



Press Release

Doha Film Institute's Co-Financed Project '*May in the Summer*' to Open 2013 Sundance Film Festival US Dramatic Competition

Cherien Dabis's New Feature Competes for Top Honours in the Premiere Section

Doha, Qatar; December 5, 2012: The world premiere of acclaimed Arab-American filmmaker Cherien Dabis's latest feature, *May in the Summer*, co-financed by the Doha Film Institute (DFI), will screen as the opening film for the US Dramatic Competition at the 2013 Sundance Film Festival.

Having won international recognition for her first feature *Amreeka*, Cherien's follow-up film is a dramatic comedy set in Jordan, where a bride-to-be is forced to re-evaluate her life when she reunites with her family, only to be confronted with the aftermath of her parents' divorce.

May in the Summer stars Palestinian actress and director Hiam Abbas (*The Visitor*, *Lemon Tree*, *The Syrian Bride*, *Munich*) and American comedienne Alia Shawkat (*Arrested Development*, *Cedar Rapids*, *Amreeka*, *The Runaways*) along with Cherien Dabis, Alexander Siddig amongst others. The film is produced by Chris Tricarico and Alix Madigan, and was co-financed by DFI underlining its commitment to nurture a strong Arab film industry by supporting regional and international productions. Whitewater Films and Durga Entertainment are the Executive Producers of the film. The project also received development support from the Time Warner Storytelling Grant, part of the Sundance Grants and Fellowship Programme and a Production grant from the Jordan Film Fund, Royal Film Commission of Jordan.

Abdulaziz Al-Khater, Chief Executive Officer, DFI, said: "One of the key objectives of DFI is to foster and facilitate the evolution of a pan Arab film industry, whereby talented filmmakers have the opportunity to tell their stories to the world. Cherien's *May in the Summer* presents a compelling portrait of Arab society, and we are honoured that our latest Middle Eastern project is opening the prestigious Sundance Film Festival, reiterating the strong global inroads made by Arab films and filmmakers."

Paul Miller, Head of Film Financing, Doha Film Institute, said: "Co-financing is an important component of our film financing initiatives, which also includes the MENA Grants and the Gulf Development Unit. *May in the Summer* is a powerful addition to our portfolio of co-financed projects, which demonstrates our long-term commitment to building the Arab film industry by supporting talented filmmakers both regionally and from the Arab diaspora."

Cherien Dabis has clinched numerous laurels for her previous project *Amreeka* in the global film festival circuit including prizes at the Cannes Film Festival, Cairo International Film Festival, and Sundance Film Festival. She said: "I'm very grateful to Doha Film Institute for their years of involvement and their assistance in making this film possible."



Most recently, DFI had announced funding for 27 new MENA projects as part of its fall grants session. The 27 projects supported include a diverse range of powerful and culturally authentic stories reflecting the diversity of new and more established filmmaking voices within the MENA region.

DFI is committed to identifying, nurturing, and promoting talent that will further enrich Qatar's cultural scene and reinforce its position as the cultural and artistic hub of the region.

Following the opening of Venice Film Festival 2012 by *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, financed by Doha Film Institute (DFI), ***May in the Summer*** screening on the 17 of January 2013, is the latest project co-financed by DFI to debut at an international Festival.

Launched in 1985, the Sundance Film Festival is one of the most prestigious film festivals bringing the world's most original storytellers together for a fantastic display of path-breaking films selected for their ingenuity and narrative brilliance.

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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.