

## 12 Doha Film Institute Supported Films Selected for 81<sup>st</sup> Venice International Film Festival

- *Line-up includes world premieres of films by emerging and established Arab talent*
- *Diverse selection across key programming sections elevates the profile of Arab creatives sharing their stories with the world*
- *Institute to partner with Media City Qatar to host a special evening to recognize Arab voices and stories selected at the prestigious festival*

**Doha, Qatar; 20 August 2024:** Continuing Doha Film Institute's remarkable track record of showcasing Arab talent to an international audience at the world's leading film festivals, a captivating slate of 12 films from the region supported by the Institute have been selected for the 81<sup>st</sup> Venice International Film Festival, taking place from August 28 to September 7, 2024.

With the mission to transform the way people see the world through film, the 2024 edition of the high-profile festival will feature some of the most celebrated names in world cinema, offering diverse perspectives in storytelling. The selected films will screen in key programming sections of the festival, including Orizzonti and Orizzonti Shorts, along with the sidebar events of Critics Week, Giornate degli Autori, Final Cut and the Venice Gap-Financing Market.

The selection includes films from Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Tunisia, and Yemen, highlighting the diversity of the Doha Film Institute's support for independent voices in cinema.

Fatma Hassan Alremaihi, Chief Executive Officer of the Doha Film Institute, said: "We are proud to continue a successful festival season with a strong showcase of films by Arab talent at Venice. These films offer fresh perspectives on life that reflect human hopes, aspirations and challenges, presenting important voices in film from the Arab world to global audiences. Our mission is to support independent creators in cinema, and the compelling selection at Venice is a testament to our commitment to shed light on stories that transcend borders and present unique perspectives. We hope these films receive the acclaim and attention they deserve."

DFI-supported films set to screen at Venice 2024 include:

Selected to the Orizzonti section, an international competition dedicated to films that represent the latest aesthetic and expressive trends, is **Aïcha** (Tunisia/France/Italy/KSA/Qatar) by Mehdi Barsaoui about Aya who leaves her previous life in Tozeur and embarks on a journey in which she reinvents herself in Tunis. Another film in this section is **Happy Holidays** (Palestine/Germany/France/Italy/Qatar) by Scandar Copti, which tells the story of a student involved in a minor accident that sets off a chain reaction of events.

Screening in Orizzonti Shorts is **Shadows** (Jordan/France/Qatar) by Rand Beiruty. The film follows Ahlam's first time at an airport, where her excitement is dampened by the sorrow of leaving her past behind.

**Sudan, Remember Us** (Tunisia/France/Qatar) by Hind Meddeb in the Giornate degli Autori section depicts the collective portrait of a generation fighting for freedom with their words, poems, and chants. It follows a group of Sudanese youth in their twenties who are politically active and artistically creative.

Screening at the Critics' Week is **Perfumed with Mint** (Egypt/France/Tunisia/Qatar) by Muhammed Hamdy. The film narrates the story of Alaa, a 30-year-old doctor and his friend Mahdy, who needs help with a strange phenomenon afflicting him.

Four films supported by the Doha Film Institute feature in the Final Cut in this edition, a workshop that aims to provide substantial assistance in the completion of films. These include:

**Aisha Can't Fly Away** (Egypt/France/Germany/Tunisia/Sudan/Lebanon/KSA/Qatar) by Morad Mostafa is about Aisha, a caregiver for elderly patients in Cairo among the society of African migrants and witnesses the tension between different groups; **In This Darkness I See You** (Lebanon/France/KSA/Qatar) by Nadim Tabet, tells the story of Tarek, a 30-year-old Syrian, who joins a construction site in Lebanon and is confronted with difficult working conditions; **My Father's Scent** (Egypt/Norway/KSA/France/Qatar) by Mohamed Siam follows the dysfunctional relationship between a son and his father who returns home after a long absence and **Those Who Watch Over** (Morocco/Belgium/France/Qatar) by Karima Saidi, inspired by the director's mother, a first-generation immigrant in Belgium.

Three films supported by the Institute have also been selected for the Venice Gap-Financing Market. **Marie & Jolie** (Tunisia/France/Qatar) by Erige Sehiri tells the story of two women in a new country where each must find her place; **The Station** (Yemen/Jordan/France/Netherlands/Germany/Norway/Qatar) by Sara Ishaq follows Layal who runs a women-only fuel station and struggles to keep the family business afloat amid a fuel crisis and **Theft Of Fire** (Palestine/Canada/France/Qatar) by Amer Shomali depicts a struggling Palestinian artist who undertakes a daring heist inside a prison.

In addition to the selected films, over 35 diverse projects from the Arab world and global south supported by the Institute are also being showcased as part of the *Your ghosts are mine: Expanded Cinemas, Amplified Voices* multi-media exhibition at ACP-Palazzo Franchetti on view till 24 November 2024.

Produced by Qatar Museums and co-organised by Doha Film Institute, Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art and the future Art Mill Museum in collaboration with ACP Art Capital Partners, the exhibition offers an all-encompassing journey in moving images through contemporary experiences of community life presented through the artistic vision of today's filmmakers from the Arab world and neighboring regions.

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