

## 49 Outstanding Projects from Over 20 Countries Selected for Qumra 2025 by Doha Film Institute

- *Emerging filmmakers from around the world will receive invaluable guidance from Qumra Masters during in-person sessions in Doha from April 4 to 9, with online sessions continuing from April 12 to 14.*
- *The diverse selection includes feature narratives, documentaries, shorts, and series in various stages of production, showcasing a wealth of global talent and creativity.*
- *With 16 projects by Qatari and Qatar-based filmmakers, the 11th edition of Qumra is a testament to the growing strength of Qatar's thriving film ecosystem.*

**Doha, Qatar; March 5, 2025:** The 11th edition of Qumra, Doha Film Institute's (DFI) annual talent incubator for Arab and international cinema, is set to provide 49 exceptional projects by emerging filmmakers from over 20 countries with invaluable support and guidance. This year's diverse selection includes 16 projects by Qatari and Qatar-based filmmakers, highlighting the growing strength of the nation's creative industry.

As a one-of-a-kind initiative, Qumra offers mentorship, skills development, and network-building opportunities, empowering filmmakers to bring their visions to life. Participants will engage in in-depth activities with Qumra Masters and leading industry experts, with in-person sessions taking place in Doha from April 4 to 9, followed by online sessions from April 12 to 14.

Fatma Hassan Alremaihi, Chief Executive Officer of Doha Film Institute, said: "For more than a decade, Qumra has served as a career-changing destination for emerging filmmakers to hone their skills and advance their projects under the guidance of accomplished filmmakers and industry experts. As a one-of-its-kind talent incubator, we continue to build on our legacy of supporting some of the world's most exciting storytellers throughout their film journey. At a time when filmmakers need support the most – not just financial but also creative and technical, Qumra demonstrates the role we can play collectively to shape the next generation of creative masters."

She added: "The diversity of this year's subjects and cinematic approach of the young filmmakers reflects the growing strength of independent cinema. These bold new voices bring to the world stories that matter, promoting a stronger understanding of humanity and our shared values. We are honoured to support several projects from Qatar that proudly demonstrate the impact of our commitment to shaping a vibrant homegrown film industry."

## **Qumra 2025 projects include:**

### **Development – Feature Narrative**

- ***The Good Spirit*** (Palestine, UK, Qatar) by Razan Madhoon is about Noor, an independently minded young woman, who wants to rescue an injured stray dog whilst Gaza is on the brink of war.
- ***The Joyful 1926*** (Algeria, France, Qatar) by Damien Ounouri and Adila Bendimerad is set in 1926 Algiers, amidst political and cultural upheaval, Ghazala battles against French colonial justice to pursue her acting career and secure a better future for her daughter.
- ***The Pearl (Working Title)*** (Qatar) by Noor Al-Nasr is about a tech-obsessed Qatari teen, disconnected from his family, who travels back in time to an era before his beloved technology existed and pearl diving was the main source of income.
- ***Quarter to Thursday*** (Algeria, France, Qatar) by Sofia Djama is about three friends on a mission to bury a dachshund in a military zone.

### **Development – Feature Documentary or Essay**

- ***In the Name of Safia*** (Algeria, Belgium, France, Qatar) by Safia Kessas is a poignant exploration of the filmmaker's journey to uncover her past, challenging the silence and shame imposed on women in her family.
- ***Just Like a Dream*** (Lebanon, Qatar) by Corine Shawi reflects the fragmented minds of Beirut's blast survivors, whose trauma is further deepened by yet another war.
- ***The Sixth Story*** (Iraq, UK, Qatar) by Ahmed Abd is about two friends who confront the nightmares of the sectarian violence they witnessed in Iraq.
- ***Speak Image, Speak*** (Palestine, Germany, Qatar) by Pary El-Qalqili challenges the distorted portrayal of Palestinians from the imagery of the 1972 Munich Olympics as a starting point.

### **In Production – Feature Narrative**

- ***In Memory of Times to Come*** (Palestine, Denmark, Malta, UK, Belgium, Qatar) by Larissa Sansour is about a utopian social experiment that has erased historical trauma from memory. But someone wants Alia to remember.
- ***Love 45*** (Syria, France, Switzerland, Qatar) by Anas Khalaf is about an overweight Lebanese man who is caught in a destructive spiral, and how he finds the path back towards hope.
- ***Sari & Amira*** (Qatar) by A.J. Al-Thani follows an outlaw Bedouin bandit couple who, while navigating the unforgiving sands of Wadi Sakheema, discover a mythical relic that holds the key to their survival but also awakens ancient forces that could destroy them and their world.
- ***Sound of Silence*** (Lebanon, France, Greece, UK, Qatar) by Joyce A. Nashawati is set in 1970s Greece, where two young women flee a military raid and take sanctuary in a mysterious convent.

### **In Production – Feature Documentary or Essay**

- ***Climbing the Mountains*** (Algeria, France, Qatar) by Sabrina Chebbi explores the silent transmission of generational trauma by reconnecting with a cultural heritage fragmented by the colonisation of Algeria.
- ***Flower of the Sand*** (Morocco, Qatar) by Jaouad Babili is about a courageous woman in her fifties, who opens a café in "Sarka," near Dakhla, following the destruction of undocumented fishing boats by authorities.

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

- ***Cotton Queen*** (Sudan, Germany, France, Palestine, Egypt, Qatar) by Suzannah Mirghani is about Nafisa, who was raised on her grandmother's stories of battling British colonisers as she sets out to save the cotton fields from a modern threat.
- ***The Fin*** (South Korea, Germany, Qatar) by Syeyoung Park unfolds in a dystopian Korean society divided by a wall that separates humans from Omegas—mutated beings with fins and fish-like feet. Amidst fear and propaganda, an Omega embarks on a dangerous mission to fulfil a dying father's wish.
- ***Marie & Jolie*** (Tunisia, France, Qatar) by Erige Sehiri follows three Ivorian women from different generations—a pastor, a resourceful businesswoman, and a student who live together in a house in Tunis that doubles as a church.
- ***The President's Cake*** (Iraq, Qatar) by Hasan Hadi narrates the story of nine-year-old Lamia, who must use her wits to gather ingredients for the mandatory cake to celebrate President Saddam Hussein's birthday.
- ***The Reserve*** (Mexico, Qatar) by Pablo Pérez Lombardini is about an obstinate park ranger who convinces her community to expel a group of invaders from their natural reserve, thus provoking a far greater threat.
- ***Roqia*** (Algeria, France, Qatar, KSA) by Yanis Koussim is about Ahmed, rendered amnesic by a car crash, who fears his returning memory.
- ***Sleepless City*** (Spain, France, Qatar) by Guillermo García López is set in La Cañada Real on the outskirts of Madrid, where 15-year-old Tonino's world unravels as his best friend prepares to leave, challenging his understanding of home, friendship, and the gypsy legends that shaped his childhood.

### Post-Production – Feature Documentary or Essay – Picture Lock

- ***Fatna, a Woman Named Rachid*** (France, Morocco, Belgium, Qatar) by Héléne Harder is a sensitive journey through past and present, portraying a pioneer of women's political engagement.
- ***Mother of Silence*** (Iraq, France, Qatar) by Zahraa Ghandour is a probe into Iraq's war and tribal laws, unravelling why families abandon daughters.
- ***Once Upon a Time in Shiraz*** (Iran, France, Norway, South Korea, Qatar) by Hamed Zolfaghari charts the saga of the Qashqai tribe's nomadic heritage and the struggles of their offspring.
- ***Souraya Mon Amour*** (Lebanon, Qatar) by Nicolas Khoury is an introspection into the life of multidisciplinary artist Souraya Baghdadi through her relationship with the filmmaker Maroun Baghdadi.

### Post-Production – Feature Documentary or Essay – Work-in-progress

- ***The Day of Wrath: Tales from Tripoli*** (Lebanon, KSA, Qatar) by Rania Rafei sheds light on five moments of uprising during different historical eras of the city of Tripoli (Lebanon).
- ***Jodari Meno*** (Qatar) by Dr. Jamal Rashid Al-Khanji is about Jamal, who embarks on the adventure of a lifetime to catch the largest dogtooth tuna, only to discover that what he was really after didn't lie in the depth of the sea but deep inside him.

### Development – TV or Web Series

- ***Al-Michelin*** (Jordan, USA, UAE) by Abdul-Rahman Sakr follows a rising star chef who decides to restart his career in Amman, Jordan, when he finds out his father is ill.
- ***(Dis)Closed*** (Palestine) by Aida Kaadan is about a journalist who risks everything to expose a wrongful conviction of five Palestinian men, only to be silenced by a system

determined to bury the truth.

- ***Dirty Hands*** (Lebanon) by Georges Hazim and Maya Dagher is about four desperate housewives who jump at the chance to make quick cash — only to land in the dangerous underworld of the TV actress they idolise.
- ***Last Words*** (Lebanon, Qatar) by Antoine Waked is about Nour, who seeks a fresh start in Canada but becomes prey for an immigrant-targeting killer.
- ***The Lost City*** (South Africa) by Chantel Clark is about aspiring singer Franki Nzo, who sets her sights on stardom in Apartheid South Africa.
- ***Nadine*** (Egypt, France, Qatar) by Amina Abdelwahab and Claire Saint-Pierre is about an 18-year-old from a Lebanese Christian/Druze family in France facing a life-changing decision when a renowned supermodel catapults her into the world.
- ***Palmyra*** (Lebanon, France, Qatar) by Carol Mezher and Gabriela Flores follows three women as they join forces to save endangered antiquities from Palmyra, only to be caught in the heart of a high-stakes international art conspiracy.
- ***Rent-a-Mama*** (Lebanon, Canada, Qatar) by Dania Bdeir is about Nuhad, a conservative Lebanese supermom living in her immigrant bubble in NYC who signs up on an app as a mother-for-hire
- ***Task Force: Apocalypse!*** (Palestine, Qatar) by Dana J. Atrach and Anne Sobel is about a hapless environmental task force that accidentally creates climate chaos across their tiny island country.

#### Showcase – TV or Web Series

- ***El'Sardines*** (Algeria, France, KSA, Qatar) by Zoulikha Tahar is about Zouzou, a 30-year-old maritime engineer who hides from the family that she is leaving to track down the sardines that have vanished from Algeria.

#### Development – Short Narratives

- ***Ghafla*** (Lebanon, Qatar) by Tony El Ghazal is about a precise watchmaker who races against the clock to craft the perfect watch for his only daughter.
- ***Gharbala*** (Yemen, Qatar) by Afnan Tag is about longtime housekeeper Sita, who secretly searches through packed belongings to retrieve a treasured keepsake before it's lost forever.
- ***Inside the White Canvas*** (Qatar) by Amna Al-Binali is about Nora, who struggles to earn her father's approval as her growing curiosity about the forbidden outside world threatens to unravel their fragile bond.
- ***Rumor Has It*** (Qatar) by Mohammed D. Fakhro follows a Qatari food blogger who subscribes to an AI app that promises to earn him more followers.
- ***Sad Boy: The Movie*** (Qatar) by N&LS follows a grief-stricken boy as he navigates his pain and haunting memories, embarking on an emotional journey towards healing and self-discovery.

#### Development – Short Documentary or Essay

- ***Me Are You*** (Lebanon, Qatar) by Myriam Salloum explores how generational trauma seeps into various aspects of life, manifesting and festering across generations, leading to devastating effects.

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

- ***Abu Fanoos*** (Qatar, Morocco) by Amira Abujbara and Horia El Hadad is about an ageing grandfather who seeks to protect his grandson from an eerie presence in the dark.
- ***Light to Ashes*** (Qatar) by Nadia Al-Khater is about a warrior-poet, who is thrust into his

past, where he must reckon with the inescapable pull of fate.

- ***Qadha' w Qadar*** (Qatar) by Maryam Al-Mohammed is about a young woman who defies societal shame and her mother's disapproval to seek a divorce to finally claim her freedom and independence.

#### **Post-Production – Work-in-progress – Short Documentary or Essay**

- ***Bel Falastini*** (Jordan, Qatar) by Obada Jarbi is about a man searching for a home for himself and his family, navigating the complexities of identity, belonging, and the refugee experience.
- ***The Sounds of Silence*** (Colombia, USA, Qatar) by Sebastian Delascasas is about a son who grapples with his mother's illness and the shifting meaning of home on returning to Doha after five years.

#### **Post-Production – Picture Lock – Short Documentary or Essay**

- ***Villa 187*** (Sudan, Qatar) by Eiman Mirghani documents her family's house—and the memories that made it a home—for over 30 years.

Of the 49 selected projects, 37 are recipients of DFI's Grants Programme, while 21 projects are graduates of DFI's year-round training initiatives, including the Feature Script Lab, Filmmaking Lab with Rithy Panh, Producers Lab, and Series Lab, showcasing the Institute's holistic approach to filmmaker development and nurturing creative talent.

The public is invited to experience Qumra firsthand through Qumra Master Classes, accessible with the Qumra Pass, and by attending Qumra Screenings. Audiences can enjoy a remarkable selection of feature-length films from the region and around the world, all supported by Doha Film Institute. These engaging programmes reinforce DFI's commitment to amplifying diverse voices and promoting meaningful cultural dialogue.

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