

## 47 Diverse Film Projects from 23 Countries Chosen for Doha Film Institute's 2024 Fall Grants

- *The Grants programme underlines DFI's commitment to nurturing independent voices in cinema from around the world*
- *21 projects by women filmmakers and 21 returning grantees demonstrate DFI's ongoing support for important voices*
- *An impressive 9 projects by Qatari and Qatar-based talent reiterate focus on building a strong homegrown creative ecosystem*

**Doha, Qatar; January 29, 2025:** Doha Film Institute has announced the recipients of its 2024 Fall Grants, which continues to support emerging and established filmmakers from the Arab world and beyond. The selection includes an exciting array of projects across various stages of production, reflecting DFI's commitment to nurturing diverse voices and innovative storytelling.

The longest-serving film development initiative in the region, DFI's Grants programme nurtures first- and second-time filmmakers as well as acclaimed directors from across the world. For the 2024 Fall Grants cycle, 47 projects from 23 nations that span a range of genres, including narrative, documentary, experimental films and series content, highlighting the Institute's dedication to fostering creativity and cinematic excellence. The grants aim to empower filmmakers by providing the resources they need to bring their unique visions to life.

In addition to 11 projects, including feature narratives and documentaries by Qatari and Qatar-based talent, the projects are from: Algeria, Belgium, Denmark, Egypt, France, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Lesotho, Mexico, Morocco, Palestine, Spain and Tunisia. This year's recipients include 21 women filmmakers and 21 returning grantees.

Fatma Hassan Alremaihi, CEO of the Doha Film Institute, commented, "Our grants programme is a cornerstone of our mission to support filmmakers in realizing their artistic potential and telling stories that resonate with audiences worldwide. Over the years, DFI Grants have enabled the script-to-screen journey of over 850 important projects in cinema from across the world, that has contributed to the advancement of cinema and the empowerment of underrepresented voices. The recipients of this cycle represent a remarkable blend of talent, vision, and cultural richness, who will continue to drive progression of the industry to new heights. We are proud to champion these projects and look forward to seeing them come to fruition."

**The 2024 Fall Grants recipients include:**

### **MENA - Feature Narrative – Development**

- ***Amara*** (Denmark, France, Lebanon, Qatar) by Michelle Keserwany, is about Darine, a vibrant woman in her mid-thirties who works at a small, politicised radio station in Beirut, where she hosts the morning show.

- ***Camera Obscura*** (Egypt, Germany, Qatar) by Viola Shafik, which is set towards the end of the 1883 cholera epidemic and the onset of the British protectorate in Egypt.
- ***Rock, Paper, Sea*** (Egypt, Qatar) by Randa Ali, a coming-of-age story set by the Egyptian Mediterranean in the summer of 2001.
- ***The Good Spirit*** (Palestine, UK, Qatar) by Razan Madhoun, follows Noor, a 22-year-old strong-willed resident of Gaza who discovers an injured stray dog.

#### **MENA - Feature Narrative – Production**

- ***In Memory of Times to Come*** (Palestine, Denmark, Malta, UK, Qatar) by Larissa Sansour, which is set 30 years after an eco-apocalypse, when Alia and her husband Elias lead a peaceful life in a restored townhouse in Bethlehem.
- ***Love-45*** (Syria, France, Switzerland, Qatar) by Anas Khalaf, the story of Walid, an unhappy Lebanese tennis club handyman who finds an unexpected purpose when tasked with building a court at a Syrian refugee camp.
- ***Minkaff*** (Qatar) by S.M. Al Thani, in which a young Qatari man investigates his friend's kidnapping during a falcon hunting trip, uncovering connections to a shared childhood incident from two decades ago.
- ***Plague*** (Tunisia, France, Qatar) by Youssef Chebbi, set in Tozeur —a farming town on the edge of the Tunisian desert, where two twin brothers jointly manage a palm grove.
- ***Selfless*** (Qatar, Algeria, France) by Meriem Mesraoua, about a 55-year-old woman, whose life changes when an administrative error invalidates her marriage, forcing her to confront deeper threats to her family's security.
- ***Tarfaya*** (Morocco, France, Belgium, Qatar) by Sofia Alaoui, about a mysterious sleeping epidemic in a remote Moroccan town that tests a dedicated doctor's resolve as she fights to save her community and the man she loves.
- ***The Joyful 1926*** (Algeria, France, Qatar) by Damien Ounouri and Adila Bendimerad, set in colonial Algiers, when a Muslim actress defies societal norms to pursue her theatrical dreams.
- ***The Pearl*** (Qatar) by Noor Al-Nasr, tells the story of Khalid, a modern-day, tech-obsessed Qatari teenager, who travels back in time to an era before his beloved technology existed.

#### **MENA - Feature Narrative - Post-Production**

- ***Exile*** (Tunisia, Luxembourg, France, Qatar) by Mehdi Hmili, set in an industrial world scarred by tragedy, as a steel factory worker undergoes a haunting transformation after an accident.
- ***Songs of Adam*** (Iraq, The Netherlands, Saudi Arabia, USA, Qatar) by Oday Rasheed, is a mystical tale set in 1946 about a boy who stops aging after witnessing a ritual, exploring themes of innocence, time, and family bonds.
- ***Spring Came On Laughing*** (Egypt, France, Saudi Arabia, Qatar) by Noha Adel, in which four interconnected stories unfold during spring, revealing unexpected darkness beneath the season's renewal.

### **MENA - Feature Documentary – Development**

- ***And Still I Rise*** (Morocco, France, Qatar) by Djanis Bouzyani, about Aravane Rézaï, who hates tennis, but was once ranked the world's 14th player, and plans a comeback after 13 years.
- ***Life After Siham*** (Egypt, France, Qatar) by Namir Abdel Messeeh, about Namir, a 40-year-old filmmaker, and his journey through grief.
- ***The Sixth Story*** (Iraq, UK, Qatar) by Ahmed Abd, in which the protagonist feels an undeniable urge to revisit a memory he has tried to suppress for 17 long years.

### **MENA - Feature Documentary - Post-Production**

- ***Mother of Silence*** (Iraq, France, Qatar) by Zahraa Ghandour, documents how the director, born and raised in a midwife's house in Baghdad, witnessed violence against women from an early age.
- ***My Armenian Phantoms*** (Lebanon, France, Armenia, Qatar) by Tamara Stepanyan, a deeply personal exploration following the loss of the director's father, Vigen Stepanyan.
- ***Souraya Mon Amour*** (Lebanon, Qatar) by Nicolas Khoury, which immerses viewers in the hidden world of Souraya Baghdadi, a realm of dance, cinema, meditation, and questioning.
- ***Women of Sin*** (Morocco, France, Qatar) by Noufissa Chara, which follows Karima Nadir and her collective, Kir Mama and Kif Baba, as they fight for gender equality in Morocco.

### **MENA - Feature Experimental/Essay – Development**

- ***B.A.H.R Alphabet*** (Lebanon, Qatar) by Sabine El Chamaa, a film about time, plastic floating underwater, tiny sparkling jellyfish, legends, and interrupted rituals.

### **MENA - Feature Experimental/Essay – Production**

- ***A Lover's Manifesto*** (Lebanon, Qatar) by Alfred Tarasi, documents the history of Beirut, spanning from its inception as a modern city in 1860 to its invasion by the Israeli army in 1982.

### **MENA - Short Narrative – Development**

- ***Burden*** (Qatar) by Mohammed D. Fakhro, is about an influencer, who struggles to promote a line of recreational oxygen cans during an appearance on a popular Gen-Z podcast.

### **MENA - Short Narrative – Production**

- ***Before the Day Breaks*** (Qatar) by Amal Al Mutfah, is about Nour a Pakistani heavyweight truck driver in his thirties who lives in Qatar, miles away from his wife and daughter in Lahore.
- ***Dance the Night*** (Algeria, France, Qatar) by Mohamed Megdoul, follows a shy six-year-old Ayoub, who reluctantly accompanies the women of his family to a village party.
- ***Demons to Diamonds*** (Lebanon, France, Italy, Switzerland, Canada, Qatar) by Valentin Noujaim, is shot on gritty 16mm, interwoven with fragmented CCTV footage and surreal VFX, the film plunges into a decaying world where paranoia and dread linger.

- ***Finding Oppo*** (Morocco, France, Qatar) by Youssef Michraf, is about Mamun, a teenager, who is forced by his father to confront a boy who stole his phone.
- ***Ms. Faiza & Dr Love*** (Tunisia, France, Qatar) by Anissa Daoud, about Faiza, who embodies everything one might imagine of a North African mother living on a housing estate.
- ***Qadha' w Qadar*** (Qatar) by Maryam Al-Mohammed, depicts Noor, who anxiously prepares to enter the courtroom with her sister, Fatima, who informs her that their mother, Amna, will not be joining them.
- ***Sundial*** (Qatar, Egypt, Chad) by Ethel Elmalik, is set amidst the uncertainty of an escalating military conflict in Khartoum, with 19-year-old Najma's primary focus being to reach her friend, Ziyad.
- ***When the Fire Burned the Sun*** (Morocco, Qatar) by Yassine Wahrani, is about Sami and Noor, who are instructed to return their memories of their time at the factory the day after a high-tech factory shuts down.

#### **MENA - Short Narrative – Post-Production**

- ***A Palm Frond*** (Qatar, USA) by Mahdi Ali Ali, a deeply introspective tale unfolds as a woman grapples with love, loss, and the mysteries of the sea.
- ***Project: Aisha*** (Qatar) by Fahd Al-Nahdi, is about a neurosurgeon Amal, who defies medical advice and takes matters into her own hands to save 10-year-old Aisha.

#### **MENA - Short Documentary – Production**

- ***Bel Falastini*** (Qatar) by Obada Jarbi, is about Jamil Atrash, born in a refugee camp in the 1950s, who reflects on his memories and shares his story from the perspective of a Palestinian refugee.

#### **MENA - Short Experimental – Production**

- ***Natural State*** (Qatar) by Majid Al-Remaihi, is about an anonymous narrator revisiting the collapse of the Popular Front for the Liberation of the Occupied Arabian Gulf in the 70s through the patchwork of archives.

#### **MENA - TV Series – Development**

- ***Men Home La Hon*** (Lebanon, Qatar) by Marie-Louise Elia, Julien Kobersy and Jean-Claude Boulos, about Kamal, in his 30s, who was once a promising architect until Lebanon's endless crises played a cruel joke on him.
- ***Nadine*** (Egypt, France, Qatar) by Christophe Saber, a family comedy-drama following the journey of a self-conscious daughter of Lebanese Christian/Druze immigrants living in France.
- ***Visions of the After: Dark Cedar*** (Lebanon, Qatar) by Ali Hamouch featuring seven stories that revolve around protagonists struggling to navigate a harsh environment—whether in a dystopian or post-apocalyptic world.

#### **MENA - Web Series - Production**

- ***The Walled Off Hotel*** (Palestine, Germany, The Netherlands, Saudi Arabia, Qatar) by Amer Shomali, is a series of light-hearted, interactive moments with a quirky ex-pirate who serves as the guide and impromptu hotel manager.

#### **NON-MENA - Feature Narrative – Post-Production**

- ***Sleepless City*** (Spain, France, Qatar) by Guillermo Garcia Lopez, set in La Cañada Real, on the outskirts of Madrid, one of the largest illegal shanty towns in Europe.
- ***The Reserve*** (Mexico, Qatar) by Pablo Pérez Lombardini, about Julia, a ranger in charge of protecting a natural reserve, living with her mother and daughter in a small village.

#### **NON-MENA - Feature Documentary - Post-Production**

- ***Fatna, a Woman Named Rachid*** (France, Morocco, Belgium, Qatar) by Hélène Harder, documents the National Archives of Morocco, where thousands of files await inventory, including victims of political violence.
- ***Once Upon a Time in Shiraz*** (Iran, France, Norway, South Korea, Qatar) by Hamed Zolfaghari, which follows Valioallah and Dorna, nearing the end of their nomadic lifestyle.
- ***The Last Shore*** (Belgium, France, Qatar) by Jean-François Ravagnan, documents the events following the viral video of a young Gambian man's drowning in Venice's Grand Canal by exploring the human story behind the tragedy through the voices of those who knew 22-year-old Pateh Sabally.

#### **NON-MENA - Feature Experimental/Essay – Post-Production**

- ***Ancestral Visions of the Future*** (Lesotho, France, Germany, Qatar) by Lemohang Jeremiah Moses, is a deeply personal exploration of identity, childhood, death, and exile through the eyes of a puppeteer, a mother, a boy, a farmer, and a city.

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