

Qumra 2019 provides crucial support for international projects

- *Qumra is judged as the best initiative of its kind when compared to other international film festivals and filmmaking labs*

Doha, Qatar: 20 March 2019: Filmmakers from around the world presenting projects at Qumra 2019 praised it as a singular event for supporting their projects' development.

The fifth edition of Qumra brings together more than 150 acclaimed filmmakers, industry professionals and experts to nurture 36 projects from around the world in various stages of development. Of the 36 projects, 26 are recipients of the Doha Film Institute's Grants programme.

Indian director and self-taught illustrator Gitanjali Rao brought her fourth film – the animated musical romance ***Bombay Rose***. "The support I am receiving at Qumra is unmatched by any other filmmaking lab that I have attended," Rao said. "The Qumra filmmaking mentors arrive well prepared, so their advice is very specific and relevant. That, along with the amazing access I have to the Qumra Masters has made this a hugely enriching experience."

Mouhssine El Badoui, the Belgian-Moroccan director of the documentary ***Femmetasia*** agreed on the invaluable support to filmmakers. "I came to Qumra with one main perspective, but through my exchanges with the Qumra mentors I've unlocked several other interesting narratives."

The feedback from the Qumra mentors was also crucial to French-Tunisian director Lofti Achour's second feature film ***Severed Head***, "What differentiates Qumra from other initiatives the quality of the advice here is very specific to our project. It has inspired new ideas for my script and reassurance about the strength of my central story."

Afsaneh Salari, producer of ***The Forbidden Strings*** – a work-in-progress feature film said that Qumra's role in supporting filmmakers from the Middle East was hugely important. "The fact that it this initiative is organised and delivered in the region makes it special," she said. "The networking opportunities it offers are also second-to-none. Over the last few days we have met industry professionals from around the world and have generated interest in our film, which is very exciting for us."

-ENDS-

Note to Editors

About Qumra

Directors and Producers attached to thirty-six 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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