



**The 20<sup>th</sup> Edition of the Marrakech International Film Festival  
November 24<sup>th</sup> to December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023**

**THE MARRAKECH INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL  
PAYS TRIBUTE TO TWO CELEBRATED PERSONALITIES**

**DANISH ACTOR MADS MIKKELSEN  
AND MOROCCAN DIRECTOR FAOUZI BENSÄÏDI  
TO RECEIVE THE FESTIVAL'S ÉTOILE D'OR**



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**Rabat, November 7, 2023.** Since its launch in 2001, the Marrakech International Film Festival has paid tribute annually to the greatest names of Moroccan and international cinema. This year, on the occasion of the Festival's 20<sup>th</sup> edition, the Étoile d'Or will be awarded to two exceptional personalities to recognise their significant contributions to the art of cinema: celebrated and world renowned Danish actor Mads Mikkelsen; and talented, poetic Moroccan director Faouzi Bensaïdi.

Mads Mikkelsen is among those rare contemporary actors who has found success in alternating roles in Hollywood blockbusters and European art-house films. His audacity, his magnetism, and his ability to reinvent himself with brilliance from one film to the next make him one of the most fascinating and popular actors of his generation. Often choosing complex roles, Mikkelsen intrigues, terrifies, or charms from role to role and is now the best-known Danish actor in the world.

*“Dear Marrakech International Film Festival – It is such an honour to be invited, once again, to your beautiful festival. Last time was part of a celebration of Danish filmmakers; this time, it’s a personal award. Although I’m probably going to dedicate it to everyone I’ve ever worked with, I do feel extraordinarily proud that it was my name you came up with as someone who deserves celebration. Proud, honoured and so fortunate, that in a short while I will meet friends and colleagues and some of my all-time heroes in beautiful Marrakech. Can’t wait!”*, he said.

For almost 25 years, Faouzi Bensaïdi has enjoyed an exemplary career both in front of and behind the camera. A beacon of Moroccan cinema at home, he is also one of its most illustrious representatives on the international scene, and sees his films selected on a regular basis for the world’s most prestigious festivals, from Cannes to Berlin via Toronto and Venice. A master of the poetic-burlesque, Bensaïdi has patiently and confidently built a remarkable body of work of great singularity and profound humanity.

*“Marrakech is a city of a thousand stories, and the film festival is one of them. It is a brilliantly bright city that is open to humanity and that never ceases renewing itself and creating new pathways and avenues. I, too, have weaved my way through my own, intimate story with this beautiful festival. It is with great pride that I have presented all my films here, and I am very grateful for the festival’s loyalty and friendship. I thank the Marrakech International Film Festival for distinguishing our long-time connection with this tribute – an immense honour for me. I am both pleased and moved to receive it in my homeland, in one of the world’s most precious cinema events. As well, I look forward to sharing my most recent film, *Deserts* – itself made up of a thousand stories – with all festival attendees.”* said Bensaïdi about his upcoming participation in the festival.

## BIO

# MADS MIKKELSEN

Mads Mikkelsen made his triumphant return to Danish cinema in 2020 in *Another Round*, an Academy Award-winning film that earned him a BAFTA nomination and a European Film Award. This was his second foray into the world of Thomas Vinterberg, the director with whom he made the multi-award-winning *The Hunt* (2013), which won him the Best Actor award at the Festival de Cannes. He also starred in *Riders of Justice* in 2020. Outside his native Denmark, Mikkelsen has made his mark in Hollywood with major roles in a wide variety of films. In 2023, he starred opposite Harrison Ford in *Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny*. He has also appeared in films including *Arctic* (2019), *Polar* (2019), *Dr. Strange* (2016), *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story* (2016), *Casino Royale* (2006), and *King Arthur* (2004), as well as the hit TV series *Hannibal* (2013–2015), in which he played the title role. In 2011, he received a European Film Award for his contribution to world cinema. In 2016, he was a member of the jury at Cannes. Mikkelsen has also played unforgettable characters in Danish films such as *Men and Chicken* (2015), *A Royal Affair* (2012), a huge international success that won an Oscar, and Susanne Bier's *After the Wedding* (2006), which was also nominated for an Oscar. Recently, he reunited with Nikolaj Arcel for *The Promised Land* (2023), which was in competition at the Venice International Film Festival. Mikkelsen has also starred in several films by Anders Thomas Jensen: *Adam's Apples* (2005), *The Green Butchers* (2003), and *Flickering Lights* (2000). In addition to his film career, he appeared in the Emmy Award-winning series *Unit One*. After graduating from the Aarhus Theatre School in 1996, he made his screen debut in Nicolas Winding Refn's first film, *Pusher* (1996). They subsequently reunited for *Bleeder* (1999), *Pusher II: Blood on Your Hands* (2004), and *Valhalla Rising* (2009).

## BIO

# FAOUZI BENSÄÏDI

Faouzi Bensaïdi directed his first short film, the multi-award-winning *The Cliff*, in 1998. He then co-wrote *Far* with André Téchiné. In 2000, he directed two short films: *Le Mur*, which won a prize at the Directors' Fortnight at the Festival de Cannes, and *The Rain Line*, which won a prize at the Venice International Film Festival. His first feature film, *A Thousand Months*, won the Prix Le premier regard and the Prix de la jeunesse in the Un Certain Regard section at Cannes. This was followed by *WWW - What a Wonderful World*, which was selected for the Venice International Film Festival. A reflection on the elements that went into making this film but that were not in the final cut (scraps, sketches, ideas, images, and video) formed the core of an installation called *Man's Worlds - World's Men* in 2009, in collaboration with the contemporary art centre L'Appartement 22. Bensaïdi's next film, *Death for Sale* (2011), won the C.I.C.A.E. award at the Berlin International Film Festival. *Volubilis* was selected for Venice Days in 2017 and won seven awards at the Tangier National Film Festival. Together with Art for the World, Bensaïdi contributed two short films to omnibus films that focus on climate change: *A Sunny Day* as part of *Interdependence* (2019); and *Why did you leave the horse alone?* for *Interactions* (2022), a film about connections between humans and animals. In 2022, he directed *Summer Days*, a modern-day Moroccan adaptation of Anton Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard*. His latest film, *Deserts* (2023), was selected for the Directors' Fortnight at Cannes. A theatre aficionado, screenwriter, and editor, Bensaïdi has also appeared as an actor in films by directors Jacques Audiard, Nadir Moknèche, Daoud Aoulad-Syad, and Bertrand Bonello, among others.

**For further information, please visit**  
[www.marrakech-festival.com](http://www.marrakech-festival.com)