

## 8<sup>th</sup> Ajyal Film Festival's First-Ever Hybrid Edition Featuring 80 Inspirational Films from 46 Countries

- Adapted festival edition features programme of online and in-person activities, taking active responsibility for the physical health and safety of all participants
- Acclaimed opening title **Sun Children** by Iranian director Majid Majidi debuted in Venice and calls attention to the issue of child labour
- Programme includes **22 Features** and **58 shorts**; **31** from the Arab World; **30** by women filmmakers and **24** films supported by the Institute

**Doha, Qatar; November 4, 2020:** The first-ever hybrid edition of the 8<sup>th</sup> Ajyal Film Festival, presented by the Doha Film Institute (DFI), will feature an inspiring selection of **80** films from **46** countries representing timeless tales of community and determination, highlighting the innocence of youth and an enduring optimism through cinema.

The six-day event, held from November 18- 23 in an adapted format, celebrates the essence of Ajyal and its commitment to community and youth development, with the majority of activities offered online. Pushing the limits of creativity and paving new paths, Ajyal 2020 will feature an innovative mix of virtual and in-person film screenings, interactive discussions, and the first-ever drive-in cinema in Lusail as part of a multisensory experience for all ages.

In line with government guidelines and with the health of all Ajyal participants as the top priority, DFI continues to work closely with Qatar's Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) and the Crisis Committee to deliver a safe Festival experience with a balance of virtual and in-person elements.

This year's **Ajyal Film Festival** will open with **Sun Children** by Iranian director Majid Majidi, which made its debut at the 77th Venice International Film Festival earlier this year. It spotlights the resilience and creativity of the youth, which when nurtured brings about lasting social change and creates the great innovators and problem-solvers of tomorrow.

Tickets for the 8<sup>th</sup> Ajyal Film Festival are available for online purchase from today, 4 November. For up-to-date information and ticket purchase please visit: [www.dohafilminstitute.com/festival](http://www.dohafilminstitute.com/festival).

Addressing the official press conference of Ajyal Film Festival 2020, Fatma Hassan Alremaihi, Festival Director and Chief Executive Officer of the Doha Film Institute, said: "The impact of film and art moves beyond boundaries and limitations, and its innate power to connect and inspire is now more important than ever. A year ago none of us would have thought the situation in the world would be what it is today. Out of adversity emerges innovation and at Ajyal 2020, we have found creative new ways through technology to continue to bring people together to celebrate the power of film in a safe environment. The adapted edition of Ajyal will be a hybrid event of online and in-person activities that will ensure the creative vibrancy of Qatar while taking active responsibility for the physical well-being of all participants."

"The challenges of this year have taught us important lessons in compassion and humanity, and most importantly forced us to adapt to a new altered reality. This year's Festival theme – 'The Show Goes On' – captures the sentiment of this time and celebrates the resilience

demonstrated through this year, and the power of creative expression to reinforce our resolve and amplify our voices. The theme also captures the strength of Ajyal - which has persevered and adapted and continues forward as a renowned cultural event in an innovative new format."

"Ajyal offers a unique opportunity to plant the seeds of diversity, engagement, and inclusion for our future. In this time of uncertainty and physical separation, it is essential to continue to foster these important connections and trust our youth to overcome current challenges to build a brighter future."

## SPECIAL GUESTS

Ajyal 2020 will provide the jury the opportunity to interact with international arts and culture visionary, **H.E Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani**, who will inspire jurors with her approach to establishing Qatar as a leading global cultural destination and the impact of art and culture in national development.

Ajyal Spotlight sessions will feature **Claudio Gubitosi**, Director and Founder of the Giffoni Film Festival in Italy; Indian actor and humanitarian, **Kunal Kapoor**, **Goran Bodgan**, Bosnian actor known from the TV series *Fargo*; and American actor and comedian, **Zach Woods**.

## 2020 PROGRAMMING HIGHLIGHTS

Bringing together award-winning filmmakers from across the globe, Ajyal Film Festival continues to shine a light on inspiring voices with the inherent power to inspire change and shape generations through cinema. The diverse programme consists of **22** features and **58** shorts, including **31** from the Arab World and **30** by women filmmakers.

Ajyal 2020 has also expanded audience access safely cross the region by enabling everyone to share the Festival experience from the comfort of their homes via online streaming platform, and an exciting new drive-in element in Lusail in partnership with Qatar National Tourism Council.

## DFI SUPPORTED FILMS

The Institute is proud to have supported **24** films at the Festival through its programmes including Grants, co-financing, Qatari Film Fund and mentorship through labs and workshops. These include: **200 Meters**, **An Unusual Summer**, **Gevan's Land**, **Their Algeria**, **The Present**, and **I am Afraid to Forget Your Face**, among others.

## INCLUSIVE SCREENINGS

In the sixth year of one of the most unique cinematic presentations in the world, Ajyal's trans-adapted screenings return with **4** inspiring DFI-supported short films from Qatar's promising filmmaking talent. Presented in collaboration with the Translation and Interpreting Institute (TII) of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences at Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU), the programme marks the UN International Day of Persons with Disabilities and demonstrates the power of film as a tool for inclusion that transcends physical limitations.

## MADE IN QATAR

**AJYAL FILM FESTIVAL 2020**

**مهرجان أجيال السينمائي ٢٠٢٠**

**THE SHOW  
GOES ON**

**يستمّر  
GOES ON**

**العرض يستمر  
GOES ON**

The 2020 Made in Qatar programme presented by Ooredoo inspiring films from emerging Qatari nationals and those who call Qatar home. An impressive slate of **16** films bring together exciting voices from the next generation of Qatari creatives whose powerful stories will resonate with audiences across the world.

### **DRIVE-IN CINEMA**

Lusail's first-ever drive-in cinema in partnership with the Qatar National Tourism Council will offer a wonderful concept bringing the communal film-going experience to audiences to enjoy at safe social distances, with screenings of family-friendly classics such as **Bambi, Chicken Run, Chronicles of Narnia - The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe** among others. An annual highlight of the Festival, the Ajyal 2020 Kids Red Carpet will celebrate the 70th year of Disney's most beloved animated classic **Cinderella**.

### **AJYAL CREATIVITY HUB**

The Ajyal Creativity Hub returns as a multisensory extravaganza combining film, art and music in a one-stop cultural destination to transport audiences to new places and inspire and unite the community. The vibrant programme of cultural and creative activities available online to participants and audiences will feature Geekdom, Qatar's largest and one-of-its-kind pop-culture event; Ajyal Talks, gathering leaders from film, art, television and technology for inspiring and insightful discussions; and Ajyal Tunes, celebrating the country's musical talents through a mix of online initiatives and drive-in concerts.

Ajyal 2020 is proud to host world-renowned Qatari composer, **Dana Al Fardan**, and Libyan international humanitarian hero, **Alaa Murabit**, as part of the Ajyal Talks showcase.

Building on the success of our past three exhibitions, this year's Ajyal exhibition '**Outbreak**' at **Sikkat Wadi in Msheireb** will feature works of art that reflect the new reality of our world as it faces a period of instability and uncertainty. The selected works of immensely talented local artists pay tribute to the brave frontline workers and modern-day heroes sacrificing their lives for our safety.

### **PARTNERS**

2020 Ajyal Film Festival's Official Partners include: **Katara Cultural Village Foundation**—Cultural Partner; **Qatar National Tourism Council** – Principal Partner; **Novo Cinemas, Ooredoo** – Strategic Partner, **Msheireb Properties, Qatari Diar** – Signature Partner.

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### **Note to Editors:**

#### **About 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 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.