

Press Release

Doha Film Institute grantees *Dégradé* and *Mediterranea* announced in Cannes Film Festival's La Semaine de la Critique line-up

Doha, Qatar; April 20, 2015: Two films supported by the Doha Film Institute's grants programme have been announced today as part of the Cannes Film Festival's Semaine de la Critique (Critics' Week) sidebar taking place from May 14 – 22, 2015.

Dégradé (Palestine, France, Qatar) and *Mediterranea* (Italy, France, Germany, Qatar) are highly anticipated debut feature films by accomplished short filmmakers - twin brothers Tarzan and Arab Abu Nasser and Jonas Carpignano - whose short films screened in previous editions of the renowned festival.

Both films received grants in the Doha Film Institute's Fall 2014 funding round and *Dégradé* recently participated in the inaugural edition of Qumra – the Institute's new intensive industry programme dedicated to the development of emerging filmmakers – where it was presented as a 'picture-lock' showcase to selected industry experts and festival selectors.

Doha Film Institute CEO Fatma Al Remaihi said: "Our grants programme is dedicated to supporting new cinematic talent and there is no doubt that *Dégradé* and *Mediterranea* are among the most innovative new projects to emerge this year. I have no doubt that their Cannes debut will mark the beginning of an exciting journey for both of these films and I congratulate the teams behind them on their inclusion in this prestigious selection."

Established in 1962 by the French Union of Film Critics, La Semaine de la Critique showcases first and second feature films by directors from all over the world through a programme of works by new, innovative filmmakers. A host of groundbreaking directors have been discovered through the Critics' Week section including Alejandro González Iñárritu, Bernardo Bertolucci, Jacques Audiard, Ken Loach and Wong Kar-Wai.

Last week's official selection announcement included another Doha Film Institute grantee, *Waves 98* (Lebanon/Qatar) by Elie Dagher, one of two animated films among the nine shorts competing for the Short Film Palme d'Or. The Directors' Fortnight selection is yet to be announced.

Filmmakers and identical twin brothers Tarzan and Arab Abu Nasser were born in Gaza in 1988. In 2010, they received the A.M. Qattan Foundation's prestigious Young Artist of the Year Award for their conceptual artwork *Gazawood*, a series of mock-Hollywood posters for imaginary feature films named after real Israeli military offensives on Gaza. That same year, they directed the short film *Colourful Journey*, which had its premiere at the Rotterdam International Film Festival.

Their debut feature film, *Dégradé*, is set on a hot summer's day in the Gaza Strip. Christine's beauty salon is heaving with female clients: a bitter divorcée, a religious woman, a lunatic addicted to prescription drugs, a young bride-to-be accompanied by her asthmatic mother and her quarrelsome mother-in-law, and a very pregnant woman, among others. But their day of leisure is disrupted when gunfire breaks out across the street. A gangland family has stolen the lion from Gaza's only zoo, and Hamas police forces have decided it's time to settle old scores. Stuck in the salon, with the prospect of death drawing ever nearer, the women start to unravel.

Jonas Carpignano has spent his life between Italy and the USA and currently lives in Gioia Tauro, where he has been making films for the past five years. His short film *A Chjàna* won the Controcampo Award for Best Short Film in Venice, and was awarded a Nastro D'Argento Special Mention from the Association of Italian Film Critics. His latest short, *A Ciambra*, won the Sony Discovery Prize at the Critics' Week at Cannes in 2014. Carpignano is an alumnus of the 2012 Sundance Writers & Directors Lab, and a recipient of the Mahindra/Sundance GFA Award.

Mediterranea is Carpignano's debut feature film and tells the story of Ayiva and Abas who are best friends making the trip from Burkina Faso to Europe in search of a better future and to provide for their families back home. They survive the arduous journey through the Sahara and across the Mediterranean Sea. But when they arrive, tensions build between the locals and the immigrant community, and Ayiva must consider what this "better life" is really worth.

The Doha Film Institute's grants programme supports projects by filmmakers from around the world with an emphasis on MENA and Qatari filmmakers. The fund is primarily for first and second-time filmmakers with the exception of the category of Post-Production which is newly open to established filmmakers from the MENA region.

For more information about eligibility and submission process visit:

<http://www.dohafilminstitute.com/financing/grants/guidelines>

A full directory of past grant recipients is available to view online at:

<http://www.dohafilminstitute.com/financing/projects/grants>

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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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Press Enquiries:

Menna Gomaa
Communications Associate
+974/55073325
mgomaa@dohafilminstitute.com

MENA Press Enquiries:

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

International Press Enquiries:

Cathy Dunkley

Freuds
+44 203 003 6355
cathy.dunkley@freuds.com