

Doha Film Institute to Host Online 'First Cut Lab' to Foster the Artistic Potential of Film Projects from the Region

- *Digital workshops to focus on three feature films and one short film in different stages of post-production*
- *Two films helmed by Qatari directors set to participate in this year's workshops*

Doha, Qatar; 13 July 2020: The Doha Film Institute (DFI) will host a comprehensive 'First Cut Lab' in a special online edition from June 18, in a series of four main sessions, each dedicated to one select feature or short film. Designed to foster the artistic potential of the selected rough cuts and to increase the sales, festival and circulation potential of the completed films, the workshops are open to film teams from Qatar or the MENA region whose projects are in in different stages of post-production.

In line with the Institute's mission to support promising talents from the region, the intensive workshop offers selected producer/director/editor teams an opportunity to receive expert feedback on their full rough cut from international film advisors as well as a consultant editor. Participants can engage in discussions and receive direct feedback in one-to-one meetings and in small groups via video-conferencing platforms. At the end of the lab, creative teams will receive a written memo report that serves as a guideline for future edits and post-production of their films.

All projects for this year's Lab will receive expert mentorship from First Cut Lab creator and Director Matthieu Darras, a renowned festival programmer and former TorinoFilmLab artistic director as well as creator of the Pop Up Film Residency; Editor Mentors Benjamin Mirguet and Sebastian Sepúlveda; and Industry Advisors Sata Cissokho, Myriam Sassine, Gudula Meinzolt and Wim Vanacker.

The first session will focus on Hamida Issa's feature documentary *Places of the Soul* (Qatar), which explores the duality between modernity and tradition and nature and civilisation through the filmmaker's journey to Antarctica with an environmental and leadership expedition. Khalifa Almarri's short narrative *Olayan* (Qatar), a Qatari Film Fund project that thematises a Bedouin boy's friendship with a camel calf, will be featured in the second session The third session will highlight *The Maiden's Pond* (Lebanon, Qatar) by Bassem Breish, a feature narrative about a strained mother-daughter relationship, while the fourth session will focus on Jihan Kikhia's *Searching for Kikhia* (USA/ Libya/Lebanon/France / Qatar), tracing the steps of the daughter of a peaceful opposition leader to Qaddafi and her mother's 19-year search to find him.

Fatma Hassan Alremaihi, Chief Executive Officer of DFI, said: "The Doha Film Institute is deeply committed to elevating promising voices and talents from Qatar and the region through our diverse year-round training and development programmes. We are proud to be part of a global network of organisations that can extend access to the internationally recognised First Cut Lab to our community and accelerate the success of standout projects ready to launch."

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“This year’s selected films will become part of a prestigious collection of First Cut Lab-supported debuts, many of which have gone on to premiere at international film festivals such as Cannes and the Berlinale. More so, translating the workshop experience into a digital format will open up new forms of collaboration between our talented film teams and global mentors, whilst maintaining the creative spirit of skill enhancement through lively discussion and practical team work,” she concluded.

To learn more about the Institute’s year-round initiatives and programmes, visit: www.dohafilminstitute.com

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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 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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About First Cut Lab

First Cut Lab is a programme designed for feature fiction films in the editing phase. Launched in 2015 as an industry activity of Trieste’s When East Meets West (WEMW) co-production forum, First Cut Lab is now an independent initiative run by Tatino Films. So far the program has supported 51 feature films, either as part of WEMW and Karlovy Vary Eastern Promises or as a program on demand at the request of different national film institutes and regional initiatives. The majority of First Cut Lab-supported films are debuts, and many projects have gone on to premiere in festivals like Cannes, Berlinale, Toronto, Karlovy Vary and San Sebastian.

<http://firstcutlab.eu/>