardees during the 17th edition of the Marrakech International Film Festival,

Jillali Ferhati was born in the Ait Wahy locality near Khemisset in 1948. He grew up in Tangier, which nurtured him and shaped his personality. A director, scriptwriter, and producer, Ferhati began his career in the theatre before he moved on to cinema which impassioned him immeasurably. He had previously studied literature and sociology in France, where he fell in love with the ancient and noble art of the theatre. He then became attracted to cinema. He directed his first long-feature film, *A Breach in the Wall*, in 1977, which drew critical attention to him during the Critics' Week at the Festival de Cannes. He returned to Cannes in 1982, when his film *Bamboo Brides* was selected for the Directors' Fortnight; he won an award for directing. At the National Film Festival, the film won the prize for Best Actress, which was awarded to Souad Ferhati. It also received the Grand Prix at the Mediterranean Film Festival in Valencia. With his feature-length film *The Beach of the Lost Children*, Ferhati participated in the Official Competition of the Venice International Film Festival in 1991. The film won the Grand Prix at the National Film Festival, as well as the Grand Prix for Best Actress – again for Souad Ferhati – at the Biennale of Arab Cinema in Paris in 1992; the Grand Prix at the African Film Festival in Milan; the Special Jury Award and the Golden Bayard for Best Artistic Contribution at the Namur International Festival of French-Speaking Film; the Grand Prix for Best Actress for Souad Ferhati at the Carthage Film Festival; and the Bronze Medal at the Damascus International Film Festival in 1993.

Throughout his work, Ferhati has faithfully addressed social themes that are close to the day-to-day experiences of common people. His *Fortune Horses* (1995), which won the Grand Prix at the National Film Festival and earned special critical acclaim from the jury of the Carthage Film Festival in 1996; and the Grand Prix at the African Film Festival in Milan in 1997. At the beginning of the millennium, Ferhati made *Braids* (2000), which took the third prize at the Rabat International Film Festival, brought Salima Benmoumen the award for Best Actress at Carthage, and received the Special Jury Award at the Mediterranean Film Festival of Tetouan in 2001. Ferhati was one of the first filmmakers to establish a new wave of films centred on contemporary history and memory with his film *Suspended Memory* (2004). The film was highly acclaimed both at home and abroad. Accordingly, it won the award for Best Screenplay at the Cairo International Film Festival; the Grand Prix of the Arab Cinema in Rotterdam; the Award for Directing at the First Edition of the Maghreb Film Festival in Oujda; the Grand Prix of the City of Tetouan at the Tetouan International Mediterranean Film Festival; the Special Jury Award at the International Film Festival of Rabat; a special commendation from the Youth Jury at Cinemed; the Special Jury Award at the National Film Festival in Tangier; the Grand Prix and the Award for Best Actor at the Pan-African Festival in Rome; and the Public Award at the African Film Festival in Tarifa, Spain. In 2010, his *At Dawn* earned the award for Best Screenwriter at the Dubai International Film Festival. In 2013, *Pillow Secrets* won the awards for Best Screenplay and Best Picture at the National Film Festival. In addition to his mastery of directing, Ferhati is also a talented actor. His calm face deftly reflects the subtlest inner feelings of the characters he embodies so masterfully.

He collaborated with Ricardo Franco in 1991 in the film *Tangiers Dream*; with Marcus Fisher in *Warm and Cold* (1992); and with Moroccan director Latif Lahlou in *The Big and Generous*

Household (2010). He has also performed in some of his own films, including *A Breach in the Wall*, *Bamboo Brides*, *Suspended Memory*, and *At Dawn*. In *The Ultimate Rebellion* (2018), Ferhati returned to the theme of documenting contemporary events, which in fact is the hallmark of his filmmaking. As usual, the director maintains his poetic touch in his handling of the most poignant issues facing his society. Before this year's tribute, Ferhati participated in the Marrakech International Film Festival as a juror for its 12th edition.

Jillali Ferhati has not only made films, but has also contributed to the establishment of a national cinema with a truly genuine Moroccan identity, whose roots stretch deep into the African soil, and whose branches extend high and wide, reaching out towards several horizons.

Pillow Secrets

By Jillali Ferhati

A young woman, who is in charge of an orphanage, is summoned by the police to help identify a corpse. On this day, she will witness a painful confrontation with a small town, its past, and the many characters who seem to be following her.

Ultimate Rebellion

By Jillali Ferhati

Ayman, a 60-year-old sculptor, meets Wafaa, a 25-year-old woman who is in search of her wayward brother. Ayman undergoes an inner conflict owing to the impossible love he has for Wafaa, and his deep-rooted relationship with his wife, Suha, who has lost her memory and lives in an old people's home. The love story Ayman is beginning will revive painful memories of the past.

**For further information, please consult:
www.festivalmarrakech.info**