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## **THE ARAB BRITISH CENTRE WINS THE UNESCO-SHARJAH PRIZE FOR ARAB CULTURE**

**The London-based charity is the first British recipient of the UNESCO-Sharjah Prize for Arab Culture. The prize will be awarded by the Director-General of UNESCO, Irina Bokova, in a ceremony at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris on 25 April 2013.**

The UNESCO-Sharjah Prize for Arab Culture, now in its 11<sup>th</sup> edition, recognises commitment to the dissemination of Arab culture in a global context.

The Arab British Centre organises and promotes cultural and artistic events relating to the Arab world, and hosts a regular programme of activities including Arabic calligraphy classes and Arabic language classes. In addition to its regular on-site activities, the Centre has worked on a number of one-off projects in external locations, including the major 2012 project '*Safar: A Journey Through Popular Arab Cinema*', a week-long series of popular Arab cinema which took place at the Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA) in London.

The Arab British Centre is not only the first British recipient of this prestigious prize, which was launched in 2001, but it is also the first organisation – rather than individual – to be awarded the honour.

### **The Laureates:**

An international jury of experts selected The Arab British Centre and academic Professor Mustapha Cherif of Algeria as joint laureates of the prize. The prize money of \$60,000 is shared equally between the two laureates.

Francesco Bandarin, The Assistant Director-General for Culture at UNESCO, said:

“[The International Jury] recognised the dynamic efforts of The Arab British Centre in promoting different aspects of Arab Culture. The various activities and events organised, within and outside the Centre, to promote a better understanding of Arab culture and foster intercultural dialogue were highly appreciated”.

Speaking of the win, the Arab British Centre's Chairman Virginia Forbes said:

“It is a huge honour for The Arab British Centre to be awarded this prize and is testament to the hard work of our small but dedicated team. We are encouraged to redouble our efforts, presenting the best of Arab arts and culture to a British audience. With the wonderful endorsement of UNESCO, we hope that we can engage more people with all that the Arab world has to offer.”

Despite limited budgetary resources, the Arab British Centre is able to undertake its activities through working with an extensive network of partners to promote the culture and arts of the Arab world in the United Kingdom. The Arab British Centre anticipates spending the \$30,000 prize money in the furtherance of this aim.

### **Media Enquiries:**

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### **Notes to Editors:**

- The Arab British Centre is an independent, non-political, non-religious charitable organisation (charity number 801026) promoting arts and culture of the Arab world
- Further information can be found on [www.arabbritishcentre.org.uk](http://www.arabbritishcentre.org.uk)
- The Arab British Centre is situated in Gough Square, behind Fleet Street and in the adjacent building to the museum Dr Johnson's House