

Press Release

Doha Film Institute Announces Plans for Inaugural Edition of Qumra

Doha, Qatar; 7 December, 2014: Abderrahmane Sissako (*Timbuktu*), Leila Hatami (*A Separation*), Cristian Mungiu (*4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days*) and Danis Tanović (*No Man's Land*) are the first names confirmed to participate as Masters in the Doha Film Institute's newly announced plans for Qumra, set to take place in Doha from 6 to 11 March.

The primary motive of the international gathering of creative film professionals is to contribute to the development of emerging filmmakers both from Qatar and around the world, with a special focus on first and second-time filmmakers.

Directors and Producers attached to up to twenty-five projects in development or post-production will be invited 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, and will also be 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 25 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.

Qumra is led by the Doha Film Institute team, with the support of the Sarajevo Film Festival (SFF) who have an ongoing partnership with the Institute. Filmmaker Elia Sulieman continues in his role as Artistic Advisor to Qumra and the Doha Film Institute. Paolo Bertolin and Violeta Bava are on board as Programming and Industry Advisors.

Acting CEO of the Doha Film Institute Fatma Al Remaili said: "I am delighted to share our plans for Qumra and honoured to welcome our first four Qumra Masters. They are each masters of their craft and their involvement will lend an exciting dimension to this creative

gathering of filmmakers. This initiative has been designed to compliment and expand on the existing support mechanisms our Institute has in place to develop emerging talent. I am confident that with Qumra, we are creating something of tangible value for Qatar and our region that will yield positive and productive results for all involved.”

Elia Sulieman said: “The concept for Qumra has evolved over time into something that responds to the needs of filmmakers in a very meaningful way. It is founded on the idea that creativity and imagination should have a space to be nurtured and we intend to guide these emerging talents along the path to realise their vision.”

Abderrahmane Sissako said: “I am honored to participate in the inaugural edition of Qumra and to share my experience in the hopes that it might benefit the filmmakers attending with their projects. I very much look forward to working with them and to be part of what promises to be an enriching and creative exchange.”

The announcement comes at the close of the successful second edition of the Institute’s Ajyal Youth Film Festival, which is dedicated to the creative development of the region’s youth. The Festival included six days of screenings, workshops, exhibitions and special events, including the world premiere of the Doha Film Institute grantee ‘Speed Sisters’ and the MENA premiere of ‘Kahlil Gibran’s The Prophet’. The Festival also saw the second annual Doha Film Experience – Ajyal’s youth jury, where hundreds of young people between the ages of 8 and 21 watch and discuss films, and determine the winners of the competition.

Leila Hatami gained international acclaim for her role in Asghar Farhadi's award-winning ‘A Separation’. Her professional entry into cinema came with Dariush Mehrjui's ‘Leila’, for which she received rave reviews; she won the Best Actress award from the 26th Montreal World Film Festival for her role in Alireza Raisian’s ‘The Deserted Station’ (2002). Hatami appeared in two films directed by her husband, Ali Mosaffa: ‘Portrait of a Lady Far Away’ (2005); and ‘The Last Step’ (2012), for which she also designed the sets and the costumes. In 2012 her intense performance in Asghar Farhadi's ‘A Separation’ won several awards, including the Silver Bear for Actress and Actor at the Berlin International Film Festival.

Cristian Mungiu is one of the most prominent of the Romanian New Wave filmmakers. His first feature film, ‘Occident’ (2002), marked the beginning of a successful relationship with the Cannes Film Festival when it premiered in the Directors’ Fortnight in 2002. His second feature, ‘4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days’, was awarded the Palme d’Or in 2007; several other prizes followed, including European Film Academy Awards for Best Film and Best Director. He returned to Cannes in 2009 as a producer with the collective film ‘Tales from the Golden Age’, and again in 2012 as writer-director of ‘Beyond the Hills’, which won awards for Best Screenplay and Best Actresses. The film was the Romanian entry for Best Foreign Language Oscar at the 85th Academy Awards.

Abderrahmane Sissako was born in Mauritania in and has established himself as one of Africa's premier auteurs. He grew up in Mali, studied film at the National Institute of Cinema of Moscow and has lived in France since the early 1990s, so it is perhaps not by chance that his films often tackles issues such as globalisation, exile, identity and displacement. His graduation film, ‘The Game’ (1989) was screened at the Cannes Critics' Week in 1991.

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'October' (1993), his first short film after he settled in France, screened in the Un Certain Regard section, as did 'Waiting for Happiness' (2002), which won the FIPRESCI Prize. 'Bamako' (2006) appeared out of competition in the Cannes Official Selection. His most recent film, 'Timbuktu' competed for the Palme d'Or in Cannes in 2014.

Danis Tanović is widely considered one of the best Bosnian filmmakers of his generation. In 2001, 'No Man's Land' premiered at the Cannes Film Festival and won the award for Best Screenplay; it would later win the Grand Jury Prize and the Audience Award at the Sarajevo Festival, a César for Best First Film, and the Golden Globe and Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film. 'L'Enfer' (2005), was inspired by 'Medea' and based on a screenplay by the late Krzysztof Kieslowski and Krzysztof Piesiewicz. His 'Cirkus Columbia' (2010) was selected as the Bosnian entry for the Best Foreign Language Film at the 83rd Academy Awards, while 'An Episode in the Life of an Iron Picker' (2013) won the Silver Bear for Best Actor and the Jury Grand Prize at the 63rd Berlin International Film Festival.

* 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.

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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.

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