



## **Stories of Love, Betrayal, Political Turmoil and Revolution Line Up for Doha Tribeca Film Festival's Arab Film Competition**

*14 Features Films and Documentaries to Compete for Top Honours at Annual  
Doha Tribeca Film Festival; Mohammad Malas Selected as Narrative Jury  
President*

**Doha, September 20, 2011** - Showcasing the strength and quality of Arab films produced throughout the Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) region in the past year, the Doha Film Institute (DFI) today announced the feature films and documentaries that will compete in the 2011 Doha Tribeca Film Festival's (DTFF) Arab Film Competition. Leading the five-member Narrative Film Competition Jury will be award-winning Syrian director Mohammed Malas, a filmmaking auteur widely recognised across the Arab World for his critical and socially engaging cinema.

Featuring eight world premieres, the Competition, in its second year, has been expanded and split into two juried segments of narrative and documentary films, with a set of new awards up for grabs including: Best Arab Narrative Feature; Best Arab Narrative Director; Best Narrative Performance Award; Best Arab Documentary Feature; and Best Arab Documentary Director. The Festival will also feature two audience awards; for Best Narrative Film and Best Documentary with cash prizes of USD 100,000 each.

Jury President Malas, received widespread international acclaim for his narrative and documentary films and has won a number of awards at film festivals around the world. Among his most important films are *Dreams of the City* (1983) and *The Night* (1992) based on auto-biographical motifs, as well as *The Dream* (1981), a documentary that was shot in the Palestinian refugee camps of Sabra and Chatila in Beirut shortly before the massacres of 1982.

Highlighting the importance of the Arab Film Competition for regional filmmakers, Malas said: "To be selected as Jury President is a great honour and also a great responsibility – one which I take very seriously- especially with the current changes in the Arab world. The Arab Film Competition is an important tool for supporting and promoting Arab films in this part of the world and providing an important recognition to emerging and established filmmakers. The Competition places select regional films up on an international platform, opening up various doors for films to gain exposure and distribution opportunities outside of the Arab World, which remains a fundamental issue within the regional industry."

Executive Director of DFI, Amanda Palmer, commented: “Having someone of Mohammad Malas’ calibre lead our Narrative Jury, whose films have profoundly shaped the identity of realistic Arab Cinema, will bring the level of insight, experience and understanding needed to discover and illuminates storytellers from this region”

She added, “In our third year, we chose to expand the Competition, mainly because of the strength of this year’s submissions, which our Arab programmers believed we could do justice to. It’s also exciting to see not only an increase of submissions generally, but more representation of films from female directors, as well as an increase in films from all over North Africa. And while it is the year of the Arab Spring, it’s been inspiring to see the maturity of films from all genres reflecting original voices and stories from the Arab World.

The 2011 Arab Film Competition will feature a diverse and wide ranging lineup, including seven narrative films and seven documentaries, which center around childhood and love, the turbulence of revolution, the inner world of Arab life and films which reveal the true nature of the lives of contemporary Arab women. All films at the Festival will be subtitled in both Arabic and English, aiming to provide full cinematic access for audiences.

Hania Mroue, DFI’s Chief Arab Programmer, said: “The films in our Arab Film Competition capture the lives, loves and modern day realities faced by everyday people in the region. They reflect the dreams, imagination, ideas and aspirations of the Arab world, both defined geographically and as people scattered around the globe. We are looking forward to showing audiences around the world the diversity of stories from our region – helmed by first-time filmmakers and seasoned auteurs – that truly highlight the richness of Arab talent and storytelling.”

Led by Amanda Palmer, the DFI Programming Team comprises Chief Arab Programmer Hania Mroue, Head of International Programming, Ludmila Cvikova, and resident filmmaker and programmer Chadi Zeneddine. The Programming Team also receives advisory support from various cultural partners and consultants.

A full list of titles competing in the Arab Film Competition is listed below.

#### **ARAB FILM COMPETITION: NARRATIVE**

##### ***A Man of Honor* (Jean-Claude Codsi)**

Set in Lebanon and Jordan, *A Man of Honor* is the story of passion, betrayal and the many facets of human nature. Brahim has a chance encounter with a mysterious woman he knew 20 years ago. Because of her, he committed a murder and now has to return home to face his tumultuous past

##### ***Red Heart* (Halkawt Mustafa)**

After the death of her mother, 19 year old Shirin discovers her father plans to trade her for a new wife. Unable to accept this, she escapes to the big city with her secret boyfriend. When he is arrested, Shirin must face the dangers and challenges of this new life, alone and without protection.

***How Big Is Your Love (Fatma Zohra Zamoum)***

One day when Adel's parents quarrel, they send him to his grandparents for the weekend. Two days turn into a week and soon Adel feels like he's lived there forever. In an attempt to grow closer, his grandparents teach and involve him in their everyday lives, in this poignant and touching story about childhood and love set in modern day Algiers.

***El Shooq / Lust (Khaled El Hagar)***

Winner of the Golden Pyramid - Best International film at the Cairo International Film Festival in 2010; *El Shooq / Lust*, brings us into the lives of the inhabitants of a marginalised street in Alexandria, in Egypt, before the revolution. Each character is isolated in his or her fierce, yet fragile dreams. The main story focuses on Umm Shooq, a woman whose sense of shame and inadequacy drives her to gain leverage over her family and neighbors.

***Smuggler's Song (Rabah Ameur-Zaimeche)***

A story about the famous mid-eighteenth century French hero Louis Mandrin and the exploits of his companions as they set out on a risky smuggling campaign in the French Provinces to win their fortune by selling tobacco, fabric and precious products.

***Normal (Merzak Allouache)***

After the riots of December and the first peaceful marches, while "the Arab Spring" begins in Tunisia and Egypt, Fouzi brings his actors, together to show them the incomplete editing of the film he made, two years ago, on the disillusionment of a youth seeking to express his artistic ideas.

***Omar Killed Me (Roschdy Zem)***

The film tracks the investigation of a gardener wrongly convicted for the murder of his employer, a rich heiress. The narrative highlights the universal problem of social injustice, and deciphers two standards of justice – one for the powerful and one for the poor.

**ARAB FILM COMPETITION: DOCUMENTARY**

***Rouge Parole (Elyes Baccar)***

A look at the Tunisian people expressed by themselves during the turbulence of the revolution in Tunisia and the expulsion of President Ben Ali charting Tunisia's first steps towards democracy and a multicultural society

***The Three Disappearances of Soad Hosni (Rania Stephan)***

*The Three Disappearances of Soad Hosni* is an elegy to a rich and versatile era of film production in Egypt which has lapsed today, through the work of this celebrated Egyptian actress. Pieced exclusively from VHS tapes of her films, it tells the story of her career up until her tragic death.

***Yearning (Lina Alabed)***

*Yearning* is a documentary about the actual role and margin of freedom women have in a male-dominated society, and how that reflects on their femininity and relationship with themselves.

***Crayons of Askalan (Laila Hotait Salas)***

The story of Zuhdi Al Adawi, a Palestinian artist imprisoned in the occupied territories who uses his art as a means of expression helped by the rest of the community and his own family to accomplish his work

***The Virgin, The Copts and Me (Namir Abdel Messeeh)***

Namir is a French filmmaker Of Egyptian origin. One day, with his mother, he watches a videotape of the Virgin Mary's apparition in Egypt. His mother, like millions of other Copts, (Egypt's Christians) sees the Virgin on the screen – while he sees nothing. Skeptical about this videotape, Namir travels back to Egypt, to make a film about these apparitions.

***Boxing With Her (Latifa Robbana Doghri and Salem Trabelsi)***

A look at the world of female boxing and how the presence of a female body in the pugilistic arena is still awkward and even taboo in Arab society

***On the Road to Downtown (Sherif El Bendary)***

Down Town in Cairo is a neighborhood full of diversity, contradictions and different personalities. The film looks at the world and its complexities through the daily lives of characters from the neighborhood.

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**Notes to Editor**

About Doha Film Institute (DFI):

The Doha Film Institute (DFI) is an independent cultural organisation established in 2010 to incorporate Qatar's film initiatives under one banner.

Located at Qatar's new cultural hub, Katara, DFI's many initiatives include film and television funding for MENA and international films, year-round education programs, film screenings, and the annual Doha Tribeca Film Festival (DTFF).

In addition, DFI has established a number of strategic cultural partnerships with leading local and international organisations including Robert De Niro's Tribeca Enterprises, Mira Nair's Maisha Film Labs, Martin Scorsese's World Cinema Foundation, the Doha-Giffoni Experience, and Katara.

DFI was founded by H.E Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani. Along with Her Excellency, DFI leadership comprises Festival Board Chair, H.E. Sheikh Mohammed Bin Fahad Al-Thani; Vice Chair, H.E. Dr. Hassan Al-Nimah; DFI Board member, Mr. Mansoor Ibrahim Al-Mahmoud; Festival Board Member, H.E. Sheikh Jabor Bin Yousuf Al Thani; and Executive Director Amanda Palmer.

DFI's website, [www.dohafilminstitute.com](http://www.dohafilminstitute.com), is a multimedia portal that features online education, specialised film programmes, film financing information, festival reports, photo

galleries, podcasts, streaming videos and an up-to-date blog covering film reviews, profile-pieces and industry news from around the world.

For more information, please contact:

Gregg Fray  
Seven Media  
Tel: 00971 50 812 9566  
Email: [greggfray@sevenmedia.ae](mailto:greggfray@sevenmedia.ae)

Robert Verschuer  
Doha Film Institute  
Tel: 00974 33638380  
Email: [rverschuer@dohafilminstitute.com](mailto:rverschuer@dohafilminstitute.com)