



With 16 films in 'Made in Qatar' programme presented by Ooredoo, local talents say Ajyal is the driving force of the local film industry

- *An eminent jury will select the winners including the newly introduced 'Abdul Aziz Jassim Best Actor Award' in honour of late Qatari actor*

Doha, Qatar; November 28, 2018: Filmmakers from Qatar say Ajyal Film Festival not only provides them the platform to highlight their talents but also serves as the driving force of a truly homegrown film industry.

Interacting with the media on the opening day of the sixth Ajyal Film Festival, the annual cinema event by the Doha Film Institute, filmmakers who are showcasing their works in the 'Made in Qatar' presented by Ooredoo programme, were unequivocal about their commitment to exploring the possibilities offered by cinema.

The 16 filmmakers, including Qataris and those who call Qatar home, shared their optimism in the country's filmmaking sector, adding that despite the blockade, Qatar has made remarkable strides in promoting local talents, as highlighted at Ajyal.

Fatma Hassan Alremaihi, Festival Director and Chief Executive Officer of the Doha Film Institute, said: "Films by our own young talents are indeed the pride of Ajyal Film Festival. Their works highlight the journey of Qatari talents, from ideation to execution, with the support of not just the Doha Film Institute but also Qatar's educational institutions and the creative community. Their works are powerful portraits of our country, with the films highlighting our values of tolerance, humaneness, openness, respect for others and our spirit of resilience and courage."

The Made in Qatar films will be evaluated by an esteemed jury comprising Turkish actress Tuba Unsal, Dr. Amal Mohammed Al Malki, Founding Dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences at Hamad Bin Khalifa University and Irish filmmaker Collin McIvor. The Doha Film Institute has also launched a new award this year as a tribute to the legendary Qatari actor Abdulaziz Jassim, who passed away this year. The 'Abdulaziz Jassim Best Actor Award' will be presented to one actor from the 16 short films that are in competition in the 'Made in Qatar' presented by Ooredoo programme.

This year, while the filmmakers present diverse themes in their shorts including narratives, thought-provoking documentaries and reflective essays, the common factor that define their cinema is their inspiration derived from their roots – the country, its culture, heritage, people and places.

Noof Al Sulaiti, director of **Gubgub** (2018), about an adventurous girl who goes crab hunting with her family, says the support of Doha Film Institute helped her to enhance the quality of her film, and believes that platform such as Ajyal will elevate the filmmaking scene in Qatar. For her film, she took inspiration from her own life. "We go crab hunting every year with family, and I was inspired by the experience and the open seas. But the underlying message is stronger in that I wanted to convey to the young women in Qatar that they can achieve their dreams through hard work and perseverance."



You do not need have to rely on others but must focus on pushing yourself to achieve what you set out to do.”

Naif Hassan Al-Malki, who directed *I Am Not My Father* (2018), which is an exploration into the power of dreams and how close family relationships are essential to happiness, believes that it is important as a filmmaker to write bold scripts and break conventions to make them memorable and relevant to modern audiences. He says the challenge he faces as a filmmaker is to find resources. “I quit my job to be a filmmaker and I found that most organisations I approached do not take filmmakers here seriously and expect to do work for them for free. This must change.” He is keen to explore stories from Qatar and through his films make them appeal to an international audience.

Valuing the support of the Doha Film Institute in helping him accomplish his filmmaking dream, Mohamed Al Mahmeed, director of *Nasser Goes to Space* (2018), said that his film was developed script-to-screen with the support of the Doha Film Institute. “I wrote the script at a workshop I attended at the Institute, and the training I received from international professionals helped me to learn and better myself both as a writer and director.” He says that Ajyal Film Festival is a notable initiative that will encourage more young people to come forward and in turn build a stronger homegrown film industry in Qatar.

All the four films were supported by the Doha Film Institute through its initiatives including the Grants programme and/or the Qatari Film Fund.

The Made in Qatar presented by Ooredoo films are being screened in two programmes on Thursday (Nov. 29) and Saturday (Dec. 1) at Katara Drama Theatre both at 7 PM. Repeat screenings will be held on Sunday (Dec. 2) at 5:30 PM (Programme 1) and 8:30 PM (Programme 2) at Novo Cinemas, The Pearl. The Made in Qatar awards ceremony will be on Dec. 1 after the screening.

Tickets to the screenings are priced QR25 and are available at FNAC stores (Lagoona Mall and Doha Festival City) and the Ajyal Katara Main Box office, Building 12. Tickets can be purchased online www.dohafilminstitute.com/filmfestival. Holders of Culture Pass by Qatar Museums will get a QR5 discount on all general screenings.

2018 Ajyal Film Festival’s Official Partners include: Katara Cultural Village – Cultural Partner; Ooredoo – Principal Partner; Novo Cinemas – Strategic Partner and St. Regis Doha – Signature Sponsor.

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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.

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 in a creative and educational environment. 'Ajyal', Arabic for 'generations', brings people of all ages together through screenings and events that inspire creative interaction and stimulate cinematic dialogue. Through its' jury programme, youth between the ages of 8 and 21 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. 6th Ajyal Film Festival takes place from the 28th of November to the 3rd of December.

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