



Press Release

Doha Film Institute Provides 27 New Film Grants for MENA Projects

2012 Fall Session to Support Emerging and Established Arab Filmmakers

- *Projects include exciting new works from Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon, Morocco and Syria*
- *11 feature films, 5 short films, 9 feature documentaries and 2 experimental feature films supported in this funding session*

Doha, Qatar; November 19, 2012: Doha Film Institute (DFI) has announced funding for 27 new MENA projects as part of its fall grants session. The grants, selected from a record high of 211 applicants for this submission cycle, range across development, production and postproduction.

The 27 projects supported include a diverse range of powerful and culturally authentic stories reflecting the diversity of new and more established filmmaking voices within the MENA region. This session has seen a significant rise in the number of applications requesting financial support compared with the Spring 2012 session.

The Fall grantees also reflect a wide range of nationalities with recipients from more established filmmaking cultures including Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon and Morocco as well as from Jordan, Syria and for the first time, the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

Eleven feature films, five short fiction films, nine feature documentaries and two experimental feature films from a combination of both new and established filmmakers were awarded grants to support Arab storytelling. Many creative, innovative and challenging projects that would struggle to be produced otherwise have also received financial support to fund their works.

This year's Fall grantees cover a diverse array of genres and powerful stories – including emotional dramas about family issues, a story of everyday life in Algiers, films about memory loss and immigration, a black comedy of errors, a comedy about reincarnation and contemporary stories that deal with the harsh realities of life.

The feature narrative section includes auteur driven projects such as Merzak Allouache's ***Terraces*** and Ghassan Salhab's ***The Valley***, as well as emotional dramas such as ***Pillow Secrets*** and a number of projects that handle serious themes in an illuminating and sympathetic way including immigration in ***Die Welt*** and the Iraqi/Kurdish feature ***Memory on Stone*** about the Kurdish genocide in Iraq.

Comedies also feature heavily in the narrative feature section with projects such as ***Ali, the Goat & Ibrahim***, ***Red Valentine*** and ***Me Memories, Myself & Murdoch*** all securing funding.



Documentary recipients tackle high profile and important political events in the region – with films such as ***Egypt's Modern Pharaohs***, ***Gaddafi's Girls*** and ***Democracy Year Zero*** discussing the Egyptian revolution in 1952 to the ousting of President Hosni Mubarak, a portrait of the women force/brigade that Gaddafi used to employ as bodyguards and the Tunisian uprising against the authoritarian regime of Z.A. Ben Ali.

The documentary category also features films which discuss the often-difficult challenges people face in the region from financial struggles in the poorest areas in Cairo in ***What Comes Around***, to uniting young people of different backgrounds from the Middle East's turmoil in ***The First Supper***.

DFI CEO Abdulaziz Al-Khater, said: "One of DFI's main goals is to support and facilitate filmmakers from the MENA region in getting their films made and their stories heard. Many of these stories are reflective of the social and political changes happening in our region and show the unique power of film as a medium to express this. We're really encouraged by the breadth and depth of submissions from this session and as we continue to fine-tune our MENA Grants process, we will ensure we can support an even more dynamic slate in the future."

Paul Miller, Head of Film Financing at DFI, added: "The MENA grants were established to help first and second time filmmakers gain financing and to help more established filmmakers get support for artistic works which might otherwise struggle to secure funding. Our 27 grantees are a blend of new and established filmmakers and they really depict the passion and determination of filmmakers in this region to tell their own authentic stories - from black comedies to political events, family dramas and changing societies. Their projects really give us a compelling taste of modern storytelling in this region."

Reem Al-Wohaibi, a producer from Qatar, has also been awarded a postproduction grant for her feature documentary ***"Somebody Clap for Me,"*** for its original look at an old Ugandan tradition and how this has been revived via open-mic poetry events and hip-hop music.

Short film entries were particularly strong this session illustrating the emergence of some new young filmmakers in the region who displayed unique cinematic vision and culturally authentic stories in such projects as ***"The Desert Fish,"*** about a family's relationship and the pursuit of individual identity, and ***"The Third Hand,"*** about a daughter sacrificing her own future for the sake of her family.

To further enhance and progress the MENA grants outreach, DFI's grants team is aiming to further help filmmakers in Qatar and the Gulf Region by providing more mentoring initiatives. DFI's Gulf Development Unit (GDU) is planning a new biannual workshop to run three months prior to the Fall and Spring Grants submission opening for Qatari nationals with qualifying projects to aid potential grantees in how to develop and package their films for funding.



In addition, for Fall grantees, two students from local Universities in Qatar were selected to attend the deliberation session to participate in the evaluation and discussion of projects with DFI script readers as committee members to aid in the training of script writing and critical thinking.

The 27 grants are awarded to films which contribute in fostering creative and innovative cinematic experience, show original and compelling Arab language projects and can develop know-how in the Qatari local industry.

The next funding session for MENA Grant recipients will open in late December 2012 for the Spring 2013 session. Results will be announced at next year's Cannes International Film Festival.

A full list of the 2012 Fall Grantees is below.

2012 Fall Grantees:

FEATURE NARRATIVE - DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

The Bastard

Uda Benyamina (Morocco, France)

Marjoun and the Flying Headscarf

Susan Youssef (Lebanon, USA)

Me, Myself and Murdoch

Yahya Alabdallah (Jordan, Palestine)

Red Valentine

Amin Matalqa (Jordan, USA)

Wooden Rifle

Alfouz Tanjour (Syria)

FEATURE NARRATIVE - PRODUCTION GRANTS

Ali, The Goat and Ibrahim

Ibrahim El Batout, (Egypt, France, Germany)

Memories on Stone

Shawkat Amin Korki, (Iraq, Australia, Germany, Sweden)



Pillow Secrets

Jillali Ferhati , (Morocco)

Terraces

Merzak Allouache, (Algeria)

The Valley

Ghassan Salhab, (Lebanon)

POST PRODUCTION GRANTS

Die Welt

Karim Alexander Pitstra, (Tunisia, Netherlands, Russia)

SHORT NARRATIVE - PRODUCTION GRANTS

Selma

Mohamed Ben Attia,(Tunisia)

The Desert Fish

Alaa Eddine Aljem, (Morocco, France, Belgium)

The Third Hand

Hicham Elladdaqi, (Morocco, France)

SHORT NARRATIVE - POST PRODUCTION GRANTS

Ismail

Nora Alsharif, (Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine)

Though I Know The River Is Dry

Omar Hamilton, (Egypt, Palestine)

FEATURE DOCUMENTARY - DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

Gaddafi's Girls

Sylvia Stevens, (Libya, United Kingdom)

The First Supper

Jamal Khalaile and Pauline Carbonnier, (Palestine, France)



FEATURE DOCUMENTARY - PRODUCTION GRANTS

A Djelfa-Dweller's Dreams

David Yon, (Morocco, Algeria, France)

Egypt's Modern Pharaohs

Jihan El Tahri, (Egypt, France, USA)

Stars and Extras

Marwa Astanios, (Lebanon, Egypt)

What Comes Around

Reem Saleh, (Lebanon, Egypt, UAE)

FEATURE DOCUMENTARY - POST PRODUCTION GRANTS

Democracy Year Zero

Amira Chebli and Christophe Cotteret, (Tunisia, Belgium, France)

Somebody Clap For Me

Luciana Farah, (Qatar, Brazil, Uganda, USA)

Waves

Ahmed Nour, (Egypt, Morocco)

FEATURE EXPERIMENTAL - DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

Dancing Beirut

Alia Hamdan, (Lebanon)

FEATURE EXPERIMENTAL - PROD/POST-PRODUCTION GRANTS

I Sold My Land

Reine Mitri, (Lebanon)

-ENDS-

About Doha Film Institute:

Doha Film Institute (DFI) is an independent cultural organisation established in 2010 to incorporate Qatar's film initiatives under one banner; organically supporting the growth of the local film community by enhancing industry knowledge, cultivating film appreciation and contributing to the development of sustainable creative industries in Qatar. DFI's year-round platforms include funding and production of local, regional and international films, educational programmes, film screenings, and the annual Doha Tribeca Film Festival (DTFF).

With culture, community, education and entertainment at its foundation, DFI serves as an all-encompassing film hub in Doha, as well as a resource for the region and the rest of the world. DFI is committed to supporting Qatar's 2030 vision for the development of a knowledge-based economy. DFI has established a number of strategic cultural partnerships with leading local and international organisations including Tribeca Enterprises, World Cinema Foundation, Maisha Film Lab, Katara Cultural Village and Giffoni Film Festival.



For more information, please contact:

Majid Wasi
Doha Film Institute
Tel: 00974 33247800
mwasi@dohafilminstitute.com

Ajay Teli
Doha Film Institute
Tel: 00974 55406634
ateli@dohafilminstitute.com

Kelly Home / Nivine William / Divya Khanna
ASDA'A Burson-Marsteller; +9714 4507 600
Kelly.home@bm.com / Nivine.william@bm.com / Divya.khanna@bm.com