



First Qumra Talk explores the power of online film distribution

- *Region's leading film and entertainment companies discuss the future of distribution and the reality of online platforms*

Doha, Qatar; March 6, 2017: Qumra Talks, a new initiative at the third edition of Qumra, the industry event by the Doha Film Institute, kicked off with the first session focusing on *International Digital Distribution and Marketing*.

Pierre Alexandre Labelle, CEO of Under the Milky Way; Gianluca Chakra, Managing Director, Front Row Filmed Entertainment and Nader Sobhan, Iflix head of Middle East and North Africa, came together to give their take on the direction of digital film distribution and whether the potential power of online distribution for independent filmmakers had been hyped or is a much-needed reality.

Pierre Alexandre Labelle took attendees through the basics of Video on Demand (VOD), the role of the digital distributor and different models of digital distribution. Speaking of the value that digital distribution offers filmmakers, Labelle said: "Video on Demand is the present and future of entertainment. This is the way the industry is evolving. Packaged media, DVDs etc., are fast disappearing. Traditional distribution channels, such as movie theatres, give filmmakers a limited audience with the constraints of time and space while VOD allows for tens of thousands of films to be available all the time."

Discussing the way in which people watch entertainment now, Nader Sobhan added: "I can't remember the last time I ran home to watch TV. No one does this anymore. There's been a seismic shift to how we watch entertainment. We no longer have to wait, we can watch films and TV shows through a multitude of platforms and devices. Iflix gives people an all-you-can-eat entertainment platform where they can binge on the films and TV shows they want."

Adding to the argument for filmmakers to harness the power of digital distribution channels, Gianluca Chakra said: "Now that you have many different ways of distributing your film, you have more ways for people to see your film. Filmmakers can find new audiences, or indeed 'their' audience."

The discussion also covered the marketing of film on digital distribution platforms, whose natural ally is social media. The panel highlighted platforms such as Facebook and Instagram, which allow distributors and producers to reach a highly targeted audience.

Organised in partnership with the Northwestern University in Qatar, Qumra Talks is a series of three specially curated discussions, open to the public. It brings together leaders from the film, TV, technology and online worlds to offer new perspectives into areas that are redefining the film and media ecosystem.

-ENDS-

Note to Editors:



About Qumra

Directors and Producers attached to thirty-four 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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