



Documentary about the Shooting of *Black Gold* Reveals the Behind the Scenes Journey of an Epic Movie in the Making

7,000 Costumes and 700 period Weapons created for Production of Black Gold

Tunisian Shoot Captures History in the Making

Doha, October 26, 2011 – A 38-minute behind the scenes documentary followed by a Q&A with the cast and filmmakers from *Black Gold* captured candid interviews and moments in the making when it screened Wednesday to an enthusiastic crowd as part of the ‘Doha Talks’ Programme at this week’s Doha Tribeca Film Festival (DTFF).

The audience was taken on the journey of creating *Black Gold* and given an insight into its Tunisian shoot where 90% of the crew were locals including 400 technicians, and 40 Arab actors.

The filmmakers also discussed the shooting of the film on location in Tunisia which coincided with the revolution in the country as part of the Arab Spring.

“There are no words to describe what I saw. It was a country in anaesthesia, I saw Ben Ali everywhere,” said Antonio Banderas in the documentary. “And then, two weeks later after the incidents of December 17 we were in the middle of the revolution and we saw how Tunisia had changed in front of our eyes. It was an unbelievable experience to be part of that.”

In January 2011 the shoot moved to Qatar where the largest film crew ever to assemble in Qatar was put in place, employing over 200 residents and locals from Doha who served various roles behind and in front of the camera.

“The desert in Qatar is special. It’s like the end of the world and leads directly to the sea. It’s absolutely pure,” said Tahar Rahim commenting on the spectacular desert dunes of Mesaieed in Qatar, the location for *Black Gold’s* epic battle scenes.

In the documentary, Mark Strong, who played the role of King Ammar paid tribute to the Arab people: “There is a gentleness and respect in this part of the world that we [the West] could learn a lot from,” he said.

Another of the film’s actors, Akin Gazi, also expressed how important he felt the film was in terms of representing the Arab world. “I hope the film opens the floodgates and we see cinema embrace the Arab people which is the way it should be.”

Speaking during the Q&A, Tarak Ben Ammar answered questions about the casting decision to use some non-Arab actors and also why the film was made in the English rather than Arabic language: "We cannot compete with Hollywood unless we compete on the same playing field by making commercial movies that have international appeal. I hope this film opens the door for Arab films the way Chinese films were embraced on the world stage thanks to films like Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon and The House of Flying Daggers. This film is, I hope the first step towards that but it won't happen overnight. We have to be patient."

For additional information relating to Festival screenings, tickets, venues or transportation please visit: <http://www.dohafilminstitute.com/filmfestival>.

The official website for Black Gold is: <http://blackgold-themovie.com>.

-Ends-

Notes to Editor

About Doha Film Institute (DFI):

The Doha Film Institute (DFI) is an independent cultural organisation established in 2010 to incorporate Qatar's film initiatives under one banner.

Located at Qatar's new cultural hub, Katara, DFI's many initiatives include film and television funding for MENA and international films, year-round education programs, film screenings, and the annual Doha Tribeca Film Festival (DTFF).

In addition, DFI has established a number of strategic cultural partnerships with leading local and international organisations including Katara Cultural Village Foundation, Tribeca Enterprises, World Cinema Foundation, Maisha Film Labs and Giffoni Film Festival.

DFI was founded by H.E. Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani. Along with Her Excellency, DFI leadership comprises DFI Board Vice-Chair and Festival Board Chair, H.E. Sheikh Mohammed Bin Fahad Al-Thani; DFI Board Member and Festival Board Vice-Chair, H.E. Dr. Hassan Al-Nimah; DFI Board Member, Mr. Mansoor Ibrahim Al-Mahmoud; Festival Board Member, H.E. Sheikh Jabor Bin Yousuf Al Thani; and DFI Executive Director, Amanda Palmer.

For more information, please contact:

Gregg Fray

Seven Media

Tel: 00971 50 812 9566

Email: greggfray@sevenmedia.ae

Majid Wasi

Doha Film Institute

Tel: 00974 33247800

Email: mwasi@dohafilminstitute.com