

Sandy Powell and Bennett Miller join the 2018 Qumra Masters lineup

- *Sandy Powell and Bennett Miller join Andrey Zvyagintsev, Apichatpong Weerasethakul and Gianfranco Rosi as the 2018 Qumra Masters*
- *Qumra Masters to support emerging filmmakers through mentoring sessions with the directors of 34 selected projects from 25 countries*
- *Selected projects include 23 Features and 11 Shorts*
- *14 Qatar based projects included in the 2018 programme*

Berlin, Germany/Doha, Qatar: February 18, 2018: Sandy Powell, Order of the British Empire (OBE), Oscar® winning British costume designer (*The Young Victoria, The Aviator, Shakespeare in Love*), and Oscar® nominated director, Bennett Miller (*Capote, Moneyball, Foxcatcher*) have been confirmed as Masters in the fourth edition of the Doha Film Institute's Qumra, to be held March 9 to 14, 2018.

They join Venice Golden Lion winning Russian director and writer Andrey Zvyagintsev, Cannes Palme d'Or winning Thai filmmaker and visual artist Apichatpong Weerasethakul, and the only documentary director to win the Berlinale Golden Bear Italian director Gianfranco Rosi for the 2018 edition of the one-of-its-kind dedicated industry forum that focuses on first and second time filmmakers.

The Qumra Masters will share their insights with emerging filmmakers, provide feedback on projects in consultation sessions, and discuss their own inspiring creative journeys in daily Masterclasses.

Qumra 2018 will provide 34 projects from 25 countries access to Masterclasses and networking opportunities for first and second-time filmmakers, driving Qumra's mission to expand support for the development of emerging filmmakers from Qatar, the Arab region and around the world.

Announcing the line-up of Qumra Masters at Berlinale, Fatma Al Remaihi, Chief Executive Officer of the Doha Film Institute, said: "We are honoured to be hosting five of the most celebrated contributors to contemporary world cinema. All creative visionaries in film, their presence in Doha and interaction with Qumra delegates will incredibly benefit emerging filmmakers, and inspire them to take their works to the next level. With the masterful crafts of Sandy Powell (OBE) and Bennett Miller, the Qumra Masters will push the conversation and learning in exciting new directions this year."

Filmmaker and Doha Film Institute Artistic Advisor Elia Suleiman said: "Sandy Powell's adeptness at transporting audiences into directors' environments makes her a modern legend in design, while Bennett Miller possesses a powerful ability to dissect social constructs by skillfully tapping into the psyche of his protagonists. Their contribution to film is evident in their long list of critical and awards acclaim, and we look forward to the depth of understanding and possibilities that their participation will bring to Qumra delegates."

34 projects from 25 countries

This year, over six days, the Qumra delegates will take part in bespoke industry sessions designed to progress their projects and prepare them for international markets, in addition to the Masterclasses and mentoring sessions by the Qumra Masters.

There are 14 Qumra projects by Qatar-based talent, including 9 films by Qatari nationals. While 6 Qatar-based projects are works-in-progress, the others are in development stage. In all, 16 projects are in development, 13 projects are works-in-progress, and 5 are in picture lock. There are 13 fictions and 10 documentary features and 11 shorts. Of the 34 projects, 23 are recipients of the Doha Film Institute's Grants programme, 2 are supported through the Qatari Film Fund and all others are shorts by either Qatari nationals or residents.

Directors and producers of these projects will attend the sessions in Doha where they will meet over 100 industry experts. The activities are specifically tailored to each project's needs, according to their stage of development. Projects in development will take part in group and individual sessions in script consulting, legal, sales, marketing and co-production advice, along with individual matchmaking and tutorials. Projects in post-production are presented in a series of closed rough-cut screenings for leading festival programmers, broadcasters, market representatives, sales agents and distributors.

2018 Qumra Projects:

Feature Narratives: Development

- ***The Voice of Amirah*** (working title/Qatar), by Khalifa Al-Thani, is about an adolescent girl in the 1970's, whose life takes a wonderful turn when she stands up for what she believes in.
- ***Khuzama*** (Qatar), directed by AJ Al-Thani, is about a Bedouin girl who dreams of exploring the desert until she discovers that the desert is not what she imagined it to be.
- ***Behind Closed Doors*** (Qatar) by Hend Fakhroo tell the story of six-year-old Leila, who wakes up one day and finds her mother gone with only her father to take care of her.
- ***A Gaza Weekend*** (Palestine, UK, Qatar) by Basil Khalil. When a viral epidemic consumes Israel, Gaza becomes the safest place in the region.
- ***Dead Dog*** (working title/Lebanon, Qatar) by Sarah Francis. When Farid, a 60-year-old man living abroad, visits his wife, he learns that his beloved dog has died. Tensions arise and Farid confesses he is returning home for good.
- ***Noura Dreams*** (Tunisia, France, Qatar) by Hinde Boujema, about Noura who struggles to raise her three children alone while her husband is in jail, until she meets Lassaad. Their plans to be together are however jeopardized by the impending release of her husband, and the two decide to flee.
- ***The Unknown Saint*** (Morocco, France, Qatar) by Alaa Eddine Aljem. After years in captivity, a thief returns to retrieve the money he stole and discovers a mausoleum unexpectedly built on the site where he stashed the money.

Feature Narrative: Work in Progress

- ***1982*** (Lebanon, USA, Qatar) by Oualid Mouaness, is about 11-year-old Wissam, who decides to tell a classmate that he loves her. But his will is challenged, his courage falters and an impending war threatens to separate them permanently.

- **Sofia** (Morocco, France, Qatar) by Meryem Benm'Barek. At 22, Sofia is the only daughter in a rather traditional family. While having dinner with her family, she discovers she is about to give birth.
- **A Kasha** (Sudan, South Africa, Qatar) by hajooj kuka, an offbeat love story set in the time of civil war. Through a series of wry and humorous incidents over 24 hours, it explores life and love in rebel-held areas of Sudan.

Feature Narrative: Picture Lock

- **Late to Die Young** (Chile, Brazil, Argentina, Netherlands, Qatar) by Dominga Sotomayor, which is set in an isolated community, where Sofia, Clara and Lucas prepare for New Year's Eve. They may live far from the dangers of the city, but not those of nature.
- **The Load** (Serbia, France, Croatia, Iran, Qatar) by Ognjen Glavonić, set during the NATO bombing of Serbia in 1999. Vlada is driving a truck. He does not know what the load is, but his cargo slowly becomes his burden.
- **Weldi** (Tunisia, France, Belgium, Qatar) by Mohamed Ben Attia, in which a father is confronted by his own reality and has to question himself and his choices.

Feature Documentary: Development

- **NAZ** (working title/Palestine, UK, Qatar) by Omar El-Khairi and Ana Naomi de Sousa, explores the historical and cultural formations of the British Yemeni boxer Prince Naseem Hamed. It is a film that not only celebrates a forgotten era, but also sheds light on where we are now.
- **Displaced in Heaven** (Palestine, Germany, Qatar) by Khaled Jarrar, which follows a family through the Balkan route, with the Palestinian director plunging into the horror of exile in a desperate need to recover his lost memories.
- **Suspended Wives** (Morocco, Qatar) by Merieme Addou, which follows three women, who were abandoned by their husbands, and their lengthy battle to obtain divorces.
- **The Fifth Resurrection of Farid** (Egypt, Qatar) by Khalid Youssef, a feature essay that explores how in Little Tokyo, Los Angeles, a new life was awarded to Olympic champion, pilot, Hollywood actor, war hero, and all around professional Farid Semeka.

Feature Documentary: Work in Progress

- **Batata** (Lebanon, Canada, Qatar) by Noura Kevorkian, was filmed over an unparalleled eight-year period, documenting the life of charismatic Syrian migrant worker Maria. An intimate story of love, friendship and perseverance set to the back-drop of an age-old conflict between Syria and Lebanon.
- **Chaos** (Syria, Austria, Lebanon, Qatar) by Sara Fattahi, is about three Syrian women, each living in a different time and place, separated by the very things that unite them – fear and trauma.
- **Underdown** (Lebanon, Germany, Qatar) by Sarah Kaskas, a pulsating journey of three unbreakable characters struggling to live below the poverty line in the chaos of Beirut.
- **Tiny Souls** (Jordan, France, Lebanon, Qatar) by Dina Naser, portrays the changes in Marwa's life, as she goes from childhood to adolescence within the walls of the Al Zaatari Refugee Camp in Jordan, reflecting its effect on her reality and future.

Feature Documentary: Picture Lock

- **Constructions** (Argentina, Qatar) by Fernando Martin Restelli, about a 60-year-old watchman of buildings under construction, who has a second chance in life to become a father.

- ***Nine Months War*** (Hungary, Qatar) by László Csujá, in which Jani has left his family to serve in the Ukrainian Army. His mother wants her son back and Jani just wants independence.

Qumra Shorts

- ***Sh'hab*** (Qatar) by Amal Al-Muftah, upon hearing a myth about falling stars, a young girl's curiosity is sparked. When night falls on Al Wakrah village, she sets out in her father's boat to chase the fabled comets.
- ***Chained Prey*** (Qatar) by Mohammed Refaat, is about a domestic falcon who lives a life of prestige at his falconer's house in Doha faces the threat of losing his secure lifestyle forever.
- ***Bandits*** (Qatar) by Sara Al Obaidly. Two young rebels leave behind their London lives for dream of the Middle East, but when reality sets in they realize have taken on more than they bargained for.
- ***Burn the Bird*** (Qatar) by Zahed Bata, is about Samaa and her son Sari who drive out in the dead of night to bury Nagnhoush, their pet parrot. Ultimately, they realise the only way to set him free is to set him on fire.
- ***Gubgub*** (Qatar) by Noof Al-Sulaiti. An adventurous young girl goes crab-hunting with her father and brother. Discouraged when her father undervalues her accomplishments compared to her brother's, she sets out to win her father's approval.
- In ***Connect*** (Qatar) by Maha Al-Jefairi, a young mother dies and is brought back to life in a robotic body – and must confront her new reality, in which her six-year-old son is afraid of her.
- ***Al Sit*** (Qatar) by Susannah Mirghani, in a Sudanese farming village, old Al Sit must be consulted for her blessings ahead of any wedding. But in a modernising world, does the matriarch's word hold any power?.
- ***Pastimes*** (Qatar) by Majid Al-Rumaihi, interrogates the repetition of traditional scenery in painting practice in Doha, and the factors that sustain as well as complicate it.
- ***Hatshepsut in the Box*** (Qatar) by Hadeer Omar, is set in a world where people wear transparent boxes on their heads to reveal their identities, 14-year-old Leila goes rogue and divides the materials in her box to become like a new Pharaoh Hatshepsut.
- ***Amphitheatre*** (Qatar) by Mahdi Ali Ali. A young girl rebels against her family's traditions in front of a professional photographer's lens.
- ***Okht Rjal*** (Qatar) by Obada Jarbi, three women become the breadwinners for their families, necessary for survival.

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Notes to Editors

Master Bios:

Sandy Powell (OBE)

Winner of three Academy Awards® for her work on *The Young Victoria* for Jean-Marc Vallée, *The Aviator* for Martin Scorsese and *Shakespeare in Love* for John Madden, Sandy Powell has also been nominated nine times for her work on *Carol*, *Cinderella*, *Orlando*, *The Wings of the Dove*, *Velvet Goldmine*, *Gangs of New York*, *Mrs. Henderson Presents*, *The Tempest* and *Hugo*. She has received two BAFTA Awards for *The Young Victoria* and *Velvet Goldmine* and has also been nominated nine times. In 2011, Sandy was appointed an Officer of the Order of the British Empire for her services to the film industry.

Her recent credits include *How To Talk To Girls at Parties* directed by John Cameron Mitchell for which she received a BIFA nomination, and *Wonderstruck*, again with director Todd Haynes. Sandy recently completed work

on Rob Marshall's *Mary Poppins Returns*, and is currently working on *The Irishman* with Martin Scorsese marking her seventh collaboration with the director, having previously worked on *The Wolf of Wall Street*, *Shutter Island*, *The Departed*, *The Aviator*, *Gangs Of New York* and *Hugo*.

Bennett Miller

An Academy Award nominated film director, Bennett Miller made his feature debut in 1998 with the critically acclaimed and award-winning documentary *The Cruise*. In 2005, he earned an Academy Award nomination for Best Director for *Capote*, starring Philip Seymour Hoffman in his Oscar-winning performance as Truman Capote. Miller's 2011 feature, *Moneyball*, starring Brad Pitt, was praised by critics and went on to receive six Academy Award nominations including Best Picture. Miller was honored at the 2014 Cannes Film Festival with the Best Director Prize for his feature film, *Foxcatcher*, starring Steve Carell, Channing Tatum, and Mark Ruffalo. The film was nominated for five Academy Awards including Miller's second nomination for Best Director.

Previous Qumra Masters

Previous Qumra Masters include Argentina's eminent Lucrecia Martel (*The Swamp*, *The Holy Girl/ The Headless Woman*); internationally acclaimed Portuguese producer Paulo Branco; Best Foreign Language Film Oscar® winning Iranian master Asghar Farhadi (*A Separation/ The Salesman*); French auteur Bruno Dumont (*P'tit Quinquin*); Cambodian creative documentarian Rithy Panh (*The Missing Picture*); Mexican actor/ director/ producer Gael Garcia Bernal (*Amores Perros/ No/ Deficit*), Best Foreign Language Film Oscar® nominated Mauritanian director Abderrahmane Sissako (*Timbuktu*); Romanian auteur and Palme d'Or winner Cristian Mungiu (*4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days/ Beyond the Hills*); Best Foreign Language Film Oscar® winning Bosnian writer/director Danis Tanović (*An Episode in the Life of an Iron Picker/ Tigers, No Man's Land*); Palme d'Or winning Turkish director Nuri Bilge Ceylan (*Once Upon a Time in Anatolia, Winter Sleep*); Cannes Grand Prix winning Japanese filmmaker Naomi Kawase (*The Mourning Forest*); Oscar® nominated director Joshua Oppenheimer (*The Act of Killing / The Look of Silence*); Cannes Best Screenplay winning writer James Schamus (*The Ice Storm*) and Aleksandr Sokurov (*Russian Ark/ Francofonia*).

About Qumra

Directors and Producers attached to 34 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 Ajal



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.