

Doha Film Institute awards four new projects by up-and-coming Qatari Filmmakers as part of the Qatari Film Fund

*Ahmed Al-Khulaifi's **The Pearl Banks**, Khalifa Al-Mana's **Al Tabbab**, Khalifa Al-Marri's **Olayan**, Maha Al Jefairi's **Connect** are the recipients of the Fall 2017 session.*

Doha, Qatar; April 9, 2018: The Doha Film Institute has announced the recipients of the Fall 2017 Qatari Film Fund, which aims to nurture Qatari filmmakers and support them in their script-to-screen journey. From a high number of submissions, an expert panel has selected four short projects by emerging Qatari directors: Ahmed Al-Khulaifi (**The Pearl Banks**), Khalifa Al-Mana (**Al Tabbab**), Khalifa Al-Marri (**Olayan**), and Maha Al Jefairi (**Connect**).

The selected short films receive up to QAR182,500 in production funding, in addition to financial and in-kind support in development, mentorship, equipment and production facilities from the Doha Film Institute. Open only to Qatari filmmakers, the Qatari Film fund is also committed to the development of up to four feature films, in addition to up to eight short films annually. The projects are selected through two funding cycles per year.

Fatma Al Remaili, Chief Executive Officer of the Doha Film Institute, said: "The quality of entries is becoming increasingly competitive, making the selection process truly a challenge for our jury. The participation underlines the noteworthy talent we have in our Qatari nationals, who are keen to pursue their cinematic aspirations. By supporting them, we are enabling their voices to be heard and to share original stories from Qatar with the world. We believe that such support is even more important given the time we live in, and we remain committed to nurturing a strong generation of filmmakers."

She added: "Since the inception of our Qatari Film Fund, several Qatari directors have accomplished films that stand out for their creativity and narrative individuality. We are proud that many of these films have traveled internationally at various festivals to be shared with audiences world-wide."

Ahmed Al-Khulaifi's documentary **The Pearl Banks** is a contemporary journey exploring the depths of Qatar's sea waters to seek 'Hair', the traditional pearl diving sites. An accomplished author and winner of several photography and videography awards, Ahmed was the Chief Operating Officer at QatarGas and is currently the President of the Qatar Society of Photography.

Khalifa Al-Mana's **Al Tabbab** is an animation film that charts the journey of seamen, who sail every full moon to a specific spot in the sea to trade pearls and where a mythical creature controls the waters. A senior project engineer and animator, Khalifa graduated in chemical engineering. He aims to bring original local stories of great relevance to Qatari culture in animation form.

An artist who has made several contributions to Qatar's fine arts scene, Khalifa Al-Marri's **Olayan** set in the 1990s, is about a Bedouin boy who realises that his best-friend, a camel, is being sold to the camel market, and goes on a journey to save him and to bring the calf back home. Khalifa had directed *Man of the House*, winner of the Made in Qatar Award at the Ajyal Youth Film Festival in 2015. He studied Mass

Communications and International affairs at Qatar University and holds a diploma in Directing and Filmmaking from the New York Film Academy.

Maha Al-Jefairi's **Connect** is about Noor, who wakes up in a procedure room in full robotic body, after she had died in a car accident and had her brain copied. Maha made four film projects as a student at Northwestern University in Qatar and has interned with the Doha Film Institute. She is currently developing several short films.

In addition to the Qatari Film Fund, the Doha Film Institute also supports film production through its Training and Development and Grants Programmes.

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Note to Editors:

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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