Doha Film Festival 2026 exceeds expectations as DFI leads next steps for regional cinema

Doha, Qatar; November 26, 2026: 16 years of work by Doha Film Institute (DFI) to build the film industry in Qatar has culminated in the slate of four feature films and eight short films in the Made in Qatar section of Doha Film Festival 2026 programme,, Festival Director and DFI CEO Fatma Hassan Alremaihi shared during a media briefing session.

She said that DFI's next priority is to take those films and the people who make them to audiences around the world. Alremaihi was joined at the media briefing by Abdulla Al Mosallam, Deputy Director of the Festival and Deputy CEO of DFI, and Programmer Majid Al-Remaihi.

Fatma Hassan Alremaihi said: "Doha Film Festival exists to bring important voices in cinema to audiences here and to take our filmmakers to the world. This year we added DFF Classics and Cinema Al Khaleej, and this brings us further along the right path to where we want to be," she said.

"A feature can take five or six years to make, so our support continues long after the grant is awarded. We created Qumra because we saw the full ecosystem that is required to keep a film moving forward. This includes networking, additional financing, script consultation, distribution and sales, and we support them in all these aspects."

Al Mosallam added: "We worked hard all year to bring new voices in cinema to audiences in Qatar, and the selection was difficult. We measure success by what audiences tell us. Cinema Al Khaleej and DFF Classics are new sections this year, and the overwhelming response is telling us to keep developing them."

Majid Al-Remaihi said the festival focuses on the Arab region and beyond, and selects strong films from every part of the world. He cited ***Tin Castle*** by Alexander Murphy, which follows an Irish family facing eviction from their caravan home. "It is shot with real intimacy with the community, and sat naturally within the competition," he said. "It's a film that demonstrates how we think about films based far more on their artistic quality and message than about ticking a standard box."

Asked whether the International Feature Film Competition would open to submissions, Majid Al-Remaihi said: "Our open call for shorts already brings in almost 2,000 films. Once we have refined this review and selection process, I'm sure that an open call for features is something we will come to in future."

Beyond the Festival run, the Made in Qatar Screening Room at Hamad International Airport (HIA), the festival's official airport partner, brings Qatari films to travellers. "HIA serves about 50 million passengers a year," Fatma Hassan Alremaihi said. "If one per cent of them watch these films, that is already a whole new audience for our filmmakers."

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