



## Press Release

# 4<sup>th</sup> DTFF announces winners of Arab Film Competition

**Doha, Qatar; November 22, 2012:** The fourth Doha Tribeca Film Festival (DTFF), the annual cultural event of Doha Film Institute (DFI) tonight announced the winner of its Arab Film Competition, the region's only dedicated competition for Arab talent. The winners were feted at a special ceremony held at Al Rayyan Theatre, attended by the competition jury members comprising film experts and cultural voices from across the international community.

Mr Abdulaziz Al-Khater, Chief Executive Officer, Doha Film Institute, said: "We had set stringent quality standards for the Arab Film Competition this year – from the short-listing process to evaluation. We congratulate the winners as well as every filmmaker who has been part of this amazing cinema journey, marked by several compelling portraits of how Arab filmmakers react to the society and world around them. The thematic intensity of their films, their courage to push the boundaries and their focus on telling our stories with conviction to the rest of the world will be an inspiration to every emerging filmmaker. The Competition is a true reflection of our focus to strengthen the regional film industry by setting solid benchmarks of excellence."

With total prize money of over US\$440,000, the Arab Film Competition had its largest selection of 27 films this year, comprising seven documentaries, seven narrative features and 13 shorts from 10 Arab countries, including first time entries to the competition from Qatar and Saudi Arabia.

The Feature Narrative jury as headed by renowned Tunisian actress Hend Sabry. The other jury members included: Dr. Emad Amralla Sultan, Cultural Advisor to Katara Cultural Village; Indian director Ashutosh Gowariker; Turkish filmmaker Yeşim Ustaoglu and Algerian author Mohammed Moulessehoul.

The jury for Documentary Narrative comprised: Syrian documentary filmmaker, producer, and scriptwriter Hala Al Abdalla; Qatari director Hafiz Ali Ali and Iranian artist and filmmaker Shirin Neshat. The short films at the competition were evaluated by Joana Hadjithomas, Tahani Rached, and Nadir Mokneche.

Appraising the 'Made in Qatar' showcase, which featured the largest line-up yet this year with 19 films, were: Qatari author Wedad Al Kawari; Saudi Arabia's first female filmmaker, Haifaa Al Mansour; and founder of the Qatar Fine Arts Society and visual artist Faraj Daham.

## **The winners in the Narrative Feature category are:**

- **Best Narrative Feature Film**

*The Repentant* (Algeria, France), directed by Merzak Allouache

- **Best Narrative Filmmaker**

Nabil Ayouch for *Horses of God* (Morocco)



- **Best Performance**

**Winner:** Ahmed Hafiane for *Professor* (Tunisia, France, Qatar)

- **Special Mention:**

*Goodbye Morocco* (France, Belgium), directed by Nadir Moknèche

**The winners in the Documentary Narrative are:**

- **Best Documentary Feature Film**

*Lebanese Rocket Society* (Lebanon, France, Qatar), directed by Joana Hadjithomas and Khalil Joreige

- **Best Documentary Filmmaker**

Hanan Abdalla for *In The Shadow of a Man* (Egypt)

- **Special Mention**

Damien Ounouri for *Fidai*

**The winners in the short film segment are:**

- **Best Short Film**

*The Forgotten* (Syria, Qatar), directed by Ehab Tarabieh

The two special awards recognised in the category owing to outstanding nature of the film's subject and artistry are:

- **Development Award**

*Sanctity* (Saudi Arabia), directed by Ahd

- **Special Mention**

*A Day in 1959* (Lebanon), directed by Nadim Tabet

**The winners in the Made in Qatar segment are:**

- **Made in Qatar Development Award**

*Bader*, directed by Sara Al-Saadi, Maaria Assami, Latifa Al-Darwish

- **Special Mention**

*Lyrics Revolt* by Shannon Farhoud, Ashlene Ramadan, Melanie Fridgant, Rana Khaled Al Khatib

The best feature narrative and documentary received prize money of US\$100,000 each. An award of US\$50,000 was awarded to the best directors in both categories. The Best Performance Award winner in the Feature Narrative competition received US\$15,000. The Best Short film received US\$10,000 and a development prize of up to US\$10,000. The Made in Qatar development award winner was presented a cash prize of US\$ 10,000.



The award winning films will be screened at DTFF on Friday and Saturday. DTFF 2012 Arab Film Competition films are also available to view through Festival Scope, [www.festivalscope.com](http://www.festivalscope.com), the benchmark online service for film professionals allowing them to watch on demand films from more than 80 of the most prestigious international film festivals.

DFI and Festival Scope will profile the Arab Film Competition Narrative and Documentary features directly after the festival and will also present a special focus on several of DFI's MENA grantees to further profile their work to an international audience.

## Jury Statements

### DTFF Arab Film Competition: Feature Narrative

- For injecting new edginess into an established genre, and for the originality of its screenplay, which is carried by outstanding performances and skillful direction, the jury rewards a special mention to Nadir Moknèche's ***Goodbye Morocco***.
- For his presence, his sincerity and his truthful portrayal of a man torn between his feelings and his principles, the jury presents the award for the Best Performance in a narrative feature film to Ahmed El Hafiane for his role in ***Professor*** by Mahmoud Ben Mahmoud.
- For creating a powerful atmosphere in order to tackle a delicate subject with bravery, and for showing craftsmanship in deftly merging reality with fiction, the jury presents the award for Best Director to Nabil Ayouch for ***Horses of God***.
- For its powerful emotional thrust and for the subtle manner in which it treats the complexity of its characters at a tragic moment in their existence, the jury presents the award for Best Narrative Feature to ***The Repentant*** by Merzak Allouache.

### DTFF Arab Film Competition: Documentary

- For skillfully using a personal story to shine a light on a very important and transformational moment in Algerian history with an affecting, humanistic style, the jury awards a special mention to Damien Ounouri, the promising director of ***Fidaï***.
- For presenting diverse female subjects who come from different generations and segments of society, and succeeding in encouraging them to express themselves with bravery; for exposing the beauty and dynamism in their spirits despite their sometimes sad and difficult life circumstances; and for confronting a common subject with a distinguished and unique directorial style, which makes the film engaging in both form and content, the jury present the Best Documentary Director Award to Hanan Abdalla for ***In the Shadow of a Man***.
- In recognition of its immense efforts of research and its ability to build a dream and convince us with it; for its success in skillfully connecting a fantasy from the past to a current political situation; for its distinctive, personal narrative voice, which is playful and humorous despite the gravity of its subject; because it is able to leverage various stylistic methods, including experimental, documentary and archival, while maintaining its cohesion; and because it motivates new dialogue and a return to history and memory, the jury presents the Best Feature Documentary Award to ***The Lebanese Rocket Society*** by Joana Hadjithomas and Khalil Joreige.



### DTFF Arab Film Competition: Shorts

- Praising the artistry of a filmmaker, producer and screenwriter who is inspired, talented and creative, and whose future work the jury is eager to see, the jury awards a Special Mention to Nadim Tabet for his ***A Day in 1959***.
- For the courageous and powerful performance of its actress, and for the work of the director in addressing the film's issues in a way that highlights the extreme solitude of a Saudi woman in a thorough, profound and tangible way, the jury awards the Development Award to ***Sanctity*** by Ahd.
- For the beauty of its cinematography, its wonderful characters and its harsh yet moving nature, all of which are wonderfully embodied by the Syrian landscape, the jury presents the Award for Best Short Film to ***Forgotten*** by Ehab Tarabieh.

### Made in Qatar

- For its distinguished cinematography, its remarkable focus on its subject matter, and for its discussion of a contemporary language of youth culture that is in alignment with the social and political changes currently being witnessed by the Arab world, the jury grants a special mention to the film ***Lyrics Revolt***, by Shannon Farhoud, Ashlene Ramadan, Melanie Fridgant and Rana Khaled Al Khatib.
- The Made in Qatar Award goes to a film that is distinguished by its courage and transparency. Using smooth cinematic language, it captures a segment of Qatari society in a humanitarian way, and its protagonist is extraordinary for expressing his ideas with spontaneity as he refuses racial, ethnic and tribal discrimination. The award goes to the short documentary ***Bader***, by Sara Al-Saadi, Maaria Assami and Latifa Al-Darwish.

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#### 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.

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