

12 films supported by Doha Film Institute put the spotlight on Arab talent and emerging filmmakers at 2017 Toronto International Film Festival

- *Nine feature films and one short – all recipients of the Institute's Film Grants - make the cut for the prestigious film festival*
- *Co-financed project Looking for Oum Kulthum makes its North American premiere at TIFF*
- *Six films mark their World Premiere at the prestigious event*

Doha, Qatar. 6 September, 2017: A strong contingent of 12 films supported by the Doha Film Institute will shine the spotlight on film talent from the Arab region and beyond, at the prestigious Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) to be held from September 7 to 17, 2017. One of the largest selections of films backed by the Institute, the 12 films to be screened at TIFF include six World Premieres, five North American Premieres and a Toronto premiere.

Of the selection, 10 films – including nine features and one short – are supported by Doha Film Institute's Grants Programme, which provides development, production and post-production funding to filmmakers from Qatar, first- and second-time filmmakers from around the world, and post-production funding for established MENA filmmakers. The line-up includes a co-financed title and a project developed through one of the Institute's Training and Development labs.

Fatma Al Remaihi, Chief Executive Officer of the Doha Film Institute, said: "We have one of the most diverse showcase of films supported by the Doha Film Institute at Toronto International Film Festival this year. In addition to presenting compelling voices in filmmaking from the Arab world, the selection also includes new voices in global cinema that we support as part of our focus on nurturing the upcoming generation of talents. The 12 films present fascinating perspectives on life that reflect human hopes, aspirations and challenges. Each film is an inspiring take on the world we live in, and demonstrates how film has the power to drive social change."

The films supported by the Doha Film Institute Grants Programme that mark their World Premiere at TIFF are:

- ***The Journey*** (Iraq, UK, France, Netherlands, Qatar/2017) by Mohamed Jabarah Al Daradji, is a provocative political meditation about a would-be suicide bomber and a fast-talking train station attendant she takes hostage. It will screen in the Contemporary World Cinema programme of TIFF. *The Journey* was also a 2017 Qumra project.
- ***Of Sheep and Men*** (Algeria, Switzerland, France, Qatar/2017) by Karim Sayad, presented in the TIFF Docs programme, is about 16-year-old Habib, who dreams of training his prized sheep to become a fighting champion. The project participated at Qumra 2016 and 2017.
- ***The Seen and Unseen*** (Indonesia, Netherlands, Australia, Qatar/2017), directed by Kamila Andini, will screen in the Platform programme; it is about a 10-year-old girl who retreats into an evocative dream space to deal with the impending loss of her twin brother.
- ***The Other Side of Everything*** (Serbia, France, Qatar/2017) by Mila Turajlic, is also in TIFF Docs, where a locked door in her mother's apartment in Belgrade provide the getaway to both the protagonist's family history and the country's tumultuous political inheritance.

- **Ava** (Iran, Canada, Qatar/2017) by Sadaf Foroughi in which a 16-year-old girl's relationship with her family is challenged after her mother takes her to a gynecologist.
- **The President's Visit** (Lebanon, USA, Qatar/2017) by Cyril Aris will screen in the Short Cuts programme, and is about a soap maker, who receives word that the President intends to visit and the overzealous townsfolk scramble to create an image of themselves that is worthy of the occasion.

DFI Grantees that will make their North American premiere at TIFF include:

- **Wajib** (Palestine, France, Germany, Colombia, Norway, UAE, Qatar /2017), directed by Annemarie Jacir, is a rousing family drama, where a father and his estranged son must come together to hand deliver his daughter's wedding invitations to each guest. The film screens in the Contemporary World Cinema segment.
- **Madmen's Fort** (Algeria, France, Switzerland, Germany, Greece, Qatar/2017), directed by Narimane Mari, explores the legacy of colonisation through a portrait in three acts filmed in Algeria and in Greece. Screening in Wavelength, the project participated at Qumra 2015 and 2017.
- **Cocote** (Dominican Republic, Argentina, Germany, Qatar/2017) by Nelson Carlo de los Santos Arias screens in the Wavelength programme; it is an exploration into the lurking violence, corruption and class conflicts in his homeland.
- **Disappearance** (Iran, Qatar/2017) by Ali Asgari to screen in the Discovery section at TIFF; the film is about a couple of young lovers in Tehran, who run into a serious problem and must come up with a solution quickly.

The co-financed film **Looking for Oum Kulthum** (Germany, Austria, Italy, Lebanon, Qatar/2017) by Shirin Neshat in collaboration with Shoja Azari, marks its North American Premiere in the Contemporary World Cinema programme. It is a movie-within-a-movie about an ambitious Iranian director's attempts to film the life and legacy of legendary Egyptian singer Oum Kulthum.

The DFI Training and Development lab project to be chosen for TIFF in the Wavelength section is **Turtles Are Always Home** (Lebanon, Canada, Qatar/ 2016), a short experimental by Rawane Nassif, who uses the Qanat Quartier of Doha, Qatar- with its faux-Venetian canals and facades- as a starting point for an abstract reflection on the concepts of place, authenticity and home.

Previous Grantees also present at TIFF this year with their new projects include award winning director of *Mustang* (DFI Grantee), Deniz Gamze Ergüven's English language debut *Kings* and Haifaa Al Mansour's English debut *Mary Shelley*.

For more information, please log on to: www.dohafilminstitute.com

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Note to Editors:

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.

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