

## **Doha Film Institute Cancels Qumra 2020 As Part of Risk Management of the Spread of COVID-19**

**Doha, Qatar: March, 3 2020:** Assuming responsibility for the management of the health and safety of its residents and international visitors, the Doha Film Institute (DFI) has made the decision to cancel the 2020 edition of Qumra and its related activities. Due to the current global alert regarding the COVID-19 outbreak, the decision comes as part of the Institute's contribution to manage and reduce the risk of further spread of the virus.

Over the past six years, Qumra has been a one-of-a-kind professional incubator crucial to the success of filmmakers from the Arab world and beyond. Fatma Hassan Alremaihi, Chief Executive Officer of the Doha Film Institute, said: "This was a very difficult decision, and although Qumra is an important event for our community and industry delegates, their safety and wellbeing remains our first priority. In order to reduce the risks to our guests in light of increasing global concerns over COVID-19, we are taking precautionary measures to proactively manage potential risks."

"DFI will continue to generate opportunities for this year's 46 selected projects and strive to support them through this period of new challenges. We thank our Qumra Masters, filmmakers and industry participants for their ongoing passion and contribution to our commitment to reshape the global storytelling landscape and empower emerging voices to create cinema, to exercise creative expression, and to transform inspired stories into acclaimed masterpieces, and look forward to future successful editions," she concluded.

The Qumra 2020 industry event was set to commence on 20 March with a select programme of 46 projects from 20 countries as part of DFI's mission to accelerate the success of filmmakers from the region and beyond and prepare them to bring their projects to audiences around the world. The programme included 20 projects by Qatar-based talent, including 12 by Qatari nationals. 7 of the projects were in development, with others in the Qumra Series and Shorts programmes. Of 46 projects, 33 are recipients of the Doha Film Institute's Grants programme, 3 are supported through the Qatari Film Fund and 1 through the Institute's co-financing programme.

As part of the Qumra Masters workshops and events, legendary French auteur Claire Denis, BAFTA and Academy Award® nominated cinematographer Phedon Papamichael, internationally celebrated director James Gray, Silver Lion winning film director and screenwriter Jessica Hausner, and Oscar® winning sound designer Mark Mangini were confirmed to support the annual film industry incubator.

Presently, the Doha Film Institute is working in close collaboration with the Ministry of Public Health and the Communicable Disease Centre in Qatar to monitor developments and status regarding COVID-19.

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**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.

### About Qumra

Directors and Producers attached to 34 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.