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Film Committee at Media City Qatar Partners with Watermelon Pictures to Develop Ambitious Slate of Original Films for Global Audiences

Collaboration Aims to Empower Visionary Filmmakers with the Resources to Compete at the Highest Levels of Global Cinema

Doha, Qatar, 21 November 2026 – The **Film Committee at Media City Qatar** and **Watermelon Pictures**, a film production and distribution studio, today announced plans for a strategic partnership to develop and co-produce an initial slate of films championing visionary filmmakers and compelling stories from the Global South and beyond, with an emphasis on culturally authentic storytelling and broad international appeal.

Announced on the closing day of the second edition of Doha Industry Days, the proposed partnership would support an ambitious slate of projects developed by the fast-rising independent studio, spanning comedy, television, genre, and drama. Combining **Qatar's** commitment to world-class filmmaking, growing production capabilities, and investment in the creative economy with **Watermelon**'s access to leading talent, established distribution infrastructure, and deep understanding of what resonates with audiences, the collaboration aims to produce commercially compelling films with high production values and international appeal.

Under the proposed partnership, the parties would aim to shoot projects substantially in Qatar or structure them as Qatari co-productions. They would also seek to involve Doha-based post-production companies and help eligible projects access the **Qatar Screen Production Incentive (QSPI)**, creating opportunities for local crews, businesses, and creative talent while strengthening Qatar's position as an international production hub.

H.E. Hassan Al Thawadi, Chairman of the Film Committee at **Media City Qatar,** said: "Through this partnership, we want to give filmmakers the resources to tell stories rooted in their communities and bring them to audiences around the world. We also want the films we support to create work for crews and businesses in Qatar and give them experience they can carry into their next production."

For **Watermelon Pictures,** the partnership marks a significant expansion into larger-scale, mainstream production, backed by five decades of distribution expertise that will ensure every film receives the highest level of support from development through release.

The collaboration seeks to create opportunities for talented filmmakers whose projects might otherwise lack access to the financing, resources, and industry connections needed to realize their full potential.

Badie Ali, Co-Founder of Watermelon Pictures, said: "When we founded Watermelon Pictures, our vision was to bring powerful stories to the big screen with an unwavering commitment to authenticity. Our partnership with the Film Committee at Media City Qatar is a major step toward realizing that promise,

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allowing us to tell these stories on a larger scale while remaining true to the people and places at their heart."

Hamza Ali, Co-Founder of Watermelon Pictures, said: "Too many compelling stories and perspectives, including those of Arab and Muslim communities, have historically been underrepresented in mainstream cinema. We see an enormous opportunity to change that. Our planned slate will span genres, challenge perceptions, and, above all, entertain. Our ambition isn't simply to create space in the industry. It's to compete at its highest level."

Stories that have historically been pushed to the margins deserve the same investment, production quality, star power, and global distribution opportunities as mainstream entertainment. This shared vision drives the proposed collaboration between the **Film Committee** and **Watermelon Pictures** will bring culturally resonant stories to global audiences and strengthen Qatar's growing role as a hub for international filmmaking and creative collaboration.

The Film Committee and **Watermelon Pictures** will jointly identify projects for the initial slate. The proposed partnership is subject to definitive agreements and the required approvals, with projects to be considered individually. More details on specific projects are soon to be announced

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About the Film Committee at Media City Qatar: The Film Committee at Media City Qatar was established to position Qatar as a leading destination for global film production, co-financing, and creative collaboration. Under the leadership of the Film Committee at Media City Qatar Chairman, H.E. Hassan Al Thawadi, the Committee supports the development of a world-class film ecosystem through strategic partnerships, incentives, and infrastructure investments. Working alongside the Doha Film Institute, Media City Qatar, and national cultural entities, the Film Committee at Media City Qatar seeks to foster a thriving creative economy, attract international productions, and amplify Qatar's voice on the world stage of cinema and storytelling.

About the Qatar Screen Production Incentive (QSPI): The QSPI offers up to a 50% cash rebate on qualifying production expenditure for feature films, television, commercials, and post/VFX work produced in Qatar. Eligible applicants must be Qatari-registered companies licensed through Media City Qatar. The programme is designed to attract international productions, build local skills, and establish Qatar as a creative and economic hub for global storytelling.

About Watermelon Pictures: Watermelon Pictures is a film production and distribution **studio** dedicated to amplifying the voices of underrepresented filmmakers worldwide through bold, culturally urgent storytelling. Founded in 2024 and celebrating its two-year anniversary, the studio has produced and/or distributed a slate of acclaimed films including *From Ground Zero, Palestine 36,* and *All That's Left of You*, each shortlisted for the Academy Award® for Best International Feature, as well as the Academy Award®–nominated *The Voice Of Hind Rajab*. In May 2025, co-founders **Badie Ali** and **Hamza Ali** launched **Watermelon+**, a streaming platform presenting the most comprehensive archive of Palestinian cinema ever assembled. Across production, distribution, and curation, Watermelon Pictures champions

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visionary work that challenges dominant narratives, expands cultural visibility, and affirms storytelling as a powerful force for collective change.

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