

Doha Film Institute chooses 4 short films by Qatari directors for Qatari Film Fund Spring 2016 grants

Four shorts to receive production support as well as mentoring opportunities

Doha, Qatar; July 26, 2016: The Doha Film Institute has announced the grantees of its Qatari Film Fund as part of the Spring 2016 cycle. Four short films by Qatari directors have been selected for this grant cycle, which will cover development, production, post-production, mentorship, and equipment & production support from the Institute.

Launched in 2015, the Qatari Film Fund is dedicated to supporting short and feature filmmaking by Qatari directors. It is committed to the development of up to four feature films, and the development, production and post-production of up to eight short films annually. The short film projects are chosen through two annual calls for projects for funding up to QAR 182,500 in total.

The Doha Film Institute received twelve projects from Qatari directors for the Spring 2016 call for short films. The final four that made the cut include: ***The World is Blue*** by Amna Al-Binali; ***Elevate*** by Hamida Issa; ***Ya Hoota*** by Latifa Al-Darwish and Abdulaziz Yousef; and ***Boy Meets World*** by Naif Al-Malki.

Fatma Al Remaihi, Chief Executive Officer of the Doha Film Institute, said: “The Qatari Film Fund is one of our key initiatives to foster a culture of home-grown filmmaking and talent development. It offers the platform for Qatari filmmakers to develop their short and feature film projects with the support and guidance of the film professionals at the Institute. The short films that have been selected for the grants presented compelling sketches of life in Qatar and demonstrate the creativity and talents of our emerging filmmakers.”

Al-Binali’s *The World is Blue* is the story of Hend, a 19-year-old Qatari woman, who sees in blue, and hears whispers that stop only when she reads. Her mother believes that marrying off her daughter will cure this strange condition. During her engagement party, Hend struggles to decide whether to go through with the marriage, or keep her blue world and the voices in her head. Her choice strains relations with her mother, whom Hend considers the most important person in her life.

Hamida Issa’s *Elevate* is about Latifa, a young Qatari woman in her 20s who is always accompanied by Rosie, her Filipino maid. One day, they get stuck in an elevator and find that, while they are isolated from the material world, they are also liberated from social constraints.

Ya Hoota by Latifa Al-Darwish and Abdulaziz Yousef portrays the life of a curious little girl, who is determined to save the moon from a lunar apocalypse so she can find out what happens next in the story her grandmother tells her. As the catastrophe means there will be no moonlight, the girl seeks out the mythological characters that populate her grandmother’s stories to use their magical powers to reach the moon. Along with her cousin, she leaves the house in search of the Afternoon Donkey, which she strongly believes in, while her cousin wants to prove to her that the creature does not exist. While walking in the neighborhood, they mistake a poor old woman for the Afternoon Donkey.

Boy Meets World by Naif Al-Malki narrates the story of 9-year-old Jassim who lives in a time that is rapidly changing. He seems full of surprises, but to Jassim, becoming a superhero is his destined future, so he works hard to achieve it. The film depicts his environment, and his attempts to face up to his biggest challenge of fulfilling his destiny. It is a message to parents to open up the sky and allow their children to fly.

The Doha Film Institute supports Qatari film talent development and localized film production through diverse initiatives. In addition to the Qatari Film Fund, the Institute will continue to provide creative and technical training and mentoring through its Training and Development Initiatives.

Qatari screenwriters, writer-directors and producers can approach the Institute with film ideas currently in the early stages of development for the Qatar Film Grants. The Institute will assist with the development, production and post-production of projects through free filmmaking workshops and in-house development, and help prepare applications for funding from the Qatari Film Fund as appropriate.