

Doha Film Institute Announces Faouzi Bensaïdi, Gael García Bernal, Alice Diop, Diego Luna and Gustavo Santaolalla as 2026 Qumra Masters

- *A leading figure in Moroccan cinema, Faouzi Bensaïdi blends dark humour and social observation, earning recognition as one of the Arab world's most distinctive voices*
- *Acclaimed Mexican actor, director and producer, Gael García Bernal bridges art with works rooted in cultural truth and social conscience*
- *Alice Diop's cinema transforms lived experience into profound, poetic inquiry, expanding boundaries between documentary and fiction with clarity and emotional depth.*
- *A creative force whose career spans acting, directing and producing, Diego Luna is driven by a commitment to storytelling across independent film and mainstream blockbusters*
- *Two-time Academy Award® winning composer and producer Gustavo Santaolalla's evocative scores have shaped the emotional language of contemporary global cinema*

Doha-Qatar February 15, 2026: Doha Film Institute (DFI) today announced globally celebrated visionaries- Faouzi Bensaïdi, Gael García Bernal, Alice Diop, Diego Luna and Gustavo Santaolalla as Qumra Masters for its 12th annual talent incubator event, taking place from March 27 to April 1, 2026.

Reinforcing Qumra's standing as the Arab world's premier platform for creative mentorship and cinematic development, the 2026 Masters will share creative perspectives forged across their distinguished careers—guiding a new generation of filmmakers as they develop bold, original work.

A cornerstone of Doha Film Institute's mission, Qumra supports filmmakers from the region and beyond, connecting them with leading international artists and industry experts through intensive mentorship, masterclasses and professional exchange. For over a decade, Qumra has played a decisive role in nurturing independent voices and expanding the global reach of thought-provoking cinema.

Fatma Hassan Alremaihi, CEO of DFI, said, "Qumra was created to ensure that emerging filmmakers are not only supported, but truly seen—artistically, professionally and globally. Welcoming these luminaries as our 2026 Qumra Masters reflects our belief that generous mentorship can change creative trajectories. Their commitment to storytelling, cultural dialogue and artistic courage will have a lasting impact on the filmmakers they engage with, and on the stories that will shape cinema's future.

"Gael García Bernal's return to Qumra is especially meaningful, having been a Master in the very first edition. Over 12 editions, Qumra has grown in scale, ambition and global reach, becoming a space defined by creative exchange, generosity and momentum. We are excited for the Masters to experience the extraordinary energy Qumra is now known for, and deeply grateful to Gael for his early support in helping set the foundation for what has become one of the most influential talent incubators for emerging filmmakers worldwide."

Masterful Moroccan filmmaker and actor **Faouzi Bensaïdi** crafts films of quiet tension and dark wit, where precise form and human fragility reveal the poetry of everyday disquiet; influential actor-director-producer whose career spans landmark independent cinema and global mainstream projects, **Gael García Bernal** consistently champions socially driven storytelling; acclaimed filmmaker **Alice Diop**, whose rigorously observed documentaries and award-winning narrative work have positioned her as a defining voice in contemporary European cinema; a leading actor, director and producer, **Diego Luna's** body of work bridges auteur cinema and major studio productions, while advancing Latino representation across global platforms; and a composer of rare emotional restraint, **Gustavo Santaolalla** has created some of the most haunting sonic landscapes across film, television and music.

Elia Suleiman, Artistic Advisor at DFI, said: "Cinema begins where certainty ends. It exists in the tension between what is seen and what is felt, offering a language beyond image. At Qumra, we gather

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not to teach, but to open doors. The exchange reshapes perception. And from that shift, new worlds are imagined by those who dare to see differently."

The 12th edition of Qumra will feature masterclasses, one-on-one mentorship sessions and curated industry meetings, offering participants rare access to creative and expert guidance from across the global film ecosystem. Further programme and guest details will be announced in the coming weeks.

2026 Qumra Masters:

Faouzi Bensaïdi is a Moroccan filmmaker, theatre director, screenwriter, editor and actor whose work is celebrated for its singular blend of wit, melancholy and sharp social observation. Bensaïdi directed several shorts films including the multi-award-winning *'The Cliff'*, *'Le Mur'* and *'The Rain Line'*. His first feature film, *'A Thousand Months'*, won the Prix Le Premier Regard and the Prix De La Jeunesse in the Un Certain Regard section at Cannes, followed by *'WWW: What A Wonderful World'*, which was selected for the Venice International Film Festival. Bensaïdi has also appeared as an actor in films by directors Jacques Audiard, Nadir Moknèche, Daoud Aoulad-Syad, and Bertrand Bonello, among others.

Mexican actor, director and producer **Gael García Bernal** has gained international acclaim through landmark films such as *Amores perros*, *Y tu mamá también*, and *Diarios de motocicleta* [*The Motorcycle Diaries*]. In addition to acting in films and series, Gael directs and produces feature films and documentaries. His directorial debut, *'Déficit'*, premiered at Cannes Critics' Week, and he later returned to social themes with *'Chicuarotes'*, which was presented in Special Screenings at Cannes. Along with Diego Luna, he co-founded Ambulante, a non-profit documentary film festival, and La Corriente del Golfo, a production company dedicated to distinctive, socially engaged storytelling across film and television.

Alice Diop is an award-winning French filmmaker who has redefined contemporary documentary and narrative cinema through an intimate, politically resonant lens. Her films—including *La Permanence*, *Nous* and *Saint Omer*—explore memory, identity and belonging with formal rigor and emotional depth. *Saint Omer*, her fiction debut, premiered at the Venice Film Festival, where it won the Silver Lion Grand Jury Prize and the Luigi De Laurentiis Award for Best First Film. Diop's practice moves fluidly between documentary and fiction, offering a powerful model for emerging filmmakers seeking new cinematic languages grounded in lived experience.

Diego Luna's work across film, television and theater as an actor, director and producer, bridges across global audiences. Guided by his artistic prowess in front of and behind the camera, Luna has built a career defined by creative range, social consciousness and a sustained commitment to expanding Latino and Hispanic representation internationally. He rose to prominence with Alfonso Cuarón's *Y tu mamá también* and recently starred in and executive-produced the web series *Andor*, earning a Golden Globe® nomination. Luna is currently in post-production on *Ceniza en la boca*, which he directs, co-writes and produces, and continues to champion cultural exchange through his work with Ambulante.

Argentinian composer, producer, and musician of international acclaim, **Gustavo Santaolalla** has won two consecutive Academy Awards® for Best Original Score (*Brokeback Mountain*, 2006; *Babel*, 2007), a Golden Globe for the song "A Love That Will Never Grow Old" from *Brokeback Mountain*, and two BAFTAs for *The Motorcycle Diaries* (2005) and *Babel* (2007). Honoured with two Grammys and 19 Latin Grammys, he is considered one of the most influential producers in the Spanish-speaking world. Santaolalla has produced over 100 albums, shaping the sound of contemporary Latin American music and is also the founder and driving force of the collective Bajofondo, which blends tango, electronic music, and Río de la Plata traditions with global projection.

