



Press Release

Doha Film Institute announces 33 projects from 19 countries to participate in second edition of Qumra

Dedicated shorts programme unveiled to offer more bespoke mentoring opportunities for emerging filmmakers

15 Qatar-based projects included in line-up alongside 12 projects from the Arab region and 6 international projects.

Doha, Qatar: February 24, 2015: The Doha Film Institute today announced the 33 projects from 19 countries selected to take part in the second edition of Qumra, taking place in Doha, Qatar from March 4-9.

Directors and producers attached to 13 narrative feature films, 10 feature documentaries and 10 short films will participate in the 6 day programme of bespoke industry sessions designed to progress their projects and prepare them for international markets. The emphasis is on supporting first-and-second-time filmmakers with projects in development and post-production.

The projects represent 19 countries of production with a total of 15 projects from Qatar-based filmmakers, 12 from the Middle East North Africa (MENA) region and 6 from the rest of the world. 11 of the 33 projects are features films in development, 12 are in post-production and 10 are short films in development.

Twenty of the feature projects are alumni of the Institute's grants programme and 3 are by independent filmmakers from Qatar. Of the 10 short projects, 7 are by Qatari filmmakers and 3 are by Qatar-based filmmakers identified through the Institute's ongoing engagement with local industry.

Doha Film Institute CEO Fatma Al Remeihi said: "We are very excited by the diverse slate of projects selected for Qumra 2016, representing emerging talent from Qatar, the Arab region and around the world."

"We have prepared an intensive programme for our project delegates which is designed to inspire them creatively and support them in navigating the evolving landscape of the film industry. I look forward to welcoming each of our project delegates to Qumra for what promises to be a productive exchange of ideas, culture and creativity."

New to this year's edition is the Qumra Shorts Programme, a dedicated strand designed to address the unique requirements of short films in development, during which 10 Qatar-based filmmakers will present their projects to a group of international industry professionals, including script consultants, producers, lab representatives, programmers and buyers, all of whom are experts in the short form.



The ten short filmmakers have been supported by the Doha Film Institute in various ways throughout their careers and many are alumni of its educational initiatives, workshops and funding programmes. *Kashta* by AJ Al Thani has been supported by the Institute's grants programme and *Amer: The Arabian Legend* by Jassim Al-Rumaihi is supported by the Qatari Film Fund, the newly established funding and development programme for Qatari filmmakers which was announced last year.

Directors and producers attached to each of the 33 projects will attend the sessions in Doha where they will be linked with more than 100 seasoned industry experts from all facets of the film industry including representatives from leading international film festivals, funding bodies, sales, production and distribution companies along with development specialists and script consultants.

The programme is specifically tailored to each project's needs and is divided according to their stage of development. Projects in development will participate in group and individual sessions for script consulting, legal, sales, marketing and co-production advice along with one-on-one match-made meetings and tutorials.

Projects in post-production are divided into two strands: the Work-in-Progress sessions will present a series of closed rough-cut screenings of 20-minute excerpts from the four narrative and four documentary Qumra projects in post-production followed by immediate, individual feedback from a panel of selected industry experts; and the Picture Lock Screenings will present exclusive 20 minute excerpts of four feature-length Qumra projects in the final stages of post-production for leading festival programmers, broadcasters, market representatives, sales agents and distributors.

The Qumra Projects delegates will also attend daily master classes and screenings presented by five Qumra Masters who represent some of the leading figures in world cinema today.

The 2016 Qumra Masters are Nuri Bilge Ceylan (Turkey), Naomi Kawase (Japan), Joshua Oppenheimer (US), James Schamus (US), Aleksandr Sokurov (Russia). Each Master will be matched to a selection of Qumra projects to participate in dedicated mentoring sessions with the emerging filmmakers.

The 2016 Qumra Projects are:

Feature Films:

Feature Narrative, Development

***Bull Shark* by Mohammed Al Ibrahim (Qatar, Bahrain, USA)**

An up-and-coming investment banker makes his mark in the Arab region's most prominent Islamic investment bank, only to find he has been caught in the middle of the costliest embezzlement scheme in Arab history.

***Death Street* by Mohanad Hayal (Iraq, Qatar)**

Tariq, the sniper of Haifa Street in Baghdad, kills Ahmed on the day he intends to propose marriage. While Tariq prevents anyone from approaching the corpse in the street, an intimate and telling drama unfolds.

***Evil Eye* by Sophia Al-Maria (Qatar, Morocco)**

After inheriting the keys to an apartment in The City, country girl Dihya finds out that The Village she comes from has a reputation for witchcraft in this North African take on the teen witch film.

***The Pearl* by Noor Al-Nasr (Qatar)**

A tech-obsessed Qatari teen, disconnected from his family, travels back in time to an era before his beloved technology existed, when the city's main source of income was pearl diving. Alone on this journey, he must learn how to survive and communicate face-to-face in order to reconnect with his family.

***The Search for the Star Pearl* by Hafiz Ali Ali (Qatar)**

Ali, a 17-year-old pearl diver from Doha, discovers a map to the Star Pearl of Abu Derya, the most valuable gem on Earth, and sets sail with three teenaged friends in search of it. Along the way, they face mythological beasts that challenge their skills and friendship.

***Stolen Skies* by Laila Hotait Salas (Lebanon, Qatar)**

When a bomb is detonated in Cairo, one family feels it ricochet through the erased memories of three generations.

***Till the Swallows Return* by Karim Moussaoui (Algeria, France, Qatar)**

This is the story of three characters who are a product of the conflicted Algeria of the 2000s. Their ideals shattered and their moral strength drained, each now faces a difficult life choice.

Feature Documentary, Development

***Agnus Dei* by Karim Sayad (Algeria, Switzerland, Qatar)**

On the vacant lot where the confrontation takes place, the tension is at its peak. Foufa and his sheep King are getting ready for the fight...

***Behind the Doors* by Yakout Elhababi (Morocco, Qatar)**

High in the Rif mountains of Morocco, the people survive by growing kif. Beneath the shadow of the ambiguous legality of the crop, 'Behind the Doors' tells the story of a family through its children and their mirroring games.

***The Great Family* by Eliane Raheb (Lebanon, France, Qatar)**

In 1976, at the age of four, Marlene was put up for adoption in Lebanon and raised in France. In delving into her past, she discovers she is a survivor of the massacre at the Tal Al Zaatar Palestinian refugee camp, and a family of survivors grows around her.

***To the Ends of the Earth* by Hamida Issa (Qatar)**

A Qatari woman travels on an environmental expedition to Antarctica in search of hope, before returning to the Gulf and finding unity and inspiration for positive change.

Feature Narrative, Works-in-Progress

***Ali, The Goat and Ibrahim* by Sherif Elbendary (Egypt, France, Germany, USA, Qatar)**

Ali and Ibrahim are two lonely and weird characters who are rejected by their society. Ali loves a goat called Nada, and Ibrahim is a sound engineer who is disturbed by strange voices that he alone can hear. When their paths cross, this odd pair embarks on a journey that will change their lives.

***Dede* by Mariam Khatchvani (Georgia, Qatar)**

As Georgia fights for its independence after the collapse of the Soviet Union, a young woman struggles to make a life in the remote, isolated villages high in the Caucasus Mountains, where ancient patriarchal laws threaten to separate her from her daughter.

***Poisonous Roses* by Fawzi Saleh (Egypt, Qatar)**

The world has left nothing to Taheya apart from her brother Saqr. When he disappears, Taheya pursues him in desperation.

***White Sun* by Deepak Rauniyar (Nepal, The Netherlands, Qatar)**

A drama about life in a Nepali mountain village in the wake of the decade-long armed conflict.

Feature Documentary, Works-in-Progress

***Ghost Hunting* by Raed Andoni (Palestine, France, Switzerland, Qatar)**

Director Raed Andoni assembles an eclectic group of Palestinians to rebuild the Israeli investigation centre in which they were imprisoned – a place they never actually saw because they were always blindfolded.

***My Uncle the "Terrorist"* by Elias Moubarak (Lebanon, Germany, Qatar)**

A film director seeks to uncover a 40-year-old family taboo: the controversial life of his Uncle Fouad, a poet and an engineer of the Munich massacre.

***The Silk Railroad* by Martin DiCicco (USA, Georgia, Qatar)**

Wealth, opportunity, and discord collide along the route of a new railroad bridging Europe and Asia.

***Tondo* by Jewel Maranan (The Philippines, Germany, Qatar)**

'Tondo' is a film about four people in different stages of life - birth, youth, adulthood and death - who are caught in the path of expansion of Manila's busiest international port.

Feature Narrative, Picture Lock

***Bastard* by Uda Benyamina (Morocco, France, Qatar)**

Fifteen-year-old Dounia lives with her mother in a rough Parisian suburb, where she has been saddled with the nickname "bastard".

***The Mimosas* by Oliver Laxe (Spain, Morocco, France, Qatar)**

In the Atlas Mountains in the past, a caravan searches for the path to take a Sufi master home to die. Among the party is Ahmed, a rascal who eventually becomes inspired to lead the caravan to its destination. Along the way, Ahmed is assisted by Shakib, a man sent from contemporary Morocco to guide him on his journey.

***Beirut Rooster* by Ziad Kalthoum (Syria, Lebanon, Germany, Qatar)**

While Syrian workers rebuild Lebanon, a country ruined by a lengthy civil war, their hometowns in Syria are destroyed during the brutal conflict there. Who will rebuild their houses?

***Those from the Shore* by Tamara Stepanyan (Armenia, Lebanon, France, Qatar)**

Marseille, 2014. Dozens of Armenian asylum seekers are trying to survive while waiting for their applications to be considered. They live in an indeterminate space, wandering in limbo.

Short Films:

Development, Short Narrative

***I Want to Feel What I Feel When I Am Asleep* by Abdullah Al-Mulla (Qatar)**

A man wearing a gas mask is on a journey to fulfil a selfless purpose. Among the people of a drugged and mesmerised society, he cleans up a ruined city in order to cover up the destruction that has taken place.

***Kashta* by AJ Al Thani (Qatar)**

A father takes his two sons out on a trip to the desert to go hunting, but the results are not quite what he was expecting.

***Qafas* by Mayar Hamdan (Qatar)**

A young man tries everything to escape the cage he is chained in. Only when he realises that the true obstacle to his release is not the chains, but rather his outlook on his situation, does he finally become free.

***A Ranged Marriage* by Nora Al Subai (Qatar)**

After being stuck in an arranged marriage for a year, a desperate wife discovers the perfect gift for their anniversary: a romantic dinner that will kill her husband.

***The World is Blue* by Amna Al Binali (Qatar)**

During her sister's engagement party, Hend comes to terms with the contradiction between how she wants her life to unfold and the inevitability of how it has been drawn for her.

Development, Short Documentary

***Amer: The Arabian Legend* by Jassim Al-Rumaihi (Qatar)**

Sent as a gift to the late Emir of Qatar in the 1980s, Amer seemed like an average purebred Arabian. After he was taken to the tracks of Umm Qarn to train other horses, however, he showed his class, changing the face of Arabian horseracing forever.

***Buqsha* by Fahad Al Obaidly (Qatar)**



'Buqsha' strives to encourage people to go beyond their preconceptions and venture into the past to look to the future. Throughout our journey, we demonstrate the importance of learning from traditional culture while preserving our own, and that the balance between artistic heritage and the contemporary arts nurtures creativity.

***The Innocent Prisoner* by Amina Ahmed Al-Boluchi (Qatar)**

The story of a man trying to wash away his history of being a prisoner, determining his destiny by becoming a better person, and finding himself a place in his own society.

***Love in the Middle East* by Mostafa Sheshtawy (Qatar)**

Romantic love is very common, yet it can mean something completely different from one person to the next. Through a young man's journey, this film looks at what it means to fall in love in the Middle East.

Picture Lock, Short Narrative

***More Than Two Days* by Ahmed Abdelnaser (Qatar)**

Over the course of two days, two brothers go through critical moments that may change their lives. 'More Than Two Days' examines their relationship and how each of them is trying to face up to the new situation in their lives.

-ENDS-

Notes To Editors

About Qumra

Directors and Producers attached to thirty-three 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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