**Press release**

# Doha Film Festival 2026 Honours Bold Storytelling

**Doha, Qatar; November 27, 2026:** Doha Film Festival 2026, presented by Doha Film Institute, announced the winners of its competition programmes at the closing ceremony, after nine days of a dynamic programme of screenings, talks and community events.

The ceremony was attended by H.E. Sheikha Al-Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, Chairperson of DFI; H.E. Dr. Abdullah bin Abdulaziz bin Turki Al-Subaie, Minister of Environment and Climate Change; H.E. Sheikh Dr. Abdulla bin Ali Al Thani, Managing Director and Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors of Qatar Leadership Centre; Hamad Omar Al-Mannai, Chief Executive Officer of Media City Qatar; Eng. Abdulaziz Ali Al Mawlawi, Chief Executive Officer of Visit Qatar and Eng. Mohammed Abdulla Al Mulla, Chief Executive Officer of Old Doha Port among others.

Hosted by Sudanese filmmaker and presenter Amjad Al-Nour, the event brought together filmmakers, industry professionals and cultural leaders from across the world, including Elia Suleiman, Brigitte Lacombe and Ahmed Al Baker, among others.

**Fatma Hassan Alremaihi, Festival Director and CEO of DFI**, said: "Tonight, as we celebrate the winners of the 2026 Doha Film Festival, we celebrate far more than cinematic achievement. We recognise the power of stories to transcend borders, challenge perspectives and bring the experiences of people and communities into the global conversation.

"At Doha Film Institute, we believe that important voices deserve to be seen, heard and recognised. Doha Film Festival exists to provide that platform — bringing together filmmakers and audiences from across the world, championing bold and independent storytelling, and creating space for stories that might otherwise go untold. The films we honour tonight remind us that cinema is not simply a reflection of the world we live in; it is a force that can shape how we understand it, connect with one another and imagine a more empathetic future."

**Winners of Doha Film Festival 2026 are:**

**International Feature Film Competition:** Jury led by Japanese director Naomi Kawase, with French Tunisian actor Adam Bessa, influential Tunisian producer Dora Bouchoucha, visionary Italian documentary filmmaker Gianfranco Rosi and award-winning Palestinian filmmaker and artist Kamal Aljafari.

- **Special Mention: 9 Temples to Heaven** by Sompot Chidgasornpongse
- **Best Performance: Josette Kwanya** from **House of the Wind,** directed by Auguste Bernard Kouemo Yanghu (awarded posthumously)
- **Best Artistic Achievement** in Documentary: **Bardi** by Tala Hadid

- **Best Artistic Achievement** in Narrative: **Filipiñana** by Rafael Manuel
- **Best Documentary**: **Concrete Land** by Asmahan Bkerat

- **Best Narrative**: **A Girl Unknown** by Zou Jing
- **FIPRESCI Prize**: **Concrete Land** by Asmahan Bkerat

**International Short Film Competition:** Jury Head French Moroccan producer Karim Aitouna was joined by Malaysian filmmaker Amanda Nell Eu, and Swiss Rwandan actress and filmmaker Kayije Kagame.

- **Special Mention: Nothing Happens After Your Absence** by Ibrahim Omar
- **Best Performance: Damián López** for his performance in **For the Opponents**
- **Best Director: Maryam Tafakory** for ***Ghazal-e Sorkh***
- **Best Film: Whispers of a Burning Scent** by **Mo Harawe**

**Made in Qatar Competition:** Jury led by Lebanese actress and filmmaker Yumna Marwan along with Qatari filmmaker Al Johara Al Thani and Palestinian Belgian filmmaker and producer Naël Khleifi.

- **Special Mention: Ghafleh** by Tony El Ghazal
- **Abdulaziz Jassim Award for Best Performance**: **Amneh Aldam** – **Light to Ashes** by Nadia Al-Khater
- **Best Director**: **Sebastian Delascasas – In the Silence After**
- **Best Film**: **Crawling Into Myself** by Hamad Al-Fayhani

**Ajyal Film Competition:** Winners were selected by an international youth jury aged 16-25.

- **Best Short Film: We Were Here** by Pranav Bhasin
- **Best Feature Film: We Are Aliens** by Kohei Kadowaki

**Audience Award: Jodari Meno** by **Dr Jamal Rashid Alkhanji**, Qatari filmmaker, physician, entrepreneur and underwater image-maker.

With prizes totalling over USD 300,000, DFF 2026 featured four main competition sections; International Feature Film Competition, International Short Film Competition, Made in Qatar Competition and the Ajyal Film Competition for youth aged 16-25 in addition to the inaugural FIPRESCI Prize.

Key Partners of Doha Film Festival were Katara, Media City Qatar I Film Committee and Visit Qatar. For more information, visit www.dohafilm.com.

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**Jury Statements**

**International Feature Film Competition**

Jury President Naomi Kawase said: "These films, unlike anything I had ever seen before, reminded me that the world is far from uniform. Together, they offered a glimpse of a world where diverse values coexist, intersect, and connect."

- On Special Mention winner ***9 Temples to Heaven*** by Sompot Chidgasornpongse, the jury said: "Through its meditative rhythm, its deep silences, and its delicate observation, this road trip family ride takes us in a profound tale of forgiveness and reckoning with personal faith."
- On Josette Kwanya, awarded Best Performance posthumously for ***House of the Wind***, the jury said: "There are performances that stay with us long after a film has ended. This is one of them. Sadly, the woman who gave us this remarkable performance passed away in 2024. Through cinema, however, her presence will remain with us."
- On Best Artistic Achievement in Documentary winner ***Bardi*** by Tala Hadid, the jury said: "What the director observes and what the riders imagine become part of the same story. The line between documentary and fiction disappears."
- On Best Artistic Achievement in Narrative winner ***Filipiñana*** by Rafael Manuel, the jury said: "This film achieves a unique form of artistic expression that reaffirms our belief in the power of abstraction and the beauty of cinematic form."
- On Best Documentary winner ***Concrete Land*** by Asmahan Bkerat, the jury said: "Through one family, we feel something universal about what it means to keep losing the place you call home. Palestine and the Arab world could not have wished for a better filmmaker at this moment in history."
- On Best Narrative winner ***A Girl Unknown*** by Zou Jing, the jury said: "Powerful performances, sensitive direction, a discerning camera eye, and the masterful interplay of music, ambient sound, and time announce the arrival of an extraordinary new talent."

**International Short Film Competition**

- The jury, led by Karim Aitouna, awarded the Special Mention to ***Nothing Happens After Your Absence*** by Ibrahim Omar, "a film that isn't afraid to use dark humour in the face of war."
- On Best Performance winner Damián López, for ***For the Opponents***, the jury recognised him "for conveying, through the quiet restraint of his expression, the tension between the expectations of the outside world and the vulnerability of childhood."
- On Best Director Maryam Tafakory, for ***Ghazal-e Sorkh***, the jury said: "With its profound artistic vision and rigorous, meticulously documented analysis, the film incisively exposes how colonialism and imperialism give rise to authoritarianism and its symbols."
- The jury described Best Film winner ***Whispers of a Burning Scent*** by Mo Harawe as "a remarkable film about love as a virtue, seen through the eyes of a man whose integrity remains unshaken despite the wound he carries within."

**Made in Qatar Competition**

- Jury member Al Johara Al Thani said: "Made in Qatar belongs to everyone who calls Qatar home, and it reflects the range of stories and talent we have here." About the Special Mention to ***Ghafleh*** by Tony El Ghazal, she said: "a filmmaker whose passion, determination and distinct voice came through in his work, and who conveyed that feeling to us and to the audience."

- Presenting the Abdulaziz Jassim Award for Best Performance to Amneh Aldam for ***Light to Ashes*** by Nadia Al-Khater, Yumna Marwan said: "This actress was able to portray inner worlds and speak loudly even in silence."
- On Best Director Sebastian Delascasas, for ***In the Silence After***, Naël Khleifi said: "With great finesse, he introduces us to a mother who has a lot of dignity. His film is a love letter made of images and sounds."
- Yumna Marwan said Best Film winner ***Crawling Into Myself*** by Hamad Al-Fayhani "uses the craft of filmmaking to create the director's own palette through a creative image and a subtle yet intentional sound."

**FIPRESCI Prize**

- "This film employs an understated yet expressive visual language to reveal bitter ironies in the story. Transcending the immediate circumstances of its characters, it becomes part of a greater struggle. The filmmaker confronts us with brutal realities endured by a family, a people, but it leaves room for love, resilience, and hope. For its intimate humanistic gaze and sobering critical rigor, the inaugural FIPRESCI Prize at the Doha Film Festival goes to **Concrete Land** by Asmahan Bkerat."