

‘The Palm Tree’ and ‘Asfoora’ win ‘Made in Qatar’ awards at the third Ajyal Youth Film Festival

Doha, Qatar; December 4, 2015: A captivating observational documentary charting the ‘life story’ of a palm tree and a short narrative that mixes live action and animation depicting what happens when one gives in to dangerous impulses have walked away with the top honours at the ‘Made in Qatar’ programme of the third Ajyal Youth Film Festival, presented by the Doha Film Institute.

Seventeen films, all of them by Qatari filmmakers and those who call Qatar home, were part of the ‘Made in Qatar’ showcase. Presented with the support of Tarsheed, the ‘Made in Qatar’ films are evaluated by a jury comprising: Ahd, an actor and filmmaker from Saudi Arabia; Marcel Ghanem, a multi-award winning current affairs journalist from Lebanon; and Bassam Al Ibrahim, a Qatari producer of several award-winning films.

The Palm Tree, edited and directed by Jassim Al-Rumaihi, won the Best Documentary Film award. ***Heart of the House***, written and directed by Gabrielle Sol, won the Jury Award, while ***The Notebook***, with script, cinematography and direction by Amna Al-Binali, won the Special Mention for the documentary category.

Asfoora, written and directed by Mayar Hamdan, was named Best Narrative Film, and ***Man of the House***, with script, cinematography, editing, music, production and direction by Khalifa Al Marri, won the Jury Award for the narrative category.

Announcing the awards, the jury said ***The Palm Tree*** was chosen as the Best Documentary for its “ability to create a tie between nature, man and technology in a charming cinematic model, and for its high quality of treatment and cinematography, along with the director’s proficiency in delivering the idea with no dialogue.”

Heart of the House won the Jury Award “for its deep human touch, its rich cultural diversity and coherent treatment that transports viewers to the backstage of an unknown world,” while ***The Notebook*** was awarded the Special Mention “for its unique theme, coherent narration and innovative treatment.”

On the jury’s vote for ***Asfoora*** as the Best Narrative, they observed: “It is a film that integrates different elements and different styles by using the cinematic tools in the best way possible, and supported by professional and brilliant acting and setting.” ***Man of the House*** won the Jury Award for “gathering new genres, supporting it with distinctive and suspenseful elements, and for the nearsolo effort of the filmmaker.”

Earlier, the director of the best documentary, Jassim Al Rumaihi said that it was not winning that mattered but participating in the programme. In 2010, a film he co-directed had won in the ‘Made in Qatar’ programme. ***The Palm Tree*** was supported by the Doha Film Institute, and he says it is a tribute to the ubiquitous tree that is integral to the Arab world, yet somehow seemed to be not as celebrated as it should be.

The winners of the Best Documentary and Best Narrative Film each received US\$5,000 through the Ajyal Film Fund.

For more information visit www.ajyalfilm.com.

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Doha Film Institute:

Doha Film Institute is an independent, not-for-profit cultural organisation. It supports the growth of the local film community through cultivating film appreciation, enhancing industry knowledge and contributing to the development of sustainable creative industries in Qatar. The Institute's platforms include funding and production of local, regional and international films; skills-sharing and mentorship programmes; film screenings; the Ajyal Youth Film Festival; and Qumra. With culture, community, learning and entertainment at its foundation, the Institute is committed to supporting Qatar's 2030 vision for the development of a knowledge-based economy.

Doha Film Institute

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