

‘Made in Qatar’ Presented by Ooredoo Spotlights Homegrown Talent at 9th Ajyal Film Festival

- *Captivating programme of documentaries, short form narratives and animations, highlight emerging Qatari talents and those who call Qatar home*
- *Line-up includes the first ever Qatari and Yemeni film selected for the official shorts film competition in Locarno and Venice respectively*
- *10 films to compete for the Made in Qatar awards, with 6 DFI-supported films*

Doha, Qatar; 27th October 2021:

Amplifying voices from Qatar’s growing national film industry, the Doha Film Institute’s (DFI) 9th Ajyal Film Festival will showcase 10 inspiring films by Qatari directors and Qatar-based filmmakers as part of the popular **Made in Qatar** programme presented by Ooredoo.

Unlocking opportunities for emerging home-grown creators to join the global film community, **Made in Qatar**, returns as one of the most highly-anticipated segments of Ajyal. The one-of-a-kind platform for aspiring filmmakers draws on the immersive power of cinema to drive the creation of original and compelling content from our region and foster global understanding through artistic dialogue.

The 10 shorts will vie for the Made in Qatar Awards, chosen by a jury which includes American actress Sheila Vand, Executive Board Member and CEO of Katara Studios Ahmed Al Baker, and Farah Nabulsi, Palestinian-British Oscar-nominated and BAFTA award-winning filmmaker of *The Present*, supported by DFI.

Continuing to build on DFI’s track-record of showcasing Arab talent to an international audience, Majid Al-Remaihi and Shaima Al-Tamimi set history as the directors of the first Qatari ***And Then They Burn The Sea*** and Yemeni ***Don’t Get Too Comfortable*** films selected for competition at international film events of Locarno and Venice respectively.

Fatma Hassan Alremaihi, Festival Director and Chief Executive Officer of the Doha Film Institute, said: *“I am extremely proud of the determination, passion, and professionalism of this year’s MIQ class persevering to realise their projects despite the limitations of a global pandemic and the restrictions that came with it. Our home-grown creatives have emerged more impressive than ever, and unequivocally represent the quality and importance of film coming from Qatar and the region. Arab cinema continues on an upward trajectory, leaving its unique imprint in the global film community. The inspirational and poignant films being created in Qatar and the wider MENA region will further drive the momentum of our regional cinematic ambitions, and more people will take note of the significant global influence.”*

“It fills me with pride to see the filmmakers of Qatar emboldened to take their narrative into their own hands, and ensure their voices are being heard in an authentic way. The selection includes thought-provoking works by emerging local talent that offer fresh perspectives on life that reflect human hopes, aspirations and challenges.”

The exciting programme line-up includes:

- **Border** (Qatar/2021) by Khalifa Al Thani is a DFI supported film, set in an abstrusely dystopian future, where a man wishes to return to his family, but navigating the complex system becomes a near-impossible journey.

- Also supported by DFI, in **Fever Dream** (Qatar, Poland, USA/2021) by Ania Hendryx Wójtowicz, the director presents a documentary about a reality that is stranger than fiction. Sick with the coronavirus, a couple films themselves in quarantine—a five-star hotel with a sea view and sealed windows.
- Filmed in the aftermath of the tragic explosion that rocked the city of Beirut last August, **Kan Fe Nas** (Qatar, Lebanon/2021) by Mohamed Al Hamadi, documents the stories of Lebanese people as they endure daily hardships.
- Premiering in the Orizzonti Shorts Film Competition at Venice 2021, Shaima Al-Tamimi's **Don't Get Too Comfortable** (Yemen, UAE, USA, Netherlands, Qatar), contemplates the continuous pattern of movement amongst Yemenis in the diaspora and highlights the collective feeling of statelessness and belonging by migrants through introspective letters written to her grandfather.
- **A Lens Under Water** (Qatar/2021) by Fatma Zahra Abderrahim, takes an eye-opening and colourful dive into the teeming coastal waters of Qatar with underwater photographer Faisal Jarkas.
- DFI supported **Virtual Voice** (Qatar, Sudan/2021) by Suzannah Mirghani, is a digital-savvy and satirical review of our online times, in which viewers meet Suzi doll, an ego-warrior marching to the algorithms of social media—another vacuous virtual voice, echoing injustices.
- **Atlal (Remnants)** (Qatar/2021) by Balkees Al-Jaafari and Tony El Ghazal, follows a wistful Palestinian man who embarks on a trip down memory lane to the pivotal locations of his life in Qatar— all of which now lay abandoned.
- Recipient of the Qatari Film Fund, **And Then They Burn the Sea**, by Majid Al Remailhi, is an ode to Al-Remailhi's mother, who suffered from gradual and terminal memory loss over the course of many years. The film screened in the Pardi Di Domani category in Locarno and has recently been selected for the Short Documentary competition at Carthage Cinema Days in Tunisia.
- **When Beirut was Beirut** (Qatar, Lebanon/2021) by Alessandra El Chanti, is an animated documentary, in which three of Beirut's monumental buildings come to life and share their stories of Beirut's unsettling history.
- A DFI Qatari Film Fund recipient **Olayan** (Qatar/2021) by Khalifa Al-Marri, follows a Bedouin boy named Hamad who forms a bond with a new-born camel, who he calls Olayan. When Olayan is later sold to market, young Hamad embarks on a mission to rescue his friend. Khalifa has previously won a MiQ Jury Award for his short Man of the House at Ajyal 2015.

The Made in Qatar programme will premiere on 9 November at 7.30PM at Katara Drama Theatre, Building 16 followed by a screening at 8:30PM at Katara Opera House, Building 16, and will screen on 11 November at 8.30PM at VOX Cinemas, Doha Festival City.

Tickets for the 9th Ajyal Film Festival are available for purchase online at ajyalfilm.com, with the exception of screenings at Vox cinemas for which tickets can be purchased directly from the Vox box office. Prices vary depending on screening and location, and a maximum of six tickets may be purchased per person. Qatar Museum's Culture Pass members are able to redeem a 20% discount on tickets sold by DFI.

2021 Ajyal Film Festival's Official Partners include: **Katara Cultural Village Foundation** – Cultural Partner; **Qatar National Tourism Council** – Principal Partner; **Ooredoo** – Strategic partner; **Qatari Diar, Msheireb Properties, W Doha** – Signature Sponsors.

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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:

Twitter: @DohaFilm; Instagram: @DohaFilm; Facebook: www.facebook.com/DohaFilmInstitute

About Ajyal Film Festival:

Ajyal Film Festival is an annual celebration of film designed to nurture young minds and support the development of mindful global citizens and thoughtful future leaders. 'Ajyal', Arabic for 'generations', brings people of all ages together through screenings and events that inspire creative interaction and stimulate cinematic dialogue.

Ajyal Film Festival builds on the Doha Film Institute's history of community-based programming. Through its jury programme, youth between the ages of 8 and 25 are given an opportunity to watch, analyse and discuss global cinema and culture, developing self-confidence, independent critical thinking skills, self-expression, and an appreciation of cinema, while making new friends and discovering global cultures.

Twitter: @AjyalFilm; Instagram: @AjyalFilm; Facebook: www.facebook.com/AjyalFilm

For more information, please contact:

Rania Aissaoui

Rania.aissaoui@bluerubicon.qa

+974 3111 5779