

Doha Film Institute selects 6 projects from Qatari filmmakers for the 2017 Qatari Film Fund Spring grants

- *One feature film, three short narratives and one short animation and documentary among winning projects*
- *Selected projects present the diversity of storytelling approaches by talented young Qatari directors*

Doha, Qatar; September 16, 2017: The Doha Film Institute announced today the recipients of the Qatari Film Fund Spring 2017 grants, dedicated to nurturing home-grown filmmaking talents by providing all-around support to young Qatari directors who are passionate about cinema and bring creative approaches to storytelling.

Launched in 2015, the Qatari Film Fund selects eight shorts and up to four feature projects through two funding cycles per year. Feature films developed through the fund are eligible for financial support for production and one film will be selected for the fund the following year. Selected short films are eligible for funding valued up to QAR 182,500, and the Institute will work closely with the filmmakers throughout the development, production and post-production stages.

For the Spring 2017 cycle, six talented Qatari filmmakers have been chosen for the grant from a record number of submissions received. The awarded projects include the feature narrative ***Khuzama***, by A.J. Al-Thani; the short animation film ***Fragile*** by Kholoud Al-Ali; the short documentary ***Untitled Arab Museum Documentary*** (working title) by Majid Al-Remaihi; and three short narratives – ***I Am My Own Guardian*** by Mahdi Ali Ali; ***End of the Road*** by Ahmad Al-Sharif; and ***Nasser Goes to Space*** by Mohamed Al Mahmeed.

Fatma Al Remaihi, Chief Executive Officer of the Doha Film Institute, said: “The Qatari Film Fund celebrates the skills and accomplishments of Qatari filmmakers, and highlights the importance of providing multi-faceted support to develop a home-grown culture of filmmaking. Our goal is to inspire, nurture and empower the next generation of storytellers, who present our stories to global audiences, and serve as a window into the creative aspirations of Qatar’s emerging filmmaking talents.

“We had an extremely competitive pitch for the Spring 2017 cycle with several high-quality projects submitted by our emerging talents. The selected projects stand out for their originality, creativity and narrative power, and are diverse in their genre and approach. At the Doha Film Institute, we believe in the power of compelling filmmaking that question perceptions and presents new perspectives. We are proud of our filmmakers for their innovative approach to cinema and for tackling challenging subjects with confidence,” she added.

A.J. Al-Thani, whose earlier film ***Kashta*** (2016) won the the Best Narrative Award at the 2016 Ajyal Youth Film Festival and was recently showcased in the Market screening of ‘Made in Qatar’ films at Cannes and at the Sarajevo Film Festival, returns with the tale of seven Bedouin women fighting to escape to freedom in ***Khuzama***. It focuses on a woman who lives with her father in the desert and in complete isolation. When she gets into trouble with bandits, she must leave home for a new journey.

Kholoud Al-Ali's **Fragile** is set in a valley where people are made of ceramic. Since they are breakable they must move very carefully. Among them is a ceramic girl who has always wondered about what lay beyond the mountains. The animation charts her journey as she decides to scale the hills and explore the world beyond. A graduate in Art Education from Qatar University, Kholoud has worked on several short animation series including for Al Jazeera Children's Channel.

The **Untitled Arab Museum Documentary** by Majid Al-Remaihi explores the history of a museum of Arab modern art through its archives, artworks and spaces. While claiming its potential as a documentary, it also produces art objects and histories. Majid is pursuing an undergraduate degree in Sociology and is part of an artist collective that explores the cross-over of youth and ideas. He has completed a short film through the Doha Film Institute's Documentary Lab.

I Am My Own Guardian by Mahdi Ali Ali narrates the story of Sara, a professional photographer, who is surprised to see a young girl from a conservative family being rebellious. To get proof of the girl's disobedience, she follows the family who are taking pictures in Katara Cultural Village. Mahdi works in training and education of Qatari filmmakers at Doha Film Institute, and is the executive producer and supervisor for more than 30 short films produced by the Institute. He holds an MFA from EICAR, the International Film School of Paris, and has made short films for Al Jazeera.

End of the Road is a comedy drama by Ahmad Al-Sharif set in 1997. Munir, a kind-hearted and trusting taxi driver, is caught in a dilemma: Whether to make it home in time for his daughter's birthday or help an old man on the side of the road to his home. However, there are more twists and turns to the story as it revolves around trusting your senses, except when they are wrong. Ahmad, a graduate in film, has worked on many high-end productions and is a producer for the New Media and Content at the Doha Film Institute. He is the director of **#DariQatar** (2016), the acclaimed crowd-sourced film initiative that provided a once in a lifetime opportunity for the community to share their stories of life in Qatar.

Mohamed Al Mahmeed's **Nasser Goes to Space** is about a highly imaginative 7-year-old boy coping with his parents' divorce by escaping to a magical place he has created in his imagination with his two toys – Thunder and Lightning. He was selected for the La Femis Summer Gulf Programme in Paris, and worked on the production of Noora Al-Subai's **Al-Johara**, a short film produced by the Doha Film Institute. He is also currently working on a feature film, **Superpower**, about a Qatari family dealing with their son's terminal illness; the project has also won a development fund from the Institute.

Since its launch in 2015, the Qatari Film Fund has supported 17 projects including 12 shorts, 1 documentary and 4 features. The first completed projects from the 2015 Qatar Film Fund recipients, Nora Al-Subai's **Al-Johara** and Amer-An **Arabian Legend** by Jassim Al Rumaihi, marked their world premiere at the 2016 Ajyal Youth Film Festival. The winners of earlier Qatari Film Fund grants have gone on to showcase their projects in international film festivals including Cannes, Berlin and Sarajevo among others, and won laurels at the Ajyal Youth Film Festival.

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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.

Doha Film Institute

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