

Press Release

## Ajyal Jurors to assess 26 masterful short films at 2022 Special 10<sup>th</sup> Edition of Ajyal Film Festival

- *More than 500 youth, aged 8 to 25, will watch, discuss, and evaluate short films in three competition categories, Mohaq, Hilal and Bader.*
- *The Shorts programme presents films from around the world whose form, style, and subjects will captivate youth jury.*

**Doha, Qatar; September 20, 2022:** 26 short films from around the world will delight the discerning young audience of Ajyal Jurors during the 2022 Special 10<sup>th</sup> Edition of the Ajyal Film Festival to be held from October 1 to 8.

Continuing to open new paths of understanding of our complexities and commonalities as humans by tackling a wide range of subjects – from climate change to emigration and women empowerment – the films express a unique diversity of style, form and substance. More than 500 Ajyal Jurors at the heart of the festival will watch the films, discuss them with peers, and critique them to select the award winners.

Fatma Hassan Alremaihi, Chief Executive Officer of the Doha Film Institute, and Festival Director, said: “Ajyal continues to build a legacy of amplifying important emerging voices and providing a platform of expression that instills hope for the young leaders of tomorrow. Film has the power to spark significant social impact by expanding our perception of the world and imparting valuable life lessons. Our carefully curated shorts programme reflects the diversity of our experiences, and it will provide the Ajyal Jury with an opportunity to find understanding, and new ideas and perspectives through these unique tales.”

The shorts are presented in three categories for the three sections of Ajyal Jurors: Mohaq (8 to 12); Hilal (13 to 17 years) and Bader (18- to 25).

Sample shorts screening in the Mohaq category include:

- Qualifying for the Live Action Short Oscar® at the 95th Academy Awards®, **Burros** (USA/2021) by Jefferson Stein, is about a young Indigenous girl, who discovers a Hispanic migrant her age separated from her father while travelling through the Tohono O’odham tribal lands into the United States.
- **Canary** (Canada/2022) by Pierre-Hugues Dallaire and Benoit Therriault is about young Sonny who doesn’t like mining much, and he trains his pet canary to play dead so they can take the day off. The prank leads to unintentional disaster in this animated short about honesty, integrity, and friendship.
- **Ice Merchants** (Portugal, UK, France/2022) by João Gonzalez is about a father and his son who jump with a parachute from their house attached to a cliff high in the cold mountains. One day the temperature begins to creep above freezing leading to dire consequences for the family in this foreboding animation about climate change and its effects.

- ***The Most Boring Granny in the Whole World*** (Germany/2022) by Damaris Zielke is about young Greta, who thinks she might have the most boring grandma in the whole world. One day while her granny naps on the couch, Greta hosts a mock funeral, inviting all her toys as guests.
- ***Nasser & The Ticket*** (Qatar/2022) by Tony El Ghazal is set in 1973 and follows young Nasser who is stuck in class and is desperate to see his idol, the legendary Pelé play a match in Doha, in a charming short about the beautiful game and its power to unite cultures

Select shorts included in the Hilal section are:

- ***Displaced*** (Kosovo/2021) by Samir is set in post-war Kosovo. Driven by the ambition of keeping their beloved sport alive, two local players wander from one obscure location to another, carrying the club's only possession—their ping pong tables.
- ***InBetween Home*** (Austria, Romania/2022) by Brigitta Kanyaro uses a touch of humour to compassionately portray the struggles of first-generation immigrants as they encounter language barriers, bureaucracy, and homesickness in their hope of finding a new life.
- ***On The Surface*** (Iceland, USA, Mali/2021), by Fan Sissoko is a short contemplative animation about a young Black woman who goes swimming in the Icelandic Sea. There, she reflects on her experience of raising a child in a country that feels nothing like home.
- ***Paradiso, XXXI, 108*** (Palestine, Germany/2022) by Kamal Aljafari uses archival footage interweaved with an almost haunting soundscape to perfectly encapsulate the folly of war in this captivating short documentary.
- ***The Eternal Melody*** (Nepal/2022), directed by Niranjana Raj Bhetwal, is about an elderly woman living high in the mountains with her grown son. She is visited in a dream by her late husband, and they go to great lengths to help ease his passage to the next world.

And some of the shorts chosen for Bader, are:

- ***As Time Passes*** (USA/2022), by Jamil McGinnis, a poetic series of captivating vignettes tracing the filmmaker's family roots from east to west and their experience in the diaspora.
- ***Five Stars*** (Spain/2021) by Roberto Jiménez Bozada is a tongue-in-cheek dramedy about wealth disparity and the objectification of people in poverty in order to entertain the privileged.
- ***Mkawda*** (Algeria/2021) by visual artist Souad Douibi takes viewers through the streets of Algiers for a “check-up” on its inhabitants. A totally immersive sound experience, it captures the zeitgeist of a city in pain.
- ***Rest in Piece*** (Germany, France, Qatar/2021) by Antoine Antabi is a beautifully crafted clay animation that shows us the courage and resilience of displaced peoples through the eyes of Midyan, who is forced to flee his war-torn home.
- ***Same Old*** (USA/2022) by Lloyd Lee is about a Chinese immigrant living day to day on tips from his job as a delivery worker. One night, his bicycle, and in essence his livelihood, is stolen from him.

The 2022 Special Edition of Ajyal is DFI's tribute to the nation in a historic year, an extraordinary milestone for Qatar and the Arab world and a shining example of how ambition, dedication, and commitment to success can turn dreams into reality.

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