

Seven Voices from the Arab World Captivated Audiences at Cineteca Nacional de las Artes

The Doha Film Institute brought a week of contemporary cinema to the heart of Coyoacán, as part of the 2026 Year of Culture Programme

29 June 2026 — Mexico City and Doha: This month, the main theatre of Cineteca Nacional de las Artes served as a window onto contemporary Arab cinema. The Doha Film Institute (DFI) presented a curated selection of seven films it has supported in recent years, a programme that brought together prize-winners from Cannes, Venice and Thessaloniki, featured as part of the 2026 Year of Culture partnership between Mexico and Qatar. More than 1,000 people attended the screenings over the course of the programme, an exceptional turnout for Cineteca Nacional de las Artes underscoring the strong interest in contemporary Arab cinema among Mexican audiences.

For Mexican audiences, the programme offered a rare opportunity to experience films from Iraq, Sudan, Tunisia, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, and Egypt. These stories explored themes of identity, memory, family, and tradition, bringing perspectives that are seldom seen on Mexico's film circuit.

Nelson Carro, Director of Outreach and Programming at Cineteca Nacional de las Artes , said: "Our partnership with the Doha Film Institute is especially valuable, as it gives us access to films that are not always easy for us to reach. Since we mainly work with European distributors, access to Arab cinema is not always direct. Through this collaboration, we were able to present a carefully curated programme of films that explore themes that speak to all of us. That is why we believe it is so important to continue strengthening this relationship and giving it room to grow."

Mohammed Al Kuwari, Advisor on Latin America for the Years of Culture, added: "Years of Culture is built on the idea that lasting partnerships are shaped through people-to-people connection. Film plays a vital role in that by enabling stories to travel. The Years of Culture's summer programme, which coincides with World Cup 2026 also reflects a broader vision: using culture alongside sport to build meaningful, long-term connections between societies."

Beyond the film festival

The film cycle is part of a wider programme that the Years of Culture will roll out in Mexico City this summer, in partnership with institutions such as Museo Jumex and the Centro de Cultura Digital, spanning film, art, heritage, design and sport throughout 2026.

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About Years of Culture

The Years of Culture initiative, chaired by Her Excellency Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, spearheads long-lasting cultural partnerships between Qatar and other nations. It exists to promote respect and understanding among diverse cultures and serves as a catalyst for bringing people together, nurturing connections, encouraging dialogue, and deepening understanding. At its core, Years of Culture is a portal for making connections across various sectors, including cultural heritage, creative industries, social and economic development, and innovation, which enriches Qatar's ties with partner countries beyond the dedicated year.

Each year is organised with support from Qatar and partner countries' cultural institutions, ministries, foundations, and private and public sector partners, with assistance from Embassies in Qatar and abroad. Programmes are tailored to explore the unique nature of each partner country.

Previous Years of Culture have included: Qatar-Japan 2012, Qatar-UK 2013, Qatar-Brazil 2014, Qatar-Türkiye 2015, Qatar-China 2016, Qatar-Germany 2017, Qatar-Russia 2018, Qatar-India 2019, Qatar-France 2020, Qatar-USA 2021, Qatar-MENASA 2022, Qatar-Indonesia 2023, Qatar-Morocco 2024, and Qatar Argentina and Chile 2025.

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