

Discover 32 Moving Short Films at Ajyal Film Festival

- *Short films line-up features five DFI Grant-supported films*
- *Nine films represent Qatar's flourishing film industry and its local directors*

Doha, Qatar; 13 November 2019: An inspiring selection of 32 powerful films from across the globe are featured in three programmes of short films on the themes of '**Feel**', '**Overcome**' and '**Experience**' at Ajyal Film Festival 2019, the Doha Film Institute's (DFI) annual cinema event taking place from 18 to 23 November at Katara Cultural Village.

Fatma Hassan Alremaihi, Festival Director and Chief Executive Officer of DFI, said: "Ajyal is committed to inspiring the next generation of storytellers, leaders and dreamers to embrace the power of intuition, persevere in the face of obstacles and find their dreams. Our carefully curated international short films programme reflects our commitment to develop and nurture our youth to understand that overcoming life's challenges is integral to one's personal and creative journey. Films use the language of imagination to create a shared experience that can shape our perception of the world and teach our children powerful lessons."

The **Feel** selection of films, to screen at 12.30 PM (23 November) at VOX Cinemas, will explore the power of intuition in shaping our sense of the world. Watch **Belles étoiles** (France/2017) by Naïma Di Piero and Elhadj Sidib, a tribute to friendship and its power to overcome feelings of isolation; **Like an Elephant in a China Shop** (France/2017) by Louise Chevrier, Luka Fischer, Rodolphe Groshens, Marie Guillon, Estelle Martinez, Benoit Paillard, Lisa Rasasombat, about a nervous shopkeeper who is confronted with a giant elephant in his store; **Hedgehog** (France/2018) by Vaibhav Keswani, Jeanne Laureau, Colombine Majou, Morgane Mattard, Kaisa Pirttinen, and Jong-ha Yoon, about a young boy's infatuation with a family of hedgehogs in his garden; **Maha'mel (Ships)** (Qatar/2018) by Dhabya AlMuhannadi explores the creation and engineering behind Qatar's iconic Dhow boats; **The Stained Club** (France/2018) by Mélanie Lopez, Simon Boucly, Marie Ciesielski, Alice Jaunet, Chan Stéphanie Peang, Béatrice Viguié, about the special bonds that can be formed from differences such as inexplicable spots; **Beit Byoot** (Jordan, Qatar/2019) by Mayar Hamdan follows a girl's struggle to choose between fitting in with the mean girls or embracing being different with her new friend; **The Unlucky Hamster** (Qatar, Indonesia/2019) by Abdulaziz Mohammed Khashabi retells the adventures of Fluffy, a hamster dreaming of a new home; **Child of the Earth** (Switzerland, USA/2018) by Claudio Fäh, a portrayal of a young man whose journey takes him beyond the confines of his disability, to outer space and beyond; **The Kite** (Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland/2019) by Martin Smatana, an animated tale about a child and his grandfather, sharing precious moments together while flying a kite; and Nada Bedair's **Paper Kite** (Qatar/2019), the story of two young girls who push against traditional boundaries in a strict catholic church.

The **Overcome** selection, screening at 3 PM (23 November) at VOX Cinemas, is a testament to the ability of people to overcome any obstacles in pursuit of their dreams. The programme includes: **Layla** (UK/2019) by Celine Cotran, the unlikely adventures of 60-year-old refugee Layla, who meets a young boy and learns how to skateboard; in Jolanta Bańkowska's **Story** (Poland/2019) a young girl has detached herself from reality and observes the world through social media; **Youth** (Egypt, USA/2019)

by Farida Zahran explores boundaries and the difficulties that arise when we are pushed to re-evaluate our personal boundaries; **Thermostat 6** (France/2018) by Maya Av-ran, Mylène Cominotti, Marion Coudert, Sixtine Dano, about Diane and her family whose struggle with a leaky roof soon uncovers deeper issues; **Maradona's Legs** (Germany, Palestine/2019) by Firas Khoury, about two young boys in search of the last sticker to complete their World Cup Album; **Esperança** (France/2019) by Cécile Rousset, Jeanne Paturle, Benjamin Serero recounts a mother and daughter's journey from Angola to France and the beginning of their new life; **Fault Line** (Iran/2018) by Soheil Amirsharifi tells the story of an Iranian schoolgirl, who must create a new version of the truth after breaking her arm in a motorcycle accident; in Baptiste Drapeau's **Half and Half** (France/2018), a knight, who has been cut in half and stuck to a knight from the opposing side, must learn to work with his enemy; **The Helmet** (Yemen/2019) by Osama Khaled thematises the country's conflict as one young tech genius dreams up an invention to help him escape his harsh reality; **Memo** (France/2017) by Julien Becquer, Éléna Dupressoir, Jules Durand, Viviane Guimarães, Ines Scheiber portrays the struggles of living with dementia; **Refuge** (Qatar/2019) by Maha Essid reflects on the connection two Palestinian expats have to their home country; and **Fragile** (Qatar/2019) by Kholood Al-Ali, the story of a ceramic girl and her perilous adventure towards reinvention and self-discovery.

The **Experience** selection, to screen at 9 PM (22 November) at VOX Cinemas, showcases how valuable life lessons can be learned, even in hardship. The films include: **Patision Avenue** (Greece/2018) by Thanasis Neofotistos in which Yanni's mother makes her way to audition as Shakespeare's Viola, only to discover her young son has been left home alone; **Ostrich Politic** (France/2018) by Mohamad HouHouis, the story of an Ostrich society that discovered that burying their heads is not always reasonable; **It's a Long Way from Amphioxus** (Germany/2019) by Kamal Aljafari reflects on the long queues that refugees are faced with in German immigration centres; in Soudade Kaadan's **Aziza** (Lebanon, Syria/2019), a Syrian refugee teaches his wife how to drive in a journey towards comedy and nostalgia; **Ambience** (Palestine/2019) by Wisam Al Jafari, about two aspiring musicians, who embrace the chaotic sounds of their environment and turn it into beautifully haunting music; **For the Sake of Yousef** (Kuwait/2019) by Yousef Al Baqshi shows the power of imagination as young Yousef begins to imagine events in a horror film happening to him; in A.J. Al-Thani's **The Black Veil** (Qatar/2019), one woman puts her life at risk to find her freedom; **Threads** (Canada, Norway/2017) by Torill Kove is a reflection on all the complexities and beauty of the bond of parental love; **In the Middle** (Yemen, Qatar/2019) by Mariam Al-Dubhani follows the story of a young boy, stuck between picking up arms and his crushed dreams in Yemen; and **End of the Road** (Qatar/2019) by Ahmad Al-Sharif chronicles a father's struggles to decide whether to be a good Samaritan or reach home in time to celebrate his daughter's birthday.

Tickets for the 7th Ajyal Film Festival are available for purchase at the Ajyal Main Box Office located in Katara Building 10; at the Ajyal Box Office at VOX Cinemas Doha Festival City for screenings taking place at VOX Cinemas; and from the Novo Cinemas Box Office for screenings at Novo Cinemas, the Pearl. For ticket purchase and up-to-date information on the Ajyal Film Festival, please visit:

<https://www.dohafilminstitute.com/filmfestival/ticketinformation>

<https://www.dohafilminstitute.com/filmfestival/films>

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2019 Ajyal Film Festival's Official Partners include: **Katara Cultural Village** – Cultural Partner; **Qatar National Tourism Council** – Principal Partner; **Novo Cinemas, Ooredoo** – Strategic Partner, **St. Regis Doha** - Signature Partner

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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

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