

Press Release

International Filmmakers Head to Qatar for 2015 Ajyal Youth Film Festival

Doha, Qatar; November 26, 2015: With the 2015 Ajyal Youth Film Festival scheduled to run from 29th November to 5th December, a lineup of globally acclaimed filmmakers will be in Qatar for the screening of their films and live Q&A sessions.

International filmmakers and film experts will come together in Qatar to share their stories and further inspire and enlighten local audiences and the selected 2015 Ajyal jurors. Leading the brigade is celebrated Bosnian director and screenwriter Danis Tanovic along with Afghani director Yousef Baraki, Zig Madamba Dulay from the Philippines, Spanish filmmaker Pablo Iraburu, Yury Feting from Russia, American director Graham Townsley, Mexican directors Ana V. Bojórquez and Lucía Carreras, and Japanese actor, singer and writer Durian Sukegawa among others.

Tigers (India, France, UK/2014) by Academy Award winning director Danis Tanovic screens on November 30th and December 4th as part of the Festivals' Special Screenings segment. Starring Bollywood actor Emraan Hashmi, the film is based on a real-life story and is a hard-hitting look at the nefarious practices of multinational corporations in the developing world. Ajyal will mark the Qatar premiere for ***Tigers***, whose director, Tanović, was one of five Masters at the inaugural edition of Qumra in March, the Doha Film Institute's newly inaugurated industry event for emerging filmmakers.

Meena Sargardan (Mina Walking, Canada, Afghanistan/2015) by Afghani Canadian director Yousef Baraki screens on the 1st and 5th December within the Hilal Competition segment at Ajyal. The film tells the story of twelve-year-old Mina who is saddled with caring for her senile grandfather and supporting her layabout father, while trying to make a better life for all in war-torn Afghanistan. The film was screened in the Generation 14plus section of the 65th Berlin International Film Festival where it competed for the Crystal Bear and has won several honours including top prizes at the Austria, Zlin, HotDocs, Saarc, Mumbai and Tofifest International Film Festivals.

Bambanti (Scarecrow, Philippines/2015) by Zig Madamba Dulay screens on 1st and 3rd December under the Hilal Competition segment at Ajyal 2015. Scarecrow' is a deeply moving film that explores the complicated relationship of social injustice, privilege and familial expectations. Zig Madamba Dulay's short film 'Missing'(2013) won the Best Short Film at the URIAN Awards, and his feature-length film 'M: Mother's Maiden Name' (2014) garnered the Jury Prize Award at the Metro Manila Film Festival in the New Wave Section.

Pablo Iraburu's ***Walls*** (Muros, Spain/2015) competing within the Bader segment screens on the 1st and 4th of December. 'Walls' follows several subjects on both sides of three contemporary international borders, demonstrating that the barriers lining them signal a lack of camaraderie. Imposing and threatening, they define who is worthy – and who is not.

Nebesnyyverblyud (Celestial Camel, Russia/2014) by Yuri Feting is included in the Mohaq competitive segment at Ajyal and screens on 2nd and 5th December. Its about Bayir, a young sheepherder, who heads off on an epic journey to find the mother of his beloved camel calf who they are forced to sell, and discovers that wonders do happen in the most unlikely of places. Celestial Camel was nominated for the Crystal Bear at the Berlin International Film Festival in 2015.

Landfill Harmonic (USA, Spain/2015) by Graham Townsley and Brad Allgood screens on the 3rd of December within the Hilal Competition segment. In a wonderful celebration of the soul-affirming joy of making music, 'Landfill Harmonic' tracks the astounding rise of a group of young people condemned to a life of poverty, who were given the opportunity to make their musical mark on the world, with instruments crafted from materials from the landfill.

The film screening will begin with a live performance by The Recycled Orchestra of Cateura, a Paraguayan musical youth group of kids that live next to one of South America's largest landfills.

La casa más grande del mundo (The Greatest House in the World, Mexico/2015) by directors Ana V. Bojórquez and Lucía Carreras screens on 30th November and 5th December within the Mohaq competitive segment. The film is about a young girl Rocio who looks after the family's flock of sheep on her own. In the isolated highlands, she whiles away her time with Ixchumilá, another young shepherdess, but when the littlest sheep in Rocío's flock goes missing, she is left alone to find it.

Quietly, it becomes clear that the greatest house in the world is nature itself in this lovely film about the never-ending circle of life.

Naomi Kawase's *An* (Japan, France, Germany/2015) is a big screen adaptation of writer, singer, and actor Durian Sukegawa's novel *An*. Screening on 2nd and 3rd December in the Bader competition segment, the film has been rated by critics as the Japanese auteur's most accessible work to date and is a gentle study of life, loss and confectionery.

An, which translates to sweet red bean paste, is a soft-centered ode to the virtues of patience, tolerance and bean-filled pancakes, and is winsome tale of the unlikely bond between a solitary confectioner with no sweet tooth and his new cook with culinary magic in her frail fingertips.

The third annual Ajyal Youth Film Festival will be held from Nov 29 – Dec 5 at Katara. The programme consists of daily public screenings of local and international films; the popular 'Made in Qatar' section dedicated to showcasing home-grown talent from Qatar; SONY Cinema Under the Stars; family weekend; the Doha Giffoni Youth Media Summit; special events and exhibitions; the Sandbox interactive digital playground; school screenings; and the Ajyal Competition, where hundreds of young jurors between the ages of 8 and 21 will watch and discuss shorts and features and decide on the winning films.

For more information on the movie timings and the Ajyal Youth Film Festival, visit ajyalfilm.com

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