

Press Release

## **Qumra 2025 Wraps with Resounding Praise from Global Film Luminaries**

**Doha, Qatar; April 10, 2025:** Qumra, the annual talent incubator by Doha Film Institute (DFI), concluded its six-day run bringing together emerging filmmakers and some of the world's most iconic cinematic luminaries.

Celebrating the power of storytelling and the mission to champion underrepresented voices, Qumra continued its tradition of connecting promising talents with industry leaders whose groundbreaking work has redefined the art of filmmaking.

On the heels of his Academy Award® win for Best International Feature Film for **I'm Still Here** (2024), Brazilian director Walter Salles, one of five Qumra Masters, stated, "What DFI does is so important. It allows emerging filmmakers to talk about important themes and to actually give name to what has not been named yet."

He praised the collaborative nature and "spirit of collectiveness that I see at Qumra. It reminds me of the experience with my two mentors [on my second film *Central Station*], which opened layers and layers of possibilities. The film would never have reached its potential if not for that collective effort."

Decorated Iranian-French cinematographer Darius Khondji of **Se7en** (1995), **The Lost City of Z** (2016), and **Okja** (2017) fame, hailed DFI's efforts to bolster emerging voices. "The institute is fantastic for filmmakers. I wish we had this in other countries."

Khondji shared his advice to emerging talents: "If I had to make a film myself today—and I'm not a young filmmaker—, it would be difficult to have a unique voice. We have to find this voice within ourselves, then put it on screen."

Filipino master director of the magnum opus **Evolution of a Filipino Family** (2004) Lav Diaz echoed the importance of Qumra for the future of cinema. "Doha Film Institute has existed for 15 years and has already done a lot for the region's cinema. Qumra is very progressive. The fact that some of the biggest distributors and programmers are present here is something great... especially for young filmmakers."

Anna Terrazas, the Mexican costume designer behind the Oscar-winning film **Roma** (2018), shared her 'deeply fulfilling' experience as a Qumra Master. "I'm thrilled to be here and thankful to the entire team at Qumra. It's been the most amazing experience to talk to the projects. I cannot say



more beautiful things about the hospitality of everybody here, and I truly appreciate all the work that the entire team is doing to help develop emerging filmmakers.”

Genre-defying Hong Kong filmmaker Johnnie To – **Election** (2005), **Exiled** (2006) and **Push** (2009) – commended Qumra’s ability to evoke conversations. “Very often, after people have watched my movies, there may be things they would like to know better and understand more. These kinds of events are a very good place to have such communication and exchanges.”

He described film as a “personal pursuit”, adding: “If someone wants to become a very mature or sophisticated filmmaker, what they need to do is to watch more, see more, and understand more. You need to have a long-term passion for film.”

In its 11th edition from April 4–9, Qumra showcased 49 bold and compelling projects by emerging filmmakers from 23 countries.

The event’s five visionary Qumra Masters—Walter Salles, Darius Khondji, Lav Diaz, Anna Terrazas, and Johnnie To—each delivered two-hour talks moderated by film professor Richard Peña, offering insights from their illustrious careers. The Masters also provided one-on-one mentorship to support participating filmmakers and their projects.

In addition, the event featured nightly public screenings of **East of Noon** by Hala Elkoussy, **Demba** by Mamadou Dia, **Moondove** by Karim Kassem, **Rising Up at Night** by Nelson Makengo, **MA - Cry of Silence** by The Maw Naing, and **Red Path** by Lotfi Achour.