

## Pursue artistic vision but also focus on smart marketing, experts tell emerging filmmakers at Qumra

**Doha, Qatar; March 6, 2016:** In another day of intensive project development sessions and consultations with international industry experts, delegates at Qumra, the industry event by the Doha Film Institute, were given some insightful lessons on the global film industry.

Experts representing international film festivals, distribution companies, funding agencies and the media were unequivocal in reminding the delegates that the process of filmmaking does not complete with post-production work.

“Live your artistic vision, no doubt,” advised Sydney Levine, Indiewire journalist and writer of SydneysBuzz, “but reach out to buyers, make sure you have the right selling agent, and keep an eye on festivals as a way to make your money and find your funds.”

Sharing insights on ‘Buzz, marketing, reviews: How to make the most of PR on the festival circuit,’ she joined Mark Adams, Artistic Director of Edinburgh International Film Festival, and film critic Jim Quilty in highlighting the modalities of making their films heard and seen.

Adams said that ‘charm offensive is the best way’ to engage with the media, especially during festivals, while Quilty underlined how creating a personal legend – how they came about to make the movie – helps create the right buzz.

“The more people you meet, the more people know who you are,” said Quilty. He also called on delegates to engage social media as an important tool in building the market buzz.

Calling upon the delegates to leverage film festivals as the first entry point to the industry, Adams said that emerging filmmakers must be astute about where the film is screening. “People respond to good work; the media loves a success story and they are not cynical.”

At a dedicated session on the Legal Aspects of Co-Production, Jovan Marjanovic, Head of Industry at Sarajevo Film Festival, said there are several reasons why filmmakers choose to coproduce – be it financial, technical, artistic or strategic.

“Co-production creates a bigger common market and gives filmmakers more space to reach newer and wider audience,” he said, citing the success that the Doha Film Institute has recorded in co-productions.

Other key sessions included what is new the world of documentary film festivals, where Jean-Pierre Rehm, General Director of FIDMarseille; Emile Bujes, Programmer of Visions due reel; and Adriek Van Nieuwenhuyzen, Head of Industry Office at the International Documentary Festival Amsterdam, discussed the growing opportunities in the documentary segment.

Matthieu Darras, Artistic Director of TorinoFilmLab and Delegate for Central & Eastern Europe at the San Sebastian Film Festival; Mille Haynes of CPH: LAB; and Gülin Üstün, Head of Meetings on the Bridge at Istanbul Film Festival, discussed the ‘development heaven’ that festivals and labs provide.

Another engaging discussion on ‘Festivalsphere: A world of its own or an integral part of the film value chain’ saw frank discussions led by Carlo Chatrian, Artistic Director at the Festival del Film

Locarno; Bero Beyer, Festival Director at the International Film Festival Rotterdam; and Mirsad Purivatra, Festival Director of Sarajevo Film Festival.

Beyer asserted that a festival screening is much like a bagging a distribution while Chatrion highlighted the value that a good sales agent can bring in to the project. Purivatra, also a co-producer of *Once Upon a Time in Anatolia* by Qumra Master Nuri Bilge Ceylan, shared the experience of having to screen the film late at night at its launch festival with just three photographers on the red carpet.

“There is no one-size-fits-all recipe,” the three festival experts agreed, and called upon the filmmakers to focus on the quality of their work. “If the film is not up to the mark, no festival director is going to watch it, even with the best sales agent, for more than five minutes.”

In addition to the networking sessions, Qumra also features Master Classes by five Qumra Masters – revered Russian auteur, Aleksandr Sokurov (*Russian Ark, Mother and Son, Father and Son*); Japanese writer/director Naomi Kawase (*An, The Mourning Forest, Still the Water*); Turkish auteur and Cannes Palme d’Or and Grand Prix winner, Nuri Bilge Ceylan (*Once Upon a Time in Anatolia, Winter Sleep, Three Monkeys*); Leading US independent producer James Schamus (*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon, The Ice Storm*), who is also a highly acclaimed writer and director; and two-time Academy Award nominated US documentarian Joshua Oppenheimer (*The Act of Killing, The Look of Silence*).

Qumra also offers the public the opportunity to attend screenings that are organised in two segments: New Voices in Cinema and Modern Masters Screening. All screenings take place at the Museum of Islamic Art Auditorium and tickets are now on sale at [www.dohafilminstitute.com](http://www.dohafilminstitute.com)

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#### **Notes to Editors**

##### **About Qumra**

Directors and Producers attached to up to twenty-five projects in development or post-production will be invited to participate in the event. They will include a number of emerging filmmakers from Qatar, as well as recipients of funding from the Institute’s Grants Programme. The robust programme will feature industry meetings designed to assist with propelling projects to their next stages of development, including master classes, work-in-progress screenings, bespoke matchmaking sessions and tailored workshops with industry experts. This creative exchange will take place alongside a programme of public screenings curated with input from the Qumra Masters.

The event is organised in three main sections: The Qumra Master Classes are daily sessions; each led by one of the Masters. The participating filmmakers have full access to these sessions, and will also be open to accredited industry guests to attend in an observational capacity.

The Qumra Meetings are a series of one-on-one meetings, workshops and tailored mentoring sessions between representatives from the 25 selected projects and seasoned industry experts.

The Qumra Screenings are open to the public and feature projects funded by the Institute through its grants and co-financing initiatives, as well as a series of films chosen by the Qumra Masters accompanied by Q&A sessions.

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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