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جامعة نورثويسترن  
في قطر

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## NU-Q Students Showcase Film Projects at Studio 20Q Premiere

**Doha, Qatar – April 10, 2018** – A celebratory red carpet event at Northwestern University in Qatar (NU-Q) showcased five student films before family, friends, and members of the local film industry. The films explored themes including identity, mental illness, friendship, tradition, and the urgent need for societal change.

“It’s great to see students making time to practice their passion and dedicating time outside the classroom to produce independent films and projects,” said Everette E. Dennis, dean and CEO. “Studio 20Q’s Premiere night has long been one of the most exciting and highly anticipated events of the year. Faculty, staff, family, and friends enjoy the opportunity to see first-hand just how talented and creative our students are.”

The films were funded by Studio 20Q, a student-run club that organizes workshops, training sessions, and networking events throughout the year. While the club contributes to the growing film culture in Doha, its main focus is to provide funding and general support to students seeking to produce short narratives, documentaries, music videos, animation, or experimental films.

This year, five projects were awarded grants for students to produce their films over the course of the school year.

This year’s films, which premiered at the club’s event, are:

***Where are you right Meow?*** is the first animated film to have been funded by Studio 20Q. In the style of Japanese hand-drawn images, the story explores the concept of what it means to be home. For Maysam Al-Ani, who directed the film, blurred borders and overlapping identities are familiar – Al-Ani is originally Iraqi but has spent extended periods of her life in both the U.S. and Qatar.

***Terima Kasih*** follows a single mother and a schizophrenic daughter in their household for a day. The film exposes the realities of living with someone who suffers with a mental illness

and the challenges involved. "The film is dedicated to my sister, who is recovering strongly, and my mother, who remained strong while she brought up her three children single-handedly through all these years," said Zaki Hussain about his film which was inspired by real events in his family.

**426** follows two prisoners, from different backgrounds who build a unique friendship from within the walls of their cells, a relationship that is challenged once they both receive amnesty. The film was directed by Maha Essid.

***The Rat Child*** is a coming of age story that confronts stigmas of physical disabilities and poverty through the tropes of Pakistani folklore. "This story highlights the importance of knowing the difference between religious and cultural heroes, and criminals, which is something that is an important distinction that many of us can't make. Perhaps telling this story will create awareness of evil, toxic rituals in society, and put an end to them," said Basmah Kamran Azmi, the film's producer.

***Desert Bounty***, a periodical piece set in the Arabian Peninsula in the early 20th century, is about a father and daughter who have a mysterious encounter that leads to unexpected consequences. Director Yassine Ouahrani said that he hopes the film inspires audiences to reconsider the ideas of ethics and family.

For many students, Studio 20Q represents the first opportunity to have an immersive filmmaking experience outside the classroom. Over two cycles, applicants for the grants submit full scripts, resumes, budgets, production timelines, and a compelling story idea to compete for the award.

Studio 20Q produced films, in the past, have been screened at international film festivals, commissioned by Al Jazeera for its program *Witness*, and have received a student Academy Award nomination.

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***About Northwestern University in Qatar***

*Northwestern University in Qatar draws from its parent organization, [Northwestern University](#) (Evanston, Illinois), a distinguished history, famous programs and an exceptional faculty. Founded in partnership with Qatar Foundation, NU-Q provides a framework through which students explore the world and, ultimately, shape its future through its distinguished schools of [communication](#), [journalism and strategic communication](#), and [liberal arts](#).*