

Qumra 2017 to nurture 12 Qatar-based projects presenting diverse themes

Doha, Qatar; February 26, 2017: The third edition of Qumra, the industry initiative by the Doha Film Institute to nurture the new generation of film talents, will extend mentoring and networking opportunities for 12 projects helmed by Qatar-based talent.

Qatar-based film projects by first and second time filmmakers at Qumra 2017 include five feature narratives along with seven shorts from national and resident filmmakers that are currently in development. The line-up includes three projects supported through the Institute's Qatar Film Fund.

In all, Qumra 2017 has 34 projects from 25 countries for mentoring through Masterclasses and networking opportunities. Directors and producers attached to 18 narrative feature films, 7 feature documentaries and 9 short films will participate in the six-day programme to be held from March 3 to 8 at Souq Al Waqif and the Museum of Islamic Arts.

The Feature Narrative Projects from Qatar under development include: ***The Other Wife*** by Meriem Mesraoua (Qatar, France) about Salima who, determined to secure her status as a wife, enlists a secondary spouse for her husband – only to find she has jeopardised her position. ***Hitch 60 (working title)*** by Sara Al Obaidly (Qatar, United Kingdom), where two mod girls from South East London embark on a dream holiday but end up on the journey of a lifetime, crossing continents and cultures, and growing up years on the road. ***iPhone Memory*** by Mahdi Ali Ali (Qatar) which presents three stories that intersect in Paris – about a Frenchman, who battles cancer while his wife wants an abortion; a Romani girl looking for someone to adopt her little sister; and a Syrian immigrant boy trying to survive by acting in the cinema.

Azooz, the Bully Slayer by Mohammed Al Hamadi (Qatar), which is set in 1992, inspired by Al Watwat (Batman) stories and is the tale of a 12-year-old who fends off a thief who has made off with a stash of Sega video-game tapes. ***The DNA of Love*** by Hafiz Ali Ali (Qatar), a 2015 Qatari Film Fund recipient, is about a retired engineer who, after the death of his Qatari wife, visits the United States to find his estranged daughter, while the same daughter travels to Doha to find answers to her late mother's past.

The Qumra Shorts by Qatar-based talent are currently in development and include two recipient films from the Qatari Film Fund: ***Sh'hab*** by Amal Al-Muftah (Qatar), about an orphan who embarks on a mythical journey that could reunite him with his parents; and ***Ya Hoota*** by Latifa Al Darwish and Abdulaziz Yousif Ahmed (Qatar), where a little girl attempts to save the moon from a gigantic whale along with her cousin.

The other shorts from Qatar chosen for Qumra 2017 are: ***Reem Planted a Flower*** by Rawda Al-Thani (Qatar) depicts a textbook example of a well-behaved schoolgirl who defies the omnipresent voice of the narrator to play with a dog; ***Angels, Spiders and Other Miserable Creatures*** by Fahad Al-Kuwari (Qatar) portrays a couple who pray for a miracle, and God sends them an angel. What will they do with it? ; in ***Awakenings*** by Fahad Al-Obaidly (Qatar), haunted by an obscure memory from his past, a young contemporary dancer inadvertently stumbles upon a painful forgotten truth, which releases his soul from the clutches of despair; ***Selective Mutism*** by Khalifa AlMarri (Qatar) about a young man caught up

in various incidents of deception, intrigue and murder and *Burn the Bird* by Zahed Bata (Jordan, Qatar), where a mother and son explore the darkness of the night in search of a place to bury their past.

Further, five films by Qatari directors are being screened in the New Voices in Cinema programme of Qumra, all of which were also supported by the DFI through year-round initiatives. These include: *Kashta* by A.J. Al Thani; *I Have Been Watching You All Along* by Rawda Al-Thani; *Turtles Are Always Home* by Rawane Nassif; *RED* by Kholood Mohammed Al-Ali and *Our Time Is Running Out* by Meriem Mesraoua.

Talents associated with the projects will have the opportunity to be mentored by this year's Qumra Masters - contemporary Iranian master Asghar Farhadi; French auteur Bruno Dumont; Cambodian creative documentarian Rithy Panh, Argentina's eminent filmmaker Lucrecia Martel and internationally acclaimed producer Paulo Branco.

Qumra 2017 programming includes industry meetings designed to assist in propelling selected projects to the next stages of development, through Master Classes, work-in-progress screenings, bespoke matchmaking sessions and tailored workshops with industry experts, as well as the newly introduced Accredited Delegate programme and Qumra Talks.

-ENDS-

Note to Editors:

About Qumra

Directors and Producers attached to thirty-four projects in development and post-production are selected to participate in the event. They will include a number of emerging filmmakers from Qatar, as well as recipients of funding from the Institute's Grants Programme. The robust programme will feature industry meetings designed to assist with propelling projects to their next stages of development, including master classes, work-in-progress screenings, bespoke matchmaking sessions and tailored workshops with industry experts. This creative exchange will take place alongside a programme of public screenings curated with input from the Qumra Masters.

The event is organised in three main sections: The **Qumra Master Classes** are daily sessions; each led by one of the Masters. The participating filmmakers have full access to these sessions, which are also open to accredited industry guests to attend in an observational capacity.

The **Qumra Meetings** are a series of one-on-one meetings, workshops and tailored mentoring sessions between representatives from the selected projects and seasoned industry experts.

The **Qumra Screenings** are open to the public and feature projects funded by the Institute through its grants and co-financing initiatives, as well as a series of films chosen by the Qumra Masters accompanied by Q&A sessions.

The Arabic term 'qumra' is popularly said to be the origin of the word 'camera', and to have been used by the scientist, astronomer and mathematician Alhazen (Ibn al-Haytham, 965-c.1040 CE), whose work in optics laid out the principles of the camera obscura.

About Doha Film Institute:

Doha Film Institute is an independent, not-for-profit cultural organisation. It supports the growth of the local film community through cultivating film appreciation, enhancing industry knowledge and contributing to the development of sustainable creative industries in Qatar. The Institute's platforms include funding and production of local, regional and international films; skills-sharing and mentorship programmes; film screenings; the Ajyal Youth Film Festival; and Qumra. With culture, community, learning and entertainment at its foundation, the Institute is committed to supporting Qatar's 2030 vision for the development of a knowledge-based economy.

Doha Film Institute

Twitter: @DohaFilm; Instagram: @DohaFilm; Facebook: www.facebook.com/DohaFilmInstitute