

Ten diverse films supported by the Doha Film Institute selected for the 78th Venice Film Festival

- *Yemen makes festival debut with Shaima Al Tamimi's 'Don't Get Too Comfortable' shortlisted for the festival's Orizzonti Short Films Competition*
- *Globally acclaimed visual artist Shirin Neshat's 'Land of Dreams' co-financed by the Institute to open Festival's new programming segment Orizzonti Extra*
- *Line-up includes six films from the Arab world and four international projects*

Doha, Qatar; **August 23, 2021**: Ten films supported by the Doha Film Institute (DFI) have been selected to screen at the 2021 Venice International Film Festival, from 1 to 11 September 2021. One of the largest selections of films funded by DFI to be shown at the festival, the diverse line up includes six exciting works from the Arab world including the first ever Yemeni film selected for the official shorts film competition.

Continuing to build on DFI's track-record of showcasing Arab talent to an international audience, Shaima Al Tamimi sets history as the director of the first Yemeni film – ***Don't Get Too Comfortable*** – selected for competition at an international film event.

Fatma Hassan Alremaihi, Chief Executive Officer of DFI, said: *"We are incredibly proud to showcase ten films backed by DFI at the Venice Film Festival this year, underlining our commitment to support emerging Arab talent and filmmakers from across the globe. The selection includes thought-provoking works by new voices in global cinema and established names that offer fresh perspectives on life that reflect human hopes, aspirations and challenges."*

"Our funding programmes are dedicated to supporting emerging talent, captivating storytelling and unique narrative styles, and there is no doubt that these films are among the most anticipated projects to emerge this year from the region and beyond. Their Venice debut will mark the beginning of an exciting journey for all these films, and I congratulate the teams behind them on their inclusion at this prestigious festival."

Competing in the Festival's Orizzonti segment are three DFI supported films: ***Atlantide*** (Italy, France, Qatar) by Italian director, Yuri Ancarani, 2020 Spring Grants recipient, that follows three young men who find an interest in small fast boats and drive the audience through a summer of dreams and nightmares; Kavich Neang's debut film and 2020 Spring Grants recipient ***White Building*** (Cambodia, France, China, Qatar) explores the life changing moments of a young man from Phnom Penh, from the demolition of his lifelong home to societal pressures; and 2020 Fall Grant recipient Kiro Russo's ***El Gran Movimiento*** (Bolivia, France, Switzerland, Qatar), set in contemporary Bolivia, the film follows Elder and his companions who arrive in La Paz after a seven-day walk and seek to be reinstated at the local mine.

Premiering in the Orizzonti Shorts Film Competition, 2020 Fall Grant recipient, Shaima Al Tamimi's ***Don't Get Too Comfortable*** (Yemen, UAE, USA, Netherlands, Qatar), contemplates the continuous pattern of movement amongst Yemenis in the diaspora and highlights the collective feeling of statelessness and belonging by migrants through introspective letters written to her grandfather.

The 2021 Venice Film Festival's new sidebar programme, Orizzonti Extra features two DFI backed projects including opening film **Land of Dreams** (USA, Germany, Qatar) by Shirin Neshat and Shoja Azari. Co-financed by DFI, the film is a political satire set in the near future where America has closed its borders and become more insular than ever; and 2018 Fall Grants recipient, Mounia Akl's **Costa Brava, Lebanon** (Lebanon, France, Spain, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Qatar) that follows the free-spirited Badri family who have escaped the toxic pollution of Beirut by seeking refuge in the utopic mountain home they have built. However, when the government inaugurates a landfill outside their fence, everything they escaped catches up with them.

Diana El Jeiroudi's **Republic of Silence** (Syria, Germany, France, Qatar), a 2016 Fall Grants recipient premieres in the official out of competition segment. The feature documentary presents a first-person account of El Jeiroudi's journey from Syria to Berlin; exploring how cinema saved her life.

Two DFI supported films have been selected for the Final Cut, a Venice Production Bridge initiative that supports projects from African and Arab countries: **Under The Fig Trees** (Tunisia, Switzerland, Qatar, France) by 2021 Spring Grants 2021 recipient Erige Sehiri, about three female friends on the threshold of an adult life who work in fruit orchards to pay for their studies, prepare for their wedding and help their families and **The Mother of All Lies** (Morocco, France, Qatar) by 2019 Spring Grants recipient Asmae El Moudir. The feature documentary follows El Moudir's personal journey to learn more about her childhood, but she soon unfolds the secrets of Morocco to tell story of the 1981 "bread riots"; exploring how this event reflects Morocco's society today.

Syrian screenwriter, director and 2019 Spring Grants recipient, Ameer Fakher Eldin, competes in Gionarte Degli Autori, an independent sidebar at the Festival with **The Stranger** (Syria, Qatar) that follows Adnan, a young man returning home against the will of his father after unsuccessfully studying medicine in the former Soviet Union.

-ENDS-

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 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.

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