



Doha Film Festival 2026 Launches Cinema Alkhaleej programme to Showcase Distinct Regional Stories and Voices

- *Programme highlights stories from across the Gulf, exploring identity, heritage, social change and complex human relationships*

Doha, Qatar; 29 October 2026: Doha Film Festival (DFF) 2026 will launch Cinema Alkhaleej, a programme honouring the diversity of storytelling from across the Gulf, bringing together seven films that represent the region's cultural heritage, evolving identities and contemporary realities.

From personal journeys that challenge current social expectations to stories rooted in folklore, memory and traditions, Cinema Alkhaleej programme presents the breadth of creative expression emerging from the Gulf on a platform that empowers filmmakers to share perspectives that resonate within the region and beyond.

Fatma Hassan Alremaihi, CEO of Doha Film Institute and Director of Doha Film Festival, said: "Cinema Alkhaleej programme reflects our commitment to showcasing the important voices of the Gulf, that represent the region's past, present and future. Our stories are shaped by distinctive cultures, shared histories and rapidly evolving societies, containing emotional truths that transcend borders. We bring these films to audiences in Doha to honour the filmmakers who are redefining regional cinema and creating space for new perspectives."

Feature Films in the programme are:

My Driver and I (Saudi Arabia) by Ahd Kamel

Winner of Best Feature Film at the 2025 Saudi Film Festival, follows the evolving friendship between a privileged Saudi teenager named Salma and her family's Sudanese driver, Gamar, in 1980s and 1990s Jeddah.

Soulala (Saudi Arabia) by Hisham Fakhri

The horror feature follows a man who returns to his mother's remote date farm, and discovers a chilling reality that threatens to keep him there. The film explores how the bonds between parents and children can become sources of both devotion and control.

Short Films included in the programme are:

Clouds (Oman) by Muzna Almusafir



The intimate drama follows Dablan, a widowed father whose village comes under threat from a leopard. As tribal pressure mounts for him to kill the animal, he resolves to set it free instead, placing him at odds with his community.

Dunya's Day (Saudi Arabia) by Raed Alsemari

Hours before her graduation party, Dunya faces an unexpected crisis when all the household help in her family's home walk out. With only two friends to help, she must find a way to save the celebration and preserve the flawless occasion she has envisioned.

Namoos (UAE) by Nada Jahed

The short follows Noora as she prepares for her first competitive camel race. Blending observational footage with reenactment, the film explores the relationship between personal ambition and cultural identity.

An Evening with Laila (Kuwait) by Haya Alghanim

A portrait of life and legacy, the film revisits a significant chapter in Kuwait's cultural history and celebrates a woman whose artistic ambitions helped expand the possibilities for music in the Arabian Gulf, leaving a lasting mark on the region's creative landscape.

Salem Not Salem (Bahrain) by Omar Farooq

Salem begins experiencing things that no one around him can see or understand. As his best friend and sister attempt to support him, he struggles to distinguish between faith and madness while confronting the stigma surrounding mental health.

Through Cinema Alkhaleej programme, Doha Film Festival continues to champion filmmakers whose work deepens cultural understanding, highlights the diversity of the region's narratives and brings Gulf cinema into conversation with audiences around the world.

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.dohafilmm.com.

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