

Qatari Talents Highlight Evolution of Country's Film Scene with Strong Representation at Qumra 2018

- *11 short films by Qatari talents and 3 feature narratives in development stage are part of the 34 Qumra projects this year*
- *Four films by Qatar-based talents, including 3 Qatari directors, to be screened in New Voices section*

Doha, Qatar; March 8, 2018: Highlighting the evolution of the country's film scene, Qatari talents are marking a significant participation at Qumra 2018, the fourth annual industry event by the Doha Film Institute to be held from March 9 to 14 at Souq Waqif and the Museum of Islamic Art.

This year, in addition to 11 short films by Qatari talents, three feature narratives in development stage are among the 34 Qumra projects to be nurtured by the Qumra Masters and industry professionals through the six-day intensive programme aimed at nurturing the skills and honing the film projects by first- and second-time filmmakers.

In addition, four films by Qatar-based talents – including three by Qatari Nationals – are being screened as part of the New Voices in Cinema section. The screenings are open to the public, and will be followed by audience Q&As with the talents associated with the films.

Fatma Al Remaihi, Chief Executive Officer of the Doha Film Institute, said: "We are exceptionally proud of the strong participation by Qatari projects at Qumra this year. From short films to feature narratives and accomplished projects, their presence underlines the evolution of a strong film-centred ecosystem in the country that also encourages the local creative industry. At a time where the art of storytelling has become a responsibility, each of these projects also stands out for their strong content and narrative approach, presenting to the world authentic stories from Qatar by Qatari talents and set in our beloved nation. Qumra continues to be a platform to launch these new voices to the global stage."

Three shorts by Qatari filmmakers to be screened in the New Voices in Cinema section are:

- ***1001 Days*** (Qatar/2017) by Aisha Al-Jaidah, is an animated short that, through its traditional fairytale structure, addresses eternal issues such as sacrifice, equality and bravery, and considers how today's women deserve equal treatment and privileges.
- ***Domestic Acoustics*** (Qatar/2017) by Majid Al-Remaihi, is an experimental endeavor that explores the overlap of domestic and creative spaces, and their relationship to the female artist.
- ***Embodiment*** (Qatar/2017) by Khalifa Al Marri is a poetic reflection of Qatar's becoming a sophisticated nation of wealth and influence while retaining its centuries-old traditions. It is an inspiring journey from ancient wilderness to contemporary metropolis.

Further, Qatar-based filmmakers Hadeer Omar and Idris Elhassan bring ***Chaos Antidote*** (Qatar/2017), which portrays the ever-changing urban landscape of Doha in a dreamily contemplated, wordless, documentary in which order is made of chaos and a sense of peace overcomes the hectic pace of progress.

The three Feature Narratives in development stage by Qatari talents being nurtured as 2018 Qumra projects are:

- ***The Voice of Amirah*** (working title/Qatar), by Khalifa Al-Thani, is about an adolescent girl in the 1970's, whose life takes a wonderful turn when she stands up for what she believes in.
- ***Khuzama*** (Qatar), directed by AJ Al-Thani, is about a Bedouin girl who dreams of exploring the desert until she discovers that the desert is not what she imagined it to be.
- ***Behind Closed Doors*** (Qatar) by Hend Fakhroo tell the story of six-year-old Leila, who wakes up one day and finds her mother gone with only her father to take care of her.

The Qumra Shorts programme that has projects by Qatari nationals and those who call Qatar home include:

- ***Sh'hab*** by Amal Al-Muftah, in which upon hearing a myth about falling stars, a young girl's curiosity is sparked. When night falls on Al Wakrah village, she sets out in her father's boat to chase the fabled comets.
- ***Chained Prey*** by Mohammed Refaat, is about a domestic falcon who lives a life of prestige at his falconer's house in Doha faces the threat of losing his secure lifestyle forever.
- ***Bandits*** by Sara Al Obaidly. Two young rebels leave behind their London lives for dream of the Middle East, but when reality sets in they realize have taken on more than they bargained for.
- ***Burn the Bird*** by Zahed Bata, is about Samaa and her son Sari who drive out in the dead of night to bury Nagnhoush, their pet parrot. Ultimately, they realise the only way to set him free is to set him on fire.
- ***Gubgub*** by Noof Al-Sulaiti. An adventurous young girl goes crab-hunting with her father and brother. Discouraged when her father undervalues her accomplishments compared to her brother's, she sets out to win her father's approval.
- ***In Connect*** by Maha Al-Jefairi, a young mother dies and is brought back to life in a robotic body – and must confront her new reality, in which her six-year-old son is afraid of her.
- ***Al Sit*** by Susannah Mirghani, in a Sudanese farming village, old Al Sit must be consulted for her blessings ahead of any wedding. But in a modernising world, does the matriarch's word hold any power?
- ***Pastimes*** by Majid Al-Rumaihi, interrogates the repetition of traditional scenery in painting practice in Doha, and the factors that sustain as well as complicate it.
- ***Hatshepsut in the Box*** by Hadeer Omar, is set in a world where people wear transparent boxes on their heads to reveal their identities, 14-year-old Leila goes rogue and divides the materials in her box to become like a new Pharaoh Hatshepsut.
- ***Amphitheatre*** by Mahdi Ali Ali, in which a young girl rebels against her family's traditions in front of a professional photographer's lens.
- ***Okht Rjal*** by Obada Jarbi, three women become the breadwinners for their families, necessary for survival.

The Qumra 2018 industry events include workshops and meetings for first- and second-time filmmakers with international film industry experts in bespoke mentorship labs; the Qumra Master Classes, led by acclaimed filmmakers; Qumra Screenings of feature films presented by the Qumra Masters and recipients of funding from the Institute, followed by question-and-answer sessions; and the Qumra Talks.

-ENDS-

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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