



Doha Film Festival 2026 Celebrates Qatar's Growing Screen Industry with Four Features and an Original Series

- *Line-up includes three feature films supported by Media City Qatar, and an original series from Katara Studios*
- *Landmark selection brings together stories connected to Qatar and Qatari talent, highlighting the growing strength of the country's creative ecosystem*

Doha, Qatar; 12 October 2026: Doha Film Festival 2026 will present a milestone **four feature films and a new original series from Qatar**, showcasing the depth, ambition and growing international potential of the country's rapidly evolving screen sector.

Spanning fiction, documentary and series, the selection reflects the range of stories emerging from Qatar and the growing capabilities of its filmmakers and production community. It also underscores the increasingly collaborative environment bringing together national institutions, creative talent and international partners to advance screen production in the country.

Part of the Special Screenings programme at the festival, the three films supported by Media City Qatar are ***Jodari Meno*** by Jamal Al Khanji, ***A Very Ordinary Life*** by Mohamed Deniz and ***First to Fly*** by Rodrigo Vazquez Salessi, along with ***When the News Breaks You*** by Hamad Al Hajri, and a special episode of ***Elzam*** produced by Jassim Al Romaihi and Ahmed Al Baker, an original series from Katara Studios. ***Jodari Meno*** and ***When the News Breaks You*** have received funding through Doha Film Institute's Grants Programme and participated in mentorship activities at Qumra 2025.

The selection represents the continued rise of Qatar's vibrant screen industry anchored in a strong foundation of collaboration working towards the vision of Qatar as a destination for ambitious creative work. Doha Film Institute, Film Committee, Media City Qatar, and Katara Studios, are contributing to the advancement of an increasingly connected ecosystem designed to support filmmakers, productions and creative talent at every stage of the creative process.

Fatma Hassan Alremaihi, CEO of Doha Film Institute and Director of Doha Film Festival, said: "This is a watershed moment for Qatar's film and creative industries. To present four feature films and an original series from Qatar at Doha Film Festival is a powerful reflection of how far our creative ecosystem has come. These projects mark Qatar's increasingly meaningful role in empowering ambitious global stories and supporting the talent behind them.



“The growing contributions of national entities demonstrate what can be achieved when creative institutions work together towards a shared purpose. We are building a sustainable industry by creating opportunities, developing capabilities and connecting Qatar’s talent with the world. Together, we are making the vision for Doha’s role as a hub for creative and cultural excellence a reality.”

Hamad Omar AlMannai, CEO of Media City Qatar, said: “It’s great to see not one but three films supported by Media City selected to screen in the special screenings program at Doha Film Festival 2026. What makes this especially exciting is that Doha Film Festival gives filmmakers from Qatar and the wider region a global platform to help their stories reach audiences around the world. This is also a testament to the power of the media ecosystem we are enabling with partners like the Doha Film Institute and the opportunities it creates for media growth in Qatar and the region.”

Jodari Meno, directed by and starring **Qatari talent Jamal Al Khanji**, follows his quest to land a world-record dogtooth tuna. What begins as an extreme pursuit becomes an intimate journey into obsession, mortality and the search for meaning. The film brings together The Film House Originals, Alkhanji Enterprise, Doha Film Institute, Media City Qatar and Al Jazeera Documentary, reflecting the collaborative environment emerging around Qatar’s filmmakers and creative talent.

A Very Ordinary Life by **Mohamed Deniz**, a Qatar-Morocco production, is produced by Abdulrahim Al-Siddiqi and Bouchra Malek. The film follows a retired Qatari pilot and a young Moroccan art teacher who, unknowingly father and daughter, are drawn towards one another through dreams, letters and a buried secret. Art becomes the key to unlocking a past that has never truly passed.

First to Fly by **Rodrigo Vazquez Salessi**, tells the inspiring story of two young gymnasts who became the first athletes in the history of Qatar and their respective countries to compete at the Rhythmic Gymnastics World Championships. The film shines a light on the opportunities created for young women through sport, following one of the first Arab gymnasts to reach this level of international competition.

When the News Breaks You (Qatar/Palestine/Greece/Lebanon/Turkey) by **Qatari filmmaker Hamad Al Hajri**, is a production examining the realities faced by journalists working across the Middle East. The documentary explores the challenges confronting journalists reporting from war zones and conflict areas, and the personal cost of bringing stories from the region to audiences around the world.

Completing the selection is a special episode of **Elzam**, an eight-part documentary series from Katara Studios, produced by Jassim Al Romaihi and Ahmed Al Baker, representing another important step in the growth of Qatar’s capabilities in original episodic storytelling



and screen production. The series follows a group of falconers on hunting expeditions, documenting a tradition that has long been a source of pride in Qatar, the Gulf and the wider Arab world.

Together, these works offer a snapshot of an industry in transition, where Qatar is increasingly not only a supporter and platform for creative talent, but also a place where stories can be developed, produced and brought to international audiences. The selection underscores Doha Film Institute's commitment to nurturing the region's storytellers while contributing to the development of a sustainable creative ecosystem in Qatar.

Key Partners of Doha Film Festival include Katara, Media City Qatar I Film Committee and Visit Qatar. Taking place from 19–27 November 2026, Doha Film Festival brings together filmmakers, audiences and industry voices from the region and beyond to honour original storytelling and important voices in film. For more information, visit www.dohafilm.com.

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