

9th Ajyal Film Festival announces winners of Ajyal Jury Competition and Made in Qatar Awards

- *In the Made in Qatar programme, **Olayan** by Khalifa Al Marri wins Best Narrative Award; And **Then They Burn the Sea** by Majid Al Remaili wins Best Documentary Award*

Doha, Qatar; November 14, 2021: The ninth Ajyal Film Festival presented by the Doha Film Institute, announced the winners of the Ajyal Jury Competition and the Made in Qatar Awards in a festive closing ceremony at Katara Cultural Village.

Notable guests in attendance included Her Excellency Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, Chairperson of DFI and His Excellency Sheikh Thani bin Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, member of DFI Board of Trustees, joined by Academy Award® winning sound editor Mark Mangini, Olympic athlete and filmmaker Alexi Pappas, journalist and activist Muna El-Kurd, and acclaimed photographer Brigitte Lacombe.

Addressing guests at the closing ceremony, Her Excellency Sheikha Al-Mayassa, Chairperson of DFI said, “Ajyal Film Festival’s significance stems from the concept of art as a language that unites people. It transcends borders and provides peaceful platforms for dialogue towards building a better society for all. Cinema is an artform of dynamic creative expression contributing to enhancing awareness and achieving harmony between communities – another reason why Ajyal is incredibly important. Art and culture is a catalyst to achieving the Qatar National Vision 2030, which aims to promoting creativity and diversity, while preserving our identity and traditions in building a knowledge-based economy.”

Winners of the Made in Qatar Awards:

- Best Narrative Award: **Olayan** (Qatar, 2021) by Khalifa Al Marri
- Best Documentary Award: **And Then They Burn The Sea** (Qatar, 2021) by Majid Al Remaili
- Abdulaziz Jassim Award for Performance Award: **Saleh Salem Al Marri for Olayan**
- Special Jury Mention: **Virtual Voice** (Sudan, Qatar, 2021) by Suzannah Mirghani

The winners of the Ajyal Jury Competition Awards are:

- **Mohaq:**
 - Best Short Film Award: **Umbrellas** by José Prats, Álvaro Robles
 - Best Feature Film Award: **Poupelle of Chimney Town** by Yusuke Hirota
- **Hilal:**
 - Best Short Film Award: **Olayan** by Khalifa Al Marri
 - Best Feature Film Award: **Captains of Zaatari** by Ali El Arabi
- **Bader:**
 - Best Short Film Award: **When Beirut Was Beirut** by Alessandra El Chanti
 - Best Feature Film Award: **Little Palestine, Diary of a Siege** by Abdallah El Khattib

- **Audience Award: *ORCA* by Sahar Mossayebi**

This year's esteemed international Made in Qatar Awards Jury included actress Sheila Vand; Executive Board Member and CEO of Katara Studios Ahmed Al Baker, and Farah Nabulsi, Oscar-nominated and BAFTA award-winning filmmaker. Jurors were divided into three age categories: Mohaq (8–12-year-olds), Hilal (13–17-year-olds), and Bader (18–25-year-olds).

Fatma Hassan Alremaihi, Festival Director and Chief Executive Officer of the Doha Film Institute, thanked the Qatari leadership, government entities, private sector partners, sponsors, volunteers, filmmakers, the members of the jury and the community for their support to the success of the festival.

"Although we are sad to see the 9th Ajyal Film Festival end, our happiness at what we have successfully achieved together far outweighs our sadness. The enduring impact of Ajyal is fuelled by cinematic and visual art that plays a crucial role in bringing positive change to our societies.

"In addition to our Ajyal Jurors and their parents – who are the heartbeat of the Festival – we are extremely grateful for the visionary leadership of Her Excellency Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, who is central to all of DFI's work including Ajyal, and the unwavering support from our community that made this year's edition a most memorable one."

The week-long festival, held under the theme, 'Press Play!' signifying the aspirations of the community to return to normalcy, featured 85 films from 44 countries, including Qatar. The programme included 31 feature films and 54 shorts from accomplished directors as well as first-time and emerging talent. 22 of the films are by Arab filmmakers, with 32 helmed by women filmmakers – nearly a third, highlighting the significant role of female talent.

Ajyal featured 13 films supported by the Doha Film Institute, including recipients of the Spring/ Fall Grants, co-financing, Qatari Film Fund and mentorship through the year-long labs and development workshops. The 2021 Made in Qatar programme presented by Ooredoo, had 10 films representing promising homegrown talent and storytellers.

The seven-day festival featured 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.

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

-END-

About Doha Film Institute:

Ajyal Film Festival

مهرجان أجيال السينمائي

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:

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.

Twitter: @AjyalFilm; Instagram: @AjyalFilm; Facebook: www.facebook.com/AjyalFilm

For more information, please contact:

Joanne Harris

joanne.harris@bluerubicon.qa

+974 3111 0965