

[Saudi Arabia Picks Female Empowerment Drama 'Scales' as its Oscar Candidate](#)

By. Nick Vivarelli – Variety
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Saudi director [Shahad Ameen](#)'s feminist fable "[Scales](#)" has been selected as [Saudi Arabia](#)'s official candidate for the Oscar in the international feature film category.

"I have only ever wanted 'Scales' to be seen, enjoyed and to act as a catalyst for wider conversations about gender roles, beliefs and feminism in the Arab world," commented Ameen in a statement.

"To now have my film selected to represent Saudi Arabia as the official Oscar entry, especially as an Arab female director, has surpassed any expectations I had for this project," she said, adding that she hoped that the film's "incredible journey" can provide "inspiration for my fellow Saudi filmmakers to embark on their own successful paths."

"Scales" will be Saudi Arabia's fourth ever submission to the Oscars.

"Scales" was produced by Image Nation Abu Dhabi, along with R. Paul Miller and Stephen Strachan of Abu Dhabi-based Film Solutions and Rula Nasser of Imaginarium Films, with executive producers Mohamed Jabarah Al-Daradji and Majid Al Ansari.

Ben Ross, chief content officer, Image Nation in the statement said that "from its initial concept, it was clear that 'Scales' presented an intriguing and distinctive perspective through an entirely new approach to filmmaking in the region, so it has been a labor of love for the Image Nation team to work closely with Shahad throughout the creative and development process and bring her vision to life."

The 93rd Academy Awards will take place on April 25, 2021.

["Scales"](#) draws on Arabic folklore about a young woman named Hayat – played by newcomer Basima Hajjar – who rebels against the tradition in her fishing village of sacrificing female children to monstrous mermaids lurking in the sea. The groundbreaking film launched from the 2019 Venice Film Festival's Critics' Week, where it won the Verona Film Club award for innovative filmmaking, and has since been shown at a slew of other festivals, including London, Carthage, Cairo, Singapore, where it won best picture, and at SXSW 2020.

These materials are distributed by LS2group on behalf of the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia. Additional information is on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, DC.