

## Qumra Shines the Spotlight on Arab Talent and Cinema

- *CEO Fatma Hassan Alremaihi believes that telling stories from the Arab world is the biggest achievement of Qumra 2019*
- *Culminative success at Qumra is proven by the quality of projects presented this year*

**Doha, Qatar: 19 March 2019:** Chief Executive Officer of the Doha Film Institute (DFI), Fatma Hassan Alremaihi, said that the role of Qumra in supporting Arab filmmakers and taking our stories to the world is what makes the annual initiative so important.

Qumra seeks to provide mentorship, nurturing, and hands-on development for first- and second-time filmmakers, with a focus on supporting projects from Qatar and the Arab world. Its fifth edition brought together more than 150 acclaimed filmmakers, industry professionals and experts to nurture 36 projects in various stages of development including 15 from Qatar.

Alremaihi said: “Looking at Qumra over the years, for me our strongest achievement is that we continue to put a spotlight on Arab talent and cinema. I am really excited by some of the projects that I have seen presented this year at Qumra by Qatari filmmakers that want to tell stories about the world as they see it. At a time of global political instability, it is more important now than ever to make sure that all voices are heard.

DFI’s CEO also said that she was pleased to see so many Qatari projects presented at previous editions of Qumra return to this year’s edition in advanced stages of development. “That’s exactly what we want to see,” she said. “We are seeing these projects progress very quickly thanks to the support and guidance that filmmakers receive at Qumra.”

Hanaa Issa, Director of Strategy and Development and Qumra Deputy Director, said that the initiative has built a reputation over the years within the industry as a vital platform for discovery of new voices from the Arab world. She said: “Qumra is now a reliable place for people from the region to get support and for people already in the industry to find out about new projects from the region. There is a real buzz around the event about some of the films presented this year.” She cited Hamida Issa’s *Places of the Soul* – the first Qatari feature-length documentary to be presented as a work-in-progress this year – as one example of a project that is generating excitement.

Artistic Advisor Elia Suleiman said that the possibilities for young filmmakers at Qumra were “limitless”. He explained: “Qumra really is the best place in the region for up-and-coming filmmakers to come and hone their craft. It really is up to them to make the most of the experience through the mentoring sessions, workshops, and networking opportunities on offer.”

During the six-day event, the first- and second-time filmmakers associated with the 36 projects participated in bespoke industry sessions designed to progress their films and prepare them for the international market, in addition to masterclasses and mentoring sessions by the Qumra Masters, who are: Academy Award® winning Mexican production designer Eugenio Caballero, Italian writer and director Alice Rohrwacher, prolific Japanese director and writer Kiyoshi Kurosawa, and Polish auteur Pawel Pawlikowski, with a special masterclass honouring the French new wave Master Agnes Varda.

For further information visit: [www.dohafilminstitute.com](http://www.dohafilminstitute.com).

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## Note to Editors

### About Qumra

Directors and Producers attached to thirty-six projects in development and post-production are selected to participate in the event. They will include a number of emerging filmmakers from Qatar, as well as recipients of funding from the Institute's Grants Programme. The robust programme will feature industry meetings designed to assist with propelling projects to their next stages of development, including master classes, work-in-progress screenings, bespoke matchmaking sessions and tailored workshops with industry experts. This creative exchange will take place alongside a programme of public screenings curated with input from the Qumra Masters.

The event is organised in three main sections: The **Qumra Master Classes** are daily sessions; each led by one of the Masters. The participating filmmakers have full access to these sessions, which are also open to accredited industry guests to attend in an observational capacity.

The **Qumra Meetings** are a series of one-on-one meetings, workshops and tailored mentoring sessions between representatives from the selected projects and seasoned industry experts.

The **Qumra Screenings** are open to the public and feature projects funded by the Institute through its grants and co-financing initiatives, as well as a series of films chosen by the Qumra Masters accompanied by Q&A sessions.

The Arabic term 'qumra' is popularly said to be the origin of the word 'camera', and to have been used by the scientist, astronomer and mathematician Alhazen (Ibn al-Haytham, 965-c.1040 CE), whose work in optics laid out the principles of the camera obscura.

### 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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