

6 Doha Film Institute's Supported Films Selected to Prestigious Sections of the 71st Cannes Film Festival

- Announces co-financing partnership on 2016 Qumra Master Nuri Bilge Ceylan's **The Wild Pear Tree** and Nadine Labaki's **Capharnaüm**, world premiering in Official Competition
- DFI Grant recipients, **Sofia** by Meryem Benm'Barek and **Long Day's Journey Into Night** by Gan Bi selected to screen in Un Certain Regard
- **The Load** by Ognjen Glavonić and **Weldi** by Mohamed Ben Attia to premiere in Directors' Fortnight
- Seven **short** films by Qatari talents to be showcased at Cannes Short Film Corner

Doha, Qatar; May 02, 2018: The Doha Film Institute has set a first in the Arab region for a film organisation, with two new films co-financed by the Institute being selected to the prestigious Competition section at the 71st Cannes Film Festival from May 8 to 19, 2018.

A defining moment for Arab and regional cinema, Turkish auteur and 2014 Palme d'or winner Nuri Bilge Ceylan's **The Wild Pear Tree** and multi award-winning Lebanese filmmaker Nadine Labaki's **Capharnaüm** will vie for the coveted Palme d'Or in the Festival's official competition.

In addition to the two new co-financed films, the Doha Film Institute marks an exceptional year at Cannes with 11 other films taking part in the festival. Official selection titles include: **Sofia** (by Meryem Benm'Barek and **Long Day's Journey Into Night** by Gan Bi selected to screen in Un Certain Regard; **The Load** by Ognjen Glavonić and **Weldi** by Mohamed Ben Attia screening in the Directors' Fortnight. In addition, seven short films by Qatari talents are being showcased at the Cannes Short Film Corner.

Fatma Al Remaihi, Chief Executive Officer of the Doha Film Institute, said: "This is an exceptional honour for Qatar and the Doha Film Institute as we represent 13 films at Cannes, including the honour of having six films selected to prestigious sections of the Festival. This underlines the focus of Qatar to support authentic and compelling voices, especially given the times we live in, and our commitment to partner with visionary filmmakers who stand for their passion and exceptional craft in bringing humane stories to life. The selection of these films to a prestigious event like Cannes adds to our commitment and pride, and highlights the strong inroads we have made to contribute to a more diverse and richly curated global film landscape."

She added: "We are truly proud of the works of Nuri Bilge Ceylan and Nadine Labaki. **The Wild Pear Tree** is an important and timely film told with the unique craftsmanship of Bilge Ceylan and **Capharnaüm** has a poignant and urgent narrative that will resonate with all. We are similarly excited about **Sofia**, **Long Day's Journey Into Night**, **Weldi** and **The Load**, as well as our own talents from Qatar with their captivating short films."

2016 Qumra Master Nuri Bilge Ceylan (*Once Upon A Time In Anatolia*, *Winter Sleep*) won the 2014 Palme d'Or for *Winter Sleep* and best director honour at the 2008 Cannes for his film *Three Monkeys*, amongst other prizes at the leading film festival. His new feature, **The Wild**

Pear Tree, explores the theme that for some the countryside is a place of exile where all hopes ultimately merge with solitude. A boundless place of exile where all hopes and dreams merge with despair like the coinciding destinies of fathers and sons.

Lebanese filmmaker Nadine Labaki has earned acclaim at Cannes earlier for *Where Do We Go Now?* (Un Certain Regard) – also supported by the Doha Film Institute - and *Caramel* (Directors' Fortnight). A gritty film underlined by Labaki's unique sense of humour and documentary-style realism, **Capharnaüm** is about a child who rebels against the life imposed on him and launches a lawsuit against his parents.

Sofia by Meryem Benm'Barek is about the namesake protagonist who lives with her parents in a modest apartment in Casablanca and discovers she is about to give birth, while having lunch with her family one day. In **Long Day's Journey Into Night**, Luo Hongwu returns to his hometown from which he fled 12 years earlier. Past and present, reality and dream interweave in Gan Bi's stunningly beautiful and highly innovative film noir.

Tunisian director Mohamed Ben Attia's **Weldi** is about Riadh, who is about to retire from his work as a forklift operator at the port of Tunis. The life he shares with his wife Nazli revolves around their only son Sami, who suddenly disappears. **The Load** charts the life of Vlada, who works as a truck driver during the NATO bombing of Serbia in 1999. Tasked with transporting a mysterious load from Kosovo to Belgrade, he drives through unfamiliar territory, surrounded by the ravages of the war.

The Doha Film Institute is presenting seven short films by Qatar-based talent under the theme, 'Shortcuts to Qatar'. The selection includes narratives, documentaries, and experimental short films that shine a light on the ever-changing landscape of Qatar.

The films in this segment are: **Voices from the Urbanscape** (2017) by Shaima Al-Tamimi and Mariam Salim; **Walls** (2017) by Nibu Vasudevan; **Treasures of the Past** (2017) by Rawan Al-Nassiri and Nada Bedair; **I Have Been Watching You All Along** (2017) by Rawda Al-Thani; **Our Time is Running Out** (2017) by Meriem Mesraoua; **Embodiment** (2017) by Khalifa Al-Marri and **1001 Days** (2017) by Aisha Al-Jaidah.

A sort of travelogue around Qatar's capital in development, **Voices from the Urbanscape** is an apt reflection of a burgeoning 21st-century city with a mission and a tribute to its multicultural success. In **I Have Been Watching You All Along**, a young woman wanders about an abandoned cinema through a trancelike journey into its corridors, while **Walls** is an animation set in a decaying world that has become nothing more than a trash heap, where a race of skeleton-like, robotic creatures are engaged in a pointless, seemingly endless war.

Embodiment is a poetic reflection of Qatar's becoming a sophisticated nation of wealth and influence while retaining its centuries-old traditions, serving as an inspiring journey from ancient wilderness to contemporary metropolis. In **Treasures of the Past**, three grandmothers from Qatar are willing to give it all that it takes to break gender stereotypes in their societies by providing for their family through their successful businesses.

In **Our Time is Running Out**, set in blissful alternate universe, a society of children lives according to strict rules, and deviation from the norm means eternal banishment, while **1001**



Days tells the story of the life of Sheherezade, the creative and heroic storyteller. Within a traditional fairy-tale structure, this animated short addresses eternal issues like sacrifice, equality and bravery, and considers how today's women deserve equal treatment and privileges.

For more details, visit: 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.

Doha Film Institute

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