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# **Doha Film Institute**

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## **Annual Report 2021**

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His Highness Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani,  
The Father Emir of the State of Qatar



His Highness Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani,  
Emir of the State of Qatar

# Contents

Message from The Chair	06
Message from The CEO	07
Acknowledgements	08
Trustees	10
Executive Directors	11
About DFI	12
Training & Development	20
Qumra	42
Ajyal Film Festival	50
Film Programming	62
Funding	66
Community Outreach	78
Thank You to Our Partners	82



2021 was a year of reset. A pivotal period in humanity's recent history when we not only had to contend with a pandemic that would strike at anytime, anywhere without warning, and to unite to overcome the challenges that came with each unexpected wave.

As a nation, we demonstrated enormously admirable resilience, in the face of unprecedented trials. As a community, we rallied in our resolve to prioritise the well-being of all citizens, residents, and visitors.

What set us apart was our unwavering focus on supporting our creative community, especially emerging filmmakers who were most impacted by the pandemic as resources for their endeavours diminished.

The Doha Film Institute achieved this by mapping out a two-pronged strategy to continue to grow our beloved community, not just in Qatar but from across the Arab region and beyond.

While we continued to keep the momentum of support moving through our Grants and industry events, we served to boost confidence and prepare our creative professional community for the new reality that embraces technology as an important tool.

As the driver of a strong environment for film, we continued to build on the comprehensive ecosystem in Qatar. From film education programmes, knowledge sharing with the global

network, and delivering key events such as the Ajyal Film Festival and Qumra in innovative hybrid formats, we ensured an uninterrupted stream of support for filmmakers in our country and from across the world.

The role that we played in helping them realise their cinematic vision produced sizable impact. From Cannes to Venice, from Rotterdam to Locarno, films supported by the Doha Film Institute, including several of them helmed by Qatari talent, mesmerized audiences around the world.

Our robust portfolio of independent cinema not only helped document and narrate harsh new realities, but also pushed the boundaries of conventional cinema to create an inspiring range of stories shared on diverse channels from conventional theatres to streaming platforms and television.

Above all, the foundational work of the Institute's growing alumni of filmmakers inspires new generations to pursue their dreams to tell compelling stories and reassures them that a genuine passion for cinema and exceptional ingenuity will be respected and rewarded. Our support seeds hope and confidence that they are not alone in their journey for creative excellence.

Doha Film Institute's journey in 2021 emerged triumphant because we had the tireless support of organisations and individuals who were invaluable partners in ensuring that independent voices in cinema continued to be heard, from Qatar to the world. I also thank and congratulate my DFI family for their dedication, enthusiasm and passion to make a difference with their inspiring work.

Moving into one of the most defining years in our nation's history as we host the world's largest sporting event, the FIFA World Cup 2022 Qatar, our experiences and learnings from the last two years positions us more than ever to deliver the most memorable world-class events that has yet to be seen.

**H.E. Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani**  
Chair, Doha Film Institute



At Qumra 2021, our annual talent incubator event, a young filmmaker from Qatar said: "The Doha Film Institute created the opportunity for me to write throughout the pandemic and paired me with a scriptwriting mentor, and I now have potential producers for the project." These words reflect how we have seized the opportunity to turn the past 12 months into a positive and productive time.

Our focus in the past year was to keep the momentum going for emerging filmmakers to realise their cinematic vision. The fact that films supported by the Doha Film Institute made headlines at leading international film festivals such as Cannes, Venice and Locarno is a testament to fruits of our labour.

The innovative hybrid format we established is our model for cultural celebrations and continues to enable a dynamic film ecosystem from Qatar for the world, identifying and nurturing new talent, amplifying important independent voices, and creating vibrant films that resonated with global audiences.

We have always believed that creativity, when backed by sincere passion for cinema and captivating storylines that build positivity and hope in others, is transformative.

We have broken down geographic barriers to support a collective of immensely talented filmmakers to make exceptional cinema and inspire everyone to pursue their passion with confidence. The highlights of these efforts are demonstrated by the 68 outstanding projects chosen for our 2021 Grants from across the world.

Our commitment to be one of the premier global resources for cinema was also reflected in the 85 inspirational films from 44 countries, at Ajyal Film Festival in 2021. Of these films, 32 were helmed by women, underpinning our commitment to driving inclusivity and diversity in cinema. 13 Institute supported projects were included in the line-up, and homegrown talent provided an inspiring slate of 10 'Made in Qatar' films.

Qumra, a one-of-a-kind professional incubator crucial to the success of filmmakers from the Arab world and beyond, was also hosted in an innovative hybrid format, welcomed over 150 industry experts from 41 countries to mentor 48 cinematic projects directed by first and second-time filmmakers.

The Institute is extremely grateful to our Qumra Masters, filmmakers and industry participants for their passion and contribution to our commitment to reshape the global storytelling landscape and empower emerging voices during this period of new challenges.

We proved that no matter where we are in the world and our challenges, the medium of cinema continues to be a beacon of free expression, cultural understanding and inspired optimism for the future.

Ajyal Film Club was launched in 2021 by the young jurors of Ajyal Film Festival to shine the spotlight on today's most important global concerns and stimulate young dialogues through film, with focus of the sessions on environmental degradation and the continuing crisis in Palestine.

This year sees even more confidence, optimism, and positivity, as the nation prepares to host the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™. We continue to press on with our mission to nurture young talents from around the world to tell authentic stories with conviction and confidence through the most important form of creative expression – cinema.

**Fatma Hassan Alremaihi**  
Chief Executive Officer, Doha Film Institute

# Acknowledgements

We would like to extend our sincerest gratitude and deepest appreciation to everyone who partnered with us in 2021. Without your enduring hard work and unwavering dedication, none of the accomplishments detailed in this report could have been possible. All of us at DFI look forward to working with you again and achieving even more success in 2022.

- His Highness Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar
- His Highness Sheikh Jassim bin Hamad Al Thani, Personal Representative of the Emir
- His Excellency Sheikh Joaan bin Hamad Al Thani
- Her Excellency Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani
- Trustees
- Fatma Hassan Alremaihi
- DFI Executive Management
- DFI Employees
- Elia Suleiman, Artistic Advisor
- The Cultural Village Foundation
- Sarajevo Film Festival
- Giffoni Film Festival
- Sponsors
- Qumra Masters
- Mentors
- Filmmakers
- Jurors
- Volunteers
- Audiences

# Trustees



**H.E. Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani**  
 Founder and Chairperson of Doha Film Institute



**H.E. Sheikh Thani bin Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani**  
 Member of Doha Film Institute Board of Trustees



**H.E. Salah bin Ghanem Al Ali**  
 Qatar's Minister of Youth and Sports



**H.E. Nasser bin Ghanem Abdullah Al-Khelaifi**  
 Chairman of beIN Media Group



**H.E. Sheikh Abdulrahman bin Hamad bin Jassim bin Hamad Al-Thani**  
 Qatar's Minister of Culture



**H.E. Sheikh Saif bin Ahmed bin Saif Al-Thani**  
 Director of the Government Communication Office



**H.E. Mansour Ibrahim Al-Mahmoud**  
 CEO of Qatar Investment Authority (QIA)



**H.E. Issa bin Mohammed Al Mohammadi**  
 Vice Chairman of Qatar Museums Board of Trustees  
 Chairman of the Racing and Equestrian Club  
 Member of the Board of Directors of Qatar Airways

# Executive Directors



**Abdulla Al Mosallam**  
 Chief Administrative Officer / Deputy Director of Ajyal Film Festival



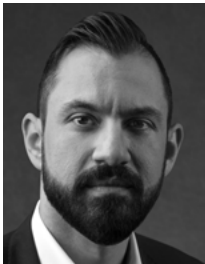
**Fatma Al Ghanim**  
 Director of Marketing and Communications



**Russell Frame**  
 General Counsel



**Hanaa Issa**  
 Director of Strategy and Development / Qumra Deputy Director



**Nikolaos Bempis Kolyfas**  
 Director of PMO and Event Management / Festival Managing Director

# About DFI

## About DFI

Doha Film Institute (DFI) is an independent, not-for-profit cultural organisation dedicated to the development of a sustainable film industry, generating film appreciation, and nurturing a vibrant film culture in Qatar.

DFI 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.

Since its inception, DFI has provided Qataris, local and regional talent with opportunities to tell their stories through the medium of film, while paving the way for the development of skills in order to equip and empower future filmmakers in their pursuit of professional careers in the film industry.

The Institute's platforms include funding and production of local, regional and international films; skills-sharing and mentorship programmes; film screenings; the Ajyal Film Festival; and Qumra, a film industry event. With culture, community, learning and entertainment at its foundation, the Institute is committed to supporting Qatar National Vision 2030 for the development of a knowledge-based economy.

## Our Mission

Doha Film Institute is dedicated to the development of a sustainable film industry, inspiring widespread film appreciation, and nurturing a vibrant film culture in Qatar.

## Our Objectives

To provide Qatari talent with a platform for storytelling through the medium of film, and the opportunity to develop skills and professional careers in the film industry.

To pave the way to a sustainable film industry in Qatar, spanning all of its relevant elements.

To support and advance Qatari and Arab film and cultural objectives by positioning Qatar and the wider Arab region in a leading role in the international film industry.

# The Year in Numbers: 2021

40+



Awards

200+



Festival selections

5



Academy Award  
Nominations

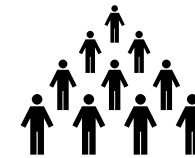
## Training & Development

30



Workshops  
/ Labs

250+



Participants

## Funding

70



Projects  
Supported

10



Qatari  
Filmmakers

27



Women  
Filmmakers

58



Grants to  
MENA  
Region

12



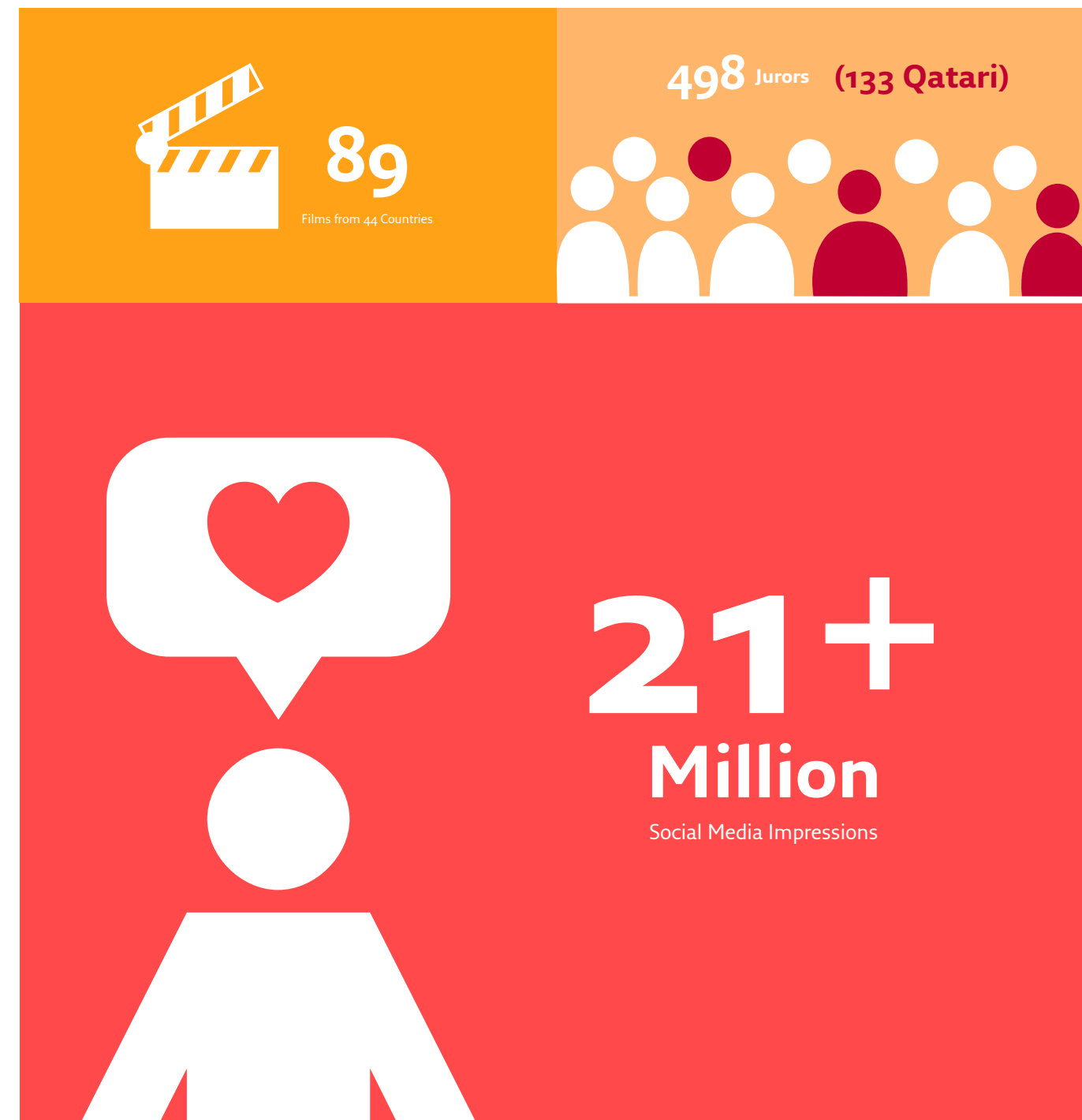
Grants to  
Non-MENA  
Region



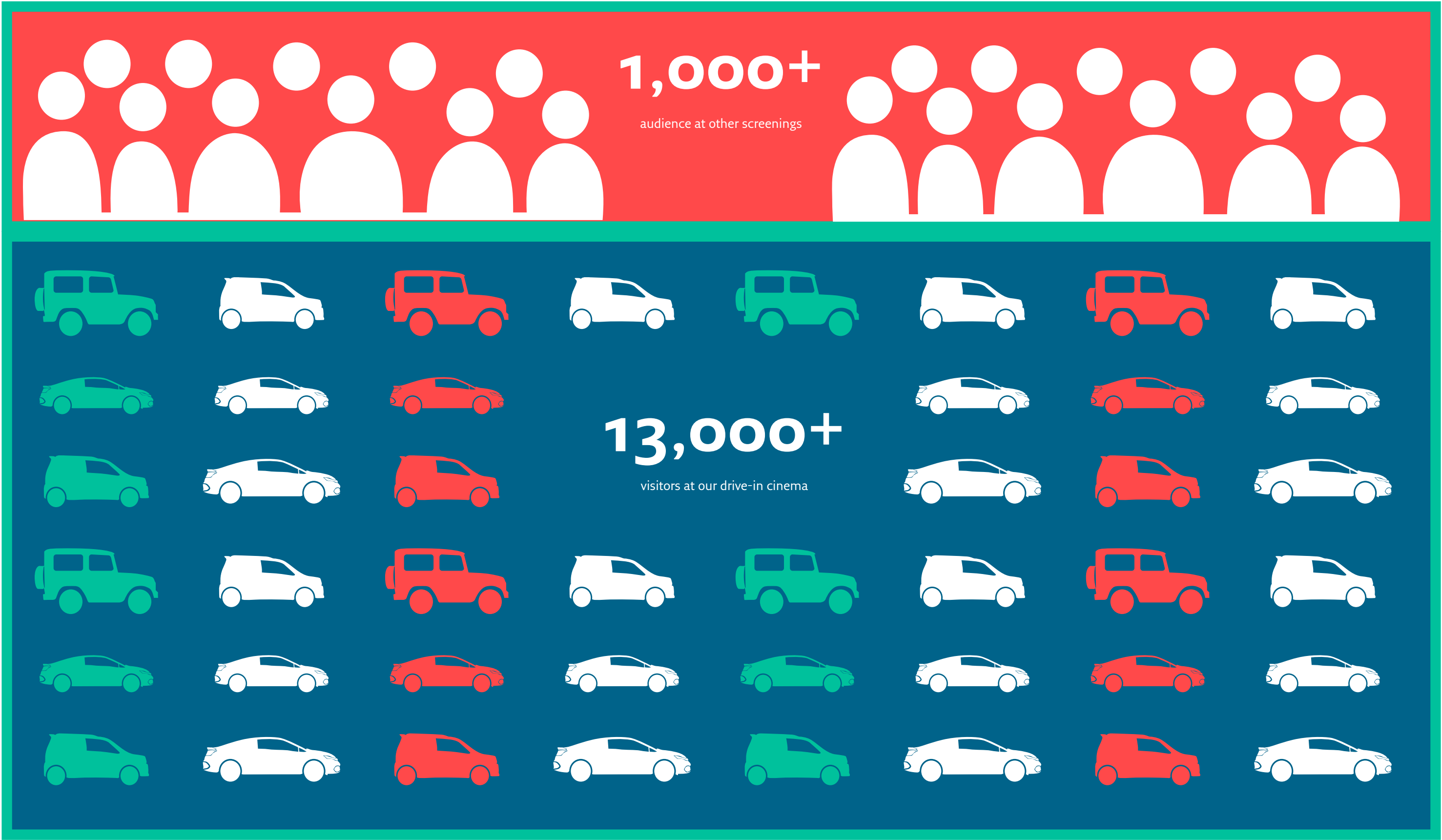
# QUMRA



# AJYAL



Year-round Screenings



# Training & Development

## Committed to Equipping and Empowering Talent

DFI continues its commitment to empowering and advancing talent through our Training and Development Programmes that ensure the filmmakers of tomorrow are developed today.

Our programmes facilitate exchanges and collaborations between filmmakers and the wider industry in an atmosphere of inclusivity, curiosity, and professionalism.

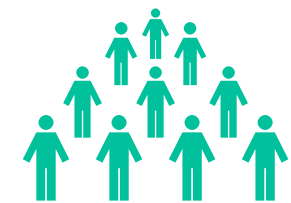
We do this through two parallel streams that provide opportunities for skills-sharing, feedback and direction from expert mentors.

### Experts in Digital Knowledge Transfer

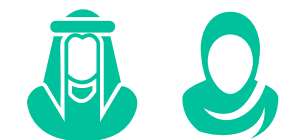
Building on the successful digital evolution that was undertaken during 2020, DFI continued to offer our invaluable workshops, labs and consultations online to meet the needs of filmmakers both at home and abroad.



**30** Workshops / Labs



**250+** Participants



**48** Qatari Participants



**26** Educational Partners



**5** Shorts produced in 2021



**63** Projects supported in 2021

# A New Record for Doha Film Institute

We partnered with 27 local and international organisations in 2021, a new record for the Institute and testament to our ever-growing and increasingly influential position as a global provider of quality filmmaking training.

## International

- **Beirut Cinema Platform** (Lebanon)
- **Bophana Center** (Cambodia)
- **Centre Cinématographique Marocain** (Morocco)
- **Centre National du Cinéma et de l'Image Tunisien** (Tunisia)
- **EAVE** (Luxembourg)
- **First Cut Lab** (France)
- **Giffoni Film Festival** (Italy)
- **Jihlava Film Festival** (Czech Republic)
- **Maskoon Fantastic Lab** (Lebanon)
- **Pop Up Residency** (Slovakia)
- **Royal Film Commission of Jordan** (Jordan)
- **Sarajevo Film Festival** (Bosnia and Herzegovina)
- **Sundance Institute** (USA)
- **The Animation Workshop / VIA University College** (Denmark)
- **The Gotham** (USA)

## Local

- **beIN**
- **Dadu, Children's Museum of Qatar**
- **Education Above All Foundation**
- **French Embassy in Doha**
- **Institut Francais Qatar**
- **Katara Studios**
- **National Museum of Qatar**
- **Northwestern University in Qatar**
- **Qatar Foundation**
- **Qatar National Library**
- **Qatar University**
- **Virginia Commonwealth University in Qatar**



# Developing Film Skills Through Educational Partnerships

Launching in 2022, DFI partnered with Virginia Commonwealth University School of the Arts in Qatar and Northwestern University in Qatar to develop an exciting new minor degree in Film Design.

For the fifth consecutive year, DFI also ran an elective module in Film Design in collaboration with the Interior Design Department at Virginia Commonwealth University School of the Arts in Qatar.





# Workshops & Labs



## Workshops & Labs

Offering exceptional opportunities to aspiring filmmakers, the workshops and labs that our Training & Development Programme provides combine theory, demonstrations, and practical exercises to train participants in all areas of the filmmaking process. Led by internationally acclaimed mentors, our programmes aim to both inspire and provide valuable instruction covering all theoretical and technical aspects of filmmaking.

### Series Lab

20 – 25 January / 12 – 16 July /  
29 September – 3 October 2021

Our popular Series Lab is dedicated to screenwriters developing scripted series projects created for distribution on all platforms (including television, digital or web). It provides participants

with the essential scriptwriting tools and invaluable industry access to help move their projects and careers forward.

### Projects:

- **‘Land Heist’**  
by Amira Abujbara (Qatar)
- **‘Beautiful Things’**  
by Basel Owies (USA/Doha Resident)
- **‘Talking to Myself’**  
by Eiman Mirghani  
(Sudan/Doha Resident)
- **‘Why Did the Bluesman  
Cross the Road’**  
by Meedo Taha (Lebanon/USA)
- **‘Noor’** by Mohcine Besri (Morocco)
- **‘Yasmine/Jasmine’**  
by Yossera Bouchtia (Morocco/USA)

### Mentors

Ryan O’Nan: Lab Leader, TV Writer  
and Showrunner  
Bassem Breche: Writer / Director  
Neerja Narayanan: Industry Advisor  
Gabrielle Capolino: Industry Advisor  
Frédéric Pittoors d’Haveskercke:  
International Production & Distribution  
Advisor at Series Mania



### Short Scriptwriting Lab

31 January – 8 February 2021

Our Short Scriptwriting Lab provides a transformative and illuminating experience where filmmakers learn the principles of dramatic writing for short films. It assisted new and emerging screenwriters and writer-directors in developing and writing a screenplay from an original idea with the support of international mentors. Supporting eight projects, 2021's lab offered participants the chance to tap into funding through the Qatari Film Fund, or MENA Region's Production Funding. Once completed, the projects also had an opportunity to be included in DFI's Qumra Shorts.

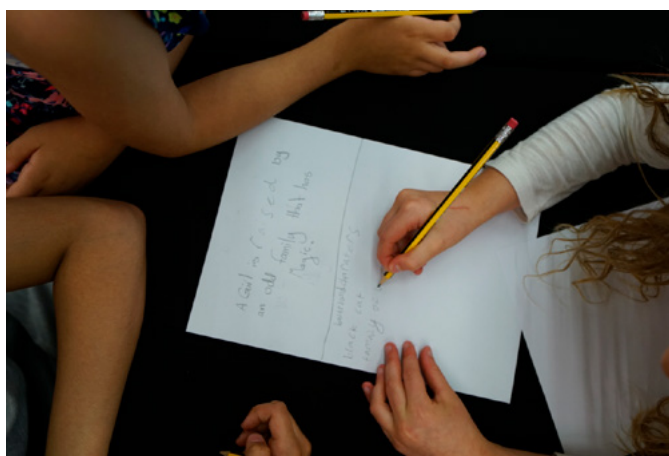
#### Projects:

- **'Al Fanar'** by Aisha Al Muhannadi (Qatar)
- **'Burnt'** by Ali Al-Hajri (Qatar)
- **'When the Levee Breaks'** by Ahmad Al Ansari (Qatar)
- **'The Break-in'** by Dwan Kaoukji (Lebanon)
- **'Coyotes'** by Said Zagha (Palestine)
- **'The Other Side of the Lens'** by Carine Khalaf (Lebanon)

- **'Field of View'** by Hussen Ibraheem (Lebanon)
- **'Laid Off'** by Karim Emara (Egypt)

#### Mentors

Matthieu Darras: Lab Advisor  
Antoine Waked: Script Editor  
Britta Krause: Script Editor



### Hezayah Screenwriting Lab

8 – 12 February / 30 June – 4 July /  
12 – 17 September 2021

DFI's Hezayah Screenwriting Lab assisted emerging screenwriters and writer-directors from the region in developing and writing an original feature-length screenplay. Participants worked in small groups with the expert support of experienced mentors. The inspiring lab consisted of three sessions of five-day workshops, which took place intermittently over a period of several months.

### Documentary Lab with Rithy Panh

12 – 16 June 2020 /  
24 – 28 September 2020 / January 2021

During this workshop, filmmakers gained first-hand experience working alongside Oscar-nominated documentarian Rithy Panh. The world-renowned storyteller taught participants his method of narration through working with memory, culture, and identity. Participants were encouraged to explore their own narratives around the theme of confinement and isolation. The five shorts produced from the lab were screened for select festival programmers during Qumra 2021.

#### Projects:

- **'The Pearl'** by Noor Al-Nasr & Dana Atrach (Qatar)
- **'Good Grief'** by Maysaa Almumin (Bahrain)
- **'Mehal Sefari'** by Abraham Gezahagne (Ethiopia)
- **'Al Baseer - The Blind Ferryman'** by Ali Al-Fatlawi (Iraq)

- **'Birthday'** by Lara Zeidan (Lebanon)
- **'Weedestine'** by Said Zagha (Palestine/Jordan)
- **'Rebirth'** by Carine Khalaf (Lebanon)

#### Mentors:

Annemarie Jacir: Director  
Joelle Touma: Script Consultant  
Matthieu Darras: Projects Coach

#### Projects:

- **'And Then They Burn the Sea'** by Majid Al Remailhi (Qatar)  
Selected in official competition at Tribeca Film Festival 2021
- **'Virtual Voice'** by Suzannah Mirghani (Qatar, Sudan)
- **'Fever Dream'** by Ania Hendryx Wójtowicz (Qatar, USA, Poland)
- **'And I Was Left Behind'** by Maysaa Almumin (Bahrain)
- **'Ode to Loneliness'** by Rawane Nassif – (Qatar, Lebanon)



### ‘Watching the Classics’ with Richard Peña

‘Watching the Classics’ was an online programme during which filmmakers and cinephiles alike could deepen their knowledge of film history. Presented by renowned scholar Richard Peña (Professor of Film Studies at Columbia University and Director Emeritus of the New York Film Festival), the series of lectures each focused on an undisputed world cinema classic.

### Series 1: Focus on Alfred Hitchcock

31 May / 7 June / 14 June 2021

‘Shadow of a Doubt’ | 1943 | Alfred Hitchcock | USA  
‘Rear Window’ | 1954 | Alfred Hitchcock | USA  
‘Psycho’ | 1960 | Alfred Hitchcock | USA

### Series 2: The Modernist Impulse

23 August / 30 August / 6 September

‘Hiroshima Mon Amour’ | 1959 | Alain Resnais | France, Japan  
‘Ivan’s Childhood (Ivanovo Detstvo)’ | 1962 | Andrei Tarkovsky | USSR  
‘Eclipse (L’eclisse)’ | 1962 | Michelangelo Antonioni | Italy

### First Cut Lab

June – July 2021

This special online ‘First Cut Lab’ was designed to assist three feature films and one short film in the editing phase. The main goal was to foster the artistic potential of the selected rough cuts and, at the same time, to increase the sales, festival and circulation potential of the completed films. The lab consisted of a one-day (for shorts) and two-day (for features) workshop tailored individually to each project, preceded by a brief preparatory meeting.

### Projects

- **‘Hanging Gardens’** by Yassin Al-Daradji – Feature Narrative (Iraq)
- **‘Hello I’m Ravish Kumar!’** by Vinay Shukla – Feature Documentary (India)
- **‘Places Of The Soul’** by Hamida Issa – Feature Documentary (Qatar)
- **‘Let’s Play Soldiers’** by Mariam Al-Dhubhani – Short Documentary (Qatar)

### Mentors

Matthieu Darras: Lab Advisor  
Benjamin Mirguet: Editor Mentor  
Sebastian Sepúlveda: Editor Mentor

### Industry Advisors

Bob Moore: Co-President and Creative Producer at EyeSteelFilm  
Olena Decock: Industry Programmer at Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival  
Stephanie Fuchs: Festival Manager at Outlook Filmsales



### Screenwriting For Beginners (English)

25 – 29 August 2021

In this fascinating online lab, participants discovered the creative process of writing for the screen. The workshop included the foundations of screenwriting, with mentors covering the ‘architecture’ of screenplays (storytelling, screenplay guidelines, non-verbal storytelling and characterization) and the ‘formatting’ of a screenplay (visual grammar and Celtx/Final Draft). Participants were also provided with the opportunity to continue their filmmaking journey with the DFI development team, working towards further education and grants.

### Mentors

Anthea Devotta  
Amna Al-Binali

### Podcast Lab

12 – 17 October 2021

In this riveting course, participants learned the basics of audio storytelling, as well as the art of creating and producing distinctive audio podcasts. DFI provided participants with the knowledge, resources, and mentor support for developing their project. Both creatively, through story development and sound editing workshops, and strategically, with discussions on industry landscape, pitching, marketing, and releasing their audio project in today’s audio landscape, and grants.

### Projects:

- **‘Keep it in the AM’** by Ali Al-Hajri (Qatar) and Joy Atrach (USA)
- **‘Science Journal’** by Anto Mohsin (Indonesia) and Elissa Mefleh (Lebanon)
- **‘Finding Mark Frerichs’** by Charlotte Bellis (New Zealand)
- **‘Becoming Maori’** by Kim Vinnell (New Zealand)

- **‘Sweat & Tears’** by Mehdi Lamloum (Tunisia)

- **‘Netflix Is the New TV, Podcast is the New Radio’** by Mohammed Al-Hammadi (Qatar)

### Lab Mentors:

Alexandra Blair: Lab Programme Producer  
Stephanie Kuo: Lead Lab Mentor

### Guest Speakers:

Claudius Boller: Managing Director Middle East, Africa and South Asia (excl. India) at Spotify  
Kevin O’Connell: Professional Musician, Audio Engineer/Producer, Educator, and Arts Advocate  
Mayss Al Alami: Business Development  
Michael Russo: Radio Marketing and Podcast Production  
Ryan Dilley: Producer at Pushkin Industries  
Hebah Fisher: Entrepreneur and Journalist  
Sharon Mashihi: Storyteller





**Producers Lab**

24 – 30 October 2021

DFI continues to recognize the rise of emerging talent in the region and the fundamental role producers play in defining, supporting and influencing the voice of filmmakers. This workshop was an opportunity for local and MENA-based producers to develop their skills further with experts in the field, in a small and intimate group of 7 projects. The intensive seven-day programme focused on the creative, artistic and strategic aspects of producing feature-length documentary and fiction films

**Projects:**

- **‘The Teacher’** by Farah Nabulsi (Palestine)
- **‘Concrete Land’** by Asmahan Bkerat (Palestine)
- **‘Being Ali’** by Janay Boulos & Abd Al Kader (Syria/UK)
- **‘The Pearl’** by Noor Al Nasr & Dana Atrach (Qatar)
- **‘Desert Paws’** by Nouf Al Sulaiti (Qatar)
- **‘Theft of Fire’** by Amer Shomali & Rashid Abdelhamid (Palestine)
- **‘Al Baseer – The Blind Ferryman’** by Ali Al-Fatlawi, Joël Jent & Sophia Rubischung (Iraq/Switzerland).

**Lab Mentors:**

Jovan Marjanović: Head of Industry at Sarajevo Film Festival  
Violeta Bava: Producers Lab Advisor  
Dora Bouchoucha: Producer Expert  
Jad Abi Khalil: Producer Expert  
Jana Wehbe: Project Coach  
Aranka Matits: Sales Expert  
Myriam Sassine: Industry Advisor

**Screenwriting For Beginners (Arabic)**

28 November – 2 December 2021

In this Arabic workshop, participants discovered the creative process of writing for the screen, all from the comfort of their own homes. This fascinating lab included the foundations of screenwriting, with mentors covering the ‘architecture’ of screenplays (storytelling, screenplay guidelines, non-verbal storytelling and characterization) and the ‘formatting’ of a screenplay (visual grammar and Celtx/Final Draft). Participants were also offered the opportunity to continue their filmmaking journey with the DFI development team, working towards further education and grants.

**Mentors**

Ayman El Amir





# Internships

## Hands-on Training Through Internships

DFI provides film production internships for aspiring filmmakers with a passion for filmmaking and an ambition to build a career in the film and television industry.

During 2021, our internship programme offered opportunities for interns to receive training in a variety of capacities, including on-set with internationally renowned director Guy Ritchie.

Our internship programmes often serve as a springboard for future careers, with many of our past interns securing jobs at leading production houses in Qatar, such as Resolution Films, The Edge Picture Company, and the Film House.



# Production

Integral to DFI's mission is the creation of original and compelling multi-platform content: film, commercials, television and online videos. DFI's Production Department works to enhance the film industry in Qatar by offering production solutions and services to DFI's projects as well as by contributing to meeting the filming and editing needs of local filmmakers, businesses, government bodies and NGOs in the country.

While focusing on creating content to the highest international standard, DFI Productions strives to incorporate education and training opportunities for local aspiring filmmakers where possible.

## Strike a Pose

DFI helped students from Virginia Commonwealth University School of the Arts in Qatar's Fashion Department to produce seven films that formed a central part of a multi-window display in Doha's Design District.



# Youth Programmes

## Nurturing Tomorrow's Talent

Investing in youth is a priority for DFI. During 2021 we held several workshops designed to develop the skills and capabilities of our budding filmmakers.

These Youth Programmes are designed to empower and equip young people to make films on issues that are important to them.

We help our participants gain the confidence to explore film production, while having fun and creating films that tell their stories, in their own unique way.

### Silhouette Animation Workshop

1 – 13 August 2021

3 Films Produced

This course introduced participants to the basics of silhouette animation techniques. It engaged students in interactive exercises to help them generate ideas, develop a story, build characters—and ultimately create a short silhouette animated film.

#### Mentor

Fadi Syriani

### Express Yourself Through Digital Art Workshop

7–14 August 2021

In this fascinating workshop, participants embarked on a personal narrative journey, exploring their innermost emotions, thoughts, and feelings—learning how to visualize them through digital art. This mindful exercise helped students better understand themselves and how to express their thoughts artistically, through carefully tailored activities and exercises.

#### Mentor

Bayan Dahadh

### Collaborative Documentary Filmmaking Workshop

2 August – 2 October 2021

7 Films Produced

In collaboration with Education Above All and the Whitaker Peace and Development Initiative, 25 participants in South Sudan and Uganda came together to make short documentaries centered around the theme of peacebuilding. Over the course of six weeks, the workshop participants watched and discussed documentary films, discovered cinematic language and visual storytelling, learned the basics of filmmaking, and, in small teams, conceptualized, planned, and shot their own films which were presented at the 2021 WISE Summit.

#### Mentor

Marcus Zaiser



## Ajyal Film Club: Continuing the Spirit of Ajyal!

Completely free of charge, this new initiative was run by our Ajyal Jurors and continued the festival's spirit of empowering and inspiring young people through thought-provoking films. Taking place every month, we suggested a selection of compelling films from popular streaming platforms for the youth to watch and then virtually meet up to discuss everything from plot and cinematography to broader issues such as cinema history and filmmaking techniques.

### Session 1: Our Earth

8 May 2021

In this session we discussed our planet. Down in the deepest of oceans, through forests we only dream to see, and among beings that keep our world alive. How can we live on this planet, for future lives to thrive?

#### Mohaq (8-12 years old)

'The Lorax' | 2012 | Chris Renaud

#### Hilal (13-17 years old)

'Chasing Coral' | 2017 | Jeff Orlowski

#### Bader (18-25 years old)

'Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind' | 1984 | Hayao Miyazaki

### Session 2: Films for Palestine

25 June 2021

The metaphor of Palestine is stronger than the metaphor of reality" as the poet Mahmoud Darwish once said, the narrative of Palestine that is being written and dispersed may be the only thing pushing it forward and keeping it the public realm. A land that has been in occupation and whose inhabitants have been exiled from, are telling stories to keep the memory of it alive. In this session, we examined the ways in which this narrative has been told and retold through various filmmaking methods that utilise both fact and fiction to document the reality of Palestine.

#### Mohaq (8-12 years old)

'The Present' | 2020 | Farah Nabulsi

'My Neighbourhood' | 2012 | Julia Bacha & Rebekah Wingert

#### Hilal (13-17 years old) / Bader (18-25 years old)

'200 Meters' | 2020 | Ameen Nayfeh

### Session 3: Home, Adventures, and Beyond

18 September 2021

It's 2021, our world has been turned upside down and is stranger than ever. Staying at home has made us crave adventure, imagining a world beyond our reality. During those sessions, we discussed a selection of films about characters who have embarked on unforgettable experiences that taught them lifelong lessons about home, courage, and imagination.

#### Mohaq (8-12 years old)

'Matilda' | 1996 | Danny DeVito

#### Hilal (13-17 years old)

'Enola Holmes' | 2020 | Harry Bradbeer

#### Bader (18-25 years old)

'Spirited Away' | 2001 | Hayao Miyazaki

## Ajyal Workshops

7 - 13 November 2021

### Mohaq: The Happiness Manifesto with Qatar Children's Museum (Dadu).

217 jurors

While gently addressing the tough themes present in the Mohaq films such as bullying or the effects of climate change, the Children's Museum team helped Mohaq jurors create their very own "happiness manifesto". This will be an empowering and hands-on workshop where the jurors will learn healthy strategies to create their own happy place.

### Hilal: The Magic of Comedy: A Conversation with Kevin Bright.

170 jurors

Jurors got a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to hear firsthand what it takes to develop and produce a hit TV comedy show from the executive producer and director of 'Friends', one of history's most successful comedy television shows.

### Bader: The Rise and Fall of the Western Genre: A Masterclass with Richard Pena.

111 jurors

Bader jurors were taken on a journey through the Western genre's historical development, significant films and filmmakers of the time, traditional narrative and character archetypes, and the genre's decline in the 1970s.



# Qumra

## Qumra

12 – 17 March 2021

Qumra expands on our existing support mechanisms for filmmakers, taking them beyond financial assistance alone, into a more complex and meaningful level of support. Having built a firm reputation as a one-of-its-kind film event in the Arab region, Qumra focuses particularly on first and second-time filmmakers and contributes unwaveringly to their growth by carving out pathways and creating invaluable opportunities for them.

The event connects leading film professionals with emerging talent, creating fruitful interactions, exchanges and networking opportunities—playing a unique role as an industry catalyst and assisting in the creation of truly significant films.



## Building on the Success of Qumra 2020's Online Format

In a tumultuous year for young filmmakers in the Arab world facing the impact of COVID-19, ensuring that their cinematic journey was uninterrupted was not an easy task. Building on the success of 2020, the team at Doha Film Institute successfully translated our commitment to supporting promising talent through an innovative format for Qumra 2021, which included the return of invaluable Qumra Master Classes and Talks.

## Learning from the Masters

This year's Qumra Masters included legendary French auteur Claire Denis, BAFTA and Academy Award® nominated cinematographer Phedon Papamichael, internationally celebrated director and Cannes veteran James Gray, Silver Lion winning film director and screenwriter Jessica Hausner and Academy Award® winning sound designer Mark Mangini. Each expert held their own masterclass, led by industry academics, and joined audiences for intimate question-and-answer sessions.

Pioneering singer-songwriter Yasmine Hamdan and influential photographer Brigitte Lacombe shared their work experiences and personal outlook about their careers in the creative industry as part of this edition's Qumra Talks.

"I have never worked in this region. This is a first for me in many ways. It's my first opportunity to mentor new filmmakers. It was a great experience. I had a wonderful time this morning in my one-on-one interviews with all of the filmmakers. There's something about the film language that's universal. I didn't really know what to expect but that level of professionalism and care and love for their projects was something I was totally comfortable and familiar with."

- **Mark Mangini**

"You have incredible locations [in this region], incredible people, you can do great cinematic pieces with very little money, with very little technical equipment. So, keep shooting, keep at it, and be patient, and don't give up. If you're passionate about it, stick with it."

- **Phedon Papamichael**

"The world is waiting and ready to explode with all this new voice and new approach to the world. So, what does it mean [Qumra], it means to me a look new look at the world, which is about as much as you could ask for."

- **James Gray**

"I think my whole attraction to composition was probably formed back when I was a child. Art shows an alternate perspective on reality and makes normal things look different. The whole storytelling lies within the composition and colours of those frames."

- **Jessica Hausner**

"Be honest. Look for form and feeling. Ask if there is something more important to be said"

- **Claire Denis**

## Qumra Screenings

Our Qumra Screenings are a selection of acclaimed feature-length and short films made with the support of the Doha Film Institute's Grants Programmes and Filmmaking Labs. This year we present bold stories from both new and seasoned voices—offering audiences fresh, original perspectives from the MENA region and beyond. All Qumra Screenings include a pre-recorded Q&A with the filmmaker, moderated by film critic and programmer Joseph Fahim.

### Features

The Unknown Saint - Directed by Alaa Eddine Aljem

The Marriage Project - Directed by Atieh Attarzadeh, Hesam Eslami

Mica - Directed by Ismaël Ferroukhi

A Comedian in a Syrian Tragedy - Directed by Rami Farah

Their Algeria - Directed by Lina Soualem

200 Meters - Directed by Ameen Nayfeh

### Shorts

The Blue Star - Directed by Valentin Noujaïm

Ceuta's Gate - Directed by Randa Maroufi

Under Her Skin - Directed by Meriem Mesraoua

Woman of Steel - Directed by Obada Jarbi

Al Tabbab - Directed by Khalifa Al Mana

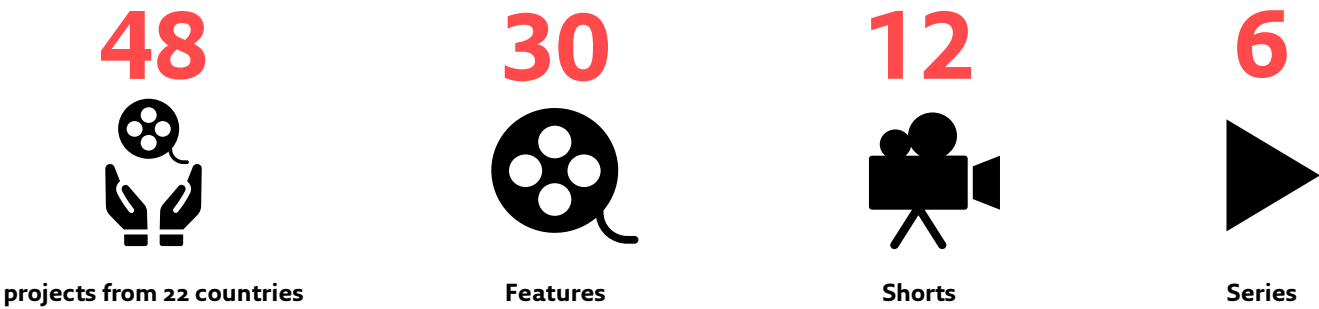
Emsahar - Directed by Hassan Al-Jahni

Omé - Directed by Wassim Geagea





# Qumra Projects

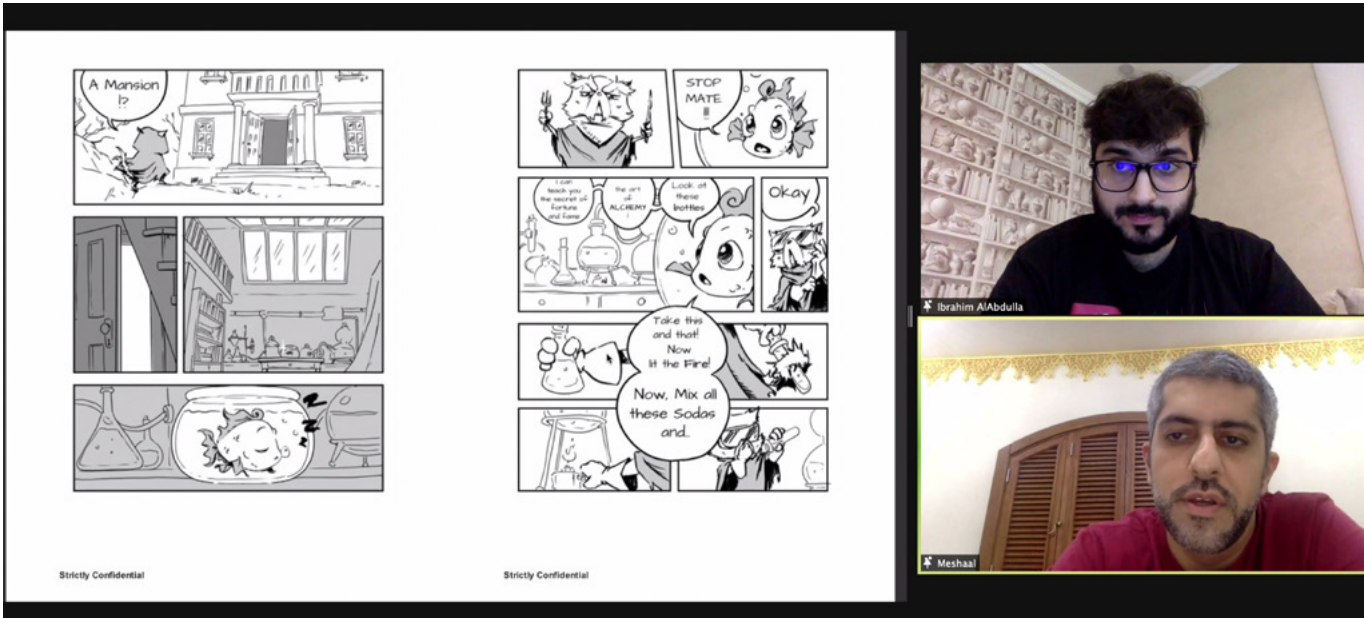


When the pandemic nearly shut down the global film industry, emerging filmmakers in Qatar and the region received a rare opportunity to continue to move their projects forward, with the support of Qumra, the annual talent incubator for Arab cinema of the Doha Film Institute.

The Qumra 2021 projects included 30 features, 12 shorts and 6 series at various stages of production selected to benefit from the experience of the Qumra Masters, as well as bespoke mentorship and business meetings with international experts.

Of these projects, 39 were recipients of the Doha Film Institute’s Grants programme and the Qatari Film Fund. In all, 15 feature projects were in the development stage, 15 feature projects in post-production, 6 TV and web Series Projects in Development, and 12 Shorts Projects (in development and post-production).

This year’s event featured 19 projects by Qatar-based talent, including 12 by Qatari nationals. The projects hailed from 22 countries (Belgium, Bolivia, Cambodia, Iraq, Iran, Italy, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Philippines, Poland, Qatar, Sudan, Sweden, Syria, Tanzania, Tunisia, Turkey, USA, Yemen).



“At Qumra, it was great to have the feedback of my mentors, which was a motivational boost for me, especially since it was my first project. The support they show added to my confidence.”

- **Qatari filmmaker Abdulla Alhor**

“The Doha Film Institute was nothing but helpful. They created the opportunity for me to write the film through the pandemic, paired with a scriptwriter to mentor the script. Now in this year’s Qumra, I have people coming forward to say they will produce the film. Qumra is a very collaborative venture and the kind of forum where people give you time to talk about your projects.”

- **Qatari filmmaker Maha Al-Jefairi**

“Qumra helped expand our horizon when the world was closing down. It gave us the opportunity to continue to have the context to help make things. It led to more profound relationships with people, with an urge to protect each other and connect at a different level. [At Qumra], I feel like I am learning again. I have been most excited about the masterclasses [by the Qumra Masters] and it has been a well-planned online experience for me.”

- **Filmmaker Mounia Akl**

“The pandemic was a huge blow to the cinema world, and it added to the challenges we already faced. Qumra helped us to push our film out there. In fact, a lot of answers [regarding the film’s sales and moving forward strategy] came from Qumra.”

- **Filmmaker Ely Dagher**

“[Qumra was] quite helpful. I was impressed by how it matched us with industry experts, which helps the project in the long run.”

- **Director Carlo Francisco Manatad**

“Qumra has done a spectacular job of organising the online event. I have heard amazing stories of the previous editions.”

- **Filmmaker Amil Shivji**





## Qumra Industry

The seventh edition of Qumra brought together more than 200 acclaimed filmmakers from over forty countries, with industry professionals and experts to nurture the Qumra projects by first and second-time filmmakers. Many of them have formed strong bonds to the annual event, which has become a unique and vital platform for new voices in Arab and world cinema.

### Project Mentors and Consultants

Mentors advising the Qumra projects included internationally acclaimed filmmakers Elia Suleiman, Rithy Panh, Ghassan Salhab, Tala Hadid, Talal Derki, and Annemarie Jacir. The consultants advising the 2021 Qumra projects included Paolo Bertolin, Violeta Bava, editors Sebastian Sepulveda and Benjamin Mirguet, sales experts Gabor Greiner and Aranka Matits, script consultant Joelle Touma, producers Joslyn Barnes, Didar Domeri and Dora Bouchoucha, project coaches Matthieu Darras and Teresa Cavina, documentary consultants Emma Davies, Jihan Al Tahri and Bob Moore, and marketing expert Ashley Hasz.

### Production Guests

Production companies and producers taking meetings at Qumra 2021 included Bill Block (CEO at Miramax), Marc Lorbe (SVP International TV Co-productions & Acquisitions for Lionsgate TV), Thanasis Karathanos (Producer at Pallas Film), Georges Schoucair (CEO at About Productions), Catherine Dussart (Producer at CDProductions), Julie Goldman (President at Motto Pictures), Jason Kliot (Vice President and Executive Producer at Open City Films), and Kickstarter's Senior Director of Narrative Film, Elise McCave.

### Sales and Distribution Guests

International sales and distribution representatives from Alphaviolet, Outlook Filmsales, Bac Films, Best Friends Forever, Charades, Doc and Film International, Dogwoof, Elle Driver, Films Boutique, Hauts et courts, Heretic, Indie Sales, Jour2fetes, Luxbox, Memento International, New Europe Film Sales, UDI, Visit Films, Wild Bunch also participated in project feedback panel discussions and industry roundtables. Regional distributors included Film Clinic, Front Row Entertainment, Metropolis Art Cinema, MAD Solutions and Moving Turtle.

### Additional Industry Guests

Strong representation of film institutes and funds included Sundance Institute, San Francisco Film Society, Film Independent, Royal Film Commission Jordan, Moroccan Centre for Cinematography (CCM), Eurimages, Centre national du cinéma et de l'image animée (CNC), Hubert Bals Fund, World Cinema Fund, Metaphora productions, Medienboard, MIBACT, AFAC – Arab Fund for Arts and Culture, Sorfond, Netherlands film Fund, Filmfoerderung Hamburg Schleswig-Holstein, The Ford Foundation and Metafora Production.

### Qumra Series Guests

Continuing the Institute's commitment to supporting Arab talents in evolving forms of creativity and new possibilities, Qumra 2021 presented the second edition of Qumra Series—dedicated to exploring the development of series format projects from the region. Prominent leaders in serialised content and drama series markets such as The Gotham, Series Mania, European Film Market – Drama Series Days, and TV Drama Vision participated.

### Streamers and Broadcasters

Streaming and broadcasting representatives in attendance included Netflix, Mubi, beIN, HBO, Nordic Entertainment Group, Sony Pictures Television Networks, Under the Milky Way, ARTE France Cinéma, and TRT. Qatar-based organisations included teams from Al Jazeera Media Network, Qatar TV, and AJ+.

### Festival Guests

Film festival representatives from more than 15 leading events included Berlinale, Venice, Cannes, Locarno, Tribeca, Toronto, Sarajevo, International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam, Vision du Reel, Malmo Arab Film Festival, and Marrakech, who participated in work in progress feedback panels for projects in post-production and industry roundtables.

"I especially want to congratulate you! We can see a clear change in the quality of the projects and especially in the awareness of the participants. They are aware of the opportunity available to them and are much more attentive to their meetings."

**- Alice Kharoubi, Programmer, Cannes Film Festival**

"A big thank you to you and to the whole Qumra - Doha Film Institute team! A big congratulations for this online edition, for giving us the chance to have access to the projects and for having the possibility to make enriching meetings. Everything went perfectly, without any technical problems and with a very friendly and warm welcome from all the people of the organization with whom I had the pleasure to exchange."

**- Ananda Nicolaïeff, Project Manager of the RIDM Forum**

"I think that this event is crucial for our industry, to meet and learn more about authors from your region, and many times we selected films that had the support of your institution, and in our case, they even won our section, so we are always very keen to participate and take advantage of your knowledge and events. So, thank you for the opportunity."

**- Anette Dujisin, Programmer, Venice International Film Critics' Week**

"Thank you very much and Bravo for this wonderful online edition! It has been a pleasure to participate and dive into their worlds – so rich in multiple ways, I really hope that it was constructive for them."

**- Camille Hébert-Bénazet, Head of Cannes Court Métrage**

"Thank you again for an exceptional year. And though we all dream of meeting in person, these editions during the pandemic will actually go down as historic Qumra editions, however long they last online, depending on the virus. For not only have you managed to organize all so smoothly (the new platform was very good), but as always, your choice of projects was eclectic and of the highest order in terms of quality. Thank you for letting me into their worlds. I hope that I was of help. Most importantly, the space that you created for the filmmakers and their projects was safe, fruitful, and creative, a space of conversation and exchange. The best tonic for any art-form.

And this is the fundamental gift of support that you give."

**- Tala Hadid, Director, Kairos Films**



# Ajyal



Through a finely tuned blend of thought-provoking documentaries, captivating drama, light-hearted comedy and live performances, Ajyal proudly invests in the future of Qatar by empowering the nation's youth, giving them the skills and knowledge to express themselves through cinema.

Returning to its beloved physical events, the seven-day festival from Nov. 7 to 13, 2021 featured a diverse mix of virtual and in-person events, including film screenings, interactive discussions, music, a multi-media art exhibit, Qatar's largest pop-culture event Geekdom, and a drive-in cinema as part of a multisensory experience for all ages.

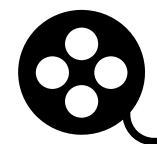
## Ajyal's Mission

To inspire and enrich the lives of youth through the power of film and media and to mobilize local and international communities to join us in this movement.

## Ajyal's Vision

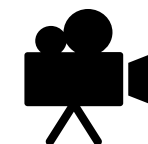
Empowered and Informed Youth for a Better Tomorrow.

30



Features

59



Shorts

44



countries represented

14



MENA premieres

144




volunteers



# Press Play...

The ninth edition of Ajyal Film Festival delivered a weeklong calendar of film screenings and community-oriented events under the theme 'Press Play!' to celebrate the return to in-person events in the spirit of togetherness and the nation's resilience in addressing the pandemic.

In this campaign, the aim was to rekindle people's passion for play, exploration, and discovery through shared cultural experiences—inviting our audiences to take a pause from their ordinary lives and daily stresses, and to press play on a truly remarkable experience.



21,000,000+  
digital impressions



399 Media Placements



250+ media interviews



370,000+ video views on YouTube



30+ TV & radio Interviews





# Opening Night Ceremony

The ninth edition of Ajyal Film Festival marked an action-packed opening with distinguished guests at Katara Cultural Village to welcome the community for a week-long calendar of exciting cinematic, music, art, and other cultural experiences. Special guests who walked the red carpet included Amir Jadidi, Fereshteh Sadre Orafaiy, Hamid Ghorbani of ‘A Hero’; accomplished photographer Brigitte Lacombe, and diplomats including the Ambassador of Spain Bélen Alfaro; Ambassador of Palestine Moneer Abdulla Ali Ghannam; and Ambassador of France Jean- Baptiste Faivre.

Other special guests included Sheikh Abdulaziz Thani KH. TH. Al-Thani, State Minister with rank of Deputy Prime Minister Hamad bin Abdulaziz Al Kuwari, Issa Al Mohammadi, Sheikh Thani bin Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, Ahmad Al-Namla, Yasmine Hamdan, Elia Suleiman, Saad Burshiad, Mahdi Ali Ali, Hafiz Ali Ali and others.

The ceremony featured speeches by Fatma Hassan Alremaihi, Festival Director and CEO, Abdulla Al Mosallam, CAO, a selection of jurors, cast and crew of the opening night film, and performances by Ajyal Tunes.

## ‘A Hero’ by Asghar Farhadi

The opening night film ‘A Hero’, directed by Academy Award-winning filmmaker, DFI collaborator and Qumra Master Asghar Farhadi, is a compelling slice of life story, which won the Grand Prix at Cannes Film Festival in 2021. True to his signature style, ‘A Hero’ is poignant and understated, and the moral dilemma the film unearths demonstrates Farhadi’s unique ability to turn ordinary human situations into cinematic masterpieces.

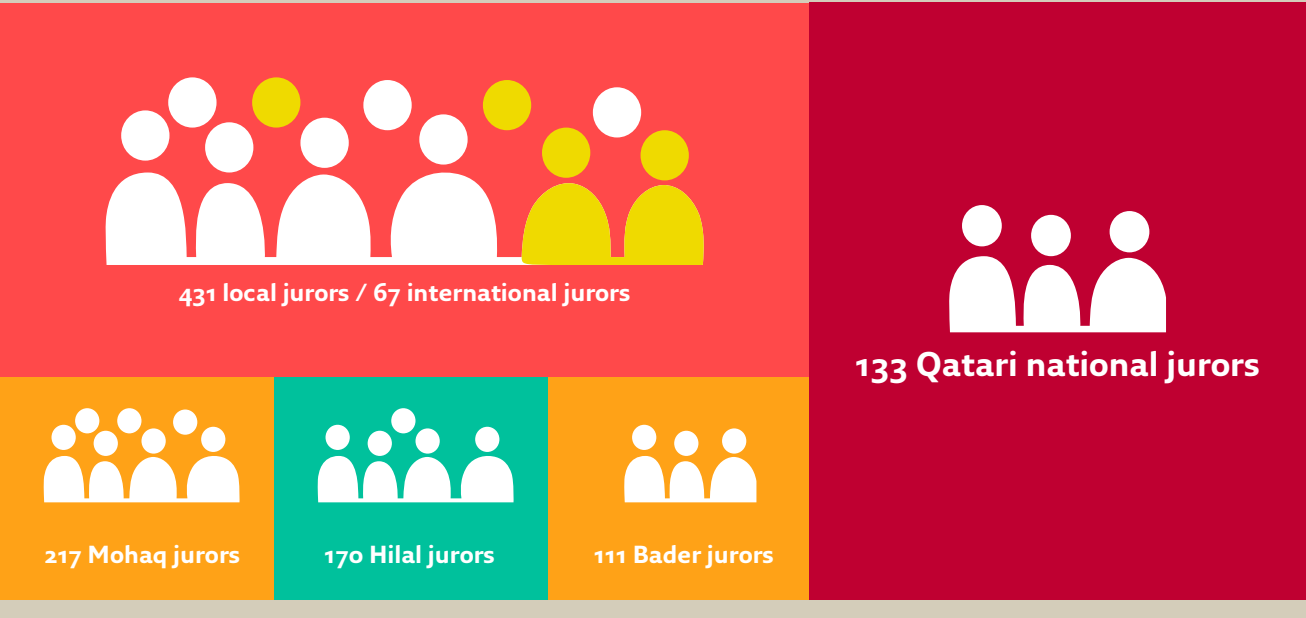
“It’s been really inspiring to be here and to see so many young MENA kids making movies and using their voice and telling their stories.”  
- **Actor Sheila Vand**

“Having children as jurors and giving them this opportunity is amazing. For me, film is art. They convey important messages to the world.”  
- **Activist and journalist Muna Al-Kurd**

“I thought their [the jurors] questions were very perceptive, and they were very engaged.”  
- **Filmmaker Joan Gratz**

“The jurors were exceptionally knowledgeable on a wide range of subjects. The details with which the questions came, I was quite pleased.”  
- **Sound designer Mark Mangini**

# Ajyal Jury: 498 jurors from 40+ countries



As always, the stars of our festival were our young Ajyal Jury. From ages 8 to 25, they formed the juries of the Ajyal Competition and selected the festival’s ultimate award winners. By providing young people access to acclaimed international cinema and renowned filmmakers, Ajyal helps them develop their understanding of the world around them and grow into confident and mindful global citizens.

The reach of the international jury programme spread to new countries around the globe, with jurors participating from: Algeria, Bahrain, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Egypt, France, Georgia, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Oman, Nepal, Palestine, Pakistan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tanzania, Uganda, Yemen, Croatia, and Portugal.

## Mohaq (ages 8 to 12)

Ajyal’s youngest jurors enjoyed one programme of short films, four feature-length films, one workshop, one special activity, and one Ajyal Spotlight session. The new moon is full of hope and endless possibilities. The critical minds of young people were challenged and inspired by these films, which were appropriate for audiences 8 years of age and older.

## Hilal (ages 13 to 17)

Hilal jurors enjoyed one programme of shorts, four feature films, one masterclass, two Ajyal Talks and three Ajyal Spotlight sessions. Carried along by the crescent in their teenage years, soon-to-be adults found films in this section that encouraged their self-expression.

## Bader (ages 18 to 25)

As the young adults of the festival, Bader enjoyed a full schedule including two programmes of shorts, five feature films, one masterclass, two Ajyal Talks and three Ajyal Spotlights. Young adults have completed the circle of youth and are now taking their own steps on the path of life. Their opinions now resonate more strongly, and this appealing programme exposed them to cinema as a contemporary art form.

“The festival was more than wonderful, and I will never forget it as long as I live.  
And thank you very much for your hard work and effort.”  
– **Juror Rabee Jan**

“Thank you so much. It was a wonderful experience for us.”  
– **Juror Mamta Babbar**

“Congratulations and a big thank you for the Ajyal experience for my students.”  
– **Croatian chaperone Ana Djordic**

“I am super grateful for how the Ajyal Jury Team handled us the past week.  
It has been an absolute pleasure to be a part of this year’s jury.”  
– **Juror Fatima Doyola**

“We would like to say a massive thank you for inviting us to participate in this year’s Ajyal Film Festival.  
We learnt a lot about the world of film, and I have an even greater respect for the work of art that is a film thanks  
to seeing some of the behind-the-scenes processes!”  
– **Street Child United chaperone Beatrice Garcia**

“It taught us what is happening. It made us see the world differently.”  
– **Juror Sara Kneina**

“It’s an eye-opening experience. It helps you find new opportunities  
and make connections; it gives you social confidence.”  
– **Juror Wardeh Kadihan**

“My experience was amazing, honestly. It was my first year and I’m sure I’m going to repeat it soon.”  
– **Juror Malak Arada**



## And the winner is...

Each of the three Ajyal Juries awards a Best Film prize to their favourite short and feature-length films, for a total of six awards.

The directors of the winning films are awarded funding toward their next film, so judges are empowered to support and promote future content that is relevant and important to them, in a proactive way. A jury of regional industry professionals decide the Best Film in the Made in Qatar section.

### Mohaq

**Best Feature Film**  
**Poupelle of Chimney Town** by Yusuke Hirota

**Best Short Film**  
**Umbrellas** by José Prats & Álvaro Robles



### Hilal

**Best Feature Film**  
**Captains of Zaatari** by Ali El Arabi

**Best Short Film**  
**Olayan** by Khalifa Al-Mari



### Bader

**Best Feature Film**  
**Little Palestine, Diary of a Siege** by Abdallah Al-Khatib

**Best Short Film**  
**When Beirut was Beirut** by Alessandra El Chanti

**Bariq Best Short Film**  
**Ink** by Joost van den Bosch & Erik Verkerk

**Ajjal Audience Award**  
**Orca** by Sahar Mossayebi

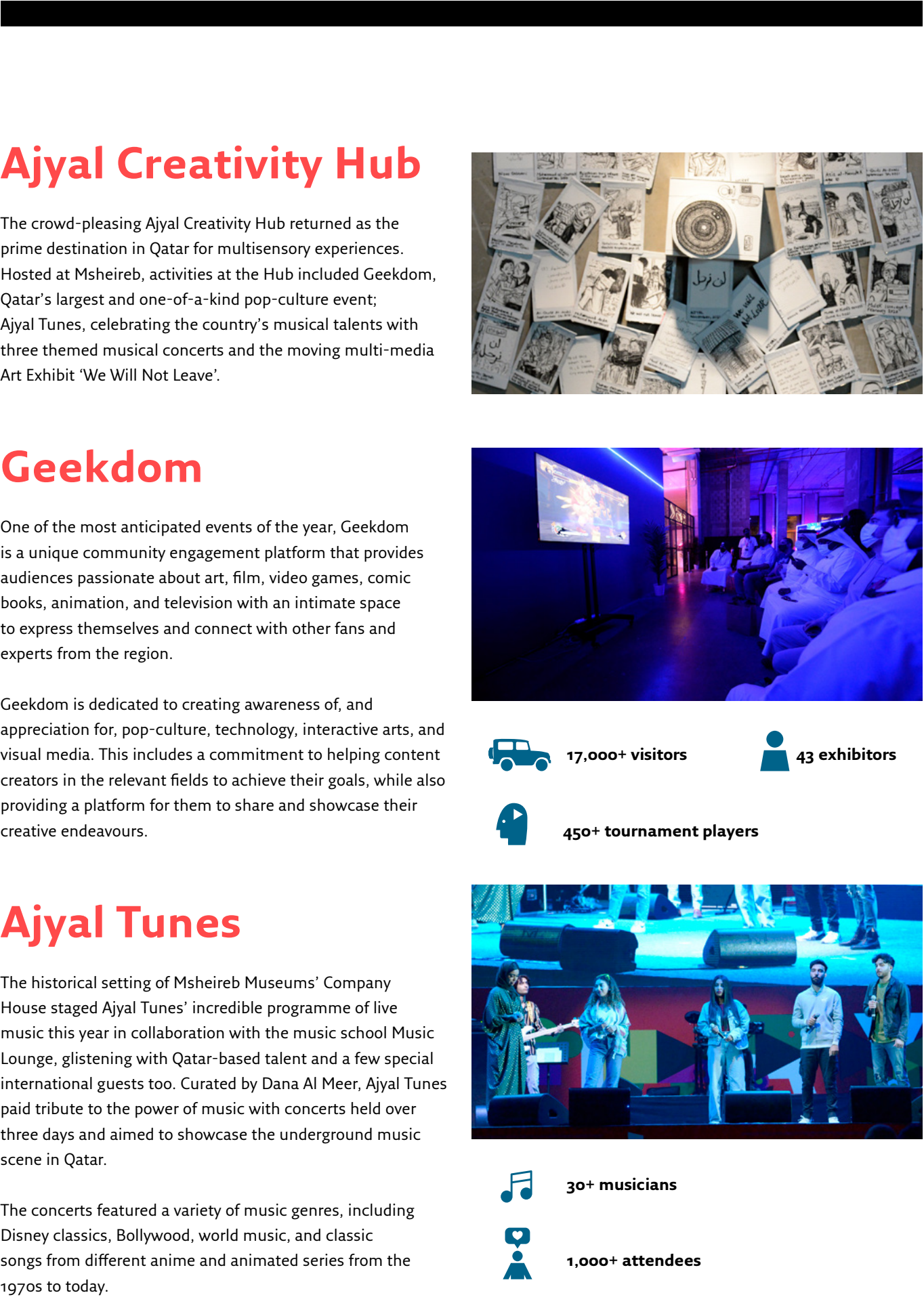






# Made in Qatar Winners

- Best Documentary**  
**And Then They Burn the Sea** by Majid Al-Remaihi
- Best Narrative**  
**Olayan** by Khalifa Al-Marri
- Special Jury Mention**  
**Virtual Voice** by Suzannah Mirghani
- Abdulaziz Jassim Award for Best Performance**  
Saleh Salem Al-Marri - From 'Olayan'



# Ajyal Creativity Hub

The crowd-pleasing Ajyal Creativity Hub returned as the prime destination in Qatar for multisensory experiences. Hosted at Msheireb, activities at the Hub included Geekdom, Qatar's largest and one-of-a-kind pop-culture event; Ajyal Tunes, celebrating the country's musical talents with three themed musical concerts and the moving multi-media Art Exhibit 'We Will Not Leave'.

# Geekdom

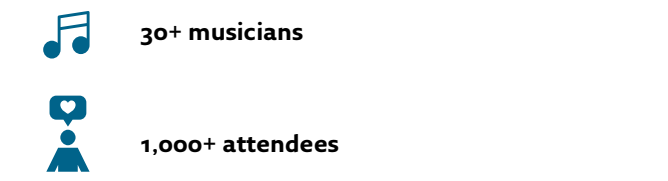
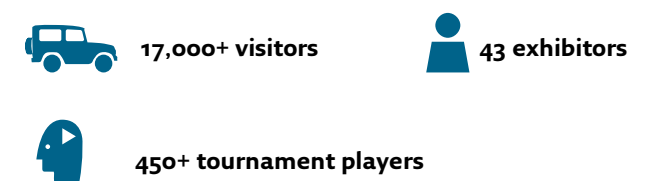
One of the most anticipated events of the year, Geekdom is a unique community engagement platform that provides audiences passionate about art, film, video games, comic books, animation, and television with an intimate space to express themselves and connect with other fans and experts from the region.

Geekdom is dedicated to creating awareness of, and appreciation for, pop-culture, technology, interactive arts, and visual media. This includes a commitment to helping content creators in the relevant fields to achieve their goals, while also providing a platform for them to share and showcase their creative endeavours.

# Ajyal Tunes

The historical setting of Msheireb Museums' Company House staged Ajyal Tunes' incredible programme of live music this year in collaboration with the music school Music Lounge, glistening with Qatar-based talent and a few special international guests too. Curated by Dana Al Meer, Ajyal Tunes paid tribute to the power of music with concerts held over three days and aimed to showcase the underground music scene in Qatar.

The concerts featured a variety of music genres, including Disney classics, Bollywood, world music, and classic songs from different anime and animated series from the 1970s to today.

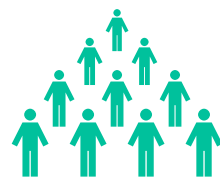




## 'We Will Not Leave' Exhibition



**27 artists / 40 artworks**



**5,500+ visitors in the first week**

Drawing inspiration from the Al-Kurd family living in the embattled Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood, this year's exhibit 'We Will Not Leave' derives its name from their defiant and now iconic piece of graffiti art. This multimedia exhibition, held at Sikkat Wadi Msheireb for an extended period from Nov. 8 to Dec. 18, presented the works of 27 artists from Qatar's creative community that have come together in a spirit of solidarity, support and kinship for our Palestinian brothers and sisters to present an experience that aims to manifest both the poignant beauty and affecting hardships of their current subjugation.

Participating artists included: Jumanah Abbas, Abdullah Ahmadi, Hanof Ahmed, Ibrahim AlBaker, Shaikha Al-Elaiwy, AlAnoud Al-Ghamdi, Reem Al-Haddad, Anfal Al-Kandari, Sharefa Al-Mannai, Saad Al-Mslamani, Noof Al-Naama, Amira Alnamla, Hazem Asif, Maryam Al-Tajer, Buthaina Al Zaman, Nour El-Basuni, Sumaia El Kilani, Yusef Fakhroo, Ahmad Tariq Hamad, Obada Jarbi, Fatima Javed, Arman Mansouri, Hayyan Monawar, Lana Shaheen, Tanya Shamil, Haytham Sharrouf and Mala Waseem.

As part of our 'We Will Not Leave' multimedia exhibit, we were honoured and thrilled to host a series of insightful talks with esteemed guests from the region and outside the region. The talks were a full house, and the ticketed day was sold out in the first 25 minutes from activation. Each of these hour-long discussions, which took place at the exhibition, shed a light on important topics related to the Palestinian struggle.

"Art that doesn't remind us of our humanity is meaningless.  
Humanity that does not acknowledge the struggle of Palestinians is void."  
- **Ministry of Foreign Affairs**

"Very proud of our young talents and to see their creativity towards our regional cause."  
- **H.E Sheikha Al-Mayassa Bint Hamad Al-Thani**

"This has been very emotional and very brave of these artists."  
- **Deputy of the Ambassador of the State of Palestine in Qatar**

"Art is unquestionably one of the purest and highest elements in human happiness. It trains the mind through the eye and the eye through the mind. I was honoured to see this exhibition."  
- **Ambassador of Pakistan in Qatar**

"The sold-out talk which was "The Rise of Digital Advocacy" was powerful. It delved into the power of the internet and in giving a voice for the voiceless while offering an indispensable platform for self-expression."  
- **Sheikh Jarrah's Units Official**

"This exhibition is a must see!"  
- **Al-Jazeera**

## A word from our partners...

"It was a wonderful experience, and we are always happy to work with you and support DFI."  
- **Zhan Temerkhanov, Managing Partner, Aldo Coppola**

"Always a pleasure working with you and the DFI team on a festival that we hold dearly.  
Looking forward to partnering with DFI on all future projects related to Ajyal and beyond."  
- **Monia Fawzi, Partnership Specialist, talabat**

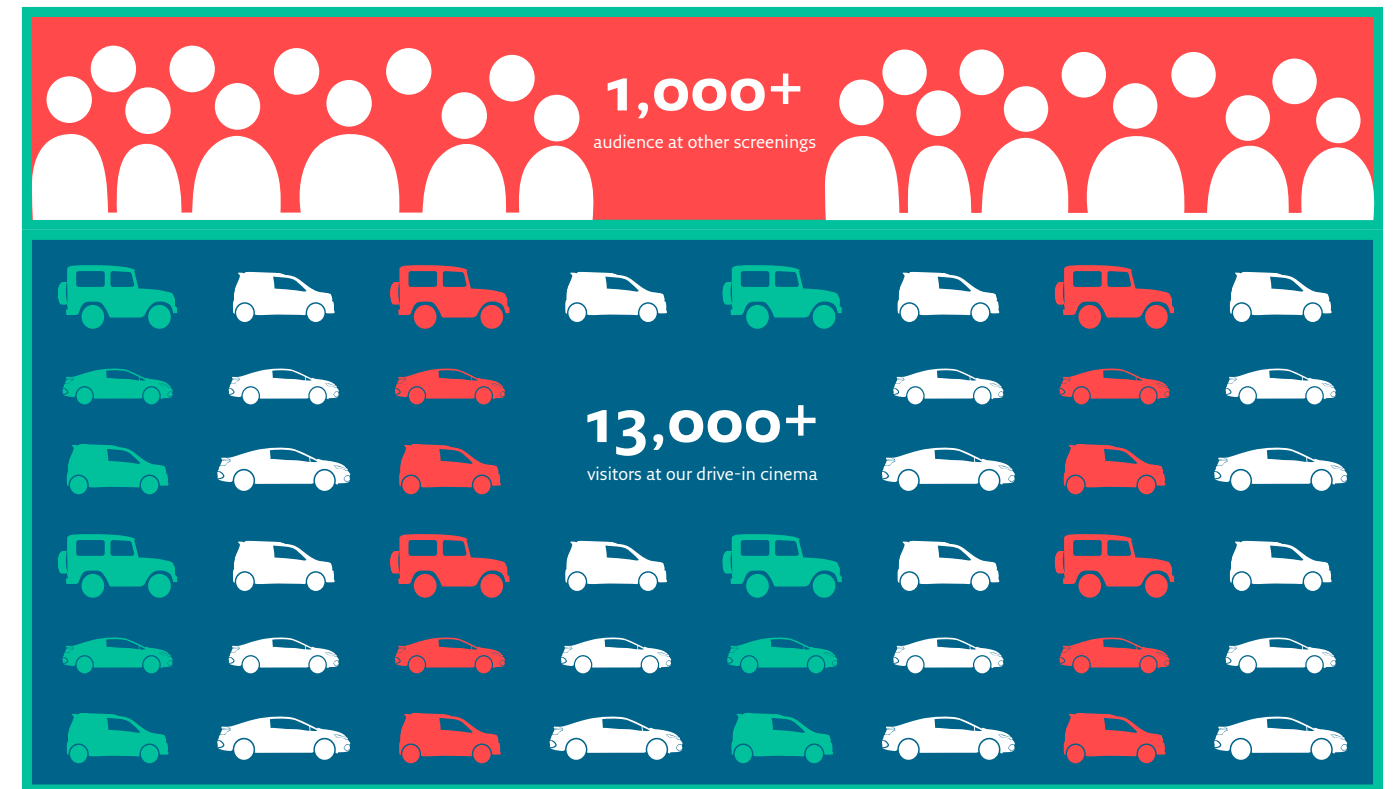
"We really enjoyed being part of the Ajyal Film Festival and it is our pleasure to support this amazing festival. I must congratulate you and your team for pulling off such a great event. You will always have our support for any activities at DFI. My praises to your management and CEO."  
- **Jaisen George, Music Lounge**

"Thank you so much for giving us the opportunity to collaborate once more! It is great to be back to life. Everything was well organized and the whole event was a success from all aspects."  
- **Miral Mourad, Head of Marketing, Virtuocity**



# Film Programming

DFI aims to develop an extensive and diverse cultural experience through the curated films we screen. Our goal is to offer an exemplary film experience to the audiences in Qatar. Our screenings include a selection of new releases, classics, retrospectives and thematically organised films for a wide range of audiences.



## A Joyous Return to In-person Screenings in 2021

As the pandemic progressed in 2020, many of our events moved online to ensure that we stayed connected to our audiences through film, even in the most challenging of circumstances.

In 2021, we were delighted to bring back some in-person events with safety being our top priority. In addition to adhering strictly to government guidelines, DFI established and enforced, in collaboration with Qatar's Ministry of Public Health, rigid procedures for capacity control, social distancing and precautionary measures at all events.





## 2021 Qatar-USA Year of Culture Screenings

DFI launched three compelling film series to celebrate the best of independent US cinema as part of the 2021 Qatar-USA Year of Culture.

### Indie Hits

21 - 22 October  
Katara Drama Theatre

DFI presented 'Indie Hits', a compelling selection of features and shorts that showcase the latest and greatest in American independent cinema from the festival circuit and beyond. The series included the critically-acclaimed 'Nine Days', 'Minari', and a shorts programme.

### Year Of Culture Series

26 - 30 October  
Katara Drama Theatre

A Showcase of five iconic films that helped shape the trajectory of American Independent Cinema as we know it today. This series included the lauded 'Amreeka', 'Badlands', 'Napoleon Dynamite', and 'The Elephant Man'.

### Cinema Under Stars

25 - 27 November  
Katara Hills

A programme of American made family-friendly features in the serene setting of Katara Hills which included 'Luca', 'Raya and the Last Dragon', and 'Annie'.

## DFI's Drive-in Cinema Continued to Be a Hit Venue in 2021

Our ever-popular drive-in cinema experience returned to Lusail so audiences could continue to enjoy the magic of cinema from the comfort and safety of their own cars.

### Hogwarts @ Lusail

18 - 20 November

Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets (2002)  
Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban (2004)  
Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire (2005)

### Disney Anniversaries Series

2 - 4 December

Dumbo (1941)  
101 Dalmatians (1996)  
Beauty And the Beast (2017)

### Big and Small Series

9 - 11 December

Abominable (2019)  
Despicable Me (2010)  
Minions (2015)

### National Day Celebrations

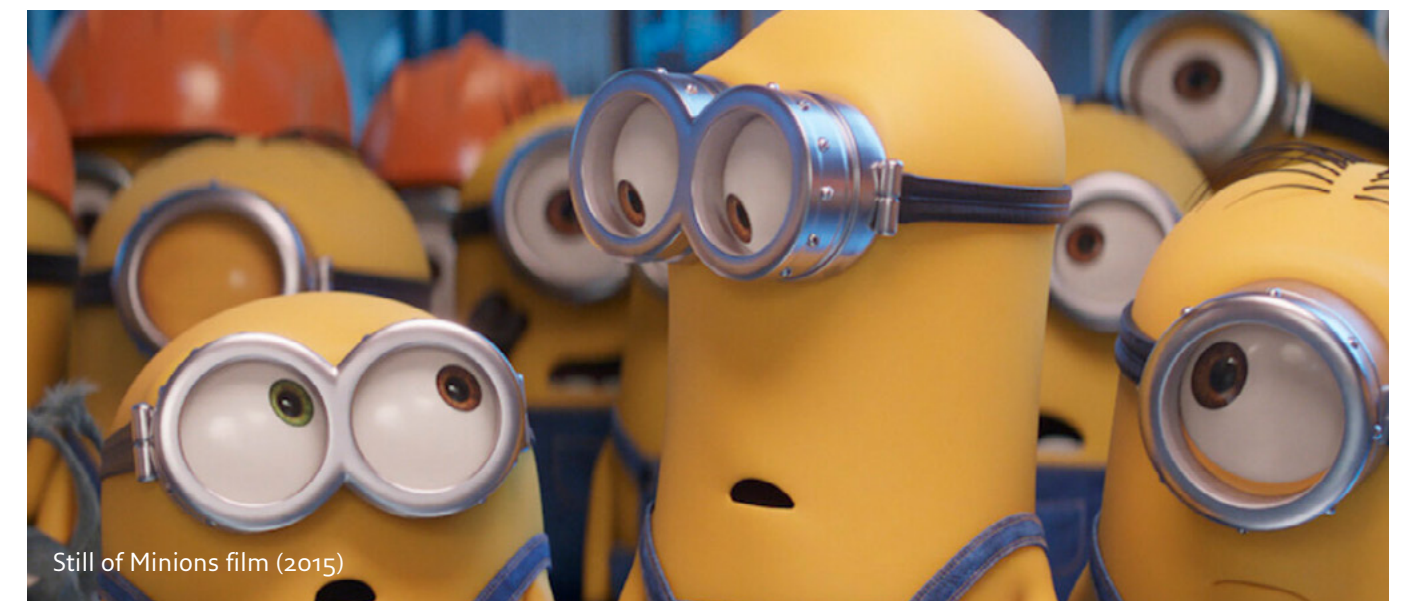
16 December

### Made in Qatar Shorts Programme

### Festive Series

23 - 25 December

Home Alone 1 (1990)  
Home Alone 2: Lost In New York (1992)  
The Santa Clause (1994)



Still of Minions film (2015)

# Funding

## Offering creative and financial support to filmmakers in Qatar and beyond.

Our funding initiatives are aimed at helping develop original and compelling film content. They enable emerging, talented filmmakers from across the globe to tell their stories, by maturing their promising ideas into viable film projects.

A crucial focus for DFI is to support projects that have regional relevance. Our primary goal is to assist the emergence of a diverse slate of original films that can contribute to a more balanced, global, storytelling platform. The Qatari Film Fund, our Grants Programme and Co-Finance are the three mechanisms we use to channel funding into selected projects.

### Qatari Film Fund

By investing in the development and success of local talent, the Qatari Film Fund (QFF) equips, empowers and elevates the skills and expertise of Qatari filmmakers. The Qatari Film Fund finances up to eight short films per year, which goes towards development and production support.

QFF also supports up to four feature films per year. Since its inception in 2015, QFF has exceeded all expectations and helped develop a vibrant community of dedicated and talented local filmmakers who are now making their mark on the global stage.

### A Record Number of Festival Acceptances for Qatari Made Films

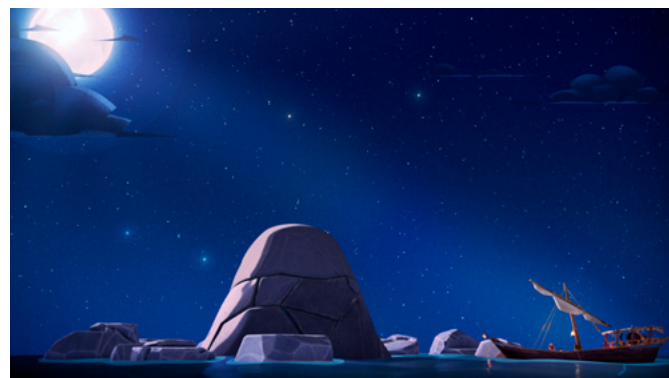
In a very challenging year for filmmaking, DFI is proud to have had its record number of festival acceptances for films made in Qatar. This achievement shows how respected and celebrated our homegrown talent is becoming on the international circuit.

2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
3	10	24	48	63	91	129



## QFF Films at Festivals in 2021

Qatari Film Fund supported films made their mark at a large number of international film festivals around the world in 2021, with some winning awards.



### Al Tabbab

by Khalifa Al Mana  
31 Festivals and 4 Awards



### Amphitheater

by Mahdi Ali Ali  
4 Festivals



### And Then They Burn the Sea

by Majid Al Remeihi  
5 Festivals



### Emsahar

by Hassan Al Jahni  
23 Festivals and 4 Awards



### End of the Road

by Ahmad Al-Sharif  
3 Festivals and 1 Award



### Fragile

by Kholoud Al Ali  
9 Festivals



### Sh'hab

by Amal Al-Muftah  
5 Festivals



### The Black Veil

by AJ Al-Thani  
32 Festivals and 7 Awards



### Ya Hoota

by Latifa Al Darwish & Abdulaziz Yousef  
10 Festivals and 2 Awards



# Grants

## Providing financial, creative, and logistical support to promising filmmakers

DFI's Grants Programme aims to discover and support the emerging talent of first-and-second time filmmakers from Qatar, the wider Arab region, and around the world. By funding their productions, we facilitate exchanges of creativity, knowledge and professional collaborations among our filmmakers.

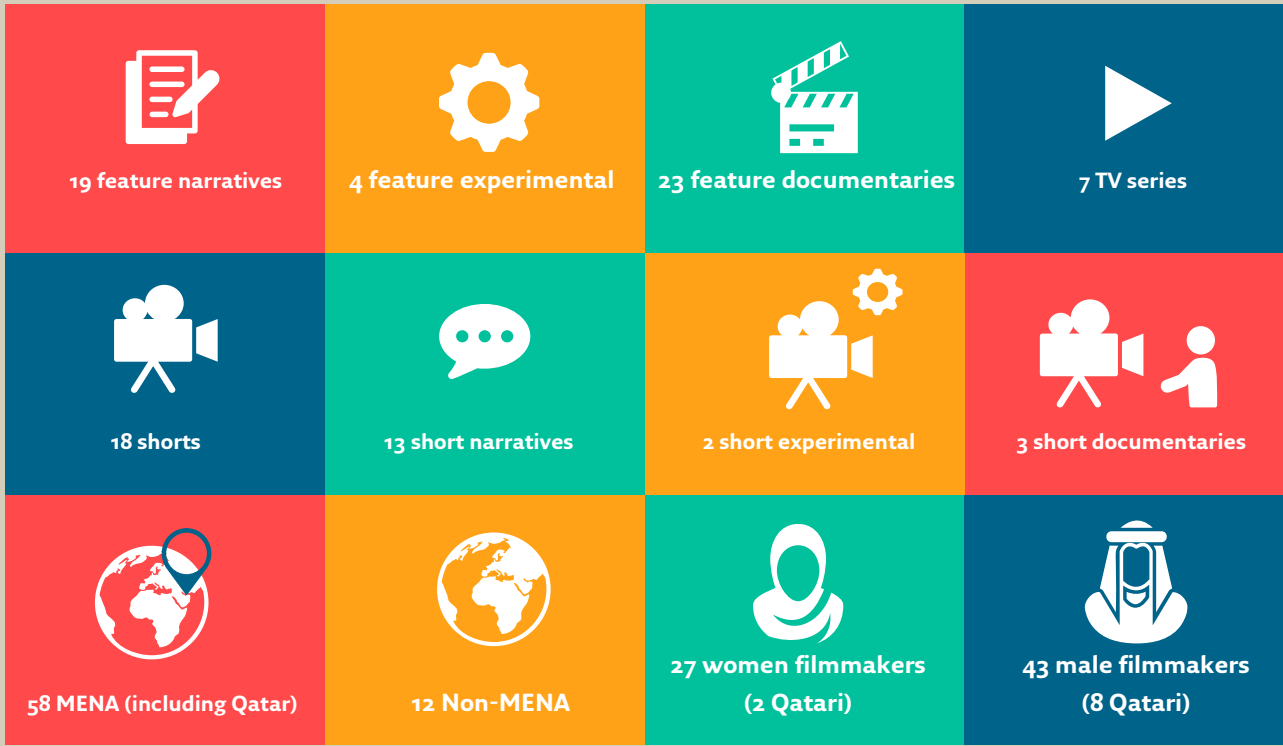
We help our Grantees interact, connect, evaluate and grow through our own events, such as Qumra and Ajyal. We also ensure that the exposure and the experience they gain thereafter are utilized as a springboard to go beyond, touring international festivals and capturing the attention of audiences across the globe.

Ever-conscious of evolving trends in the industry and to help reach growing audiences who use technologies beyond traditional cinema, DFI also funds work that includes television and web series.

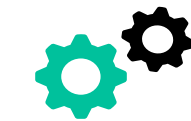


Fall 2018 film 'Costra Brava' by Mounia Akl.

# 70 projects granted in 2021:



# Stages of Development



18 in development

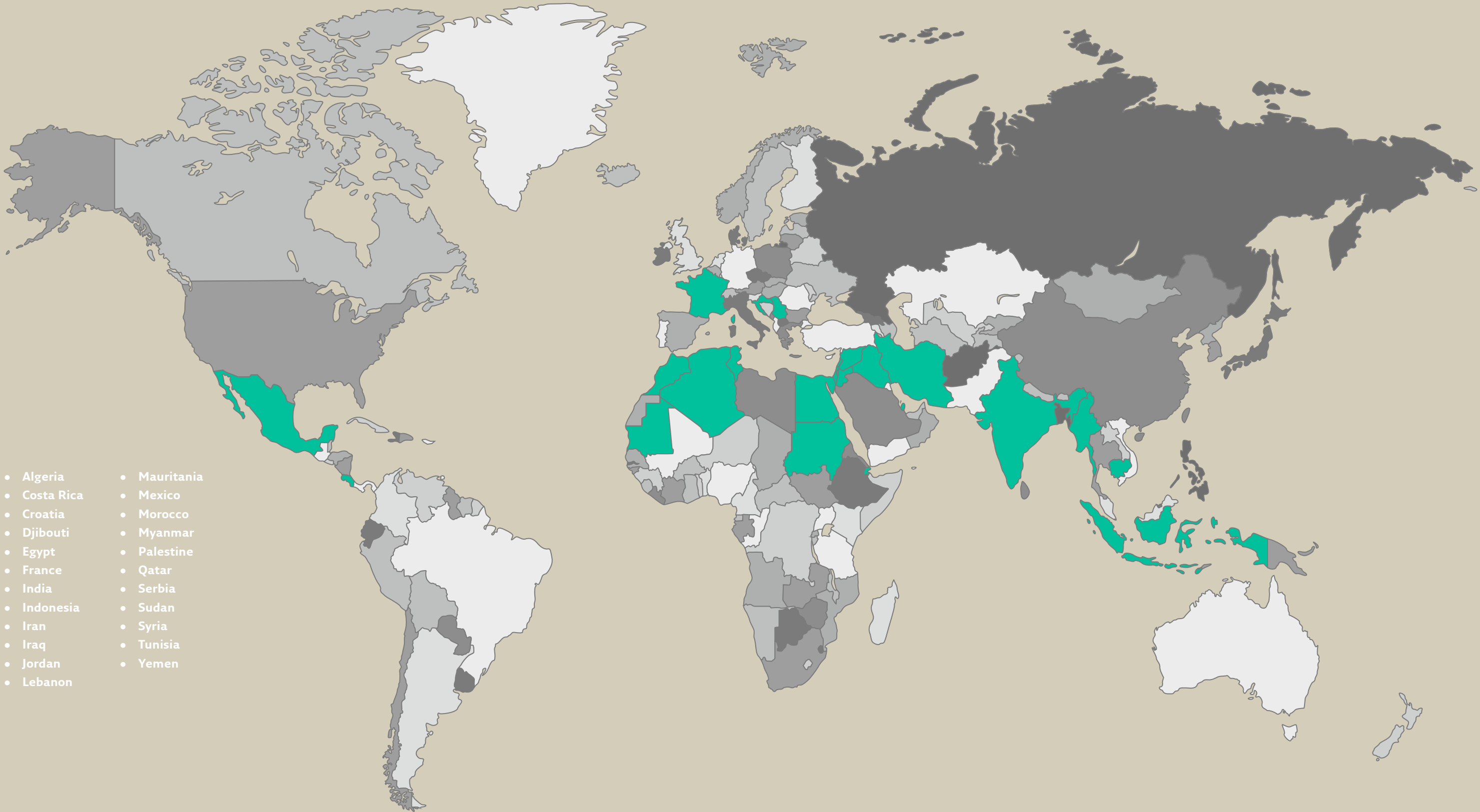


28 in production



24 post-production

# 23 Countries supported in 2021



# DFI Supported Films Shine at Prominent Film Festivals in 2021

	Awards	Selections
Academy Awards®	-	5
Cannes Film Festival	-	9
Berlin Film Festival	-	1
Toronto International Film Festival	-	7
International Film Festival Rotterdam	-	3
Sarajevo Film Festival	-	3
Venice International Film Festival	2	9
Total Selections (All Festivals)	200+	
Total Awards (All Festivals)	40+	

# Venice Film Festival Locarno Film Festival

**Orizzonti**  
**Atlantide** by Yuri Ancarani

**White Building** by Kavich Neang  
Won a Best Actor Award

**El Gran Movimiento** by Kiro Russo  
Won a Special Jury Prize and the Fondazione Fai Persona Lavoro Ambiente Award

**Orizzonti Extra**  
**Costa Brava, Lebanon** by Mounia Akl

**Orizzonti / Short Films Competition**  
**Don't Get Too Comfortable** by Shaima Al-Tamimi

**Giornate Degli Autori**  
**The Stranger (Al Garib)** by Ameer Fakher Eldin

**Final Cut in Venice**  
**Under the Fig Trees** by Erige Sehiri  
**The Mother of All Lies** by Asmae El Moudir

**Official Selection**  
**Republic of Silence** by Diana El Jeiroudi

# Toronto International Film Festival

**Memoria** by Apichatpong Weerasethakul  
**Huda's Salon** by Hany Abu-Assad  
**Costa Brava, Lebanon** by Mounia Akl  
**The Devil's Drivers** by Mohammed Abugeth and Daniel Carsenty  
**The Gravedigger's Wife** by Khadar Ayderus Ahmed  
**Tug of War** by Amil Shivji  
**Whether the Weather is Fine** by Carlo Francisco Manatad

**Concorso Cineasti del presente**  
**Whether the Weather is Fine** by Carlo Francisco Manatad

**Piazza Grande**  
**The Alleys** by Bassel Ghandour

**International Competition**  
**The River** by Ghassan Salhab (Co-financed)

**Pardi di domani (Short Films)**  
**And Then They Burn The Sea** by Majid Al-Remaihi  
**Night** by Ahmad Saleh

# Cannes Film Festival

**Directors' Fortnight**  
**The Sea Ahead** by Ely Dagher  
**A Brighter Tomorrow** by Yassine Qnia

**ACID**  
**Little Palestine (Diary Of A Siege)** by Abdallah Al-Khatib

**Critics' Week**  
**Amparo** by Simon Mesa Soto  
**The Gravedigger's Wife** by Khadar Ayderus Ahmed

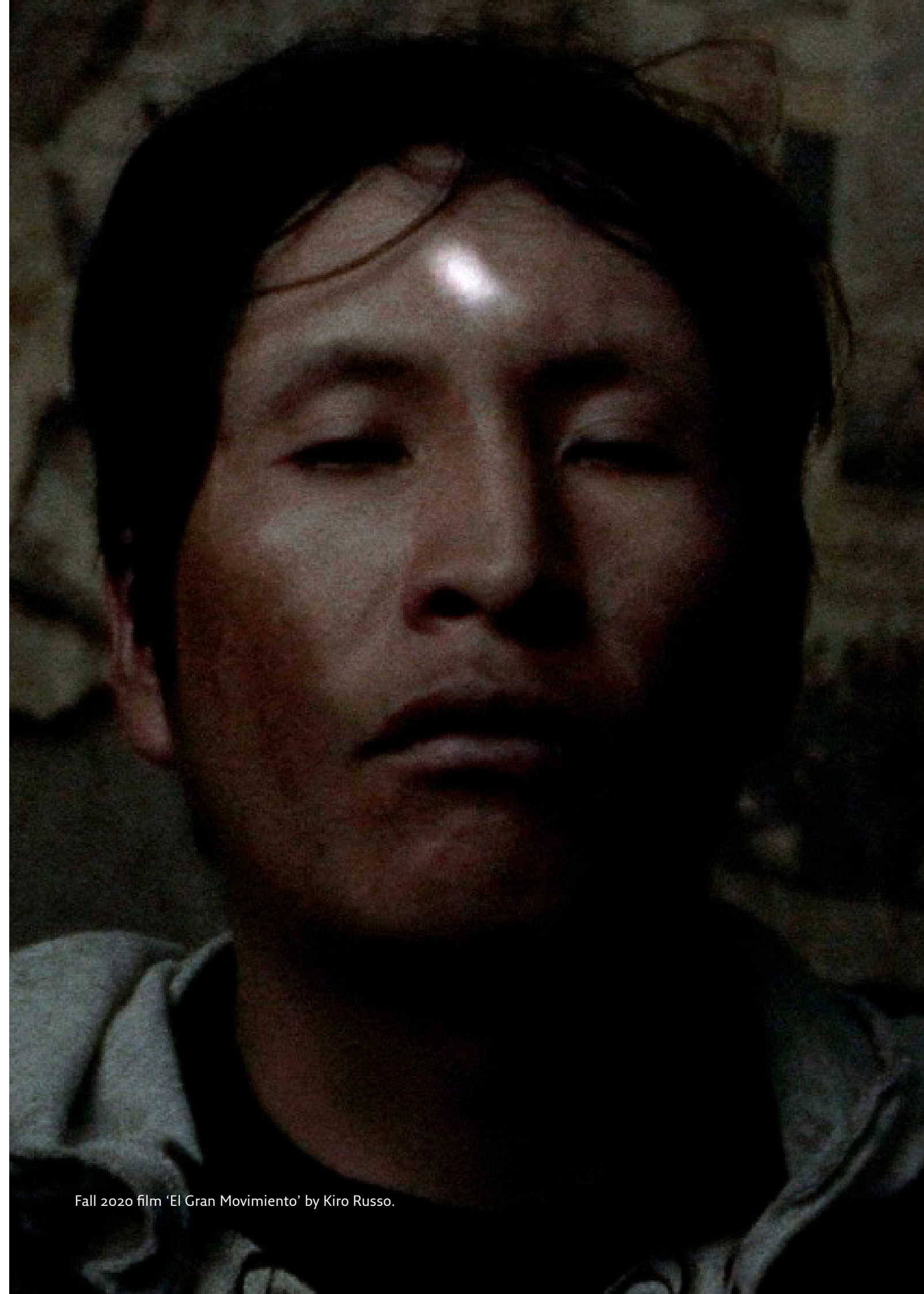
**Official Competition**  
**Memoria** by Apichatpong Weerasethakul (Co-financed)

**Un Certain Regard**  
**Freda** by Gessica Fabiola Geneus  
**Prayers for the Stolen (Noche de Fuego)** by Tatiana Huezo  
**Rehana Maryam Noor** by Abdullah Mohammad Saad



## Official Selections for Best International Feature Film at the Academy Awards in 2022

- **El Gran Movimiento** by Kiro Russo (Bolivia)
- **White Building** by Kavich Neang (Cambodia)
- **Memoria** by Apichatpong Weerasethakul (Colombia)
- **Freda** by Gessica Fabiola Geneus (Haiti)
- **Costa Brava, Lebanon** by Mounia Akl (Lebanon)
- **Prayers for the Stolen (Noche de Fuego)** by Tatiana Huezo (Mexico)
- **The Stranger** by Ameer Fakher Eldin (Palestine)
- **The Gravedigger's Wife** by Khadar Ayderus Ahmed (Somalia)
- **Rehana Maryam Noor** by Abdullah Mohammad Saad (Bangladesh)



Fall 2020 film 'El Gran Movimiento' by Kiro Russo.

# Community Outreach

DFI's Community Outreach Department works to identify targeted opportunities and talents within local communities in Qatar, making sure to engage and oversee the growth of the filmmaking community.

Community Outreach aims to make it easy for the public to participate and be part of this growing industry. The department not only represents DFI, but also showcases DFI as the leading Film Institute in the region.

Our goal is to improve the productivity of DFI's engagement with external organisations while applying the best strategies to increase opportunities locally.

## **Welcoming All Communities Through Film**

DFI and Outreach recognise the importance of catering to the diverse communities in Qatar and prioritise the value of reaching every community. Ultimately, we want to spread awareness of DFI and communicate what we can offer. Our goal is to attract talented filmmakers of the future and engage film lovers of all ages.

Outreach is divided into two distinct sections:

- Public and Organisational Community Outreach
- Filmmaking Community Outreach

## **Nurturing Film Appreciation in Schools**

Working closely with the Ministry of Education, DFI aims to nurture and enhance film appreciation by reaching out to over 800 schools in Qatar and creating special events with 270 educational institutes, both government and private.

## **Supporting Qatar Capital of Culture in the Islamic World 2021**

Doha was designated as the Islamic world culture capital for the year 2021 by the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO). DFI worked with the Ministry of Education, Qatar Culture Events Centre, and Qatar Museums on the program through a film competition.

## **Engaging with the Filmmakers of Tomorrow**

The Outreach team attended the career fairs of numerous Qatar-based universities in 2021 to both represent DFI and engage fully with students interested in the film industry.





# Building Lasting and Fruitful Partnerships

Outreach supported and collaborated with a wide range of organisations across Qatar and beyond in 2021, including:

- AFG College with the University of Aberdeen
- Channel 37 Qatar
- College of North Atlantic-Qatar
- Doha Mums
- Education Above All
- Ehsan (Tamkeen Center)
- Qatar Business Women Association
- Qatar Foundation Universities
- Qatar National Library
- Qatar Social Work
- Qatar University
- Teach for Qatar
- The Media Center for Youth (Ministry of Culture)

# Thank you to our Partners

