

The Simpsons' writer and producer Mike Reiss takes Qumra Talks' guests on a hilarious journey through his career

Mike Reiss shared his favourite jokes from America's longest-running sitcom

Doha, Qatar; March 7, 2017: Mike Reiss, winner of four Emmy Awards and famed for writing *The Simpsons* for three decades, took the audience through his illustrious career at a packed auditorium in the Museum of Islamic Art, as part of this week's Qumra Talks.

The session, *On writing and Producing with Mike Reiss*, saw Reiss describe the lessons that he has learnt along the way, demonstrating how all these skills came together in *The Simpsons*, the internationally-renowned animated comedy.

The self-deprecating writer immediately enamoured the audience to him by stating, "Please remember, I'm a comedy writer not a comedian."

However, the talk itself was full of great humour bringing his points about writing comedy to home by playing some of his favourite scenes from *The Simpsons*.

Imparting advice to attendees who are starting out in their career, Reiss said: "In this job you have to make your own luck, and work on as many ideas and projects as you can. When I started working with The National Lampoon, I had five other projects on the go."

Reinforcing the advice, Reiss also suggested writers and filmmakers should take any job that comes their way as you never know what it will turn into. Reiss was offered the role of writer of *The Simpsons*, a new show in 1988, on TV network Fox Broadcasting Company, which was also a newcomer to audiences. He took gamble and here he is three decades later sharing his story in Qatar - and many other parts of the world.

Rounding up the lively event, which was attended by students, upcoming writers and vloggers, Reiss said: "You can't teach comedy. Or how to craft it. It just comes from observation. You have to watch a lot of good comedy. Watching good work inspires you to do good work."

The session touched upon topics such as character development, 'What makes a good joke?', and the writing process of *The Simpsons*. It was the second in the series of Qumra Talks organised as part of Qumra, the industry event by the Doha Film Institute, in partnership with the Northwestern University in Qatar.

Qumra Talks features three specially curated discussions, open to the public. It brings together leaders from the film, TV, technology and online worlds to offer new perspectives into areas that are redefining the film and media ecosystem.



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Note to Editors:

About Qumra

Directors and Producers attached to thirty-four projects in development and post-production are selected to participate in the event. They will include a number of emerging filmmakers from Qatar, as well as recipients of funding from the Institute's Grants Programme. The robust programme will feature industry meetings designed to assist with propelling projects to their next stages of development, including master classes, work-in-progress screenings, bespoke matchmaking sessions and tailored workshops with industry experts. This creative exchange will take place alongside a programme of public screenings curated with input from the Qumra Masters.

The event is organised in three main sections: The **Qumra Master Classes** are daily sessions; each led by one of the Masters. The participating filmmakers have full access to these sessions, which are also open to accredited industry guests to attend in an observational capacity.

The **Qumra Meetings** are a series of one-on-one meetings, workshops and tailored mentoring sessions between representatives from the selected projects and seasoned industry experts.

The **Qumra Screenings** are open to the public and feature projects funded by the Institute through its grants and co-financing initiatives, as well as a series of films chosen by the Qumra Masters accompanied by Q&A sessions.

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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