



## Press Release

# **Socio-political change and new talent to mark renaissance of Egyptian cinema, say industry leaders**

## ***Panel discussion on current direction of Egyptian cinema at DTFF underlines optimism of filmmakers and talent***

**Doha, Qatar, November 19, 2012:** Arab Spring was about integration and the wave of socio-political change marked by freedom of expression and the emergence of new talent to the fore will mark the renaissance of Egyptian cinema, observed leading film talent from the country at a panel discussion at the fourth Doha Tribeca Film Festival (DTFF), the annual cultural event of Doha Film Institute (DFI).

With Egyptian cinema representing a strong contingent of DTFF's film repertoire this year, the panel discussion on 'Where is Egyptian cinema heading to,' witnessed intense moments as filmmakers and talent passionately underlined their focus on creating a new cinema culture in the country.

Yosra, the leading Egyptian actress, set the tone for the discussion by pointing out that compared with the 1960s and 1970s, when over 120 films were made every year, now Egypt produces hardly 20 films.

Internationally acclaimed writer and producer, Mohamed Hefzy, whose film *Asham: A Man Called Hope*, is competing in DTFF's Arab Film Competition, and won rave reviews for his film *Tahrir 2011*, added that the crisis in the Egyptian film industry started alongside the global financial crisis in 2009, and the number of productions came down dramatically.

Hend Sabry, jury chairperson of DTFF's Arab Film Competition Feature Narrative, who has over a decade of acting association with Egyptian cinema, pointed out that the key concern is not relating to quality of the films produced, but the reduction in volume of production.

Egyptian actress Nelly Kareem said that Egyptian film talent must take more interest in creating a film production culture by taking more ownership, while Khaled Abol Naga, actor and producer of acclaimed films like *Microphone*, presented a strong overview of the various reasons that led to the crisis in the Egyptian film industry, including the reduction in corporate support for filmmaking.

The panelists were unanimous in their observation that the film industry is poised for renaissance with new talent coming to the fore, and so much optimism abounding among the filmmakers. They also underlined the need to promote the mainstream film industry too, without losing focus on developing independent films that reflect the creative aspirations of the Egyptian film professionals.

The panelists also discussed the impact of the January 25 revolution, and the current state of politics and its potential impact on the industry, concluding that the key focus now must be to promote the industry by creating movies that cater to the masses as well as for international glory. They said that there will be challenges – as is the norm in any country – but the optimism that is now pervading will fuel the growth of the industry in the coming days.



With an expanded Festival format this year, DTFF 2012 will showcase over 87 films from across the globe under distinct themed sections including Arab Film Competition, Made in Qatar, Contemporary World Cinema, Special Screenings and Tribute to Algerian Cinema.

DTFF 2012 provides audiences a comprehensive and enriching cultural experience with new screening venues across Doha. Indoor and outdoor screenings will take place at Katara Cultural Village, Museum of Islamic Arts (MIA), and Souq Waqif.

Public participation will be central as the Festival is hosting an array of large community events, including Family Days, panel discussions, networking events and educational filmmaking programmes including Doha Talks and Doha Projects.

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**About Doha Film Institute:**

Doha Film Institute (DFI) is an independent cultural organisation established in 2010 to incorporate Qatar's film initiatives under one banner; organically supporting the growth of the local film community by enhancing industry knowledge, cultivating film appreciation and contributing to the development of sustainable creative industries in Qatar. DFI's year-round platforms include funding and production of local, regional and international films, educational programmes, film screenings, and the annual Doha Tribeca Film Festival (DTFF). With culture, community, education and entertainment at its foundation, DFI serves as an all-encompassing film hub in Doha, as well as a resource for the region and the rest of the world. DFI is committed to supporting Qatar's 2030 vision for the development of a knowledge-based economy. DFI has established a number of strategic cultural partnerships with leading local and international organisations including Tribeca Enterprises, World Cinema Foundation, Maisha Film Lab, Katara Cultural Village and Giffoni Film Festival.

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