

Qumra Master Paweł Pawlikowski encourages emerging filmmakers to innovate and break convention

- *The Academy Award® winning Polish director discusses his fluid approach to filmmaking at Qumra's third masterclass*

Doha, Qatar: 17 March 2019: The critically-acclaimed Qumra Master Polish director Paweł Pawlikowski shared his unconventional approach to filmmaking at a masterclass at Qumra 2019. His advice to up-and-coming filmmakers was to go against the grain of typical conventions to make stories and characters come alive.

During the third Qumra Masterclass, Pawlikowski charted his development as a filmmaker through three clips of his films: *The Last Resort* (2000), *The Woman in the Fifth* (2011), and *Ida* (2015), which won an Academy Award® for Best Film.

Pawlikowski shared that early in his filmmaking career, as a director of documentaries at the BBC he realised that he wanted to do things differently. He said: "In my view, the job of a filmmaker is to bring your idea to life and that sometimes requires going against the grain. In my early films, I wanted to do something that was a more creative way of looking at the world than simple reportage— to break outside the accepted conventions of documentaries of at the time."

After moving away from documentaries into narrative feature films, Pawlikowski developed a unique approach to filmmaking that was, "fluid and open". His experience in documentaries taught him to think on his feet and "see the world through images and sounds". For this reason, he does not stick rigidly to scripts and allows actors and writers to improvise during filming. He said: "A script is never fixed – it is a fluid thing. The best things come up in dialogue and that is why I often make changes to scripts with my co-writers during filming and allow actors to improvise and contribute their ideas as well." On casting and location, Pawlikowski said that his approach was to instinctively look and react.

As well as giving up-and-coming filmmakers an insight into his creative process, Pawlikowski also talked about common themes in his films such as the relationship between mothers and sons, romantic love, and immigration. On storytelling in cinema, he said: "You really don't need to spell the whole thing out. Trust your audience to imagine the rest. Always make sure that your characters are at the heart of the story and not political or social contexts. With a good character and a good actor that can bring them to life, the work of a director is largely done."

Pawlikowski's final words of wisdom were on decision making and self-editing. He said: "As I have become more experienced as a filmmaker, I have learned that decisions on what not to include are as important on what to include. You don't need to overtell your story. My advice to up-and-coming filmmakers is to discover who you are, what your tastes are, and what you like. You need to do this to be secure and confident enough to make difficult creative decisions."

The fifth edition of Qumra brings together more than 150 acclaimed filmmakers, industry professionals and experts to nurture 36 Qumra Projects – by first and second-time filmmakers that are in various stages of development. The six-day event takes place 15–20 March at Souq Waqif and the Museum of Islamic



Art, and features Qumra Master Classes, Qumra Talks and Qumra Masters and New Voices in Cinema screening.

Further details about ticket prices and sales for the screenings are now available on www.dohafilminstitute.com.

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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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