

Press Release

Qumra 2017 to nurture 34 projects from 25 countries including 12 Qatar-based film projects

Berlin, Germany/Doha, Qatar: February 13, 2017: Doha Film Institute has chosen 34 projects from 25 countries, including 12 Qatar-based projects, for mentoring through Masterclasses and networking opportunities for the talents associated at Qumra 2017, the industry event that aims to nurture the new generation of filmmakers. This was announced at the 2017 Berlin International Film Festival, where a strong showcase of captivating films supported by the Institute are being screened.

Directors and producers attached to 18 narrative feature films, 7 feature documentaries and 9 short films will participate in the 6 day programme of bespoke industry sessions designed to progress their projects and prepare them for international markets. The emphasis remains on supporting first-and-second-time filmmakers with projects in development and post-production.

Qumra Masters including contemporary Iranian master Asghar Farhadi; French auteur Bruno Dumont; and Cambodian creative documentarian, Argentina's eminent filmmaker Rithy Panh Lucrecia Martel and internationally acclaimed producer Paulo Branco will mentor first and second-time filmmakers during Qumra, to support the development of emerging filmmakers from Qatar, the Arab region and around the world.

The projects represent 25 countries of production with a total of 12 projects from Qatar-based directors, alongside 16 from the Middle East North Africa (MENA) region and five from the rest of the world. Of the 34 projects, 13 are features films in development, 12 are in post-production and nine are short films in development. Further, 23 of the projects are alumni of the Institute's grants programme, three were supported through the Qatari Film Fund and six through other training initiatives. Of the nine short projects, six are by Qatari filmmakers, and all the projects have been selected through the Institute's ongoing local engagement and training initiatives.

Directors and producers attached to projects will attend the sessions in Doha where they will be linked with more than 100 seasoned industry experts. The programme is specifically tailored to each project's needs and is divided according to their stage of development. Projects in development will participate in group and individual sessions for script consulting, legal, sales, marketing and co-production advice along with one-on-one match-made meetings and tutorials.

Projects in post-production are divided into two strands: the Work-in-Progress sessions will present a series of closed rough-cut screenings of 20-minute excerpts from the four narrative and four documentary Qumra projects in post-production followed by immediate, individual feedback from a panel of selected industry experts; and the Picture Lock Screenings will present exclusive 20 minute excerpts of four feature-length Qumra projects in the final stages of post-production for leading festival programmers, broadcasters, market representatives, sales agents and distributors.

The 2017 Qumra Projects are:

Feature Films:

Feature Narrative, Development:

- ***A House in Jerusalem*** by Muayad Alayan (Palestine, Qatar), about a Jewish American family who finds it hard to adapt to their new home in Jerusalem after they discover the grave of a young Palestinian girl.
- ***Solo*** by Mehdi Hmili (Tunisia, Qatar) about Amel, who is released from prison after an affair and seeks her missing son Moumen, in the lower depths of Tunis.
- ***The Maiden's Pond*** by Bassem Breche (Lebanon, Germany, Qatar) about two women trying to maintain and negotiate their lives – with and against each other.
- ***Zanka Contact*** by Ismaël El Iraki (Morocco, France, Qatar) is the romantic idyll and eventful odyssey of a has-been rocker and a singer with a golden voice.
- ***You Will Die at Twenty*** by Amjad Abu Alala (Sudan, Egypt, Qatar) is about a world where extremism rules, a young man has to choose between life and death.
- ***The Return*** by Meyar Al-Roumi (Syria, France, Qatar), about a journey across Syria during which Taysir and Juliette meet and go to bury Kamal, who died during the fighting.
- ***The Other Wife*** by Meriem Mesraoua (Qatar, France) about Salima who, determined to secure her status as a wife, enlists a secondary spouse for her husband – only to find she has jeopardised her position.
- ***Hitch 60 (working title)*** by Sara Al Obaidly (Qatar, United Kingdom), where two mod girls from South East London embark on a dream holiday but end up on the journey of a lifetime, crossing continents and cultures, and growing up years on the road.
- ***iPhone Memory*** by Mahdi Ali Ali (Qatar) which presents three stories that intersect in Paris – about a Frenchman, who battles cancer while his wife wants an abortion; a Romani girl looks for someone to adopt her little sister; and a Syrian immigrant boy tries to survive by acting in the cinema.
- ***Azooz, the Bully Slayer*** by Mohammed Al Hamadi (Qatar). Set in 1992 and inspired by Al Watwat (Batman) stories, 'Azooz the Bully Slayer' is the tale of a 12-year-old who fends off a thief who has made off with a stash of Sega video-game tapes.
- ***DNA of Love by*** Hafiz Ali Ali (Qatar). After the death of his Qatari wife, a retired engineer visits the United States to find his estranged daughter, while the same daughter travels to Doha to find answers to her late mother's past.

Feature Documentary, Development

- ***My Friend Gadhgadhi*** by Rafik Omrani (Tunisia, Lebanon, Qatar) is about Kamel Gadhgadhi, the infamous terrorist in Tunisia, who turns out to have been a close friend of the director at college.
- ***Republic of Silence*** by Diana El Jeiroudi (Syria, Germany, France, Qatar), which talks about the protagonist reclaiming the images and sounds of Syrians from her exile.

Feature Narrative, Works-in-Progress

- ***Memory Hotel*** by Heinrich Sabl (Germany, France, Qatar) is an emotional journey through European history. Set in a Red Army hotel in post-World War II Germany, the orphan Sophie grows up. She marries a paratrooper before escaping with another man.

- **Land** by Babak Jalali (United Kingdom, Italy, France, The Netherlands, Mexico, Qatar), is set on the plains of the United States and is a modern Western about Native Americans and whites, distance and longing, roadwork and abuse.
- **They** by Anahita Ghazvinizadeh (Iran, United States of America, Qatar), in which through the prism of J, a gender-expansive teenager going through puberty suppression, the film explores notions of in-between-ness, whether of gender, cultural identity, or the idea(s) of 'home.'
- **Madmen's Fort** by Narimane Mari (Algeria, France, Greece, Germany, Switzerland, Qatar), in which desires and greed lurk like raptors, preparing to transform a utopian dream into tragedy.

Feature Documentary, Works-in-Progress

- **Dream Away** by Marouan Omara and Johanna Domke (Egypt, Germany, Qatar) set in Sharm El Sheikh, where young Egyptian workers are trapped between a liberal Western lifestyle and their traditional culture.
- **Al Sahra** by Saeed Al Batal and Ghiath Al Haddad (Syria, Lebanon, Qatar) in which two people become entwined in the affairs of the people of the besieged city of Gouta in a personal story about a group of young people in Syria.
- **Stronger than a Bullet** by Maryam Ebrahimi (Iran, Sweden, Qatar) that documents Saeed Sadeghi, the Iranian photographer who responsible for images from the Gulf War.
- **Agnus Dei** by Karim Sayad (Algeria, Switzerland, Qatar) set in Algiers, 2016, on one of Bab el Oued's football fields, where Habib and his sheep El Bouq are getting ready for the fight.

Feature Narrative, Picture Lock

- **The Journey** by Mohamed Jabarah Al Daradji (Iraq, United Kingdom, France, Qatar) narrates the story of Sara who stands on the cusp of committing an unthinkable act, time stands still, giving her an opportunity to witness the consequences of her action. But is this a second chance or an admission of guilt?
- **Beauty and the Dogs** by Kaouther Ben Hania (Tunisia, France, Sweden, Lebanon, Qatar) that charts Mariam, who just wanted to enjoy her night out, but something terrible happens, forcing her to seek justice from the same perpetrator of the crime committed against her.
- **Hunting Season** by Natalia Garagiola (Argentina, France, Germany, United States of America, Qatar), in which a violent teenager reunites with his hunter father in the woods of southern Argentina, where he is faced with his own ability to love and to kill.

Feature Documentary, Picture Lock

- **The Man Behind the Microphone** by Claire Belhassine (Tunisia, United Kingdom, Qatar), an amazing story of love and family, celebrity and music through a portrait of Hedi Jouini, the godfather of Tunisian music.

Qumra Shorts

- **Reem Planted a Flower** by Rawda Al-Thani (Qatar) is a textbook example of a well-behaved schoolgirl defies the omnipresent voice of the narrator to play with a dog.

- ***Sh'hab*** by Amal Al-Muftah (Qatar) is about an orphan embarks on a mythical journey that could reunite him with his parents.
- ***Ya Hoota*** by Latifa Al-Darwish, Abdulaziz Yousif Ahmed (Qatar) is about a little girl who attempts to save the moon from a gigantic whale along with her cousin.
- ***Angels, Spiders and Other Miserable Creatures*** by Fahad Al Kuwari (Qatar) is about a couple that pray for a miracle, and God sends them an angel. What will they do with it?
- ***Awakenings*** by Fahad Al-Obaidly (Qatar). Haunted by an obscure memory from his past, a young contemporary dancer inadvertently stumbles upon a painful forgotten truth, which releases his soul from the clutches of despair.
- ***SimSim*** by Amer Jamhour (Jordan, Qatar) is about a 12-year-old cemetery cleaner and con artist who tries to save enough money for a train ticket to Latakia, where he can become a fisherman away from his greedy boss.
- ***Clouds*** by Muzna Almusafir (Oman, Qatar), about a leopard hunter in a traditional village in the mountains, who goes through a transformation.
- ***Burn the Bird*** by Zahed Bata (Jordan, Qatar) is about a mother and son who explore the darkness of the night in search of a place to bury their past.
- ***Selective Mutism*** by Khalifa AlMarri (Qatar) about a young man caught up in various incidents of deception, intrigue and murder.

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Notes to Editors

About Qumra

Directors and Producers attached to 34 projects in development and post-production are selected 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, which are also 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 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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