

‘Have a point of view and do not play by rules,’ Qumra Master Paulo Branco advises delegates

Doha, Qatar; March 4, 2017: Qumra Master Paulo Branco, honoured as one of the ‘Greatest European Producers’ with over 300 films to his credit, shared his journey in films in an inimitable fashion, urging emerging filmmakers not to play by rules and describing film production as a gamble ‘where you always win even if you lose money because something always stays back.’

The lively discussion, moderated by Richard Peña, former programme director of the Film Society of Lincoln Center and the director of the New York Film Festival, took participants through the rich and varied experiences of Branco, who started his production career, self-admittedly, “without knowing anything at all about film production.”

Branco said his move to Paris from Lisbon, where he was born, gave him the freedom to take risks. He was happy running a cinema in Paris, when he started his long association with legendary Portuguese director Manoel de Oliveira. Together they made an impressive body of works – each film’s making a different experience.

He says the defining aspect of working with Oliveira was that the master knew exactly what he wanted, “framed, shot and edited in his head,” much like Raúl Ruiz, the experimental Chilean filmmaker, with whom too Branco had made films that went on to win top honours.

Branco went on to discuss the making of *Cosmopolis*, the Robert Pattinson-starrer, that was originally slated for Colin Farrell.

Sharing at the length the quirkiness of some of the directors he worked with and the ‘crazy’ moments in his 30 plus years as a film producer, Branco said that key to filmmaking was to have a ‘point of view’ in everything from script to shot.

That was also his advice to emerging filmmakers who sought his counsel on aspects including how he chooses scripts and finances his projects.

“There is no one and only way to making films,” said Branco, admitting candidly that he has never considered anything beyond the present day he lives in. “I want to live in (such a manner) ... I don’t know what happens in the next hour. I live day by day not knowing what I do tomorrow.”

That is why he insists that in filmmaking there are no rules, adding that “there are a lot of projects that are deserved to be made,’ and urging young filmmakers categorically to “just do it, even if you lose money because something stays back always – your film.”

Branco’s advise to new filmmakers is to bear in mind that “it is important to know what to tell, how to tell and how to use your elements.” He said he is keen to hear and discuss the Qumra Projects during his mentoring sessions with the talents.

Branco has the honour of having the largest number of films selected at Cannes Film Festival and in competition for the Palm d'Or. *Lisbon Story* (Germany, Portugal/1994), produced by Branco and directed by Wim Wenders, was screened in the Modern Masters Screenings at Qumra 2017.

Qumra hosts leading international filmmakers, producers, industry experts and professionals, for intense brainstorming, knowledge-sharing and nurturing sessions with talents associated with 34 films from 25 countries. Directors and producers attached to 18 narrative feature films, 7 feature documentaries and 9 short films are participating in the event being held until March 8 at Souq Al Waqif and the Museum of Islamic Arts.

New this year are the Accredited Delegates Programme, developed for professionals from diverse backgrounds which will allow 100 local and regional delegates to access more opportunities and be a part of the platform for discovery, and 'Qumra Talks', a series of three specially curated discussions that gathers leaders from the technology, film, TV and online worlds to share their insights on trending topics impacting the international film industry.

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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

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