

Press Release

Doha Film Institute Announces Spring 2016 Grant Recipients: 26 projects from 14 countries to receive funding

*Six DFI Grantees selected for screening in key sections at this year's Cannes Film Festival including **Divines**, **Apprentice**, **Dogs**, **Mimosas**, **Tramontane** and **Diamond Island***

- Two Spring 2016 DFI Grantees screening in Cannes – *Dogs in Un Certain Regard* and *Diamond Island in Critics Week*
- Represented MENA countries include Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Qatar, Sudan, Syria and Tunisia
- Filmmakers from Bolivia, Romania and Sudan receive grants for the first time
- Submissions for next funding round open **14 July, 2016** and close on **27 July, 2016**

Cannes, France; May 14, 2016: The Doha Film Institute today announced the recipients of the Spring 2016 session of its Grants programme. Two of these new grantees, along with four recipients of funding from previous sessions, will have their world premieres at this year's Festival de Cannes.

Twenty six projects from 14 countries – comprising 13 feature-length narrative films, 6 feature documentaries, 3 feature experimental or essay films and 4 short films – will receive funding for development, production or post-production. The Spring session marks the 12th session of the grants programme, which is dedicated to supporting new cinematic talent, with a focus on first- and second-time filmmakers.

Two of the Spring 2016 grantees are also screening in key sections at this year's Cannes Film Festival – **Dogs** in Un Certain Regard, directed by Bogdan Mirica (Romania/France/Bulgaria, Qatar) about a man who wants to sell the land he has just inherited from his grandfather near the Romanian border with Ukraine, and **Diamond Island** in Critics Week, directed by Davy Chou (Cambodia/France/Germany/Qatar) about an adolescent who leaves his home village for the worksites of Diamond Island, a contemporary playground for the rich outside Phnom Penh where he finds his mysterious older brother Solei, whom he has not seen in years.

Four other previous grantees selected for screening in official sections at Cannes this year – **Divines** (Directors Fortnight), **Apprentice** (Un Certain Regard), **Mimosas** (Critics Week) and **Tramontane** (Critics Week).

Stories of embezzlement, coming of age, time travel, liberation, physical or spiritual journeys, tales of family life and of life in exile are highlighted in the selections this Spring.

Twenty of the projects are from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, while six are from the rest of the world. Three projects from Qatari directors are among the 26 projects selected for funding, four projects from Lebanon, three from Palestine and two returning grantees.

Qatari-based directors Mohammed Al Ibrahim's **Bull Shark**, Sara Al-Obaidly's **Coming of Age** feature narrative project and Abdulla Al-Mulla's short **Green Eyes** all received grants this session.

Co-directors Jasmina Metwaly and Philip Rizk are return grantees with their new project **On Trials**, after being previously granted in 2013 for their project *Out on the Streets*, and Kasem Khasra is also a second time grantee for **I Dreamt of Empire** after his previous grant for the project *Shelter* in 2013.

Lebanese projects which have received backing include **The President's Visit**, Cyril Aris (Lebanon/Qatar), **To the One Who Didn't Give Me Life**, Wassim Geagea (Lebanon/Qatar), **Summer of 2015**, Angie Obeid (Lebanon/Qatar) and **The Insomnia of a Serial Dreamer**, Mohamad Soueid (Lebanon/Qatar).

The three Palestinian projects who are grantee recipients this round are: **A House in Jerusalem** Muayad Alayan (Palestine/Qatar), **Screwdriver** - Bassam Jarbawi (Palestine/Qatar) and **The Forgotten** - Ghada Terawi (Palestine/Qatar).

Highlights from this session's grants include the strong presence of projects from established filmmakers in the MENA region with four projects as grantees this session – **Headbang Lullaby** from Hicham Lasri (Morocco, France, Qatar), **The Journey** from Mohamed Al Daradji (Iraq, Qatar), **Whispering Sands** from Nacer Khemir (Tunisia, France, Qatar) and **The Insomnia of a Serial Dreamer** from Mohamed Soueid (Lebanon, Qatar).

Fatma Al Remaihi, CEO of the Doha Film Institute, said: "Our Spring grantees cover a broad range of subjects and represent some powerful new voices in cinema, but we are especially proud of the high quality of Qatari projects represented including four strong projects from established MENA filmmakers. Two of our grantees from this round are selected for screening in official selection in Cannes alongside four older grantee projects which I think is testament to the strength of our grants programme, the exciting new filmmakers emerging from our region and beyond, and the high quality of the films we are pleased to be able to support."

"Our grantees represent the core of the Doha Film Institute's mandate to support emerging filmmakers and contribute to the development of the regional film industry and we continue to seek out projects with a strong directorial vision that are challenging, creative and thought-provoking."

Submissions for the next funding round open July 14 and close July 27, 2016. Funding is available to projects by filmmakers from around the world, with an emphasis on support for filmmakers from the MENA region. Certain categories of funding are reserved for MENA and Qatari filmmakers.

The fund is primarily for first and second-time filmmakers. Post-production funding is available to established filmmakers from the MENA region.

For more information about eligibility and submissions, please visit <http://www.dohafilminstitute.com/financing/grants/guidelines>

A full directory of past grant recipients is available to view at <http://www.dohafilminstitute.com/financing/projects/grants>

The Doha Film Institute Grants Programme funding recipients for the Spring 2016 are:

Feature Narrative/Development

Amerli - Yahya Al Allaq (Iraq/Qatar)

Logline: After the destruction of their hometown in northern Iraq, and the murder of their parents, Zainab and her brother Yousef are on the run, intent on reaching the town of Amerli.

Bull Shark - Mohammed Al Ibrahim (Qatar)

Logline: An up-and-coming investment banker makes his mark in the Arab region's most prominent Islamic investment bank, only to find out that he has been caught in the middle of the costliest embezzlement scheme in Arab history.

Coming of Age - Sara Al-Obaidly (Qatar/United Kingdom/Italy/Turkey/Nepal)

Logline: Two mod girls from South East London embark on a dream holiday but end up on the journey of a lifetime, crossing continents and cultures, and growing up over three wild years on the road.

A House in Jerusalem - Muayad Alayan (Palestine/Qatar)

Logline: A Jewish American family finds it hard to adapt to their new home in Jerusalem after they discover the grave of a young Palestinian girl.

Feature Narrative/Production

I Dreamt of Empire - Kasem Kharsa (Egypt/Germany/France/Qatar)

Logline: An Egyptian professor travels back and forth through time in an attempt to save his only son and reclaim the past

Screwdriver - Bassam Jarbawi (Palestine/Qatar)

Logline: Driven to psychosis by the torture he underwent in an Israeli prison, an ex-basketball champ struggles to reassimilate into society. As reality blurs with his hallucinations, he cannot help but drive himself back into incarceration

You Will Die at Twenty - Amjad Abu Alala (Sudan/Qatar)

Logline: When Mozamel is born in a Sudanese village where the ideas of Sufism hold sway, a prophecy says he will die in his twenties. He lives in fear until Sulaiman, an elderly cinematographer, appears in his life

Feature Documentary/Production

The Forgotten - Ghada Terawi (Palestine/Qatar)

Logline: A look at the life of Kozo Okamoto, a Japanese freedom fighter who gave up his life in Japan after joining the movement to liberate Palestine

Feature Experimental or Essay/Production

On Trials - Jasmina Metwaly, Philip Rizk (Egypt/Qatar)

Logline: In an attempt to question the legal realm, 'On Trials' explores the performative aspect of the law in Egypt through performances by judges, lawyers, defendants, journalists and law students

Short Narrative/Production

Born in the Maelstrom - Meryam Joobeur (Tunisia/Canada/Qatar)

Logline: Rebecca, an 18-year-old biracial girl, is bound in an imaginary world shaped by her black mother's painful past. She searches for liberation from this place where she does not belong

Green Eyes - Abdulla Al-Mulla (Qatar)

Logline: The tireless struggle of a coma patient in the oceanic depths of his own reality, as he faces off against his own ego and the mysterious monster that lives within

The President's Visit - Cyril Aris (Lebanon/Qatar)

Logline: When the men in a fishing village learn of the secret upcoming visit of their country's president, they embark on a never-ending struggle to maintain the perfect image of their town

To the One Who Didn't Give Me Life - Wassim Geagea (Lebanon/Qatar)

Logline: When his mother unexpectedly dies, a nine-year-old boy kidnaps a statue of the Virgin Mary in order to blackmail Jesus into returning her

Feature Narrative/Post Production

Headbang Lullaby - Hicham Lasri (Morocco/France/Qatar)

Logline: A policeman is sent by his dissatisfied superiors to spend a day on a bridge between two warring neighborhoods, where he is charged with ensuring the security of a hypothetical royal procession

The Journey - Mohamed Al Daradji (Iraq/Qatar)

Logline: Sara is on the cusp of committing an unthinkable act, but time stands still and she is given the opportunity to witness the consequences of her destructive action

Whispering Sands - Nacer Khemir (Tunisia/France/Qatar)

Logline: An encounter in the desert between a woman haunted by her family's tragic past, and her guide, who discovers his own family's dark future

Dark Skull - Kiro Russo (Bolivia/Qatar)

Logline: "A conflictive young man lived rejecting his father, after he passed away the young man must return to his village to replace him in the tin mines. Who was his father?"

Diamond Island - Davy Chou (Cambodia/France/Germany/Qatar)

Logline: Bora leaves his home village for the worksites of Diamond Island, a contemporary playground for the rich outside Phnom Penh. There, he finds his mysterious older brother Solei, whom he has not seen in years

Dogs - Bogdan Mirica (Romania/France/Bulgaria/Qatar)

Logline: Roman seeks to sell the land near the Romanian border with Ukraine that he has just inherited from his grandfather, but the local men will not let go of it without a fight.

Feature Documentary/Post Production

A Comedian in a Syrian Tragedy - Rami Farah (Syria/Denmark/Qatar)

Logline: An intimate portrait of Syrian actor Fares Helou, who calls for freedom of speech, is forced to flee his home country, and experiences the absurdities of existence in exile

Summer of 2015 - Angie Obeid (Lebanon/Qatar)

Logline: Twenty-seven-year-old Angie, a Lebanese filmmaker, hosts a 53-year-old Syrian woman in her small apartment in Beirut. There, they wait endlessly for an opportunity to reach a better place.

City of the Sun - Rati Oneli (Georgia/Qatar)

Logline: A surreal vision of the lives of the few inhabitants of Chiatura, Georgia – a post-Soviet ghost town

Listen to the Silence - Mariam Chachia (Georgia/Qatar)

Logline: Nine years old and completely deaf, Luka dreams of dancing on stage. He follows his dream and learns Georgian folk-dancing, after which his life changes completely

Untitled Congo Project – Daniel McCabe (USA/Congo/Qatar)

Logline: An unfiltered look into the lives of three people who are surviving amid the most recent cycle of conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo – the M23 rebellion

Feature Experimental or Essay/Post Production

Experimental Summer - Mahmoud Lotfy (Egypt/Qatar)

Logline: Mahmoud and Zainab are making a documentary about 'Experimental Summer', an independent Egyptian film produced in the mid-1980s whose makers are unknown

The Insomnia of a Serial Dreamer - Mohamad Soueid (Lebanon/Qatar)

Logline: A personal essay of dreams, images and clouds, built from visual materials filmed over the last 15 years in different formats and locations

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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 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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