



4th Ajyal Youth Film Festival to screen 70 thought-provoking films from 33 countries celebrating the theme of positive social change

Doha, Qatar; November 15, 2016: The fourth edition of Ajyal Youth Film Festival, presented by the Doha Film Institute, will kick off on November 30, 2016, at Katara Cultural Village bringing a six-day eclectic showcase of 42 public screenings, 18 jury screenings, interactive panels and masterclasses, red carpets, exhibitions and family activities.

This year, Ajyal highlights the theme of positive social change with 70 thought-provoking films that will inspire the youth and stimulate discussions about real and relevant issues that affect them globally. The motivational line-up includes 24 features and 46 short narratives/documentaries, from 33 countries that cover themes ranging from women empowerment to the global displacement crisis, the loss of loved ones, financial dependence, separation and every day struggles, presented with an underlying spirit of optimism and hope that will warm the hearts of the viewers.

The festival will open with the MENA premiere of ***The Eagle Huntress***, directed by Otto Bell, and close with ***The Red Turtle*** by Michaël Dudok de Wit – also a MENA premiere, described as a wordless wonder.

Other highlights of this year's feature film line-up also include the MENA premieres of Cannes Palme d'Or winner ***I, Daniel Blake*** from Ken Loach, Asghar Farhadi's ***The Salesman*** and Babak Anvari's ***Under the Shadow***. Golden Bear winner at Berlin ***Fire at Sea*** by Gianfranco Rosi and Sundance favourite ***Hunt for the Wilderpeople*** by Taika Waititi will enjoy their Qatar Premieres at the Festival.

Ajyal 2016 also includes a diverse showcase of 18 documentary films, highlighting the importance of the art form to address important issues, and used as a tool for promoting social change throughout its history. 27 of the films to be screened at Ajyal are by women directors/producers.

An eclectic shorts programme will see films screen to the public during the festival for the very first time – 17 of these in the Made in Qatar section, which celebrates work by local filmmakers and those who call Qatar home. The 2016 programme marks a milestone with the world premieres of the first completed projects from the 2015 Qatar Film Fund recipients, Nora Al-Subai's ***Al-Johara*** and ***Amer-An Arabian Legend*** by Jassim Al Rumaihi. ***The Waiting Room*** by Hend Fakhroo and AJ Al-Thani's ***Kashta***, recipients of the Institute's Grants Programme, also make their world debut's at the 2016 Festival.

Announcing the line-up of films and the varied activities associated with Ajyal, Fatma Al Remaihi, Festival Director and CEO of Doha Film Institute, said: "Ajyal is a festival of cinema for the community, which has truly become an event for all generations. At the core of this celebration are young people from Qatar and around the world, who come together in a creative and inspiring environment, to explore and engage with the many interesting films and subject matters that fuels their curiosity and sparks their imaginations.

"Since our inception four years ago, we have evolved tremendously, especially in the diversity of our programming that encourages critical thinking on contemporary issues, and highlights the power of



films to shape perceptions and change minds. This growth would not have been possible without the love and encouragement of our jurors and audiences, who breathe life into this community event.

“This year too, we are engaging them with compelling and meaningful films that enhance their awareness of the world around them, and inspires them to see humanity from fresh perspectives. With our theme on social change and transformation, we have carefully curated a programme that urges audiences to understand the power that lies in every human being to make a positive difference.”

The competition line-up at Ajyal 2016 comprises 14 meaningful feature films from 17 countries and a series of short film programmes. More than 500 jurors from the ages of 8 to 21 who make up the Ajyal Competition Jury will watch and analyse a dynamic programme of films under three competitive sections – Mohaq, Hilal, and Bader – followed by discussions and events including panels, workshops and Q&A sessions with filmmakers.

The 2016 Ajyal Jury includes a delegation of 24 international jurors who will travel to Doha for the event from 10 countries including Australia, Bahrain, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iraq, Italy, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Serbia, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates.

This year, Ajyal is introducing the Midnight Screenings strand and will also bring the inclusive screening of ***The Idol*** by Hany Abu-Assad, presented in a ‘trans-adapted’ version to mark the UN International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

Ajyal 2016 will screen 15 films that are supported by the Doha Film Institute through its Grants Programme, co-financing, Qatari Film Fund or projects mentored through its labs and workshops. These include the feature films: ***Under the Shadow*** by Babak Anvari (Spring Grant 2014); ***Listen to the Silence*** by Mariam Chachia (Spring Grant 2016) and ***The Salesman*** by Asghar Farhadi, produced by Memento Films Production and Asghar Farhadi Production, in coproduction with Arte France Cinéma and in association with DFI, Memento Films Distribution and Arte France.

The short films at Ajyal supported by the Institute are: ***Waves*** by Ely Dagher (Spring Grant 2014); ***Ave Maria*** by Basil Khalil (Fall Grant 2013); ***Mariam*** by Faiza Ambah (Spring Grant 2013); and ***The Waiting Room*** by Hend Fakhroo (Fall Grant 2015) ; ***Al-Johara*** by Nora Al-Subai (Qatari Film Fund 2015); ***Amer: An Arabian Legend*** by Jassim Al-Rumaihi (Qatar Film Fund 2015); and ***Kashta*** by AJ Al Thani (Fall Grant 2015).

Ajyal 2016 has a rich selection of highly acclaimed films. Directed by Ken Loach, ***I, Daniel Blake*** is the winner of the Palme d’Or at Cannes this year, while ***The Salesman*** won the prizes for Best Screenplay and Best Actor. ***Fire at Sea*** directed by Gianfranco Rosi, is the winner of Berlinale’s Golden Bear this year. ***The Eagle Huntress*** won acclaim at Sundance and ***Enclave*** by Goran Radovanović was Serbia’s entry for the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film last year.

Three films in contention for the Oscar for Best Foreign Language Film this year are screening at Ajyal including ***Under the Shadow*** (entry by UK), ***The Salesman*** (by Iran) and ***The Idol*** (by Palestine). ***Ave Maria*** was also Oscar-nominated for Best Live Action (Short Film) at the 2016 Academy Awards.



Tickets go on sale from 16 November and are priced QR25 for general screening. Tickets are available for purchase 24 hours a day at ajyalfilm.com or from the Ajyal Katara Main Box Office in Katara Building 12 or Ajyal FNAC Ticket Outlet, FNAC Qatar (at Lagoona Mall).

Katara is the Cultural Partner and Oxy Qatar is the Principal Partner for the 2016 edition. Qatar Tourism Authority is the Signature Partner of the festival this year. For more details on the Ajyal Youth Film Festival, please visit www.dohafilminstitute.com/filmfestival

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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 Youth 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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