

Doha Film Institute announces 36 compelling film projects for its 2021 Fall Grants

- 10 past grantees and 12 women filmmakers are among the Grants recipients in the new cycle
- 8 projects by Qatari talents highlight the continuing evolution of home-grown cinema supported by the Doha Film Institute
- 9 international projects selected from Costa Rica, Croatia, Djibouti, France, Indonesia, Iran, Myanmar, and Serbia

Doha, Qatar; February 06, 2022: A fresh new slate of 36 compelling film projects by first- and second-time filmmakers has been selected by the Doha Film Institute for its 2021 Fall Grants cycle, the funding programme that aims to promote and nurture emerging voices in cinema. Among the grantees are 12 women and 10 past grantees as well as eight projects by Qatari talents, underlining the continued evolution of a body of independent cinema from the region, supported by the Institute.

The Grants programme has evolved as one of the flagship film funding initiatives by the Doha Film Institute. Awarded in two cycles – Fall and Spring – the programme has to date supported more than 650 film projects from across the world, which are in various stages of production. With the goal of seeking out original voices in cinema, it has enabled the Institute to develop a community of filmmakers among its alumni, who are also provided mentoring and creative support throughout the life cycle of the films.

Representing the diversity of the film projects chosen for the Grants, the recipients come from countries across the Middle East and North Africa region with the largest representation from Algeria, Egypt, and Lebanon as well as projects from Mauritania, Palestine, Yemen and Syria. The nine international projects in this cycle are from Costa Rica, Croatia, Djibouti, France, Indonesia, Iran, Myanmar, and Serbia. The Grants cover projects including feature and short narratives, documentaries and experimentals as well as TV series.

Fatma Hassan Alremaihi, Chief Executive Officer of the Doha Film Institute, said: “With the sweeping challenges that emerging film talents face in the current environment, we believe it is our responsibility to further step up our support to ensure that their cinematic aspirations are realised. The Grants programme, through both its cycles, serves not only in elevating original cinematic voices but also in ensuring that first- and second-time filmmakers receive the support they need – from funding to mentoring and networking.”

She added: “The success of our Grants programme in creating a robust body of independent cinema is underlined by the accolades several past recipients have achieved globally with their films. Many have won illustrious awards and touched audiences globally. We are proud of the creative ideas that our emerging talent present; they stand out for showcasing the region and narrating stories that are untold. These film projects serve more than a creative purpose: They are bridges for the world to better understand the Arab world.”

The 2021 Fall Grants recipients are:

MENA - Feature Narrative - Development

- ***Délit de Solidarité (Algeria)*** by Mounia Meddour presents the story of Ariane, who lives in the Roya Valley, a strategic point for migrants to cross the border between Italy and France.

- ***The Photographer*** (Syria) by Anas Khalaf is about a photographer working in a unique position at the heart of the Syrian government during the revolution in 2011, who decides to defect.

MENA - Feature Documentary - Development

- ***My Dream to Fly*** (Egypt) by Asmaa Gamal is an immersive portrait of a group of young people from the crowded slums of Cairo who escape their daily hardships on motorcycles by night.
- ***Those Who Watch Over*** (Morocco) by Karima Saïdi are about people buried in their host country and also their loved ones, who set up a new relationship with them, in Brussels—in a unique cemetery.

MENA - Feature Documentary - Production

- ***When the News Break You*** (Qatar) by Hamad Al Hajri, is about Arab journalists who have been in the eye of the storm for decades because interstate and intrastate conflicts have been an enduring and poignant characteristic of the region.
- ***Broken Dreamland*** (Morocco) by Khalid Laboudi and Hannu-Pekka Vitikaine is about three young Moroccan men who were best friends in Finland until their life took a dramatic turn when one of them carried out a murderous attack in the city of Turku.
- ***The Missing Camel*** (Mauritania), directed by Cheikh N'diaye, tells the story of Cheikh, who wants to prove that he is the descendant of a Senegalese king who fought French settlers.

MENA - Feature Narrative - Production

- ***All That the Wind Can Carry*** (Egypt) by Maged Nader depicts the story of Susana, whose ailing memory becomes fragments and shifting collages of pictures, home videos, and daily life encounters.
- ***Oum*** (Morocco) by Sofia Alaoui is a mystical journey in contemporary Morocco—between social drama and science fiction.
- ***Hamlet from the Slums*** (Egypt) by Ahmed Fawzi-Saleh presents the story of Sufi Ahmed, who has to face the rigid patriarchal world of his slum and challenge the status quo after his dead father appears to him.
- ***Perfumed with Mint*** (Egypt), directed by Muhammed Hamdy, shows a band of old friends who reunites in a nightmare. Mint sprouts out of their bodies, while photographs of people who lived there are scattered everywhere.

MENA - Feature Documentary – Post-Production

- ***The Mother of All Lies*** (Morocco) by Asmae El Moudir is about a young Moroccan woman's search for truth that tangles with a web of lies in her family's history.

MENA - Feature Experiment – Post-Production

- ***The Outlandish*** (Algeria) by Tahar Kessi follows the journeys of three characters through Algeria and meet its people, questions the country, the territory and the history.
- ***A Fidai Film*** (Palestine), directed by Kamal Aljafari, is a sabotage film in response to the looting of Palestinian memories.

MENA - Feature Narrative – Post-Production

- ***The Dam*** (Lebanon) by Ali Cherri is about Maher, a seasonal worker, who toils in a traditional brickyard downstream from a dam in Sudan.

Non-MENA – Feature Documentary – Post-Production

- In ***A Year of Endless Days*** (Croatia) director Renata Lučić returns to her village to visit her dad, who is—as most men in his town—abandoned by his wife and trying to reinvent himself in his late 50s.
- ***Another Spring*** (Serbia) by Mladen Kovacevic depicts the 1972 epidemic of smallpox in Yugoslavia, which remains one of its most inspiring chapters.
- ***Green Line*** (France) by Sylvie Ballyot documents the story of Fida, who decides to meet those fighters who frightened her as a child.
- ***Khmerica*** (France) by Antoine Guide is about Sokha, a Khmer-American. The son of Cambodian refugees, he grew up in the United States. He was deported back to Cambodia seven years ago, where he still feels like a foreigner.
- ***Nadia*** (France) by Anissa Bonnefont follows Nadia Nadim, an international soccer player, whose dad was killed by the Taliban in 2000, has embarked on the quest to return to Afghanistan but the country is torn by chaos.
- ***Midwives*** (Myanmar) by Snow Hnin Ei Hlaing narrates the story of two midwives—one Buddhist and one Muslim—who defy strict ethnic divisions to work side by side in a makeshift clinic in western Myanmar, providing medical services to the Rohingya of Rakhine State.

Non-MENA - Feature Narrative – Post-Production

- ***Autobiography*** (Indonesia) by Makbul Mubarak is about a timid housekeeper who diligently obeys his master until a seemingly minor affront sets in motion a violent chain of events.
- ***Domingo and the Mist*** (Costa Rica) by Ariel Escalante Meza is about Domingo, whose house is due to be expropriated to make way for the construction of a highway. But his land hides a secret—the ghost of his deceased wife visits him within the mist.
- ***Until Tomorrow*** (Iran) by Ali Asgari is about a single mother's courage, which is tested when she resorts to desperate measures to hide her illegitimate child from her parents.

TV Series - Development

- ***Out of My Mind*** (Djibouti) by Mo Yusuf is about a struggling Somali writer living in Dubai who decides to become the stand-up comedian he always wanted to be.
- ***Why did the Bluesman Cross the Road?*** (Lebanon) by Meedo Taha narrates the story of a pair of Latinx-Arab mechanics escaping the truckyards of Dearborn to seek their fortunes as bluesmen in Detroit.

MENA - Short Projects - Development

- ***The Line*** (Qatar) by Hitmi Alhitmi is a call to choose happiness when undecided.
- ***I Wished for Solitude*** (Qatar) by Hamad Al-Fayhani is about a mother, who grapples with the loss of her identity as she takes on the arduous job of caretaking for her ill son.

MENA - Short Projects - Production

- ***Mary*** (Qatar) by Abdulaziz Khashabi and Abdulla Al-Janahi, is about a 65-year-old housewife who lives with her beloved 70-year-old husband, Robert, and their lazy cat. Mary tries her best to be the perfect wife before an incident occurs—revealing an unexpected sad truth.
- ***Ebb and Flow*** (Lebanon) by Nay Tabbara is about 14-year-old Loulwa, who plans to meet with her school crush Sharif, when a bomb explodes nearby, Loulwa is forced to put an end to her plans.
- ***Sea Salt*** (Lebanon), directed by Leila Basma, about Nayla, a young beachside resort waitress, in Sour, the south of Lebanon, who has to come to terms with what her future plans will be once the summer ends.

- **Fariha** (Yemen), directed by Badr Yousef is about 74-year-old former Yemeni music star, Fariha, who attempts a musical comeback to bring hope to the hearts of those around her.
- **Pacific Club** (Lebanon) by Valentin Noujaïm is the story of the first music club that opened in the basements of la Défense—Paris' business district to welcome Arabs from the suburbs.
- **Lost Memories** (Lebanon, Qatar), directed by Aya Al Blouchi is about alienated souls attempting to discover themselves.
- In **Kinship** (Qatar) by Ali Alhajri, when a shadow emerges with the birth of his newborn, Khalid must come face to face with his past.

MENA - Short Projects – Post-Production

- **A Proposal** (Qatar) by Nadia Alkhater is about a young Qatari man seeking approval from a council in order to marry his foreign fiancé.

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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 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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