

Doha Film Festival

مهرجان الدوحة السينمائي

CATALOGUE



Doha Film Festival

مؤسسة الدوحة للأفلام

Doha Film Institute

2026

Strategic Partner

المدينة الإعلامية
Media City
Qatar قطر

لجنة الأفلام
Film Committee

Cultural Partner

كتارا
katara

Principal Partner

visit QATAR

Signature Partners

مطار حمد الدولي
Hamad International Airport
QATAR قطر

ROSEWOOD

Contributing Partners

BYD

متاحف قطر
QATAR MUSEUMS

MIA

الأعوام الثقافية
YEARS OF CULTURE

قطر تبدع
QATAR CREATES

ڤوكس
VOX
CINEMAS سينما

Media Partners

Official Broadcast Partner

العربي

DEADLINE

SCREEN INTERNATIONAL

Social Media Partner

كيومنيكيشن
Qommunication

VARIETY

ALJAZEERA

Qatar.net

Qatar LIVING
One Place. Endless Choices

TOD by beIN

Friends of the Festival

كلية العلوم الإنسانية والاجتماعية
College of Humanities & Social Sciences
جامعة حمد بن خليفة
HAMAD BIN KHALIFA UNIVERSITY

COREGAME

100 FIPRESCI
THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF FILM CRITICS

INSTITUT FRANÇAIS
Qatar

HAYYA

استوديوهات كتارا
KATARA STUDIOS

Official Beauty Partners

MESTOUR

Te'masq
LADIES SALON
صالون للسيدات

الهلال الأحمر القطري
Qatar Red Crescent

قنوان
QINWAN
PREMIUM DATES
للتمر الفاخرة

Published by Doha Film Institute

Editorial
Diviya Khanna
Shane Brennan

Design
Shaimaa Qadi
Dawood Al-Anwari
Raymond Bobar
Minoo Hosseinipour

Doha, Qatar, November 2026

Contents

7 Board of Trustees
8 Welcome to Doha Film Festival
13 Doha Film Festival Programming Team
14 DFF Creative Excellence Award
16 DFF Films
- 18 Opening Night: ‘The Station’
- 20 International Feature Film Competition
- 40 International Short Film Competition
- 54 Made in Qatar Competition
- 60 Made in Qatar Special Screenings
- 66 Made in Qatar Shabab
- 72 Ajyal Feature Film Competition
- 78 Ajyal Short Film Competition
- 86 Gala Screenings
- 92 Special Screenings
- 96 DFI Inclusive Cinema Screening
- 98 Cinema Alkhaleej
- 104 DFF Classics
- 108 Focus on Indonesia
- 112 Focus on Yemen
- 116 Year of Culture: Made in Mexico
- 120 Cinema Under the Stars
- 124 Ajyal Film Club

134 DFF Talks
150 Doha Industry Days
154 DFF Music
162 Geekdom
166 DFF Exhibitions and Experiences
168 Doha Film Institute and Doha Film Festival Team

Board of Trustees



H.E. Sheikha Al Mayassa, Chairperson of Doha Film Institute



H.E. Sheikh Thani bin Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Qatar Fund for Development (QFFD)



H.E. Lolwah bint Rashid bin Mohammed Al Khater, Minister of Education and Higher Education



H.E. Mr. Saad Bin Ali Al Kharji, Chairman of Qatar Tourism



H.E. Hassan Abdulla Al Thawadi, Managing Director of the Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy



Mr. Abdulla Al Najjar, Member of the Board of Trustees of Qatar Museums



Mr. Hamad Omar A. Al-Mannai Chief Executive Officer of Media City Qatar



H.E. Sheikha Al Mayassa
Chairperson, Doha Film Institute

Culture is among the most powerful expressions of who we are as a nation, how we understand the world and the future we aspire to create. For Qatar, our commitment to art and culture is inseparable from our national vision: one in which creativity drives progress, knowledge opens new horizons, and meaningful exchange builds a more connected world.

The 2026 Doha Film Festival is a gathering that embodies this vision and honours cinema's extraordinary capacity to look beyond borders and expand our understanding of one another.

Over the years, Qatar has invested in building a cultural landscape that honours our heritage while embracing new ideas and artistic possibilities. Our museums, galleries, festivals and creative institutions are more than places of cultural expression; they are spaces where knowledge is exchanged, talent is nurtured and new perspectives take shape.

As we look forward to the next chapter of our cultural journey, we recognise that creative industries are essential to our nation's continued development, fostering innovation, creating opportunities and contributing to a dynamic, knowledge-based economy.

Doha Film Institute has been an important part of this ambition since 2010. What began as a commitment to championing Arab cinema and supporting independent filmmakers has grown into an international platform connecting talent, audiences and ideas across borders. The Institute has brought distinctive voices to the screen and enabled stories from our region and beyond to reach audiences around the world.

This year's Doha Film Festival brings that conviction to life. Through an ambitious programme spanning Qatar and the Arab world, Africa, Asia, Latin America and beyond, the festival celebrates the diversity of global storytelling, reminding us that the future of cinema depends on a plurality of voices, experiences and imaginations.

Art does not erase our differences, nor does it offer simple answers to complex realities. It creates the space to lead with curiosity, listen to experiences beyond our own and acknowledge the dignity of others. In doing so, it creates possibilities for understanding where distance might otherwise prevail. This is the enduring value of cultural exchange and a fundamental reason why we continue to champion it.

Our ambition is to continue strengthening Qatar's creative ecosystem, ensuring that artists and filmmakers can develop their talents, realise their visions and contribute to the cultural progress of our nation and the world.

To the filmmakers and artists joining us in Doha, thank you for your courage and imagination. To our community, thank you for contributing to a culture built on openness and shared purpose. And to the team at DFI, we see the impact of your tireless efforts.

May Doha Film Festival 2026 reaffirm our belief that creativity is not simply an expression of society, but a force that helps shape its future.



Fatma Hassan Alremaihi
CEO, Doha Film Institute
Festival Director, Doha Film Festival

Welcome to the 2026 Doha Film Festival (DFF), where cinema becomes a meeting point for cultures, a catalyst for dialogue and a powerful expression of our shared humanity.

DFF embodies our enduring conviction that cinema can transcend borders, challenge perspectives and bring us closer together, even in the most divided of times. This year, 104 films from 60 countries come to Doha, reflecting our commitment to bold storytelling, diverse perspectives and voices that deserve to be heard.

These films capture the spirit of the voices we champion, courageous in their perspective, deeply rooted in its cultural context and universal in its human resonance. Our audiences will discover works that challenge conventions, explore new artistic frontiers and illuminate experiences too often absent from mainstream cinema.

Alongside compelling new works from the Arab world and beyond, our selection honours the diversity of human experience and the extraordinary possibilities that emerge when storytelling is free to cross borders and defy expectations.

From inclusive screenings to immersive experiences, DFF extends beyond the screen to welcome audiences into a shared space of discovery. Our talks, panels and Doha Industry Days programme by Film Committee at Media City Qatar bring creatives and thought leaders together to shape a more connected future for cinema. Live performances by artists from across the region and internationally add another dimension to this celebration of cultural expression, creativity and resilience.

Doha Film Institute has supported more than 1,000 films from over 85 countries to date, reaffirming our belief that meaningful investment in filmmakers can transform careers and enrich the cinematic landscape. Our commitment to creative independence and talent development remains unwavering. As Qatar's screen industries continue to grow, DFF is a testament to the confidence, capability and creative potential of our country and the wider region.

In a world marked by conflict and uncertainty, culture is not peripheral to shaping our future, it is central to it. By creating space for important voices, DFF affirms our collective responsibility to keep these conversations alive.

I extend my deepest gratitude to Her Excellency Sheikha Al Mayassa and the Board of Trustees of Doha Film Institute, whose vision and guidance continue to inspire our work and strengthen Qatar's position as a global meeting point for culture, creativity and cinematic excellence.

We are grateful to our filmmakers for their courage, imagination and trust. Thank you to our partners, supporters and audiences for believing in cinema's ability to bring us together. And to our staff and volunteers, the commitment and care with which you bring this festival to life makes us proud.

I invite all of you to DFF 2026 to discover windows into other lives and listen with greater empathy to voices that have the power to change perspectives. Every story brings us closer and shows us the world we can create together.

Doha Film Festival Programming Team

Festival Director, Doha Film Festival
Fatma Hassan Alremaihi

Deputy Director, Doha Film Festival
Abdulla Al Mosallam

Chief Strategy & Programmes Officer
Hanaa Issa

Film Programmers
Majid Al Remaihi
Rawda Al Thani
Karem Kamel
Aya Al Blouchi

Programme Operations
Farah El-Buy
Maya Mechmoum

Pre-Screeners
Jaser Alagha
Amna Al-Binali
Sahar Bou Hamdan
Quay Chu
Hoor Elshafei
Mohammed D. Fakhro
Alexandra Fredricks
Carole Mezher
Rabwa Moidu
Ben Robinson
Manuel Santini
Jana Wehbe

DFF Creative Excellence Award

Presented by H.E. Sheikha Al Mayassa, Chairperson of Doha Film Institute, the DFF Creative Excellence Award recognises individuals whose exceptional artistic contributions have enriched the art of storytelling and left a lasting impact on cinema.

The award honours creative vision, originality and the ability to challenge perspectives and move audiences. This year, we recognise two remarkable careers, united by a belief in the power of cinema to reflect who we are and imagine who we might become.



Taim Hasan

Taim Hasan is one of the Arab world's most acclaimed screen actors. Born in Tartus, Syria, in 1976, he studied at the Higher Institute of Dramatic Arts in Damascus, and while still a student made his mark in Hatem Ali's historical epics 'Al-Zir Salem' (2000) and 'Saladin' (2001), in which his portrayal of the Fatimid Caliph Al-Adid became his breakthrough. He went on to take the title roles in 'Nizar Qabbani' (2005), as the celebrated Syrian poet, and 'King Farouk' (2007), as Egypt's last king, a performance that earned him the Gold Medal for Best Actor at the Cairo Arab Media Festival.

From 2017 to 2021, he led all five seasons of 'Al Hayba' as Jabal Sheikh Al Jabal, a role that made him a household name across the region and reached international audiences on Netflix. His recent work includes 'Taj' (2024), as a boxer resisting the French occupation of Syria, 'Under the Seventh Ground' (2025) and 'Mawlana' (2026), the latter two earning him consecutive Murex d'Or awards. Across a quarter of a century, his range and depth have brought the region's history and stories into homes across the Arab world and beyond.



Nandita Das

Nandita Das is an actor, filmmaker and social advocate. Over the last three decades, she has acted in more than 40 feature films across 10 languages, working with eminent directors such as Mrinal Sen, Shyam Benegal, Deepa Mehta, Adoor Gopalakrishnan, Rituparno Ghosh and Mani Ratnam. She made her directorial debut in 2008 with 'Firaaq', which premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival and won wide critical acclaim. Her second film, 'Manto' (2018), based on the life of writer Saadat Hasan Manto, premiered at the Cannes Film Festival, where she has also served twice as a juror. Her book, 'Manto & I', chronicles the six-year journey of making the film.

In 2016, she founded Nandita Das Initiatives, a creative platform that co-produced 'Manto' and her third film, 'Zwigato' (2023), which follows a food delivery rider and his family and premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival. She was conferred the title of Knight of the Order of Arts and Letters by the French Government and holds a master's degree in social work. She continues to advocate for human rights and social justice and is currently developing her fourth feature film, exploring the dynamics of marriage in contemporary society.

DFF Films

Opening Night



The Station

Yemen, Jordan, France, Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Qatar / Arabic / 2026
112 mins
Winner of La Biennale di Venezia Award for Best Film in Post-Production, Final Cut in Venice 2025

Layal runs a women-only petrol station in Yemen, a safe haven in a war-torn country. The rules are simple: no men, no weapons, no politics. Inside its gates the women wait for fuel and trade gossip, food and news, and Layal shields her younger brother, Laith, from a war that wants him. When he faces enlistment, she must reunite with her estranged sister, Shams, to save the one life they still can. Layal's name means night; Shams means sun. Inside the gates, the queue is a small world of its own, loud, funny, opinionated, where the women bicker, bargain and look out for one another.

Outside, the war is always audible. A plane roars overhead just as Layal tells a caller she cannot give any petrol. Layal is quiet, steady and protective; Shams is bold and outspoken, as harsh as she is warm. To save Laith, the sisters will have to find their way back to each other. Sara Ishaq, the Oscar-nominated director of 'Karama Has No Walls', based the film on a real women-only petrol station she queued at in Sana'a in 2015, and cast it largely with non-actors from Yemen and the diaspora. The result is a warm, witty ode to the people of Yemen, who have endured years of war with dignity, humour and strength.



Sara Ishaq is a Yemeni-Scottish filmmaker who received Academy Award and BAFTA New Talent Award nominations for her debut short documentary, 'Karama Has No Walls' (2012), produced while she was studying for an MFA in Film Directing at the Edinburgh College of Art. Her second documentary feature, 'The Mulberry House' (2013), premiered at IDFA. 'The Station' is her first fiction feature. In 2017 she co-founded Comra Academy, a foundation for creative film training in Yemen, and in 2022 joined the International Coalition for Filmmakers at Risk in Amsterdam, going on to run it.

Director: Sara Ishaq
Screenwriter: Sara Ishaq, Nadia Eliewat
Producer: Nadia Eliewat,
Nicolas Leprêtre, Fred Burle, Sol Bondy
Cinematographer: Amine Berrada
Editor: Romain Namura
Music: Tessa Rose Jackson,
Darius Timmer
Cast: Manal Al-Mulaiki,
Abeer Mohammed, Rashad Khaled,
Saleh Al-Marshahi

International Feature Film Competition

Our International Feature Film Competition continues the festival’s commitment to championing bold cinematic voices and nurturing creative connections across cultures, with a particular focus on the Global South. This year’s jury will adjudicate a selection of narrative and documentary features from four continents, that represent exceptional storytelling, artistry and vision from the Arab world and beyond.

International Feature Film Competition Awards

DFF's distinguished jury of five international film professionals will select winners in the Best Narrative, Best Documentary, Best Artistic Achievement and Best Performance categories, with a certificate of Special Mention also presented to a feature narrative or documentary. New this year, a three-member jury from the International Federation of Film Critics will award the FIPRESCI Prize to the film it considers the most significant achievement in the competition.



© Leslie Kee

Naomi Kawase
Head of the Jury

Naomi Kawase, born and based in Nara, Japan, is known for acclaimed films that blend fiction and documentary. In 1997, she became the youngest winner of the Caméra d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival with her first feature, 'Suzaku'. She went on to win the FIPRESCI Prize at Locarno for 'Hotaru' (2000) and the Cannes Grand Prix for 'The Mourning Forest' (2007), and received the Carrosse d'Or from the Directors' Fortnight in 2009 for her contribution to cinema. Her film 'Radiance' (2017) won the Ecumenical Jury Prize at Cannes. Kawase directed the official film of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games, part of which was selected for Cannes Classics, and her latest feature, 'Yakushima's Illusion' (2025), starring Vicky Krieps, premiered in competition at the Locarno Film Festival. In 2018 to 2019, the Centre Pompidou in Paris dedicated a major exhibition to her work.

An experienced juror, she served on the Cannes Competition Jury in 2013 and presided over the Cinéfondation and Short Films Jury in 2016. She also founded the Nara International Film Festival, which supports emerging filmmakers through its NARAtive initiative. Kawase has a long-standing connection with Doha Film Institute: as a Qumra Master in 2016, she delivered a master class, presented 'The Mourning Forest' and mentored emerging filmmakers from Qatar, the region and beyond. She is also a UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador and served as Producer and Senior Advisor for Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai.



© Rémi Duchili

Adam Bessa

Born in Grasse to Tunisian parents, Adam Bessa trained as an actor after abandoning his law studies to pursue his passion for cinema. Fluent in French, English, Italian and Arabic, he has developed a diverse international career spanning French, European and American productions. He first gained recognition in Sofia Djama's 'The Blessed' ('Les Bienheureux'), presented at Venice, for which he was shortlisted for the César for Most Promising Actor. He then appeared in 'Mosul', 'Extraction' and 'Extraction 2', as well as the Amazon series 'Hanna'. In 2022, his breakthrough performance in Lotfy Nathan's 'Harka', filmed in Tunisia, earned him the Best Performance Award in Un Certain Regard at Cannes, as well as acting awards at the Red Sea International Film Festival and Saint-Jean-de-Luz. He went on to star in Meryam Joobeur's 'Who Do I Belong To', which premiered in Competition at the 2024 Berlinale.

In Jonathan Millet's 'Ghost Trail' ('Les Fantômes'), which opened Critics' Week at Cannes in 2024, he played Hamid, a young Syrian man pursuing former members of the regime, earning Best Actor at the El Gouna Film Festival and a César nomination for Most Promising Actor. In 2026, he starred in Asghar Farhadi's 'Parallel Tales' ('Histoires Parallèles'), alongside Isabelle Huppert, Virginie Efira, Pierre Niney and Vincent Cassel, which premiered in Competition at Cannes. 'Harka', 'Who Do I Belong To' and 'Parallel Tales' were all made with the support of Doha Film Institute.



© Rim Temimi

Dora Bouchoucha

Dora Bouchoucha has been a film producer since 1994 and founded her company, Nomadis Images, in 1995. She has produced and co-produced award-winning documentaries, short and feature films, including 'Satin Rouge', 'Buried Secrets' and 'Foreign Body' by Raja Amari, 'Inhebbek Hedi', 'Weldi' and 'Behind the Mountains' by Mohamed Ben Attia, 'Souad' by Ayten Amin and 'Aisha Can't Fly Away' by Morad Mostafa.

She founded the Carthage Film Festival Projects' workshop in 1992, the Sud Écriture workshops in 1997, which she still runs, and Takmil in 2014. She headed the Carthage Film Festival in 2008, 2010 and 2014, and the Manarat Film Festival in 2018, 2019 and 2021.

Bouchoucha was a member of the Berlinale International Jury in 2017 and Venice's debut feature jury in 2020, President of the FESPACO jury in 2023 and sat on the Shanghai International Film Festival jury in 2026. She received career achievement awards at El Gouna Film Festival and Luxor African Film Festival in Egypt, Salé festival in Morocco and MedFilm Festival in Rome in 2018, and a tribute at the House of Lords in 2020.

A member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, she was named Vice President of the Institut du Monde Arabe in Paris in 2021 and was godmother of La Fabrique Cinéma de l'Institut français at Cannes in 2023. She also mentors and consults for labs and programmes across Africa and the Arab world.



© Vittorio Zunino Celotto/Getty Images

Gianfranco Rosi

Gianfranco Rosi is the only documentary filmmaker to have won both the Golden Lion at Venice and the Golden Bear at Berlin. Working largely alone as his own cinematographer, he immerses himself in a place for months or years before filming, creating intimate, observational portraits without narration or interviews.

After graduating from New York University Film School in 1985, he spent five years making 'Boatman' (1993), about a boatman on the Ganges, which screened at Sundance, Locarno and Toronto. 'Below Sea Level' (2008), shot in Slab City, California, won Best Film in the Orizzonti section at Venice, and 'El Sicario – Room 164' (2010) won the FIPRESCI Award there.

In 2013, 'Sacro GRA' became the first documentary to win the Golden Lion. In 2016, 'Fire at Sea' ('Fuocoammare'), filmed on Lampedusa, won the Golden Bear and the European Film Award, and received an Academy Award nomination for Best Documentary. In 2018, he mentored emerging filmmakers as a Qumra Master at Doha Film Institute. 'Notturno' (2020), shot over three years along the borders of Iraq, Kurdistan, Syria and Lebanon, was presented in Competition at Venice and shortlisted for the Academy Awards. In 2021, he served on the Berlinale International Jury. In 2024, he received the Camerimage Award for Outstanding Achievements in Documentary Filmmaking, and in 2025, 'Below the Clouds' ('Sotto le Nuvole'), set on the slopes of Mount Vesuvius, won the Special Jury Prize at Venice.



© Ferrante Ferranti

Kamal Aljafari

Palestinian filmmaker and artist Kamal Aljafari is known for his distinctive approach to cinema. He studied at the Academy of Media Arts in Cologne and has held teaching positions at The New School in New York and the Deutsche Film- und Fernsehakademie Berlin. He was awarded a Radcliffe Fellowship at Harvard University and, most recently, a fellowship at the Columbia Institute for Ideas and Imagination in Paris (2024 to 2025). His installation 'The Camera of the Dispossessed' was shown at the 35th Bienal de São Paulo in 2023, and he has been honoured with retrospectives at DMZ Docs, the Museo Nazionale del Cinema in Turin and Batalha Centro de Cinema in Porto.

His feature 'A Fidai Film' (2024) won the Jury Prize in the Burning Lights Competition at Visions du Réel and the Tanit d'Or at Carthage, and screened at more than 100 festivals. His documentary 'With Hasan in Gaza' (2025) premiered in the International Competition at Locarno, where it received the Europa Cinemas Label, and went on to win Best Artistic Achievement at Doha Film Festival 2025, as well as main awards at DMZ Docs, Yamagata, Cinemed and Festival dei Popoli.

Both films were made with the support of Doha Film Institute, which is also backing his upcoming feature 'Beirut 1931'. His latest short, 'Masao Adachi Takes a Passport Photo' (2026), premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival.



9 Temples to Heaven

Thailand, Singapore, France, Norway, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Qatar / Thai / 2026
140 mins
Winner of Best Director and Best Actor, Asian New Talent Award, Shanghai International Film Festival 2026

After hearing a prophecy that his elderly mother may die soon, Sakol sets out on a one-day pilgrimage to nine temples as a remedy. Two weeks before her birthday, he loads her into a rented van with his wife, brother, sister and children, and the family moves from one temple to the next, offering shampoo and razor blades to monks, feeding temple fish, making donations, and bickering in between. Along the way they pass their old family home, now a glass recycling factory, while the grandmother grows quietly more tired, in body and in mind.

Sompot Chidgasornpongse, for many years assistant director to Apichatpong Weerasethakul, who was a DFI Qumra Master in 2018, drew the film from his own family's temple trips in Samut Prakan, his hometown by the sea. Thais, he notes, often go to temples less to let go of desire than to bank good karma, and nine, pronounced kao, means to step forward. The film watches that faith with tenderness and a raised eyebrow, as the light moves from morning to dusk across one long day. It premiered in Directors' Fortnight at Cannes, the first Thai film there in nineteen years, and is Thailand's submission for Best International Feature at the 99th Academy Awards.



Sompot Chidgasornpongse (Boat) holds a bachelor's degree in architecture from Chulalongkorn University in Thailand and an MFA in Film/Video from the California Institute of the Arts (CalArts). His short films have screened at festivals including Rotterdam, Oberhausen, Visions du Réel and the Viennale. His debut documentary, 'Railway Sleepers' (2016), premiered in competition at Busan and had its European premiere at the Berlinale. He has worked closely with Apichatpong Weerasethakul as an assistant director on films including 'Tropical Malady', 'Cemetery of Splendour' and 'Memoria'. He is based in Bangkok.

Director / Screenwriter: Sompot Chidgasornpongse
Producer: Kissada Kamyoung, Apichatpong Weerasethakul
Cinematographer: Jonathan Ricquebourg
Editor: Tham Kattiyakul, Jirapat Mekkrajai, Daniel Hui, Sompot Chidgasornpongse
Cast: Amara Ramnarong, Surachai Ningsanond, Jirawut Chiwaruck, Yaneenan Jiraphatjittrin



Bardi

Morocco, France, USA, Qatar / Arabic, Greek / 2026
109 mins
Currents Centerpiece, New York Film Festival 2026

Stallions stand in the silver water of the Atlantic, tended by the men who ride them. These riders are a brotherhood bound by Tbourida, a centuries-old ritual rooted in warfare, in which horsemen in ceremonial dress charge in a single line and fire their rifles at the same instant. Tala Hadid travels with them across central Morocco, from one saint's festival to the next, and watches everything that surrounds the charge: the men dress one another, care for the horses, wait, argue and eat. In the saddle, the farmer becomes a general, the young man a prince, the labourer a hero.

Hadid, who also shot the film, lets documentary and fiction blur until it no longer matters which is which. Its three movements each open with a card laid down by the riders themselves, and it builds through recurrence. The sea, a horse, a costume, a voice. The daughter of the troupe's leader wants to ride and is refused; later, at the great gathering of Moulay Abdesalam, her voice returns through a stallion that speaks. Mobile phones and motorbikes sit alongside gestures that seem centuries old. The result is a vernacular epic, and a portrait of Arab men at work and at play, capable of great force and equal tenderness.



Tala Hadid is a Moroccan-Iraqi photographer and filmmaker, born in London. Her short 'Your Dark Hair Ihsan' won a Student Academy Award, and her fiction feature 'The Narrow Frame of Midnight' ('Itarr el Layl', 2014) premiered at Toronto. Her documentary 'House in the Fields' (2017) was selected for the Berlin Film Festival and won prizes including Best Documentary at the Hong Kong International Film Festival. Her work has been shown at MoMA and the Smithsonian, and she made a permanent video installation for the National Museum of Qatar. 'Bardi' premiered at the New York Film Festival in 2026.

Director / Cinematographer: Tala Hadid
Producers: Abdelmonime El Jarib, Tala Hadid
Editors: Ibrahim Arcan, Tala Hadid
Sound Design: Thomas Robert
Original Score: Karolina Rec (RESINA)



Concrete Land

Jordan, Palestine / Arabic / 2026
102 mins
Semaine de la critique, Locarno Film Festival 2026

On the outskirts of Amman, the Najars live much as their elders always have: in tents on agricultural land, with their flock and a much-loved pet sheep called Badrya. Abu Awad and Hakima, the grandparents, keep to Bedouin ways. Their son Awad drives a cement truck, helping to pour the city that is swallowing them. His ten-year-old daughter, Eman, goes to school and is bullied for her skin and her background. Then the villas arrive, and with them neighbours who want the tents gone. A government notice orders the family to clear their animals within five days or face removal, and one night their tent is slashed open.

Asmahan Bkerat met the family by chance in 2016, stopping for tea near Amman, and filmed them for eight years. The Najars have been displaced before, from the Negev; this film bears witness as it begins again. Meals, songs, the care of the animals and quarrels between generations tell the story, and the losses arrive the way they do in life, one after another, without announcement. Bkerat, who shares the family's Bedouin roots, had never made a film before she met them. She picked up a camera because she believed their knowledge was too precious to be lost. The result is both a fascinating portrait and an act of keeping a record of perpetual displacement.



Asmahan Bkerat is a Palestinian-Jordanian documentary filmmaker. She began her career as a photographer and social justice advocate and learned filmmaking through her work with the Najar family, whose Bedouin roots she shares. Her first short documentary, 'Badrya', about the family's grandmother, won the Jury Prize for Best MiniDoc at the Sebastopol Documentary Film Festival. 'Concrete Land', her debut feature documentary, was developed with support from Doha Film Institute, and premiered at the Semaine de la critique in Locarno in 2026. She is also producing the documentaries 'Harvest Moon' and 'If These Stones Could Talk'.

Director / Cinematographer: Asmahan Bkerat
Producers: Asmahan Bkerat, Ban Maraqa
Writer / Editor: Ban Maraqa
Executive Producer: Jane Mote
Sound Design: Rana Eid
With: Abedel Wahad Al-Najjar, Awad Al-Najjar, Eman Al-Najjar, Samira A-Muray, Hakima Obeid, Aminah Al-Najjar, Bushra Al-Najjar



Conversation with the Sea

Palestine, Netherlands, Saudi Arabia, Qatar / Arabic, English / 2026
113 mins

In Jerusalem, Kamal, a 60-year-old Palestinian man, is ordered by an Israeli court to pay a large social security debt allegedly owed by his son Wael. But Wael drowned in the Red Sea decades ago, or so Kamal was told. When no official record of his son's death can be found anywhere, the paperwork that should have closed a painful chapter instead throws it wide open. Kamal follows the only remaining lead, setting out to uncover what really happened to Wael, and forcing a family to face the guilt, pain and flaws it has carried ever since.

Inspired by true events in his own family, Muayad Alayan's fourth feature returns to the city at the centre of his work. A Jerusalem where soldiers, armed settlers and home demolitions are part of daily life, yet where people go on living, loving and finding something to look forward to. As Kamal's search unfolds, old certainties begin to give way, and a past he thought was long settled refuses to stay quietly buried. At its heart is a love story about family, and a love-and-hate letter to the director's only home. A portrait of a father, a family and a city still searching for answers, torn between nostalgia for what it once was and grief for what it is being forced to become.



Muayad Alayan is a Palestinian director and producer from Jerusalem. His first narrative short, 'Lesh Sabreen?', premiered in competition at Clermont-Ferrand in 2009, and his debut feature, 'Love, Theft and Other Entanglements' (2015), in the Berlinale's Panorama. 'The Reports on Sarah and Saleem' (2018) won the Special Jury Prize in Rotterdam's Tiger Competition and the Hubert Bals Audience Award and was distributed in more than 50 territories. 'A House in Jerusalem' (2023) premiered in Rotterdam and was nominated for the UNESCO Gandhi Medal. He is a member of the European Film Academy.

Director: Muayad Alayan
Screenwriters / Producers: Muayad Alayan, Rami Alayan
Cinematographer: Lorenzo Casadio Vannucci
Editor: Matteo Faccenda
Music: Fabienne Van Eck
Cast: Kamel El Basha, Amer Hlehel, Ruba Blal, Haitham Omari, Bahira Ablassi, Maria Zreik



Filipiñana

Singapore, UK, Philippines, France, Netherlands, Qatar / Filipino, English, Ilokano / 2026
100 mins
Winner of the World Cinema Dramatic Special Jury Award for Creative Vision, Sundance Film Festival 2026

Amid stifling heat and pervasive drought, Isabel, a 17-year-old Ilokana from the rural north, works at a posh country club outside Manila, lining up golf balls for powerful men to drive into the verdant horizon. New to the job, she wanders the immaculate grounds sampling its luxuries as members, among them an industrialist and his expatriate niece, the club president and his pampered wife, and a slew of Chinese tourists, engage in a complex dance with the doting and subservient staff. But something is rotting beneath the pristine fairways, as Isabel discovers when she tries to return a mislaid golf club to its patriarchal director, Dr. Palanca.

The deeper she journeys into its most exclusive corners, the closer she gets to the violent truths of the club, her native Philippines, and her own past. Rafael Manuel expands his own Silver Bear-winning short into a study of structural violence, where almost nothing violent is shown. He lets the frame lose width and gain verticality, with members high in the shot and workers looking up from below and raises the crack of a club striking a ball until it sounds like gunfire. Isabel is Ilokana, from the region the Marcos family comes from, and her awakening is also an act of remembering. Golf rewards inaction. So, the film suggests, does a country.



Rafael Manuel is based between Amsterdam, London and Manila. His short films have won a Silver Bear at the Berlinale, have screened at Locarno, IFFR and FIDMarseille, and are exhibited by ARTE and the Criterion Collection. He was the last film protégé of the Rolex Arts Initiative, mentored by Jia Zhangke. ‘Filipiñana’ is his debut feature, expanded from his 2020 short of the same name. It won the World Cinema Dramatic Special Jury Award for Creative Vision at Sundance 2026 and is the Philippines’ entry for Best International Feature Film at the 99th Academy Awards.

Director / Screenwriter / Editor: Rafael Manuel
Producer: Jeremy Chua, Alex Polunin, Bianca Balbuena, Bradley Liew, Nadia Turincev, Omar El Kadi, Rafael Manuel
Cinematographer: Xenia Patricia
Cast: Jorrybell Agoto, Carmen Castellanos, Teroy Guzman, Carlitos Siguion-Reyna, Isabel Sicat, Nour Hooshmand, Elle Velasco, Angeli Bayani, Micah Musa



A Girl Unknown

China, France / Mandarin / 2026
128 mins
Winner of the FIPRESCI Prize, Critics’ Week, Cannes Film Festival 2026

Lin Juan is six and has already been told she was found in a rubbish bin. The woman who took her in loves her, but when she remarries, Juan is handed to Wang Weiqiang and Ding Meishuang, a city couple still grieving the daughter they lost at seven. Now she is Wang Juan. She learns to dance, fights at school and understands, without anyone saying so, whose place she is filling. At sixteen, her birth parents appear, call her by a third name and take her home to a brother and sister she has never met.

Zou Jing’s first feature grew from something she learned only after her grandmother died: that she too had been abandoned as a baby, in 1936. The film follows its heroine from six to eighteen, through a village, a city flat and a factory floor, and never shows us more than she knows. The years jump without warning, just as she is moved without warning. Light carries much of the feeling, from sunlit rivers to rooms kept half dark by grief, and finally a classroom where she studies how light travels. It is a film of few words, patient and tender, about a girl who is always being given away, and who slowly learns to belong to herself.



Zou Jing is a Chinese writer and director. She began her career making television documentaries and commercials before turning to fiction. Her first narrative short, ‘Lili Alone’ (2021), about surrogacy in China, won the Leitz Cine Discovery Prize for Best Short Film at Cannes Critics’ Week and Best Fiction Short Film at the Melbourne International Film Festival, and screened at more than 80 festivals. Her screenplay for ‘A Girl Unknown’ won the Critics’ Week Next Step Prize in 2024. The finished film, her debut feature, premiered in competition at Critics’ Week in 2026, where it won the FIPRESCI Prize.

Director / Screenwriter: Zou Jing
Producers: Wang Yang, Didar Domehri, Cao Xi
Cinematographer: Liang Zhongqiang
Editors: Zou Jing, Tina Baz
Music: Valentin Hadjadj
Cast: Li Gengxi, Shen Jiani, Zu Feng, Cao Ruofan



House of the Wind

Cameroon, France, Belgium, Benin, Saudi Arabia, Qatar / French, Bafang / 2026
103 mins
Winner of the Lion of the Future for a Debut Film and the Special Orizzonti Jury Prize, Venice Film Festival 2026

Josette is 80 and lives alone in Yaoundé, Cameroon. All six of her children have left for the West. She encourages them to build houses back in Cameroon, a ploy to bring them home to her. But the unexpected bond she forms with Sarah, a young woman from her neighbourhood, shatters everything she has built her life on: her family, her responsibilities, and her hopes. Josette is the director's mother. Auguste Bernard Kouemo Yanghu left Cameroon for France twenty years ago and, like the children in his film, he did not come back.

When he visited, he found the house empty and his mother alone in it, moving from room to room each day, keeping her children's plates ready for a homecoming that never came. He started filming her. The film took six years to come together. He thought it would be a documentary, then found he would rather imagine an ending than record one. We talk about the ones who leave, he says, and almost never about the ones who stay, and the ones who stay are mostly old and mostly alone. His first feature sits quietly with one of them, in a house built for a family that does not arrive, with the wind whistling through it.



Auguste Bernard Kouemo Yanghu began his film studies thanks to the film classes created by the Ecrans Noirs association in Yaoundé, then deepened his knowledge in France at the Toulouse Film School (ENSAV). A film instructor, he joined the Canal Plus Horizons group in 2019 as a reader-consultant for TV series aimed at African audiences. He has directed several short films, including 'Waramutséhó!' (19 awards worldwide), 'Painful Imprints' (15 selections and two awards) and 'My Friend Fukushima', which premiered at the Pan-African International Film Festival at Cannes. 'House of the Wind' is his first feature film.

Director / Screenwriter:
Auguste Bernard Kouemo Yanghu
Producer: Auguste Bernard Kouemo Yanghu, Arthur Grec, John Engel, Faissol Gnonlonfin, Linda Natacha Kwanya Siakam
Cinematographer: Eva Sehet
Editor: Ewin Ryckaert, Geoffroy Cernaix
Music: Michel Duprez, Blick Bassy
Cast: Josette Kwanya, Moudjeu Pouadeu, Adrien Jolivet, Babetida Sadjo, Tatiana Rojo, Basseek Fils



The Illusion of an Everlasting Summer

USA, Argentina / Spanish / 2026
94 mins
Winner of the Golden Leopard, Concorso Cineasti del Presente, Locarno Film Festival 2026

In 1999, photographer Alessandra Sanguinetti invited her young neighbours, the cousins Guillermina, ten, and Belinda, nine, to act out their dreams for her camera on two neighbouring farms in the Argentine Pampas. They dress up as brides and gypsies, stage a funeral for an imaginary husband, sing old love songs and give their photographs grand titles such as "The Queen of Garlic". On a trip to Buenos Aires, they gasp at every building. Guillermina dreams of a long white wedding dress and a party full of white decorations. Then, almost without noticing, they grow up. First loves arrive, then babies, then work, marriage and motherhood.

At eighteen, one of them asks the question the film keeps circling: why didn't we just stay little? Twenty-five years on, the cousins lead separate lives and can go a year without seeing each other, until one of their daughters stands in front of the same camera. Sanguinetti's first feature grows out of her celebrated photographic series 'The Adventures of Guille and Belinda', and as grainy camcorder footage gives way to digital, the images age alongside the women. Tender, funny and quietly heartbreaking, it is a story of friendship, and of how a summer only looks everlasting from inside it.



Alessandra Sanguinetti is an Argentine-American photographer and filmmaker. A Guggenheim Fellow, she has received a Hasselblad Grant, Sundance Grant, and a Rencontres d'Arles Discovery Award. Her monographs include 'On the Sixth Day', 'The Adventures of Guille and Belinda' (vols 1 & 2), 'Some Say Ice', and 'Sorry Welcome'. Her work has been collected and exhibited by MoMA, SFMOMA, MFA Houston, Museo de Bellas Artes Buenos Aires, and Fondation Cartier-Bresson. She has been a Magnum member since 2007. 'The Illusion of an Everlasting Summer' is her first feature film.

Director / Cinematographer:
Alessandra Sanguinetti
Producer: Julia Solomonoff
Editor: Andrés Tambornino
With: Guillermina Aranciaga, Belinda Stutz



The Meltdown

Chile, USA, Spain, Mexico / Spanish, English, German / 2026
108 mins
Un Certain Regard, Cannes Film Festival 2026

Chile, 1992. At the Vista del Volcán, her grandparents' ski hotel in the Andes, nine-year-old Inés is meant to go to bed early and finish her homework. She would much rather be anywhere else: sleeping in the staff quarters, out on the slopes, or trailing after Hanna, a 14-year-old German racer training on the mountain under the eye of a demanding coach and her mother, Lina, a former East German athlete. Hanna is everything Inés wants to be. She orders pisco at the bar, lets Inés share her room and sneaks out at night with Inés's older brother, Sebastián. Then she disappears.

Helicopters circle, patrols comb the slopes and policemen crowd the lobby. Inés knows more than she should, and her grandmother, anxious to protect the family and the Spanish investors she is courting, tells her, firmly and lovingly, that she knows nothing. Only Lina refuses to stop asking questions. On television, Chile is showing off an Antarctic iceberg at the Seville Expo, proof of a modern country that has turned the page on dictatorship, while inside the hotel, everything the adults have buried is slowly starting to melt. Manuela Martelli's second feature is Chile's submission for Best International Feature at the 99th Academy Awards.



Manuela Martelli debuted as a teenager in 'B-Happy', winning the Coral Award for Best Leading Role at the Havana Film Festival, and has since acted for directors including Andrés Wood, Sebastián Lelio and Martín Rejtman. A Fulbright scholar, she studied film at Temple University in the USA, and co-directed the short 'Marea' with Amirah Tajdin, which premiered in Directors' Fortnight at Cannes. Her first feature, '1976', premiered in the Fortnight in 2022 and won the Sutherland Award at the BFI London Film Festival.

Director / Screenwriter:
Manuela Martelli
Producer: Alejandra García, Alex C. Lo, Andrés Wood
Cinematographer:
Benjamín Echazarreta
Editor: Yibrán Asuad
Music: María Portugal
Cast: Maya O'Rourke, Saskia Rosendahl, Maia Rae Domagala, Jakub Gierszal, Paulina Urrutia, Mauricio Pesutic



My Semba

Angola, Qatar / Portuguese / 2026
93 mins
Winner of the Feature Film Competition Award, International Film Festival Innsbruck 2026

X, Lelé and Maria grew up together at the Divine Providence Home in Luanda, raised by Father Jonas, the closest thing to a parent any of them has known. Now grown, they have joined the city's working majority, where the hours are long, the pay is poor and dignity is hard to come by. Maria, a housekeeper, holds tight to her faith and the values Father Jonas gave her. Lelé, a delivery driver, has stopped waiting for justice and fights fire with fire. X, a poet with albinism, walks the streets trying to make sense of a city that barely looks at him, and finds his voice at poetry readings and late-night rap battles.

Then Father Jonas's life is threatened. The three siblings, pulled in different directions for so long, must face their deepest fears to save the man who gave them a home. Old loyalties are tested, faith meets its limits and anger looks for somewhere to go. Told in rhyme and rhythm as much as in dialogue, with semba, the music at the heart of Angola, pulsing beneath every scene, Hugo Salvaterra's debut feature is a love letter to Luanda and the people who keep it running, and to the words that help them survive it.



Hugo Salvaterra is an Angolan writer, photographer, musician and filmmaker who describes himself as a Pan-African storyteller. For more than a decade he has worked across feature and short films, experimental work, documentaries, music videos and advertising, with a focus on Africa and its diaspora. He studied psychology at ISCTE in Lisbon, received a Fulbright grant in 2015 and completed an MFA at the New York Film Academy in 2018. His short film '1999' won Best Short Film at the Unitel Angola Move Awards in 2021. 'My Semba', his debut feature, premiered in the Tiger Competition at Rotterdam in 2026.

Director / Screenwriter:
Hugo Salvaterra
Producer: Jorge Cohen
Cinematographer: Ery Claver
Editor: Kamy Lara
Art Director: Prudênciana Hach
Original Music: Nakhane, Toty Sa'med, Valete
Cast: Euclides Teixeira, Wili Ribeiro, Eliane Silva, Clemente Chimuco, Isis Hembe



Revolutionaries Never Die

Palestine, Belgium, Qatar / Arabic, English, French / 2026
80 mins
Winner of the Special Jury Prize, Concorso Cineasti del Presente, Locarno Film Festival 2026

In October 2018, the archivist and filmmaker Mohanad Yaqubi received an unexpected email from Jocelyne Saab, proposing a cinematic collaboration. It ended, “give me a sign of life so that we can begin”. He had not replied when she died three months later, leaving the request as a final, open question. Compelled to understand why she had reached out to him, Yaqubi entered her archive, 113 reels of 16mm shot between 1973 and 1983, tracing the threads between artistic expression and political struggle, and the intimate consequences of a life given to revolution.

Saab was born in Beirut in 1948 and became a war reporter for French television before going independent in 1975, filming the Palestinian resistance, the Lebanese civil war, Western Sahara, Egypt’s bread riots and the Israeli siege of West Beirut. She spent her last years depositing her reels at the CNC in Paris so they would survive her. Yaqubi builds his film as a letter that will never be delivered, splicing her footage in chronological order and letting her own voice answer him across fifty years. Partway through the work, photographs reached him of his own family home in Gaza, destroyed. We are still seeing the same images, he writes to her, fifty years after you filmed them.



Mohanad Yaqubi is a filmmaker, producer and one of the founders of Idioms Film, an arthouse production company based in Ramallah since 2004. He is a member of Subversive Film, a curatorial collective researching and redistributing militant cinema from Palestine and beyond, and has been a lecturer and researcher at KASK School of the Arts in Ghent since 2017. His first film, ‘Off Frame AKA Revolution Until Victory’ (2016), premiered at Toronto. His second feature, ‘R21 AKA Restoring Solidarity’ (2022), debuted at Documenta 15 and IDFA.

Director: Mohanad Yaqubi
Screenwriter: Mohanad Yaqubi, Mathilde Rouxel
Producer: Sami Saeed, Mohanad Yaqubi
Cinematographer: David Denil, Jordi Coppers
Editor: Elettra Bisogno
With: Jocelyne Saab



Sama

Palestine, France, Qatar / Arabic / 2026
65 mins

Sama is ten years old, and every morning she goes to work. Her family fled the north of Gaza and now lives in a tent in Deir al-Balah: Sama, her mother, three brothers and three sisters. Her father stayed behind in Gaza City, and she does not know when she will see him again. With no gas or electricity left, Sama walks the streets and markets gathering scraps of plastic and cardboard to sell as fuel and carries home whatever she can find. It is heavy, dirty work for a child, and the whole family depends on it.

But Sama is still a child. In quiet moments she turns bottle caps into toys, some to keep and some to sell. She laughs without warning, then falls silent for long stretches, heavier on some days than others. When a tent becomes a classroom, she is there. When she can, she heads for the sea and the open sky. Filmed by her neighbour Rabab Khamis, who lives in a tent nearby, ‘Sama’ is a tender, intimate portrait of a girl doing a grown-up’s job while holding on to three simple wishes: for the war to end, to see her father again, and to go back to school.



Rabab Khamis was born in Gaza in 1997. She holds a degree in digital media and has worked as a drama and psychosocial support facilitator, mainly with children, directing theatre productions and acting in several works. Her short ‘Recycling’, a wordless portrait of a displaced mother reusing a single bucket of water, was part of ‘From Ground Zero’ (2024), the anthology of short films made in Gaza that was shortlisted for the Academy Award for Best International Feature Film. ‘Sama’, her first feature documentary, was made while she was herself living displaced in southern Gaza.

Director: Rabab Khamis
Producers: Rashid Masharawi, Laura Nikolov
Production: Masharawi Fund for Films and Filmmakers in Gaza, Coorigines Production
Co-production: Metafora Production
With: Sama



The Station

Yemen, Jordan, France, Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Qatar / Arabic / 2026
112 mins
Winner of La Biennale di Venezia Award for Best Film in Post-Production, Final Cut in Venice 2025

Layal runs a women-only petrol station in Yemen, a safe haven in a war-torn country. The rules are simple: no men, no weapons, no politics. Inside its gates the women wait for fuel and trade gossip, food and news, and Layal shields her younger brother, Laith, from a war that wants him. When he faces enlistment, she must reunite with her estranged sister, Shams, to save the one life they still can. Layal's name means night; Shams means sun. Inside the gates, the queue is a small world of its own, loud, funny, opinionated, where the women bicker, bargain and look out for one another.

Outside, the war is always audible. A plane roars overhead just as Layal tells a caller she cannot give any petrol. Layal is quiet, steady and protective; Shams is bold and outspoken, as harsh as she is warm. To save Laith, the sisters will have to find their way back to each other. Sara Ishaq, the Oscar-nominated director of 'Karama Has No Walls', based the film on a real women-only petrol station she queued at in Sana'a in 2015, and cast it largely with non-actors from Yemen and the diaspora. The result is a warm, witty ode to the people of Yemen, who have endured years of war with dignity, humour and strength.



Sara Ishaq is a Yemeni-Scottish filmmaker who received Academy Award and BAFTA New Talent Award nominations for her debut short documentary, 'Karama Has No Walls' (2012), produced while she was studying for an MFA in Film Directing at the Edinburgh College of Art. Her second documentary feature, 'The Mulberry House' (2013), premiered at IDFA. 'The Station' is her first fiction feature. In 2017 she co-founded Comra Academy, a foundation for creative film training in Yemen, and in 2022 joined the International Coalition for Filmmakers at Risk in Amsterdam, going on to run it.

Director: Sara Ishaq
Screenwriter: Sara Ishaq, Nadia Eliewat
Producer: Nadia Eliewat, Nicolas Leprêtre, Fred Burle, Sol Bondy
Cinematographer: Amine Berrada
Editor: Romain Namura
Music: Tessa Rose Jackson, Darius Timmer
Cast: Manal Al-Mulaiki, Abeer Mohammed, Rashad Khaled, Saleh Al-Marshahi



Thirteen in Gaza

Palestine, Qatar / Arabic / 2026
78 mins
Winner of the NETPAC Award, Toronto International Film Festival 2026

Gaza, 2025. A bombing destroys Raghad's home and kills her mother, and the thirteen-year-old and her father, Abu Raghad, end up in an overcrowded displacement camp, where tents stand close together, bathrooms are shared and water is scarce. There, Raghad gets her first period. With no mother to guide her, and too ashamed to add to her father's burdens, she tries to hide it. Nour, a former neighbour, helps her quietly with advice and scarce supplies, though even that small kindness causes friction with Nour's family, who fear giving away what they may need themselves.

Abu Raghad has lost his home, his work and his standing. When Khalil, an old acquaintance who now controls warehouses and aid supplies, offers him a job, he takes it, telling himself he is doing what any father would. But Khalil's help comes at a price, and his attention begins to turn towards Raghad. Filmed entirely in Gaza with a local cast and crew, under bombardment and displacement, Hosam Abu Dan's first fiction feature keeps destruction looming at the edge of the frame. It looks instead at what war does to a body, a family and a community's sense of right and wrong, and at a girl forced to grow up far too fast.



Hosam Abu Dan is a Palestinian director and producer from the Gaza Strip, where he lives and works. He began his career as an editor in 2010 before moving into directing, cinematography and production, and in 2016 he founded New Scene for Media & Artistic Production, making documentaries, drama and digital work for broadcasters including Al Jazeera and UNRWA TV. His documentary 'Gaza Sound Man' (2024), about a sound engineer recording life in Gaza, competed for the Tim Hetherington Award at Sheffield DocFest in 2025. 'Thirteen in Gaza', his first fiction feature, won the NETPAC Award at Toronto in 2026.

Director / Producer / Editor: Hosam Abu Dan
Screenplay: Khalil Al-Muzayyen
Executive Producer: Hanna Atallah
Cinematographer: Yousef Mashharawi
Music: Alaa El Rawey
Cast: Mary Ziyara, Firas Al-Masri, Ghassan Salem, Abeer Ahmed, Nawaf Abu Amra



Tin Castle

Ireland, France / English / 2026
95 mins
Critics' Week Competition, Cannes Film Festival 2026

Along a long-forgotten Irish road, the O'Reillys live in a rundown trailer stranded in the middle of the fields. Pa, Lisa and their ten children weather the seasons in their tin castle, heirs to a way of life on borrowed time. Under threat of eviction, their tenuous balance falters, yet, steadfast in their tradition, they resist. In a school presentation, Chantelle explains that she has lots of brothers and five sisters, that she lives in a mobile home because she is an Irish Traveller, and that when she marries, the boy will have to ask her dad first.

Around her, family life carries on at full tilt. Barbie weddings, boxing lessons, communion dresses and a broken generator that leaves them without electricity for a week. When the council offers a house on a crowded estate, with no room for the horses, Pa refuses; he is a Traveller until the day he dies. Alexander Murphy spent six years with the O'Reillys, filming alone until the camera became, in his words, "an eleventh child". Seen through the children's eyes, it is a warm, unvarnished portrait of a culture slowly fading, and of a tin castle that is, against everything, a home.



Alexander Murphy is a Franco-Irish filmmaker. Through stories rooted in the youth of traditional communities, he explores questions of heritage, displacement and transmission. His sensitive eye gives intimate access to the lives of vulnerable populations facing extreme living conditions. Marked by great tenderness and a keen photographic sensibility, his films are dedicated to preserving the memory of threatened cultures within marginalised groups. His previous documentaries include 'Goodbye Sisters' (2025), 'Ndao Hanavao' (2024) and 'Of Soul and Joy' (2023). He is currently developing 'Born Free', a Franco-South African documentary.

Director / Cinematographer: Alexander Murphy
Screenwriter: Alexander Murphy, Jean-Baptiste Plard
Producer: Cosme Bongrain, David Collins, Eamon Hughes
Editor: Nicolás Longinotti
Music: Kevin O'Leary
With: Pa O'Reilly, Lisa O'Reilly, Sean O'Reilly, Paddy O'Reilly, Chantelle O'Reilly, Tina O'Reilly, Maggie O'Reilly

FIPRESCI Jury

DFF 2026 welcomes its inaugural International Federation of Film Critics (FIPRESCI) Jury, expanding the space where critics and filmmakers can engage across cultures, discover new voices and contribute to a richer global conversation around cinema. The Jury of three international film critics will evaluate films in the International Feature Film Competition and present the FIPRESCI Prize to the film it considers the most significant achievement in the competition.



Amarsanaa Battulga

Amarsanaa Battulga is a Mongolian film critic and programmer based in Ulaanbaatar. He is a member of FIPRESCI, a voter for the 84th Annual Golden Globes in 2027 and a pre-selector for the Glasgow Short Film Festival and Filmfest Dresden. His writing has appeared in English, Chinese, Mongolian, German and Dutch, in publications including Die Welt, Cineuropa, photogénie and Documentary.



Katharina Dockhorn

Katharina Dockhorn studied history and cultural science at the Humboldt University of Berlin. She has been working as a freelance journalist and film critic for TV stations, newspapers and trade magazines for more than 30 years.



Ali Alyasery

Ali Alyasery is an Iraqi film critic and researcher with over two decades of experience and numerous books and articles to his credit. The first Iraqi critic to join FIPRESCI, he has served on festival juries in Iraq and internationally, helped pioneer film support funds in Iraq, including the Iraqi Film Fund, and has three times sat on Iraq's Academy Awards selection committee.

International Short Film Competition

Short films give filmmakers the freedom to take creative risks, challenge conventions and bring fresh perspectives to the screen. From the realities of life in Gaza, Lebanon, Sudan and Yemen to the Peruvian Amazon and rural Indonesia, the International Short Film Competition reflects the vitality of short-form filmmaking as a space for experimentation, discovery and urgent storytelling, with films deeply rooted in their communities while speaking to experiences that transcend borders.

International Short Film Competition Awards

The competition is evaluated by an international jury of three, drawn from producing, directing and performance, who will assess the films' artistic vision, originality and storytelling to award the Best Film, Best Director and Best Performance prizes, alongside a certificate of Special Mention.



Karim Aitouna
Head of the Jury

Karim Aitouna is a producer with French and Moroccan roots, born in Tétouan and based in Lyon, where he co-founded Haut les Mains Productions in 2009 with Thomas Micoulet. Trained in law, film studies and cultural management, he began as a director and editor before turning to producing; his own documentary, 'A Place Under the Sun', won the Robert Bosch Stiftung Film Prize for co-production in 2013. As CEO of Haut les Mains and of Waq Waq Studio in Tangier, he has produced more than 22 fiction and documentary features.

His productions have travelled to the major festivals, from Cannes and Berlin to Venice, Toronto and Sundance: Anna Roussillon's 'I Am the People' (ACID, Cannes 2014), David Yon's 'The Night and the Kid' (Berlinale Forum 2015), Rä di Martino's 'Controfigura' (Venice 2017), Ahmed Fawzi Saleh's 'Poisonous Roses' (IFFR 2018), Qutaiba Barhamji's 'Gevar's Land' and Karima Saidi's 'A Way Home' (both IDFA 2020) and Philip Scheffner's 'Europe' (Berlinale 2022). In 2025, Amel Guellaty's 'Where the Wind Comes From', supported by Doha Film Institute, premiered in the World Cinema Dramatic Competition at Sundance, and Ratchapoom Boonbunchachoke's 'A Useful Ghost' won the Grand Prix of Critics' Week at Cannes.

A member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, Film Independent, EAVE and Eurodoc, he consults for the Atlas Workshops of the Marrakech International Film Festival, IFFR Pro Days and the Berlinale's EFM Toolbox, teaches at MIDPOINT Shorts and advised the Qumra Shorts projects at Doha Film Institute's Qumra 2025.



Amanda Nell Eu

Amanda Nell Eu is a Malaysian filmmaker, born in Kuala Lumpur in 1985. She took her MA in filmmaking at the London Film School, and is an alumna of Berlinale Talents, the Locarno Filmmakers Academy and Talents Tokyo. In Kuala Lumpur she co-founded Ghost Grrrl Pictures with producer Foo Fei Ling to champion female-led stories from Southeast Asia, and her work explores the female body and identity within the region's cultural context.

Her short 'It's Easier to Raise Cattle' (2017) premiered in the Orizzonti competition at Venice and received a Special Mention at Clermont-Ferrand, and 'Vinegar Baths' (2018) took first prize at the Scream Asia Horror Short Film Competition. Both draw on Malaysian folklore, as does her debut feature, 'Tiger Stripes' (2023), a coming-of-age tale about a twelve-year-old girl whose body begins to change. Supported by Doha Film Institute, it was the first Malaysian film by a woman director to premiere at Cannes and the first Malaysian film to win a top prize there, taking the Grand Prix of Critics' Week. It also took Best Picture and Best Director in the Asian Next Wave competition at QCinema, and was Malaysia's submission to the Academy Awards.

In 2024 she received the Women in Motion Emerging Talent Award at Cannes. She has sat on the 2026 juries of Clermont-Ferrand and Karlovy Vary and mentored film workshops across Southeast Asia. Her second feature, 'Lotus Feet', is in development with support from the Hubert Bals Fund and the World Cinema Fund.



Kayije Kagame

Kayije Kagame is a Swiss-Rwandan actress, filmmaker, theatre director, writer and producer, born in Geneva in 1987, whose work moves between stage, screen, sound and installation. She trained at ENSATT in Lyon and at Robert Wilson's Watermill Center in New York, and was cast by Wilson in his production of Genet's 'The Blacks' at the Odéon-Théâtre de l'Europe in Paris in 2014. She has since been an artist in residence at the Cité internationale des arts in Paris. Her stage creations include the diptychs 'Sans Grace / Avec Grace' (2019 to 2020) and 'Intérieur Vie / Intérieur Nuit' (2022 to 2023).

Her screen debut came in the lead role of Alice Diop's 'Saint Omer' (2022), the director's first fiction feature, as Rama. The film won the Silver Lion, Grand Jury Prize at Venice; Kagame was named among the Révélations of the César Awards and a European Shooting Star for Switzerland at the Berlinale in 2023. She reunited with Diop for 'Fragments for Venus' (2025) and performs solo in Diop's stage work 'Le Voyage de la Vénus Noire', inspired by the work of Robin Coste Lewis.

As a director, her short 'Night Shift' (2023), co-directed with Hugo Radi, won the Pardino d'argento Swiss Life in the national competition at Locarno and the Asino d'Oro at Italy's Concorto Film Festival, and was nominated for a Swiss Film Award. In 2026 she received the Swiss Performing Arts Award from the Federal Office of Culture. She is currently developing her first fiction feature.

Another Day Shall Come

Palestine, Lebanon, France, Qatar / Arabic / 2026
20 mins



Since October 2023, nearly two million Palestinians holding Israeli citizenship have lived inside an intensifying silence, where words are dangerous and solidarity carries consequences. Aida Kaadan resists by listening. Through an open call, she gathered anonymous voice messages from across the 1948 borders, set against her own camera walking Haifa, a city suspended between beauty and alienation, emptied of the people who live in it. The title is a hope of a day when the streets are theirs again.

Aida Kaadan (born 1994) is a Palestinian filmmaker and writer pursuing an MA in Film Archive, Preservation and Restoration at Elias Querejeta Zine Eskola (EQZE) in San Sebastián. Her work engages with questions of image, voice, memory and representation. Her first short film, 'Strawberry' (2017), marked her early engagement with intimate storytelling, and her second, 'Another Day Shall Come' (2026), explores identity, belonging and collective memory through sound and voice. She is also the founder of 7th Art Club, an independent Palestinian film club.

Director / Screenwriter: Aida Kaadan
Producer: Aida Kaadan, Carol Mezher
Cinematographer: Aida Kaadan, Mostafa Kadah
Editor: Abdallah Sada
Music: Diego Rojas, Anas Asadi

A Chronicle of the Lost

India / Hindi / 2026
25 mins



A migrant jute mill worker wanders through Calcutta and its riverbanks, haunted by fragments of a life shaped by labour and loss. As he cycles past the factory gates, he reads aloud an imagined letter to his wife back in their village, remembering her cooking and fearing he will forget how to work the machines. Built from the testimonies of real jute workers, the film becomes an elegy for a community displaced by history, capital and neglect.

Soumya Mukhopadhyay is a filmmaker, producer and new media artist based in Kolkata, working across documentary and hybrid forms on South Asian political and social subjects. He directed the interactive documentary 'A South Asian Queer Pamphlet', which premiered at IDFA DocLab in 2022, and the short 'This Summer in Waiting' (2019). A founding partner of Cherrypix Movies, he has produced several IFFR premieres and is visiting faculty at the Satyajit Ray Film and Television Institute.

Director / Screenwriter: Soumya Mukhopadhyay
Producers: Patralika Mukherjee, Soumya Mukhopadhyay
Cinematographer: Manas Bhattacharyya
Editor: Amit Ray
Music: Tajdar Junaid
Cast: Sraman Chatterjee

The Day I Smoked a Cigarette with My Father

France, Belgium, Egypt / Arabic / 2026
13 mins



Cairo, 1964. Alaa, a 12-year-old boy, and his three younger siblings hear shouting from the street. Outside, a crowd is cheering a man they can barely believe is their father, Ibrahim, home from prison on a day nobody expected. The younger children are delighted. Alaa cannot hide his distrust of the man who vanished from their lives overnight. This tender short holds the distance between a boy and a father he is not sure he wants back.

Sameh Alaa is an Egyptian director and producer based between Cairo and Brussels. His short 'I Am Afraid to Forget Your Face' became the first Egyptian film to win the Palme d'Or for Best Short Film at Cannes in 2020. He is developing his first feature, 'When I Close My Eyes, I See Yours'.

Robin Vouters is a French animation director who trained at the Atelier de Sèvres and has directed commissioned shorts and music videos.

Director: Sameh Alaa, Robin Vouters
Screenwriter: Sameh Alaa
Producer: Damien Megherbi, Justin Pechberty, Clara Marquardt, Valentin Leblanc, Delphine Duez, Mark Lofty
Editor: Jérôme Bréau
Music: Simon Fransquet
Cast: Torki Younis, Sherif Abouzeid, Alia Morsi, Farida Abouzeid

Faux Bijoux

France, Lebanon / Arabic, English, Finnish / 2026
22 mins



Mireille promises Johnny the big screen, dragging him to an audition whose rules only she truly knows. He wants an action role; she coaches him to play a polite boy who loves his mother. Waiting for them is a broker and a Finnish couple with questions about family illnesses, and a deal worth far more than a hairdresser earns in Lebanon. As the price goes up, Mireille must decide how much of herself she is prepared to sell.

Jessy Moussallem was born in 1990 and raised in Beirut and now lives in Paris. She developed her passion for storytelling at the Lebanese Academy of Fine Arts (ALBA), graduating top of her class with a short film that won first prize at the European Film Festival in Beirut. 'Faux Bijoux', her first professional short, premiered at the Sundance Film Festival in 2026. She is now developing her first feature, co-written with Jihad Hojeily.

Director: Jessy Moussallem
Screenwriters: Jihad Hojeily, Jessy Moussallem
Producers: Jean-Baptiste Savary, Jessy Moussallem, Olivier Muller
Cinematographer: Robbie Ryan
Editors: Esther Lowe, Nicolas Desmaison
Music: Amine Bouhafa
Cast: Maria Shmouri, Akram Nayef, Samer El Sayyed, Seidi Haarla, Jarkko Lahti

A Few Moments of Happiness

France, UK, Lebanon / French, Arabic / 2026
18 mins



In autumn 2024, having left Beirut for Paris, a filmmaker watches Lebanon fall under constant bombardment from the far side of her phone. Barely able to leave her bed, she records her screen for a month. Instagram posts, WhatsApp messages, voice notes and daily calls to her father, a poet. When no image seems worthy of his words, the screen goes black. What began as survival becomes a refusal to let a country scroll past and disappear.

Shaden Safieddine Tazi (b. 1999) is a Moroccan-Lebanese writer, director and editor. She graduated from Columbia University in 2022 with a degree in Film and Media Studies. Her debut short, 'Everything Will Disappear' (2023), received the Best Narrative Short Award at the Arab Media Film Institute and the Best Cinematography Award at the Tangier Film Festival. 'A Few Moments of Happiness', her second short, won the Orizzonti Award for Best Short Film at Venice. She is developing her debut feature.

Director / Screenwriter: Shaden Safieddine Tazi
Producer: Shaden Safieddine Tazi, Anna Khazaradze, Nino Chichua, Chloé Montana Rash
Editor: Rafe Scobey-Thal
With: Shaden Safieddine Tazi, Nabil Safieddine

A Few Things Happening by a River

France, Portugal / Portuguese, Hindi / 2026
14 mins



A group of teenagers floats down the river, pretending to be dead for social media. One of them drifts away unnoticed. As the body floats downstream, it passes jaded delivery workers, restless holidaymakers and distracted families, each too caught up in their own absurd microcosms to see the quiet tragedy passing by. Shot on film in textured natural light, Daniel Soares builds a kaleidoscopic drifting narrative that questions what short attention spans have stopped noticing.

Daniel Soares is a Portuguese writer and director born in Germany. His short films have premiered at major international festivals including Cannes, Telluride, Locarno, Clermont-Ferrand, and Hong Kong. His work has received several awards, including a Special Mention for the Short Film Palme d'Or at Cannes, the Grand Prix at Premiers Plans d'Angers, and Best Short Film at IndieLisboa. He is currently developing his debut feature film '900 Tons' and is a member of the European Film Academy.

Director / Screenwriter: Daniel Soares
Producer: Mouloud Ouyahia, Thaddeus Christandl, Luís Urbano, Sandro Aguilar, Daniel Soares, Romina Orsini
Cinematographer: Marta Simões
Editor: Sandro Aguilar, Daniel Soares
Music: Meara O'Reilly
Cast: Teresa Madruga, João Vicente, Clara Namora, Rui Pedro Silva, Cárin Silva

For the Opponents

Mexico, Chile, France, UK / Spanish / 2026
14 mins



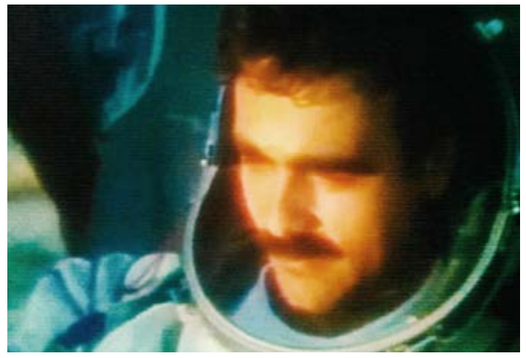
In the tough neighbourhood of Tepito, a young boy chases the great Mexican dream; to become a boxing champion. Federico Luis shot on 16mm, where a roll runs almost exactly as long as a round, and kept the adults out of frame so only their voices reach us. What remains is Damián's narrow, euphoric view of a world at once brutal and tender. This compelling short won the Short Film Palme d'Or at Cannes 2026.

Federico Luis was born in Buenos Aires in 1990. After several short films, including 'The Nap', which premiered in Cannes Competition in 2019, his debut feature 'Simón of the Mountain' won the Grand Prix at Cannes Critics' Week 2024. 'For the Opponents' won the Short Film Palme d'Or at Cannes 2026, the first Palme d'Or awarded to an Argentine director. He is currently developing his second feature, 'The Dog Trainer'.

Director / Screenwriter: Federico Luis
Producer: Fernando Bascuñán, Fernanda de la Peza, Elena Fortes, Augusto Matte
Cinematographer: Marcos Hastrup
Editor: Andrés Medina
Music: Satoshi & Makoto
Cast: Damian López, Jesús Esquivel, Ian Haziel Castillo, Jair Monroy, Isaac Rivas Cruz

Forgotten Spaceman

Afghanistan, UK / Pashto / 2026
16 mins



In 1988, with Afghanistan on the brink of collapse, its first and only astronaut, Abdul Ahad Momand, reached the Mir space station. He brewed tea for his crew and called his mother, making Pashto the fourth language spoken beyond Earth. The film traces a personal and collective line that reminds us of a nation's dreams, interrupted by conflict and subject to the selective invisibilisation of colonial influence.

Elham Ehsas is a London-based filmmaker, playwright and theatre director. His short film 'Yellow' was BAFTA-nominated and Oscar-shortlisted in 2024, while his debut 'Our Kind of Love' is being developed into a feature with the BFI. His short film, 'There Will Come Soft Rains' (2025), was awarded Best Film at Raindance and Encounters Film Festivals. His latest short 'Forgotten Spaceman' (2026) won the Junior Jury Award for Best International Short Film at Locarno Film Festival 2026.

Director / Screenwriter / Editor: Elham Ehsas
Producer: Lorraine Bhattachary, Elham Ehsas
Music: CJ Mirra

Ghazal-e Sorkh

Iran, United Kingdom, France / Farsi / 2026
21 mins



In 1976, there was a call to boycott the Shiraz Arts Festival. Some well-known international artists joined at once; others, reluctantly. “The giants aren’t coming this year,” wrote the Iranian newspaper Kayhan. Moving between fragments of films commissioned by the Shah and the films and books banned in the same years, Maryam Tafakory’s essay film gathers stories that first began with “crime-producing” poems, each one returning to a fire that never stopped burning.

Born and raised in Iran, **Maryam Tafakory** works with film and performance. Her work has had solo screenings at MoMA, BOZAR, the National Gallery of Art and the Academy Museum, and has screened at Tate Modern, Cannes’ Directors’ Fortnight, the New York Film Festival, Locarno and Toronto. Her awards include the Gold Hugo at Chicago, the Tiger Short Award at IFFR and Best Experimental Film at Melbourne, twice. She won the Film London Jarman Award in 2024.

Director / Producer / Editor: Maryam Tafakory
Sound: Stefan Smith
Production: Parishan Films

Imagine Me Like a Country of Love

Netherlands, Yemen, Qatar / Arabic, English / 2026
21 mins



A fragmented, poetic short film about belonging and the return to a place reshaped by conflict. Shot between Yemen and the Netherlands, the film contemplates what happens when we disturb the memories we left behind. Using archival photographs, everyday footage and intimate voice recordings, it becomes a quiet meditation on grief, absence and the contradictions of remembering. Through a deeply personal lens, Thana Faroq’s debut reflects on the dislocation of identity caused by geographical and emotional separation, and on the complexities of returning home.

Thana Faroq is a Yemeni-Dutch artist working across moving image, photography and text, based in the Netherlands. Her practice explores memory, displacement and the lives of women in the aftermath of conflict, often through intimate family histories and personal archives. Working between documentary and associative forms, she brings together found imagery, moving image, text and sound to examine how private memory intersects with larger histories of violence, migration and belonging.

Director / Screenwriter: Thana Faroq
Producer: Thana Faroq, Ruba Alsharki
Cinematographer: Thana Faroq, Arianna Cavalensi
Editor: Alexander Cabeza Trigg, Ruba Alsharki
Music: Reeda Fnieche

In Another Palestine

Peru, Germany / Arabic, Spanish / 2026
10 mins



164 kilometres from Tarapoto, in the Peruvian Amazon, there is another Palestine. Children swim in its Jordan River on their way to the next village, Jerusalem. It is summer, the plants are bearing fruit, and it is New Year. The story goes that in the 1970s a Palestinian man bought land here and left to fetch his family; by the time he returned, others had settled it. His name is forgotten. The name he gave the place is not.

Yaela Gottlieb is a Peruvian filmmaker, curator and educator. She graduated from the Universidad del Cine in Buenos Aires and later moved to Germany for a master’s in fine arts at HFBK Hamburg on a DAAD scholarship. Her work explores photography, film and video through montage driven by affect, in tension with fiction. Her films have shown at FID Marseille, Punto de Vista, Berlin Critics’ Week and BAFICI. In 2021, she released her first feature, ‘No Hay Regreso a Casa’.

Director / Screenwriter / Cinematographer: Yaela Gottlieb
Editor: Facundo Sanchez

Journey to Heaven

Indonesia / Indonesian, Javanese / 2026
20 mins



Trapped by distance and the unaffordable cost of performing the Hajj, Sulastri, 68, and a group of villagers take part in a ‘local hajj’ ritual in a cave led by a spiritual guide. She does not realise that the journey is not towards Mecca but towards an illusion, and her own hopes. ‘Journey to Heaven’ is a portrait of faith in the midst of poverty, about how ordinary people try to draw closer to God when the world feels too distant from them.

Kenny Gulardi is an Indonesian film director and screenwriter based in Jakarta, and the founder of Pesawat Kertas Studio. A directing graduate of the Faculty of Film and Television at Institut Kesenian Jakarta, he calls himself a storyteller first. In 2023, he made his feature debut as writer and director of ‘Perjamuan Iblis’, followed by ‘Lampir’ (2024). He co-wrote ‘Godaan Setan yang Terkutuk’ (2025) and has two further features due in 2026.

Director / Screenwriter: Kenny Gulardi
Producer: Jap Herlina, Destiara Rahmadanti
Cinematographer: Ilham Fakhri
Editor: Kenny Gulardi, Tiyas Bagus, Desvan Verdiansya
Cast: Aty Cancer, Brilliana Arfira, Teguh Mahesa, Dyah Mulan, Nunung Rieta, Tri Sudarsono

Khufu

Egypt, France, Sweden, Canada / Arabic, English / 2026
17 mins



Behind the postcard Pyramids, 14-year-old Sayed works the dusty alleys of Nazlet El-Semman with Khufu, the camel who keeps his family fed. When Khufu collapses on the Giza Plateau, Sayed is torn between selling him to a slaughterhouse and leaving him by the notorious Wall of Carcasses. At dawn his mother, Ikram, gathers the women of the neighbourhood for something else entirely. Mahmoud Assi gives a pharaoh's name to a camel nobody else will mourn.

Mahmoud Assi is an Egyptian filmmaker and visual artist whose work blends cinematic storytelling with humanitarian perspectives. A graduate of the Higher Institute of Cinema in Egypt, he is an alumnus of the Film Independent Lab. 'Khufu' received the Film i Skåne Development Award at the Malmö Arab Film Festival and the 2024 Filmmaking Award from the World Food Programme and won the Pardino d'Argento at Locarno. He is developing his debut feature, 'Turquoise'.

Director / Screenwriter: Mahmoud Assi
Producer: Abdallah Dnewar, Mark Lotfy
Cinematographer: Karim Marold
Editor: Samir T. Radwan
Music: Ahmed Mustafa
Cast: Mohamed Elbadry, Hanady Abd Alkhalek, Ibrahim Ahmed, Halyna Petrova, Victoria Dolgushina

Light to Ashes

Qatar, France / Arabic / 2026
12 mins



After losing his family in a sandstorm, a warrior-poet must reckon with ghosts of his past to find them. Labid, a young Bedouin, roams the desert with his sister Arbad. When the vast landscape inspires poetry in him, he shares his verses with her by the fire. But the world around them begins to shift when a wounded tribesman returns to camp one afternoon. Across this changing desert, a strange figure appears, whose riddles echo truths Labid cannot yet name.

Nadia Al-Khater is a Qatari-Iranian filmmaker who has written and directed a range of projects, from short films to commercial work. Her previous short film, 'A Proposal', premiered at the Malmö Arab Film Festival, received the Best Director award at Ajyal Film Festival, and was named "Best of" at the Marrakech International Film Festival. It also screened in competition at the Amman International Film Festival and the Arkansas International Film Festival.

Director / Screenwriter: Nadia Al-Khater
Producer: Doha Film Institute
Cinematographer: Aymerick Pilarski
Editor: Abdul Jabbar Maki
Music: Falah Hannoun, Séverin Favriau

Nothing Happens After Your Absence

Sudan / Tigre / 2026
15 mins



Ibrahim goes back to the village he once left, hoping to screen films. Over a crackling phone line, he asks a friend to send four films by Elia Suleiman, Abbas Kiarostami, Ousmane Sembène and Abderrahmane Sissako. To win the villagers over, he organises a football tournament, each team named after a director. But as he wrestles with custom and bureaucracy, war ignites across Sudan, turning his search for a screen into a battle to stay alive.

Ibrahim Omar is a Sudanese director who studied at the Higher Institute of Cinema in Cairo and holds a cinema diploma from the French University in Egypt. He founded the short film magazine SHORT and Port Sudan Film Days, an annual short film event, and has spent a decade directing and producing for television, including several documentaries. He also edited the cinema page of the Sudanese newspaper Al-Tayyar, the first of its kind in the Sudanese press.

Director: Ibrahim Omar
Cinematographer: Ala Kheir
Editors: Ziad Faid, Youhanna Nagy
Sound Design: Ala Kheir, Ibrahim Omar, Youssef Assaf
With: Ibrahim Omar, Ali Hommed, Hommed Mohammed Ali, Qassem Al-Araby, Mohammed Yaqoub

Obscura

Indonesia, Netherlands / Indonesian / 2026
15 mins



A group of gallery workers steal a Mooi Indië landscape painting, part of a colonial tradition that rendered the Indies as serene, tropical and picturesque. Drawn by its strange pull, they drive towards the sea. Keroncong drifts through the air like a spell, archival figures surface as living presences, and what began as a theft becomes a passage through trance and inherited memory. The painting no longer seems like something they have taken. It begins to take hold of them.

Timoteus Anggawan Kusno, also known as TA Kusno, is an Indonesian artist-filmmaker working across cinema, installation and moving-image environments, tracing colonial afterlives and the futures they continue to haunt. His work has shown at Berlinale, Locarno, IFFR, CPH:DOX, Tate Modern, Eye Filmmuseum and the Sharjah Art Foundation, and IFFR dedicated a focus programme to him in 2025. He won the Locarno Residency Grand Prix, and is developing his debut feature, 'Orphaned Atlas'. He lives between Amsterdam and Yogyakarta.

Director / Screenwriter / Producer:
Timoteus Anggawan Kusno
Cinematographer: Aditya Kresna
Editor: Krisna E. Putranto
Music: Soladi, Erie Setiawan

Somewhere I Belong

Tunisia / Arabic / 2025
22 mins



After a long absence, a man comes back to his hometown, quietly believing that returning might restore what was once familiar. He walks the old streets, meets faces from his past and slips back into old routines, but conversations trail off, silences linger and the town carries on without him. Through silence, gestures and fleeting encounters, Youssef Handouse's graduation film observes a quiet reckoning with change and memory, and asks where we belong if we can never truly return.

Youssef Handouse is a Tunisian filmmaker, editor, musician and composer, born in 2002. After earning a bachelor's degree in literature and arts in 2021, he studied cinema at the Higher Institute of Multimedia Arts of Manouba (ISAMM), graduating in 2025. His work explores identity and displacement through minimal narrative and strong visual atmosphere. 'Somewhere I Belong', his first short as writer-director, was selected for La Cinef at the Cannes Film Festival in 2026.

Director / Screenwriter: Youssef Handouse
Cinematographers: Yassine Ayed, Slim Abroug
Editor: Adem Fadhloun
Music: Youssef Handouse, Adam Zouaoui
Sound: Adam Zouaoui
Cast: Nizar Ben Belgacem, Elyes Ghazouani, Abdelatif Bouaaleg, Mounir Mabrouk

A Sweet Day

Iran / Farsi / 2026
18 mins



Granted a rare visit with her imprisoned husband, a young woman arrives determined to make something tender of the time she is given. Around her, the prison is indifferent, its rooms harsh and its routines unmoved. Omid Abdollahi drew on childhood visits to his own father and turns his attention to the people punishment leaves behind, the wives and mothers and children who carry wounds no record measures. Sweetness here is something made, not found.

Omid Abdollahi is an Iranian director, screenwriter and editor whose short fiction and documentary films have screened at numerous international festivals. His short film 'Glimmer' received a Special Mention from the Jury at the 35th Clermont-Ferrand International Short Film Festival. In 2015, he received the Grand Prize for Best Filmmaker at the Sapporo International Short Film Festival for his trilogy 'Bandage', 'Glimmer' and 'Hostess'. He is currently developing his first feature-length fiction film.

Director / Editor: Omid Abdollahi
Screenwriter: Omid Abdollahi, Solmaz Haddadian
Producer: Hossein Mansourzadeh, Omid Abdollahi
Cinematographer: Ali Ehsani
Music: Kaveh Kateb
Cast: Behdokht Valian, Reza Akhlaghirad (voice), Ebrahim Azizi (voice)

To the North

Palestine / Arabic / 2026
7 mins



During a brief ceasefire in 2025, Firas returns alone to northern Gaza through streets whose landmarks have been erased, searching for the ruins of his sister's home, where she and her family remain buried. Without machinery, the concrete cannot be lifted. So, he writes their names on the rubble, not as a memorial but as a marker for the day the ruins can be opened. Amer Nasser shot it in Gaza, in black and white, with a small local crew.

Amer Nasser, born in Gaza in 1991, is a Palestinian filmmaker, director and producer. A longstanding collaborator of Tarzan and Arab Nasser, he has co-writing and production credits on 'Gaza Mon Amour' (Venice and TIFF, 2020) and 'Once Upon a Time in Gaza' (Un Certain Regard, Cannes, 2025). He worked for several years at UNRWA TV in Gaza. A laureate of the PAUSE Programme in France in 2025, he now teaches filmmaking at École Kourtrajmé Marseille.

Director / Screenwriter / Producer: Amer Nasser
Cinematographer: Amjad Alfayomi
Editor: Abod Nasser
Music: Jabr Alhaj

We Are Entitled to Love Autumn

Sweden, Palestine, Tunisia / Arabic, Swedish / 2026
25 mins



After the 2023 war on Gaza, Mhamed, a Palestinian asylum seeker in Sweden, is trying to rebuild his life far from home. To improve his Swedish, he starts talking to an AI chatbot, but what begins as language practice slowly becomes a place where he shares his grief, his memories and his loneliness. Through these late-night conversations, Amani Jaafer's film offers an intimate portrait of exile, loss and the need to be heard.

Amani Jaafer is a Tunisian filmmaker based in Stockholm, with a PhD from KTH Royal Institute of Technology, where she pursued an academic career in engineering and data science. Her directorial debut, 'Je te ferai un film' (2022), was selected by more than 30 festivals worldwide, followed by 'A Lullaby Unlike Any Other', made in response to the early days of the 2023 Gaza war. Her project 'A Curious Boy' was selected for the Doha Film Institute's Short Script Lab.

Director / Screenwriter: Amani Jaafer
Producers: Amani Jaafer, Karim Jouini
Cinematographer: Harshad Gaikwad
Editor: Louis De Schrijver
Music: Noor Cherif
Sound: Simon Smårs, Yazid Chebbi
Cast: Saleh Bakri, Shadi Diab, Kaïs Qadri

Whispers of a Burning Scent

Somalia, Austria, Germany / Somali / 2026
28 mins



On the day of a decisive court hearing and an important wedding performance, a quiet wedding musician finds his private life exposed to public scrutiny. Accused of exploiting his marriage, he moves between courtroom, city streets and stage, carrying the weight of judgement, loyalty and unspoken guilt. As he is forced towards a restrained but irreversible decision, the film observes a man whose inner truth remains elusive, caught between devotion, dignity and loss.

Mo Harawe is a Somali-Austrian filmmaker and screenwriter. His award-winning short films include 'Life on the Horn' (2020) and 'Will My Parents Come to See Me' (2022). In 2024, his debut feature 'The Village Next to Paradise' premiered in the Un Certain Regard section at the Cannes Film Festival. 'Whispers of a Burning Scent' was made with a production grant from the Displacement Film Fund and premiered at the International Film Festival Rotterdam in 2026.

Director / Screenwriter / Producer: Mo Harawe
Cinematographer: Mostafa El Kashef
Editor: Alexander von Piechwoski
Cast: Omar Abdi, Anab Ahmed Ibrahim, Nuh Musse Berjeeb, Nuura Mohamoud Abdi

The Wind Between Us

Netherlands / Dutch, Farsi / 2026
18 mins



Arman, who spent years in prison in Iran, travels to the Netherlands to finally meet his six-year-old son. While his wife heads off to work, father and child are left together in a park, facing each other like strangers without a shared language. Slowly, the silence between them gives way to gestures, play and tentative steps towards a fragile bond. Ali Asgari, who also plays the father, lets glances and long takes carry what words cannot.

Ali Asgari is a prominent Iranian writer, director and producer known for films exploring marginal lives in Iran. His shorts 'More Than Two Hours' (2013) and 'The Silence' (2016) competed for the Short Film Palme d'Or at Cannes. His debut feature 'Disappearance' premiered in Orizzonti at Venice in 2017, 'Until Tomorrow' in Berlinale Panorama in 2022, and 'Terrestrial Verses' in Un Certain Regard at Cannes in 2023. 'Divine Comedy' premiered at Venice in 2025.

Director: Ali Asgari
Screenwriter: Ali Asgari, Rahab Ahmed
Producer: Maryam Tarami
Cinematographer: Yavuz Selim Isler
Editor: Pepijn Ahsmann
Music: Áron Gunst
Cast: Ian Arvelo, Ali Asgari, Maryam Tarami

Made in Qatar Competition

The Made in Qatar Competition spotlights the creativity and ambition of Qatar's filmmaking community through films that explore personal experience, family bonds, cultural memory and the imaginative possibilities of cinema. Drawing on a range of genres and approaches, the selection demonstrates the growing diversity of voices shaping the country's screen industry, and the festival's commitment to giving homegrown talent a platform to reach audiences at home and abroad.

Made in Qatar Competition Awards

The Made in Qatar awards are adjudicated by three respected film professionals: Yumna Marwan, Al Johara Al Thani and Naël Khleifi. Together they bring a balanced perspective across acting, directing and production to recognise outstanding achievement in the Best Film and Best Director categories, alongside the Abdulaziz Jassim Award for Best Performance.



Yumna Marwan
Head of the Jury

Yumna Marwan is a Lebanese actress and filmmaker, born in Beirut, where she is based. After a degree in anthropology at Smith College in the United States and a spell as a journalist, she made her screen debut in Ghassan Salhab's 'The Valley' (2013), and was named one of Screen International's Arab Stars of Tomorrow in 2016.

Her films include Mounia Akl's short 'Submarine' (2016), which won a Special Jury Prize at the Dubai International Film Festival, Wissam Charaf's 'Heaven Sent' (2016), Rana Kazkaz and Anas Khalaf's 'The Translator' (2020), Salhab's 'The River' (2021), which competed at Locarno, and Akl's 'Costa Brava, Lebanon' (2021), supported by Doha Film Institute, which premiered at Venice, won the NETPAC Award at Toronto and was Lebanon's submission to the Academy Awards. She appeared in Amjad Al Rasheed's 'Inshallah a Boy' (Critics' Week, Cannes 2023), Brandt Andersen's 'The Strangers' Case' (Berlinale 2024) and Annemarie Jacir's 'Palestine 36' (2025), winner of the Tokyo Grand Prix and Palestine's submission to the Academy Awards. On television she has starred in 'Little Birds' for Sky, 'The Veil' for FX opposite Elisabeth Moss, and the Arab science-fiction series 'Hell's Gate'.

As a writer and director she made the short 'Madina, IA' (2018) and 'Prisoner of Love', the story of a young Palestinian civil defence volunteer over one night in a Beirut refugee camp, developed at the Atlas Ateliers of the Marrakech International Film Festival with a grant from AFAC.



Al Johara Al Thani

Al Johara (A.J.) Al Thani is a Qatari filmmaker and multimedia artist whose career began with Doha Film Institute's earliest workshops in 2010. A graduate of Northwestern University, with a concentration in film, she made her debut narrative short, 'Kashta' (2016), with the support of a DFI grant and The Film House in Doha. The story of a father who takes his two sons into the desert, it won Best Narrative Short Film in the Made in Qatar Awards at the fourth Ajyal Film Festival and has since screened widely in Qatar, including under the stars at the Museum of Islamic Art Park.

Her second short, 'The Black Veil' (2020), also supported by DFI, follows Reem, a young woman in occupied Mosul who hires a driver to pose as her husband so that she can escape the city. It had its world premiere at the Tribeca Film Festival in 2020 and went on to the Malmö Arab Film Festival and NewFilmmakers Los Angeles, and has been shown in Ajyal's Made in Qatar programmes.

She is now completing her first feature, 'Sari & Amira', a desert adventure about a pair of Bedouin outlaws and a mythical relic, produced by Katara Studios with a cast including Alexander Uloom, Hala Al Turk, Ger Duany and Abdulmohsen Al Nemr. The project was presented in production at Qumra 2025, and a second feature, a long-gestating passion project, is in development.



Naël Khleifi

Naël Khleifi is a Palestinian Belgian filmmaker, cinematographer and producer, born in Brussels in 1978 to a Palestinian father and a Belgian mother. He graduated from the image section of INSAS, Brussels, and began his career as a documentary director of photography, including on Jérôme Laffont's 'Algérie, images d'un combat' (2009). His first short fiction, 'In the Land of Giants', was made in 2004.

His documentaries are drawn to people on the move and those who help them. 'Waiting...' ('En attente...', 2011) was filmed among the Afghan community in the Calais camp known as the Jungle, and 'Alps' ('Alpes', 2021), which he also photographed, follows the volunteers who guide migrants across the French-Italian Alpine border at night. 'Alps' was presented at Cannes Docs, the Namur International Francophone Film Festival and Festival dei Popoli, and was pre-selected for the Magritte for Best Documentary in 2023.

'Summer Meadow' ('L'estive', 2026), his first fiction feature, co-directed and co-written with Lisa Debauche, follows Hana, a young Lebanese apprentice shepherd in the French Alps, played by Manal Issa. It had its world premiere in the Filmmakers of the Present competition at the 79th Locarno Film Festival, where Issa won the Pardo for Best Performance. Produced by Michigan Films and Sourat Films in Belgium with Les Films de l'Oeil Sauvage in France, the film continues his long-standing interest in borders and the people who cross them.

Abu Fanoos

Qatar / Arabic / 2026
18 mins



The day before his grandson Khaled leaves for university abroad, Jeddi takes him on one last trip into the Qatari desert. As night falls and the two sit by the campfire, a strange light appears in the darkness and begins to draw Khaled away. It is Abu Fanoos, the man with the lantern of Gulf folklore, a jinn whose glow leads travellers astray. His own health failing, Jeddi sets out into the dark to bring his grandson home.

Amira Abujbara is a Qatari Palestinian and Dena'ina Athabascan filmmaker who uses storytelling to explore her cultures and raise questions about morality and power. She is developing a feature horror set in her Native village in Alaska.

Horia El Hadad is a Qatar-based filmmaker with a 15-year career in television documentary. She works at Al Jazeera English as a filmmaker and commissioning producer for its flagship strand, Witness. 'Abu Fanoos' is the first short narrative film for both directors.

Directors / Screenwriters: Amira Abujbara, Horia El Hadad
Producer: Poppy Clinton
Cinematographer: Chapin Hall

After the Rain

Qatar / Arabic / 2026
12 mins



Maria is eight and lonely, reading in the park since her best friend moved away. On a rainy day, she finds a lost creature and hides it in her room. It is a unicorn, fallen from the clouds. When a rainbow appears, the two set out across town, pursued by the dogcatcher, towards a bridge of light thrown up by a fountain. Kholood Al Ali's cutout animation understands that company, like a rainbow, tends to arrive after the rain.

Kholood Al Ali is an award-winning Qatari animation writer and director based in Doha. She studied art education at Qatar University and later worked with Al Jazeera Children's Channel, where she wrote and directed the children's series 'My Little World'. She has directed two short films with DFI and QFF, 'Red' (2017) and 'Fragile' (2019). She co-founded the animation studio Blue Penguin Animation with Aisha AlJaidah, with whom she is developing the 2D animated feature 'The Peacock Queen'.

Director / Screenwriter: Kholood Al Ali
Producer: Ben Robinson
Editor: Abduljabbar Maki
Music: Mohammed Al Khulaifi, Joris Laenen

Constant

Kuwait, Qatar / Arabic, English, Portuguese / 2026
13 mins



As her husband returns from a business trip, a woman makes her way home through the city at night. Reflecting on seven years of shared harmony, she recalls the closeness they built while sensing quiet shifts reshaping her from within. Aware of the microscopic changes in her own body, she recognises a growing dissonance in a once flawless bond, as the two of them slowly fall out of step for no reason either can name.

Maysaa Almumin is a Kuwaiti filmmaker and academic based in Qatar. Trained as an architect in the UK, she brings a strong visual language to intimate, self-reflective stories centred on middle-aged Arab women navigating the edges of societal expectation. Her shorts have screened at festivals including Tampere, Cairo and Malmö Arab Film Festival, and 'Bint Werdan' streams on Netflix in the Middle East. Named an Arab Star of Tomorrow by Screen International in 2021, she is developing her first feature.

Director / Screenwriter: Maysaa Almumin
Producer: Nic Van der Bijl
Cinematographer: Mostafa Sheshtawy
Editor: James Griffiths
Music: Sonic Jeel

Crawling Into Myself

Qatar / Arabic / 2026
14 mins



Bader, a young man grappling with a rare illness that erases his facial features, retreats from the world when treatments fail. To help him hold on to a normal life, his mother crafts hyper-realistic masks, but he feels ever more alienated and barricades himself in his room. As the outside world fades, his surroundings begin their own eerie transformation, and a beetle becomes the sole witness to his journey inwards, and to the unsettling peace he finds there.

Hamad Al Fayhani is a Qatari filmmaker and photographer who studied Media Industries and Technologies at Northwestern University. His work explores isolation, illness, the body and nature, and life on the line between modernisation and tradition. He has exhibited across the GCC, including at the Misk Art Institute in Saudi Arabia and Abu Dhabi Art, and has directed five audiovisual installations in the permanent collection of the National Museum of Qatar. 'Crawling Into Myself' is his first short film.

Director / Screenwriter: Hamad Al Fayhani
Producer: Doha Film Institute
Cinematographers: Ebert Steyn, Yanis Cherif
Editor: Abduljabbar Maki
Sound Designer: Séverin Favriau
Cast: Omar Abdulla, Asma Shaban, Carla Madani

Ghafleh

Qatar, Lebanon / Arabic / 2026
12 mins



Set within the surreal mechanics of time, ‘Ghafleh’ tells the story of a skilled watchmaker who realises he has been absent from his daughter’s life. Determined to make up for the time lost between them, he sets out to craft the perfect watch for her. Yet as the demands of his work pull him further away, the ticking clock threatens not only the gift he strives to create, but the precious bond he is at risk of losing. The film explores the emotional conflict between a father’s desire to give and the fleeting moments he may never get back.

Tony El Ghazal is a Lebanese writer and director based in Qatar. His narrative fiction films and documentaries have screened at festivals around the world, exploring memory, family and identity from an Arab point of view with universal appeal. A graduate of Northwestern University, where he received two grants to produce his shorts ‘Bayt El Omor’ and ‘Ibn El Ballad’, he now conceives and directs films for some of Qatar’s biggest companies at Saatchi & Saatchi.

Director: Tony El Ghazal
Screenwriters: Tony El Ghazal, Lujain Assaf
Producer: Afnan Tag

In the Silence After

Qatar, USA, Colombia / English, Spanish / 2026
17 mins



A son returns home to care for his mother, filming on Super 8 the last year they will spend together. Sebastian Delascasas began shooting during her treatment without knowing what the film would become, and the grain of the format holds what words could not. Moving between English and Spanish, this is an essay film built from small gestures, routines and shared silence, holding its questions open rather than explaining loss, and staying close to something as it disappears.

Sebastian Delascasas is a Colombian filmmaker born in Bogotá and raised in Doha. A graduate of NYU Tisch, his debut short ‘Promise’ premiered at the Indy Shorts International Film Festival, where it was nominated for Best Directorial Debut, and later became a Vimeo Staff Pick. ‘In the Silence After’, developed in Doha Film Institute’s Filmmaking Lab with Rithy Panh, was selected for the 79th edition of the Locarno Film Festival 2026.

Director / Screenwriter / Cinematographer:
Sebastian Delascasas
Producer: Sebastian Delascasas, Reuben Hamlyn
Editor: Reuben Hamlyn, Sebastian Delascasas
Music: Ilyaa Ghafouri

Kantqtaa

Qatar / Arabic / 2026
9 mins



A mother hides a worsening case of endometriosis behind the daily rituals of her home; laundry, ironing, cooking. She pushes her teenage son to focus on his upcoming exam and scolds him over stained clothes, unaware that her own body is bleeding through her routine. Drawn from his own mother’s experience, Yazid Taki’s intimate family drama looks at a silent illness from inside the home, where pain can be present every day and still go unnoticed.

Yazid Taki is a Moroccan filmmaker and multidisciplinary creative based in Doha. He studied at Lycée Lyautey and graduated from Northwestern University in Qatar in communication and media industries, with a minor in film and design, and has since written and directed several short films. An alumnus of the French Institute’s CultureLab programme, he performs with the Doha theatre troupe Scène des Sables, and founded Grain, a creative studio working across cinematic storytelling, digital media and interactive experiences.

Director / Screenwriter: Yazid Taki
Producers: Aya Al Blouchi, Sahar Bou Hamdan
Cinematographer: Ahmad Barakat
Editor: Khaled Alatawneh
Sound: Falah Hannoun
Cast: Noufla El Mesbahi, Adam Boumasri

Light to Ashes

Qatar, France / Arabic / 2026
12 mins



After losing his family in a sandstorm, a warrior-poet must reckon with ghosts of his past to find them. Labid, a young Bedouin, roams the desert with his sister Arbad. When the vast landscape inspires poetry in him, he shares his verses with her by the fire. But the world around them begins to shift when a wounded tribesman returns to camp one afternoon. Across this changing desert, a strange figure appears, whose riddles echo truths Labid cannot yet name.

Nadia Al-Khater is a Qatari-Iranian filmmaker who has written and directed a range of projects, from short films to commercial work. Her previous short film, ‘A Proposal’, premiered at the Malmö Arab Film Festival, received the Best Director award at Ajyal Film Festival, and was named “Best of” at the Marrakech International Film Festival. It also screened in competition at the Amman International Film Festival and the Arkansas International Film Festival.

Director / Screenwriter: Nadia Al-Khater
Producer: Doha Film Institute
Cinematographer: Aymerick Pilarski
Editor: Abdul Jabbar Maki
Music: Falah Hannoun, Séverin Favriau

Made in Qatar Special Screenings



Jodari Meno

Qatar / Arabic, English / 2026
70 mins

Raised in Qatar in a family deeply connected to the sea, Jamal has always understood the water as part of memory, inheritance and belonging. A physician and former cardiac surgeon, he once weighed over 160 kg, and spearfishing became his way back into his body: a discipline that restored his purpose, strength and control. Now he has set his sights on a world record, landing a dogtooth tuna, one of the most elusive and demanding fish in the sport. His pursuit takes him from Qatar to Zanzibar and Italy, but the same drive that transformed him begins to consume him, pulling him between the hunt and his responsibilities as a father, as memories of his late parents rise to the surface.

Then, after repeated failures, Jamal suffers a blackout underwater, a spearfisher's worst nightmare, forcing him to confront the true cost of a life built around challenge. When he returns to the sea, the record still matters, but the question has changed: what is the chase meant to prove, and what is worth coming back for? Filmed over several years, Jamal Alkhanji's immersive and introspective debut moves between the open blue of the sea and the intimacy of home, becoming a reflection on legacy, family and what remains when the need to prove oneself begins to change.



Dr Jamal Rashid Alkhanji is a Qatari filmmaker, physician, entrepreneur and underwater image-maker. Over many years of spearfishing, photography and videography, he has developed a distinctive visual language rooted in breath, depth, movement and immersion, and built an international following within the spearfishing community. He is the founder of the world's first accredited spearfishing academy, with courses taught across five continents. A graduate of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, he also holds an MBA and a Juris Doctor from Hamad Bin Khalifa University. 'Jodari Meno' is his first feature documentary as a director.

Director: Jamal Alkhanji
Producer: Cindy Le Templier
Cinematographers: David Ochoa, Ricardo Ascimeneto, Jamal Alkhanji, Christopher Moon, Vedran Strelar, Hassan Kilani
Editor: Zeina Aboul Hosn
Sound Designer: Rana Eid
Music: Mhamad Safa
With: Jamal Alkhanji



First to Fly

Qatar, United Kingdom / Arabic, English / 2026
120 mins

Rhythmic gymnastics is a sport of ribbons, hoops and impossible grace, and of years of unseen work. In Qatar, no athlete had ever reached its highest stage. ‘First to Fly’ follows two young gymnasts as they set out to change that, training to become the first in the country’s history to compete at the Rhythmic Gymnastics World Championships, and the first from their own countries to do so. From the training halls of Doha to the competition floor, the film stays close to them through the discipline the sport demands, the pressure of representing a nation that has never been represented before, and the quiet doubts that come with carrying so much hope.

Filmed across Qatar, Bulgaria and Madagascar, Rodrigo Vazquez Salessi’s documentary is as much about what happens off the mat as on it: the coaches, families and federations behind a first, and the opportunities that sport can open for young women in the region. Vazquez Salessi, whose work has taken him from the conflicts of the Middle East to the mines of South America, brings the same patient attention to a story of ambition and belonging. The result is a portrait of two athletes discovering what it means to be first, and of a country watching them take flight.



Rodrigo Vazquez Salessi is an award-winning Argentine-born filmmaker and the founder of Bethnal Films, a London-based production company. Over more than two decades, he has produced, directed and filmed documentaries for Al Jazeera, the BBC, Channel 4 and other international broadcasters. He spent more than ten years documenting Gaza and the experiences of Palestinians, developing a deep understanding of the region and its people. His work has earned international recognition, including the Rory Peck Award for Features, and has been presented at leading festivals, including Cannes, where his feature ‘Condor: Axis of Evil’ premiered in 2003.

Director: Rodrigo Vazquez Salessi



A Very Ordinary Life

Qatar, Morocco / Arabic / 2026
136 mins

Every night, Abdelnasser, a retired Qatari pilot in his fifties, dreams that he is drowning while a woman from a distant past tries to hand him a letter that never arrives. Far away in Casablanca, Hayat, a young art teacher, is haunted by a vision of herself embracing a tree in a place she has never seen. Neither knows the other exists. But when Hayat discovers letters among her late mother’s belongings that point to a father she never knew, and Abdelnasser can no longer ignore the messages of his memory, both are set on a path toward a truth neither can name, and toward a buried secret that only art can bring to light.

Moving between Morocco and Qatar, and between the present day and the early 1990s, Muhammed Deniz’s film traces a love story cut short by wars, borders and bad timing, and asks what the past still demands of us. Here the past is not a memory summoned out of nostalgia, but a living trace that lingers in the body, in silence and in the places we thought we had left behind. Woven from glances and silences, missed moments and deferred encounters, it is a mystery and a romance about the quiet ways fate draws two lives back together.



Muhammed Deniz is a Turkish director, producer and screenwriter of Egyptian origin, working across film and advertising. He has directed dozens of commercials for brands across the Middle East, documentaries for Al Jazeera, Alhurra and TRT, and more than 25 short films produced by Georgetown University. He is a founding member of the Expatriate Artists Association in Istanbul. His work is marked by an atmospheric, non-linear style in which memory and reality intersect. His latest feature, ‘A Very Ordinary Life’ (2026), explores how the past persists in the present, and the silences, memories and unfinished spaces that time leaves behind.

Director: Muhammed Deniz
Screenwriters: Bouchra Malek, Abdulrahim Al-Siddiqi, Muhammed Deniz
Producers: Abdulrahim Al-Siddiqi, Bouchra Malek
Cinematographer: Sherif Shimi
Editor: Amir Ahmed
Art Director: Amina Al-Raisi
Music: Greg Johnson
Cast: Khaled Amin, Farah El Fassi, Fatima Zahra Baldi, Merieme Bakouch, Hosni Shata



When the News Breaks You

Qatar, Palestine, Greece, Lebanon, Turkey / Arabic, English / 2026
106 mins

The conflicts of the Middle East have grown ever more complex, drawing in participants active and passive, domestic and foreign, and the journalists who cover them have become targets. Unlike many of their colleagues elsewhere, who are flown in by their newsrooms when the news breaks, Arab journalists live their stories. They report from their own cities and their own communities, and the threats they face come not only from governments, but sometimes from neighbours, former friends and even family. Hamad Al Hajri's documentary examines the realities faced by these reporters working across the region, and the personal cost of bringing its stories to audiences around the world.

Built on the testimonies of more than 30 journalists, mainly Arab, alongside colleagues in the West, the film shows how much closer to the battle they came than they ever intended. It also confronts a silence within the profession: because the stories are so close to home, many Arab journalists never recognise the trauma they carry as a legitimate response to what they witness, day after day, as part of their work and their lives. Moving between Arabic and English, this is a film about the people behind the headlines, and about what it means to keep reporting when the news breaks you.



Hamad Al-Hajri is a Qatari filmmaker based in Doha. 'When the News Breaks You', his first feature documentary, has been developed with the Doha Film Institute over several years: it was presented at Qumra 2022 as a project in development, received DFI production and post-production grants, took part in mentorship sessions at Qumra 2025 and returned to Qumra 2026 at picture lock, before its world premiere at Doha Film Festival. The film was completed with post-production support from Katara Studios and archive and stringer footage from Al Jazeera.

Director: Hamad Al-Hajri



Elzam

Qatar / Arabic / 2026
57 mins
Special Episode

Falconry has long been a source of pride in Qatar, the Gulf and the wider Arab world, a tradition handed down through generations and lived most fully far from the city, out in the wild. 'Elzam', an eight-part documentary series, follows a group of falconers on their hunting expeditions and through their everyday lives, and this special episode takes audiences alongside them. Filmed to stay true to the falconers' own experience, it captures details and moments rarely seen at such close quarters: the hunt itself, life in the wild, and the conversations that unfold around the fire at the end of the day.

The series began with a simple conviction. That the strength of this tradition lies in its human details and in the people who live it every day, not in information told from the outside. So, there is no voiceover. The falconers are both the subjects and the storytellers, and viewers learn as they would in the field, through a passing conversation, an encounter on the hunt or a long silence broken by a wingbeat. Shot with cinematic camerawork and high production values, 'Elzam' offers a contemporary portrait of a living heritage, conveying its beauty with honesty and authenticity.



Jassim Al Romaihi is a Qatari documentary director and producer. He has directed several short documentaries and produced 'Elzam' (2015), a series exploring the thrill and tradition of falcon hunting across Asia and North Africa. He returns to this year's festival with the new season of 'Elzam'.



Ahmed Al Baker is a Qatari filmmaker and CEO of Katara Studios. He directed the Opening Ceremonies of the FIFA Arab Cup in 2021 and 2025 and was Creative Director for the Opening and Closing Ceremonies of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022. He was showrunner and director on 'The Pact' and 'Medinah'.

Producers: Jassim Al Romaihi, Ahmed Al Baker
Cinematographer: Pierre Rene
Editor: Saleh Hamze
Music: Diab Mekari

Made in Qatar Shabab

Made in Qatar Shabab is where the next generation of Qatar's storytellers meets the industry. Across two days of screenings, masterclasses and open conversation, it gives young and emerging filmmakers the space to learn, to ask questions and to find their place in a growing creative community.

The programme opens with five new short films made in Qatar, presented by their makers, and continues with sessions led by working professionals on how the industry functions, how a visual language takes shape and how a filmmaker finds their voice. The emphasis throughout is practical: what it takes to turn an idea into a film, and a film into a career.

For DFI, nurturing new talent is at the heart of everything we do. Made in Qatar Shabab is an invitation to create, to connect and to carry the region's storytelling tradition forward.

Screenings

The Fifth Voice

Qatar / Malayalam / 2026
6 mins



Four friends, Arjun, Siyana, Jesswin and Paul, head into the desert for a camping trip, expecting an escape from the everyday. But as night falls over the dunes, their trip takes a terrifying turn. They encounter a djinn that can mimic their voices, and soon none of them can be sure who is really speaking. Inspired by a close friend's real experience, Ramya Vimal's chilling short blurs the line between the familiar and the unknown.

Ramya Vimal is a filmmaker and media professional whose work spans film production, television and campaign production in Qatar. She has worked as a production coordinator with Al Jazeera, was part of Qatar Media Corporation's 37 TV channel and contributed to the production of FIFA music videos. She has also worked as an assistant director on two Tamil films. With a growing focus on directing, she brings a practical, collaborative approach to storytelling.

Director: Ramya Vimal
Producer: Jaber Sulaiman
Cinematographer: Rhaazi Majeed
Cast: Arjun Vimal, Siana Ann Sebastian, Jesswin Mathew, Paul Sebastian

My Soil, My Soul

Qatar / Albanian / 2026
15 mins



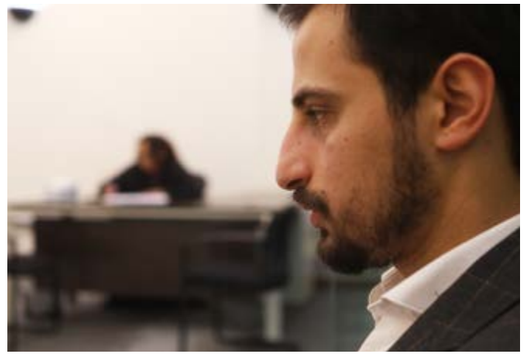
In 1944 and 1945, Cham Albanians were expelled from Chameria, in what is now northwestern Greece. Decades later, Dario travels from Tirana to his family's ancestral village of Spatar for the first time, to retrieve a stone from the land his grandfather left as a three-year-old child and place it on his grave. Isra Fejzullaj's documentary explores how a homeland can live on in descendants who have never seen it, carried through family stories, inherited grief and fragments of memory.

Isra Fejzullaj is an Albanian journalist and filmmaker based in Doha, Qatar. Her work spans documentary filmmaking, journalism and multimedia storytelling, with a particular interest in the intersection of cultural identity and politics. She is drawn to underrepresented stories and overlooked histories, using visual storytelling to question dominant narratives and bring human experiences to the forefront. She made 'My Soil, My Soul' through a fellowship at Northwestern University in Qatar.

Director: Isra Fejzullaj
Directors of Photography: Isra Fejzullaj, Dario Haruni
Camera Operators: Xhemile Husha, Isra Fejzullaj
Editors: Isra Fejzullaj, Yazid Taki
With: Dario Haruni

Overwhelmed

Qatar / English, Arabic / 2026
3 mins



A young man has done everything right. His portfolio is immaculate, his research is thorough, his ambition is real, and he has rehearsed every answer. But as the job interview begins, social anxiety takes hold, and the noise in his mind grows louder than the room around him. In under three minutes, Ranim Ibrahim's debut captures the distance between what is really happening in a moment and what fear insists might happen.

Ranim Ibrahim is an emerging filmmaker based in Qatar, drawn to the art of observing, capturing and telling stories. With a camera often in hand, she is fascinated by the small, fleeting moments that reveal something deeper about the human experience, and sees cinema as a way to capture the world as it unfolds and tell stories that might otherwise go unnoticed. 'Overwhelmed', which explores social anxiety, is her debut film.

Director / Screenwriter: Ranim Ibrahim
Cinematographer / Editor: Mohamed Omer
Cast: Samer Abdelhadi, Fatima Abdelqader (voice)

Qadar

Qatar / Arabic / 2026
15 mins



Jassim, 28, is a gifted Qatari coffee artisan who pours his heart into his struggling specialty coffee shop. More than a business, the café is a monument to a dream shaped by the loss of his mother, and to his need to prove his worth to his emotionally distant father. As the café bleeds money and his childhood friend and partner walks away, Jassim refuses to give up, until he discovers that peace can come through surrender rather than control.

Aisha Al-Khanji is a Northwestern University graduate drawn to the emotional and symbolic power of storytelling. She independently made 'Inside the Mind of a Writer', a documentary exploring a Qatari writer's creative process, and worked on lighting and art design for the award-winning short horror film 'Umm Al-Duwais'. She is part of a social media team at a cultural institution, and seeks to make films that merge emotional truth with cinematic depth, rooted in Qatari identity and universal themes.

Director: Aisha Al-Khanji
Co-producers: Habeeba Abdelhamid, Duha Al Ghaffari
Art Director: Duha Al Ghaffari

Rage

Qatar / English / 2026
13 mins



Sumazi is desperate to win, and to impress his girlfriend, Ruby. So when an arcade claw machine refuses to give up its prize, he becomes fixated on beating it, and spends all their money trying. As Ruby walks away, his obsession turns to paranoia, and he begins to imagine his father watching him with disappointment. Emanuel Kenga's darkly comic short asks what happens when the need for a parent's approval can never be satisfied.

Emanuel Kenga is a multidisciplinary artist from Kenya with a keen interest in film and design. As a self-taught artist and designer, he aims to explore how storytelling can be implemented in different forms of expression. He has worked as a director, production assistant and assistant director on films including 'Quench', 'Al Sayad' and 'Asliyat'. 'Rage' was made with Studio 20Q, the student film club at Northwestern University in Qatar.

Director: Emanuel Kenga
Producer: Omar Al-Saadi
Cinematographer: Khalid Al-Disi
Editor: Yazid Taki
Art Director: Ahmed Al Mushaddani
Sound Designer: Mohammed Al-Khulaifi
Cast: Felix Muraya, Leshamta Wangui

Masterclasses

Before Stepping on Set Understanding How the Industry Works

Filmmaking starts long before anyone presses record. It starts with the industry around the camera: the people, roles, resources and systems that turn an idea into something audiences can actually watch. This session takes participants behind the scenes to understand how a production works as an ecosystem. Who does what on set? How does a crew work together? How do equipment, locations, studios and post-production connect, and where can an emerging filmmaker find a place within that system? It also looks at the opportunities and gaps in Qatar's growing screen sector, and why building an industry means developing crews, facilities and infrastructure as well as filmmakers. Idea first. Understand the industry. Know your tools. Practise always.



Speaker | Dr Milan Maric
Head of Digital Communication and Media Production (UDST)

Dr Milan Maric is Head of the Department of Digital Communication and Media Production at the University of Doha for Science and Technology (UDST). An academic leader and researcher, he holds a PhD and an Associate Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy, with professional experience spanning digital media, communication and higher education.

Finding Your Visual Language Before You Turn on the Camera

How do you create images that belong to your story alone? In this practical masterclass, acclaimed cinematographer Aymerick Pilarski, AFC, takes participants inside the process of translating a screenplay, an emotion or an idea into a distinctive cinematic language. Rather than starting with cameras, lenses and technical specifications, the session focuses on the choices that come before them. Where should the camera be? Why should it move, or stay still? What do you reveal, and what do you leave unseen? How can light, location, colour and composition tell the story? Drawing on his work across cultures and international productions, Pilarski explores how cinematographers collaborate with directors to communicate emotion, atmosphere and meaning, and how the limits of budget, time, locations and equipment can become creative opportunities.



Speaker | Aymerick Pilarski
Cinematographer (AFC)

Aymerick Pilarski is an award-winning cinematographer and a member of the AFC, the French Society of Cinematographers. A graduate of the Beijing Film Academy, he began his career on international co-productions in China, including 'Outcast' and 'The Great Wall', and won Best Cinematography for 'Invisible Tattoo', with martial arts star Vincent Zhao. He has since shot 'Öndög' for Wang Quan'an, 'Black Tea' for Abderrahmane Sissako and 'Meeting with Pol Pot' for Rithy Panh, films selected at the Berlinale, Cannes and Camerimage. He has served on the jury of the Nantes Three Continents Festival and mentors in cinematography programmes worldwide.

Making Films, Finding Your Voice

An interactive masterclass on how filmmakers discover the emotional core of a story, develop their own cinematic voice and navigate the creative and professional challenges of making films. Drawing on her experience in independent and commissioned work, director Pascale Abou Jamra shares insights into the creative process, from an initial idea to the perspective and cinematic language that bring a story to life. The session also looks at the realities of building a career: moving between independent and commissioned projects, balancing personal vision with creative constraints, and finding room to experiment and grow in different production environments. Through film excerpts, scene analysis and open discussion, participants are invited to reflect on their own creative processes and explore new approaches to filmmaking.



Speaker | Pascale Abou Jamra
Director and Producer

Pascale Abou Jamra is a Lebanese filmmaker, director and producer based in Qatar, whose work spans documentary, short film and cultural and museum storytelling. She began her career in Lebanon before moving into regional and Qatar-based productions, directing, writing and producing films that explore identity, memory and social narratives in the Arab world. Her short 'Behind Me Olive Trees' (2012) was selected for the Cannes Cinéfondation. With Qatar Museums' digital production team she has made internationally awarded documentaries including 'From Here to Anywhere: The Story of Football in Qatar' (2022), 'You Are at the National Museum' (2023) and 'Mathaf' (2024).



Moderated by Jana Wehbe
Producer (The Attic)

Jana Wehbe is a producer working across film, cultural initiatives and education. A Université Saint-Joseph filmmaking graduate, she launched her producing career with the FIPRESCI-winning '2 1/2'. She has produced documentaries and fiction, line-produced international co-productions, and co-founded The Attic in Beirut (2009). She manages projects in Development at Qumra, Doha Film Institute, and teaches producing. Former Executive Director of Reef, she was selected for the Afac Netflix Equity Fund and nominated for the Sony Future Filmmaker Award.

Ajyal Feature Film Competition

The Ajyal Feature Film and Short Film Competitions are judged by the Ajyal Jury, young people aged 16 to 25 who watch, discuss and debate the films over the course of the festival before selecting the winners of the Best Feature Film and Best Short Film Awards. Feature films in the Ajyal Competition are also eligible for the Audience Award.



Ben'Imana

Rwanda, Gabon, France, Norway, Qatar / Kinyarwanda / 2026
101 mins
Winner of the Caméra d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival 2026

Rwanda, 2012. In the years following the Genocide against the Tutsi, the Gacaca courts, community-led trials convened on the hillsides for justice and reconciliation, are drawing to a close. Vénéranda, a survivor, leads dialogue between victims and the families of perpetrators, helping others rebuild their lives and look towards the future. But when she learns of her daughter Tina's unexpected pregnancy, she is forced to confront the limits of her own convictions. Around her, the past is never far away, written into the homes and the silences between neighbours.

Suzanne lives behind walls still scarred by fire and covered in messages left by survivors, while Madeleine watches her home destroyed, and mothers who have kept their silence for years must decide what to say, and what to keep from their children. Set in the misty hills of Kibeho and shaped by the women whose lives inspired it, many of whom appear on screen, Marie-Clémentine Dusabejambo's debut feature took ten years to make. The first film by a Rwandan director in Cannes' Official Selection, 'Ben'Imana' takes its title from a Kinyarwanda word Rwandans use to describe themselves as one people, sharing a single language and culture, and quietly asks whether that oneness can be rebuilt.



Marie-Clémentine Dusabejambo was born and raised in Kigali and is a self-taught filmmaker. She took her first steps in cinema in 2008, with a collective of young filmmakers in her neighbourhood. In 2010 she won a Tribeca Film Institute scriptwriting competition, which led to her first short, 'Lyiza'; it premiered at Tribeca in 2011 and won the Bronze Tanit at the Carthage Film Festival in 2012. Her shorts 'A Place for Myself' and 'Icyasha' followed, and she worked on the documentaries 'Why We Hate?' and 'Faces We Lost'. 'Ben'Imana' is her first feature.

Director / Screenwriter / Producer: Marie-Clémentine Dusabejambo
Producers: Samantha Biffot, Marie-Épiphanie Uwayezu, Pierre-Adrien Ceccaldi
Cinematographer: Mostafa El Kashef
Editor: Nadia Ben Rachid
Music: Igor Mabano
Cast: Clémentine U. Nyirinkindi, Kesia Kelly Nishimwe, Isabelle Kabano, Arivere Kagoyire



Gabin

France, Germany, Switzerland / French / 2026
103 mins
Directors' Fortnight, Cannes Film Festival 2026

In the Artois, a corner of northern France crossed by motorways and dotted with slag heaps and abandoned factories, Gabin is the youngest of the Jourdel family. His father, Dominique, a butcher who works all hours, has quietly decided that Gabin will one day take over the shop. Gabin is not so sure. He would rather work with animals, but living ones: he dreams of training a contest cow, of becoming a dog breeder, and of saving the farm his mother, Patricia, runs as it slides towards financial ruin. Between breakfasts with his father, lessons with his tutor and long days among the cattle, he slowly begins to imagine a life of his own.

Filmed over ten years, from the age of eight to 18, Maxence Voiseux's documentary watches Gabin grow up without hurry or fanfare, through the rituals of family life and the conversations that finally bring unspoken things into the open. As his exhausted father reaches breaking point and his mother turns to the family's past for answers, Gabin must find a path that honours where he comes from without being bound by it. The result is a moving, gently funny portrait of a boy coming of age in a region where leaving can feel like betrayal and staying comes at a cost.



Maxence Voiseux was born in the Ardennes in 1988. After studying science and graduating as an engineer, he trained in documentary directing and editing at Paris VII University. His graduation film, 'Des hommes et des bêtes', introduced him to the Jourdel family, whom he went on to film in 'The Heirs' (2015), winner of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Award at Cinéma du Réel. His work also includes 'Le Crack' (2019), the short fiction 'She Is One of Us' (2021), selected for Clermont-Ferrand, and 'Ultras' (2023). 'Gabin' is his first feature film.

Director / Screenwriter:
Maxence Voiseux
Producers: Cécile Lestrade, Elise Hug
Cinematographers: François Chambe, Martin Roux
Editors: Pascale Hannoyer, Natali Barrey
Music: Nicolas Rabaeus
With: Gabin Jourdel, Patricia Jourdel, Dominique Jourdel, Lilou Duflos-Lamotte, Catherine Ranson



Out of School

Morocco, Denmark / Amazigh, Arabic / 2026
70 mins
Human:Rights Competition, CPH:DOX 2026

In Oulghazi, a remote village high in Morocco's Atlas Mountains, there is no secondary school. At 12, Mohamed, known to everyone as Mokari, has had to leave his studies behind, because his parents cannot afford the 35-kilometre journey to the nearest one. With his father now too old for the building sites, Mokari decides it is time to become a man, find a job in the city and lift his family out of poverty. His sister Fatima, in her final year of primary school, is determined to avoid the same fate. She wants to become a teacher and wear jeans to work, rather than face a life of housework until marriage, and then more housework.

The first generation in their village to go to school, the two siblings stand at the edge of childhood as friends leave for work, for Koranic school or for marriage, and every Friday the men set off to work far from home. Filmed over two years, Hind Bensari's intimate documentary follows them through games of hide-and-seek, odd jobs, sheep herding and end-of-year results, capturing with tenderness and humour the tension of adolescence caught between the world they imagine they can reach and the reality they must live with.



Born in Casablanca in 1987 and raised in Morocco and the UK, **Hind Bensari** is a self-taught filmmaker whose work combines visual storytelling with strong social impact. Her short '475: Break the Silence' (2013) was broadcast internationally and helped repeal a controversial article of Moroccan law. Her feature debut, 'We Could Be Heroes' (2018), won Best International Feature at Hot Docs and Best Moroccan Film at the Tangier National Film Festival. Based in Marrakech, she is commissioning editor for documentaries at 2M and teaches documentary filmmaking at ESAV Marrakech.

Director / Screenwriter: Hind Bensari
Producers: Vibeke Vogel, Alaa Eddine Aljem
Cinematographers: Amine Zouine, Hind Bensari
Editor: Julie Benta
Music: Tin Soheili
With: Mohamed Afarrou, Fatima Afarrou



Summer Meadow

Belgium, France / Arabic, French / 2026
66 mins
Best Performance (Manal Issa), Filmmakers of the Present, Locarno Film Festival 2026

In the mountains above Gap, in the French Alps, Hana is learning the trade of a shepherdess, spending the summer season alone with a flock of several hundred sheep. Far from the hustle and bustle of the world, she counts, herds, treats and watches over her animals, and keeps her mother's anxious calls, and the news of war in her native Lebanon, at arm's length. But when the shepherdess sent to train her leaves, and an accident strikes the flock, the isolation begins to weigh on her. Then Lisa arrives, sent up the mountain to help with the animals.

Slowly, the two women find their rhythm, sharing coffee, chores and stories, and Lisa's easy warmth draws Hana out of her solitude and invites her to reconnect with her own story: a childhood interrupted by war, and a country she still feels calling her. Meanwhile, a body is found near a dam down the valley, and young men are crossing the mountain on foot from Italy, hoping to reach France unseen. Blurring the lines between documentary and fiction, Naël Khleifi and Lisa Debauche's film reveals the customs and the people who cross these mountains, in a tender meditation on exile, freedom and belonging.



Naël Khleifi is a Belgian-Palestinian director and cinematographer based in Brussels, who graduated from INSAS. His work includes the short fiction 'Au pays des géants' (2004), the documentary 'Waiting' (2011) and 'Alps' (2021), which premiered at Festival dei Popoli. He has also shot documentaries for filmmakers including Marie-France Collard and Nahed Awwad.



Lisa Debauche was born in Brussels in 1988. Trained as an actress, she is a singer-songwriter with two albums and a poet, whose first collection was a finalist for the Prix Apollinaire Découverte.

Directors / Screenwriters: Naël Khleifi, Lisa Debauche
Producers: Sébastien Andres, Alice Lemaire, Quentin Laurent, Perrine Humble
Cinematographer: Diego Romero Suarez-Llanos
Editors: Lenka Fillnerova, Benoit Baudson
Sound: Vincent Nouaille
Cast: Manal Issa, Sybille Bataille, Elkebir Belfatmi, El Hadj Ibrahima Barry



We Are Aliens

Japan, France / Japanese / 2026
117 mins
Winner of the Grand Prize for Animated Feature, Ottawa International Animation Festival 2026

In a small Japanese town, Tsubasa, an ordinary third-grader who says he wants to be a footballer only because everyone else does, finds a friend in Gyotaro Hoshi. Gyotaro is strange, funny and fearless. He claims to know what the top of Mount Fuji looks like, carries a piece of meteorite and brushes his teeth for half an hour at the school tap. The two become inseparable, walking home past the secret tree and through the tunnel where you must walk weirdly or die. But Gyotaro keeps getting into trouble, and Tsubasa's mother tells him to stay away.

One day, Tsubasa makes a small, quiet choice. Following the two boys from primary school through high school and into their twenties, Kohei Kadowaki's film watches that choice ripple across the years, as one boy's life moves on and the other's stalls. Drawn by hand, it catches all the restless movements of childhood with rare precision and moves freely between ages and points of view. Funny, tender and painfully honest, it is a film about friendship and cruelty, and about the one thing an ordinary boy will spend the rest of his life trying to forget.



Kohei Kadowaki was born in 1996 and graduated from the Department of Design at Tokyo University of the Arts. He joined an animation production company, then went independent, working on scenography for stage productions, commercials and promotional videos before turning to directing animated films. His distinctive style builds sequences from live-action footage and 3D references, giving his work an unusual sense of depth. 'We Are Aliens' premiered at the Directors' Fortnight in Cannes in 2026 and won the Grand Prize for Animated Feature at the Ottawa International Animation Festival.

Director / Screenwriter / Cinematographer: Kohei Kadowaki
Editor: Kenichiro Tachikawa
Music: Yaffle
Voice Cast: Ryota Bando, Amane Okayama, Ten Yamasaki

Ajyal Short Film Competition

As a Cure

China, UK / Mandarin / 2026
17 mins



A girl sifts through the dune to find the identity card she needs to enrol at the Beijing Opera Academy. Dorothea Sing Zhang traces her own mother's origin story. Chosen at nine from thousands of children, opposed by her parents, and set on a path she followed for life. Shot on 35mm, the film makes the dune a place of becoming rather than losing, and treats wanting something badly enough as its own kind of cure.

Dorothea Sing Zhang's filmmaking taps into the curiosity of practical surrealism. She studied at the Slade School of Fine Art in London and at Ecole de Leth in Denmark, under Lars von Trier, Jørgen Leth and Thomas Vinterberg. Her first musical short 'Masterpiece Mommy' (2024) premiered at TIFF and was shortlisted for a European Film Award. 'A Small Fiction of My Mother in Beijing' (2025) also premiered at TIFF. 'As a Cure' completes her Mommy trilogy.

Director / Screenwriter: Dorothea Sing Zhang
Producer: Sol Ye, George Telfer
Cinematographer: Louis Lustermann
Editor: Jacopo Ramella Pajrin
Cast: Yichen Zhu, Ziyu Chu, Ai'er Yu

The Bird's Placebo

Tunisia / Arabic / 2025
20 mins



In a marginalised neighbourhood of Tunis, Yahya, a young man in a wheelchair, lives with his mother and dreams of crossing the Mediterranean, like so many of the young men around him. His father is in prison, and Yahya has not been to visit him. Then a friend hands him a rare bird, said to have come all the way from Mexico. Told through rotoscope and 3D animation, this modern fable explores migration, youth and the fluidity of identity.

Rami Jarboui is a Tunisian filmmaker, born in 1990. After studying multimedia at ISAMM in Tunis, he won the Grand Prix International at the Mobile Film Festival in Paris in 2017 with his short 'Soup', and his short 'Retro' screened at festivals worldwide. His work blends documentary realism with poetic and experimental forms. 'The Bird's Placebo' premiered at the Sundance Film Festival in 2026. He is developing 'The Salt of the South', a creative documentary about southern Tunisia.

Director / Screenwriter: Rami Jarboui
Producers: Sarra Ben Hassen, Ramses Mahfoudh, Lotfi Mahfoudh
Artistic Director: Lotfi Mahfoudh
Cinematographer: Farouk Laaridh
Music and Sound Design: Ayed Ghanem
Cast: Yassine Bardaa, Fatma Felhi, Mohamed Hassine Grayaa

Boomerang Atomic

Algeria, France, Japan, USA / French / 2025
22 mins



In 1960, in the heart of the Sahara, France detonated its first atomic bomb at Reggane, in Algeria, then still a French colony, and became the world's fourth nuclear power. Built from the newsreels and official commentary of the time, Rachid Bouchareb's documentary follows the countdown, the mixed reactions on French streets and the tests that followed, including a radioactive leak in 1962. Sixty-five years on, the land and its people still live with the consequences, in silence.

Rachid Bouchareb is a director, producer and screenwriter who founded 3B Productions in 1990. His work explores colonial memory, immigration, exile, identity and Franco-Algerian history, shedding light on often overlooked stories. His films 'Dust of Life' (1995), 'Days of Glory' (2006) and 'Outside the Law' (2010) were each nominated for an Academy Award. His other features include 'Little Senegal', 'London River' and 'Our Brothers' (2022). 'Boomerang Atomic' premiered at the Venice Film Festival in 2025.

Director: Rachid Bouchareb
Editor: Matthieu Asano
Music: Amine Bouhafa

Boundaries

South Korea / No dialogue / 2025
10 mins



A passenger on a bus reclines their seat too far. The seatback becomes a wall between rooms, then between villages, and finally between countries. More and more people gather on both sides, forming ever-larger groups that push against one another. Under the pressure, the space around them expands and contracts. Seun Yee made it alone, in paper cut-out and hand-drawn 2D, without a word of dialogue. A wall is shelter or threat depending on how close it presses.

Seun Yee is an animation filmmaker whose practice moves between the abstract and the figurative, exploring visual storytelling through hand-crafted 2D techniques. She graduated from the Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design in Prague in 2016 and is currently based in Korea. 'Boundaries' has won the Short Film Award of the German Film Critics Association at Filmfest Dresden, Best Animated Short Film at REGARD in Canada, and the Jamie Bolio Award at Kaboom Animation Festival.

Director / Screenwriter / Producer / Cinematographer / Editor: Seun Yee
Music: Jan Šikl

Intersecting Memory

France, Palestine / Arabic / 2025
21 mins



During the Second Intifada in occupied Palestine, fear, siege and death define the daily reality of Hebron. Moments from the past are revived through childhood reminiscence, intersecting with the memory of a whole city. Shayma' Awawdeh builds the film from archive and recollection, letting the two run together until the join stops showing. Memory here is neither personal nor collective but both at once, and the question the film leaves open is what we keep and what do we let go of?

Shayma' Awawdeh, a Palestinian filmmaker and photographer, was born in Bethlehem in 1994. She completed her studies in filmmaking and cinematography at Dar Al-Kalima University. She directed two short films, '4th Floor' and 'Love Contract'. She has worked as a Director of Photography and Assistant Camera on short films and has trained children in filmmaking. 'Intersecting Memory', produced by GREC with support from CNC and Périphérie, benefited from the Sawa Sawa residency programme.

Director: Shayma' Awawdeh
Producer: Anne Luthaud, Marcello Cavagna
Editor: Mahmoud Nabil Ahmed
Music: Wajdi Riahi

The Kalgan Horse

China, USA / Mandarin / 2026
13 mins



In Kalgan, on the borderlands of farming and herding in northern China, ten-year-old Amu spends every spare moment with his horse, Aban, while his father runs a busy restaurant nearby. But his father and the grown-ups around him agree that the young stallion must be gelded before he grows too wild to handle. Determined to protect his friend, Amu pleads for another way, and finds himself confronting a violence and cruelty beyond his understanding.

Zichen Zhao is a Chinese director and producer based in New York. He studied Screenwriting at Beijing Film Academy and earned an MFA in Film from Columbia University. Shorts he has directed and produced have screened at festivals including Vancouver, El Gouna, Palm Springs ShortFest and FIRST. His work explores the margins of contemporary society, examining masculinity and forgotten local histories. 'The Kalgan Horse' won Best Cinematography at HollyShorts in 2026.

Director / Producer: Zichen Zhao
Screenwriters: Yue Zhang, Zichen Zhao
Cinematographer: Junxiong Zhu
Editors: Zichen Zhao, Yue Zhang
Music: Haozheng Liu, Zijian Guo
Cast: Aban, Yang Yang, Si Feng

Nobody Said Anything

Serbia, France, Slovenia, Croatia / Serbian / 2026
16 mins



Katarina is waiting for her daughter Mina to come home for dinner when a little boy knocks at the door: his mother is asking for her. At the home of Mina's friend Bojana, the girls are made to explain what happened after they took Bojana's new kitten to the schoolyard. As the story slowly comes out, and another mother arrives to defend her own child, it becomes clear that a seemingly innocent game has spiralled out of control.

Tamara Todorović studied Film and Television Directing at the Faculty of Dramatic Arts in Belgrade. Her student films 'Hunger' (2017), 'Pink' (2018) and 'Take Me to the Sea' (2022) screened at festivals including Isola, Zagreb and Pula. She also directed a children's series for Serbia's national broadcaster, adapted from the Dutch hit 'Talking Heads'. 'Nobody Said Anything' premiered in competition at Cannes and won the Heart of Sarajevo for Best Narrative Short Film in 2026.

Director / Screenwriter: Tamara Todorović
Producer: Čarna Vučinić
Co-producers: Ena Bajraktarević, Jasmina Sijerčić, Katja Lenarčič, Lucija Perić, Tena Gojić, Miljenka Čogelja
Cinematographer: Mladen Teofilović
Editor: Kristina Todorović
Cast: Ivana Vuković, Milica Stefanović, Jovan Belobrković, Iva Kraljević, Kalina Šutić

Prisoner of Love

Lebanon, USA / Arabic / 2025
17 mins



Beirut, in the aftermath of the Israeli bombardment. In a Palestinian refugee camp, a young first responder with the civil defence spends an ordinary night playing cards with his friends, trading jokes about girlfriends and the camp's shiny new ambulance. But beneath the banter, he cannot separate his daily life from what he has seen in the rubble, and the martyrs he helped to recover. At home, his mother asks him to sing for her.

Yumna Marwan is an actor and director from Beirut. For more than a decade, she has acted in independent films across the Arab world, including two features with Ghassan Salhab and two films with Mounia Akl, before taking lead roles opposite Juno Temple in 'Little Birds' and Elisabeth Moss in 'The Veil'. She studied anthropology and creative writing and worked as a journalist in Lebanon. 'Prisoner of Love' is her second short film, and she is developing her first feature.

Director: Yumna Marwan
Producer: Ihsen Kammoun
Cinematographer: Ramzi Hibri
Editor: Mehdi Lachhab
Cast: Khattab Daher, Ghada Osman, Yousef Daher, Tarek Makdah, Wael Maarouf

Threads of Support

Uzbekistan, Qatar / Uzbek, Russian / 2026
22 mins



In Uzbekistan's Fergana Valley, silk has been woven by hand for centuries. The families at the centre of this film kept it alive through the Soviet era, when looms were confiscated and hidden in secret rooms, and now face a flood of cheap printed imitations. In a shimmering palette that echoes the silk itself, the film listens to its makers, many of them strong, independent women, and asks what survives when knowledge is passed on by hand.

Olya Korsun is a Siberian-born, Latvia-based filmmaker and researcher whose work explores how our ideas of the natural world, living bodies and materials are built, experienced and taken apart. Her films have reached audiences through art institutions, festivals and online platforms. In 2023 she became Head of Film at the international publication EastEast, curating its online cinema and launching open calls for emerging filmmakers from the MENA region. She now runs EastEast Films with writer and filmmaker Furqat Palvan-Zade.

Director / Editor: Olya Korsun
Producers: Furqat Palvan-Zade, Fahad Al-Attiyah
Cinematographer: Luda Kuropyatnikova

Typhoon Mambo

Switzerland, France, Thailand / Thai / 2026
24 mins



Rusmee keeps interacting with Chalerm, her dead husband, in the form of an AI chatbot. Only with the arrival of Fa, Chalerm's former caretaker, are the memories inhabiting the house released, and loss finally accepted. Domenico Singha Pedroli drew on his own Thai grandmother, who appears here as herself and through an actress, the doubling standing in for what dementia does to time. Fa carries the film's heart, a tribute to caretakers who vanish when the work ends.

Domenico Singha Pedroli (1994) is a Swiss-Thai filmmaker based between Paris and Bangkok. His works explore memory, identity and diaspora in all their mutability. Trained in architecture at USI and in visual arts at Le Fresnoy – Studio national, he works across photography, cinema, video art and VR. His films have been presented at major international festivals including IDFA, Visions du Réel, DOK Leipzig and Bogoshorts. He is currently developing his first feature, centred on metamorphosis and trauma.

Director / Screenwriter / Editor: Domenico Singha Pedroli
Producer: Domenico Singha Pedroli, Inès Riera, Henry Jean
Cinematographer: Parinee Buthrasri
Cast: Rawipa Srisanguan, Garuna Luktoomtong, Rusmee Thongsriphong

Vegetare

Spain / English / 2026
14 mins



A beech tree suffering from a strange form of anorexia carves a diary into its own bark. In a world unsettled by climate collapse, its fragile body becomes a mirror of our own struggle to adapt. As the seasons pass, the tree wavers between holding on and letting go, searching for a way to live when both the world and the self feel unstable. A quiet fable in which human and plant wounds echo one another.

Born in 1998, **Adrià Expòsit-Goy** is a Catalan filmmaker working in documentary and hybrid forms. His first short, 'Mater inerta' (2022), premiered at Visions du Réel, followed by 'Pneuma' (2025), which screened at DocumentaMadrid. 'Vegetare', his third short, continues his exploration of the ties between human and more-than-human worlds. He holds master's degrees in Filmmaking from EQZE and Creative Documentary from UPF, and is currently producing his first feature, 'Foresta'.

Director / Screenwriter / Producer / Editor: Adrià Expòsit-Goy
Associate Producer: Elías Querejeta Zine Eskola
Sound Design: Xabier Erkizia

We Were Here

India / Hindi, English / 2026
11 mins



In a sleepy old Indian town, convinced that machines are replacing them, three retired men threaten to take over the jobs of household appliances. Pranav Bhasin's comedy is about the elderly crashing into a future moving too fast to notice them, in a country where family and sentiment still outweigh optimisation. What happens when the future arrives and no one tells you, and how do you remind the world that you were here?

Pranav Bhasin is a 29-year-old writer, director and actor from Mumbai. His Academy-qualifying short 'We Were Here', executive produced by BAFTA-winning actor Andrew Scott, won the Audience Award at SXSW 2026, Best Live Action Short and Best Comedy Short at Palm Springs ShortFest 2026, and the Canal+ Prize at Clermont-Ferrand 2026. He began making films on YouTube at 15. He is an alumnus of the Zurich Film Festival Academy and Vanishing Angle's Short-to-Feature Lab.

Director / Screenwriter: Pranav Bhasin
Producer: Yash Gonsai
Cinematographer: Rajiv Malu
Editor: Pralay Valanju
Music: Yash Sahai
Cast: Satish Kashyap, Dvendra Dodke, Arindol Bagchi, Shubham Kujur, Kalpana Gagdekar, Yash Gonsai

Gala Screenings



Edward Said: Between Worlds

USA, Qatar / English, Arabic / 2026
108 mins
TIFF Docs, Toronto International Film Festival 2026

Twenty-three years after his death, the renowned Palestinian-American scholar, musician and intellectual Edward Said tells the untold history of Palestine in his own words. The first documentary made with full access to the Said family and estate, this all-archival portrait draws on hundreds of hours of lectures, television appearances, interviews and debates, alongside never-before-seen 8mm home movies shot by his father. They capture a childhood in Jerusalem before the Nakba of 1948, the family's years in Egypt and Lebanon, and his arrival in America as a teenager who would spend his entire adult life in exile.

Said became one of the most influential public intellectuals of the 20th century. His 1978 book 'Orientalism' dismantled Western stereotypes of Arab culture and identity and became a foundational text of postcolonial studies, while 'The Question of Palestine' brought the Palestinian experience to English-language readers. A classically trained pianist and music critic, he was as eloquent at the keyboard as he was on television, and a series of BBC documentaries gave him a broader canvas to tell his own story and that of his people. Spanning seven decades, Maiken Baird's film weaves together the personal and the political and asks who has the right to tell their own story.



Maiken Baird is a Danish-American film director and producer. She directed 'Venus and Serena' and, for Netflix, 'Ghislaine Maxwell: Filthy Rich'. She was an executive producer of the Academy Award-winning documentary 'Icarus', produced 'Tantura' (Sundance 2022) and 'Folktales' (Sundance 2025), and is an executive producer of the acclaimed Palestinian feature 'All That's Left of You', an epic, multigenerational story of exile. A member of the Council on Foreign Relations, she speaks four languages. 'Edward Said: Between Worlds' premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival in 2026.

Director: Maiken Baird
Producers: Maiken Baird, Sarah Mowaswes, Razan Ghalayini
Editors: Jay Arthur Sterrenberg, Plummy Tucker, R.A. Fedde
Music: Kareem Roustom (original score), Max Richter



Furies

Lebanon, Brazil / Arabic / 2026
133 mins
Spotlight, Venice International Film Festival 2026

During Lebanon's real-life, corruption-fuelled economic collapse, the banks freeze accounts overnight, trapping the life savings of millions. In Beirut, Maro, a determined single mother, needs her own money to pay for her wild-hearted younger sister Dalia's life-saving surgery. When the bank refuses, the sisters scheme an elaborate all-night heist to reclaim what is rightfully theirs, with Dalia talking her way into the staff bathrooms and Maro mapping the building in her son's Lego. As they recruit Sunshine, a former militiaman still haunted by the civil war, and Hamza, a truck driver in debt to the wrong people, their plan sets off a chain of events that quickly spirals out of control in a city already on the brink.

The film began with a text Rami Kodeih sent a friend in 2019, when his own savings were frozen and his wife and co-writer, Nora Mariana, needed surgery the bank would not let them pay for: "Do I need to write a heist movie about me stealing my own money back?" Executive produced by George Clooney and Grant Heslov, his feature debut turns that fantasy into a character-driven crime story about ordinary people taking their destiny into their own hands, and a celebration of the bonds of family.



Rami Kodeih is a Lebanese writer-director whose work has screened in the Directors' Fortnight at the Cannes Film Festival, the BFI London Film Festival and the Clermont-Ferrand International Short Film Festival. His previous film, 'Alina' (2019), starring Alia Shawkat, screened at more than 250 film festivals worldwide and won 150 awards. He has developed projects with Alfonso Cuarón's Esperanto, Pablo Larraín's Fabula and Participant Media, and is an alumnus of the Sundance Institute Labs and Berlinale Talents. 'Furies' is his feature debut.

Director / Editor: Rami Kodeih
Screenwriters: Rami Kodeih, Nora Mariana
Producers: Rodrigo Teixeira, Berta Marchiori, Nora Mariana, Rami Kodeih
Executive Producers: George Clooney, Grant Heslov
Cinematographer: Tony Kopec
Music: Arthur Joly
Cast: Rym Mroue, Maria Nakouzi, Hasan Akil, Issam Bou Khaled



Paper Tiger

USA, Brazil, Italy / English / 2026
115 mins
Competition, Cannes Festival 2026

New York, 1986. Irwin Pearl is a naïve engineer living a modest suburban life with his wife Hester and their two young sons. So when his brother Gary, a former cop with easy charm and sharp European suits, offers him a seemingly lucrative business proposition, Irwin can hardly say no. But at the Gowanus Canal, he witnesses something he was never meant to see, and the brothers are suddenly pulled into a dangerous confrontation with the newly emerging Russian mafia, men far more ruthless than either of them can comprehend. As the threat of violence closes in on their homes and Hester sounds the alarm, Irwin desperately tries to protect his family, while Gary is forced to make an impossible choice to save the people he loves.

Gary dismisses the Russians as paper tigers, all show and nothing underneath, but the phrase may describe him just as well. Rooted in the New York of James Gray's own youth, the film is also a tender portrait of an ordinary family doing its best in difficult circumstances, held together by love even as the ground shifts beneath them. Rich in the textures of the era, from family dinners to the city's grimy streets, it is a deeply felt and intense crime thriller about brotherhood, loyalty and the true cost of a deal that seems too good to be true.



Born in New York City and raised in Queens, **James Gray** studied at the University of Southern California School of Cinema-Television. He made his directorial debut at 25 with 'Little Odessa' (1994), winner of the Silver Lion at Venice, followed by 'The Yards' (2000). 'We Own the Night' (2007), 'Two Lovers' (2008) and 'The Immigrant' (2013) all screened in Competition at Cannes. His later films include 'The Lost City of Z' (2016), 'Ad Astra' (2019) and 'Armageddon Time' (2022), inspired by his own childhood in Queens.

Director / Screenwriter: James Gray
Producers: James Gray, Rodrigo Teixeira, Anthony Katagas, Raffaella Leone
Cinematographer: Joaquin Baca-Asay
Editor: Scott Morris
Music: Christopher Spelman
Cast: Adam Driver, Scarlett Johansson, Miles Teller, Gavin Goudey, Roman Engel



Red Rocks

Portugal, France, Italy, Spain, Qatar / French / 2026
90 mins
Directors' Fortnight, Cannes Film Festival 2026

On the French Riviera, two gangs of kids compete in the perilous game of cliff jumping. Géo, barely five years old, lives with his family in a mobile home and spends his days scrambling over the red rocks with his friends Rouben and Manon, raiding parked cars for sweets and watching the trains that run along the coast to Italy. When the gendarmes chase them away, the children simply plan to climb higher. Then Géo meets Ève, who belongs to the rival gang and already has a sweetheart, B. Over one summer, friendship blends with rivalry, and the first stirrings of the heart become a source of trouble.

Every day brings a new adventure: a dare on the cliffs, a squabble over loot from a parked car, a promise to meet again tomorrow and jump from even higher. Géo and Ève trade secrets about who loves whom and dream of catching the train to Italy together, while the rival gang closes ranks around her. Bathed in the bright blues, reds and yellows of a Mediterranean summer, Bruno Dumont's film is less about children than about childhood itself, the part of all of us that is always five years old. Fearless, funny and full of light, it is a film about love, jealousy, rivalry and, above all, freedom.



Bruno Dumont is a French filmmaker whose debut, 'The Life of Jesus' (1997), shot in his native Bailleul, won a Special Mention for the Caméra d'Or at Cannes and the Prix Jean Vigo. He has won the Cannes Grand Prix twice, for 'Humanity' (1999) and 'Flanders' (2006) and has since made 'Camille Claudel 1915' with Juliette Binoche, the series 'Li'l Quinquin', 'Slack Bay', 'Jeannette', 'Joan of Arc', which won the Louis Delluc Prize, and 'France' with Léa Seydoux. His sci-fi satire 'The Empire' won the Silver Bear Jury Prize at the Berlinale in 2024.

Director / Screenwriter / Editor: Bruno Dumont
Producers: Joaquim Sapinho, Marta Alves, Fiorella Moretti
Cinematographer: Carlos Alfonso Corral
Sound: Bernat Fortiana
Music: Laia Torrents Carulla
Cast: Kaylon Lancel, Kelsie Verdeilles, Louise Podolski, Mohamed Coly, Alessandro Piquera

DEADLINE



ENTERTAINMENT'S #1 BREAKING NEWS SITE

For all the latest happenings in film, television and tech, Deadline is your source. From box office numbers, to film and television premieres, to renewals and festival coverage, and everything in between!

DEADLINE.COM

SCREEN INTERNATIONAL



Go full Screen

Subscribe to unlock:
- Unlimited access to ScreenDaily.com
- Print editions of Screen International
- Weekly awards season magazines
- Breaking news alerts
- Daily newsletters

subs.screendaily.com/subscriptions

Special Screenings



52 Blue

Qatar, Egypt, India, USA / Malayalam, Hindi, English, Arabic / 2026
91 mins

On a remote island in Kerala, Ashish has grown up in near-total isolation, sheltered by a controlling father and sustained by a quietly supportive mother and the memory of his late brother. His one true friend is someone he has never met: Lionel Messi. When the 2022 FIFA World Cup arrives in Qatar, Ashish seizes his chance. Telling his family he has been chosen to represent India, he leaves home for the first time and crosses the sea to Doha, where a backstage job at the stadiums puts him within touching distance of his hero, and face to face with a world, and a self, he has never known.

Shot on location during the tournament itself, the first feature ever filmed at a FIFA World Cup, Ali El Arabi's coming-of-age story was inspired by a real Indian worker he met in Qatar in 2022. Set against the noise and colour of a nation hosting the world, it captures the tournament from the inside, among the young people who made it happen far from home, each carrying a dream of their own. From the director of 'Captains of Zaatari', it is a film about loneliness and belonging, about dreams that seem impossible, and the hope that someone, somewhere, is listening.



Ali El Arabi is an Egyptian filmmaker and producer, and the founder of Ambient Light, an international production company based in Los Angeles and Cairo. He began his career as a war reporter, covering refugee displacement and women's and children's rights, before working with ZDF, Stern TV and National Geographic. His first feature, 'Captains of Zaatari', premiered at Sundance in 2021, screened at 85 festivals worldwide and was longlisted for the Academy Awards. He co-produced 'Goodbye Julia' (Cannes 2023, Sudan's Oscar submission) and was lead producer on 'Arzé' (Tribeca 2024, Lebanon's Oscar submission). '52 Blue' is his first narrative feature.

Director / Producer: Ali El Arabi
Executive Producer: Tariq Al-Naama
Co-producers: Krysanne Katsoolis, Joe Matthews, Katara Studios
Cinematographer: Mahmoud Beshir
Editor: Marion Tuor
Cast: Yadav Shashidhar, Adil Hussain, Neha Dhupia, Arya Appukattan, with Wegz



Life Support

United Kingdom, Qatar / English, Arabic / 2026
93 mins

Since October 2023, Gaza has been sealed from the world, except for one group: international doctors. While global media are barred from reporting and governments look away, surgeons, physicians and nurses from Britain and beyond breach the blockade to volunteer in its hospitals, there to share their expertise and support their Palestinian colleagues. Instead, they find themselves the sole international witnesses to something far worse than a humanitarian crisis, a calculated dismantling of life itself. Covering the two years of the genocide, ‘Life Support’ is built largely from footage the doctors shot on their phones, both as evidence of their work and as video diaries recorded at the end of impossible shifts in Gaza’s hospitals.

Plastic surgeon Victoria Rose, gastrointestinal surgeon Nick Maynard and paediatric intensive care doctor Tanya Haj Hassan navigate bombed-out hospitals, dwindling supplies, starvation and an overwhelming, relentless flow of casualties, predominantly women and children. Through it all, the doctors and their Palestinian colleagues fight to keep their humanity intact and to go on delivering care. Beyond the wards, Gazan cameramen Mahmoud Abou Hamda and Suleiman Hejjy capture the impossible living conditions and the destruction all around, completing a rare first-hand chronicle of a health system kept alive under siege.



Daniele Rugo is an Italian documentary filmmaker and writer, born in 1982. His earlier films include ‘The Olympic Side of London’ (2012) and ‘About a War’ (2019), co-directed with Abi Weaver. His most recent documentary, ‘The Soil and the Sea’ (2023), featuring prose by the celebrated Lebanese writer Elias Khoury, uncovered Lebanon’s buried history as the first cinematic record of the mass graves left by the country’s civil war. ‘Life Support’ grew out of a 2024 screening of that film, where he met producer William Parry.

Director: Daniele Rugo
Producer: William Parry
Executive Producers: Sawsan Asfari, Melissa Barrera, Azeezah Kanji, Asif Kapadia, Farah Nabulsi, Erik Olson, Stephanie Nadi Olson, William Parry, Susan Sarandon, Dale Vince, Paul Weller
Cinematographers: Mahmoud Abou Hamda, Suleiman Hejjy
Editor: Masahiro Hirakubo
Music: Robert Del Naja, Euan Dickinson, Habib Shehada Hanna
Narrator: Denise Gough



The Roses of Marrakech

Italy / French, Arabic / 2026
90 mins
Grand Public, Rome Film Fest 2026

On the outskirts of Marrakech, in the Palmeraie, stands a vast estate where order and beauty conceal the cracks of time. Cooks, drivers, gardeners and housemaids each perform their role to perfection, and at the heart of it all is Leila, a discreet housekeeper whose life rests on precise gestures and silenced emotions. For years she has devoted herself to Isabelle, an elderly French aristocrat now confined to her bed, for whom she has become much more than an employee: a constant presence, a confidante and, at times, her only tie to the outside world. Their relationship is woven from dependence, veiled gratitude and a slight cruelty, at once tender and merciless.

In the gardens, Yusef, the head gardener, tends the flowers and trees as if they were a living memory, composing a fresh bouquet for Isabelle’s room each day. Over the years, he and Leila have formed a discreet bond built on glances and shared silences, a latent, patient love neither has ever confessed. Then Leila’s sister Miriam arrives with news. Leila’s son is getting married. It is a son Leila never saw grow up, and a wound she has buried for years under silence and discipline is about to violently resurface.



Born in London in 1979, **Ginevra Elkann** is an Italian director and producer. She studied at the American University of Paris and earned a master’s degree from the London Film School. As a producer, she founded Caspian Films and co-founded Good Films, backing titles including ‘White Shadow’, winner of the Lion of the Future at Venice, ‘Chlorine’ and ‘Mektoub, My Love: Canto Uno’. Her directorial debut, ‘Magari’ (2019), opened the Locarno Film Festival, and was followed by ‘I Told You So’ (2023). ‘The Roses of Marrakech’ is her third feature.

Director: Ginevra Elkann
Screenwriters: Ginevra Elkann, Babak Jalali, Chiara Barzini
Producer: Fabrizio Mosca
Cinematographer: Simone D’Arcangelo
Editor: Francesca Calvelli
Music: Fabio Massimo Capogrosso
Cast: Nisrin Erradi, Fanny Ardant, Ahmed Hammoud

DFI Inclusive Cinema Screening

The President’s Cake by Hasan Hadi
Doha Film Festival is honoured to welcome audiences of all abilities to an inclusive screening of ‘The President’s Cake’, a DFI-supported film. Directed by Hasan Hadi, the award-winning drama follows a young girl in 1990s Iraq who must find the ingredients for a birthday cake for the nation’s ruler, amid war and food shortages.

Presented in collaboration with the College of Humanities and Social Sciences at Hamad Bin Khalifa University and Katara Studios, this screening will be accompanied by an Arabic audio description, Arabic sign-language interpretation, and enriched subtitles in both Arabic and English.

This screening is part of DFI’s commitment to making cinema accessible to everyone.



The President’s Cake

Iraq, USA, Qatar / Arabic / 2025
105 mins
Winner of the Audience Award and the Caméra d’Or at Cannes Film Festival 2025

Set against the pressures of 1990s Iraq, a child is selected by chance to supply a birthday cake for the nation’s ruler, an everyday ritual turned ultimatum. What follows is a delicate journey through scarcity: kitchens without sugar, markets emptied by sanctions, and classrooms where small privileges can be bartered for safety. The narrative, rooted in memories of growing up in the period, privileges the humane over the didactic. It looks closely at the quiet labour of families and neighbours, those who find ways to help without drawing attention, and those who say no when saying no is costly. Each small success, from a borrowed egg to a smuggled measure of flour, becomes a wager against consequence.

Shot entirely in Iraq, the sense of place is exacting: the marshes, city checkpoints, and modest shops function as living archives of an era rarely depicted on screen. Naturalistic performances, many from non-actors, are handled with restraint, and a subtle strand of fabulism allows a child’s imagination to coexist with the hard edges of authority. Rather than lecture, the film invites us to witness how love and friendship help a young mind navigate risk. In this world, tenderness is a form of courage, and the simple act of finishing a cake is less a celebration than a test of ingenuity and care.



Hasan Hadi is an Iraqi writer and director who grew up in southern Iraq during wartime. He has worked in journalism and production, and taught as an adjunct professor at NYU’s Graduate Film Program. His honours include the Gotham–Marcie Bloom Fellowship, the Black Family Production Prize and the Sloan Foundation Production Award. A 2022 Sundance Lab Fellow, he received the 2022 Sundance/NHK Award, SFFILM Rainin Grant and a Doha Film Institute Grant for his feature debut, ‘The President’s Cake’.

Director / Screenwriter: Hasan Hadi
Producer: Leah Chen Baker
Cinematographer: Tudor Vladimir Panduru RSC
Editor: Andu Radu
Cast: Baneen Ahmed Nayyef, Sajad Mohamad Qasem, Waheed Thabet Khreibat, Rahim AlHaj

Cinema Alkhaleej



My Driver and I

KSA, UK / Arabic / 2023
111 mins
Winner of the Golden Palm for Best Feature Film at the Saudi Film Festival 2025

In 1980s Jeddah, Salma is a privileged, rebellious girl from a wealthy Saudi family, raised by a strict mother weighed down by grief and a loving father who is rarely home from work. Gamar is a young Sudanese man who has left his own family behind to earn a living in Jeddah, driving Salma to and from her day-to-day activities. At first, their relationship follows the simple rules of employer and employee, but it quickly grows into an intimate friendship that bonds them through her teenage years and beyond. Then, as Salma gets older and starts to take the wheel, that friendship is put to the test.

Ahd Kamel's first feature as director was inspired by her own childhood, and by Mohi, the Sudanese driver who was there from the day she was born, accompanied her through childhood and adolescence, and became her closest confidant, despite every difference of age, gender and nationality that society placed between them. Moving through the 1980s and 90s, it is a tender, deeply personal coming-of-age story about finding family in the most unexpected places, and about a man who may have been driving her car, but who ultimately helped her take the wheel of her own life.



Ahd Kamel is an award-winning actress and filmmaker from Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, best known for her roles in the BAFTA-nominated 'Wadjda' and the BBC and Netflix series 'Collateral'. She moved to New York in 1998, studied at Parsons School of Design and the New York Film Academy, and trained as an actor with William Esper. She wrote, directed and starred in the shorts 'The Shoemaker' (2009) and 'Sanctity' (2012), the first Saudi film to compete at the Berlinale. In 2019 she was named a World Economic Forum Young Global Leader. 'My Driver and I' is her first feature.

Director / Screenwriter: Ahd Kamel
Producers: Georgie Paget, Thembisa Cochrane
Cinematographer: Frida Marzouk
Editor: Andonis Trattos
Music: Marc Codsi
Cast: Roula Dakheelallah, Mustafa Shahata, Rana Alamuddin, Amjad Abu Alala



Soulala

Saudi Arabia, Jordan / Arabic / 2026
100 mins

A man receives a mysterious call from the mother he has not spoken to in years. She is dying, she tells him, and she wants to see him one last time. So he travels back to the remote date farm where he grew up, deep in rural Saudi Arabia, to make his peace. But the woman waiting for him is not quite the mother he remembers, and the longer he stays among the palms, the clearer it becomes that she has no intention of letting him leave. Something older than either of them has taken root in the family, and it is not done with him yet.

Drawing on mysticism, ‘Soulala’ is an elevated horror about betrayal and witchcraft, and about the cultural obligations we have to our parents: duties of loyalty and care that can be turned, by the wrong hands, into instruments of control. The farm itself becomes a character, its palm groves and shadowed rooms holding generations of secrets, and the dread builds less from what is shown than from what is slowly understood. Rooted in Saudi folklore, it speaks to anyone who has felt the pull of home tighten into a grip. A title that means lineage, and a film about what we inherit whether we want to or not.



Hisham Fqih is a Saudi filmmaker, actor, writer and comedian, born in Riyadh in 1987. After a master’s at Columbia University, where he trained in improvisational comedy at the Upright Citizens Brigade, his satirical web series ‘Hisham’s Weeklies’ made him an early Saudi online comedy star, and his 2013 video ‘No Woman, No Drive’ was seen more than 17 million times. He co-produced and starred in ‘Barakah Meets Barakah’ (2016), Saudi Arabia’s first submission to the Academy Awards, led content at Telfaz11 and directed USC’s Middle Eastern Media Initiative. In 2023 he co-founded DH’BAB Productions, which produced ‘Soulala’.

Director: Hisham Fqih
Cinematographer: Mark Khalife
Cast: Ahd Kamel, Baraa Alem, Maha Al-Ghazal, Ibrahim Al-Hasawi

Clouds

Oman, Qatar, Italy / Jibali / 2019
14 mins



In 1978, in the mountains of Dhofar in southern Oman, Dablan, a widower, lives with his children Salma and Amr in a traditional rural village. In a culture that sees the leopard as the ultimate test of a hunter’s courage, his tribe expects him to kill the one threatening their village. But Dablan resolves to set the animal free, and the pressure on him only grows. An intimate, tender journey inside a tribal society on the edge of change.

Born in Muscat, **Muzna Almusafer** first fell in love with images through her father, a painter and photographer. She studied mass communication at Kuwait University and cinema at Stockholm University. Her first film, ‘Niqab’, won the student short competition at the Gulf Film Festival in 2010, and ‘Cholo’ won Best Script at the Abu Dhabi Film Festival. Influenced by the Pre-Raphaelites and magic realism, she is also the author of the novel ‘The Marvel of Saleem in the Sad Valley’.

Director / Screenwriter: Muzna Almusafer
Producer: Intisar Said
Cinematographer: Giovanni C. Lorusso

Dunya’s Day

KSA / Arabic / 2019
14 mins



In an affluent suburb of Riyadh, Dunya has planned her graduation party down to the last samosa. But hours before her esteemed guests arrive, all of the domestic help take off, fed up with “Madame” Dunya’s antics. Aided only by her two loyal sidekicks, Deema and Dalal, she must cook, clean and stay perfectly poised, all while protecting the social status she has worked so hard to earn. A sharp, funny portrait of a flawed but fierce young woman.

Raed Alsemari is an award-winning filmmaker from Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. His short ‘Dunya’s Day’ premiered at the 2019 Sundance Film Festival, where it won the Jury Award for International Fiction, qualified for the 2020 Academy Awards and toured more than 60 festivals. He produced Sara Balghonaim’s short ‘Me & Aydarous’, winner of two jury awards at the 2024 Saudi Film Festival. He holds an MFA in Filmmaking from NYU Tisch and a BA from Harvard University.

Director / Screenwriter: Raed Alsemari
Producers: Sarah Elnawasrah, Raed Alsemari
Cinematographer: Olivier Theurillat
Editors: Olivier Theurillat, Raed Alsemari
Cast: Sara Balghonaim, Rahaf, Sarah Altaweel, Ida Alkusayer

An Evening with Laila

Kuwait / Arabic / 2021
10 mins



Laila Abdulaziz is a musical legend but not celebrated as one, a champion of the arts but not treated as one, a part of Kuwaiti history but not recorded as one. The first Kuwaiti woman to graduate from Cairo's Higher Institute of Arabic Music, she left Kuwait in 1980 and never looked back. Through rarely seen archive footage and recordings, Haya Alghanim's documentary traces her journey, up to a performance she gives today.

Haya Alghanim is a Kuwaiti filmmaker based between New York City and Kuwait City. Her short films have screened at international film festivals and exhibition venues. She is developing her first narrative feature, 'Road 250', a selection of the Rawi Screenwriters Lab and the Red Sea Lodge. She holds an MFA in Film from Columbia University and a BA from The New School. Through her artistic and professional practice, she aims to preserve and represent modern Arab art and culture.

Director / Producer: Haya Alghanim
Cinematographer: Fatima Alfulaij
Editor: Waleed Alqahtani
Production Designer: Moudhi Altouq
Music: Laila Abdulaziz
With: Laila Abdulaziz

Namoos

UAE / Arabic / 2026
11 mins



As Noora Al Zaabi prepares for her first competitive camel race, she navigates the tension between determination and doubt as the starting line draws ever closer. Through a poetic blend of observation and reenactment, Nada Jahed's short documentary revisits, in fragments of memory and motion, the pivotal race that marked the beginning of Noora's journey, exploring where tradition, identity and a sport deeply woven into the cultural heritage of the Gulf meet.

Nada Jahed is a Palestinian Jordanian filmmaker and photographer with a keen eye for human stories and cultural memories, bringing a thoughtful and grounded approach to documentary storytelling. Her debut short documentary, 'Luminary', supported by Arab Film Studio, has screened locally and internationally since 2021. In 2025, she received a grant from the Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi Foundation for Policy Research for 'Namoos', which premiered at the Ras Al Khaimah Fine Arts Festival in 2026.

Director / Producer: Nada Jahed
Cinematographer: Daniel Tudano
Editor: Waleed Al Madani
Featuring: Noora Al Zaabi

Salim Not Salim

Bahrain / Arabic / 2025
28 mins



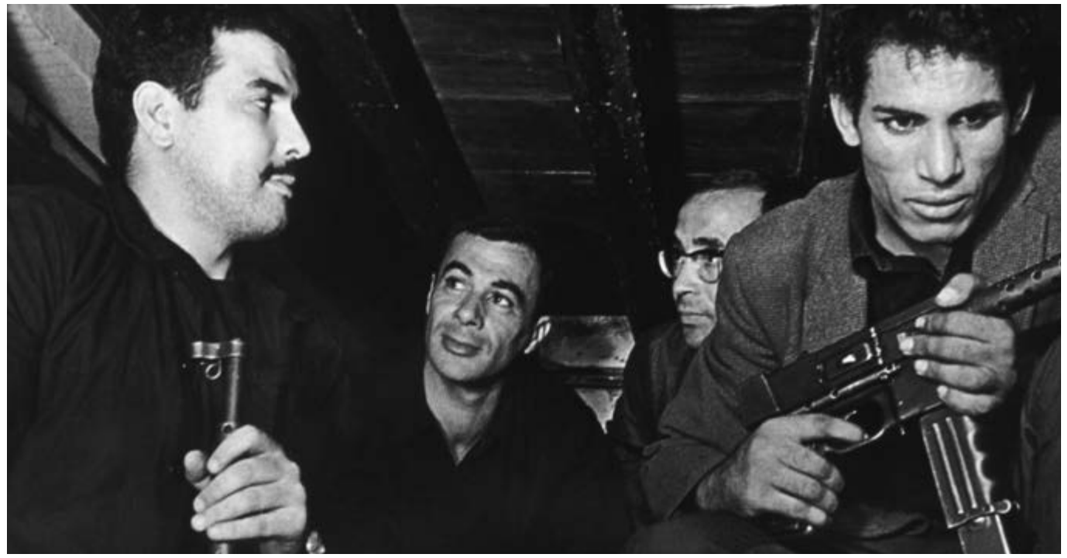
Salem is a gifted and ambitious university student whose mental state suddenly and mysteriously begins to deteriorate. As he spirals into hallucinations, delusions and breakdowns, his close friend Muath and his sister Huda try everything to help, from a sheikh's healing sessions to psychiatric care. Moving between past, present and future, Omar Farooq's film looks with compassion at the stigma of mental illness, and at what it means to stop fighting your own shadow and learn to live alongside it.

Omar Farooq began his journey in media and filmmaking in 2010, while still at high school. He studied Media at the University of Bahrain and filmmaking at the New York Film Academy. His documentary series 'Omar Tries', about travel and cultures, has drawn more than two billion views and over 20 million followers. He has received the Gulf Excellence Shield from His Majesty the King of Bahrain and was named in Forbes' 30 Under 30. He also plays Salem.

Director / Screenwriter: Omar Farooq
Producer: Bashar Abulfath
Cinematographer: Walid Tiahi
Editor: Ahmed Alsayed
Music: Selim Arjoun
Cast: Omar Farooq, Mahmood Sharif, Lamya Alshwaikh, Dana Alsalem, Abubaker Habib

DFF Classics

The history of cinema is part of its future. DFF Classics presents restored screenings of ‘The Battle of Algiers’ (1966) and ‘The Night of Counting the Years’ (1969), two films whose urgency and beauty have only deepened with time.



The Battle of Algiers

Italy, Algeria / Arabic, French / 1966
93 mins
Winner of the Golden Lion at the Venice Film Festival 1966

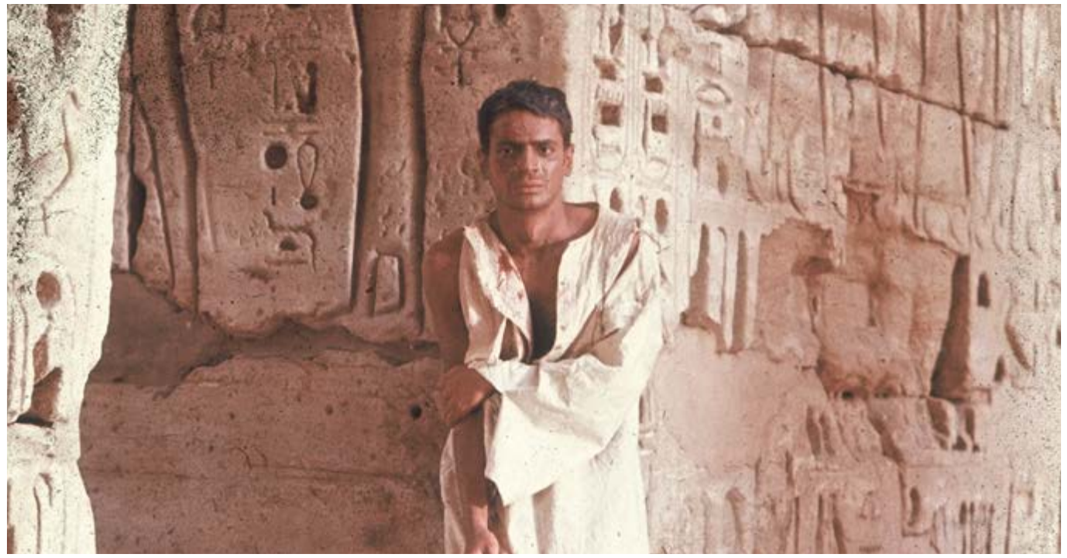
Algiers, 1954 to 1957. In the alleys of the Casbah, Ali La Pointe, a petty criminal radicalised in prison, rises through the ranks of the National Liberation Front as it begins its campaign against French colonial rule. Women carry bombs into European cafés; the French government sends in paratroopers under the cool, methodical Colonel Mathieu, authorised to use whatever methods are thought necessary to crush the uprising. Told in flashback as the net closes on Ali’s last hiding place, the film refuses to paint either side as villains or heroes, and shows with unflinching clarity how terror begets terror, and how a people’s will to be free cannot be defeated by force alone.

Shot on the streets where it happened less than a decade earlier, with a cast of non-professionals that includes Saadi Yacef, the FLN commander on whose memoir the film is based, Gillo Pontecorvo’s masterpiece has the texture of newsreel and the force of tragedy, driven by Ennio Morricone’s martial score. Winner of the Golden Lion at Venice and nominated for three Academy Awards, banned in France for five years and studied by revolutionaries and generals alike, it returns in a 4K restoration sixty years on, as urgent as ever.



Gillo Pontecorvo (1919 to 2006) was born in Pisa into a Jewish family and fled Fascist Italy for Paris in 1938, where he worked as a journalist. He led a Resistance brigade in Milan during the war and turned to filmmaking in the 1950s. ‘Kapò’ (1960) was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film; ‘The Battle of Algiers’ won the Golden Lion at Venice and earned him Oscar nominations for Best Director and Best Original Screenplay. He later made ‘Burn!’ (1969), with Marlon Brando, and ‘Ogro’ (1979), and directed the Venice Film Festival from 1992 to 1994.

Director: Gillo Pontecorvo
Screenwriters: Franco Solinas, Gillo Pontecorvo
Producers: Antonio Musu, Saadi Yacef
Cinematographer: Marcello Gatti
Editors: Mario Morra, Mario Serandrei
Music: Ennio Morricone, Gillo Pontecorvo
Cast: Brahim Haggiag, Jean Martin, Saadi Yacef, Samia Kerbash, Fusia El Kader, Mohamed Ben Kassen



The Night of Counting the Years

Egypt / Arabic / 1969
104 mins

Based on the real discovery of a cache of royal mummies at Deir el-Bahari in 1881, the film opens in Cairo, where the antiquities authorities are alarmed by treasures appearing on the market from a tomb no archaeologist has found. A dedicated young member of their committee is sent upriver to Thebes to trace it. Meanwhile, Salim, chief of the Hurabat, a mountain tribe near Thebes, dies, and the secret that has sustained his people for decades passes to his sons. Wannis and his brother are appalled to discover that the tribe has been living on the riches of the dead. Now they must choose: obey their late father's wishes and loot the tombs, or reveal their elders' secret and be cast out by their family and tribe.

Shot in classical Arabic, Shadi Abdel Salam's only feature unfolds in long takes and slow, deliberate editing that underscore the weight of the choice his characters face, while Mario Nascimbene's haunting score plays beneath its dreamlike images with a sense of fateful unease. Made with the encouragement of Roberto Rossellini, it is widely regarded as one of the greatest Egyptian films ever made: a richly realised meditation on cultural heritage, the past and the meaning of death. Long seen only in faded prints, it returns restored from its original camera negatives.

Shadi Abdel Salam (1930 to 1986) was born in Alexandria and studied drama and visual arts at Victoria College. He began his career as an assistant director to Salah Abou Seif, before becoming one of Egypt's leading set and costume designers, working with Youssef Chahine, on Joseph L. Mankiewicz's 'Cleopatra' and on Roberto Rossellini's 'Mankind's Fight for Survival'. Encouraged by Rossellini, he directed 'The Night of Counting the Years', his only feature. He spent twelve years preparing 'Akhenaton', which was never made for lack of funding, and went on to make short films and documentaries, including 'The Eloquent Peasant'.

Director / Screenwriter:
Shadi Abdel Salam
Cinematographer: Abdel Aziz Fahmy
Editor: Kamal Abou El Ella
Music: Mario Nascimbene
Cast: Ahmed Marei, Ahmed Hegazi, Zouzou Hamdi El Hakim, Nadia Lotfi



Focus on Indonesia

Focus on Indonesia celebrates a cinema steeped in ritual and rooted in place. Two acclaimed features explore how children make sense of loss and how communities hold on to the land, offering audiences in Doha a window on Indonesian storytelling at its most poetic.



The Seen and Unseen

Indonesia, Netherlands, Australia, Qatar / Balinese, Indonesian / 2017
85 mins
Winner of the Grand Prix of the Generation Kplus International Jury, Berlin International Film Festival 2018

In a village in Bali, ten-year-old Tantri and her twin brother Tantra are inseparable best friends who steal eggs from the family offerings and play together under the moon. Then Tantra falls gravely ill. As he lies in a hospital bed, his body failing, Tantri retreats into the magical, parallel worlds the two of them have always shared. By night she dresses in costume and paints her body, dances with the moon and the animals of the rice fields, and speaks to her brother in the only language that still reaches him. The boundary between the living and the dead, the seen and the unseen, dissolves, and she begins, in her own way, to say goodbye.

Drawing on the Balinese philosophy of sekala and niskala, the visible and invisible worlds that exist side by side, Kamila Andini's second feature is a film of extraordinary stillness and beauty, told almost entirely through movement, ritual and the faces of its two young non-professional leads. Supported by the Doha Film Institute, it premiered in Platform at Toronto before winning the Grand Prix of the Generation Kplus jury at the Berlinale, Best Youth Feature at the Asia Pacific Screen Awards and the Golden Hanoman at Jogja-NETPAC. A quietly devastating portrait of childhood grief, and one of the most original Indonesian films of its decade.



Kamila Andini was born in Jakarta in 1986 and studied sociology and media arts at Deakin University in Melbourne. Her films address sociocultural themes, gender equality and the environment. Her debut, 'The Mirror Never Lies' (2011), won Best Director at the Bandung Film Festival; 'The Seen and Unseen' (2017) won the Generation Kplus Grand Prix at the Berlinale; 'Yuni' (2021) won the Platform Prize at Toronto; and 'Before, Now & Then' (2022) premiered in competition at the Berlinale. In 2023 she co-directed the Netflix series 'Cigarette Girl'. Her new feature, 'Four Seasons in Java', is in post-production.

Director / Screenwriter: Kamila Andini
Producers: Kamila Andini, Gita Fara
Cinematographer: Anggi Frisca
Editors: Dinda Amanda, Dwi Agus
Music and Sound: Yasuhiro Morinaga
Cast: Ni Kadek Thaly Titi Kasih, Ida Bagus Putu Radithya Mahijasena, Ayu Laksmi



Tale of the Land

Indonesia, Philippines, Taiwan, Qatar / Indonesian, Kutai / 2024
98 mins
Winner of the FIPRESCI Prize at the Busan International Film Festival 2024

Borneo, Indonesia. Haunted by the memory of witnessing her parents' death on land, May lives with her grandfather Tuha in a floating house, adrift on a lake far from the shore, while their homeland is turned into a mining area. Since that day, May has been plagued by a mysterious condition: she faints whenever she sets foot on land. The villagers believe she is cursed, and the belief isolates her further. Deep down, May longs to reclaim her life on solid ground, but does not know how. Then Lawa, a young man training as a security guard for the mine, enters her life, and May sees a new hope. But as soon as they try, an ominous incident befalls Tuha, a stark reminder that the land remains a dangerous place.

Shot almost entirely on water, on a vast seasonal lake in East Kalimantan, Loeloe Hendra's debut feature is a new fairy tale drawn from the Dayak cosmology of his Bornean childhood, in which magic and reality, land and water, pull against one another. Shenina Cinnamon, speaking the Kutai language rarely heard in Indonesian cinema, is luminous as May, opposite veteran Arswendy Bening Swara as Tuha. Supported by the Doha Film Institute, the film won the FIPRESCI Prize at Busan, where it premiered in the New Currents competition.



Loeloe Hendra was born in a remote village in West Java and spent much of his childhood with his grandparents in Borneo, an experience that shaped his view of the world. He studied film and television at the Indonesian Institute of the Arts in Yogyakarta, where he also took his master's degree. His short 'Onomastika' (2014), about a nameless child, won Best Short Film at the Festival Film Indonesia and competed in Generation Kplus at the Berlinale. Further shorts include 'Lost Wonders' (2017) and 'Kiwa' (2019). 'Tale of the Land', his first feature, was developed at TorinoFilmLab in 2017.

Director / Screenwriter: Loeloe Hendra
Producers: Yulia Evina Bhara, Amerta Kusuma
Cinematographer: Fahrul Tri Hikmawan
Editor: Carlo Francisco Manatad
Production Designer: Sigit D. Pratama
Music: Teresa Barrozo
Sound: LH Aim Adi Negara, Vincent Vila
Cast: Shenina Cinnamon, Arswendy Bening Swara, Yusuf Mahardika, Angga Yunanda

Focus on Yemen

Focus on Yemen shines a light on a new generation of Yemeni storytellers, at home and across the diaspora. From a women-only petrol station in wartime to a return through family archives, three films reclaim the frame from headlines, providing a portrait of Yemen told with resilience, tenderness and hope.



The Station

Yemen, Jordan, France, Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Qatar / Arabic / 2026
112 mins
Winner of La Biennale di Venezia Award for Best Film in Post-Production, Final Cut in Venice 2025

Layal runs a women-only petrol station in Yemen, a safe haven in a war-torn country. The rules are simple: no men, no weapons, no politics. Inside its gates the women wait for fuel and trade gossip, food and news, and Layal shields her younger brother, Laith, from a war that wants him. When he faces enlistment, she must reunite with her estranged sister, Shams, to save the one life they still can. Layal's name means night; Shams means sun. Inside the gates, the queue is a small world of its own, loud, funny, opinionated, where the women bicker, bargain and look out for one another.

Outside, the war is always audible. A plane roars overhead just as Layal tells a caller she cannot give any petrol. Layal is quiet, steady and protective; Shams is bold and outspoken, as harsh as she is warm. To save Laith, the sisters will have to find their way back to each other. Sara Ishaq, the Oscar-nominated director of 'Karama Has No Walls', based the film on a real women-only petrol station she queued at in Sana'a in 2015, and cast it largely with non-actors from Yemen and the diaspora. The result is a warm, witty ode to the people of Yemen, who have endured years of war with dignity, humour and strength.



Sara Ishaq is a Yemeni-Scottish filmmaker who received Academy Award and BAFTA New Talent Award nominations for her debut short documentary, 'Karama Has No Walls' (2012), produced while she was studying for an MFA in Film Directing at the Edinburgh College of Art. Her second documentary feature, 'The Mulberry House' (2013), premiered at IDFA. 'The Station' is her first fiction feature. In 2017 she co-founded Comra Academy, a foundation for creative film training in Yemen, and in 2022 joined the International Coalition for Filmmakers at Risk in Amsterdam, going on to run it.

Director: Sara Ishaq
Screenwriter: Sara Ishaq, Nadia Eliewat
Producer: Nadia Eliewat,
Nicolas Leprêtre, Fred Burle, Sol Bondy
Cinematographer: Amine Berrada
Editor: Romain Namura
Music: Tessa Rose Jackson,
Darius Timmer
Cast: Manal Al-Mulaiki,
Abeer Mohammed, Rashad Khaled,
Saleh Al-Marshahi

Fariha

Yemen, Qatar / Arabic / 2024
27 mins



Fariha, a 70-year-old woman from Yemen whose name means joy, stepped out of the limelight of a burgeoning singing career in the 1980s after a series of setbacks in a male-dominated society and industry. She had sung alongside Abu Bakr Salem, Ahmed Fathi and Karama Mursal. When filmmaker Badr Yousef stumbles upon her singing in her kiosk in downtown Sana'a, he insists on following her with his camera, and tries to convince her back onto a stage.

Badr Yousef (1998) is a Yemeni filmmaker and visual artist based in Saudi Arabia. 'Fariha' is his debut short documentary, which he developed, produced and edited through the Comra Academy Mentorship Programme in Yemen, with support from the Doha Film Institute and Al Mawred Al Thaqafy. Through his work, Badr focuses on human stories, memory, culture, and voices from Yemen and the Arab region.

Director / Editor: Badr Yousef
Producer: Sara Ishaq

Imagine Me Like a Country of Love

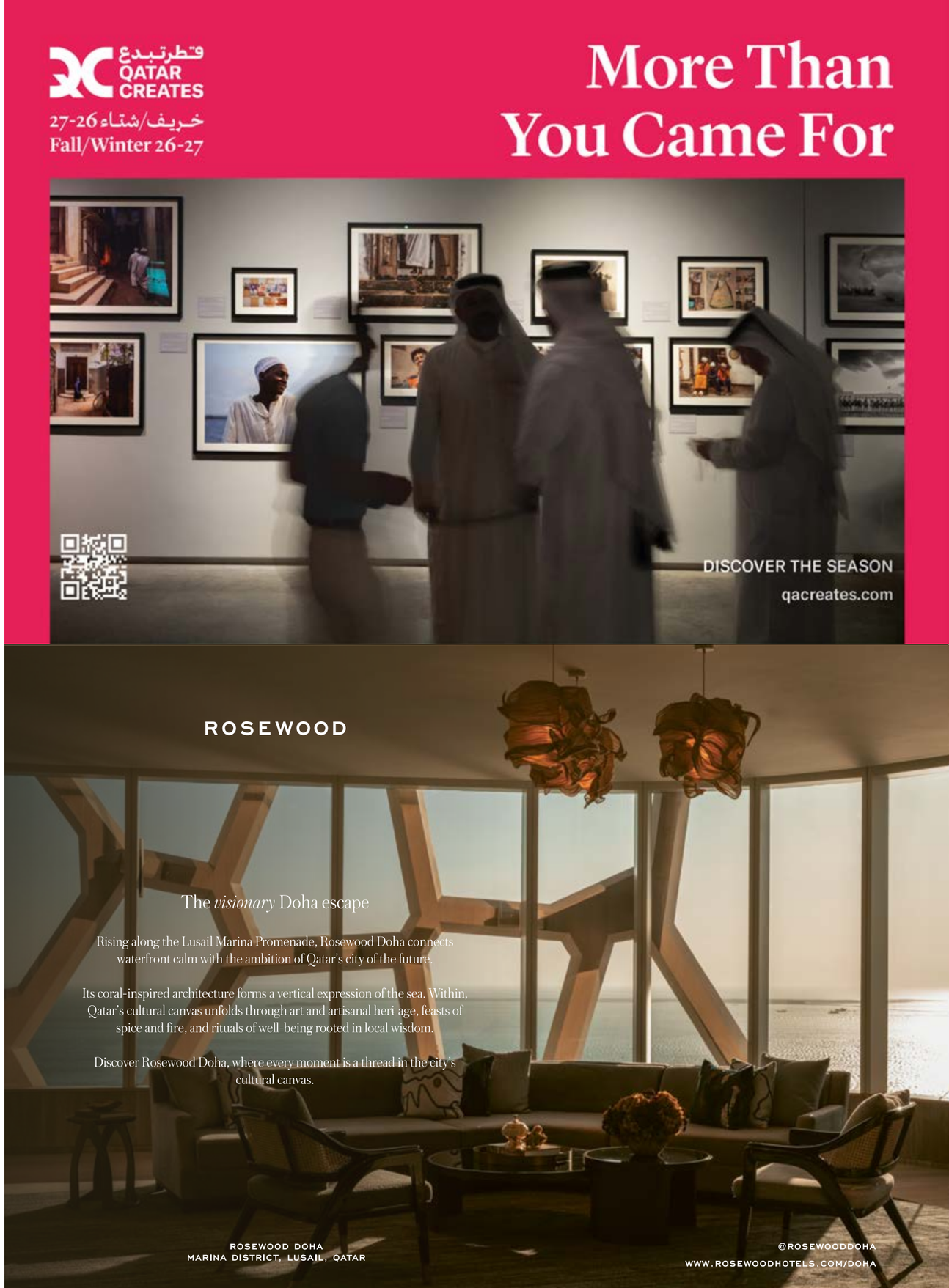
Netherlands, Yemen, Qatar / Arabic, English / 2026
21 mins



A fragmented, poetic short film about belonging and the return to a place reshaped by conflict. Shot between Yemen and the Netherlands, the film contemplates what happens when we disturb the memories we left behind. Using archival photographs, everyday footage and intimate voice recordings, it becomes a quiet meditation on grief, absence and the contradictions of remembering. Through a deeply personal lens, Thana Faroq's debut reflects on the dislocation of identity caused by geographical and emotional separation, and on the complexities of returning home.

Thana Faroq is a Yemeni-Dutch artist working across moving image, photography and text, based in the Netherlands. Her practice explores memory, displacement and the lives of women in the aftermath of conflict, often through intimate family histories and personal archives. Working between documentary and associative forms, she brings together found imagery, moving image, text and sound to examine how private memory intersects with larger histories of violence, migration and belonging.

Director / Screenwriter: Thana Faroq
Producer: Thana Faroq, Ruba Alsharki
Cinematographer: Thana Faroq, Arianna Cavalensi
Editor: Alexander Cabeza Trigg, Ruba Alsharki
Music: Reeda Fnieche



Year of Culture: Made in Mexico

Presented with Years of Culture, Made in Mexico gathers short films that explore family, identity, migration and memory. Comedy, documentary and drama sit side by side in a selection that celebrates the range of a national cinema and the ties being built between two cultures.

Casa Chica

Mexico / Spanish / 2025
26 mins



After their parents separate, 11-year-old Quique and 5-year-old Valentina move with their mother into a tiny apartment. On their first Sunday out with their father, he introduces them to his “new family”, where they discover that their half-sister is the same age as Valentina. Moving between Valentina’s wide-open curiosity and Quique’s silent anger, Lau Charles’s film pieces together her own childhood memories, ending on a portrait of her real family 25 years later.

Lau Charles is a Mexican director and visual artist, born in Mexico City in 1991. She graduated with honours in film directing from the Centro de Capacitación Cinematográfica (CCC) and in visual arts from La Esmeralda. Her short ‘Olote’ (2021) screened at Huesca and Morelia and was shortlisted for the BAFTA Student Film Awards. A co-founder of the casting project PININOS, she has worked as a casting director and acting coach and is writing her first feature.

Director / Screenwriter: Lau Charles
Producer: Luna Martínez Montero
Cinematographer: Ángel Jara Taboada
Editor: Santiago Zermeño
Music: Marco Charles, Alonso Alemán
Cast: Mauro Guzmán, Katherine Bernal, Daniela Arroio, Raúl Briones, Raquel Robles

Dante

Mexico / Spanish / 2026
19 mins



Raúl, a bodyguard on the verge of retirement, returns to work alongside his son, Daziel, before he has fully recovered from an accident. His boss orders him to get rid of Dante, a Doberman he no longer wants. To keep his job, Raúl agrees, despite his son’s objections. But when his attempts fail, Raúl is confronted with his own obsolescence, and must decide how far he is willing to go to keep his standing in his son’s eyes.

Julio Kassack was born in Mexico City in 1992. He holds a degree in actuarial science from UNAM and a master’s in economics from CIDE, and studied visual arts at La Esmeralda, specialising in photography. His photographs were shown at FotoMéxico 2019 and the 21st Photography Biennial in Mexico in 2025. He is currently studying at the Centro de Capacitación Cinematográfica (CCC), where he directed the shorts ‘Humo en la tierra’ (2023) and ‘Dante’.

Director: Julio Kassack
Producer: Laura Retiz
Cinematographer: Liz Robles
Editors: Francy Tamayo, Julio Kassack
Sound: Isa Montalvo
Music: Lucas Barroso
Cast: Leonardo Alonso, José Sabino

The End of Summer

Mexico / Spanish / 2026
16 mins



In search of brotherly connection, 12-year-old Beto skips his first day of school to follow Ramiro, the aloof older brother he admires. Their carefree outing on a scorching late-summer day in Mexico City is cut short when they discover their father cheating on their mother. As the secret strains the family's fragile harmony, a storm, both emotional and literal, forces Beto to choose between keeping quiet like his brother and confronting a painful truth.

Francisco Sánchez Solís is a Mexican writer, director and producer, and the founder of the Mexico City production company Avalancha. His shorts 'Soldado' (2022) and 'The End of Summer' (2026) have screened at festivals including Guadalajara, Morelia, Huesca, São Paulo and Moscow. As a producer, his credits include the documentary 'Sanctuary' (2019), the coming-of-age drama 'All of the Fires' (2023) and 'Don't Follow Me' (2025), the first Spanish-language Blumhouse film. He is completing his debut feature, 'Jacaranda Season'.

Director / Screenwriter / Editor: Francisco Sánchez Solís
Producers: Gabriel Barragán, Francisco Sánchez Solís
Cinematographer: Bruno Gaeta
Cast: Donovan Said Mendoza, Emilio Mejía, Brenda Montoya, César Ramos

For the Opponents

Mexico, Chile, France, UK / Spanish / 2026
14 mins



In the tough neighbourhood of Tepito, a young boy chases the great Mexican dream; to become a boxing champion. Federico Luis shot on 16mm, where a roll runs almost exactly as long as a round, and kept the adults out of frame so only their voices reach us. What remains is Damián's narrow, euphoric view of a world at once brutal and tender. This compelling short won the Short Film Palme d'Or at Cannes 2026.

Federico Luis was born in Buenos Aires in 1990. After several short films, including 'The Nap', which premiered in Cannes Competition in 2019, his debut feature 'Simón of the Mountain' won the Grand Prix at Cannes Critics' Week 2024. 'For the Opponents' won the Short Film Palme d'Or at Cannes 2026, the first Palme d'Or awarded to an Argentine director. He is currently developing his second feature, 'The Dog Trainer'.

Director / Screenwriter: Federico Luis
Producer: Fernando Bascuñán, Fernanda de la Peza, Elena Fortes, Augusto Matte
Cinematographer: Marcos Hastrup
Editor: Andrés Medina
Music: Satoshi & Makoto
Cast: Damian López, Jesús Esquivel, Ian Haziel Castillo, Jair Monroy, Isaac Rivas Cruz

Heavenly Dream

Mexico / Nahuatl / 2025
8 mins



In a forest at the foot of the Alfonso Serrano Large Millimetre Telescope, on a dormant volcano in central Mexico, two young shepherds, Armando and Braulio, talk about their dreams while tending their flock. Braulio dreamed he was a snow rose. Armando wishes he could dream his way inside the telescope. Spoken entirely in Nahuatl, José Ángel Tomasis Briseño's short documentary is a small, wondering essay on how a culture looks at the sky, and how the sky looks back.

José Ángel Tomasis Briseño was born in Querétaro, Mexico. He studied journalism and semiotics at UNAM and cinematography at the CEC, specialising in directing and screenwriting, and was first assistant director to Bernardo Arellano. He has worked on six features, producing Arellano's 'El paraíso de la serpiente', which won Best Picture at La Orquídea 2019. His shorts include 'El Reflejo' (winner at FICMA 2020) and 'Ilhuícatl Nextli', which won Best Documentary Short at the Guanajuato International Film Festival 2025.

Director / Screenwriter / Editor: José Ángel Tomasis Briseño
Producers: Claudia Angélica Viveros Pérez, Alison Rebeca Borja Rodríguez
Cinematographer: Isay Peña Cruz
Music / Sound: Víctor Emmanuel Navarro Sánchez
Animation: Rodrigo Beltrán Soria
With: Isai Solís Rendón, Josué Solís Rendón

Nyanga

Mexico / Spanish / 2023
20 mins



During the colonial era, Nyanga is kidnapped off the coast of West Africa and brought to Mexico. All he wants is to escape and return home, but instead he is sold at the slave market and forced to work on his master's plantation. Still, he never stops thinking about freedom. Then, in a dream, he is called to organise an uprising and an escape that will not take them home, but will let them put down roots in new lands.

Medhin Tewolde Serrano is an Eritrean-Mexican filmmaker based in Chiapas. After studying documentary, she turned to supporting participatory video and community media projects in Spain, Tunisia, Mexico, Honduras and Guatemala. That work shaped her own identity as a woman of African descent and led to her first feature documentary, 'Negra'. While making it, she discovered the little-known Afro-Mexican hero Gaspar Yanga, whose life inspired 'Nyanga'. The film screened at IDFA and has won 20 awards.

Director / Screenwriter: Medhin Tewolde Serrano
Producers: Daniela Contreras, Nicolas Défossé
Cinematographer: Xun Sero
Editor: Nicolas Défossé
Music: Akonio Dolo, Aleth Durel
Cast: Álvaro Nel Hernández Almario

Cinema Under the Stars

Cinema Under the Stars offers three free evenings of animated adventure in the Museum of Islamic Art Park, presented as part of the Qatar-Canada Year of Culture. From ‘Butterfly Tale’ to ‘Babar: King of the Elephants’ and ‘The Little Bear Movie’, these are stories of courage, friendship and finding your way home.



Babar: King of the Elephants

Canada, France, Germany / English / 1999
79 mins

Narrated by Marabou the stork, this animated feature tells the story of how Babar became king. In the Great Forest, the young elephant plays happily with his friends Arthur and Celeste, until a hunter’s bullet takes his mother and he flees in terror, running until he reaches the city. There, a kind old lady known only as Madame takes him in. She buys him his green suit, red bow tie and bowler hat, and raises him as her own, teaching him to read, to drive and to mind his manners. Two years later, Arthur and Celeste track him down with news from home: the old king has died, and the elephants are at war with the rhinoceroses. Babar knows he must return.

Back in the forest, Babar’s cleverness ends the war without a drop of blood, and the elephants ask him to be their king, on one condition: that Celeste becomes his queen. Together, with Madame’s help, they set about building a city for their people, which Babar names Celesteville. Drawn in the clean, gentle lines of de Brunhoff’s classic picture books and told with songs, slapstick and real tenderness, ‘Babar: King of the Elephants’ is a story of loss, growing up and learning to lead, made for the youngest filmgoers and the grown-ups who remember the books.

Raymond Jafelice is a Canadian animation director and a long-serving member of Toronto’s Nelvana studio, where his career spans more than four decades of children’s animation. He began as a storyboard artist on ‘The Care Bears Movie’ (1985) and made his directing debut with ‘The Care Bears Adventure in Wonderland’ (1987).
He went on to direct episodes of the ‘Babar’ television series, the feature ‘Babar: King of the Elephants’ (1999), the first season of ‘Redwall’ (1999) and ‘The Little Bear Movie’ (2001), which also screens in this programme. His other credits include ‘Ewoks’, ‘Strawberry Shortcake’ and ‘Little Bear’.

Director: Raymond Jafelice
Screenwriters: Raymond Jafelice, Peter Sauder
Producers: Hasmi Giakoumis, Merle-Anne Ridley
Editors: Karen Lawrie, Noda Tsamardos
Music: Tom Thorney, Tim Thorney, Peter Coulman, Brent Barkman, Carl Lenox
Voice Cast: Dan Lett, Kristin Fairlie, Janet Laine-Green, Chris Wiggins, Elizabeth Hanna



Butterfly Tale

Canada, Germany / English / 2023
88 mins

Every autumn, millions of monarch butterflies set off on one of nature's great journeys, flying thousands of miles south for the winter. Patrick, a gutsy, loveable but hopelessly inept teenage monarch, was born with one wing smaller than the other, and has never managed to fly. So when the migration leaves without him, he stows away in a milkweed trailer, with his best friend Marty, a caterpillar who is in no hurry to grow up, and Jennifer, a rebellious young butterfly who happens to be afraid of heights. Ahead of them lie wild weather, meddling humans and three villainous birds with a score to settle, and a journey that will ask Patrick to find a courage he never knew he had.

A bright, funny and big-hearted animated adventure from Canada and Germany, 'Butterfly Tale' follows its unlikely trio on the long flight south, through storms, cities and open skies, to where the monarchs gather each winter. Beneath the slapstick and the soaring flight sequences is a gentle story about self-discovery and friendship, about learning that a weakness can become a strength, and the idea that the bonds we share matter more than the differences between us. A film for the whole family, and a perfect fit for an evening under the stars.



Sophie Roy is a Canadian producer and director based in Montreal, with more than 15 years' experience developing and managing animated series and features. She began her career at Cinar and CineGroupe, served as Vice-President of Development and Sales at Echo Media, and joined CarpeDiem Film & TV in 2011, where she was a producer on the animated features 'The Legend of Sarila' (2013), 'Snowtime!' (2015) and 'Racetime' (2018). 'Butterfly Tale', which premiered at the Atlantic International Film Festival in 2023 and has since been released in cinemas around the world, is her feature directorial debut.

Director: Sophie Roy
Screenwriters: Heidi Foss, Lienne Sawatsky
Producers: Marie-Claude Beauchamp, Emely Christians
Voice Cast: Mena Massoud, Tatiana Maslany, Lucinda Davis, Richard M. Dumont, Edda Fischer



The Little Bear Movie

Canada / English / 2001
75 mins

Little Bear and Father Bear have gone camping. By the river, Little Bear meets Cub, a young wild bear who saves him from Trouble, the mountain lion who stalks the forest. Cub comes home with them, sleeps under the bed because it feels like his cave, and soon tells his new friends the truth: a storm separated him from his mother and father, and he has been on his own ever since. So Little Bear gathers Duck, Owl, Cat and Hen, and together they set out to bring Cub's family back together, posting signs through the woods and asking everyone they meet.

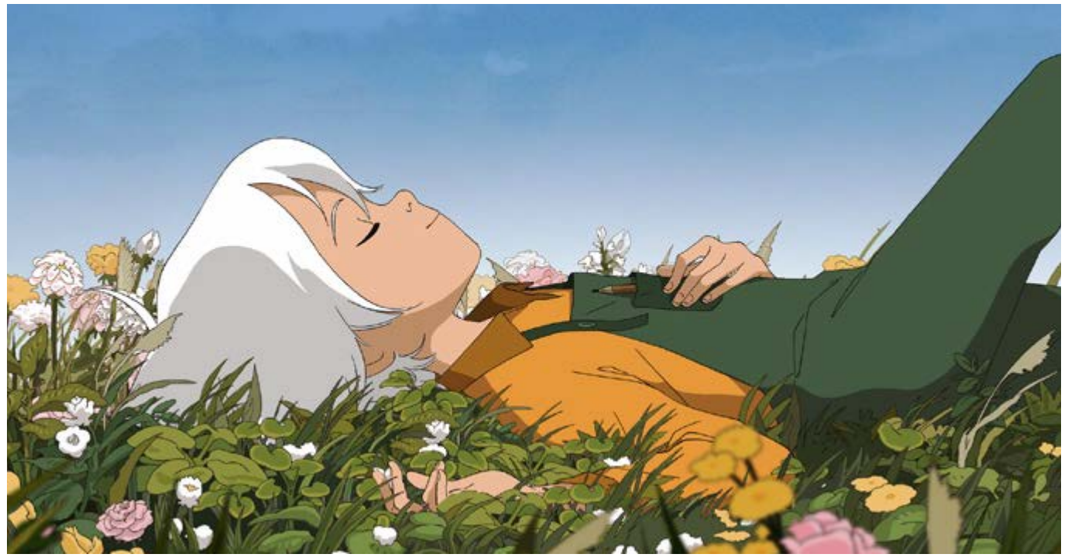
The search does not go to plan. The signs vanish, a dam breaks, and Little Bear and Cub are swept over a waterfall and lost in the forest at night, with Trouble never far behind. But the woods are full of friends too, from Moose to the playful fox twins Poppy and Pete, and help comes from an unexpected direction. Adapted from the classic picture books by Else Holmelund Minarik and Maurice Sendak, who also produced the film, 'The Little Bear Movie' keeps all the quiet warmth of the originals, with songs by Shawn Colvin and a story about kindness, courage and the comfort of home.

Raymond Jafelice is a Canadian animation director whose career at Toronto's Nelvana studio spans more than four decades of children's television and film. He began as a storyboard artist on 'The Care Bears Movie' (1985) and directed 'The Care Bears Adventure in Wonderland' (1987), before working on series including 'Babar', 'Little Bear' and the first season of 'Redwall' (1999). His features include 'Babar: King of the Elephants' (1999), which also screens in this programme, and 'The Little Bear Movie' (2001), made as the finale to the long-running 'Little Bear' series, which he helped bring to the screen.

Director: Raymond Jafelice
Screenwriters: James Still, Raymond Jafelice, Nancy Barr
Producer: Maurice Sendak
Music: Lesley Barber
Voice Cast: Kristin Fairlie, Kyle Fairlie, Dan Hennessey, Janet Laine-Green, Amos Crawley

Ajyal Film Club

The Ajyal Film Club Festival Edition offers three days of films, fun and discovery for young people aged 8 to 15. Mohaq, for ages 8 to 11, and Hilal, for ages 12 to 15, pair carefully curated screenings with creative activities and conversations designed to build confidence, curiosity and friendships.



Lucy Lost

France / French / 2026
89 mins
Family Screenings, Cannes Film Festival 2026

On the edge of a quiet fishing village in a remote archipelago lives a family bound to the sea. Jim and Mary share their home with their son Alfie, and with Lucy, a mysterious eleven-year-old girl with striking white hair and visions no one else can see. Nobody knows where she came from. Her gifts spark curiosity that soon turns to suspicion among the villagers, then to whispered rumours and cruelty in the schoolyard, as news of a distant war makes the islanders fear anyone who seems different. When Lucy meets Milly, her secret imaginary friend, the two girls set off on a magical quest to uncover the secret behind her mysterious powers.

Inspired by ‘Listen to the Moon’ by Michael Morpurgo, the author of ‘War Horse’, the film is set on the Isles of Scilly, a scattering of islands off the south-western tip of England, where shipwrecks were once common, and the tide drops low enough to cross between islands on horseback. Olivier Clert’s first feature tells the story through Lucy’s eyes, painting it all by hand in warm dawn and dusk light. It is a heartfelt journey that tests the bonds of friendship and courage, and a gentle, timely story about the fear of strangers.



Olivier Clert is a French animation director and storyboard artist. Before ‘Lucy Lost’, he spent many years developing stories for other filmmakers, working as head of story on several animated features and collaborating closely with Sergio Pablos, director of the Oscar-nominated ‘Klaus’. His credits also include ‘The Little Prince’ and ‘Little Amélie or the Character of Rain’. He joined Xilam, the studio behind ‘I Lost My Body’, expecting to work on storyboards alone, and instead reshaped its long-stalled Morpurgo adaptation. ‘Lucy Lost’, his feature debut, premiered at Cannes in 2026.

Director: Olivier Clert
Screenwriters: Olivier Clert, Helen Blakeman
Producer: Marc du Pontavice
Art Director: Joyce Colson
Editor: Ivy Buirette
Music: Anne-Sophie Versnaeyen
Cast: Charlie Rosenzweig, Zach Valentin-Dattas, Jessica Monceau, Quentin Faure, Keanu Peyran

After the Rain

Qatar / Arabic / 2026
12 mins



Maria is eight and lonely, reading in the park since her best friend moved away. On a rainy day, she finds a lost creature and hides it in her room. It is a unicorn, fallen from the clouds. When a rainbow appears, the two set out across town, pursued by the dogcatcher, towards a bridge of light thrown up by a fountain. Kholood Al Ali's cutout animation understands that company, like a rainbow, tends to arrive after the rain.

Kholood Al Ali is an award-winning Qatari animation writer and director based in Doha. She studied art education at Qatar University and later worked with Al Jazeera Children's Channel, where she wrote and directed the children's series 'My Little World'. She has directed two short films with DFI and QFF, 'Red' (2017) and 'Fragile' (2019). She co-founded the animation studio Blue Penguin Animation with Aisha AlJaidah, with whom she is developing the 2D animated feature 'The Peacock Queen'.

Director / Screenwriter: Kholood Al Ali
Producer: Ben Robinson
Editor: Abduljabbar Maki
Music: Mohammed Al Khulaifi, Joris Laenen

Grandma Swim

Bahrain, Qatar, USA / English, Arabic / 2026
11 mins



When Rana, a spirited ten-year-old who loves the ocean, loses her grandfather, she also loses their weekly swims at Malkiya Beach, a magical stretch of Bahrain's coastline. Determined to keep the ritual alive, she turns to her grandmother Bushra, who prefers to stay indoors and has not swum in years. Grieving and unable to refuse, Bushra agrees to one special day at the beach: their shared birthday. Facing old fears, she begins to see the world through Rana's eyes.

Maryam Mir is a Kashmiri-Canadian filmmaker whose work centres on warmth, whimsy and the magic of everyday life. Her short 'Sweet Refuge' screened at more than 50 festivals, won ten awards including a DGA Student Film Award, and was acquired by AMC+. She holds an MFA in Filmmaking from NYU Tisch, where she was an Ang Lee Scholar, and is a 2026 Directing Resident at the Canadian Film Centre and a 2025 Sundance Institute and Walt Disney Studios Artist Fellow.

Director / Screenwriter: Maryam Mir
Producers: Amna Alhawaj, Nicole Cone, Aya Hamdan, Maryam Mir
Editors: Maryam Mir, Nay Tabbara, Vaishnavi Upadhyay
Music: Alex Wakim
Cast: Ghada Khunji, Rahaf Hazem

Low Tide

France / French / 2025
19 mins



A retirement home by the sea, and a storm is brewing. Élodie, 11, comes to visit her grandmother Ismène, who no longer remembers her name and seems lost in the fog of her memories. Refusing to give in, the young girl fights back against fate with a few notes of music, a song the two of them once shared. Slowly, the fog begins to lift. A tender short musical about love, memory and the songs that outlast forgetting.

David Noblet was born in the mountains near Grenoble and started making films at around 15. After studying at Ciné-Sup in Nantes, where he co-founded the artists' collective Pagaille, he trained in directing at INSAS in Brussels, graduating in 2018. His films often focus on isolated or marginalised communities, and approach each story with gentleness and poetry, often anchored in nature. A musician since childhood, he composes for his own films and others'; his first films were musicals.

Director / Screenwriter: David Noblet
Producers: Audrey Guatelli, Pierre Dessogne
Cinematographer: Maxime Sabin
Editor: Tuong-Vi Nguyen Long
Music: David Noblet, Alexandre Treille
Cast: Olympe Renard, Jo Deseure, Yves-Batek Mendy, Oriane Renard



Out of School

Morocco, Denmark / Amazigh, Arabic / 2026
70 mins
Human:Rights Competition, CPH:DOX 2026

In Oulghazi, a remote village high in Morocco's Atlas Mountains, there is no secondary school. At 12, Mohamed, known to everyone as Mokari, has had to leave his studies behind, because his parents cannot afford the 35-kilometre journey to the nearest one. With his father now too old for the building sites, Mokari decides it is time to become a man, find a job in the city and lift his family out of poverty. His sister Fatima, in her final year of primary school, is determined to avoid the same fate. She wants to become a teacher and wear jeans to work, rather than face a life of housework until marriage, and then more housework.

The first generation in their village to go to school, the two siblings stand at the edge of childhood as friends leave for work, for Koranic school or for marriage, and every Friday the men set off to work far from home. Filmed over two years, Hind Bensari's intimate documentary follows them through games of hide-and-seek, odd jobs, sheep herding and end-of-year results, capturing with tenderness and humour the tension of adolescence caught between the world they imagine they can reach and the reality they must live with.



Born in Casablanca in 1987 and raised in Morocco and the UK, **Hind Bensari** is a self-taught filmmaker whose work combines visual storytelling with strong social impact. Her short '475: Break the Silence' (2013) was broadcast internationally and helped repeal a controversial article of Moroccan law. Her feature debut, 'We Could Be Heroes' (2018), won Best International Feature at Hot Docs and Best Moroccan Film at the Tangier National Film Festival. Based in Marrakech, she is commissioning editor for documentaries at 2M and teaches documentary filmmaking at ESAV Marrakech.

Director / Screenwriter: Hind Bensari
Producers: Vibeke Vogel, Alaa Eddine Aljem
Cinematographers: Amine Zouine, Hind Bensari
Editor: Julie Benta
Music: Tin Soheili
With: Mohamed Afarrou, Fatima Afarrou



Thirteen in Gaza

Palestine, Qatar / Arabic / 2026
78 mins
Winner of the NETPAC Award, Toronto International Film Festival 2026

Gaza, 2025. A bombing destroys Raghad's home and kills her mother, and the thirteen-year-old and her father, Abu Raghad, end up in an overcrowded displacement camp, where tents stand close together, bathrooms are shared and water is scarce. There, Raghad gets her first period. With no mother to guide her, and too ashamed to add to her father's burdens, she tries to hide it. Nour, a former neighbour, helps her quietly with advice and scarce supplies, though even that small kindness causes friction with Nour's family, who fear giving away what they may need themselves.

Abu Raghad has lost his home, his work and his standing. When Khalil, an old acquaintance who now controls warehouses and aid supplies, offers him a job, he takes it, telling himself he is doing what any father would. But Khalil's help comes at a price, and his attention begins to turn towards Raghad. Filmed entirely in Gaza with a local cast and crew, under bombardment and displacement, Hosam Abu Dan's first fiction feature keeps destruction looming at the edge of the frame. It looks instead at what war does to a body, a family and a community's sense of right and wrong, and at a girl forced to grow up far too fast.



Hosam Abu Dan is a Palestinian director and producer from the Gaza Strip, where he lives and works. He began his career as an editor in 2010 before moving into directing, cinematography and production, and in 2016 he founded New Scene for Media & Artistic Production, making documentaries, drama and digital work for broadcasters including Al Jazeera and UNRWA TV. His documentary 'Gaza Sound Man' (2024), about a sound engineer recording life in Gaza, competed for the Tim Hetherington Award at Sheffield DocFest in 2025. 'Thirteen in Gaza', his first fiction feature, won the NETPAC Award at Toronto in 2026.

Director / Producer / Editor: Hosam Abu Dan
Screenplay: Khalil Al-Muzayyen
Executive Producer: Hanna Atallah
Cinematographer: Yousef Mashharawi
Music: Alaa El Rawey
Cast: Mary Ziyara, Firas Al-Masri, Ghassan Salem, Abeer Ahmed, Nawaf Abu Amra



Tin Castle

Ireland, France / English / 2026
95 mins
Critics' Week Competition, Cannes Film Festival 2026

Along a long-forgotten Irish road, the O'Reillys live in a rundown trailer stranded in the middle of the fields. Pa, Lisa and their ten children weather the seasons in their tin castle, heirs to a way of life on borrowed time. Under threat of eviction, their tenuous balance falters, yet, steadfast in their tradition, they resist. In a school presentation, Chantelle explains that she has lots of brothers and five sisters, that she lives in a mobile home because she is an Irish Traveller, and that when she marries, the boy will have to ask her dad first.

Around her, family life carries on at full tilt. Barbie weddings, boxing lessons, communion dresses and a broken generator that leaves them without electricity for a week. When the council offers a house on a crowded estate, with no room for the horses, Pa refuses; he is a Traveller until the day he dies. Alexander Murphy spent six years with the O'Reillys, filming alone until the camera became, in his words, "an eleventh child". Seen through the children's eyes, it is a warm, unvarnished portrait of a culture slowly fading, and of a tin castle that is, against everything, a home.



Alexander Murphy is a Franco-Irish filmmaker. Through stories rooted in the youth of traditional communities, he explores questions of heritage, displacement and transmission. His sensitive eye gives intimate access to the lives of vulnerable populations facing extreme living conditions. Marked by great tenderness and a keen photographic sensibility, his films are dedicated to preserving the memory of threatened cultures within marginalised groups. His previous documentaries include 'Goodbye Sisters' (2025), 'Ndao Hanavao' (2024) and 'Of Soul and Joy' (2023). He is currently developing 'Born Free', a Franco-South African documentary.

Director / Cinematographer: Alexander Murphy
Screenwriter: Alexander Murphy, Jean-Baptiste Plard
Producer: Cosme Bongrain, David Collins, Eamon Hughes
Editor: Nicolás Longinotti
Music: Kevin O'Leary
With: Pa O'Reilly, Lisa O'Reilly, Sean O'Reilly, Paddy O'Reilly, Chantelle O'Reilly, Tina O'Reilly, Maggie O'Reilly

Guided Tour

France, Puerto Rico / Spanish, English / 2026
15 mins



Night falls over the island of Zuania, once the site of a US military base, now a coveted Caribbean tourist destination. Newborn sea turtles make for the sea as a ferry of visitors docks. Beatriz, a local guide, spends her days chasing bookings and condescending American clients while her mortgage payments pile up. When the month runs short, she agrees to lead them inland, where another species of free-roamer is proliferating.

Alba Jaramillo is a Colombian-Puerto Rican director, editor and producer who grew up in Puerto Rico. She directed 'Motorrodillo' (2022), which screened at DOK Leipzig and DOC NYC, and 'Project for a Collection' (2014), selected for the Havana Film Festival. An alumna of the IDFA Academy, EURODOC Caribbean and the Sundance Producing Fellowship, she is a former BBC commissioning editor. 'Guided Tour' won the Jury Prize for Best Short Film at Visions du Réel in 2026.

Director / Screenwriter / Editor: Alba Jaramillo
Producers: Surya Daniel, Alba Jaramillo
Cinematographers: Rami Ghorra, Alba Jaramillo
Sound Design: Manuel Vidal
Cast: Inès Badila

Pale Sun

France / French / 2026
16 mins



Summer in Fos-sur-Mer, where heavy industry meets a sun-drenched coastline. Twelve-year-old Abel's father is finally home from hospital, his head shaved and his body scarred by cancer, but Abel would rather play football with his new friends than spend the day at the beach with his parents. When the boys start mocking a strange bald man who keeps calling Abel's name, he faces an impossible choice. Deny his father to belong or stand by him under everyone's gaze.

Adrian Moyse Dullin is a French writer and director who studied at Sciences Po Grenoble and the École des Mines de Paris. His first fiction short, 'The Right Words' was selected for the Official Competition at Cannes and nominated for a César. Jawahine Zentar spent ten years as an assistant director before making her first short, 'On My Father's Grave' (2021), which screened at nearly 100 festivals and won the Golden Yusr at the Red Sea International Film Festival.

Directors: Adrian Moyse Dullin, Jawahine Zentar
Screenwriters: Adrian Moyse Dullin, Emma Benestan, Valery Carnoy
Producers: Lucas Tothe, Jessica Arfuso
Cinematographer: Balthazar Lab
Editor: Maxime Pozzi-Gracia
Music: Santiago Dolan
Cast: Anass El Hmami, Baki Bousmaha, Sylvie Fasano

Summer Delivery

China, Switzerland, Malaysia / Chinese (Chaozhou dialect) / 2026
15 mins



In traditional Chinese culture, red eggs symbolise fortune and happiness. On her mother's birthday, seven-year-old Aileen leaves her grandmother's mountain village for the city, carrying a red egg as a precious gift. Her mother works there and comes home only twice a year. When Aileen's bike falters midway, a quirky yet kind delivery driver unexpectedly becomes her guardian for the day. A bittersweet tale of missing someone, and of growing up.

Lam Can-zhao is a Chinese filmmaker from Chaozhou, in southern China, where 'Summer Delivery' was shot. Born in 1994, he made his feature debut at 20 with the low-budget independent film 'The Dog'. In 2023 he produced, wrote and edited 'A Bright Sunny Day', selected for La Cinef at Cannes. His short 'A Summer's End Poem' (2024) won the Special Prize of the International Jury for Best Short Film in Berlinale Generation Kplus.

Director / Editor: Lam Can-zhao
Screenwriters: Lam Can-zhao, Xu Shutong
Producers: Lam Can-zhao, Tammy Tai
Cinematographers: Gou Haokun, Wenhua Pan
Music: Ton That An
Cast: Weng Qi, Anton Kind, Cai Mengting, Tammy Tai

DFF Talks

DFF Talks gathers filmmakers, artists, musicians, cultural leaders and journalists for in-depth conversations and panels that look at where cinema and culture are heading, from the archive to the future of Arab cinema, and from the Gulf's cinematic firsts to the stories behind the headlines.

Inspired by the wider conversations shaping cinema today, the talks explore creative practice, industry challenges, cultural and social themes and the evolving landscape of filmmaking. From personal storytelling, representation and contemporary Arab cinema to producing, technology and new forms of expression, they offer an open platform for exchange and discovery between filmmakers, industry professionals and audiences.

The Architecture of Vision: The Father Emir and the Making of Qatar's Cultural Landscape

Culture, arts and human development are not merely reflections of a nation's identity; they are the foundation of its future. Presented as a tribute to His Highness the late Father Emir, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, this special session revisits the thinking behind one of his defining legacies: Qatar National Vision 2030. When the Vision was drafted, Qatar faced a set of defining choices: between managed growth and uncontrolled expansion, between modernisation and the preservation of tradition, and between the needs of today and those of generations to come. H.E. Sheikha Al Mayassa and H.E. Dr Ibrahim Ibrahim, former Economic Advisor to the Father Emir and founding Secretary General of the General Secretariat for Development Planning, discuss how economic foresight became a cultural mandate, and how museums, cinema and creative institutions became part of building a nation able to sustain itself and tell its own story.

Panellists



H.E. Sheikha Al Mayassa
Chairperson, Doha Film Institute



Dr Ibrahim Ibrahim
Former Economic Advisor to the Father Emir
and founding Secretary General of
the General Secretariat for Development Planning

The New Gatekeepers with Mehdi Hasan

Trust in news is changing, and more of it now sits with independent, journalist-led media. Mehdi Hasan, founder of Zeteo, joins a conversation on what that asks of the people building these platforms: how they earn trust, hold power to account and remain accountable themselves.

Speaker



Mehdi Hasan

Mehdi Hasan is an award-winning British-American journalist, broadcaster and author. He is the founder, CEO and editor-in-chief of the new media company Zeteo. Mehdi is also a Guardian columnist, host of 'Head to Head' on Al Jazeera English and the best-selling author of 'Win Every Argument: The Art of Debating, Persuading, and Public Speaking'. He previously worked as an anchor at MSNBC and columnist for The Intercept.

The Modern Classicism: Intimate Scale and Epic Vision with James Gray

From the streets of New York in 'Little Odessa' to the vast cosmos of 'Ad Astra' and the 1980s New York of 'Paper Tiger', James Gray has bridged independent authorship with large-scale cinematic worlds. This conversation offers an inside look at his journey through the creative and industrial realities of modern filmmaking: the endurance required to realise ambitious projects, the balance between personal signature and mainstream machinery, and how the timeless grammar of cinema can tell stories that endure.

Guest



James Gray

James Gray made his directorial debut in 1994, at the age of 25, with 'Little Odessa', which received the Silver Lion at the Venice Film Festival. In 2000 he wrote and directed 'The Yards', his first film with Joaquin Phoenix, who went on to star in 'We Own the Night' (2007), 'Two Lovers' (2008) and 'The Immigrant' (2013), all of which screened in competition at Cannes. 'The Lost City of Z' (2017) was followed by 'Ad Astra' (2019), which premiered in competition at Venice, and 'Armageddon Time' (2022), inspired by his own childhood in 1980s Queens. His latest feature, 'Paper Tiger', starring Scarlett Johansson, Miles Teller and Adam Driver, premiered in competition at Cannes and opened the New York Film Festival. Born in New York City, Gray attended the University of Southern California School of Cinema-Television.

Moderator



Rodrigo Teixeira

Rodrigo Teixeira is a film producer and the founder of RT Features, which since 2006 has been one of the leading audiovisual production companies in Latin America and the most prominent Brazilian film company in the international market, with films nominated for over 50 awards, including nine Oscar and six Golden Globe nominations. His credits include James Gray's 'Armageddon Time' (2022) and 'Ad Astra' (2019); Mia Hansen-Løve's 'Bergman Island' (2021); Karim Aïnouz's 'Invisible Life' (2019), winner of Un Certain Regard at Cannes; Robert Eggers' 'The Lighthouse' (2019) and 'The Witch' (2016); Luca Guadagnino's 'Call Me by Your Name' (2017), winner of the Academy Award for Best Adapted Screenplay; and Noah Baumbach's 'Frances Ha' (2013) and 'Mistress America' (2015).

Khaleeji Cinema: A Shared Language?

As Gulf cinema continues to expand across international festivals and regional markets, this conversation explores the evolving identity of Khaleeji cinema and the distinct cinematic voices emerging from the region. Building on our Cinema Alkhaleej programme, it brings together filmmakers and industry professionals to discuss shared cultural influences, storytelling traditions and the challenges of reaching both local and international audiences.

Panellists



Ahmed Al Baker

Ahmed Al Baker is a Qatari filmmaker with over a decade of experience across film, television and live events, rooted in thoughtful storytelling and a clear creative vision. He directed the Opening Ceremony of the first FIFA Arab Cup (2021), served as Creative Director for the Opening and Closing Ceremonies of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, led 'The Lost Chapter of Kelileh and Demneh' for the AFC Asian Cup Opening Ceremony (2023) and returned to direct the Opening Ceremony of the FIFA Arab Cup in 2025. On screen, he was a showrunner and director on 'The Pact' (Roku) and 'Medinah' (Starzplay), and produced 'Orca', the football docuseries 'Chasing Dreams', the Qatari feature 'Sa3oud Wainah?' and the observational docuseries 'Elzam', which has its world premiere at DFF 2026. He leads Katara Studios as CEO and Executive Producer, developing projects that bring regional stories to life.



Hisham Fqih

Hisham Fqih is a multi-hyphenate creative working across Western and Arab audiences. He started his career in 2011 as a stand-up comedian in Saudi Arabia's underground scene, and went on to become Head of Content at Telfaz11. As a filmmaker, he gained international acclaim for producing and starring in 'Barakah Meets Barakah', Saudi Arabia's submission to the 2017 Academy Awards, which premiered at the Berlin International Film Festival, where it won the Prize of the Ecumenical Jury, and became the first Saudi film on Netflix. He served as Director of the Middle East Media Initiative at USC's School of Cinematic Arts and has worked on 'Ramy' and 'Big Mouth' in the US. He is currently Chief Creative Officer at DH'BAB Productions, based in the US and Saudi Arabia. 'Soulala' is his debut feature as director.



Muzna Almusafer

Born in Muscat, Oman, Muzna Almusafer developed an early appreciation for visual storytelling through her father, a painter and photographer. She graduated from Kuwait University with a degree in Mass Communication and later studied Swedish cinema and television culture at Stockholm University. Her debut short, 'Niqab', won the Student Short Film Competition at the Gulf Film Festival in 2010. Her second, 'Cholo', received the Best Script award at the Abu Dhabi Film Festival and premiered at the Dubai International Film Festival in 2013, with later screenings at the Smithsonian's National Museum of African Art, the Eye Film Museum in Amsterdam and the Institut du Monde Arabe in Paris. Her short 'Clouds' won Best Short Film at the Gulf Film Festival in Riyadh.



Ahd Kamel

An award-winning Saudi actress and filmmaker from Jeddah, Ahd Kamel has built an international career across film, television and short film direction. She is best known for her role in the BAFTA-nominated 'Wadjda' (2012) and as Fatima Asif in the BBC and Netflix series 'Collateral' (2018). Her two short films have screened at festivals including the Berlinale, and her debut feature, 'My Driver and I', won the Golden Palm at the Saudi Film Festival in 2025. She remains dedicated to authentic storytelling across cultures.

Moderator



Fahad Al-Kuwari

Fahad Al-Kuwari is a screenwriter and researcher in storytelling and myth-making, specialising in building educational resources in the fields of creative writing and narrative development. Fahad has been actively working in the Qatari film industry for more than 15 years, including as a Creative Writer with Innovation Films, a Youth Programmes Specialist at Doha Film Institute, and Head of Development at Katara Studios. Fahad is the joint recipient of a CIDA Merit Award for developing production design curricula at Virginia Commonwealth University in Qatar, where he guest-lectured for four years. He holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Virginia Commonwealth University and a Master's degree in Film and Screen Studies from Goldsmiths, University of London.

The Things We Do Not Say with Khaled Khalafalla

Khaled Khalafalla uses comedy and storytelling to talk about identity, belonging and the things people often feel but struggle to say. This conversation draws on the show he is currently touring, then opens into a wider exchange on how a personal story becomes one other people recognise, what to share and what to hold back, and why a laugh can start a conversation that is otherwise hard to have.

Speaker



Khaled Khalafalla

Khaled Khalafalla is an Egyptian-Australian comedian, actor and storyteller whose performances take audiences from roaring laughter to stunned silence. Blending sharp political satire with deeply personal storytelling, he has sold out theatres across Australia and internationally. With screen credits including ‘Ali’s Wedding’, ‘Utopia’ and ‘Upper Middle Bogan’, his fiercely independent voice and command of an audience have established him as one of Australia’s most exciting and compelling performers.

Between Roots and Ritual: Naomi Kawase on Crafting Intimate Worlds

At the core of Naomi Kawase’s body of work lies an enduring search for identity, connection and the unseen bonds of memory. Across three decades of filmmaking, her stories have probed family lineage, motherhood, loss and humanity’s coexistence with nature. This session invites audiences into Kawase’s storytelling philosophy, exploring how personal grief and local heritage can be transformed into poetic, healing narratives on screen, her instinctive approach to directing non-professional and seasoned actors alike, and why honouring emotional truth remains the guiding compass of her craft.

Guest



Naomi Kawase

Born and based in Nara, Japan, Naomi Kawase is acclaimed for films that blend fiction and documentary through intimate explorations of human experience. In 1997 she became the youngest recipient of the Caméra d’Or at Cannes for her debut feature, ‘Suzaku’, before winning the Cannes Grand Prix for ‘The Mourning Forest’ (2007). ‘Radiance’ (2017) received the Ecumenical Jury Prize at Cannes, while her latest feature, ‘Yakushima’s Illusion’ (2025), premiered in competition at Locarno. An experienced juror, she has served on the Cannes Competition Jury and presided over its Cinéfondation and Short Films Jury. She founded the Nara International Film Festival and joined DFI’s Qumra programme as a Master in 2016. She is Head of the International Feature Film Competition Jury at DFF 2026.

Moderator

Melanie Goodfellow

Book Contributors Panel: The Future of Arab Cinema

What does the future hold for Arab cinema, and who will shape it? Bringing together contributors to a new book on the subject, this panel gathers filmmakers, curators, critics and scholars from across the region and its diaspora to reflect on where Arab cinema stands today. From archives and film criticism to programming, education and new modes of production, the conversation explores the histories, institutions and voices that will define the next chapter of Arab filmmaking.

Panellists

Alia Ayman

Alia Ayman is a film curator, filmmaker and scholar based between Cairo and New York City. She is a co-founder of Zawya Cinema in Cairo and has contributed to programmes at Berlinale Forum, IDFA, Flaherty NYC, Arsenal Institute for Film and Video, and Images Festival. She currently programmes for the Arab Women Film Festival in Brazil and BlackStar Film Festival in Philadelphia. She holds a PhD in anthropology, culture and media from New York University.

Viola Shafik

Viola Shafik, PhD, is a filmmaker, curator and film scholar specialising in Arab cinema. She is the author of several books, including ‘Arab Cinema: History and Cultural Identity’ and ‘Popular Egyptian Cinema’. She has taught at institutions including the American University in Cairo and has worked as a curator and consultant for international festivals and film funds such as the Berlinale and the World Cinema Fund. She has also directed several documentary films.

Fahad Al-Kuwari

Fahad Al-Kuwari is a screenwriter and researcher in storytelling and myth-making, specialising in building educational resources in the fields of creative writing and narrative development. Fahad has been actively working in the Qatari film industry for more than 15 years, including as a Creative Writer with Innovation Films, a Youth Programmes Specialist at Doha Film Institute, and Head of Development at Katara Studios. Fahad is the joint recipient of a CIDA Merit Award for developing production design curricula at Virginia Commonwealth University in Qatar, where he guest-lectured for four years. He holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Virginia Commonwealth University and a Master’s degree in Film and Screen Studies from Goldsmiths, University of London.

Mary Jirmanus Saba

Mary Jirmanus Saba is a geographer and filmmaker whose work explores the histories of labour movements and anticolonial struggles in the Arab world. Her debut feature, ‘A Feeling Greater Than Love’ (2017), received the FIPRESCI Prize at the Berlinale Forum. She is currently a fellow at the Harvard Film Study Center and a UC Presidential Postdoctoral Fellow at UC Santa Cruz.

Ahmed Al Ayyad

Ahmed Al Ayyad is a Saudi journalist and film critic. He is the founder and editor-in-chief of Fasllah.com, a platform dedicated to film criticism and writing. He serves as a film programmer at the Red Sea International Film Festival and is the president of the Saudi Film Critics Association, as well as a member of FIPRESCI. He regularly covers major international festivals and hosts several cinema-focused podcasts.

Moderator
Zaina Bseiso

Zaina Bseiso is a filmmaker, educator and curator whose work explores diasporic notions of return, cinematic acts of solidarity and articulations of power in the moving image. She is the Senior Programmer at the Points North Institute, Shorts Programmer at the Sundance Institute, and serves on the programming board of the LA Filmforum. As a guest curator, she has collaborated with the Flaherty Seminar, DOXA Documentary Film Festival and others. In 2019 she co-founded Bahia Collective, a community of filmmakers committed to collaborative practices and curation. Her first feature film, ‘Todo Lo Sólido’, is currently in post-production and has received support from Sundance, Sandbox Films, Visions Sud Est, IDFA and others.

Re-Centering the Archive: From Edward Said to Our Times

Co-presented with Lusail Museum

How do images invent an ‘Orient’, and how do we begin to deconstruct them? Drawing on the rare archival broadcasts featured in ‘Edward Said: Between Worlds’ and the collections of the Lusail Museum, this panel investigates the enduring lineage of colonial depiction. The discussion explores Said’s critique of media distortion, the archival craft of recovering silenced perspectives, and the Lusail Museum’s mission to transform historical artefacts from tools of imperial imagination into sites of critical dialogue and regional agency.

Panellists



Maiken Baird

Maiken Baird is a Danish-American film director and producer. She directed ‘Venus and Serena’ and ‘Ghislaine Maxwell: Filthy Rich’ for Netflix, was an executive producer of the Academy Award-winning ‘Icarus’, and produced ‘Tantura’ (Sundance 2022) and ‘Folktales’ (Sundance 2025). She is also an executive producer on the acclaimed Palestinian feature ‘All That’s Left of You’ (Sundance 2025), an epic multigenerational story of exile. Her latest film, ‘Edward Said: Between Worlds’, screens as a Gala at DFF 2026. She is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and speaks four languages.



Najla Said

Najla Said is an actress and writer who has performed in theatre, film and television. In 2010 she completed an eight-week Off-Broadway run of her solo show ‘Palestine’, which has since been performed at schools and universities across the United States. That same year she was named one of ‘Forty Feminists Under Forty’ by The Feminist Press. She is the author of ‘Looking for Palestine: Growing Up Confused in an Arab-American Family’ (2013), and a consulting producer on ‘Edward Said: Between Worlds’.



Wadie Said

Wadie Said is the Nicholas Rosenbaum Professor of Law at the University of Colorado Law School, where he teaches criminal law and procedure and a seminar on advanced criminal justice. He is the author of ‘Crimes of Terror’ (2015) and of some twenty law review articles and book chapters, and is currently at work on a book on Palestine and American law for Princeton University Press. A former assistant federal public defender, he is an elected member of the American Law Institute, a board member of the Institute for Palestine Studies (USA) and a former Senior Visiting Fellow at Georgetown University in Qatar.



Mohammed El-Kurd

Mohammed El-Kurd is an internationally touring, award-winning poet, writer, journalist and organiser from Jerusalem, Palestine. In 2021 he was named one of TIME’s 100 most influential people in the world and co-founded the #SaveSheikhJarrah movement. He is the first Palestine Correspondent for The Nation, and his work has been featured in major news outlets worldwide. His debut poetry collection, ‘Rifqa’ (2021), was shortlisted for the Forward Prize for Best First Collection, and his non-fiction debut, ‘Perfect Victims and the Politics of Appeal’ (2025), has been translated into several languages. He holds an MFA in Creative Writing from Brooklyn College and delivered the keynote for the 18th Annual Edward Said Memorial Lecture at Princeton University.



Dr. Giles Hudson

Moderator



Dr Safwan Masri

Dr Safwan M. Masri is Senior Advisor and Executive Director of Cultural Diplomacy at the Office of H.E. Sheikha Al Mayassa. He most recently served as Dean of Georgetown University in Qatar (GU-Q) and a Distinguished Professor of the Practice at Georgetown’s Walsh School of Foreign Service. After joining GU-Q in October 2022, he championed initiatives that strengthened the university’s position as a hub for global dialogue and interdisciplinary scholarship. Under his leadership, GU-Q expanded its academic and research collaborations, launched new community engagement programmes and hosted signature events such as the Hiwaraat conference series. He is a lifetime member of the Council on Foreign Relations and an honorary fellow of the Foreign Policy Association, and the founding chairman of King’s Academy and Queen Rania Teacher Academy in Jordan. He serves as a trustee of International College in Beirut and is a director of AMIDEAST and of Endeavor Jordan.

Polyphonic Yemen: Memory, Diaspora, and New Forms of Creative Expression

Global media coverage has often obscured the vibrant cultural heritage, humour and daily realities of Yemen. Today, a new generation of filmmakers, visual artists and digital creators is reclaiming the frame. In this conversation, Yemeni storytellers from the homeland and the diaspora reflect on the emergence of diverse perspectives in their work. From poetic fiction and documentary photography to sonic archives, the panel explores how personal memory, youth culture and visual innovation offer counter-narratives that speak to resilience, nuance and artistic self-determination.

Panellists



Sara Ishaq

Sara Ishaq is a Yemeni-Scottish director, producer and screenwriter (Setara Films) who holds an MA in Humanities and Social Sciences and an MFA in Film Directing from the University of Edinburgh. In 2011 she covered Yemen's Arab Spring uprising for outlets including the BBC, and shot her debut short documentary, 'Karama Has No Walls' (2012), which was nominated for an Academy Award and a BAFTA New Talent Award. Her feature documentary 'The Mulberry House' (2013) premiered at IDFA. She has trained filmmakers in Yemen since 2015, is co-founder and Executive Director of Marsa Foundation, and from 2022 to 2026 ran the International Coalition for Filmmakers at Risk in Amsterdam. Her debut fiction feature, 'The Station', premiered in Cannes Critics' Week in 2026 and opens DFF 2026.



Ala'a Amer

Ala'a Amer is a Yemeni producer and filmmaker who works across the US and the MENA region to tell Yemeni stories authentically and to create real pathways for the next generation of Yemeni filmmakers. She came to film from healthcare: when war broke out in Yemen she changed course, learned producing on set, and built a career spanning commercial, documentary and narrative work. She has produced three short films inside Yemen and is developing her first feature, 'Al-Madeeneh 2008', with her long-time collaborator, director Yousef Assabahi, set in their hometown of Ibb. She also mentors emerging Yemeni filmmakers, is an alumna of the Arab Producers Lab with EAVE and holds a diploma in international producing from UCLA Extension.



Yousef Assabahi

Yousef Assabahi is a Yemeni writer and director. Since completing his studies at the UCLA School of Theater, Film and Television in 2018, he has written and directed several short films and commercials exploring the cultural identity and collective memory of Yemenis at home and abroad. His recent short won Best Short at the Hollywood Arab Film Festival and Best Director at the Casablanca Arab Film Festival, and was shown at the Kennedy Center. For over three years he served as Senior Producer and then Associate Director of Oral History at the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, producing oral histories of filmmakers including Béla Tarr, Mike Leigh and Eric Roth. He is currently developing his debut feature, 'Al-Madeeneh 2008', which has received support through over ten development labs and industry platforms.



Thana Faroq

Thana Faroq is a Yemeni visual artist and educator based in The Hague. Working across photography, moving image, text and sound, her practice explores memory, displacement and the lives of women in the aftermath of conflict, often drawing on intimate family histories and personal archives. She is the author of two photobooks, 'I Don't Recognize Me in the Shadows' (2020), which received the PhotoWien Photobook Award, and 'How Shall We Greet the Sun' (2023). Her work has been exhibited internationally and supported by institutions including the Magnum Foundation, the Arab Fund for Arts and Culture and Doha Film Institute. Her debut short, 'Imagine Me Like a Country of Love' (2026), screens in the International Short Film Competition at DFF 2026. She teaches photography at the Royal Academy of Art in The Hague.



Nadir Nahdi

Nadir Nahdi is a British presenter, filmmaker and producer from London, with Yemeni, Indonesian, Pakistani and Kenyan heritage. Representing the voice of the third-culture generation, he blends heritage and modernity through cinematic storytelling about identity, diaspora, food and belonging. He is the founder of BENI, a storytelling platform and culture lab spanning a popular YouTube channel, live events and products. His films include '#findingnenek', which retraces his Indonesian grandmother's journey; 'Am I Just a Number?', on observing Ramadan as a refugee; and 'The Doppi Project', on Uyghur and Uzbek identity. A YouTube Creators for Change Ambassador, he was named one of London's most influential people by the Evening Standard. He also founded BENI Run Club, a weekly community run in London, and leads storytelling masterclasses for new creators.

Moderator



Shaima Al-Tamimi

Shaima Al-Tamimi is a Yemeni-East African visual storyteller based in Qatar who uses her lived experiences to address social issues, focusing on family, healing and sociocultural dynamics. She is currently working on her first feature documentary with Mayar Hamdan, and was a 2024 Fellow of Firelight Media. Her latest commission, 'Teta, Show Us Your New Teeth', for Qatar Museums, is currently on display at Rubaiya Qatar 2026. In 2021 her short film 'Don't Get Too Comfortable' premiered in Venice and has screened at over 40 festivals and art galleries worldwide.

Arabic on the Mic:
DAM in Conversation with NARCY

DAM, pioneers of Palestinian hip-hop, have been rapping in Arabic since the late 1990s. Iraqi-Canadian artist NARCY joins them to talk about moving between Arabic and English, and about what Arabic sounds like on a beat in 2026. The conversation closes with a live verse exchange.

Speakers



DAM

DAM, meaning ‘everlasting’ in Arabic, is the first Palestinian hip-hop crew and among the first to rap in Arabic. Formed in the late 1990s in Lyd by Tamer Nafar, Suhell Nafar and Mahmood Jrere, the group became a household name across the Middle East after ‘Min Irhabi’ (‘Who’s the Terrorist?’) was downloaded over a million times following its release in 2001. Their sound is a fusion of east and west, blending fierce Arabic rap with Arabic rhythms, Middle Eastern melodies and the pulsating beats of urban hip-hop. Maysa Daw joined the group in 2015, and their albums include ‘Dedication’ (2006), ‘Dabke on the Moon’ (2011) and ‘Ben Haana Wa Maana’ (2019). At DFF 2026, Tamer Nafar, Maysa Daw and Mahmood Jrere perform together with DJ Bruno.



NARCY

NARCY, born Yassin Alsalman, is a celebrated Iraqi-Canadian multidisciplinary artist, filmmaker and cultural thinker whose work bridges music, cinema and cultural critique. A JUNO-nominated musician, an award-winning director, a professor of hip-hop at Concordia University and a bookshop owner, his practice explores identity and media, challenging dominant narratives while forging connections across cultures. He is regarded as one of the sharpest pens in Arab hip-hop.

Doha Industry Days

المدينة الإعلامية
Media City
Qatar قطر

لجنة الأفلام
Film Committee

Presented by Film Committee at Media City Qatar, in collaboration with Doha Film Institute, Doha Industry Days opens the festival with three days of keynotes, fireside conversations and panels. Held under the auspices of H.E. Hassan Al Thawadi, Chairman of Film Committee at Media City Qatar, the programme brings together leading figures from global cinema, media, technology and finance to explore how stories are financed, made and shared today.

From the economics of independent studios and the rise of microdramas to artificial intelligence, gaming, sport and the craft of telling true stories, the sessions trace the forces reshaping the industry, while a guest country spotlight on Indonesia and a focus on talent and craft keep creativity at the centre. Across three days of exchange, Industry Days positions Qatar as a meeting point for the global entertainment industry and a growing hub for film, media and entertainment in the region.

Fireside Chat: In Conversation with the Chairman

This opening conversation with the Chairman of Film Committee at Media City Qatar explores the vision behind its work, the partnerships shaping it and what a growing production and talent ecosystem in Qatar can offer the international industry.

Global Trends in the Entertainment Industry

A leading media executive and investor shares a view of where the entertainment industry is heading, from streaming and consolidation to the new business models reshaping how content is made, owned and brought to audiences.

Panel: Squid Game: How a Korean Story Conquered the World

Members of the creative team behind ‘Squid Game’ discuss how a deeply Korean story became one of the most watched series ever made, and what its success reveals about the global appetite for local stories told on their own terms.

Fireside Chat: AI in Film Making

Founders at the forefront of AI-driven production explore how new tools are entering every stage of filmmaking, from development and previsualisation to visual effects, and what this means for creativity, rights and the future of the craft.

Fireside Chat: Global Film Financing: Where the Money Is Going

A leading media and technology investor presents a view of how film and television are being financed today, followed by a conversation on where capital is flowing and the opportunities and risks for producers and platforms in a rapidly changing market.

Panel: The Ethics of Microdramas

Vertical, bite-sized drama is one of the fastest-growing formats in entertainment. Leaders behind the boom discuss AI, the race for audience attention in vertical video, and the creative and ethical questions raised by stories built for the scroll.

Panel: Brands as Co-Creators: Funding and Building IP from Development

As brands move from sponsorship to authorship, this panel explores how global companies are funding and shaping film and television from the earliest stage of development, and how creators can build partnerships that serve the story.

Panel: State of the Entertainment Industry in Indonesia

This year’s guest country spotlight turns to Indonesia, one of Asia’s most dynamic screen industries. Producers, filmmakers and executives discuss the creative and commercial forces behind its growth, and the opportunities for collaboration with Qatar and the region.

Fireside Chat: Talent Led Studios

Two leading actors who have built their own production companies discuss why talent is taking control of development and ownership, and how talent-led studios are changing the stories that get told and the balance of power in the industry.

Fireside Chat: In Conversation with Joe Russo

The director, producer and co-founder of AGBO reflects on a career spanning some of the most successful films of all time, building an independent studio, and how technology and new models of ownership are changing the way stories reach audiences.

Fireside Chat: Why Capital Is Betting on Sports and Live Entertainment

Sport and live entertainment have become some of the most valuable assets in media. Leading investors make the case for live events, rights and sports storytelling, and explore why capital is flowing into experiences that bring audiences together in real time.

Panel: Trends in Film Infrastructure

Leaders in post-production, studios and stage facilities explore the infrastructure behind modern filmmaking, from virtual production and post-production pipelines to the studio capacity that attracts international projects to a region.

Panel: Real Lives: Turning True Stories into Film and Television

How do filmmakers turn real lives into drama without losing sight of the truth? Directors, actors and producers discuss the responsibility owed to real people, the balance between fact and storytelling, and how Arab lives can reach global audiences with nuance and care.

Panel: From Console to Screen: Adapting Games for Film and Television

As game franchises become some of the most successful films and series of recent years, this panel explores how stories travel between gaming and the screen, and the opportunities for the region's creators and studios.

Panel: The Human Spark: Creativity, Conscience and the Age of AI

This panel brings together filmmakers, faith leaders and thinkers to reflect on faith, ethics and artistry at a time when machines can make content, and on the imagination and conscience that give art its power.

DFF Music

Music is an essential part of the festival's celebration of creativity, identity and cultural exchange. Across the Arab world, a new generation of artists is using music not only to redefine contemporary sounds but to express identity, lived experience and the issues of their time. DFF Music puts them on stage alongside acclaimed international names, extending the festival experience beyond cinema and into the wider creative landscape.

Spanning hip-hop, R&B, electronic music, Afrobeat and contemporary Arabic sounds, the programme brings Palestinian hip-hop pioneers, fresh Sudanese voices and Qatar's own rising talent together with international artists over five nights.



Saturday 21 November

Arab hip-hop opens the programme, from Qatar's own independent rap scene to two of the sharpest voices the genre has produced. Doha's Brava Dance Studio brings movement and aerial arts to the stage, before Iraqi-Canadian rapper NARCY and Palestinian pioneers DAM close the night.



SAAD and SwayDee

SAAD, born Saad Al Suwaidi, is a Doha-based rapper carving out his own identity in the hip-hop scene. Driven by a passion for music, storytelling and self-expression, he combines personal experience with a confident delivery and a distinctive creative vision, treating music as a platform for expression, connection and pushing creative boundaries. He performs alongside his brother SwayDee, born Farhan Al Suwaidi, a Doha-based producer with a passion for sound design and experimentation who brings a distinctive approach to hip-hop production. Together they represent a new generation of independent creatives making their mark on Qatar's growing hip-hop scene, on their own terms.



Brava Dance Studio

Brava Dance Studio is a leading dance and aerial arts studio in Doha. Founded in 2018, it was the first in Qatar to offer multiple dance styles for all ages and levels, and the country's first aerial arts studio. Its professional choreographers created the 'Dreamers' music video for the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, choreographed opening ceremonies for the 2024 World Aquatics Championships and Formula 1, and have worked on commercials with David Beckham and numerous music videos. Brava's students have also won international competitions in Singapore, South Korea and the United States.



NARCY

NARCY, born Yassin Alsalman, is a celebrated Iraqi-Canadian multidisciplinary artist, filmmaker and cultural thinker whose work bridges music, cinema and cultural critique. A JUNO-nominated musician, an award-winning director, a professor of hip-hop at Concordia University and a bookshop owner, his practice explores identity and media, challenging dominant narratives while forging connections across cultures. He is regarded as one of the sharpest pens in Arab hip-hop.



DAM

DAM, meaning 'everlasting' in Arabic, is the first Palestinian hip-hop crew and among the first to rap in Arabic. Formed in the late 1990s in Lyd by Tamer Nafar, Suhell Nafar and Mahmood Jrere, the group became a household name across the Middle East after 'Min Irhabi' ('Who's the Terrorist?') was downloaded over a million times following its release in 2001. Their sound is a fusion of east and west, blending fierce Arabic rap with Arabic rhythms, Middle Eastern melodies and the pulsating beats of urban hip-hop. Maysa Daw joined the group in 2015, and their albums include 'Dedication' (2006), 'Dabke on the Moon' (2011) and 'Ben Haana Wa Maana' (2019). At DFF 2026, Tamer Nafar, Maysa Daw and Mahmood Jrere perform together with DJ Bruno.

Sunday 22 November

Three women reshaping the sound of the region, from Yemeni-rooted electronic production to a new wave of singer-songwriters building audiences across cultures and platforms. The night moves from Intibint's layered live sets to Dana Salah's bold fusion of vintage Arab soul and global pop.



Intibint

Intibint is the moniker of UK-based Yemeni producer, singer-songwriter, visual artist and DJ Noha. Born in London and raised between the UK and Yemen, she makes music that moves between the personal and the collective, combining emotional directness with political resonance. Rooted in electronic production, her sound crosses downtempo, alt-R&B and hip-hop while drawing on Yemeni musical traditions. Her live performances bring together vocals, field recordings, original productions and reworked traditional and revolutionary Arabic songs from Yemen, Palestine and Sudan. Across sound, visuals and performance, including her work as founder of Al Yamaniah, her practice is rooted in resistance and reclamation.



TÄRA

TÄRA is an Italian-Palestinian artist with an international outlook, emerging as one of the most exciting new voices bridging Arabic heritage and contemporary R&B. She describes her sound as 'Arab'n'B': a modern blend of Arabic rhythms and melodies with R&B songwriting and production, built around a strong vocal identity and a distinctive, forward-looking aesthetic. Her new album, 'Zefiro', released in May 2026, marked the start of a significant new chapter and a wider international push.



Dana Salah

Growing up in Amman, Jordan, Dana Salah spent her afternoons watching vintage broadcasts of Umm Kulthum and Abdel Halim Hafez beside her grandmother, planting the seed for her signature sound: Fala7i Pop, a bold fusion of vintage Arab soul and global pop that blends reggaeton beats, Palestinian folklore and classic Arabic instruments. After studying at Duke University, she moved to New York, where as King Deco she topped Billboard's Dance charts, before a quiet pull brought her home to her language and lineage. Now one of the region's most distinct voices, with songs including 'Weino', 'Ghazaleh' and 'Bent Bladak', she was named Spotify's EQUAL Arabia Ambassador and nominated Best Indie Artist by Billboard Arabia in 2024.

Monday 23 November

A landmark collaboration unites contemporary songwriting with the emotional ambience of a symphonic performance, as Grammy-nominated artist RY X performs with the Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra.



RY X

Grammy-nominated artist and producer RY X is constantly in pursuit of connection: to nature, to spirit and to the human experience, with expression and vulnerability at the core of his work. The Australian-born, Los Angeles-based artist has toured and performed in some of the world's most iconic spaces and collaborated with orchestras including the LA Philharmonic and London Philharmonic, as well as producing and writing records for artists such as Drake, Diplo, Black Coffee and John Legend. He has amassed over a billion streams and been invited to share his work at the Nobel Peace Prize ceremony and Notre Dame. His forthcoming album, led by the single 'Holy Water', marks a return to organic instrumentation and intimate, emotional songwriting.

The Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra

The Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra promotes both Western and Arabic music, inspiring a love of the art form among people of all ages in Qatar and the Arab world. Through performances, education, and cultural outreach, it builds connections between musical traditions and communities. As part of Qatar Foundation, the Philharmonic supports the country's shift from a carbon-based to a knowledge-based economy, playing a key role in unlocking human potential and enriching the nation's cultural and creative development.

Tuesday 24 November

Three artists building global audiences on their own terms: Jeddah-born Mishaal Tamer, moving between Arabic, English and Spanish; British-Sudanese soul prodigy Elmiene; and Malaysian singer-songwriter Yuna, whose hit ‘Crush’ with Usher made her an international sensation.



Mishaal Tamer

Saudi-Ecuadorian by blood and global by nature, Mishaal Tamer was born in Jeddah in 1999 and is fluent in English, Arabic and Spanish. His music lives at the crossroads of indie rock, pop and alternative R&B, shaped by two cultures and built for the world. The first Saudi artist to sign with a major global record label, he trained at NYU’s Clive Davis Institute before releasing his critically acclaimed 2024 debut album ‘Home Is Changing’, which has contributed to over one billion streams across platforms. His collaboration with OneRepublic on ‘Mirage’ earned a sync placement on Assassin’s Creed, and he is the founder of Arabian Knights Records, in partnership with EMPIRE.



Elmiene

British-Sudanese singer Elmiene, born Abdala Elamin and raised in Oxford, is a poet turned artist whose very first song attempt sparked the whirlwind start of his career in 2022. Since then he has soundtracked a Louis Vuitton show, won early admirers in Sampha and Stormzy, and released five critically acclaimed projects in three years, earning Rising Star nominations at the BRITs and The Ivors, support slots with Stevie Wonder and SZA, and a performance on NPR’s Tiny Desk. His debut album ‘sounds for someone’, made with producers including Sampha and Raphael Saadiq, is a collection of songs centred on his late father, exploring love, grief and acceptance.



Yuna

Yuna makes R&B with a timeless groove, crafting soulful pop with the sultriness of Sade, the air of Aaliyah and the sweetness of Brandy. Growing up in Kuala Lumpur, she began writing confessional songs at 14 and was performing them in public while still in her teens. Since her self-titled 2012 debut and her Pharrell Williams-produced breakthrough ‘Live Your Life’, she has released five studio albums and collaborated with artists including Usher, G-Eazy and Tyler, the Creator, with ‘Crush’ becoming an international hit. By staying true to her identity as a Muslim South East Asian woman, she has become a voice for a vast global fanbase, and an independent artist and producer who owns her own music.

Wednesday 25 November

The programme closes with the fresh voices of Sudanese music, from Qatar-based rapper EZ9 and Brooklyn neo-soul artist Nadine El Roubi to the Afrobeat-inflected duo MarSimba and Sudanese-Saudi rapper Dafencii.



EZ9

EZ9 is a Sudanese rapper based in Qatar, recognised as one of the leading voices of the new generation of Sudanese hip-hop. Known for his distinctive sound, confident delivery and authentic representation of Sudanese culture, he continues to push the boundaries of the 249 music scene. With hit records including ‘Romana’ and ‘Nas Al Donia’, alongside his ‘B7RIII’ EP, he has built a growing audience across the region and beyond, establishing himself as a rising force in Sudanese rap.



Nadine El Roubi

Nadine El Roubi is a neo-soul artist of Sudanese heritage based in Brooklyn, New York. With a background in hip-hop, she laces cutting lyrics and sharp storytelling within her songwriting, woven together with intricate harmonies and melodies that bring together hip-hop, R&B and neo-soul. Her music explores identity, self-reflection and spirituality. Her debut album, ‘Life Is Beautiful Again’, was released in October 2026.



MarSimba

MarSimba are Sudanese singers and songwriters Sedeeg Hassan (SeidoSimba) and Mazen Awad (MazMars), who started as social media influencers before transitioning into music. They are known for their unique style, mixing Sudanese accent and lingo with African beats, and fusing Sudanese musical influences with Afrobeat and contemporary rhythms.



Dafencii

Omar Mohammed AlFadil, known as Dafencii, is a Sudanese-Saudi rapper, singer and composer born in 2001 in Khamis Mushait. Blending diverse cultural influences with a passion for rhythm and poetry, he began writing lyrics and sharing raw, self-produced rap videos that quickly gained attention for their authenticity, and his music blends contemporary hip-hop with Arabic sounds.

Geekdom

Geekdom is Qatar’s home of pop culture, run by Doha Film Institute and built with our community at its heart. Since 2013, it has offered a space for fans of all ages to share their interest in films, games, comics and more.

At Doha Film Festival 2026, Geekdom presents ‘Hope’, a genre-defying epic from one of Korea’s most acclaimed filmmakers, alongside a talk on how visual effects are reshaping the stories we tell.



Hope

South Korea / Korean, English / 2026
160 mins

In Hope Harbor, an isolated coastal village near the Demilitarized Zone, police outpost chief Bum-seok receives alarming news from the locals: a tiger has appeared. When old Mr Ko’s prized fighting bull is savagely killed and the village erupts into panic, it becomes clear that something far stranger is at large. With reinforcements diverted to battle wildfires and all communication cut off, Bum-seok and the steadfast officer Sung-ae struggle to defend a village of the elderly, while in the mountains, the restless young hunter Sung-ki and the locals who set out to track the beast find themselves hunted instead. What begins as ignorance plants the seed of disaster, escalating through human conflict into a tragedy of cosmic proportions.

Na Hong-jin’s first film in a decade, and the fourth of his features to be selected for Cannes, ‘Hope’ is a breathless fusion of science fiction, action and thriller, with unexpected flashes of humour. Shot almost entirely in daylight, across the ancient forests of Romania and the South Korean coast, it begins as a hunt for a mysterious predator, grows into a desperate struggle for survival, and finally becomes something else entirely. Spectacular and unpredictable from start to finish, it is a monumental story of how tragedy is born of misunderstanding.



Na Hong-jin is one of South Korea’s most acclaimed filmmakers, known for original storytelling, sophisticated visuals and an ability to bridge artistic merit with mainstream appeal. His debut feature, ‘The Chaser’ (2008), opened a new chapter for Korean thrillers and screened in the Midnight Screenings at Cannes. ‘The Yellow Sea’ (2010) followed in Un Certain Regard, and ‘The Wailing’ (2016), a supernatural thriller seen by 6.87 million Korean cinemagoers, was acclaimed at Cannes. He wrote the original story for, and produced, ‘The Medium’ (2021), and in 2021 founded Forged Films, which produced ‘Hope’, his fourth feature.

Director / Screenwriter: Na Hong-jin
Producers: Na Hong-jin, Saemi Kim, Saerom Kim
Cinematographer: Hong Kyung-pyo
Editor: Sunmin Kim
Music: Michael Abels
Cast: Hwang Jung-min, Zo In-sung, Hoyeon, Taylor Russell, Cameron Britton, Alicia Vikander, Michael Fassbender

Geekdom: The New Visual Frontier: CGI, VFX and the Future of Storytelling

From blockbuster spectacle to the latest generative tools, visual effects are transforming what can be imagined on screen. In this talk, CG supervisor Borko Milohanovic, whose credits include ‘Avengers: Endgame’ and ‘F9’, takes audiences behind the scenes of today’s VFX industry. He covers the studio facilities and CGI and 3D post-production behind major productions, and the procedural systems and AI technologies shaping the future of storytelling.

Speaker



Borko Milohanovic

Borko Milohanovic is a CG supervisor and technical leader with extensive experience in visual effects for major feature films. At DNEG Montreal, he supervised CG production across studios in North America, Europe and Asia, contributing to films including ‘Avengers: Endgame’, ‘Ghostbusters: Afterlife’, ‘F9’, ‘Scream’, ‘Pet Sematary’ and ‘Borderlands’. As Head of Tech Art and Technical Director at Ubisoft, he oversaw tools, procedural systems, AI-driven automation and procedural content generation for large-scale game development. An active educator, he has delivered masterclasses and lectures on effects animation and procedural systems at SIGGRAPH. He is known for developing innovative AI and procedural workflows for large-scale film and VFX productions.

DFF Exhibitions and Experiences

Atlas of Cinematic Affinities
15 Years of Doha Film Institute

Marking 15 years of Doha Film Institute, ‘Atlas of Cinematic Affinities’ engages cinematic practice through a publication and an exhibition, mapping the creative processes of filmmakers from across the world and the connections between them.

Presented as part of Design Doha 2026 at Fereej Al Asmakh, the exhibition expands the book into a space, deconstructing cinema into its elemental languages: time, the sensorial, movement and stillness, sound, archives, and the ways in which space shapes narrative.

In this meeting of cinema, print and spatial design, the tools of filmmaking are taken apart and encountered anew. Images, sounds, gestures and rhythms are drawn out of their original contexts and placed in relation to one another, making the process of filmmakers visible and inviting visitors to consider what cinema can hold, and what it can transmit.

At its heart is the notion of affinity: between filmmakers, those who have inspired them, and the communities that have supported them. Together, they trace the landscape DFI has helped to shape over the past fifteen years.





Artou

France, Mauritania, Luxembourg, Qatar / 2026
27 mins

After the death of their father in Europe, three sisters and three brothers fulfil his final wish: to be laid to rest beside his own father, in his native village in Mauritania. In the Fulani language, “artou” means both “come back” and “the return”. Moving across sky, water and land, Abderrahmane Sissako’s first 360° immersive film follows one family’s journey home, and the return that awaits us all, with the voice of Omar Sy.

Abderrahmane Sissako was born in Mauritania in 1961, grew up in Mali and studied film at VGIK in Moscow. His short ‘Oktyabr’ (1991) was selected for Un Certain Regard at Cannes, as was ‘Waiting for Happiness’ (2002), which won the FIPRESCI Prize. ‘Timbuktu’ (2014) became the first Mauritanian film nominated for the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film, and won seven César Awards, including Best Film and Best Director. His latest feature, ‘Black Tea’, was released in 2024.

Director / Screenwriter:
Abderrahmane Sissako
Producers: Omar Sy,
Maryvonne Le Meur
Cinematographer: Fouzi Louahem
Editor: Nadia Ben Rachid
Music: Armand Amar
Voice: Omar Sy
Cast: Kessen Tall, Oumou Ba,
Aissatou Ba, Djibril Diaw,
Soueilem Mohamed dit Aziz

Doha Film Institute and Doha Film Festival 2026 Team

Chief Executive Officer,
Director of Doha Film Festival
Fatma Hassan Alremaihi

Deputy Chief Executive Officer,
Deputy Director of Doha Film Festival,
Geekdom Founder
Abdulla Jassim Al Mosallam

Chief Operating Officer,
Festival Managing Director
Nikolaos Bempis Kolyfas

Chief Strategy & Programmes Officer
Hanaa Issa

General Counsel
Russell Frame

Creative Advisor
Issam Bou Khaled

Artistic Advisor
Elia Suleiman

Film Programming
Majid Al-Remaihi
Sheikha Rawda Al Thani
Karem Kamel
Aya Al Blouchi

Programme Operations
Farah El Buy
Maya Mechmoum

DFF Music
Karem Kamel

Geekdom
Ahmad Al Sharif

Atlas of Cinematic Affinities
Shaima Al Tamimi
Zaina Bseiso
Nathalie Elmir

DFF Team 2026
Aanar Alobeid
Aashika Sureshan
Abdalhadi Shurair
Abdelkarim Ghassan
Abdelrahman ElKady
Abderraouf Elbaouni
Abdul Ahad Altaf
Abdul Hafeedh Haneefa
Abdul Jabbar Maki
Abdulaziz Al Marri
Abdulla Al Saif
Abdulla AlNaimi
Abdulla Abdulqawi
Abeer Hassan
Adem Karmous
Adi Tunovic
Adil Abdulgaffoor
Ahammed Uneen Umminiyil
Ahmad Khalil
Ahmad Barakat
Ahmed Alrefaei
Ahmed Shalaby
Ahmed Taha
Ahmed Yaser Abujoudeh
Aimee Merheb
Aisha Guiamadin
Aizere Yessenkulova
Ajmal Mohammed
Alaa AlHakawati
Alaa Mahmoud
Alanoud AlSaiari
Alexandra Fredricks
Ali Khechen
Ali Shawkat
Alina Bachek
Alyeldeen AlZiftawi
Ameer Parambil
Amer Jamhour
Amina Mahnoor
Amit Chowdhury
Ammar Tbayshat
Amna Al-Binali
Amnah AlJaidah
Anagha Robbin
Anand Mondhe
Anas Aboobacker
Anas Aldous
Angel Cheng
Angel Raphael
Ania Wojtowicz
Anida Devedžić
Anthea Devotta
Anuja Srivastava
Arham Khalid
Arij Ahmed Omar
Arwa Ibrahim
Ashma Guiamadin
Ashwin Valiyaveettil
Awn Mustafa
Aya Chafi
Ayan Bhat
Ayat Salim Nazar
Azzam Nasarudheen
Bassam Fayad
Bassam Lebbos
Belal Hiroli
Benjamin Amy
Benjamin Robinson
Bilal Iqbal
Carole Mezher
Céline Roustan
Chadi Abdulrahim
Chadi Zahreddine
Chris Knight
Clare Peacock
Dalibor Spasevski
Dana Abou Nahl
Dana An Natsheh
Dana Mohammed
Darin Al-Saqqa
Dariusz Bolton
Darren Arthur
David D'Souza
Dawood Al-Anwari
Deena Wafy
Delia Mackenzie Cameron
Dina Bolboul
Diviya Khanna
Doaa Rashwan
Earl Abrahams
Eiman Nasir
Elena Pavlaki
Elena Servetnik
Elham Gaber
Ellie Spencer-Harty
Eman Kamel
Ermin Čakal
Eslam Abdelghany
Fadeela Totah
Fahad Qureishi
Faisal Abdulrasheed
Faisal Khan
Falah Hannoun
Farah Hadi
Faran Raza
Farida Nader
Farina Amir
Faten Aboul Hosn
Fatima Adieb
Fatima Asif
Fatma Attia
Fawzi Abdelfattah
Fedja Purivatra
Furkhan Ali
Galib Bin Dastagir
George Rouhana
Ghada Salha
Ghanimeh El-Taweel
Gheed Fawaz
Haitham Abu Elghiet
Hajara Najeeb
Hajera Thakur
Hamad Musthafa
Hani Aboukhalil
Hanin Hashem
Hannah Ocampo
Haroon Muhammad
Hassan Mourad
Hend Khader
Hira Akbar
Hoor Elshafei
Hossam Mohamed Nayel
Hussam Babar
Hussein Baydoun
Ibrahim Abuhumeid
Ibrahim ElHamaida
Ibrahim Idris
Iman Ghareeb
Ines Lučić
Inigo Palenzuela
Jaili Hajo
Jam Moreno
Jamie Navarro
Jana Wehbe
Jaser Alagha
Jenny Nomikou
Joe Jabbour
Johnny Kallas
Joud Siam
Julia Taribo
Julie Alagos
Juliet Pastor
Kamal Sai
Kaoutar Aatioua
Karim Ariqat
Karl Harris
Kawkab Zaouk
Khadija Jamaldin
Khaled Alatawneh
Khalil Benkirane
Kinan Akaoui
Kleopatra Korai
Labeeba Ahmed
Lamia Salman
Lana Abu Abed
Lauren Mekhael
Lejla Karišik
Lena Alkahaleh
Lubna Al Azzeh
Lubna Wafi
Mahdi Al Sharshani
Mahdya Tayubur Rahman
Mahitab Taha
Mahmoud Hamdouna
Mahmoud Hussein
Maida Shafaq
Majid Wasi
Malek BenSaid
Malika Assanseitova
Mansha Farooq
Manuel Santini
Maria Ghantous
Marie Adrien
Marilou Zotiadou
Marjan Anbarsooz
Mark Jared Mendoza Quejano
Marko Lendić
Marwa Hajwel
Marwan Mohamed Mireh
Maryam Shaheen
Maseera Kazi
Mauricio Trade
Mayar Hamdan
Mike Marsland
Mila Zhanat
Minas Stratigos
Minoo Hosseinipour
Mohamed Abdelazez Elnour
Babiker
Mohamed Anas
Mohamed Atif
Mohamed Safwat
Mohamed Sidahmed
Mohamed Somji
MohamedElgaili Nouri
Mohammad Abuhaweeleh
Mohammad Alsalem
Mohammad Amayreh
Mohammad El Khairy
Mohammad Khalid
Mohammed Abu Nahl
Mohammed Al-Hanouti
Mohammed Arda
Mohammed Fakhro
Mohammed Gani
Mohammed Ismail
Mohammed Shahabas
Mohammed Yunus
Mohammed Zameen
Mohannad Ahmad
Moien Kiswani
Mona Ybanez
Mostafa Al Sheshtawy
Mubarak Kunniyam Purath
Muhammad Jaber
Muhammed Mujthaba Zain
Muna Ibrahim
Muna Osman
Mustafa Ali
Mustafa Azhari Noureldin
Mustafa Esam
Mustafa Mohamed Khair
Mustapha Sahouadj
Nada El Ali
Nadine Kain
Naeem Shoaib
Nagham Dahleh
Naif Alasmar
Najlah Mohamed Ali
Najwan Al Saqqa
Nashim Shukkur
Nasreen Zahan
Nasser Abdulla
Nathalie Ayoub
Nedda ElBedawi
Nesma Sherif
Nimer Abonaadj
Nina Kawakami
Nouf Qussini
Nour Abukhattab
Nour Al Soliman
Noura Habjouqa
Noura Khan
Nurmala Easty
Omar Al Jerjawy
Omar Kanaan
Omer Shahzad
Osama Elamin
Owais Shaikh
Panagiotis Giannakos
Patricia Donohue
Patrick Abo Serhal
Pavel Ilchuk
Pelin Çiftci Bircan
Peter Okorn
Quay Chu
Rabwa Moidu
Raghad Mahmood
Raheem Khan
Rajeev Nair
Rana Houssami
Rana Mostafa
Rania Ghanem
Ranim Ajeeb
Raquel Pintor
Rasha Awada
Ravinder Kaur
Rawaia Abdelrahman
Rawan Aburaida
Raymond Bobar
Renjith Babu
Ricardo Ceballos
Rim Jaballah
Rita Beirouty
Riyas Peediyekkal
Roald Aron
Ruksana Kavila Valappil
Saad Ahmad
Sahar Bou Hamdan
Salim Poovathiyullathil
Samaa El Baba
Sameer Kavungalayil
Sameera Yasmin
Sanjeewa Roshan
Saqib Shahid
Sara Allouba
Sara El Natsha
Sarah Thakur
Sarmad Louis
Seren Abouhassanein
Shahan Akkawi
Shaima Shiref
Shaimaa Qadi
Shamim Tabandeh
Shamna Hameed
Shane Brennan
Shereen Doummar
Shereen El-Buy
Shorooq Shaheen
Shrijan Raj Pandey
Sina Hosseinipour
Sojoud Yahia
Souha Taouili
Soulaima Taleb
Stanley Mathews
Sultan Alemadi
Tais Angelova
Taniya Tleubayeva
Tarek Alolabi
Tarek Sendi
Tausif Abdullah Chowdhury
Tereza Soldátová
Thannia Jizan Sulaik
Thasnim Nashim
Tim Whitby
Toka Hanafi
Uhain Poignon
Ushera Nadeem
Vanessa Magalhaes Silva
Varun Sudhakaran
Victoria Allan
Waheed Khan
Waleed Khan
Wesam Said
Wiaam Sabri
Yahia ElBakri
Yanis Cherif
Yara Amr
Yara Atallah
Yasmine Mohamad
Yasser Mustafa
Yassine Ouahrani
Yazan Shorbaji
Youssef Belamine
Yusuf Kudsi Koç
Zack Pinto
Zahra Al-Anssari
Zaid Naveed
Zena Chamoun
Ziad Haddad

Community Partners

AWFULLY GOOD!

BE PILATES

BEANS OF ZELIA ROASTERY

BLACKOUT SPECIALTY COFFEE

ClassMate

COUNTER CARDS

CRUST

EVERGREEN ايفرجرين

Fenyal

مطافىء FIRE STATION

HALO

honour WHOLENESS

HURIYA DANCE

LE PETIT CAMION

M7

NIYA MOVEMEANT

RIAYA PILATES

run·of·the·mill

Rusk ARTISANAL BAKERY

SAHWA STRENGTH

STORE974

TONKA

TWO SIX

BURGER

Velo

VORTEX COFFEE

زاوية