

Press Release

Doha Film Institute announces first Qatari Film Fund grant recipients – Nine short films by Qatari directors and writers to receive funding and mentorship

- *First round of recipients announced for new fund established by the Doha Film Institute to support Qatari directors and writers*
- *Nine short films by Qataris including narrative, documentary and animation projects to receive funding, mentorship and production support*
- *Additional four feature films supported by the fund to be announced in coming months*

Doha, Qatar; June 3, 2015: Further strengthening its commitment to national film talent, the Doha Film Institute has announced the nine short films set to receive funding in the first session of the **Qatari Film Fund**, the newly established programme dedicated to supporting Qatari filmmakers.

The nine short films by Qatari directors and writers comprise six live-action narrative shorts, two animated shorts and one documentary short. A further four feature films are yet to be announced as part of the first funding cycle.

The nine projects reflect a range of themes, including family relationships, modern fairytales, East-West relations and tales of faith, love and betrayal, as well as the true story of Amer, a legendary racehorse that was a gift to the Emir of Qatar in the 1980s. Documentary, science-fiction, fantasy and family drama all feature among the films' genres.

The Doha Film Institute will work jointly with each grantee to develop and finalise the film's script, establish a budget and shooting schedule, secure a creative and technical team and provide mentorship opportunities with industry specialists where required.

Doha Film Institute CEO, Fatma Al Remaihi said: "The Qatari Film Fund represents a true collaboration between filmmakers and the Institute as we support them in realising their vision."

"This fund was created to build on the existing support mechanisms established by the Doha Film Institute to pave the way for a film industry here in Qatar and the structure was informed by feedback from the many Qatari filmmakers we have worked with over the past five years. We know that it is not enough to simply give funding – through the Qatari Film Fund we are offering a holistic ecosystem of support to provide a unique combination of funding, script development, mentorship, access to industry resources and production support specific to each project's needs."

"I congratulate the nine filmmakers selected for the first round and look forward to seeing their projects come to fruition in the years ahead."

The **Qatari Film Fund** aims to develop up to four feature films, in addition to developing and producing up to eight short films every year through two application sessions for Qatari directors and writers. At least one of the four feature films in development will be selected the following year for production support by the Qatari Film Fund through mentoring and financial support. Due to a strong pool of applicants this year, one additional short film project was awarded a grant, bringing the total number of grantees to nine.

Feature film treatments and screenplays at varying levels of progress are eligible for development funds up to QAR 182,500 which include bespoke mentoring opportunities provided by the Doha Film Institute.

Short films are eligible for a combined development and production budget of up to QAR 182,500 and will include mentorship, equipment and production support from the Institute.

Filmmakers from Qatar are also supported through the Doha Film Institute's grants programme, which provides funding to filmmakers from Qatar, and first- and second-time filmmakers from around the world. Additionally, the Institute provides creative, logistical, and financial support for projects by Qatari filmmakers through its education programmes.

The recipients of the 2015 Qatari Film Fund short films are:

NARRATIVE:

'1001 Days' by Aisha Al-Jaidah

Trapped in a forbidding palace, a mysterious storyteller sweeps us away every day on a magical journey so that she can fight bravely for her life every night.

'A Journey to from Love' by Abdullah Al-Mulla

After his love abruptly leaves him, Ashiq's surreal journey for closure takes him through the five stages of grief, from denial to depression and finally acceptance.

'Al-Johara' by Nora Al-Subai

'Al-Johara', a Qatari take on the classic Cinderella fairy tale, accentuating Arab traditions with a modern twist.

'The Doll' by Nasser Abdelreda

Ten-year-old Mona lives with her cold father and her distant mother, a victim of the hopeless relationship between her parents. One day, her attempts to escape her emotionless reality take a poignant turn.

'Nasser' by Sheikha Shaikha Mohammed Al-Thani

A woman looks out her car window and makes her first spontaneous decision.

'Our Time Is Running Out' by Meriem Mesraoua

In a parallel universe ruled by children, an observant pubescent boy finds himself banished from the only world he has ever known. How must he do to survive, while coping with sudden changes to his body, world and notion of time?

'RED' by Kholoud Al-Ali

In a dark, snowy Doha, a Boy has very little to look forward to in life, until one day he spots a pair of red shoes hanging from a power wire above the street. Once a pale, lonely slouch, he changes for the better in his hope of the winning the shoes, while the Mystery Man secretly watches his every move. Will the Boy get what he wants? Will the Mystery Man reveal himself?

'Sh'hab' by Amal Al-Muftah

Not fully convinced by the myths about falling stars, Mohammed and Sultan decide to head out to sea every night to investigate. As the nights pass, they learn new things about each other, strengthening the bonds of their friendship.

DOCUMENTARY:

'Amer, the Arabian Legend: From the Freedom of the Desert to the Glory of the Track' by Jassim Al-Romaihi

Sent as a gift to the Emir of Qatar in the late 80s, Amer seemed like an average purebred Arabian. After he was taken to the tracks of Umm Qarn to train other horses, however, Amer showed his class, changing the face of Arabian horseracing forever.

Photo caption: Doha Film Institute CEO Fatma Al Remaili with three of the nine filmmakers selected for the Qatari Film Fund short film selection - Meriem Mesroua, Aisha Al-Jaidah and Amal Al-Mufta.

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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.

Doha Film Institute

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