

Qumra 2018 to screen 17 captivating films by Qumra Masters and emerging cinematic talents

- Watch masterpiece works by Qumra Masters Tilda Swinton, Sandy Powell, Bennett Miller, Andrey Zvyagintsev, Apichatpong Weerasethakul and Gianfranco Rosi in Qumra Master Screenings
- Films by emerging directors showcased in the 'New Voices in Cinema' segment

Doha, Qatar; March 7, 2018: The Doha Film Institute will screen 17 captivating films as part of Qumra 2018, the annual industry event being held from March 9 to 14, at Souq Waqif and the Museum of Islamic Art. The screenings, open to the public and Qumra Pass holders, are in two segments – Master Screenings, featuring compelling works of the Qumra Masters; and New Voices in Cinema, to showcase feature-length and short films that are supported by the Doha Film Institute through its Grants programme. Following the screenings, the audience can interact with the filmmakers and talents through an open Q&A session.

Fatima Al Remaihi, Chief Executive Officer of the Doha Film Institute, said: “The Qumra Screenings offer an unprecedented opportunity not only to revisit and refamiliarize with the works of some of the luminaries in world cinema today but also to discover fresh voices in film, spearheaded by our emerging talents. The films of Qumra Masters have been thoughtfully curated to present the masterly craft that defines their work, while the New Voices selection are a fine representation of innovative storytelling techniques and ideas pursued by the new generation, supported mainly by the DFI Grants programme. The two segments open doors to the realisation that while the film industry and technology are evolving, there is no substitute for authentic storytelling.”

This year, the Qumra Master Screenings present the works of six distinguished personalities in world cinema: Academy Award-winner Tilda Swinton (*Michael Clayton*, *We Need to Talk about Kevin*, *Caravaggio*); Sandy Powell, Order of the British Empire (OBE), Oscar® winning British costume designer (*The Young Victoria*, *The Aviator*, *Shakespeare in Love*); Oscar® nominated director, Bennett Miller (*Capote*, *Moneyball*, *Foxcatcher*); Venice Golden Lion winning Russian director and writer Andrey Zvyagintsev (*Leviathan*, *Loveless*); Cannes Palme d’Or winning Thai filmmaker and visual artist Apichatpong Weerasethakul (*Cemetery of Splendour*, *Tropical Malady*, *Blissfully Yours*), and the only documentary director to win the Berlinale Golden Bear Italian director Gianfranco Rosi (*Fire at Sea*, *Sacro GRA*).

The Modern Master Screenings include:

- ***Okja*** (South Korea, USA/2017), an action adventure film directed by Bong Joon-ho, and starring Qumra Master Tilda Swinton, along with Jake Gyllenhaal and Ahn Seo-hyun. A scathing critique of contemporary globalised society, the film is about a little girl and her gargantuan, genetically designed pet pig. It plunges viewers in an intricate, extremely dark world of unbridled capitalism, flagrant corporate irresponsibility, slavery, and the wilful depletion of the world’s natural resources. As Lucy Mirando, the CEO of a company out to profit from the situation, Qumra Master Tilda Swinton provides an unnervingly canny performance.
- ***The Young Victoria*** (UK, USA/2009), which won Qumra Master Sandy Powell an Academy Award for Best Costume Design, is directed by Jean-Marc Vallée, Order of Canada (OC), and stars Emily Blunt, Jim Broadbent, Paul Bettany and an ensemble cast. Jean-Marc Vallée and screenwriter

Julian Fellowes begin their film with Her Majesty Queen Victoria in her final months as the bubbly and charming heir presumptive, brilliantly finding the period when she went from girl to woman, princess to queen – and from a pawn on the chessboard of 19th-century European politics to the girl who would one day oversee the golden apex of the British Empire.

- Qumra Master Apichatpong Weerasethakul's film: ***Footprints by Apichatpong Weerasethakul*** explores the mechanics of making films, as tracking shots are followed by shots that betray the tracks and the camera team, generating a kind of explosion in the viewer's mind as the implications of the construction-behind-the-construction become apparent. ***The Return*** (Russia/2003) by Qumra Master Andrey Zvyagintsev is about inseparable, if occasionally quarrelsome, young Ivan and his elder brother Andrei, who are shocked and excited when their father, who has not been home for 12 years and whom the boys only know from a faded photograph, returns out of the blue. The morning after his arrival, Dad takes his sons on a fishing trip, but what might be expected to be an epic bonding experience turns out to be anything but.
- ***Fire at Sea (Fuocoammare)*** (Italy/2016) directed by Qumra Master Gianfranco Rosi, was the winner of the Golden Bear at the 66th Berlin International Film Festival. Set in the island of Lampedusa, a frontline in the migrant crisis, the documentary charts the risky Mediterranean crossing of 'refugees' against the background of the ordinary life of the islanders. In the words of Berlin jury president Meryl Streep, this necessary and urgent film 'demands its place in front of our eyes and compels our engagement and action'.
- Qumra Master Bennett Miller's ***Moneyball*** (US/2011), stars Brad Pitt, Jonah Hills and Philip Seymour Hoffman. Based on the book 'Moneyball: The Art of Winning an Unfair Game' by Michael Lewis, the film is an account of the Oakland Athletics Baseball team's 2002 season and its general manager Bill Beane's attempt to assemble a competitive team. The film premiered at the 2011 Toronto International Film Festival and was nominated for six Academy Awards.

In the New Voices in Cinema segment, all 10 films are supported by the Doha Film Institute through its Grants programme. Four of these are 'Made in Qatar' films directed by Qatari directors or those who call the country home. The films in the section include four feature-length works:

- ***Hunting Season*** (Argentina, France, Germany, USA, Qatar/2017), the debut feature-length film by Natalia Garagiola, about a violent teenager, who is reunited with his hunter father in the southern woods of Patagonia. Forced to help the older man in a struggle against the wilderness, the youth faces his ability to love and kill.
- ***Taste of Cement*** (Syria, Lebanon, Germany, UAE, Qatar/2017) by Ziad Kalthoum, is a feature documentary about the Syrian workers who rebuild Lebanon, even as their hometowns are destroyed in the brutal conflict. The film poses the question: who will rebuild their houses? It had won the Golden Sesterce for Best Feature Documentary at Visions du Réel in 2017.
- ***City of the Sun*** (Georgia, USA, the Netherlands, Qatar/2017) by Rati Oneli is set in the once-celebrated manganese-mining town of Chiatura in Georgia, now all but abandoned and crumbling around those who still inhabit it. The film takes viewers on a languorous tour of this place of faded glory, building a portrait of a city and its people that is comfortably familiar at the same time that it verges on other-worldly.
- Kaouther Ben Hania's ***Beauty and the Dogs*** (Tunisia, France, Sweden, Norway, Lebanon, Switzerland, Germany, Qatar/2017) is about Mariam, who just wanted to enjoy her night out, but something terrible happens. The film explores what can be done when the perpetrator of a crime is also the arbiter of justice

The six short films to be screened in the New Voices in Cinema segment are:

- **Tshweesh** (Lebanon, Germany, Spain, Qatar/2017) by Feyrouz Serhal, set in Beirut. The World Cup begins and the people are excited but the highly-anticipated event is disrupted by strange audio waves that make for a much bigger live event.
- **The President's Visit** (Lebanon, USA, Qatar/2017) by Cyril Aris, is a sly and clever satire unravelled through the story of Nino, who sells soap in a small fishing town. When he receives a highly confidential phone call informing him that the President of the Republic wants to visit to buy a lot of soap as part of his campaign to clean up the nation, he is not quite sure what to do.
- **Language** (Iraq, Qatar/2017), directed by Iraqi novelist Mortada Gzar, is about an elderly blind man, who walks through the streets of Baghdad but falls asleep while reading a book in Braille. When he wakes up, he finds he has become a giant and reads the devastation of the city by touch.
- **1001 Days** (Qatar/2017) by Aisha Al-Jaidah, is an animated short that, through its traditional fairytale structure, addresses eternal issues such as sacrifice, equality and bravery, and considers how today's women deserve equal treatment and privileges.
- **Domestic Acoustics** (Qatar/2017) by Majid Al-Remaihi, is an experimental endeavor that explores the overlap of domestic and creative spaces, and their relationship to the female artist
- **Chaos Antidote** (Qatar/2017) by Hadeer Omar and Idris Elhassan portrays the ever-changing urban landscape of Doha in a dreamily contemplated, wordless, documentary essay, in which order is made of chaos and a sense of peace overcomes the frenetic pace of progress.
- **Embodiment** (Qatar/2017) by Khalifa AlMarri is a poetic reflection of Qatar's becoming a sophisticated nation of wealth and influence while retaining its centuries-old traditions. It is an inspiring journey from ancient wilderness to contemporary metropolis.

Ticket sales for the screenings have commenced. Visit www.dohafilminstitute.com for online and in-person ticketing details. Tickets are priced QAR 35.

The Qumra 2018 industry events include workshops and meetings for first- and second-time filmmakers with international film industry experts in bespoke mentorship labs; the Qumra Master Classes, led by acclaimed industry professionals; Qumra Screenings of feature films presented by the Qumra Masters and recipients of funding from the Institute, followed by question-and-answer sessions; and the Qumra Talks.

The Qumra Pass is open for all citizens and residents in Qatar and the region, and will provide them access to Qumra Master Classes, Qumra Screenings and Qumra Talks. The price for Qumra Pass is QAR 500, students and Culture Pass by Qatar Museums holders can purchase it for a discounted price of QAR 350.

-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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