



Press Release

To overcome stereotypes, find the balance between social constraints and storytelling: Khaleeji panel discussion at DTFF

Doha, Qatar; November 22, 2012: In a panel session in front of an almost sold out crowd, Doha Film Institute (DFI) tackled one of the more sensitive and controversial issues in cinema - overcoming stereotypes in Khaleeji film - as part of their Doha Talk series of the fourth Doha Tribeca Film Festival (DTFF).

Traditionally, storytelling has always played a central role in Arab culture. Four members of the regional film industry came together to discuss contemporary storytelling, debating new regional and international influences and on whether Khaleeji films rely on stereotypes.

"Stereotyping happens everywhere, not just in Khaleeji films. It's a global issue, not a local one," said Dr Marzook Bashir, Director, Ministry of Culture, Arts and Heritage, during his opening remarks, before continuing to providing background into the origins of the phrase. "This is a reflection of our personalities in society. Stereotypes exist whether you agree with them or not," he added

Bassam Al-Thawadi, Producer/Director from Bahrain suggested local acting talent need better scripts and need to work more collaboratively with directors. "Directors and Casting Directors should ensure actors understand their characters, and give them more direction and better materials in order to bring a deeper sense of character to their roles."

Haifaa Al-Mansour discussed the role of women both in filmmaking and on screen. "Regionally, the stereotypical role for women has been the same for many years, in all aspects of the media." Addressing the crowd she said: "It's very encouraging to see so many women here today and we have a large number of women within the industry, however women still remain apprehensive about getting their work made."

Emirati author/screenwriter Mohammed Hassan spoke about the importance of making local content. "If we don't produce modern movies, we are not representing and reflecting our society correctly. You have to find the balance between social constraints and the storytelling and through this process, we will move forward from the current plateau of portraying the same character over and over again. You must focus on the aesthetics before anything else and push the boundaries to change the perception of cinema."



Dr Bashir summed up the session by putting his faith in the younger generations in the region. “By fostering a better film industry in this region, we can benefit from shared technologies and learning from our neighbours. I am proud that this new generation are a challenging one. We don’t want them to give up straight away, we want them to continue to push the boundaries in order to overcome stereotypical representation in the media.”

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Photo caption:

Khaleeji filmmakers at the panel discussion at the fourth DTFF

About Doha Film Institute:

Doha Film Institute (DFI) is an independent cultural organisation established in 2010 to incorporate Qatar’s film initiatives under one banner; organically supporting the growth of the local film community by enhancing industry knowledge, cultivating film appreciation and contributing to the development of sustainable creative industries in Qatar. DFI’s year-round platforms include funding and production of local, regional and international films, educational programmes, film screenings, and the annual Doha Tribeca Film Festival (DTFF).

With culture, community, education and entertainment at its foundation, DFI serves as an all-encompassing film hub in Doha, as well as a resource for the region and the rest of the world. DFI is committed to supporting Qatar’s 2030 vision for the development of a knowledge-based economy. DFI has established a number of strategic cultural partnerships with leading local and international organisations including Tribeca Enterprises, World Cinema Foundation, Maisha Film Lab, Katara Cultural Village and Giffoni Film Festival.

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