

54 inspirational short films highlight diverse Qatari and international talent at 9th Ajyal Film Festival

Doha, Qatar; 3 November 2021: The ninth edition of the Ajyal Film Festival presented by the Doha Film Institute (DFI), taking place from 7 to 13 November, will feature an inspirational line up of 54 short films from emerging and accomplished directors. The films will be screened in eight themed programmes: **Made in Qatar, Made in USA, A World of Colour, Under the Trees, The Journey Within, Changing Times, Uncertain Futures I, and Uncertain Futures II.**

Fatma Hassan Alremaihi, Festival Director and Chief Executive Officer of the Doha Film Institute, said: *"Short films are often very personal statements of our experience of the world and our search for understanding, and offer audiences new ideas and perspectives. This year, we have a very rich showcase of short films including films Made in Qatar and from around the world. We are incredibly impressed by the creativity that shines through in each of the short films – the narratives the filmmakers have chosen, the craft they bring to their work and the techniques they use."*

Shorts Programmes

The **Made in USA** programme presents a selection of the very best in contemporary American short form filmmaking and includes **The Chicken** (USA/2020) by Neo Sora, about a young Japanese immigrant, who after mishandling an emergency he witnesses on the streets of New York City, cannot bring himself to butcher the chicken he bought for dinner. **Moving** (USA/2019) by Adinah Dancyger, explores how the challenge of transporting an old mattress into a new apartment becomes an absurdist, cinematic one-woman choreography, full of humour and pathos in this wordless vignette of city life. **Lonely Blue Night** (USA/2020) by Johnson Cheng, follows an awkward family reunion at a business dinner which leads a Chinese mother to realize the consequences of leaving her daughter in the care of an American homestay family.

The Made in USA programme will premiere on 11 November at 9.30PM at Katara Opera House, Building 16.

The **Journey Within** programme compellingly showcases how a journey within oneself can lead to a revelation at every step. Films include **Umbrellas** (France, Spain/2020) by José Prats and Álvaro Robles, about a village where the rain never stops and where young Kyna spends her days playing happily, protected under her father's umbrella beard. **A Lens Under Water** (Qatar/2021) by Fatma Zahra Abderrahim is an eye-opening and colourful dive into the teeming coastal waters of Qatar with underwater photographer Faisal Jarkas. **Louis' Shoes** (France/2020) by Théo Jamin, Kayu Leung, Marion Philippe and Jean Géraud Blanc is inspired by interviews and testimonials from people with autism.

The Journey Within programme will premiere on 12 November at 7.00PM at VOX Cinemas, Doha Festival City.

Changing Times is a dynamic programme of shorts that explores the natural state of turmoil to find meaning in chaos. It includes DFI supported film **Olayan** (Qatar/2021) by Khalifa Al-Marri, about a boy who forms a bond with a newborn camel. **Don't Get Too Comfortable** (Yemen, USA, Netherlands, Qatar, UAE/2021) by Shaima Al-Tamimi contemplates the collective feeling of statelessness and belonging by

migrants through introspective letters written to her grandfather. **Night** (Germany, Qatar, Jordan, Palestine/2021) by Ahmad Saleh explains how in a city devastated by war it can be difficult to sleep, let alone dream. **Silence** (Norway, Iraq/2020) by Brwa Vahabpour, sees how a young Kurdish girl who has recently become deaf from an infection struggles with her disability and begins to feel increasingly isolated from her community.

Changing Times programme will premiere on 13 November at 2.00PM at VOX Cinemas, Doha Festival City.

Uncertain Futures I is a thought-provoking programme of shorts that illustrate the uncertainty that lies at the beginning of some of life's most meaningful journeys. The programme includes **And Then They Burn the Sea** (Qatar/2021) by Majid Al-Remaihi, where Al-Remaihi ruminates on the experience of witnessing his mother's gradual and terminal memory loss over the course of many years. **Shark** (Australia/2021) by Nash Edgerton, sees how Jack, a serial prankster, finds his perfect match in the equally daring Rose. **Before Darkness** (Iran, Afghanistan 2021) by Mosayeb Hanaie is about an Afghan woman who hides her child because she does not have enough money to take both across Iran's border, yet her plan is exposed with heartbreaking consequences.

Uncertain Futures I programme will premiere on 13 November at 5.00PM at VOX Cinemas, Doha Festival City.

Uncertain Futures II is an extension of Uncertain Futures I. **BJ's Mobile Gift Shop** (USA/2020) by Jason Park is about BJ, a young Korean American hustler, who tirelessly runs throughout the city of Chicago making hard-earned sales out of his infinitely convenient "mobile gift shop". **Trumpets in the Sky** (Palestine, Lebanon, France, Belgium/2021) by Rakan Mayasi is about Boushra, one of the Syrian potato-picking girls in Lebanon, who returns from a long day in the field only to learn that today - her childhood will come to an end. **Neon Phantom** (Brazil/2021) by Leonardo Martinelli is about Joao who works in the gig economy as a delivery driver. He dreams about buying a motorcycle and transforming his life into a musical, but his reality is far harsher.

Uncertain Futures II programme will premiere on 13 November at 8.00PM at VOX Cinemas, Doha Festival City.

Tickets for the 9th Ajyal Film Festival are available for purchase online at ajyalfilm.com, with the exception of screenings at Vox cinemas for which tickets can be purchased directly from the Vox box office. Prices vary depending on screening and location, and a maximum of six tickets may be purchased per person. Qatar Museum's Culture Pass members are able to redeem a 20% discount on tickets sold by DFI.

2021 Ajyal Film Festival's Official Partners include: **Katara Cultural Village Foundation** – Cultural Partner; **Qatar Tourism** – Principal Partner; **Ooredoo** – Strategic partner; **Qatari Diar, Msheireb Properties, W Doha** – Signature Sponsors.

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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

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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:

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. 'Ajyal', Arabic for 'generations', brings people of all ages together through screenings and events that inspire creative interaction and stimulate cinematic dialogue.

Ajyal Film Festival builds on the Doha Film Institute's history of community-based programming. Through its jury programme, youth between the ages of 8 and 25 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, while making new friends and discovering global cultures.

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