

**Press Release**

## **Doha Film Institute announces projects to participate in inaugural edition of Qumra**

### **Actor, director/producer Gael Garcia Bernal comes on board as fifth Qumra Master**

**Berlin, Germany; 9 February, 2014:** The Doha Film Institute today announced the thirty-one projects selected to take part in the inaugural edition of Qumra, taking place in Doha, Qatar on March 6-11.

Twenty-three narrative feature films, 4 feature documentaries and 4 short films will participate in a focussed programme of industry sessions designed to propel their work to the next stage of development.

Twenty-two projects were selected from the Institute's funding programmes and nine are by independent filmmakers from Qatar who were identified through the Institute's ongoing engagement with local industry. The emphasis is on supporting first- and second-time filmmakers with projects in development and post-production stages.

The projects represent 29 countries of production with a total of 11 projects from Qatar-based filmmakers, 15 from the Middle East North Africa (MENA) region and 5 from the rest of the world. Nineteen of the 31 projects are in development and the remainder are in post-production or final stages.

Directors and Producers attached to each project will attend the sessions in Doha where they will be linked with seasoned industry experts through a series of bespoke meetings tailored to their project's needs.

The sessions will be comprised of one-on-one meetings, script consultations, pitching sessions, working breakfasts, rough-cut screenings and feedback sessions as well as an exclusive presentation of 'Final Cut' screenings where 20 minute excerpts of recently finalised projects will be presented to leading festival programmers, sales agents and distributors.

Doha Film Institute CEO Fatma Al Remaihi said: "Qumra was created as a direct response to the needs of emerging filmmakers. It is closely bound to the year-round initiatives of the Doha Film Institute - uniting many of the programmes we have developed over the past five years and expanding on them further by connecting filmmakers with industry mentors who will provide creative and practical support to move their projects to the next stage."

"At the heart of Qumra are the projects participating in our inaugural edition. Every aspect of this event is geared towards giving these first and second-time filmmakers access to the knowledge, inspiration and development opportunities that will allow them to move ahead in their careers."

In addition to the industry programme, the Qumra Projects participants will attend a series of master classes and screenings presented by some of the leading figures in world cinema today.

Mexican actor, director and producer Gael Garcia Bernal (*Amores Perros; No; Deficit*) has been confirmed as the fifth master to participate.

Al Remaihi said: “The participation of our Masters is integral to Qumra which is founded upon a commitment to the mentorship and creative development of emerging filmmakers. I am delighted to welcome Gael Garcia Bernal as the fifth member of this group, whose combined wealth of experience brings a rich layer of expertise to our programme.”

Garcia Bernal joins previously announced Qumra Masters: Mauritanian director Abderrahmane Sissako (*Timbuktu* - nominated for Best Foreign Language Film at this year’s Academy Awards); Iranian actor Leila Hatami (*Leila; A Separation*); Romanian auteur and Palme d’Or winner Cristian Mungiu (*4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days; Beyond the Hills*); and Bosnian writer/director Danis Tanović (*An Episode in the Life of an Iron Picker; Tigers, No Man’s Land* - winner of Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film in 2001)

The event will also include a programme of public screenings curated with input from the Qumra Masters featuring their work alongside new voices in cinema selected from films supported by the Institute’s grants and co-financing programmes. The screening programme will be announced in the coming weeks.

The 2015 Qumra Projects are:

#### FEATURE NARRATIVE – FINAL CUT

**Go Home** by Jihane Chouaib  
(Lebanon, France, Qatar)

The story of a young woman searching for the truth and discovering herself.

**Mountain** by João Salaviza  
(Portugal, France, Qatar)

A visually intense, poetic coming-of-age film in which 14-year-old David is forced to become the man of the house while his grandfather lives out his last days in hospital.

**The Garbage Helicopter** by Jonas Selberg Augustsén  
(Sweden, Qatar)

Three young adults on a journey. Their goal: to return an old wall clock to their grandmother. A story about a minor mission that becomes a major journey.

#### FEATURE NARRATIVE – WORK IN PROGRESS

**Blessed Benefit** by Mahmoud Al Massad  
(Jordan, The Netherlands, Germany, UAE, Qatar)

If the fish hadn’t opened its mouth, it never would have been caught.



**By the Time it Gets Dark** by Anocha Suwichakornpong  
(Thailand, France, Qatar)  
Secondhand memories, a film and a very blue mushroom.

**Dégradé** by Arab & Tarzan Abunasser  
(France, Palestine, Jordan, Qatar)  
Gaza, nowadays. Twelve women are stuck in a hair salon for a whole afternoon, witnessing a violent confrontation taking place across the street.

**Frenzy** by Emin Alper  
(Turkey, Germany, France, Qatar)  
Istanbul is in political chaos. Armed groups have taken control of the shantytowns. The police response is brutal. In the midst of this, two brothers are drawn into the violence.

#### **FEATURE DOCUMENTARY – WORK IN PROGRESS**

**Asphalt** by Ali Hammoud  
(Libya, Egypt, Qatar, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan)  
'Asphalt' is a travelogue about two Arab truckers on the road set against the fragile region they cross, and a poetic and realistic journey into their daily existence.

**Holy Cow** by Imamaddin Hasanov  
(Azerbaijan, Germany, Romania Qatar)  
One man's dream of bringing a European cow to his picturesque hometown in Azerbaijan unsettles the village's conservative community, who want to keep their traditions intact.

**Salaam Plenty** by Yasmine Kassari  
(Morocco, Australia, Belgium, Qatar)  
One of the earliest case studies of the movements of the Afghan Diaspora, this is a surprising example of a foray by Muslim men from the remote nomadic regions of Asia into the heart of a 19th-century British colony. This emigration created a ripple effect that continues to this day.

**What Comes Around** by Reem Saleh  
(Egypt, Lebanon, Qatar)  
In one of the poorest neighbourhoods in Cairo, hope still finds ways to resonate among the people.

#### **FEATURE NARRATIVE - DEVELOPMENT**

**A Reverence for Spiders** by Faiza Ambah  
(Saudi Arabia, USA, France, Qatar)  
A New York-based Egyptian imam helps a dying Christian teenager convert to Islam, only to be plunged into a political scandal that threatens his job, his faith and his relationship with his daughters.

**Beretta** by Sophia Al-Maria  
(Egypt, USA, Qatar)

'Beretta' follows Suad, a mute young woman who, over the course of the story, is transformed from an obedient, subdued woman into a vengeful killer.

**Beyond** by Nora Al Subai  
(Qatar)

The daughter of a conservative tribe leader burns with curiosity and hungers for freedom. When she embarks on a journey in search of the new world beyond the horizon, she is forced to question just how far and how much she is willing to sacrifice.

**In Search of Adam** by Ahmed Ibrahim Al Baker  
(Qatar)

Earth is dying. One man has been sent to coordinates where he hopes to find humanity's salvation, but while on the mission he uncovers something that unhinges his entire existence. Now alone, he is left to decide the fate of our planet.

**Little River** by Shaikha Al Thani  
(Qatar)

A call to prayer in Mecca, a secret deal, a city's development against the backdrop of a lie, a river wish made by two sisters recovering from a state of exile in their father's name.

**Madmen's Fort** by Narimane Mari  
(Algeria, France, Qatar)

Desires and greed lurk like raptors, preparing to transform a utopian dream into tragedy.

**Marjoun and the Flying Headscarf** by Susan Youssef  
(Lebanon, The Netherlands, USA, Qatar)

With her father imprisoned on dubious terrorism-related charges, a Lebanese-American teenager in Arkansas searches for her identity in the headscarf and a motorcycle.

**Me Myself and Murdoch** by Yahya Alabdallah  
(Jordan, Palestine, France, Qatar)

After an automobile accident, a young Palestinian wakes up with total amnesia – and finds he can speak only Hebrew.

**Men in the Sun** by Mahdi Fleifel  
(Palestine, Greece, United Kingdom, Denmark, Qatar)

Three young Palestinian refugees dream of escape from Athens after seven years of living in a country in crisis. Their carefully laid plans are ruined when they are conned by a people smuggler and the friends must use their wits to get their money back. When they finally have their revenge, they are faced with the choice of sticking together or a new beginning.

**Parijat** by Hend Fakhroo  
(Qatar)

A Qatari woman from a dissected family has moved and settled in London. When she's unexpectedly appointed head of her family's struggling perfume business, she rises to the challenge of saving the company and mending her broken past.

**Sahaab** by Khalifa Muraikhi  
(Qatar)

When Nasser and his friends are lost in the desert, struggling to retrieve their falcon, their search turns out to be a deadly journey.

**Scales** by Shahad Ameen

(Saudi Arabia, Qatar)

Thirteen-year-old Hayat was almost sacrificed to become a mermaid by her father when she was an infant. Now she faces the same problem once again because of her newborn brother.

**Superpower** by Mohammed Al Mahmeed

(Qatar)

The members of a dysfunctional family question faith, try to find happiness and realise their dreams when confronted with the illness of a son.

**The Taste of Apples Is Red** by Ehab Tarabieh

(Syria, USA, Palestine, Qatar)

Everything in Syria is becoming more difficult. In the village on the other side of the border, the cold is unbearable this year, and two elderly brothers are looking to redeem themselves and each other.

**Wooden Rifle** by Alfouz Tanjour

(Lebanon, Syria, Qatar)

During the Syrian revolution, a 21-year-old youth tries to escape with his mother to join his father. Things take a different direction when their boat capsizes in the sea and his mother dies. When his father sinks into a coma after a fight over his dirty work, the boy is obliged to care for the older man.

**SHORT FILMS – DEVELOPMENT**

**Bou Ejaila** by Saeed Al-Mennai

(Qatar)

After Afra is assaulted, she tries to explain herself to her uncaring family.

**Green Eyes** by Abdulla Al Mulla

(Qatar)

The tireless struggle of a coma patient in the ocean depths of his reality, as he faces off against his own ego and the mysterious monster that lives within.

**Our Time Is Running Out** by Meriem Mesraoua

(Qatar)

Children cherish one rule: simplicity. But what happens when they start to grow up? A pragmatic teenager doubts the logic of his world, finding himself on the verge of enlightenment.

**Pizza O Bass** by Mohammed Al Ibrahim

(Qatar)

The story of a pizza delivery guy and his three deliveries on New Year's Eve in Qatar.

**About Qumra:**

Qumra is an initiative that seeks to provide leadership, nurturing and hands-on development for filmmakers from Qatar and around the world, alongside a series of screenings for Doha audiences featuring films by international masters and recipients of support from the Institute.

\* 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.

**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 Youth 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.

Doha Film Institute

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