

Press Release

Leading regional and international film industry professionals set to arrive in Doha for inaugural edition of Qumra

Doha, Qatar – Monday 2nd March, 2015: The Doha Film Institute will welcome more than one hundred leading film industry professionals to Qatar later this week for the first edition of Qumra, a new event dedicated to the development of emerging filmmakers from Qatar and around the world, taking place from March 6-11.

[Twenty-nine projects](#) at various stages of production have been selected to benefit from the experience of international film industry professionals in bespoke mentorship labs and meetings designed to propel their projects to the next stage.

More than 100 delegates from all facets of the film industry will participate in the programme including representatives from international film festivals, funding bodies, sales, production and distribution companies along with development specialists and script consultants.

There are two strands of the Qumra industry programme: projects in development will participate in group and individual sessions for legal, sales, marketing, production and script consultations along with one-on-one match-made meetings; projects in post-production will participate in a series of rough-cut and work-in-progress screenings and feedback sessions which will present excerpts of their projects, in many cases for the first time.

Doha Film Institute CEO, Fatma Al Remaihi said: “The projects selected for Qumra are by filmmakers we have worked very closely with over time through our grants and development programmes. We are in a unique position to catalyse their work to the next stage through this intensive programme which has been designed with each of their individual needs in mind.”

“I am extremely encouraged by the support that has been shown by film professionals from all sectors of the industry for the first edition of Qumra. Their immense generosity towards the new generation of filmmakers is invaluable and I am certain that the connections formed over the coming weeks will resonate far into the future for all of the participants.”

Artistic Directors and key selectors from leading regional and international film festivals include representatives from: Venice Film Festival; Karlovy Vary International Film Festival; Toronto International Film Festival; Busan International Film Festival; International Film Festival Rotterdam; Sarajevo Film Festival; Clermont-Ferrand International Film Festival; Abu Dhabi Film Festival; Dubai International Film Festival; Festival del Film Locarno; International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam; and from the Cannes Film Festival, representatives from multiple sections and sidebars including Cinéfondation, Court Métrage, Critics’ Week and Directors’ Fortnight.

Representation from international film bodies include executives from major film funds Eurimages, Hubert Bals Fund, Medienboard, the Sarajevo City of Film Fund and Sørfond; film labs including the Binger Film Lab, Torino Film Lab, Rawi Screenwriters' Lab and the Cannes Residency Programme; and representatives from national film organisations including Creative England, the Danish Film Institute and Cinemas du Monde.

All participants, with a focus on work-in-progress projects, will be connected with international sales and production companies including Elle Driver, Fortissimo Films, Memento Films, Open City Films, Picture Tree International, Sikhya Entertainment, Urban Distribution International, WIDE, Wild Bunch and Visit Films alongside key distributors from the MENA region including Gulf Film, Front Row Filmed Entertainment, Teleview International, Moving Turtle and MC Distribution.

Regional representation is strong and includes a presence from the major funds for Arab filmmakers – Abu Dhabi's SANAD and Dubai's Enjaaz – along with important regional bodies such as the Arab Fund for Arts and Culture, Screen Institute Beirut, The Royal Film Commission Jordan, and a diverse range of film and television production and distribution outfits including Abbout Productions, Image Nation, Middle East Broadcasting Centre (MBC), Mad Solutions, ART – Arab Radio and Television and Qatar-based Al Jazeera. New technologies and funding models are also represented with streaming platform icflix, crowd-funding platform Aflamnah and on-demand viewing platform, Festival Scope.

Regional content will be in focus through an industry panel presented by Northwestern University in Qatar (NU-Q) on March 9th, building on the work undertaken in partnership with the Doha Film Institute last year through a comprehensive pan-Arab survey, 'Entertainment Media Use in the Middle East'.

The panel, 'Meeting the Demand for Regional Content', is a special session of the NU-Q Qatar Media Industries Forum, a bi-annual gathering of industry leaders. It will use the findings of the study as a basis to consider issues around the demand for more film and entertainment content from and about the Arab world and explore the most innovative ways that local content producers are connecting to regional audiences within or around the existing media ecosystem.

Moderated by Joe Khalil, NU-Q's Associate Professor in Residence, the panelists include regional experts Fadi Ismail, General Manager of O3 Productions (MBC Group); Hania Mroue, Director of Metropolis Cinema; Khalifa Al-Haroon, Founder of the iLoveQatar Network; Mohammed Makki, Director and Showrunner of the "Takki" series; and Selim El Azar, Chief Executive Officer of Qatar-based distributor, Gulf Film.

One hundred and fifty Qatar-based film, media and entertainment delegates will also participate in the programme, further building on the event's aim to connect local, regional and international industry for the benefit of emerging talent.

The event includes a programme of public screenings featuring films by the Qumra Masters – Gael García Bernal, Leila Hatami, Cristian Mungiu, Abderrahmane Sissako and Danis Tanović - alongside new voices in cinema selected from films supported by the Institute's



grants and co-financing programmes. The Qumra Masters will also participate in individual advisory sessions with the participating projects.

-ENDS-

About Qumra:

Qumra is an initiative that seeks to provide mentorship, nurturing and hands-on development for filmmakers from Qatar and around the world, alongside a series of screenings for Doha audiences featuring films by international masters and recipients of support from the Institute.

* The Arabic term 'qumra' is popularly said to be the origin of the word 'camera', and to have been used by the scientist, astronomer and mathematician Alhazen (Ibn al-Haytham, 965-c.1040 CE), whose work in optics laid out the principles of the camera obscura.

About Doha Film Institute:

Doha Film Institute is an independent, not-for-profit cultural organisation. It supports the growth of the local film community through cultivating film appreciation, enhancing industry knowledge and contributing to the development of sustainable creative industries in Qatar. The Institute's platforms include funding and production of local, regional and international films; skills-sharing and mentorship programmes; film screenings; the Ajyal Youth Film Festival; and Qumra. With culture, community, learning and entertainment at its foundation, the Institute is committed to supporting Qatar's 2030 vision for the development of a knowledge-based economy.

Doha Film Institute

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