

Press Release – Strictly Under Embargo until Sunday February 14, 2016

Filmmakers James Schamus and Joshua Oppenheimer unveiled as final two Qumra Masters

- Prolific screenwriter/producer/director James Schamus (*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon, Indignation*) and Academy Award nominated documentary filmmaker Joshua Oppenheimer (*The Act of Killing, The Look of Silence*) join previously announced Qumra Masters Naomi Kawase, Nuri Bilge Ceylan and Aleksandr Sokurov
- Masters Screenings confirmed for Qumra include *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon, Once Upon A Time in Anatolia, The Mourning Forest, Russian Ark and The Look of Silence*
- Qumra screenings to be held at the Museum of Islamic Art, a cultural partner of the Doha Film Institute

Berlin, Germany and Doha, Qatar: February 14, 2015: Screenwriter/producer/director James Schamus (*The Ice Storm, Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon, Indignation*) and acclaimed documentary filmmaker Joshua Oppenheimer (*The Act of Killing, The Look of Silence*) have been confirmed by the Doha Film Institute as the final two Masters for the 2nd edition of Qumra taking place from March 4-9, 2016.

Schamus and Oppenheimer will join previously announced Qumra Masters Naomi Kawase (Japan), Nuri Bilge Ceylan (Turkey) and Aleksandr Sokurov (Russia) at the event to mentor first and second-time filmmakers during the new initiative, which debuted in March 2015, to support the development of emerging filmmakers from Qatar, the Arab region and around the world.

Due to unforeseen circumstances, previously announced Qumra Master Lucrecia Martel is no longer able to participate this year.

Both Schamus and Oppenheimer were born in the US and combine their acclaimed filmmaking careers with other roles within the industry: Schamus as a revered film historian and academic; and Oppenheimer as Artistic Director of the Centre for Documentary and Experimental Film at the University of Westminster in London.

“We are privileged to have James Schamus and Joshua Oppenheimer participate as Qumra Masters this year,” said Doha Film Institute CEO Fatma Al Remaihi. “Both filmmakers, while very different in style, are truly ground-breaking in their fields and bring a wealth of experience to Qumra that will be invaluable for the young filmmakers participating.”

“We look forward to welcoming James and Joshua to the Gulf region for the first time and enabling our Qumra 2016 participants to establish a connection with these two leaders of independent filmmaking in the US.”

“We are also very pleased to have the opportunity to showcase their work through our Qumra screenings at the Museum of Islamic Art, a cultural landmark for the region and the perfect setting for Qumra this year.”

Schamus, a multi award-winning screenwriter, director and leading US indie producer, is best known for his long creative collaboration with Taiwanese director Ang Lee. He has worked with Lee on nine films, including *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (2000), which won four Academy Awards, including Best Foreign Language Film and Best Cinematography, and remains the highest-grossing non-English-language film in the US. He was the screenwriter for Lee's *The Ice Storm*, for which he won the award for Best Screenplay at the Festival de Cannes in 1997 and co-wrote *Eat Drink Man Woman* (1994), the first of Lee's films to achieve both critical and commercial success.

As a producer, Schamus co-founded the US powerhouse production company Good Machine in the early 1990s, and then from 2002 to 2014 was CEO of Focus Features, the motion picture production, financing and worldwide distribution company whose films during his tenure included Wes Anderson's *Moonrise Kingdom* (2012), Michel Gondry's *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* (2004), Roman Polanski's *The Pianist* (2002), Henry Selick's *Coraline* (2009) and Sofia Coppola's *Lost in Translation* (2003).

In 2014, Schamus turned his hand to directing with the short documentary *That Film About Money* (2014), and in 2016 made his feature directorial debut with an adaptation of Philip Roth's *Indignation*, which had its world premiere at the Sundance Film Festival in January 2016 and is screening at this year's Berlin International Film Festival in the Panorama section.

Schamus is also Professor of Professional Practice at Columbia University's School of the Arts, where he teaches film history and theory, and is the author of 'Carl Theodor Dreyer's Gertrud: The Moving Word', published by the University of Washington Press.

Two-time Academy Award nominee Joshua Oppenheimer's debut feature-length film, *The Act of Killing* (2012) was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Documentary Feature Film, named Film of the Year by The Guardian and the Sight and Sound Film Poll, and won 72 international awards, including a European Film Award, a BAFTA, an Asia Pacific Screen Award, a Berlin International Film Festival Audience Award, and the Guardian Film Award for Best Film.

His second film, *The Look of Silence* (2014) had its world premiere at the Venice Film Festival, where it won five awards including the Grand Jury Prize, the FIPRESCI Prize and the FEDEORA Prize. It was nominated for the 2016 Oscar for Best Documentary Film, and has received 66 international awards, including an International Documentary Association Award for Best Documentary, a Gotham Award for Best Documentary, and three Cinema Eye Honors for Nonfiction Filmmaking.

Oppenheimer is a partner at the Final Cut for Real production company in Copenhagen, and Artistic Director of the Centre for Documentary and Experimental Film at the University of Westminster, London.



As part of their role as Qumra Masters, Schamus and Oppenheimer will participate in a series of masterclasses and one-on-one sessions with participating Qumra projects, along with screenings and question-and-answer sessions for Doha audiences throughout the week.

The Qumra Screenings, open to the public and Qumra industry delegates, are presented in two sections of 'Masters' and 'New Voices in Cinema'. They will be held at the Museum of Islamic Art, a world renowned cultural institution which is the flagship of Qatar Museums, a cultural partner of the Doha Film Institute.

The Masters screenings, accompanied by question and answer sessions with the visiting filmmakers, feature an impressive selection of work by the group of eminent filmmakers: *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* by Ang Lee (co-written and produced by James Schamus), *Once Upon A Time in Anatolia* by Nuri Bilge Ceylan, *The Mourning Forest* by Naomi Kawase, *Russian Ark* by Aleksandr Sokurov and *The Look of Silence* by Joshua Oppenheimer. The New Voices in Cinema screenings, the line-up of projects participating at Qumra and industry guests will be announced in the coming weeks.

Filmmaker and Doha Film Institute Artistic Advisor Elia Suleiman said: It was James Schamus who first introduced me to the work of Joshua Oppenheimer, so it seems like the wit and wisdom of destiny to have them complete the cycle of Qumra Masters this year. Along with Nuri Bilge Ceylan, Naomi Kawase and Aleksandr Sokurov, one can't help but grasp the intensity of creative nourishment offered to our filmmakers this year.

Previous Qumra Masters include Mexican actor, director and producer Gael Garcia Bernal (*Amores Perros; No; Deficit*), Mauritanian director Abderrahmane Sissako (*Timbuktu* - nominated for Best Foreign Language Film at the 2015 Academy Awards); Romanian auteur and Palme d'Or winner Cristian Mungiu (*4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days; Beyond the Hills*); and Bosnian writer/director Danis Tanović (*An Episode in the Life of an Iron Picker; Tigers, No Man's Land* - winner of Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film in 2001).

The final two Qumra Masters were announced during the Berlin International Film Festival where eight Doha Film Institute grantees are screening in the official selection.

-ENDS-

Notes To Editors

About Qumra

Directors and Producers attached to up to twenty-five projects in development or post-production will be invited 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, and will also be 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 25 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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