

Muslim Heritage film dominates New York Festival Awards

A short film about the scientific heritage of Muslim civilisation has won NINE awards at the New York Festival, including the prestigious "Best Film" gong. 1001 Inventions and The Library of Secrets, starring Oscar-winning screen legend Sir Ben Kingsley, dominated proceedings at the 53rd annual New York Festivals International Television & Film Awards held on 3rd May 2010, taking away more prizes than any other contender.

As well as taking the most prestigious award of the evening – Grand Winner for Best Film – the thirteen minute Muslim Heritage movie, sponsored by the Abdul Latif Jameel Foundation, also scooped an additional five gold medals and two silver medals.

Reacting to the results, Prof. Salim Al-Hassani, Executive Producer said: "It's truly humbling to see that our efforts have been recognized in such spectacular fashion by a long-established and internationally respected festival. I hope that these awards help raise awareness of the work we're doing within the 1001 Inventions initiative. Our aim is to increase cross-cultural understanding and help people discover a history and culture that we all share, but is still under-appreciated."

1001 Inventions and The Library of Secrets was launched in January 2010 at London's Science Museum, and was also free to watch online. Since that time more than two million people have viewed the film. The story revolves around a group of young school children on a field trip to a dusty old library. Their teacher challenges them to research the era known as the "Dark Ages" of civilisation; a chore they resent until they meet a mysterious librarian (Kingsley) who takes them on a journey to the past to uncover the thousand years of scientific and cultural excellence that took place outside Western Europe between the 7th and 17th century.

Prof. Al-Hassani elaborates: "We were privileged to have such an accomplished team of professionals working on the film. They really enjoyed bringing to life 1000 years of under-appreciated history. And the popularity of the 1001 Inventions exhibition is down, in no small part, to the exceptional acting and production talent involved in the Library of Secrets film. The Edge Picture Company, which produced the film for us, has achieved something quite amazing as a result."

The movie was produced by The Edge Picture Company as an introductory film for the 1001 Inventions exhibition that was launched at London's Science Museum in January 2010 under the sponsorship of the Abdul Latif Jameel Foundation. The landmark exhibition has proved so popular with visitors that its residency at the Museum has been extended by two months until the summer. Described by critics as London's most successful new exhibition, it received more than 100,000 visitors in its opening weeks and the Museum's Director, Prof. Chris Rapley, has described their latest attraction as a "blockbuster".

The Library of Secrets film was awarded the following prizes by the New York Festivals 53rd International Television & Film Awards:

- Grand Winner for overall Best Film
- Gold Winner for Best Film in Society and Social Issues
- Gold Winner for Best Film in Arts and Humanities
- Gold Winner for Best Direction
- Gold Winner for Best Writing
- Gold Winner for Best Film for an Event Venue
- Silver Winner for Best Cinematography
- Finalist Certificate for Best Original Music

The film 1001 Inventions and The Library of Secrets can be seen as part of the 1001 Inventions exhibition at London's Science Museum, and can also be viewed for free at the official website www.1001inventions.com/Libraryofsecrets. The exhibition is open to visitors, seven days a week, and runs from the 21st January to 30th June 2010 after which it embarks on a five-year tour of major world cities in Asia, Europe and the Americas.