

## Qatari Projects Shine at Qumra 2019 Representing Evolution of the Local Film Industry

- *Qumra 2019 supports 15 projects from Qatar with 8 films by Qatari nationals*
- *Six Qatar-based projects presented as works-in-progress and nine in development stage*
- *Works in progress screening of first Qatari Documentary Feature*
- *Six short films including four by Qatari directors to be screened in New Voices section*

**Doha, Qatar; March 13, 2019:** Representing the rising film industry in Qatar, national talent is at the forefront of Qumra 2019, the Doha Film Institute's fifth annual industry event to be held from March 15<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> at Souq Waqif and the Museum of Islamic Art.

Of this year's 36 Qumra projects, 15 are Qatar-based offerings, including three feature narrative and one feature documentary in development; one feature documentary in post-production; five shorts in development and five shorts in the works in progress stage. Over the six-day intensive assessment and feedback programme, leaders in the film industry will lend their expertise to the future success of first- and second-time filmmakers.

In addition, six short films by Qatar-based talents will screening in the New Voices of Cinema segment including four films by Qatari directors. The screenings are open to the public and will be followed by audience Q&A's with the talents associated with the films.

"The Doha Film Institute is excited to be connecting the creativity and ambition of our emerging talent with the wisdom and experience of leaders in the global film industry in the fifth edition of Qumra," said Fatma Hassan Alremaihi, Chief Executive Officer of the Doha Film Institute. "We are very excited to present the works in progress screening of the first Documentary Feature by a Qatari national; underlining the evolution of a strong film ecosystem in the country. As the depth and profile of our homegrown talent continues to grow, it is powerfully inspiring to have some of the most respected professionals in cinema contributing to their future success."

### **New Voices in Cinema: Films by Qatar-based directors:**

- ***Wake*** by Zahed Bata (Jordan, Qatar/2018) - An old woman, Samaa, and her son Sari are at odds on the appropriate burial for 'The White Box'. While Samaa's reaction to the disposal is sentimental, Sari is pragmatic and dismissive of his mother's emotions.
- ***Hope*** by Mohammed Shaikhow (Syria, Iraq, France, Qatar/2018) - Hévi and Walat, a Kurdish-Syrian refugee couple in their thirties meet a human trafficker and try to cross an undefined border.
- ***Sh'hab*** by Amal Al-Muftah (Qatar/2018) - When a young girl's curiosity is sparked upon hearing a myth about falling stars, she sets out in her father's boat to find some. Winner of the Best Narrative Award at the 2018 Ajyal Film Festival.

- ***Gubgub*** by Nouf Al-Sulaiti (Qatar/2018) - The story of an adventurous girl who goes crab-hunting with her family. Discouraged when her father undervalues her accomplishments compared to her brother's, she sets out to win his approval. The film's lead Fatima Al Nahdi won the inaugural Abdulaziz Jassim Award for Best Performance at the 2018 Ajyal Film Festival.
- ***Amphitheater*** by Mahid Ali Ali (Qatar/2018) - Sarah, a professional Qatari photographer, stumbles upon a rebellious young girl and her family. Fascinated by the girl's defiant behaviour, she begins to follow them.
- ***Just Another Memory*** by Mariam Al-Dhubhani (Qatar/2018) - An exploration of what it feels like to be displaced by war; torn between being 'safe' and 'away' with the emotional burden that entails. Winner of the Best Documentary award at the 2018 Ajyal Film Festival.

**Feature Narrative and Feature Documentary projects by Qatari talents in development stage being nurtured as 2019 Qumra projects are:**

#### **Feature Narrative – Development**

- ***Lavandula*** by Mahdi Al-Ali (Qatar / Qatari Film Fund 2018) - A boy goes through a psychological change process to discover the reasons behind the divorce of his parents.
- ***Behind Closed Doors*** by Hend Fakhroo (Qatar / Spring Grants 2018) - Six-year-old Leila wakes up one day and finds her mother gone with only her father to take care of her. After weeks of struggling, the small family settles into an emotional equilibrium, only to have the mother suddenly return.
- ***Khuzama*** by A.J. Al-Thani (Qatar / Qatari Film Fund 2017) - Set against the harsh desert backdrop, a Bedouin girl is thrown into a world of turmoil and violence which she can only survive with the help of a group of nomadic women.

#### **Feature Documentary – Development**

- ***Qatar Stars*** by Danielle Beverly (USA, Qatar) - Qatar is one of the richest, most aspirational, and most scrutinized countries in the world. What is it like to grow up as a girl in this rapidly changing, majority-Muslim nation; that is a clash of tradition and modernity? For the Olympic Stars, a rhythmic gymnastics team for girls aged 9-15, it offers empowerment opportunities their mothers never had.

**The first Qatari Documentary Feature presented as Works in Progress screening at 2019 Qumra is:**

#### **Feature Documentary – Post-Production**

- ***Places Of The Soul*** by Hamida Issa (Qatar / 2016 Qumra development project / Fall Grants 2015 and 2018) - A Qatari woman travels on an environmental expedition to Antarctica in search of hope for a sustainable future before returning to Qatar in search of inspiration to make positive change.

**2019 Shorts by Qatar-based talents in Development include:**

- ***Msa7ar*** (Qatar) by Hassan Al-Jahni- Fatima seeks to capture the local Msa7ar (em-sa-har) to wake up her dying grandmother, but can she overcome her fear of the dark in order to save her grandma?

- ***Border*** (Qatar/ Fall Grants 2018) by Khalifa Al-Thani- 'Border' is the story of a Middle Eastern man who wants to cross the border back into his country, but bypassing the security becomes a near impossible journey.
- ***J'ai le cafard*** (Kuwait, UK, Qatar) by Maysaa Al Mumin- In a demanding corporate office, forty-two-year-old Maryam develops a relationship with a cockroach that becomes both her saving grace and cause for angst.
- ***Al-Azza*** (Sudan, Qatar) by Eman Mirghani- Following the death of her estranged mother, Arwa returns to her childhood home. There she must comply with religious traditions and wash her mother's body before burial—setting in motion events which will make her question her identity and why she ran away from home.
- ***6 Months and 1 Day*** (France, Morocco, Qatar) by Yassine Ouahrani- After his pension gets withheld, Aziz—an old retired immigrant, must confront his landlord at the risk of losing his home.

**2019 Qumra Shorts from Qatar in Works in Progress include:**

- ***End of the Road*** (Qatar/ Qatari Film Fund 2017) by Ahmed Al-Sharif- When a mysterious old man appears on the side of the road, Munir, an honest and God-fearing taxi driver, must make a choice on the night of his daughter's birthday. His decision will shape his faith in humanity forever.
- ***The Black Veil*** (Qatar/ Spring Grants 2017) by A.J. Al-Thani- Many women around the world suffer under oppression and dream of escaping it. 'The Black Veil' is the story of one woman who puts her life at risk in order to find her freedom.
- ***Beit Byoot*** (Palestine, Qatar/ Fall Grants 2017) by Mayar Hamdan- Jameela, a friendly little girl, wants nothing more than to fit in with two carbon copy mean girls. But when she meets odd Yasmine, she must choose between conformity and being herself.
- ***Paper Plane*** (Egypt, Qatar) by Nada Bedair- In a strict Catholic school, a new girl, Zayn, prompts her classmate Noor to make her dream kite. As both twelve-year-old girls embark on a kite-making mission, they soon find themselves in trouble with the school nuns.
- ***In the Middle*** (Yemen, Russia, Qatar) by Mariam Al-Dhubhani- Forced to pick up arms, Ali is stranded between his crushed dreams and the harsh reality of Aden— a city torn apart by the ongoing war in Yemen.

Qumra 2019 industry events include workshops and mentorship and networking sessions for first- and second-time filmmakers with international film industry experts; Qumra Masterclasses led by acclaimed luminaries of cinema; Qumra Masters film screenings with Q&A sessions; and Qumra Talks.

Further details about ticket prices and sales for the screenings are now available on [www.dohafilminstitute.com](http://www.dohafilminstitute.com).

**-ENDS-**

**Note to Editors:**

### About Qumra

Directors and Producers attached to thirty-six 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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