

## Qumra 2022 to accelerate 45 film projects from 27 countries through intensive online sessions from March 18 to 23

- *Doha Film Institute's annual industry incubator will accelerate projects in various stages of production - from development to post-production including 16 Qatar based projects*
- *Selected projects include 28 features, 11 shorts and 6 series; 3 Qatari features presented in development and 3 in post-production*
- *Film projects by promising filmmakers from the Arab world and beyond to be advanced through the week-long event*

**Doha, Qatar; March 2, 2022:** The Doha Film Institute announced a slate of 45 promising projects in various stages of production that will gain significant support through its annual industry incubator event, Qumra, which will be held online from March 18 to 23, 2022.

Through an online programme that includes round-tables, feedback sessions and evaluations, and collaborative exercises on advanced knowledge-sharing platforms, Qumra 2022 will continue its rich tradition of providing crucial support to emerging film talent from the Arab world and beyond, despite the challenges of travel and physical events created by the pandemic.

Fatma Hassan Alremaihi, Chief Executive Officer of the Doha Film Institute, said: "As an organisation committed to nurturing authentic new independent voices in cinema, maintaining meaningful and valuable support for creative expression remains our strategic priority. We must also balance this important work with focusing on ensuring the safety and well-being of every participant, including our highly acclaimed team of mentors from around the world.

She added: "Crucial to the success of filmmakers from the Arab region and beyond, Qumra has established itself as a rich showcase of quality, independent and creative films from around the world that has enabled filmmakers to realise their dreams and gain global acclaim. We are continuing the tradition with this edition's impressive projects, which stand out in their distinctive approach to storytelling and cinematic vision. We are confident that the participating projects at Qumra 2022 will make headlines and earn the acclaim of audiences globally."

Featuring activities focused on ensuring the success of promising talents on their script-to-screen journey, the 2022 Qumra online sessions are dedicated to exploring and developing fresh new projects from the region. The programme will be held online to reach the goal of accelerating the success of filmmakers to present their projects to industry experts around the world.

Qumra 2022 features 16 projects by Qatar-based talent, including 13 by Qatari nationals. Of 45 projects, 39 are recipients of the Doha Film Institute's Grants programme, 26 are supported through the DFI training programmes. In all, 11 feature projects are in development, 17 feature projects in post-production, 6 in Qumra Series, and 11 are in Qumra Shorts. 20 of the selected projects across shorts, features and series are helmed by women directors.

## 2022 Qumra Projects:

### Development- Feature Narrative

- ***Al Baseer - The Blind Ferryman*** by Ali Al-Fatlawi (Iraq, Switzerland, Qatar) is about a blind ferryman, who finds his way around the southern Iraqi marshes until one night he gets lost and meets a mysterious woman.
- ***The Photographer*** by Anas Khalaf (Syria, Qatar, Germany) is about a photographer working at the heart of the Syrian government who decides to defect.
- ***The Teacher*** by Farah Nabulsi (Palestine, UK, Qatar) is about a Palestinian teenage boy, who discovers that his schoolteacher is involved with the darker side of resistance.
- ***Blacklight*** by Karim Bensaleh (Algeria, France, Qatar) narrates the story of Sofiane, an Algerian student living in France, who is threatened of expulsion after missing his exams.
- ***Khuzama*** by A.J Al-Thani (Qatar) is about Azzam, the young heir to a Bedouin tribe, who is discovered to be a woman the night before her wedding to Khuzama, sent by her mother to save her from the perilous, barbaric land of Remal.
- ***The Pearl*** by Noor Al-Nasr (Qatar) tells the story of a tech-obsessed Qatari teen, who travels back in time to an era before his beloved technology existed when the city's main source of income was pearl diving.

### Development- Feature Documentary

- ***Chasing the Dazzling Light*** by Yaser Kassab (Syria, Qatar) documents Yaser and his father in Aleppo, who decide to make a joint film that challenges the distance between Sweden and Syria.
- ***My Dream to Fly*** by Asmaa Gamal (Egypt, Qatar, Lebanon) is an immersive portrait of a group of young people from the crowded slums of Cairo who escape their daily hardships on motorcycles by night.
- ***My Father Killed Bourguiba*** by Fatma Riahi (Tunisia, Qatar) is set against the coup of 1987 in Tunisia, in which the filmmaker unspools the history of his father who wanted to be part of it.
- ***Those Who Watch Over*** by Karima Saïdi (Belgium, France, Qatar) are about Muslims, Jews, the Orthodox and marginalised people, who are buried in Brussels—in a unique cemetery.
- ***When The News Breaks You*** by Hamad Al-Hajri (Qatar) narrates the story of conflict journalists who keep the world informed of war, revolutions, political unrest, natural and manmade disasters.

### Post-Production – Feature Narrative – Picture Lock

- ***Mediterranean Fever*** by Maha Haj (Palestine, France, Qatar, Germany, Cyprus) is about an aspiring but depressed writer from Haifa, who befriends his new neighbour in an attempt to convince the man to help him commit suicide.
- ***The Dam*** by Ali Cherri (Lebanon, France, Serbia, Sudan, Qatar) Every evening, Maher, a traditional brickyard worker by the Merowe Dam on the Nile, secretly erects a mysterious mud construction. A political fable about the power of imagination on the backdrop of the Sudanese revolution.
- ***The Last Queen*** by Damien Ounouri (Algeria, France, Qatar) is set in Algiers, at the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. After the death of her husband, a queen must stand up to the most fearsome pirate.
- ***The Return*** by Meyar Al-Roumi (Syria, France, Germany, Qatar) tells the story of Taysir, who returns to Syria to move the remains of his younger brother Kamal from the suburbs of Damascus where he was shot as a freedom fighter.

- **Autobiography** by Makbul Mubarak (Indonesia, Singapore, Philippines, Poland, Germany, France, Qatar) is about a timid housekeeper, who diligently obeys his master until a seemingly minor affront sets in motion a violent chain of events.
- **Domingo and the Mist** by Ariel Escalante Meza (Costa Rica, Qatar) is about Domingo, whose house is due to be expropriated to make way for the construction of a highway. But his land hides a secret—the ghost of his deceased wife visits him within the mist.

#### Post-Production – Feature Narrative – Work-in-progress

- **The Wind Blew On** by Katrín Ólafsdóttir (Iceland, Qatar, Chile, Spain) in which a boy says to himself, 'Perhaps, I'm already dead.' But these words are spoken in an unsettling world where no one can confirm this to be true or false for him.
- **Backstage** by Afef Ben Mahmoud and Khalil Benkirane (Tunisia, Morocco, France, Belgium, Norway, Qatar) A stage injury during a spectacle of a Tunisian contemporary dance troupe touring Morocco, triggers a series of events through a night across a forest, on the way to the next village's doctor.

#### Post-Production - Documentary – Work-in-progress

- **A Fidai Film** by Kamal Aljafari (Palestine, Germany, Qatar) is a sabotage film in response to the looting of memories.
- **Concrete Land** by Asmahan Bkerat (Jordan, Qatar) is an intimate look at the lives of a nomadic Bedouin family in its struggle to hold on to their traditional life under the pressures of urbanisation.
- **Let's Play Soldiers** by Mariam Al-Dhubhani (Yemen, Qatar) is about Nasser, a child-soldier who tries to find his place in his community in Yemen, where the war forced him to become the guardian of his younger siblings' fate.
- **Qatar Stars** by Danielle Beverly (Qatar, USA) is set in a girls' rhythmic gymnastics school in Doha led by a former Russian gymnast providing a space for empowerment and freedom.
- **The Tokyo Reel** by Mohanad Yaqubi (Palestine, Belgium, Qatar) is an open invitation to discover the restored digital scan of a lost 16 mm film reel found in the outskirts of Tokyo.

#### Post-Production - Documentary – Picture Lock

- **Places of the Soul** by Hamida Issa (Qatar) depicts a Qatari woman, who travels on an environmental expedition to Antarctica.
- **Green Line** by Sylvie Ballyot (France, Qatar) depicts the story of Fida, who decides to meet the fighters who frightened her as a child.
- **Khmerica** by Antoine Guide (France, Cambodia, Qatar) is about Sokha, a 36-year-old Khmerican returnee, through the film we explore some pieces of his shattered personal history and dive into the meanders of his exile.
- **While We Watched** by Vinay Shukla (India, Qatar) is a raw and timely film that offers an intimate portrait of the frontlines of truth in India.

#### Series- Development

- **Under This Roof** by Areej Mahmoud (Lebanon, Qatar) is about a frail, yet strong willed, seventy-year-old woman who tries to assassinate a presidential candidate and fails.
- **Out of My Mind** by Mo Yusuf (Somalia, UAE, Qatar) is about a struggling Somali writer living in Dubai, who decides to become a stand-up comedian.
- **Why Did The Bluesman Cross The Road** by Meedo Taha (Lebanon, USA, Qatar) depicts a pair of Latin-Arab mechanics and their boss's daughter, who escape the garage in search of freedom, love, and music.

- *Day Off* by Lina Lamara (Algeria, France) "It's the weekend o'clock! Madani, Amina, Soukaina, Pierre, Atef, and Noor take us on their typical rest day. From Paris to Doha, via Casablanca, the day off is the one we prefer. Could it be longer?"
- *Yasmine/Jasmine* by Yossera Bouchtia (Morocco) after her mother's sudden and mysterious death, a grieving daughter starts to contend with haunting visitations from her doppelganger.
- *Traditional Qatari Songs* by Aisha Al-Jaidah and Kholoud Al Ali (Qatar) brings back Qatar's traditional children's songs with new beats and colourful animations to appeal to the kids of today.

## 2022 Qumra Shorts

### Short Narrative – Development

- *I Wished for Solitude* by Hamad Alfayhani (Qatar), A mother grapples with the loss of her identity as she takes on the arduous job of caretaking for her ill son.
- *Abu Fanoos* by Amira Abujbara and Horia El Hadad (Qatar), On a routine road trip to a petrol station in 1980s Qatar, Khaled and his grandfather encounter a strange and eerie presence in the middle of the desert.
- *Sandogi* by Noor Alkuwari (Qatar), A middle-aged man is left to question his existence as he goes through an extraordinary journey to reconnect with himself.
- *The Line* by Hitmi Al Hitmi (Qatar), Born into a silly, yet strict hierarchical social structure, Bu Mubarak finds himself in a constant struggle to enjoy simple pleasures that are considered beneath his class.
- *Mercy* by Abdulaziz Mohammed (Qatar), A woman finds herself in a moral struggle when a man asks her for help with a difficult request.

### Short Narrative – Post-Production – Work-in-progress

- *Kinship* by Ali Alhajri (Qatar), When a shadow emerges with the birth of his newborn, Khalid must come face to face with his past.
- *A Simple Cut* by Maha Al-Jefairi (Qatar), After 13-year-old Kholoud rebels and cuts her hair without her mother's approval, what should be a minor disagreement turns into a series of mishaps and unfortunate mistakes that end up changing the relationship unexpectedly.
- *The Swinging Chandelier* by Karim Emara (Egypt, Qatar), After moving back into the old worn-out house he grew up in, Ameen, a newlywed Egyptian man, struggles to attend a crucial online job interview due to a visit from his needy in-laws.
- *Manity* by Hussen Ibraheem (Lebanon, France, Qatar), The sound of a key opening the Biton family's door is haunting young Edina at night. But when all the family starts experiencing this nightmare, panic sets in. Will Dr. Naftali be able to explain this strange phenomenon?

### Short Narrative – Post-Production – Picture Lock

- *The Key* by Rakan Mayasi (Palestine, Belgium, Qatar, France), On his first bird-hunting trip, a coming-of-age boy defies his oppressing father's logic on the conception of manhood.
- *A Proposal* by Nadia Al-Khater (Qatar), A young Qatari man dreams of marrying his American fiancé. However, he must first face a panel who hold his fate in their hands.

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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 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.

#### **About Qumra**

Directors and Producers attached to 45 projects in development and post-production are invited 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 work-in-progress screenings, bespoke matchmaking sessions and tailored workshops with industry experts.

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.