

8th Ajyal Film Festival continues to build a legacy of inclusion and exchange

- Adapted Festival edition brought together audiences across the world with a unique delivery of in-person and virtual activities
- Acclaimed feature **Sun Children** by Iranian director Majid Majidi opened the festival
- Programme included **22** features and **58** shorts; **31** from the Arab World; **30** by women filmmakers and **24** films supported by the Institute

Doha, Qatar; November 26, 2020: The first-ever hybrid edition of the 8th Ajyal Film Festival, presented by the Doha Film Institute (DFI) under the theme 'The Show Goes On', delivered a compelling cinematic and cultural programme for audiences in Qatar and beyond over six days from 18 – 23 November.

From open-air cinema to art exhibits and inspiring virtual talks, Ajyal 2020 offered an innovative mix of virtual and in-person film screenings balanced with the highest health and safety standards to all keep all participants safe. The Festival kicked off with a glamorous red carpet event at Katara Cultural Village followed by a screening of **Sun Children** (Iran/2020) by Iranian director Majid Majidi, which made its debut at the 77th Venice International Film Festival earlier this year.

Ajyal 2020 showcased **22** features and **58** shorts, including **31** from the Arab World and **30** by women directors. Bringing together award-winning filmmakers from across the globe, Ajyal continues to amplify powerful voices and rouse all generations through cinema.

The captivating **Made in Qatar** programme, presented by Ooredoo, returned to celebrate the exciting growth of filmmaking in the country with an inspiring slate of 16 films by Qatari directors and Qatar-based filmmakers. The Made in Qatar jury was comprised of filmmaker Kamal Aljafari, composer Dana Al Fardan, and producer Marie Balducci.

Delivering the magic of cinema to audiences for the fifth time, the **Made in Qatar: An Inclusive Experience** presented in partnership with the Translation and Interpreting Institute (TII) of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences at Hamad bin Khalifa University made film accessible to film enthusiasts of all abilities.

The **Ajyal Talks** showcase brought leadership, creativity and sustainability into focus. Audiences had the opportunity to engage in virtual discussions with international human rights hero and Nobel Peace Prize nominee Dr. Alaa Murabit, youth climate activist Sophia Kianni, and Qatar's foremost female contemporary composer, Dana Al Fardan.

Featuring an unmissable selection of films from classic family-favourites to edge-of-your-seat horror, Ajyal launched its first-ever Drive-In Cinema experience in partnership with Qatar National Tourism Council at Lusail as part of a multisensory experience for all ages, aimed at bringing the community together at safe social distances and in line with government guidelines, with the health of all Ajyal participants as top priority.

AJYAL FILM FESTIVAL 2020

مهرجان أجيال السينمائي ٢٠٢٠

**THE SHOW
GOES ON**

**يستمّر
GOES ON**

**العرض يستمر
GOES ON**

Delighting audiences with a transformative one-stop cultural extravaganza, the Ajyal Creativity Hub returned with Qatar's largest pop-culture event **Geekdom**, presented in partnership with Qatar National Tourism Council. **Ajyal Tunes** invited audiences to explore the mesmerising power of melody at Ajyal's Drive-In Cinema in Lusail with three exhilarating night-time concerts.

Meanwhile, a highly anticipated in-person element of Ajyal 2020, '**Outbreak**' art exhibition at Sikkat Wadi Msheireb featured inspiring original works from 24 local artistic talents that creatively represent and honour global action and solidarity. An exploration of the artists' personal trails of isolation and separation, '**Outbreak**' challenges audiences to consider the various facets of how the current pandemic can affect - and sometimes inspire - our worldview. The exhibition will remain open to the public until 10 December, Saturday to Thursday from 10 AM – 10 PM, and Friday from 2 PM – 10 PM.

The Festival culminated in a celebratory awards ceremony, where the winners of the Ajyal Jury Competition and Made in Qatar Competition were announced. Winners were selected by an international Ajyal Jury – with many jurors joining virtually from around the world – divided into three age categories: Mohaq (8-12 year olds), Hilal (13-17 year olds), and Bader (18-25 year olds) to evaluate a selection of shorts and feature films.

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**, **Lusail**, **Qatari Diar** – Signature Sponsors.

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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.

Doha Film Institute

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