



DFI provides vital film grants to new wave of Gulf filmmakers

Funding is part of region's ongoing support for emerging film industries in MENA

The submissions for the fall grant is still open till the 15th of July 2012

Doha, Qatar, June 16, 2012:

Reflecting the growing strength and diversity of Gulf filmmaking, the DFI announced 24 new features, documentaries and short films from the Gulf, Levant and, North Africa will receive funding as part of the Institute's 2012 grants programme.

The region's collaborative approach to film funding is supporting the development of the fast growing Gulf film industry. This year's grant recipients also reflect a rise in applicants from Algeria, in a year which marks the country's 50th anniversary of independence.

The 24 projects span the geography, history and social complexity of the Arab world and its cinematic diversity. Entries from Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Libya and Egypt in North Africa to Palestine, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Palestine in the Levant, and Qatar and Kuwait in the Arabian Gulf take on subjects as diverse as Afghan cameleers in 19th century Australia, the impact of civil unrest in contemporary Tunisia, female football scouts journeying across Libya to find women players and the future of Arab Gulf society as women are increasingly integrated.

Tales of modern romance, family violence, financial crimes, collective and individual amnesia and unusual takes on the Arab spring including a film on former Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak's national fateful address to the nation are among the harvest from the 12 nations represented in the shortlist. Nine of the shortlisted film projects are narrative features; eight are documentaries; an additional four are narrative shorts and two are experimental films.

In a marked change from previous DFI grants editions, accomplished directors such as Morocco's Hakim Belabbès and Lebanon's Dima El Horr have received funding in addition to emerging and first-time directors. Experimental shorts intermingle with traditional storytelling in the shortlist.

More than 40 film projects from over 10 countries received funding during DFI's 2011 grants cycles, with a majority applying for production and post-production support. Doha Film Institute Executive Director

Amanda Palmer said the growing diversity in its grants portfolio speaks to a coming watershed moment for cinema from the region.

“There is an undeniable increase in the quality, diversity and volume of entries this year. The submissions reflect the exciting changes happening in the Gulf region at the moment and the huge potential for its growing film industry and the strength of its creative talent.”

We’re proud to be able to support and encourage this passionate new wave of storytellers as well as continuing to back more established talent working in the MENA region.” The DFI’s twice-yearly filmmaking grants are one of many training, development and funding support initiatives extended by the film institute to filmmakers across the Arab world.

Projects eligible for funding include feature films, feature length documentaries, short fiction and documentary films and experimental films, with no restrictions on story genre, length and overall budget. Films are eligible for funding at all stages of production – from development, production, post-production to P&A (Prints & Advertising).

Grant recipients for 2012 include:

Feature Narrative

Production

A Concert

Nadim Tabet, Lebanon

Amira and her friends plan a concert in Beirut to help fund their own apartment and independence. Life has other plans.

Aicha Bonheur

Hakim Belabbès, Morocco/England/USA

In Casablanca, a teenage girl who loves to run is lured by the promise of professional coaching and equipment.

Algiers by Night

Yanis Koussim, Algeria

The city comes alive at night, with roller-bladers, middle aged men, young women, insomniacs and party people and their stories.

Blessed Benefit

Mahmoud Al Massad, Jordan/Netherlands/Germany

During Ramadan, a man sentenced for a minor financial misdemeanor finds peace and morality in the prison.

Post-Production

Line of Sight

Aseel Mansour, Jordan/France

A woman points a gun at a car thief and his accomplice. She needs to retrieve memories from her car, he needs an ear and some money.

The professor

Mahmoud Ben Mahmoud, Tunisia

Development

Ideal Love

Dima El Horr, Lebanon

Tamara, an attractive and sparkling biology professor, gets a taste of what could be love, and reconsiders migrating out of Lebanon.

The Day I Lost My Shadow

Soudade Kaadan, Syria

Between water outages and power cuts, all Sana dreams about is a hot shower. She takes a day off from her two jobs to search for a gas cylinder.

One Week Ago, Today

Rania Attieh, Lebanon

An ageing prostitute takes charge of a young man with amnesia who is returned to his senile old father.

Shelter

Kasem Kharsa, Egypt/Lebanon/UK/USA/UAE

Ghetto dweller Ahmed can't remember his past but is haunted by a recurring nightmare where he is strangling a group of beautiful horses.

SHORT NARRATIVE

Production

Control Room

Mohammed Adeeb, Egypt

In the state TV control room, the technical team is preparing for what is arguably the most important speech ever transmitted there: Mubarak's address to the Tahrir Square demonstrators on January 25, 2011.

Playtime

Hamad Al-Tourah, Kuwait

An eight-year-old boy wanders around Kuwait, trying to track down the mother who has left him home alone for a night out.

Mourning

Rama Mari, Palestine

Yassin kills his father for brutalizing his mother – who is the martyr here, and who are the survivors?

The Box

Alaa Mosbah, Egypt

Tariq, a teenager, wants to show his best friend that he is a man. But his mother gets in the way.

FEATURE DOCUMENTARY

Development

Salaam Plenty

Yasmine Kassari, Morocco/Belgium/Australia

A portrait of Australia's Afghan cameleers from the mid-1800s to 1930, based on testimony from their descendants, period photographs and press clippings.

The Foreign Son

Abdallah Badis, Algeria/France

50-year-old Omar returns to his homeland and the tortuous path unfolding in front of him, led by a providential child.

Matoub Lounes: The Story of a Legend

Regine Abadia, Algeria/France

In the Berber-speaking world, Kabyle singer Matoub Lounès is a legend for standing up to a tyrannical military government and radical Islamism.

Freedom Fields

Naziha Arebi, Libya

Sohad, a passionate female football scout, works her way across the country to discover and empower the women of Libya through sport.

Post-Production

Embers

Tamara Stepanyan, Lebanon/Armenia

A grandmother and granddaughter explore nostalgia, history, ideologies, war and peace.

Cursed be the Phosphate

Sami Tlili, Tunisia

In January 2008, a group of unemployed youth began a movement of civil dissent. Four years later, what remains of this human adventure is broken souls, open wounds, pride, and dignity.

Production

Remnant of Photos

Khalil El-Muzayen, Palestine

Gaza cinemas have gone silent, even though its people rushed into theatres to see the new releases. What has happened to film there today?

When Home... Becomes Hell

Dalila Ennadre, Morocco/France

The Medina of Casablanca cries out for its inhabitants and their memory but above all, for a more human world.

EXPERIMENTAL

Production/Post Production

Encounters

Sarah Francis, Lebanon

Feature

A glassed van roams the city, home to a camera that encourages people to share a personal moment with this moving confessional.

That Which is Coming

Sophia Al-Maria, Qatar

Short

A meditation on the changing role of women in the Arabian Gulf, which casts woman as the elemental connector between life and death, the earth and the stars, past and future.

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