



## Villa Hegra and Film AlUla announce new partnership on Scriptwriting Residency with Le Groupe Ouest expertise

**Cannes, France - May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2026:** During the 2026 edition of the Cannes Film Festival, Villa Hegra and Film AlUla, in partnership with AFALULA, announced the launch of a new scriptwriting residency, marking a new chapter in cinematic collaboration between Saudi Arabia and France.

### A new artistic residency for filmmakers and screenwriters

Focused on the theme of *“The Art of Shaping Film Ideas”*, the residency program is delivered by Le Groupe Ouest and LIM<sup>2</sup> | Less is More. This residency is dedicated to supporting filmmakers during the earliest stages of feature film creation, with a focus on narrative exploration, story development, and artistic authorship.

Structured across collaborative sessions at Le Groupe Ouest in Brittany, France and at Villa Hegra in AlUla, Saudi Arabia, the initiative will include two cycles: an international residency open to eight filmmakers from Saudi Arabia, France, and all around the world, alongside a national residency dedicated to eight Saudi and MENA-based filmmakers.

### Connecting Brittany and AlUla

Unfolding between Brittany and AlUla, the international residency creates a dialogue between two distinct creative territories connected by their striking natural beauty, cinematic landscapes, and strong relationship to place. From the rocky coastline of Brittany to the sandstone formations of AlUla, the program offers filmmakers immersive environments dedicated to reflection, ideation, and artistic exchange.

This collaboration highlights Film AlUla’s pivotal role as the Royal Commission for AlUla’s film agency, in supporting the region’s growing cinema sector, not only as a destination for international productions, but also as a center for film culture, talent development, and creative exchange. Through partnerships spanning production support, filmmaker development, cinephile initiatives, and community engagement, Film AlUla continues to grow the local film ecosystem.

As the prominent Saudi-French cultural institution, Villa Hegra fosters long-term collaborations across artistic disciplines while supporting new creative voices. This scriptwriting residency reflects Villa Hegra’s footprint in supporting AlUla’s cultural landscape and reinforcing its position as a global destination for contemporary cinematic creation and international artistic dialogue.

Developed with the support of the Centre national du cinéma et de l’image animée (CNC), the residency brings together internationally recognized expertise in script development through Le Groupe Ouest and LIM<sup>2</sup>. Widely regarded as leading references in Europe for accompanying filmmakers during the writing process, Le Groupe Ouest and LIM<sup>2</sup> have played a significant role in supporting a new generation of international auteur cinema. Over the past two decades, Le Groupe Ouest has accompanied more than 2,500 filmmakers and writers internationally, while LIM<sup>2</sup> has become closely associated with the emergence of bold new voices presented in major international festivals.





Beyond the residency, the announcement underscores a broader and expanding cinematic partnership between Villa Hegra, Film AlUla, and AFALULA - the French agency for AlUla development. Following the success of the community film appreciation programs launched in AlUla, upcoming initiatives will include the opening of a new cinema club conceived as a space for discovery, conversation, and shared cinematic experiences. Together, these initiatives reflect a growing cultural dialogue between Saudi Arabia and France through cinema and artistic exchange.

Applications for the international scriptwriting residency are now open, and the national scriptwriting residency dedicated to Saudi and MENA-based filmmakers will be announced shortly.

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#### **About Film AlUla**

Film AlUla is the film agency of the Royal Commission for AlUla, supporting international, regional and local films and TV productions in AlUla County.

Located in northwest Saudi Arabia, AlUla offers diverse natural landscapes and heritage sites. Its natural beauty, cutting-edge production infrastructure and production support services, including the AlUla Studios, position AlUla as an international pristine filming location.

<https://filming.experiencealula.com>

#### **About Villa Hegra**

Villa Hegra is the first institution dedicated to cross-cultural dialogue and creative exchange between Saudi Arabia and France, located in AlUla, Saudi Arabia.

Founded through an intergovernmental agreement signed in 2021, Villa Hegra develops residencies and public programs across the fields of arts, cinema, research, and creative industries, encouraging long-term collaboration between Saudi and French cultural ecosystems.

Villa Hegra fosters encounter between local practices, emerging generations and international perspectives, contributing to AlUla's development as a leading cultural destination both in Saudi Arabia and on a global scale.

In 2025, Villa Hegra opened its doors in central AlUla: spanning more than 2,300 square meters, its venue hosts AlUla's first indoor cinema and first performing arts studio, alongside artist residencies and studios, workshops and exhibition spaces.

Villa Hegra is a member of the international network of residencies Viva Villa alongside Villa Medici (Rome), Villa Kujoyama (Kyoto), Casa de Velázquez (Madrid), Villa Albertine (United States) and Villa Swagatam (India).

<https://www.villahegra.org/>





#### **About AFALULA**

The French Agency for Alula Development (AFALULA) was established to support its Saudi partner, the Royal Commission for Alula, in transforming the Alula region into a world-class cultural and tourism destination. The Agency is structured around specialized areas of expertise, including architecture, planning, culture and archaeology, tourism, human capital, infrastructure and environment, agriculture and botany, the equestrian sector, and security.

<https://www.afalula.com/en/>  
<https://horizon-afalula.com/logbooks.html>

#### **About Le Groupe Ouest**

Le Groupe Ouest is a unique place in Europe, established on the northern coast of Brittany, known for its unique approach in accompanying and coaching writers and filmmakers from all over the world during their writing phase.

Created in 2006, Le Groupe Ouest team has been coaching over 2,500 writers and filmmakers in their script-development phase, making it the N°1 place in Europe in that field.

Among its best-known programs, "*The Annual selection*", created in 2007 for francophone writers, selects 8 projects a year, and "*LIM - Less is More*", a European program launched in 2015, propels international films every year into A-List Festivals. And since the creation of its European Think Tank in 2017 ("*StoryTANK*"), Le Groupe Ouest has been launching the first applied research platform in Europe for the creation of new methodological frameworks for the creation of fictional works.

<https://www.legroupeouest.com>

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