

Doha Film Institute Announces Award-winning Actor and Producer Toni Collette as Additional Qumra 2024 Master

Qumra Masters to mentor over 40 participating projects by emerging filmmakers from 20 countries

- Selected projects include feature narratives, documentaries, shorts and TV/web series in various stages of production
- 11 projects are helmed by Qatari and Qatar-based directors
- Talents associated with selected projects to take part in intensive mentoring sessions by global film industry professionals

Doha-Qatar; February 20, 2024: Doha Film Institute announced the addition of award-winning actor and producer Toni Collette (*The Sixth Sense, Knives Out, Hereditary*) as a Qumra Master for the 10th edition taking place from March 1-6, 2024 in Doha.

Founder of Vocab Films, Toni joins acclaimed film visionaries, Leos Carax, Claire Denis, Atom Egoyan, Martín Hernández, and Jim Sheridan for the 2024 event dedicated to supporting important new voices from Arab and world cinema.

On its tenth anniversary, Qumra will offer networking and development opportunities for more than 40 projects from emerging filmmakers from over 20 countries, as part of its mission to accelerate the success of filmmakers from the region and beyond and prepare them to bring their stories to audiences around the world.

Fatma Hassan Alremaihi, Chief Executive Officer of the Doha Film Institute, said: “Each edition of Qumra continues to expand in the diversity of new voices in cinema, especially from emerging markets. We are honoured to welcome the contribution of accomplished actor and producer Toni Collette as one of our Masters. Her incredible command of storytelling and bringing humanity to characters makes her a perfect addition to the lineup of cinema luminaries who will provide invaluable mentorship to this year’s projects.

She added, “Qumra underlines the Institute’s commitment to support promising global filmmakers in their script-to-screen journey and accelerate the success of standout projects ready to launch. Filmmakers that are traditionally under-represented in global cinema gain the opportunity to further hone the skills and develop the network they need to take their projects to the next level at Qumra.”

Talents associated with the projects will participate in intensive mentoring sessions from March 1 to 6 in Doha and online sessions from March 9 to 11, providing them with an extended period of training and networking opportunities.

The projects were selected by an expert panel of judges from hundreds of submissions received from filmmakers across the world. These include 13 feature narratives, 11 documentaries, 11 shorts and 7 web/TV series in various stages of production. Among the projects, 11 are helmed by Qatari or Qatar-



based directors, including seven by nationals. This further underlines the fast-paced evolution of the country's cinematic ecosystem led by talented nationals and those who call the country home.

Among the selected projects, 32 are recipients of Doha Film Institute's Grants programme, and 3 are supported through the Qatari Film Fund. Highlighting the strong support system offered by the Institute, 15 have participated in DFI Training Programmes such as the Hezayah Scriptwriting Lab, Producers Lab, Shorts Script Lab, Doc Lab with Rithy Panh, Series Lab, and First Cut Lab.

Filmmakers with projects selected at Qumra 2024 come from diverse countries, including Afghanistan, Algeria, United Kingdom, Croatia, Egypt, France, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Morocco, Myanmar, Palestine, Qatar, Sudan, Syria, Taiwan, Tunisia, and Yemen.

The selected projects will receive tailored creative mentorship on a broad range of subjects related to storytelling, filmmaking, directing, editing, cinematography and sound—focusing on the specific needs of the project at hand. They will also receive bespoke business advice on financing and co-production strategy, marketing & packaging, project positioning, festival, and distribution strategies, pitching and matchmaking.

Some of the projects in the latter stages of development will participate in a series of closed rough-cut screenings to international festival programmers, broadcasters, market representatives, sales agents, and distributors.

2024 Qumra Projects:

Development – Feature Narrative

- ***Eldorado, The Taste of the South*** (Morocco, France, Italy, Qatar) by Alaa Eddine Aljem, follows a group of migrants who are looking to reach Eldorado, a secret utopian island where everyone lives in peace.
- ***To Leave or To Stay*** (Algeria, France, Qatar) by Azedine Kasri is about a suspended Franco-Algerian pilot who turns to cultivating his parents' olive fields in Algeria.
- ***The Dream Betrayed Me*** (Syria, France, Belgium, Germany, Qatar) by Mohammad Alchikho ("Shaikhow") tells the story of a fake hero in a real war.
- ***Al-Dana*** (Qatar) by Nora Al-Subai is about a young girl accused of bringing a curse on her village after the disappearance of a famous black pearl.
- ***'Trouble Magnet'*** (Palestine, Germany, Jordan, Qatar) by Ahmad Saleh is about Ali, a teenager, who rides an imaginary donkey from Palestine to Germany.

In Production – Feature Narrative

- ***Aisha Can't Fly Away*** (Egypt, Tunisia, France, Qatar) by Morad Mostafa tells of the underworld of African migrant society in Cairo, as witnessed by Aisha, a Somali caregiver.
- ***Rogia*** by Yanis Koussim (Algeria, France, Qatar) tells the tale of a disciple of an old Raqi (a Muslim exorcist) worried that his master's Alzheimer's may unleash a long-contained evil.

Picture Lock – Feature Narrative

- ***Across the Sea*** (Morocco, France, Belgium, Qatar) by Said Hamich Benlarbi, set in the 1990s, is about Nour, 27, who has immigrated illegally to Marseille and lives a marginal and festive life.

- ***Aïcha*** (Tunisia, France, Italy, KSA, Egypt, Qatar) by Mehdi Barsaoui, questions how far can we go to break free from our past?
- ***Ma*** (Myanmar, South Korea, France, Qatar) by The Maw Naing is the story of a young Burmese woman who moves to the big city to work in a garment factory to support her family.
- ***Perfumed with Mint*** (Egypt, France, Brazil, Qatar) by Muhammed Hamdy is about old friends who reunite in a nightmare where mint sprouts out of their bodies.
- ***Celebration*** (Croatia, Qatar) by Bruno Anković explores the life of Mijo and the circumstances that lead to an expansion of fascism and extremism both in history and today.
- ***Locust*** (Taiwan, France, USA, Qatar) by KEFF is set in Taiwan, where a mute twenty-nothing struggles to find meaning in the injustice of everyday life.

Development - Feature Documentary or Essay

- ***House No 7*** (Syria, Qatar) by Rama Abdi is about three girls who meet and rent rooms in an old Damascene house after escaping their conservative societies, hoping to create a safe space isolated from everything.
- ***In the Shade of the Royal Palace (Dwellers of the Cabins)*** (Egypt, Qatar) by Hend Bakr, about people who used to live together in the centre Alexandria but were completely detached as if they lived in a distant, isolated village.
- ***My Mother & I*** (Iraq, Egypt, Qatar) by Dilpak Mated centres around a woman in her seventies, deeply connected with her sheep, and embarks on a journey through loss and change when her mother falls ill.
- ***After Tahar*** (Algeria, France, Qatar) by Soufiane Adel, the story of the director's large Algerian immigrant family against the backdrop of his grandfather, an infantryman in the French Army in Indochina.

Work In Progress – Feature Documentary or Essay

- ***Do You Love Me*** (Lebanon, France, Germany, Qatar) by Lana Daher is a personal journey through Beirut's fractured historical, social, cultural, and political landscapes using archive footage.
- ***Hawa*** (Iran, France, The Netherlands, Afghanistan, Qatar) by Najba Nouri and Rasul Nouri documents Hawa, 40 years after her arranged marriage as a child, now eager to finally begin an independent life and to be literate.
- ***Naseem, Fight With Grace*** (UK, Qatar) by Ana Naomi de Sousa recounts the “people's history” of British-Yemeni featherweight boxer Naseem Hamed, who became a world champion in 1995
- ***Son of the Streets*** (Palestine, Poland, Qatar) by Mohammed Almughanni is about a stateless Palestinian child in a Beirut refugee camp, who embarks on a courageous journey for recognition, education, and a brighter future.
- ***The Myth of Mahmoud*** (Palestine, USA, Lebanon, Kenya, Yemen, Jordan, Qatar) by Mayar Hamdan and Shaima Al Tamimi captures a Palestinian family who made Doha their home 60 years ago, once again grappling with the dilemma of moving or fighting to remain.

In Production – Feature Documentary or Essay

- ***Khartoum*** (Sudan, UK, Germany, Qatar) by Rawia Alhaq, Anas Saeed, Timmea Ahmed, Ibrahim Ahmad (Snoopy) is about a street boy, a civil servant, a tea lady, and a medic—four lives weave together in peace and war in this creative documentary set in the city of Khartoum, Sudan.

- **Niemeyer 4 Ever** (Lebanon, France, Germany, Qatar) by Aurélia Makdessi is about the now-shuttered International Fair created by Brazilian architect Oscar Niemeyer and the local Lebanese who attempt to rehabilitate his imagined utopia.

Qumra Shorts

- **The Land Was Well Past its Zenith** (Lebanon, Qatar) by Rita Mahfouz is a non-perspectival 'documentation' of Beirut that depicts the forces regulating the city following the events of 2019-20.
- **Becoming a Vampire** (Qatar) by Kummam Al Maadeed and Abeer Al Kubaisi is about Sara, who struggles with her draining corporate job and the social pressure from her mother. When a vampire bites her—she finds an opportunity to reclaim her autonomy.
- **La Nuit a Peine** (Tunisia, France, Qatar) by Wiame Haddad is a fictionalised documentary reconstruction depicting the eve of the Sabra and Shatila massacre in Lebanon.
- **Theatre of Dreams** (Qatar) by Fatma Al-Ghanim is a film inspired by the true story of the courage and hidden sacrifices of the first Qatar Women's National Football Team as told through the personal experience of its captain—exploring themes of identity, belonging, and broken dreams.
- **Autumn** (Qatar, Iran) by Annan Nassari and Aisha Al Jaidah is a romantic tragedy of the captivity of ambitious thoughts under short roofs.
- **Before the Day Breaks** (Qatar) by Amal Al-Muftah is about Nour, a young truck driver who encounters an obstacle while delivering an urgent, unusual shipment to Qatar.
- **Sundial** (Chad, Egypt, Qatar) by Atheel Elmalik is set against the backdrop of an intensifying war, where young Najma must rely on the sun to find the right time to see Ziyad.
- **Can You See Me?** (Qatar) by Dhoha Abdelsattar tells of a lonely woman trapped in the cycle of a mundane life that spirals into emotional turmoil until she is forced to confront herself.
- **I Wished for Solitude** (Qatar) by Hamad Alfayhani is about a young man, who struggles with the news that he is losing his face.
- **I Lay to Wait for You to Sleep** (Qatar) by Ali Al-Hajri follows a man embarking on a desert odyssey in search of his requiem.

Qumra Series

- **All About Adam** (Tunisia, Qatar) by Mehdi Hmili explores the tumultuous life of Adam Mejri, also known as the "Tunisian Bernard Madoff", one of the most reviled figures in the country due to his controversial actions.
- **Beautiful Things** (Jordan, Qatar) by Basel Owies is about an over-achieving university student, who is forced into a life of crime to protect her family and advance her legitimate political aspirations.
- **Dyouf** (Palestine, Qatar) by Saleh Saadi is about a family of five that runs a guesthouse in their Bedouin village in Occupied Palestine while living in a turmoil of relations, identity, and career.
- **Hazawi** (Qatar) by Latifa Al Darwish and Abdulaziz Yousef is an adventure animation series that takes place in the late 1980s, featuring a magical world full of Jinn creatures and two children.
- **The Blue Weddings** (Algeria, France, Qatar) by Samia Dzair is set in France, where an Algerian family celebrates the union of their eldest son with a young woman. The next morning, he is found dead in their wedding bed.



- ***Rabet*** (Qatar, Tunisia, Jordan, Sudan, UAE, Egypt, KSA, Lebanon) by Aya Al Blouchi and Basel Owies is an anthology series of Middle Eastern crime stories that explore the complex ironies of human morality.
- ***My Sister and I*** (KSA, Qatar) by Lucy DerTavitian tells the tale of two Saudi sisters who use education to escape crushing poverty and patriarchy.

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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 selected 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 master classes, 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.