

Record 20 films supported by Doha Film Institute on spotlight at 13th Dubai International Film Festival

- 15 films supported by the Doha Film Institute to be screened at the Dubai International Film Festival
- Three grantee films to be showcased in Dubai Film Connection, DIFF's co-production market
- Qatari short narrative that received DFI in-house development support also chosen for DIFF, while Qatari filmmaker Hafiz Ali Ali nominated for fifth IWC Filmmaker Award
- Three Qatari short films compete for top honours in the Muhr Gulf Short section

Doha, Qatar; December 4, 2016: Twenty films, supported by the Doha Film Institute, are taking the spotlight at the Dubai International Film Festival (DIFF) to be held from December 7 to 14, 2016.

In one of the largest participations of Qatar-backed projects, 15 films supported by the Doha Film Institute will be screened at the 13th DIFF, several of them also nurtured at Qumra, the dedicated industry event where the filmmakers had the opportunity to discuss diverse aspects of the film with industry veterans. A number of these films are competing for DIFF's Muhr Awards, while two films are showcased in both the Cinema of the World and Arabian Nights segments.

Additionally, three films that are recipients of the Institute's grants are being showcased in Dubai Film Connection, the co-production market of DIFF. Further, Hafiz Ali Ali, a Qatari producer-director, has been nominated for the prestigious IWC Filmmaker Award 2016 of the festival for his project, ***The Search for the Star Pearl***, a feature animation that received the Institute's grant for development and was nurtured by industry experts at Qumra earlier this year. Ali Ali will compete alongside Emirati nominees and filmmakers Nujoom Alghanem and Abdullah Hassan Ahmed for the USD\$ 100,000 award. An eminent jury of experts will evaluate the potential of the three projects and choose the winner.

Adding to the pride of Qatar, ***Smicha*** (Qatar / 2016), a short narrative produced by Innovation Films, written and directed by Amal Al Muftah will mark its world premiere at DIFF. The film received in-house development support from the Doha Film Institute, and will compete in the Muhr Gulf Short segment.

Fatma Al Remaihi, Chief Executive Officer of Doha Film Institute, said: "We are exceptionally proud of the firm imprint that Qatar will make this year at DIFF. In addition to 15 films supported by us being chosen for screening in different programmes, we are also delighted with many Qatari talents, nurtured by the Institute, underlining their credentials at the international festival.

"This is a strong testament to the success of our grassroots-level initiative to identify, nurture and strengthen the filmmaking skills of our talented young people. Through their selection, they are highlighting the remarkable strides that Qatar has made in building a home-grown film industry marked by quality productions."

The DFI grantees that have been short-listed at the Dubai Film Connection are: ***From A Palm Tree to the Stars***, a feature documentary by Leila Albayaty (Iraq, France, Qatar); ***The Great Family*** by Eliane Raheb (Lebanon, France, Qatar) – a 2016 Qumra project – and ***Parijat***, a feature narrative by Hend Fakhroo (Qatar), also a 2015 Qumra project.

Among the 15 films to be screened at DIFF that were supported by the Doha Film Institute, six are marking their world premiere.

They are: ***Ali, the Goat and Ibrahim*** (Egypt, UAE, France, Qatar / 2016), a feature narrative by Sherif El Bendary; ***Behind the Wall*** (Morocco, Qatar / 2016), a short narrative by Karima Zoubir; ***Egyptian Jeanne d'Arc*** (Egypt, Kuwait, Germany, Qatar / 2016), a feature documentary by Iman Kamel; ***Kashta*** (Qatar / 2016), a short narrative by A.J. Al Thani; ***Terra Firma*** (Morocco, France, UAE, Qatar / 2016), a feature documentary by Laurent Ait Benalla; and ***The Waiting Room*** (Qatar / 2016), a short narrative by Hend Fakhroo.

Six feature narratives will mark their MENA premiere at DIFF. These include: ***Apprentice*** (Singapore, Germany, France, Hong Kong, Qatar / 2016) by Junfeng Boo and ***Tramontane*** (Lebanon, France, UAE, Qatar / 2016) by Vatche Boulghourjian that premiered both at the 2016 Cannes Film Festival; ***Blessed Benefit*** (Jordan, Germany, The Netherlands, UAE, Qatar / 2016) by Mahmoud Al Massad and ***Off Frame AKA Revolution Until Victory*** (Palestine, France, Lebanon, Qatar / 2016), a feature essay by Mohanad Yaqubi that screened to audiences first at TIFF 2016; ***The Dark Wind*** (Iraq, Germany, Qatar / 2016) by Hussein Hassan; and ***White Sun*** (Nepal, Netherlands, USA, Qatar / 2016) by Deepak Rauniyar.

Two films mark their Middle East debut at DIFF in the Muhr Feature and Arabian Nights segments. Respectively, these are ***Hedi*** (Tunisia, Belgium, France, UAE, Qatar / 2016) by Mohamed Ben Attia that won the Best First Feature Award at Berlinale 2016; and ***Zaineb Hates the Snow*** (Tunisia, Lebanon, France, UAE, Qatar / 2016), a feature documentary by Kaouther Ben Hania, that premiered at the 2016 Locarno Film Festival. Also in the Arabian Nights segment is ***House Without Roof*** (Iraq, Germany, Qatar / 2016), a feature narrative by Soleen Yusef, which marks its GCC premiere at DIFF.

Of the films, ***Ali, the Goat and Ibrahim, Egyptian Jeanne d'Arc, Terra Firma, Blessed Benefit, The Dark Wind, Tramontane, Off Frame AKA Revolution Until Victory***, and ***Hedi*** are competing for the Muhr Feature awards, while ***Behind the Wall, Kashta*** and ***The Waiting Room*** are competing for the Muhr Short award. ***Ali, the Goat and Ibrahim, Blessed Benefit, Kashta*** and ***White Sun*** are also Qumra projects.

The Doha Film Institute's grants programme has supported more than 300 films since its inception in 2010. The Institute also supports films from across the world through co-financing in addition to nurturing Qatari talents through the Qatari Film Fund. Additionally, it provides creative and technical training and mentoring through its Training and Development Initiatives.

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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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