

Discover Qatar's homegrown talent and award-winning films at 9th Ajyal Film Festival on Nov. 9

- *One of the festival's most anticipated programmes, the 'Made in Qatar' screenings will feature works by 10 talented filmmakers who call Qatar home*
- *Must-see films include the MENA premiere of Danis Tanovic's 'Not So Friendly Neighbourhood Affair'*

Doha, Qatar; November 8, 2021: Discover home grown talent in the much-anticipated 'Made in Qatar' programme alongside the year's most celebrated international films at the ninth Ajyal Film Festival presented by the Doha Film Institute (DFI).

Must-see films of the day include ***Not So Friendly Neighbourhood Affair*** (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Turkey/2021) by Danis Tanović, which marks its MENA Premiere at Ajyal. The cleverly dark comedy about two friends, and a grilled dish of minced meat that changes their lives when it is thrust into the national spotlight, will be screened at 8.30 PM at Vox Cinemas, Doha Festival City.

Addressing the media ahead of the film's public screening, actors Kerim Čutuna and Almir Palata, described it as not provoking viewers to the extremes but "presenting a natural, realistic tale that people can easily relate to."

"There are elements such as friendship, love, the pandemic itself, and these are themes people anywhere can associate with," said Čutuna, adding that "These connecting themes are underlined by our dark Bosnian humour."

Palata said what surprised him most about the film, "was when I actually had to act! It helped me that I knew most of the crew since they were students, but I was still worried that I would have to watch my performance with my eyes closed. The thing that gave me confidence is that I trusted and believed in the director, and that if he said it was good, then that was good enough."

Čutuna said it was important for the film to be screened at Ajyal, as it provides the opportunity to network with the creative community in the country. "Personally, being here is my chance to know the country more and meet its people." Both said the underlying theme of the film – that love conquers all – is a statement they would happily endorse.

Discover Qatar's own talent

The 'Made in Qatar' Programme presented by Ooredoo will be screened on Nov. 9, 7.30 PM at Katara Drama Theatre and at 8.30 PM at Katara Opera House. The programme features internationally shown and award-winning short documentaries and narratives.

The selection of films include: ***Border*** (Qatar/2021) by Khalifa Al Thani is a DFI supported film, set in an abstrusely dystopian future, where a man wishes to return to his family; ***Fever Dream*** (Qatar, Poland, USA/2021) by Ania Hendryx Wójtowicz, a documentary about a reality that is stranger than fiction; ***Kan Fe Nas*** (Qatar, Lebanon/2021) by Mohamed Al Hamadi, which documents the stories of Lebanese people as they endure daily hardships; and, Shaima Al-Tamimi's ***Don't Get Too Comfortable***

(Yemen, UAE, USA, Netherlands, Qatar/2021), which contemplates the continuous pattern of movement amongst Yemenis in the diaspora.

Also included in the screenings are: ***A Lens Under Water*** (Qatar/2021) by Fatma Zahra Abderrahim, which takes an eye-opening and colourful dive into the teeming coastal waters of Qatar; the DFI supported ***Virtual Voice*** (Qatar, Sudan/2021) by Suzannah Mirghani, is a digital-savvy and satirical review of our online times; and ***Atlat (Remnants)*** (Qatar/2021) by Balkees Al-Jaafari and Tony El Ghazal, which follows a wistful Palestinian man who embarks on a trip down memory lane to the pivotal locations of his life in Qatar.

The programme includes the screening of ***And Then They Burn the Sea*** (Qatar/2021), by Majid Al-Remaihi, an ode to Al-Remaihi's mother, who suffered from gradual and terminal memory loss over the course of many years.; ***When Beirut was Beirut*** (Qatar, Lebanon/2021) by Alessandra El Chanti, an animated documentary; and ***Olayan*** (Qatar/2021) by Khalifa Al-Marri, which follows a Bedouin boy named Hamad who forms a bond with a new-born camel, who he calls Olayan.

Intimate documentaries and dramas

The screenings at Ajyal on Tuesday include the MENA premiere of ***Dear Future Children*** (Germany, UK, Austria/2021) directed by Franz Böhm at 5 PM at Vox Cinemas, Doha Festival City. It is a film about the new generation at the heart of a seismic political shift. The intimate documentary follows three activists—Rayen protests for social justice in Chile, Pepper fights for democracy in Hong Kong and Hilda battles the devastating consequences of climate change in Uganda.

Also making their MENA Premiere at Ajyal are ***Josee, the Tiger and the Fish*** (Japan/2020), directed by Kotaro Tamura, which is part of the Geekdom Screening at Vox at 5.30 PM, about a university student with dreams of diving abroad; and ***Lily Topples the World*** (USA/2021), directed by Jeremy Workman. Winner of the Grand Jury Prize for Best Documentary at SXSW 2021, the film follows 20-year-old Lily Hevesh—the world's greatest domino "toppler" and the only woman in her field. It will screen at 7.30PM at Vox.

Tickets for Ajyal 2021 and can be purchased at www.dohafilminstitute.com/festival.

The seven-day festival until Nov. 13, 2021, has a diverse mix of virtual and in-person events including film screenings, interactive discussions, multi-media art exhibit, Qatar's largest pop-culture event Geekdom, and a drive-in cinema as part of a multisensory experience for all ages.

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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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Ajyal Film Festival

مهرجان أجيال السينمائي

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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