



Homegrown Filmmakers Credit DFI as Catalyst for a Thriving Local Industry

Doha, Qatar; November 24, 2025: Qatar's film ecosystem has transformed over the past 15 years, powered by Doha Film Institute's year-round programmes and the creative synergy of the nation's artistic community, say filmmakers showcasing their work at the Made in Qatar programme at Doha Film Festival 2025. They praised DFI for creating unprecedented opportunities that have allowed Qatari and Qatar-based storytellers to hone their craft and reach global audiences.

The impact of DFI's comprehensive support system is evident in the careers of Qatar's emerging filmmakers, said **Fatma Al-Ghanim**, whose film *Theatre of Dreams* celebrates the National Women's Football Team. "This is an exciting time to be a filmmaker in Qatar. The ecosystem has strengthened with Doha Film Festival and the growth vertically - from development programmes to funding support, DFI has built a complete pipeline."

Filmmaker **Mahdi Ali**, who attended Qatar's first independent film festival in 2000, reflected on the long journey: "That event put Qatar on the cinema world map. Now we have DFF, and it's going to create another major shift in the region." Speaking about his film *A Palm Branch*, he added: "I drew from my grandmothers and our collective memory of pearl diving, merging it with global conversations about migration."

Mohammed Al-Suwaidi, an animator and lecturer who has collaborated with DFI for over a decade, said: "I've seen the environment grow and the community mature. There's real reason for hope." He co-directed *Al-Aqiq: Darkness of Virtuality* with Kummam Al-Maadeed, who added: "Seeing students clap for our film—that experience meant everything."

Fahad Al-Nahdi, director of *Project Aisha*, spoke to the impact of sustained support: "I have worked with DFI for ten years across festivals and community events, and the growth has been remarkable—more resources, more funding, more opportunity for a stronger impact."

For filmmaker **Karim Emara**, a former Ajyal Youth Juror now presenting *Baba Is Melting*, the progress is personal: "Seeing the leap from 2015 to 2025 is incredible. With every edition, films get stronger."

Eiman Mirghani, presenting her documentary *Villa 187*, noted how filmmakers have grown alongside the Institute: "This edition of DFF has opened new conversations. DFI Workshops and programmes like Qumra continue to nurture local and resident talent."



Justin Kramer, director of *Fahad the Furious*, who has worked within Qatar’s industry since DFI’s inception, underlined the importance of grassroots development: “I believe in reinvesting into local filmmakers. Real industry growth starts at the ground level.”

Maria Joseph, director of the comedy *Is This a Sign?*, drew from real-life wedding chaos: “Casting was a challenge—I even found actors in supermarket aisles. My friends became my crew, and they were incredible.”

Al-Ghanim highlighted the collaborative spirit now defining the industry: “DFI supported my film, Film House supported it, Katara Studios supported it—the community is stronger than ever. I’m truly optimistic.”

Also screening in the programme are: *Qadha’ w Qadar* by Maryam Al-Mohammed and *Yom El Juma’* by Haya Al Kuwari. For more information, visit www.dohafilm.com.

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