Doha Film Festival 2026 Introduces Screen International's First 'Arab Rising Stars'

- *Doha Film Festival's launch of Arab Rising Stars initiative marks Screen International's 10th year of identifying emerging Arab talent.*

Doha, Qatar; November 21, 2026: Arab Rising Stars made their Doha debut at Doha Film Festival (DFF) 2026, marking Screen International's 10th year identifying emerging regional talent. The first year of the Award honoured creative talents **Nadia Al-Khater, Avan Jamal, Marawan Waleed** and **Lina Malaika**.

Qatar-based filmmaker **Nadia Al-Khater,** whose short film ***Light to Ashes*** (Qatar/France) features in DFF 2026's International Short Film Competition, spoke about the creative challenges and opportunities facing Arab filmmakers. Addressing challenging stereotypes, she said: "There are many narratives and external expectations we have to push against. Not succumbing to outside viewpoints is important, and there are plenty of opportunities to challenge this because we have a lot to say."

Iraqi-Kurdish actress **Avan Jamal** who stars as a Peshmerga sniper in the war drama ***No Paradise If You Are Killed by a Woman*** (Norway/ Iraq/ United Arab Emirates/ Sweden), Iraq's submission for the 99th Academy Awards, spoke about the importance of bringing stories from her community to the screen. "It is a true honour and privilege to be part of Arab Rising Stars. Emotions like love, hope, family and survival are universal, and what we are doing is telling our stories with authenticity and sharing them with the world."

Egyptian actor **Marawan Waleed**, star of the psychological thriller ***Safe Exit*** (Egypt/ Libya/ Tunisia/ Qatar/ Germany), reflected on his experience: "I am very proud to be chosen and happy to be here with DFF, meeting so many people and building connections at such an exciting time."

Saudi filmmaker, creative director, writer and cultural consultant **Lina Malaika** shared her pride in representing Saudi voices across cinema, writing and creative media. Speaking on the achievement, she said: "I am extremely honoured to be selected among such inspiring creatives, and I am proud to represent Saudi Arabia on a global stage through cinema, writing and creative work."

Doha Film Festival initiatives like Arab Rising Stars bring together emerging talent with established industry voices, and continues to foster cross-cultural exchange and support original stories from the region and beyond.

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

Doha Film Festival
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