

Doha Film Institute Champions Independent Cinema with 8 Supported Films Selected for 2026 Venice International Film Festival

- *Lineup spans Orizzonti, Venice Spotlight, Venice Gap-Financing Market and Final Cut with films from the Arab world and beyond*
- *Selection reinforces DFI's role in nurturing bold, authentic voices and shaping the future of global independent cinema*

Doha, Qatar; 29 August 2026: Doha Film Institute (DFI) celebrates another major milestone with eight Institute-supported films selected for the 83rd Venice International Film Festival, reaffirming its commitment to championing independent filmmakers and bringing distinctive voices from the Arab world and beyond to the global stage.

Taking place from September 2 to 12 at the Lido di Venezia, the festival will feature DFI-supported films across four key programmes: the Orizzonti Competition, Venice Spotlight, the Venice Gap-Financing Market and Final Cut. The breadth of the selection reflects the strength and international reach of the filmmakers and projects supported through DFI's funding, talent development and industry programmes.

Fatma Hassan Alremaihi, Chief Executive Officer of Doha Film Institute, said: "Great cinema begins with a voice that needs to be heard. At DFI, we believe in giving bold filmmakers the support they need to transform distinctive experiences into stories that can travel far beyond its origins. At a time when authentic voices and diverse perspectives matter more than ever, cinema has a vital role to play in preserving memory and expanding our understanding of one another. We are proud to stand behind filmmakers whose work challenges conventions, deepens empathy and expands the possibilities of meaningful cinema for audiences today and generations to come."

Selected for the Orizzonti Competition, dedicated to films representing new aesthetic and expressive trends in international cinema, is ***House of the Wind*** (Cameroon/France/Belgium/Benin/KSA/Qatar) by Bernard Auguste Kouemo Yanghu. The film follows Josette, 75, a lonely woman in Yaoundé who attempts to bring her children home from Europe while overseeing her son's house. When she befriends her neighbour Sarah, their growing bond challenges everything Josette believed about family.

Featured in Venice Spotlight, which showcases a curated selection of innovative and creatively original works, is ***Conversation with the Sea*** (Palestine/ KSA/ Netherlands/Qatar) by Muayad Alayan about a Palestinian man ordered by an Israeli court to pay a large social security debt on behalf of his son, who drowned in the Red Sea more than 20 years ago.

Two DFI-supported films have been selected for the Venice Gap-Financing Market, which connects filmmakers with potential collaborators and financiers to complete their projects. They are ***Faux Bijoux*** (Lebanon/France/Belgium/Qatar), a feature narrative by Jessy Moussallem. Following selections at Sundance and Clermont-Ferrand and a Grand Prix win at the Brussels Short Film Festival, the film was conceived as a proof of concept for Moussallem's debut feature, scheduled to shoot in autumn 2026. Also selected is ***Wolfmother*** (Morocco/France/Belgium/Qatar) by Ismaël El Iraki, set in Tangier, the film follows smuggler Amira Ouazzani as she raises her children alone.

Four DFI-backed projects will be presented through Final Cut in Venice, the industry programme supporting films in post-production and connecting filmmakers with international industry partners. The selection includes ***A Quarter to Thursday*** (Algeria/France/Qatar) by Sofia Djama, about three friends on a mission to bury a dachshund in a military zone; ***Eldorado, The Taste of the South*** (Morocco/France/Italy/Qatar) by Alaa Eddine Aljem, following migrants searching for Eldorado, a secret utopian island where everyone lives in peace; ***Occupational Hazards*** (Jordan/UK/KSA/Palestine/Qatar) by Bassel Ghandour, an absurd dark comedy chronicling the experiences of a multigenerational Palestinian family; and ***Plague*** (Tunisia/France/Qatar) by Youssef Chebbi, set in Tozeur, a farming town on the edge of the Tunisian desert, where twin brothers jointly manage a palm grove.

The eight-film presence at Venice underscores DFI's long-standing commitment to investing in filmmakers at different stages of their creative journeys, from development and financing to international exposure. Through its funding, talent development and industry initiatives, DFI continues to champion filmmakers to help build a more diverse, sustainable and interconnected global film ecosystem. To date, the Institute has supported more than 1000 films from over 85 countries, strengthening the pathways for independent cinema to reach audiences worldwide.

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