



Doha Film Festival Announces International Feature Film Competition Jury

Doha, Qatar, 29 October 2025: Doha Film Festival (DFF), presented by Doha Film Institute (DFI), has announced five acclaimed creative visionaries of global cinema as the International Feature Film Competition Jury.

Head of the jury, **Rithy Panh** is an Academy Award®-nominated Cambodian filmmaker celebrated for deeply humanistic storytelling and innovative approach to documentary cinema. Joining him are award-winning Tunisian director and screenwriter **Raja Amari**, masterful Moroccan filmmaker and actor **Faouzi Bensaïdi**; acclaimed Tunisian actor and filmmaker **Dhafer L'Abidine** and Founder and Curator of Final Cut Venice **Alessandra Speciale**.

The International Feature Film Competition furthers the festival's commitment to championing bold cinematic voices and nurturing creative cultural connections, with particular focus on the Global South. The jury will adjudicate 13 distinct films that represent exceptional achievements in storytelling, artistry and vision from the Arab world and beyond.

Fatma Hassan Alremaihi, Festival Director and CEO of DFI, said: "The International Feature Film Jury reflects the very essence of Doha Film Festival — a meeting of storytellers whose work transcends borders and explores the complexity of humanity. These remarkable artists bring diverse perspectives that inspire dialogue, reflection, and discovery, that mirror our ongoing mission to support storytelling that bridges cultures and redefines narratives. Each of them represents a distinct cinematic tradition yet share a common dedication to exploring the transformative power of film. Their collective insight will be instrumental in amplifying important voices that are redefining the global film landscape".

The esteemed jury will select winners in **Best Narrative** (with a cash prize of US\$75,000), **Best Documentary** (US\$50,000), **Best Artistic Achievement** (US\$45,000) and **Best Performance** (US\$15,000) categories. A certificate of Special Mention will also be presented to a feature narrative or documentary.

With a total prize money of over US\$300,000, DFF will feature a dynamic selection of films in four competition strands: International Feature Film Competition, showcasing emerging and established filmmakers from around the world; International Short Film Competition, highlighting innovative storytelling in a concise format; Ajyal Film Competition with the festival's unique youth jury's fresh, generational perspectives; and Made in Qatar Competition, dedicated to sharing the creative talent of filmmakers based in Qatar.

Doha Film Festival serves as a dynamic platform for international collaboration, fostering artistic excellence and amplifying voices that reflect the diversity and creativity of contemporary cinema. Taking



place from 20–28 November 2025, Doha Film Festival (DFF) represents the bold next chapter in Doha Film Institute's mission to nurture regional talent and champion urgent and authentic stories in cinema.

The festival will transform iconic locations across Doha, including Katara Cultural Village, Msheireb Downtown Doha, and the Museum of Islamic Art, into vibrant hubs of cultural exchange, bringing together filmmakers, storytellers, and audiences from every corner of the globe, to reaffirm art's power to inspire, to unite, and to spotlight voices that deepen our shared understanding.

Designed to reflect the diversity and ambition of the region through a wide selection of films, inspiring conversations and engaging events, DFF will provide a truly meaningful shared cultural experience in Doha. For more information, visit www.dohafilm.com.

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Notes to the Editor:

Jury Bios:

Rithy Panh

Rithy Panh is one of Cambodia's most acclaimed filmmakers, known for his poignant portrayals of the Khmer Rouge era. His work often revisits the traumas of his homeland, aiming to preserve memory and seek justice for the victims of mass atrocities.

Panh has directed numerous award-winning films, including *The Missing Picture* (2013), which won the Un Certain Regard at Cannes and was nominated for an Academy Award, *Irradiated* (2020), which won the award for Best Documentary at Berlinale and *Everything Will Be Ok* (2022) that won the Silver Bear. *Meeting with Pol Pot* continues his exploration of Cambodia's tragic past.

Raja Amari

Tunisian filmmaker Raja Amari is celebrated for her poetic explorations of women's identity, exile, and emancipation. A graduate of La Fémis in Paris, her debut *Satin Rouge* (2002) premiered at the Berlin International Film Festival, winning multiple awards and gaining her international recognition.

Her films *Buried Secrets* and *Foreign Body* screened at Venice, Toronto, Berlin, and MoMA New York, along with her documentary *She Had a Dream* (2020), have established her as a distinctive voice in Arab storytelling. A member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences since 2019, she has served on juries at Venice and Locarno and mentored a diverse range of emerging filmmakers.

Faouzi Bensaïdi

Moroccan filmmaker, actor, and multidisciplinary artist Faouzi Bensaïdi merges poetic form with political reflection in award-winning works such as *The Cliff* (1998) and *A Thousand Months* (2003) - Cannes' Un Certain Regard double prize winner. His later films, including *WWW – What a Wonderful World* (2006),



Death for Sale (2011), and *Volubilis* (2017), affirmed his inventive cinematic language and humanist sensibility.

His recent *Summer Days* (2022) and *Deserts* (2023) continue the exploration of identity and modern Morocco. Bensaïdi bridges performance and cinema as a theatre director and has acted in films by Jacques Audiard and Bertrand Bonello.

Dhafer L'Abidine

Tunisian filmmaker and actor Dhafer L'Abidine made his directorial debut with *Ghodwa* (2021), which he co-wrote, directed, produced, and starred in won the FIPRESCI Award for Best Film at the Cairo International Film Festival. His second feature, *To My Son*, also written and directed by L'Abidine, received the Jury Award Special Mention for Screenwriting & Platinum Reel Award at the Hollywood Arab Film Festival. He recently completed *Sophia*, starring alongside Jessica Brown Findlay and Jonathan Hyde.

As an actor, L'Abidine has appeared in international films such as *Children of Men*, *Centurion*, and *The Eddy*, directed by Damien Chazelle. In the Arab world, he won Best Actor awards for *Eugenie Nights* and *Halawat Al Dounia* and earned acclaim for *Aroos Beirut*.

Alessandra Speciale

Alessandra Speciale is a curator, filmmaker, and leading advocate for cinema from Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Since 2013, she has served on the selection team of the Venice International Film Festival, as consultant for African and Arab regions, and founded Final Cut in Venice supporting films in post-production from these countries.

As Artistic Director of Milan's African, Asian and Latin American Film Festival since 1991 and leading the Milano Film Network, Speciale introduces vital new voices to Italian audiences and fosters independent cinema through development and training. In 2025, she was awarded the Chevalière de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by France. She has also directed documentaries exploring migration, identity, and the power of cultural exchange.

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