

Press release

## Seven Doha Film Institute Supported Films Make Global Splash at 74<sup>th</sup> Berlin International Film Festival

- *Selected films include two 'In Competition', three in 'Panorama', one each in the 'Encounters' and 'Generation' sections*
- *First- and second time filmmakers from the Arab world and beyond representing bold independent voices in cinema*

**Doha, Qatar; February 7, 2024:** Highlighting the global impact of films supported by the Doha Film Institute, seven DFI Grantees have been selected to screen in key programming sections of the 74<sup>th</sup> Berlin International Film Festival (Berlinale) including the official in competition.

Regarded as one of the world's most prestigious film festivals showcasing the best of art house cinema, this year's representation of DFI-supported films is another testament to the Institute's success in nurturing independent voices in cinema from the Arab world and beyond.

Among the films selected this year, two are in the **Competition** section – the centrepiece of the Berlinale that features only 20 exclusive titles from all across the world. Three films will screen in the **Panorama** section of extraordinary international cinema to the festival's largest jury. One film will be screening in **Encounters**, a platform for daring and innovative independent filmmakers, and one in **Generation**, the section that illustrates the many complexities of youth.

Fatma Hassan Alremaihi, Chief Executive Officer of DFI, said: "We are exceptionally proud of the selection of DFI-supported films at the Berlinale this year, that celebrates independent and art house productions, and often sets new benchmarks that defines contemporary cinema. The diversity of the selection underlines our mandate to support important voices, especially by emerging talents from the region and the world. All seven films stand out for the power of their content and innovation in the filmmakers' cinematic techniques that will inspire audiences with their riveting narratives of humanity. Through our various initiatives, we continue to support compelling voices and powerful stories that have the potential to shape world cinema."

### Films in Competition:

- ***Who Do I Belong To*** (Tunisia, Canada, France, Qatar) by Meryam Joobeur, is about a Tunisian mother gifted with prophetic dreams who lives in a rural farm with her husband Brahim and three sons. Their lives are completely changed after the departure of their eldest sons to the violent embrace of war.
- ***Shambhala*** (Nepal, France, Norway, Hong Kong, Turkey, Taiwan, USA, Qatar) is a feature narrative by Min Bahadur Bham. Set under the Himalayas in the highest human settlement, about three brothers – one of whom departs for trade. This weaves an unbreakable bond between the two others, transcending their roles in a tale of intertwined fates.

### Films in Panorama:

- ***Brief History of a Family*** (China, Denmark, France, Qatar), by Jianjie Lin, explores an incident on the playground that brings two high school boys together who are worlds apart. But their middle-class existence is soon shadowed by unspoken secrets, unmet expectations, and untended emotions.

- ***Diaries from Lebanon*** (Lebanon, France, Saudi Arabia, Qatar), a feature documentary by Myriam El Hajj, is set in 2018, when Joumana, a fiery feminist writer, poet and activist runs for election defying a political system that has been suffocating Lebanon for 40 years. She gets elected, only to be ousted the very next day through fraud, leaving her supporters furious. In 2019, the people's rage turns into a revolution.
- ***Rising Up at Night*** (Democratic Republic of Congo, Belgium, Germany, Burkina Faso, Qatar) by Nelson Makengo, is set amidst the background of Congo relaunching plans to build Africa's largest power plant on the Congo River, while Kinshasa, the capital of 17 million people, is plunged into darkness and insecurity with its people struggling to gain access to light.

The film in the '**Encounters**' section is ***Demba*** (Senegal, Germany, Qatar), by Mamadou Dia, is about a 55-year-old man, who is about to retire after 30 years of service at the city hall in his small town in Northern Senegal. But as his mental health deteriorates, he discovers a new connection with his once-estranged son.

Screening in the '**Generation**' segment is ***Disco Afrika: A Malagasy Story*** (Madagascar, France, Mauritius, Germany, South Africa, Qatar), by Luck Razanajaona, is about 20-year-old Kwame, who struggles to make a living in the clandestine sapphire mines and is taken back to his hometown by an unexpected turn of events. As he reunites with his mother and old friends, he finds himself confronted with the rampant corruption plaguing his country.

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#### **About Doha Film Institute**

Doha Film Institute (DFI) is an independent, not-for-profit cultural organization, that 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. For more info, please visit: [www.dohafilminstitute.com](http://www.dohafilminstitute.com)