

Interactive Events and Award-Winning Films Delight Audiences at 7th Ajyal Film Festival

- *The Ajyal Creativity Hub opens its doors with the ARC storytelling exhibition & Qatar's largest pop-culture event Geekdom*
- *Six international feature films, including special screening of Elia Suleiman's **It Must Be Heaven**, to delight audiences throughout the festival day*

Doha, Qatar; 19 November 2019: An array of award-winning films and events for the whole family are taking centre stage on the second day (19 November) of Ajyal Film Festival 2019, the annual cinema event hosted by the Doha Film Institute (DFI) at Katara Cultural Village.

Ajyal brings back **Geekdom**, Qatar's largest pop-culture event, as part of the vibrant Ajyal Creativity Hub. Visitors of all ages are welcome to join the must-visit event, which is open to the public at the Geekdom pavilion in Katara Buildings 18 and 19. Families and children will be entertained by a special screening of Hiromasa Yonebayashi's **The Secret World of Arrietty** (Japan/2010) at Karata Building 18 at 4 PM. The animated cult classic tells the story of four-inch-tall Arrietty, who lives in a suburban home with her family, undiscovered by the homeowner. She forms a secret friendship with 12-year old Shawn, but will this friendship endanger her family?

The Ajyal Creativity Hub additionally presents **ARC** - a multimedia exhibition featuring eclectic artworks by 19 of Qatar's most promising artists and creative talents. **ARC** will be open to the public from 10 AM to 10 PM in Katara Building 19, Gallery 1. The exhibition invites visitors to follow the chronological path of narrative through multimedia art pieces divided into three distinct parts— Setup, Confrontation, and Resolution. Visitors are invited to join an exclusive discussion panel on "**Storytelling & The Qatari Identity**" at 6 PM on 19 November, where artists will share the unique insight and creative foundations of their works. The panel is moderated by Abdulaziz Yousef and features Qatari artists Ibrahim Al-Baker, Buthaina Al-Zaman and Roda Ahmad Al-Thani.

Following its Middle East premier at the Ajyal 2019 Opening Night, a screening of Elia Suleiman's **It Must Be Heaven** (France, Qatar, Germany, Canada, Turkey, Palestine/2019) will be held at Novo Cinemas, the Pearl at 8.30 PM. The DFI-supported film and the Palestinian entry for Best International Feature Film at the 92nd Academy Awards follows Suleiman's own journey of leaving his homeland Palestine for the bustling metropolises of Paris and New York. In each new city, Suleiman is wide-eyed with curiosity and wonder at the daily lives of the cities' inhabitants, yet time and again, something seems to remind him of home. Speaking just four words in the entire film, Suleiman skilfully touches on the art of silent comedy roaring into the 21st century. Please note that the screening is rated PG-18.

A thrilling selection of feature films will be screened throughout the day:

- Suhaib Gasmelbari's award-winning documentary **Talking About Trees** (France, Sudan, Germany, Chad, Qatar/2019) will screen at 5.30 PM at Novo Cinemas, the Pearl, following four friends who are reunited after years in exile. Please note that the screening is rated PG-13.
- **1982** (Lebanon, US, Norway, Qatar/2019) by Oualid Mopanesen will screen at VOX Cinemas Doha Festival City, at 5.30 PM. The DFI-supported film tells the story eleven-year-old Wissam, who struggles to find the courage and reveal his true feelings to classmate Joanna.
- DFI-supported feature film **Bombay Rose** (India, France, UK, Qatar/2019) by Gitanjali Rao tells the story of Kamala and her quest to give her little sister a better life. The screening will take place at 8.30 PM at VOX Cinemas Doha Festival City and is rated PG-18.
- Gints Zilbalodis's **Away** (Latvia/2019) can be viewed at Novo Cinemas, the Pearl at 6.00 PM. The fairytale-like adventure follows a young boy, who is pursued by a malevolent creature across a mysterious lands.
- **The Land of Ashes** (Costa Rica, Argentina, Chile, France/2019) by Sofía Quirós Ubeda is a tender and humane coming-of-age story. The film will be screened at Novo Cinemas, the Pearl at 9.00 PM and is rated PG-15.

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>

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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