

Doha Film Institute's inaugural 'Focus on Qatar' records strong response from community and film industry

Doha, Qatar; October 4, 2015: The inaugural 'Focus on Qatar' showcase, presented by the Doha Film Institute, recorded a strong response from the Qatari community and the film industry.

The three-day event, held from Sept. 30 to Oct. 2 at the Museum of Islamic Art, included film screenings that put the spotlight on home-grown talent and celebrated the filmmakers who have made an impact on Qatar's film scene over the past five years.

The event also included industry panels that brought together Qatari filmmakers and local industry professionals who discussed the opportunities and channels to market and distribute their films and take them to a wider audience.

Fatma Al Remaili, Chief Executive Officer of the Doha Film Institute, said: "We are delighted by the positive support and encouragement from the Qatari community to the inaugural 'Focus on Qatar' initiative. Our goal was to showcase the talents of local filmmakers and to encourage them in addition to promoting their films to wider audience.

"The panel discussions were also aimed at strengthening their understanding of the film industry and to support them to take their films to newer markets. We are committed to building a strong and sustainable cinema industry in Qatar and such initiatives play a key role in highlighting the accomplishments of our talents and providing them more platforms to interact with the industry experts."

The showcase included a special screening of Qatar's first feature-length film ***Clockwise*** (Qatar, 2010) by Khalifa Al-Muraikhi; short film screenings as part of the 'Next Generation Short Film Programme' and 'Innovation Films Showcase'.

The two-day Industry Programme on October 1 and 2 brought together Qatari filmmakers and local industry professionals for two specially curated events. The first, 'Meet the Production Houses,' was attended by expert representatives of Innovation Films, Adabisc, Resolution Productions, Cartoon and Ginger Camel, who discussed their scope of work and the platforms available for Qatari talent to take their works to the next level.

The second industry session on 'How to Distribute Your Film' was addressed by Fatima Al Remaili, CEO of the Doha Film Institute; Sheikh Abdul Aziz Bin Thani Al Thani, General Manager of Qatar TV; Khalid Hassan Al Remaili, General Manager of Entube; and Selim El Azar, CEO of Gulf Film.

Fatma Al Remaili said in the panel: "We are providing established and emerging filmmakers an important platform to showcase their films with the 'Made in Qatar' films receiving tremendous appreciation from the audience."

She added: “It is important for filmmakers to have a robust distribution strategy, including the creation of a compelling trailer, and to allocate a set budget for it. At the Doha Film Institute, we assist filmmakers in developing a clear distribution strategy and support them to showcase their films at our festivals and events. We also assist in showcasing their films globally at international film festivals. This gives them the opportunity to market their films and promote them to wider audience.”

Shiekh Abdul Aziz Bin Thani Al Thani said: “Qatar TV is ready to show all productions that meet our values and requirements. We encourage local productions and cover events and activities that highlight local cinema with the goal of introducing them to a wider audience. Qatar TV is a key part in the distribution network and what is important is that filmmakers must ensure that their works are well-scripted and produced.”

Khalid Al Remaihi said: “Entube is a new initiative of the Ministry of Youth and Sports that fosters creativity and knowledge in digital and social media among Qatar’s youth. We focus on self-publishing tools and social media, and support youth in marketing and distributing their films over social media channels to reach more people.”

Salim El Azar said: “The production quality and script are crucial aspects in making a good film that will attract distribution companies. The trailer also plays an important role in introducing the film to the people. This preparation has to start early during the production phase to attract viewers to factors such as the actor, director, story or location of the movie.”

Focus on Qatar is now an annual event presented by the Doha Film Institute to serve as a platform to nurture new talent and promote discussion on the various challenges and opportunities in the film industry.

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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.

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