

AJYAL

18—23

FILM

NOV

FESTIVAL

2020

THE SHOW

GOES ON

GOES ON

GOES ON

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مؤسسة الدوحة للأفلام

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Ajyal Film Festival

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DOHA FILM INSTITUTE

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**Chair,
Doha Film Institute**



There are very few certainties in these uncertain times. We all met new and unforeseen challenges this year, and each of us have had to adapt to an altered reality. Today's creative industry has evolved to an increasingly important role that leverages its inherent power to inspire, bring about change, and amplify the voices of young leaders and activists.

Every challenge opens the door to new opportunity. Adversity reaffirms our belief in the power of art, film and music to empower us to respect and understand each other, and to have confidence in our own individual identity and fabric. It helps us transcend limitations and unites people from distinct communities and disparate geographies in a common space of learning and understanding. The vibrancy and strength of the film and creative industry in Qatar and the region is now more important than ever in ensuring that Qatar's 2030 vision remains on course and that our voices do not fade.

Film opens minds and opens doors. It has the power to keep us connected and draw inspiration and strength from unique circumstances. Through various initiatives and decisive steps forward, Qatar and the Doha Film Institute continue to lead a community of young artists making powerful work that creatively expresses lived experiences, reveals the complexities of our world and challenges its injustices. When we support our brilliant creators, we learn invaluable lessons, and our interactions with them enrich and benefit our lives in immeasurable ways.

For the past eight editions, Ajyal Film Festival has worked to nurture the innate talent in our children and young adults and to tap into the strength of their collective voice. Out of the challenges of this year's pandemic emerged a clear understanding of the role Ajyal plays in highlighting the importance of realising the creative abilities in each and every one of us. Ajyal 2020 returns to bring us all together in a space of self-expression and innovation in a uniquely adapted format that makes the Festival more accessible than ever.

Ajyal offers a unique opportunity to plant the seeds of engagement, inclusion and exchange for our future. Our young jurors and filmmakers join us this year from 37 countries on an innovative digital platform that brings the world together with our youth and rising stars in a space of contemporary vision and creative energy built on the foundation of Qatar's rich history and cultural heritage.

In a world currently divided by physical separation, it is essential that our communities look towards creative solutions for the future. We welcome you all to be part of our celebration of culture, community, learning and entertainment at Ajyal, and in each of your own unique ways to be a voice for change across generations.

Fatma Hassan Alremaihi

**Chief Executive Officer,
Doha Film Institute**

**Festival Director,
Ajyal Film Festival**



Film is an enabling force, a vehicle for understanding and a creative outlet that speaks to our human need for connection and inspiration. At a time of physical isolation, film and the arts can transport us to new places. This year has challenged us to push ourselves beyond the very concept of physical and cultural barriers. Amidst uncertainty and isolation, film helped us connect and collaborate as a global community of thinkers, dreamers and storytellers.

Ajyal over the past eight years has built a nurturing space where our youth are empowered to reach beyond physical differences to find their collective creative voice. These connections continue to thrive in an adapted format this year which expands their reach across a limitless virtual space of imaginative collaboration.

The challenges of this year have taught us important lessons in compassion and humanity. Ajyal 2020 echoes the old entertainment business adage “The Show Goes On” – a tribute to our ability to preserve, adapt and overcome. This is reflected in the lives of our youth and the new understanding that they have gained of the world. Now more than ever, they recognise the importance of people coming together for creative expression and community.

Over 80 films from 46 countries will delight and inspire audiences over six festival days. This year’s Ajyal opens with ‘Sun Children’ by Iranian director Majid Majidi, which made its debut at Venice earlier this year and calls attention to the issue of child labour. It spotlights the resiliency and creativity of our youth, which when nurtured will bring about lasting societal change and create the great innovators and problem-solvers of tomorrow. The Ajyal 2020 programme brings together a selection of award-winning filmmakers whose timeless tales of community and willpower highlight the innocence of youth and confer a lasting sense of optimism.

Pushing the limits of creativity, we open new horizons for digital formats that have the potential to expand our reach permanently as we continue to build a global community of meaningful change. Ajyal 2020 features a special showcase as part of the Qatar-France Year of Culture, the ‘Outbreak’ art exhibition, our pop culture spectacle Geekdom, and our first-ever drive-in cinema film screenings as part of a multisensory experience for young and old.

Ajyal 2020’s ‘Made in Qatar’ programme presented by Ooredoo echoes our commitment to the cultivation of homegrown talents and storytellers, who continue to draw inspiration and strength from a unique perspective. Their voices are more relevant than ever and continue to open a window to the world and its complex challenges.

Year after year, we look to the young members of our society to join us as jurors, spectators and aspiring film talents. We are proud to welcome nearly 400 jurors between the ages of eight and twenty-five to our jury programme and engage in an exciting exchange of culture and learning through film.

As is often the case, hope emerges out of adversity. This year has taught us that we must approach life as we approach film - with curiosity and wonder, with the unbridled belief that we can make a change, that our voice matters and that learning never stops.

We look forward to this special edition of Ajyal Film Festival, whose role in youth development is now more important than ever. I also want to thank our distinguished Board of Trustees, partners, staff and volunteers, whose belief in the shining spirit of Ajyal continues to shape its success.

Storytelling as a medium has always defied traditional borders set by people, distance and time. At Ajyal, we draw on its enduring power to unlock new perspectives on the world and unite youth from across the world for a truly eye-opening experience.

Ajyal Programming Team

Festival Director, Ajyal Film Festival
Fatma Hassan Alremaihi

Deputy Director, Ajyal Film Festival
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Rawda Al-Thani

Mahdi Ali Ali Al-Sharshani

Majid Al Remaili

Animation Programming Advisor
Maryam Al-Khulaifi

Pre-Screeners

Farah El-Buy

Ben Robinson

Dana Mohammed

Fahad Al Kuwari

Anthea Devotta

Cultural Partners

Katara Cultural Village Foundation



Launched in 2010, the Katara Cultural Village Foundation is considered Doha's cultural hub, encompassing an open-air amphitheatre, an opera house, a drama theatre and a series of well-frequented international restaurants.

Katara presents a varied range of regular performances and exhibitions by international and local artists, orchestras, and opera and theatre companies. Katara is home to the Doha Film Institute year-round offices and many Qatari associations; as well, several important visual and performing arts organisations have their offices in Katara.

Giffoni Opportunity



The Giffoni Opportunity is one of the most relevant international cultural events for youth. Named after the town in the south of Italy where it originated, it was launched in 1971 by then 18-year-old

Claudio Gubitosi, and has made its mark internationally thanks to its unique ability to select and present the best in films for young people. Giffoni's main focus is making children and young adults, who attend from 50 countries worldwide, the protagonists of the event by providing them with the opportunity to sit on the juries that decide the festival's winners. The event has developed over the years, becoming a truly global experience for children, youth and their families. Capable of attracting celebrities and industry professionals from around the world, Giffoni is now a comprehensive, year-long cultural event that is exported worldwide.

FESTIVAL OVERVIEW



Ajyal Competition

As always, engagement of young people at the Ajyal Film Festival centres on the juries of the Ajyal Competition, who select the festival's award winners. By providing young people from the ages of 8 to 25 with access to international cinema and filmmakers from around the globe, Ajyal helps them develop their understanding of how the world tells its stories in a spirit of cultural exchange. The Ajyal Competition inspires creative thinking, cooperation, and self-expression—and leads to friendships that will last a lifetime.

Ajyal Jury

The Ajyal Competition Jury is divided into three sections by age group. The three juries are:



Mohaq

Mohaq means 'New Moon' in Arabic, and these are Ajyal's youngest jurors, aged 8 to 12. These young people will watch one programme of short films and four feature-length films.



Hilal

Ajyal's jurors aged 13 to 17 are the Hilal jury – the term means 'Crescent Moon' in Arabic. Four feature films and one programme of shorts make up this jury's film selection.



Bader

The most mature of Ajyal's juries, Bader (Arabic for 'Full Moon') jurors are aged 18 to 25 and will select their favourite films from five features and two programmes of short films.

Awards

Each of the three Ajyal Juries awards a Best Film prize to their favourite short and feature-length films, for a total of six awards. The directors of the winning films are granted funding toward their next film, so jurors are empowered to support and promote future content that is relevant and important to them, in a proactive way.

Our youngest audiences vote for their favourite film in the Bariq programme, and a jury of regional industry professionals will decide the best film in the Made in Qatar presented by Ooredoo section. Finally, the general public will decide our Ajyal Audience Award.

Special Screenings

In addition to our incredible selection of films for this year's Ajyal Competition, we are once again delighted to host an array of special screenings at the festival.

We've launched an exciting new drive-in cinema experience at Lusail showing everything from family-favourites to edge-of-your-seat horror. The venue is also home to our Ajyal Tunes concerts that explore the transformative power of music.

In partnership with the Translation and Interpreting Institute of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences at Hamad Bin Khalifa University, we are thrilled to bring our popular inclusive experience to an online audience, with a compelling programme of shorts made right here in Qatar with the support of Doha Film Institute. The screening will be presented with Arabic audio description and sign-language interpretation, as well as enriched subtitles in Arabic and English.

FESTIVAL FILMS

Opening Night

Sun Children

'Khorshid' / Iran / Farsi / 2020
99 mins / Colour



The captivating story of 12-year-old Ali and his three friends who work hard to survive on the streets of Tehran. The boys support their families by doing odd jobs in a garage and committing petty crimes on the side to make fast money. In a turn of events that seems almost miraculous, Ali is entrusted to find a hidden treasure underground. He recruits his gang, but first, to gain access to the tunnel, the children must enrol at the Sun School—a charitable institution that tries to educate street kids and child labourers—close to where the treasure is located.

The Sun School, facing money problems of its own, is initially reluctant to take the boys in until Vice Principal Mr. Rafie, impressed by a show of passion, intercedes on their behalf. The natural ingenuity of the kids is evident, using their building site experience to solve geometry problems, wire drills to light fittings, and even fix the school's temperamental bell. A spellbinding and absorbing film, as you would expect from renowned director Majid Majidi, who dedicates it to the 152 million children globally, forced to work and so deprived of an education that would allow them to uncover the true buried treasure—their full potential.

MENA Premiere
Winner of the Lanterna Magica
Award at Venice Film Festival, 2020.

Director: **Majid Majidi**
Screenwriter: **Majid Majidi, Nima Javidi**
Producer: **Majid Majidi, Amir Banan**
Cast: **Ali Nasirian, Javad Ezzati, Tannaz Tabatabaie, Rouhollah Zamani, Mahdi Mousavi, Shamila Shirzad**
Cinematographer: **Hooman Behmanesh**
Editor: **Hassan Hassandoust**
Composer: **Ramin Kousha**
Sales: **Celluloid Dreams**



Born in Tehran in 1959, **Majid Majidi** is the first Iranian director to receive an Academy Award®

Nomination for Best Foreign Language Film for 'Children of Heaven' (1996). His debut feature, 'Baduk' (1991), was presented at Cannes Directors' Fortnight, and his second effort 'Father' (1995) secured Majidi's first major prize, at the San Sebastian Film Festival. Majid is a triple winner of the Grand Prix des Amériques at the Montreal World Film Festival for 'Children of Heaven', 'The Colour of Paradise' and 'Baran' (2001). His movie 'The Song of Sparrows' (2008) won the Golden Bear for Best Actor at the Berlin International Film Festival. Since then, he has directed 'Muhammad, The Messenger of God' (2017) and 'Beyond the Clouds' (2019).

MADE IN QATAR

Presented by Ooredoo

This special film showcase shines a spotlight on the work of Qatari filmmakers, and those who call Qatar home.

Made in Qatar Awards

The Made in Qatar awards are decided by a jury of three internationally respected arts professionals.

Made in Qatar Jury



Kamal Aljafari

Head of the Jury

Kamal Aljafari lives in Berlin. He works with moving and still images, interweaving between fiction, non-fiction, and art. Kamal's past films include 'Recollection' (2015), 'Port of Memory' (2009), and 'The Roof' (2006). He was a featured artist at the Robert Flaherty Film Seminar (NYC) and was a Fellow at Harvard University's Radcliffe Institute and Film Study Center. His short film 'It's a Long Way from Amphioxus' premiered at the Berlinale (2019), and his latest film 'An Unusual Summer' (2020) was selected at Visions du Réel 2020.



Dana Al Fardan

Dana Al Fardan is Qatar's only female contemporary composer. A songwriter and symphonic artist, she draws on her rich cultural heritage and is influenced by her love of world music. Al Fardan's work is a blend of Arab-influenced contemporary classical, epic in scale and universally accessible. With a considerable local audience, she is already garnering international attention, enhanced by the cross-continental reception to her most recent album release, 'Sandstorm', and her appointment as the official composer for Qatar Airways.



Marie Balducchi

Marie Balducchi is associate producer within AGAT Films / Ex Nihilo. She produces films for cinema and television and regularly participates in film support commissions such as the CNC, ECLA, Pôle Image Haute Normandie, and Pictanovo. She also serves on the jury of several international festivals. Her recent filmography includes 'Their Algeria' by Lina Soualem (2020), 'Talking about Trees' by Suhaib Gasmelbari (2019), 'A Young Girl in Her Nineties' by Valeria Bruni Tedeschi and Yann Coridian (2017), and 'National Diploma' by Dieudo Hamadi (2015).

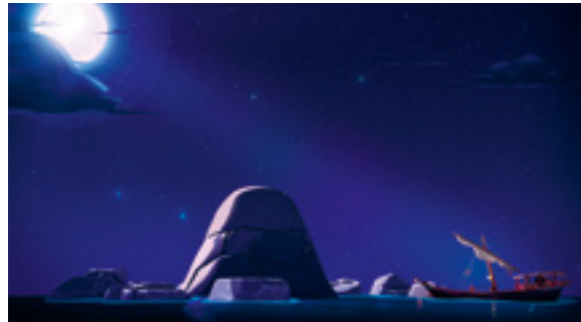
Al Tabbab

Doha Film Institute Supported Film

Qatar / Arabic / 2020

7 mins / Colour

Home Premiere



A boy and his father set sail to a secret site where they perform an ancient offering ritual to harvest pearls from a mysterious sea monster. The young boy is determined to make his father proud but struggles with the demanding tasks given to him. When the sea monster prefers the boy's pet goat to the usual offerings, our young hero must perform a gallant rescue to save his friend and show his father that he is ready to be his own man.

Director / Screenwriter: **Khalifa Al Mana**

Producer: **Basel Owies**

Sound Design: **Falah Hannoun**

Music: **Greg Johnson**

Khalifa Al Mana is an engineer, 3D animator and filmmaker. He completed an intensive 18-month programme on character animation and has recently directed his first 3D Animated short film entitled 'Al Tabbab'. In all of his work, Khalifa is striving to put the Qatari animated film industry on the map internationally and regionally. He is committed to telling original Qatari and authentic Arab stories of great cultural relevance to the world.

Al-Sit

Doha Film Institute Supported Film

Qatar, Sudan / Arabic / 2020

20 mins / Colour

Home Premiere



In a cotton-farming village in Sudan, 15-year-old Nafisa has a crush on Babiker, but her parents have arranged her marriage to Nadir, a young Sudanese businessman living abroad. Nafisa's grandmother Al-Sit, the powerful village matriarch, has her own plans for Nafisa's future. But can the young girl choose for herself? A compassionate story from Sudan about women—both powerless and powerful—exploring opposing ends of the social chain and how these roles might be changing in a modernizing world.

Director / Screenwriter: **Suzannah Mirghani**

Producer: **Eiman Mirghani, Suzannah Mirghani**

Cast: **Mihad Murtada, Rabeha**

Mahmoud, Mohammed Magdi

Cinematographer: **Khalid Awad**

Editor: **Abdelrahim Kattab, Suzannah Mirghani**

Sound Design: **Falah Hannoun**

Suzannah Mirghani is a writer, researcher, and independent filmmaker, highlighting stories from the Arab world. Being of multicultural Sudanese and Russian backgrounds, she is interested in stories that examine the complexity of identity. Suzannah is a media studies and museum studies graduate, and the writer and director of several short films, including, 'Caravan' (2016), 'Hind's Dream' (2014), and 'Hamour' (2011).

Ander

Doha Film Institute Supported Film

Qatar, Kazakhstan / English, Kazakh, Russian / 2020

14 mins / Colour

MENA Premiere



Five-year-old Ander lives in Qatar with his family, and outwardly looks like any ordinary, active and joyful kid. But due to his rare and severe allergy to dairy, he is forced to eat separately from his classmates at school. Ander's mother, who cares for him around the clock, is from Kazakhstan and for Kazakh nomads, dairy along with meat and dough is regarded as a source of life. How can a boy forge his own identity, when the food which was so crucial for his ancestors threatens his very existence?

Director / Editor: **Alina Mustafina**

Cinematographer: **Socheat Cheng, Mesa Prum**

Sound Design: **Falah Hannoun, Severin Favriau**

Alina Mustafina is a Kazakh journalist, writer and a filmmaker currently living in Qatar. She is a real nomad, as her ancestors used to be. She has been changing countries for a living since she left her motherland Kazakhstan in 2008 for UAE, Spain, Turkey and now Qatar. Journalism and filmmaking degrees in Spain, along with professional work and life experience in all those countries, make her works to be a combination of searching for an identity and being a citizen of the world. 'Ander' was filmed in Qatar under the mentorship of Oscar-nominated director Rithy Panh during the documentary lab at Doha Film Institute.

Beyond Broken Walls

Qatar / English / 2020

4 mins / Colour

World Premiere



Dimitrije Bugarski, a well-known artist in Qatar, realizes he lost himself as an artist, as he no longer creates for himself. He feels trapped by society's expectations for his art, causing him to shy away from creating authentic pieces. He immediately disassociates from his work, as they cease to bear an emotional connection to him. To find himself once more, he seeks out abandoned places to freely paint whatever his mind, heart, and soul desire. He feels most at peace with himself as an artist when he is painting alone on broken walls.

Director / Screenwriter / Producer: **Hissa G. Al-Mannai**

Cast: **Dimitrije Bugarski**

Cinematographer / Editor: **Hissa G. Al-Mannai**

Music: **Enzo De Rosa**

Hissa G. Al-Mannai is a visually impaired filmmaker from Doha, Qatar. She graduated from Northwestern University in Qatar in 2019, where she obtained her Bachelor of Science in Communication degree. Al-Mannai is passionate about telling stories that examine personal struggles, perseverance, and the beauty that surrounds us. Her films focus on the human experience and what it means to be human. She strongly believes in cinema's power to create empathy and compassion by telling stories that matter.

Emsahar

Doha Film Institute Supported Film

Qatar / Arabic / 2020

7 mins / Colour

Qatar Premiere



Young Fatima is heartbroken to discover her ailing grandmother and attempts to harness the magical powers of a local Ramadan drummer to make her better. Despite her best efforts, her grandmother peacefully passes away in her sleep—transformed into a benevolent, Emsahar. Tears of joy replace tears of sorrow as Fatima says a final goodbye to her beloved grandmother, watching in awe as she marches away, drumming and singing into the dawn light.

Director / Screenwriter: **Hassan Al-Jahni**

Producer: **Ben Robinson**

Hassan Al-Jahni is a Qatari filmmaker. He graduated from Northwestern University with a degree in Media, Industries, and Technologies and a concentration in film and Middle Eastern studies. Intrigued by animation and worldbuilding, he wrote and directed his first animated short 'Emsahar'. His work is inspired by local and regional culture and a need to bring Arab stories to the forefront of global cinema. Currently, Al-Jahni is pursuing his MFA in Film and Television at USC.

Hope

Doha Film Institute Supported Film

Qatar, Indonesia / No Dialogue / 2020

9 mins / Colour

Home Premiere



Aqua, the sea turtle, was born with the disability of having one fin smaller than the other. But he doesn't let it get in the way of his life's journey from nest to sea—one fraught with dangerous predators and tragic pollution. This endearingly humorous animation hides a more profound message of perseverance and the importance of being environmentally conscious.

Director / Screenwriter: **Abdulla Al-Janahi**

Producer: **Abdulaziz Khashabi**

Abdulla Mohammed Al-Janahi is a Qatari filmmaker with a passion for making a difference through his work. He firmly believes that through the power of creativity and animation, a person can do magical things. He has written several scripts for feature and short films and has worked on a traditional Qatari series consisting of 15 episodes. He is the writer and director of the short film 'Hope', which was supported by Doha Film Institute. In addition, he was the producer of short film 'The Unlucky Hamster', which won the Made in Qatar Special Jury Award at the Ajyal Film Festival 2019.

J'ai Le Cafard

Doha Film Institute Supported Film

Kuwait, Egypt, Sudan, Qatar / Arabic / 2020

14 mins / Colour

Home Premiere



A woman unable to make sense of her downhearted mood struggles to keep up appearances in front of her chirpy and driven office colleagues. When an encounter with a dying cockroach in a restroom at work develops into an absurd friendship, it becomes both the companion she needs and the source of her angst.

Director / Screenwriter: **Maysaa Almumin**

Producer: **Eiman Mirghani**

Cinematographer: **Mostafa Sheshtawy**

Editor: **Sara Abdullah**

Sound Design: **Emeline Aldeguer**

Music: **Severin Favriau**

Born in Kuwait, **Maysaa Almumin** is currently working as an assistant professor of design in Qatar. She grew up in London where she trained and practised in architecture before moving to Kuwait and then Qatar to begin acting, scriptwriting and eventually filmmaking. She has trained with directors, filmmakers, and academics such as Scandar Copti and Daniel Suissa and has been involved in film projects in Kuwait, Italy, Egypt and Qatar. Maysaa was granted by AFAC and Doha Film Institute to make her first short film 'J'ai Le Cafard'.

No Words

Yemen, Qatar, UK / Arabic, English / 2020

6 mins / Colour

MENA Premiere



'No Words' is a lyrical film that laments the poet's loss of words as to what is happening to his beloved city Taiz and the situation in Yemen. It utilizes 360-degree footage to place the audience at the camera's point of view as an observer to what is occurring in the city. The melancholic images beautifully resonate with the mournful words to create a poetic feel surrounding the ongoing conflict.

Director: **Mariam Al-Dhubhani**

Producer: **Mohammed Al-Jaberi**

Cinematographer: **Khaled Al-Saeed**

Editor: **Anas Al-odaini**

Music: **Mohammed Alghoom**

Mariam Al-Dhubhani is a Yemeni-Russian award-winning journalist, filmmaker, and curator. Al-Dhubhani is a Northwestern alumna with a BS in Journalism and Strategic Communication and an MA in Museum and Gallery Practice from University College London. She first pursued her passion for media during the 2011 Arab uprisings and co-founded her first media production. Her films have been screened globally in festivals such as Carthage, Interfilm, and Oaxaca. She also utilizes Virtual Reality in highlighting stories from Yemen.

Shringar

Qatar / Malayalam / 2020

11 mins / Colour

World Premiere



Made entirely in Qatar, 'Shringar' is a short narrative that delicately uses a young girl's nightmare as an allegory for the real-life horror of child labour in the Indian mica industry—a mineral used in creating some cosmetic products. The shocking stories behind the makeup industry are beautifully communicated by various art forms such as Indian semi-classical music, shadow play and the Indian dance form called 'Kadhak'.

Director: **Muhammed Noufal**

Producer: **Vimal Kumar Mani**

Cast: **Abdul Shukoor, Nithya Sathyan, Ashmitha Mahesh**

Muhammed Noufal is an Indian filmmaker living in Qatar since 2012. He holds a diploma in multimedia and animation. His first short film 'Border' was shown at the Qatar Kanavukal short film competition and was awarded Best Director at the All Kerala Thapasya Short Film Festival. In 2017, his short film 'The Unjust' was selected and screened by Doha Film Institute as one of the five best short films from their 'one-minute short film challenge'.

Smile You Deserve It

Doha Film Institute Supported Film

Qatar / Arabic / 2020

4 mins / Colour

World Premiere



In this charming 3D animated apologue, two farmers live side-by-side with similar land but a very different approach to their vocations. One is upbeat and hopeful, always putting in an honest day's work with a smile on his face. The other, however, resents having to toil the land and doesn't put much care into his farming. When harvest time arrives, he learns a valuable lesson from his cheery neighbour—that work done with joy and perseverance always bears the best harvest.

Director / Screenwriter / Producer: **Ibrahim Albuainain**

Cast: **Sari**

Music: **Simon Kang**

Ibrahim Albuainain is a writer, art director and filmmaker with experience in puppet making using various mediums such as silicone and foam latex. His first stop-motion film 'The Last Drop of Oil' (2012) was an official selection at the Family Film Festival in Hollywood and Douban Film Festival in Seoul, and was awarded at Ras Al Khaimah in 2014. His second film 'Mata Alwusol', a 2D animated short film was also an official selection in Douban Film Festival in Seoul.

Stranger

Doha Film Institute Supported Film

Qatar, France / No Dialogue / 2020

11 mins / Colour

Home Premiere



Khalid is the security guard in an abandoned Qatari elementary school. We follow him as he makes his rounds through the empty classrooms and encounters remnants of the neighbourhood's past residents, some of which remind him of the life he has left behind in Egypt. 'Stranger' is a journey not just into a school and its past, but also a poetic portrait of an immigrant who has left their family and friends for the opportunity of a better salary abroad.

Director: **Yasser Mustafa, Christophe Buffet**

Producer: **Ania Wójtowicz**

Cinematographer: **Yasser Mustafa Shater**

Editor: **Socheat Cheng**

Yasser Mustafa is a Qatari cinematographer who has been working in the film industry since 2010. His films have been screened in different festivals such as Ajyal Film Festival, Chicago International Film Festival, and Cardiff International Film Festival. In August 2019, Yasser Mustafa won his first cinematography award for the short Documentary 'Just Another Memory' at the South Film and Arts Academy Festival.

Christophe Buffet is Digital Media Senior Specialist at Qatar Museums, where he recently led the team that delivered the digital media productions for the opening of the National Museum of Qatar. Before moving to Qatar, he has worked with museums in Europe and Brazil.

Under Her Skin

Doha Film Institute Supported Film

'À fleur de peau' / Qatar, France, Algeria / Arabic / 2020

15 mins / Colour

MENA Premiere



Making its world premiere in the Orizzonti Short Films Competition at Venice Film Festival this year, Meriem Mesraoua's 'Under Her Skin' explores a young Algerian girl's rite of passage as she struggles for control over her self-image. Disturbed by her daughter Sarah's sudden nervous habit of nail-biting, a domineering mother attempts to correct the behaviour. But deeper issues are at play in this profoundly nuanced portrait of adolescence and rebellion.

Director / Screenwriter: **Meriem Mesraoua**

Producer: **François d'Artemare**

Cast: **Amina Hilal, Salima Abada, Mohammed Benameur, Hayem Delfi**

Cinematographer: **Mohamed Tayeb Laggoune**

Editor: **Marie Molino**

Production Design: **Maya Mancer Sihem**

Sound Design: **Hafidh Moulfih, Mikhael Kurc**

Meriem Mesraoua earned a BSc with Honours in Media Industries and Technologies from Northwestern University. Her short films include 'Coucou' (2009), 'Our Time Is Running Out' (2017), and 'Under Her Skin' (2020). She is currently developing her first feature narrative, 'The Other Wife'.

Under the Lemon Tree

Doha Film Institute Supported Film

Qatar, Palestine / Arabic / 2019

10 mins / Colour

Home Premiere



In this short but powerfully introspective documentary, we spend a day under the shade of a lemon tree with a Palestinian woman named Khaldieh, who was abruptly exiled from her hometown of Tulkarem in 1967. Preparing herself a humble breakfast of za'atar and breathing in the smell of sage, she recreates her old life through an assemblage of simple elements. Though they may seem trivial, for many Palestinians they are among the only tangible pieces of their lost homeland that they still possess.

Director: **Noor Alasswad**

Producer: **Yasmine Hammoudi**

Cinematographer: **Yasser Mustafa, Mesa Prum**

Noor Alasswad is a Palestinian filmmaker whose works explore the multidirectional connections between memory, identity, loss, history, home, land, heritage and addressing the feminist issues. She was born and raised in Syria until she had to leave in 2012 due to the political turmoil. Her raw and earnest style invites the viewer to jump through time and perspective. Her previous works include 'Noah' (2018) and 'Samha' (2017). Her latest short, 'Under the Lemon Tree' (2020), which was created in conjunction with DFI's Short Documentary Lab with Rithy Panh, won Best Director for short documentaries at the South Film Arts and Academy Festival.

Watar El Ghurbeh

Qatar, USA / Arabic, English / 2019

10 mins / Colour

World Premiere



Wanees Zarour is a Palestinian-American music composer and director. He leads the Middle Eastern Music Ensemble at the University of Chicago, a 60-piece orchestra that plays Arabic, Turkish, and Iranian music. As Zarour prepares the orchestra for its Turkish concert, he takes us on a journey of two parallel narratives—the preparations and rehearsals for the show, as well as the story of his musical upbringing in Palestine told through a phone call with his mother.

Director / Producer: **Alessandra El Chanti**

Cast: **Wanees Zarour, Suzanne Boulos, and the Middle Eastern Music Ensemble at the University of Chicago.**

Cinematographer / Editor: **Alessandra El Chanti**

Alessandra El Chanti is a Lebanese documentary filmmaker and activist born and raised in Qatar. She is currently an MFA candidate at Northwestern University in Illinois, USA, pursuing a degree in Documentary Media. Her interests lie in arts, culture, and politics of the MENA region and using film as a tool of soft power. El Chanti holds a degree in Media Industries and Technology from Northwestern University in Qatar, with a minor in Media and Politics. She is the director of a short documentary entitled 'Revive The Lira's Glory', which premiered at DFI's Ajyal Film Festival in 2019.

Woman of Steel

Doha Film Institute Supported Film

'Okht Rjal' / Jordan, Qatar / Arabic / 2020

16 mins / Colour

World Premiere



An earnest and empathetic portrait of a matriarch who works tirelessly for her family. Um Mohamed is a proud mother and a wife. Due to her husband's post-polio disability, he is incapable of working. As a result, Um Mohamed roams the streets of Irbid, collecting scrap metal and recyclables to sell in the male-dominant industrial area. Though she provides for her family and has undoubtedly earned the title of "breadwinner", she lacks the recognition and power often afforded to a man in her situation.

Director: **Obada Yousef Jarbi**

Editor: **Amit Chowdhury**

Sound Design: **Severin Favriau, Falah Hannoun**

Obada Yousef Jarbi is a Jordanian resident of Qatar who holds a bachelor's degree in Mass Communication and Broadcast Journalism from Qatar University. He made his directorial debut with the documentary 'Addicted to Alienation' (2016). His second short film 'The Fishermen' (2017), created through Doha Film Institute's documentary workshop, screened in several international film festivals. In 2016 he started developing his documentary 'Okht Rjal', going through the development process at Qumra 2018 and beginning filming in 2019 as a part of DFI's documentary workshop with 'Rithy Panh'.

Ya Hoota

Doha Film Institute Supported Film

Qatar / Arabic / 2019

11 mins / Colour

MENA Premiere



A curious little girl is determined to save the moon from a lunar eclipse. She sets off on a search for mythological characters from her grandmother's stories, hoping they can help her reach the moon. Her cousin comes along for the journey, but he is more than a little sceptical about the existence of such creatures. That is until the pair run into the Afternoon Donkey! A delightfully charming adventure about the power of storytelling and how it can inspire young minds to explore the world around them.

Director / Screenwriter: **Abdulaziz Yousif,**

Latifa Al-Darwish

Producer: **Ben Robinson**

Abdulaziz Yousif (aka "crocodile") is a social and political cartoonist. He was awarded the bronze Promax Award, along with his graphic design team, for their work on the advertising campaign of the "Jeem Cup" football tournament. He curated and co-curated the 'leBlockade' and '[Re]action' exhibits in collaboration with Doha Film Institute.

Latifa Al-Darwish is an award-winning filmmaker and storyteller. Her work ranges between documentaries and cartoons. She is interested in telling untold stories and draws inspiration from her city of Al Wakra and her grandmothers' stories. She obtained her BSc in Communication from Northwestern University in Qatar, and her MA from King's College London in culture and creative industries. 29

BARIQ

Our youngest audiences sparkle with energy. The films in this section are selected to satisfy the excitement and curiosity of children from the age of four and are appropriate for the whole family.

The Concrete Jungle

'Betonová Džungle' / The Czech Republic /
No Dialogue / 2019

8 mins / Colour

MENA Premiere



The enchanting story of a little boy in a housing estate, where even the world's greatest adventure can take place if you listen hard enough. Is the neighbour hanging a picture? Or is it a buffalo stampede, or even a tribe of cannibals! A short, but painstakingly animated feast for the eyes and ears, 'The Concrete Jungle' is about a child's boundless imagination and their infinite ability to create new worlds from even the most mundane of situations.

Director: **Marie Urbánková**

Screenwriter: **Rudolf Král**

Co-Producer: **Maur film**

Cinematographer: **Jaroslav Fišer**

Sound Design: **Martin Horáček**

Music: **Miroslav Chaloupka**

Distribution: **Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design in Prague**

Marie Urbánková was born in 1995 in Prague. She first studied scenography at the SUPŠ, then advanced her studies at the Prague UMPRUM, majoring in film and television graphics, where she is currently continuing her master's degree. She illustrates and collaborates with Raketa magazine and has illustrated three books, with others currently in the process.

The Goofylympics

'Les Zozolympiades' / France / No Dialogue / 2019

4 mins / Colour

MENA Premiere



The animal-only Olympic games are taking place in the middle of the jungle. Each team is composed of three contenders. The lion and tiger are clear favourites but are disgruntled to discover that the third member of their team is a lackadaisical sloth. Winning the cup now seems impossible for the two felines, but as they soon find out, not everything is about speed in this heartwarming paper-drawn 2D animation about celebrating differences.

Director / Screenwriter / Editor: **Salomé Hammann**

Sound Design: **Pauline Berthelemy**

Music: **Maxime Mary**

Distribution: **Miyu Distribution**

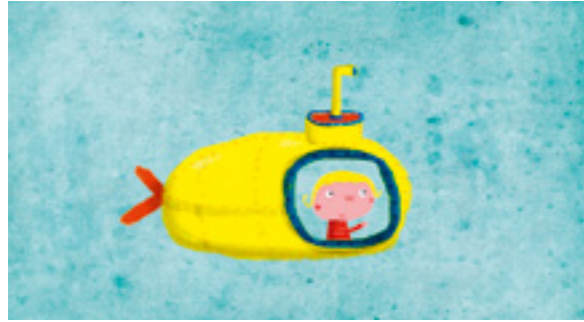
Salomé Hammann is a graduate from Atelier Supérieur d'Animation. She has a passion for illustration and is interested in everything that concerns childhood. Hammann is very enthusiastic about sharing her stories and graphic universe through the endless possibilities that animation offers.

Knock Knock

'Kuc Kuc' / Croatia / No Dialogue / 2019

4 mins / Colour

MENA Premiere



Knock-Knock. Who's there? Why it's a cast of friendly sea creatures of course in this colourful animated story about the power of creativity. A small yellow submarine dives through the ocean, meeting a host of marine life along the way who each greet the submarine's captain, a little girl. But is the submarine really diving in an ocean? Or is it all just part of a child's vivid imagination?

Director: **Ivana Guljašević**

Screenwriter / Producer: **Bruno Kuman**

Sound Design: **Ana Kuman, Bruno Kuman,**

Ivana Guljašević

Distribution: **Igubuka**

Ivana Guljašević graduated from the Arts Academy in Zagreb. She is the author of 40 animated films for children and one for adults. Guljašević is the animator on three series appearing on Croatian television and author of the animated serial 'Igubuka's Stories' with Bruno Kuman. Besides working on films, she illustrates, writes novels and is also the author of several comic strips published in children's magazines. She has been awarded for her work in illustration, comics, books and film.

Leaf

'Lístek' / Belarus, The Czech Republic /

No Dialogue / 2020

6 mins / Colour

MENA Premiere



Tough, rugged, and larger than life—a gentle giant of a sailor works diligently aboard a boat. He is way past getting seasick, but when a little girl gifts him a seemingly inconspicuous autumn leaf, he suddenly starts to feel a bit homesick. It's so long since he's been back, and he wonders what it would look like now. An endearing look at the concept of "home" and how even the littlest of things can hold the largest of significance.

Director / Screenwriter: **Aliona Baranova**

Editor: **Jan Saska**

Sound Design: **Jiří Gráf**

Music: **Petr Mazoch**

Distribution: **Miyu Distribution**

Aliona Baranova was born in Russia and grew up in Belarus before studying animation in the Czech Republic where she currently lives. Both her previous short films deal with the idea of homesickness, and she loves colour. Her dream is to one day create an educational and humorous children's series about recycling garbage and composting.

A Lynx in the Town

'Un lynx dans la ville' / France / No Dialogue / 2019

7 mins / Colour

MENA Premiere



In this hand-drawn animation, a curious lynx is attracted by the neighbouring city lights. Leaving the forest behind, he sets out for a night on the town. Frolicking through buildings and parks is tiresome work though, and he soon becomes so jaded that he falls asleep in the middle of a parking lot. When the residents wake up the next morning, they are amazed to discover this wonderfully strange visitor from nature in their urban environment.

Director / Screenwriter: **Nina Bisiarina**

Producer: **Pierre Méloni**

Editor: **Antoine Rodet**

Sound Design: **Flavien Van Haezevelde**

Music: **Nathanaël Bergèse**

Distribution: **Folimage**

Nina Bisiarina has worked in the animation industry since she graduated from the Ural Academy of Architecture (Yekaterinburg) in 2002, when the Department of Animation was opened. She creates short, animated films and also makes animations for documentaries and music videos, sharing her skills with other directors.

Small Spark

'Petite étincelle' / France / No Dialogue / 2019

3 mins / Colour



A cute little mouse lives amongst the books where often embarks on literary pursuits. In the middle of one such novel, his reading candle is suddenly blown out. Forced to find another form of lighting, he sets out on a whacky caper through the house where he must avoid the clutches of a not-too-pleased cat. A mixed-media family adventure where a little rodent brings new meaning to illumination through literature.

Director / Screenwriter: **Julie Rembauville,**

Nicolas Bianco-Levrin

Producer / Cinematographer: **Nicolas Bianco-Levrin**

Editor: **Julie Rembauville**

Music: **Rémy Tatard, Maxence Camelin**

This directors' duo has been writing and directing animated short films for 15 years. After their first collaboration in 2015 with La Luna productions for 'Once Upon Three Times', one of the ten films of the Canal Animated Collection + "Draw Always!"—they made 'A Story by Jeannot', co-produced by Xbo films and broadcast on the France 3 channel. They have just finished 'Old Hag', whose screenplay was awarded in 2016 at the Annecy Film Market and pre-bought by Canal +.

MOHAQ COMPETITION

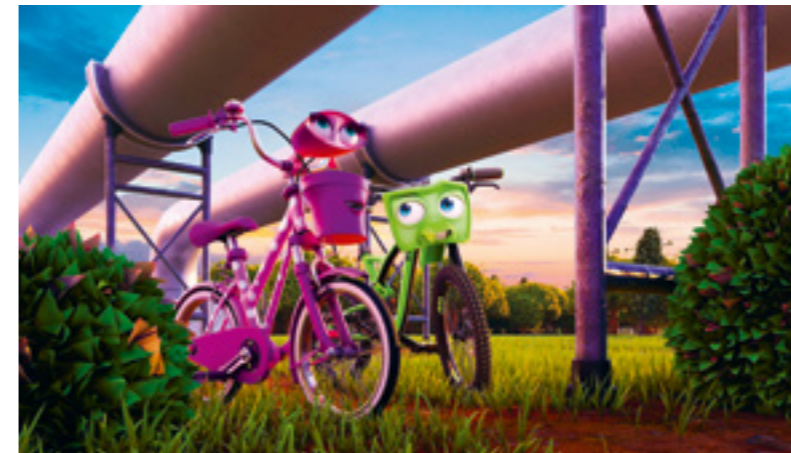
The new moon is full of hidden secrets and endless possibilities. The critical minds of young people will be challenged and stimulated by these films, which are appropriate for audiences 8 years of age and older.

Bikes

Spain, China, Argentina / English / 2019

80 mins / Colour

MENA Premiere



Deep among the beautiful mountains, lush forests and blue streams lies a unique little town—Spokesville. There, an entirely pedal-powered population of bicycles live an idyllic and environmentally sustainable existence. The aptly named “Speedy”, a shiny green mountain bike, is the town’s fastest hero and delivers the mail to all of the inhabitants. That is until a new invention comes to town, the smoky combustion engine. Troubled by the new development, Speedy becomes the unwitting leader of a group of environmental activists, who are determined to stop the engine from polluting their unspoiled haven.

In an effort to protect their town, the group lead an environmental drive against the two nefarious bikes behind the engine, bankers Romulus and Remus, as well as their protégé, Rock Bikeson, a local racing champion and Speedy’s idol. Will Speedy and his motley crew be able to save Spokesville? ‘Bikes’ is a free-wheeling animated adventure for children and adults alike that teaches the importance of friendship, teamwork, and the need for green transport in building a better, healthier, and more sustainable future.

Director: **Manuel J. García**
Screenwriter: **John Michael Boughn, Michael Maurer**
Producer: **Ximo Perez, Marife de Rueda, Li Bo, Jiang Yingtian, Fernando Sokolowicz**
Sales: **Filmax International Sales**
Distribution: **Selim Ramia & Co. Holding**



Manuel J. García is a film director best known for directing ‘Bikes’ (2018), ‘Tombatossals, la Leyenda’ (2013), ‘Sculpture Club’ (2005), ‘Marco Antonio, Rescate en Hong Kong’ (2000) and as a co-director of ‘Piñatas: The Movie’ (2006). He has also worked in the animation department of classic TV series such as ‘Count Duckula’ (1988-1991) and ‘Babar’ (1989).

Director: **J.J. Johnson**
 Screenwriter: **J.J. Johnson, Christin Simms**
 Producer: **J. J. Johnson, Matthew J.R. Bishop, Blair Powers**
 Cast: **Michela Luci, Saara Chaudry, Nicola Correia-Damude, Amish Patel, Richie Lawrence, Evan Whitten**
 Cinematographer: **George Lajtai**
 Distribution: **Sinking Ship**



J.J. Johnson is the creative force and founding partner of Sinking Ship Entertainment. He is an Emmy

award-winning executive producer and director, and Emmy-nominated writer, with international acclaim for over 15 series and 500 episode credits. He and Sinking Ship Entertainment are globally recognized for such successes as 'Annedroids', 'Odd Squad' and the 'Dino Dan' and 'Dino Dana' series. He has been lauded by the Hollywood Reporter as one of the Top 20 under 35. Among his many accolades, J.J. has won a total of 6 Daytime Emmy Awards, including Outstanding Series in all three children's categories (preschool, family and educational).

Dino Dana

Canada / English / 2019
 76 mins / Colour
 MENA Premiere



Dana is a ten-year-old adventure-seeking girl who dreams about all things prehistoric. This palaeontologist-in-training loves science, knowledge, and finding ways to get her older sister Saara to join her. She's whip-smart and therefore clever enough to know when she needs a helping hand or a new piece of intel to help solve her experiments. Dana is obsessed with dinosaurs because palaeontologists haven't figured out everything about them yet. Her mission is to fill in the missing pieces as she tries to solve experiment 901—where are all the kid dinos? But before she can complete her work, Dana's new upstairs neighbour Mateo finds her magical "Dino Field Guide", which allows him to see dinosaurs in real life too!

An action-packed prehistoric adventure, 'Dino Dana' posits the theory that certain dinosaurs changed shape so dramatically over the course of their development that palaeontologists mistakenly identified them as different dinosaurs rather than the same dinosaur at different ages. This "shape-shifting dinosaur" theory is relatively new and not one that all palaeontologists agree with. Like all science, it is an ever-evolving process of presenting bold ideas and proposals before carefully examining the evidence to form new conclusions, and one little girl is undoubtedly up for the challenge!

Microplastic Madness

USA / English / 2019
 76 mins / Colour
 MENA Premiere



Fifth graders from Brooklyn, USA—a community on the frontline of the climate crisis as it was severely impacted by Superstorm Sandy—spend two years investigating the existential threat of plastic pollution. Taking on the roles of citizen scientists, community leaders, and advocates, these go-getting 10-11-year-olds collect local data, lead community outreach, and use their impressive data to inform policy by testifying at City Hall. They take the deep dive into the root causes of plastic pollution, bridging the connection between plastic, climate change, and environmental justice before turning their focus back to school. There they battle to rid their cafeteria of all single-use plastic, driving forward a city-wide and scalable, youth-led plastic-free movement.

Making its MENA premiere, 'Microplastic Madness' is an inspirational and optimistic look at the local and global plastic pollution crisis as told through a refreshing urban youth point of view with an emphatic "take action" message. With stop-motion animation, heartfelt commentary from young people, and interviews of experts and renowned scientists who are engaged in the most cutting edge research on the harmful effects of microplastics—this alarming, yet charming documentary, conveys an urgent message in relatable terms with an inspiring and motivating message to spark youth-led plastic-free action in schools around the world.

Winner of the Grand Jury Award at Greenpoint Film Festival 2020

Director / Producer: **Atsuko Quirk, Debby Lee Cohen**
 Cinematographer / Editor: **Atsuko Quirk**



Atsuko Quirk is a documentary filmmaker, environmental advocate, and media director at

CafeteriaCulture.org. She directed and produced 'It's Everybody's Ocean', a film about marine debris that won the best documentary short at NYC International Film Festival in 2014, two awards at other festivals, and has been shown in ten cities all over the world.



Debby Lee Cohen is a multi-disciplinary artist, zero waste activist/educator, and founding

director of CafeteriaCulture.org. In partnership with parents and students, she led the "Styrofoam Out of Schools" campaign that resulted in the elimination of a half-billion plastic Styrofoam trays per year from landfills. She also presented at the United Nations in 2016 on urban youth action on plastic marine pollution.

Director: **Victor Monigote, Eduardo Gondell**
 Screenwriter: **Juan Pablo Buscarini, Pablo Bossi, Eduardo Gondell**
 Producer: **Pablo Bossi, Juan Pablo Buscarini, Carlos Fernandez, Laura Fernandez**
 Cinematographer: **Alejandro Valente**
 Sales: **Filmax International Sales**
 Distribution: **Selim Ramia & Co. Holding**

Eduardo Gondell is a director and producer, best known for 'Turu, the Wacky Hen' (2019), 'Un Hijo Genial' (2003) and 'Valentina, la Película' (2008).

Victor Monigote is well-known for his work on 'Turu, the Wacky Hen' (2019), 'A Xiu Luo' (2018), 'Mortadelo y Filemón contra Jimmy el Cachondo' (2014) and 'Campeones' (2018).



Turu, The Wacky Hen

'La Gallina Turuleca' / Spain, Argentina / English / 2019
 80 mins / Colour
 MENA Premiere

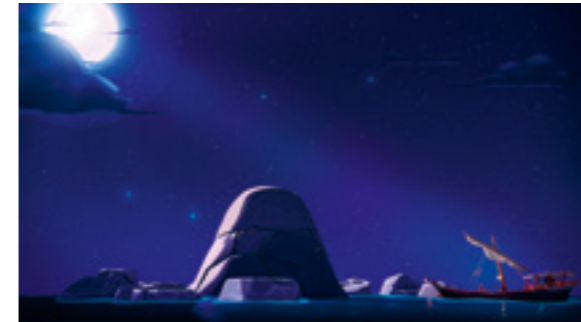


Based on the famous character from a song that has transcended generations in the Latin World, 'Turu, The Wacky Hen' tells the story of a very unusual hen, trying to find her place in the world. Ridiculed by the rest of the henhouse because of her peculiar appearance and the fact that she is unable to lay eggs, Turu just doesn't seem to fit in. But one day, her life takes a harmonious turn when Isabel, a retired music teacher, takes Turuleca to live on her farm. There, the pair discovers Turuleca true talents—she talks, she sings, and she even dances!

After an unfortunate accident where Isabel loses her memory, Turuleca embarks on an adventure full of both high and low notes. From a circus full of new friends to the exceedingly greedy Armando Tramas who is determined to capture and exploit the talented Turuleca. A veritable love song to differences, this animated family adventure will have you tapping and singing along with its infectious lineup of catchy musical numbers.

Al Tabbab

Doha Film Institute Supported Film
 Qatar / Arabic / 2020
 7 mins / Colour
 Home Premiere



A boy and his father set sail to a secret site where they perform an ancient offering ritual to harvest pearls from a mysterious sea monster. The young boy is determined to make his father proud but struggles with the demanding tasks given to him. When the sea monster prefers the boy's pet goat to the usual offerings, our young hero must perform a gallant rescue to save his friend and show his father that he is ready to be his own man.

Director / Screenwriter: **Khalifa Al Mana**
 Producer: **Basel Owies**
 Sound Design: **Falah Hannoun**
 Music: **Greg Johnson**

Khalifa Al Mana is an engineer, 3D animator and filmmaker. He completed an intensive 18-month programme on character animation and has recently directed his first 3D Animated short film entitled 'Al Tabbab'. In all of his work, Khalifa is striving to put the Qatari animated film industry on the map internationally and regionally. He is committed to telling original Qatari and authentic Arab stories of great cultural relevance to the world.

Ander

Doha Film Institute Supported Film
 Qatar, Kazakhstan / English, Kazakh, Russian / 2020
 14 mins / Colour
 MENA Premiere



Five-year-old Ander lives in Qatar with his family, and outwardly looks like any ordinary, active and joyful kid. But due to his rare and severe allergy to dairy, he is forced to eat separately from his classmates at school. Ander's mother, who cares for him around the clock, is from Kazakhstan and for Kazakh nomads, dairy along with meat and dough is regarded as a source of life. How can a boy forge his own identity, when the food which was so crucial for his ancestors threatens his very existence?

Director / Editor: **Alina Mustafina**
 Cinematographer: **Socheat Cheng, Mesa Prum**
 Sound Design: **Falah Hannoun, Severin Favriau**

Alina Mustafina is a Kazakh journalist, writer and a filmmaker currently living in Qatar. She is a real nomad, as her ancestors used to be. She has been changing countries for a living since she left her motherland Kazakhstan in 2008 for UAE, Spain, Turkey and now Qatar. Journalism and filmmaking degrees in Spain, along with professional work and life experience in all those countries, make her works to be a combination of searching for an identity and being a citizen of the world. 'Ander' was filmed in Qatar under the mentorship of Oscar-nominated director Rithy Panh during the documentary lab at Doha Film Institute.

Emsahar

Doha Film Institute Supported Film

Qatar / Arabic / 2020

6 mins / Colour

Qatar Premiere



Young Fatima is heartbroken to discover her ailing grandmother and attempts to harness the magical powers of a local Ramadan drummer to make her better. Despite her best efforts, her grandmother peacefully passes away in her sleep—transformed into a benevolent, Emsahar. Tears of joy replace tears of sorrow as Fatima says a final goodbye to her beloved grandmother, watching in awe as she marches away, drumming and singing into the dawn light.

Director / Screenwriter: **Hassan Al-Jahni**

Producer: **Ben Robinson**

Hassan Al-Jahni is a Qatari filmmaker. He graduated from Northwestern University with a degree in Media, Industries, and Technologies and a concentration in film and Middle Eastern studies. Intrigued by animation and worldbuilding, he wrote and directed his first animated short 'Emsahar'. His work is inspired by local and regional culture and a need to bring Arab stories to the forefront of global cinema. Currently, Al-Jahni is pursuing his MFA in Film and Television at USC.

En Route

The Netherlands / Dutch / 2019

10 mins / Colour

MENA Premiere



When nine-year-old Inay and her little brother must join their father on a special trip through the city, the pair try everything they can to cause a delay. They know from experience that if they arrive late at their destination, they will be rewarded with loads of sweet desserts. 'En Route' is an endearing short that portrays sibling solidarity and youthful innocence in the face of challenging living conditions.

Director / Screenwriter: **Marit Weerheijm**

Producer: **Loes Komen, Eva Verweij**

Cast: **Inay Heijblom, Alex Dosljak, Mike Libanon, Nanette Boxman, Zouhair Mtazi**

Cinematographer: **Martijn Melis**

Editor: **Fatih Tura**

Sound Design: **Luuk Hoogstraten, Tom Jansen**

Distribution: **Square Eyes**

Marit Weerheijm is a director based in Amsterdam. In 2016, she graduated from the Netherlands Film Academy with her short film, 'When Grey is a Colour'. This film won multiple awards, including a Student Academy Award. In 2018 she directed and co-wrote the short film 'Before Dark'. Her latest commercial film for breast cancer organization Pink Ribbon was nominated for the Young Director Award at Cannes Lions in 2019. Marit's work is based on subtle storytelling, with a strong fascination for interpersonal relationships, particularly within family ties.

Hope

Doha Film Institute Supported Film

Qatar, Indonesia / No Dialogue / 2020

9 mins / Colour

Home Premiere



Aqua, the sea turtle, was born with the disability of having one fin smaller than the other. But he doesn't let it get in the way of his life's journey from nest to sea—one fraught with dangerous predators and tragic pollution. This endearingly humorous animation hides a more profound message of perseverance and the importance of being environmentally conscious.

Director / Screenwriter: **Abdulla Al-Janahi**

Producer: **Abdulaziz Khashabi**

Abdulla Mohammed Al-Janahi is a Qatari filmmaker with a passion for making a difference through his work. He firmly believes that through the power of creativity and animation, a person can do magical things. He has written several scripts for feature and short films and has worked on a traditional Qatari series consisting of 15 episodes. He is the writer and director of the short film 'Hope', which was supported by Doha Film Institute. In addition, he was the producer of short film 'The Unlucky Hamster', which won the Made in Qatar Special Jury Award at the Ajyal Film Festival 2019.

Left Foot

Iraq / No Dialogue / 2020

2 mins / Colour

International Premiere



A modest shoeshine is approached by a wealthy man in a luxury car seeking his services. As he polishes his new customer's expensive shoes, he begins to imagine himself living the same lavish lifestyle. But he is soon made aware of his own, different kind of riches, when he discovers that the man is an amputee. A short but poignant reminder that health is often an overlooked and underappreciated form of wealth.

Director: **Falah Al-Baghdadi**

Screenwriter: **Safaa Al-Obaidi, Falah Al-Baghdadi**

Editor: **Yasser Al-Khalidi**

Music: **Naoya Sakamata**

Falah Al-Baghdadi is a screenwriter and director. He holds a bachelor's degree in the Arabic language and has written numerous short stories in prominent Iraqi magazines. He currently creates stop-motion animation films with 'Left Foot' being his first project. He has been a member of the Baghdad International Film Festival, and the Iraqi Foundation for the Development of Cinema and Culture.

Moonjump

Germany / English, German / 2019

5 mins / Colour

MENA Premiere



Major Luna dreams of one day walking on the moon. Determined to experience zero-gravity on earth, she hides in a closed swimming pool's locker so she can float weightlessly in the deep waters below the diving board. But will she have the courage to make this final leap of faith? 'Moonjump' is a dream-like short about the power of imagination and ambition.

Director: **Lasse Holdhus**

Screenwriter: **Yoav Rolef, Alexander Brack**

Producer: **Victor Buzalka**

Cast: **Marlen Leteztki**

Cinematographer: **Alexander Brack**

Editor: **Lasse Holdhus**

Sound Design: **David Röntgen**

Distribution: **German Film- and Television**

Academy Berlin (DFFB)

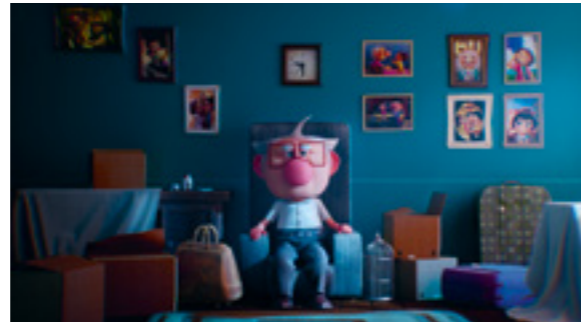
Lasse Holdhus was born in Stavanger, Norway in 1991. In 2013 he started his directing studies at the German Film and Television Academy of Berlin (DFFB). Lasse currently lives in Berlin.

Napo

Brazil / No Dialogue / 2020

16 mins / Colour

MENA Premiere



A young boy struggles to understand his ailing grandfather's dementia who has come to live with them due to his illness. One day he stumbles upon a family album full of old photographs. Taking inspiration from the images, he begins to reinterpret them into new drawings. His grandfather is mesmerised by the boy's drawings and begins to regain and relive some of his most cherished memories through them in this kind-hearted short about ageing and intergenerational relationships.

Director: **Gustavo Ribeiro**

Screenwriter: **Gustavo Ribeiro, Gabriela Antonia Rosa**

Producer: **Thais Peixe, Gustavo Ribeiro**

Editor: **Victor Spadotto**

Composer: **Chico Okabe**

Distribution: **Mira Lumo**

Gustavo Ribeiro has made films for as long as he can remember. As a child, he used to gather his friends to record homemade movies around the small town he lived in. Later on, he graduated in Visual Arts at the Federal University of Paraná, where he developed his knowledge on diverse fields of art. Gustavo is one of the founders of the animation studio Fish Films and Revolution, a Digital Arts School, both based in Curitiba. There, he currently works as a director, screenwriter, and teacher.

The School Bus

'Servis' / Turkey / Turkish / 2019

14 mins / Colour

Qatar Premiere



Nebahat, a young and driven teacher, has just been appointed to a rural village school in Anatolia. She quickly recognizes the difficulties her students face when travelling to class, often having to hitch a ride on the back of a local farmer's tractor! She dutifully requests a school bus from the Ministry of Education, but when it arrives there is just one small problem—there is nobody to drive it!

Director / Screenwriter / Producer: **Ramazan Kılıç**

Cinematographer: **Dişat Canan**

Editor: **Abdullah Enes Ünal**

Music: **Ahmet Kaya, Hasan Hüseyin Korkmazgil**

Sales: **Premium Films**

Ramazan Kılıç was born in Ağrı, East of Turkey in 1993. He studied cinema, TV, and literature at İstanbul Şehir University. His first short film 'Penaber' screened at numerous festivals and won several awards. His latest film 'The School Bus' competed at the 42nd Clermont-Ferrand International Film Festival.

Smile You Deserve It

Doha Film Institute Supported Film

Qatar / Arabic / 2020

4 mins / Colour

World Premiere



In this charming 3D animated apologue, two farmers live side-by-side with similar land but a very different approach to their vocations. One is upbeat and hopeful, always putting in an honest day's work with a smile on his face. The other, however, resents having to toil the land and doesn't put much care into his farming. When harvest time arrives, he learns a valuable lesson from his cheery neighbour—that work done with joy and perseverance always bears the best harvest.

Director / Screenwriter / Producer: **Ibrahim Albuainain**

Cast: **Sari**

Music: **Simon Kang**

Ibrahim Albuainain is a writer, art director and filmmaker with experience in puppet making using various mediums such as silicone and foam latex. His first stop-motion film 'The Last Drop of Oil' (2012) was an official selection at the Family Film Festival in Hollywood and Douban Film Festival in Seoul, and was awarded at Ras Al Khaimah in 2014. His second film 'Mata Alwusol', a 2D animated short film was also an official selection in Douban Film Festival in Seoul.

Under the Lemon Tree

Doha Film Institute Supported Film

Qatar, Palestine / Arabic / 2020

10 mins / Colour

Home Premiere



In this short but powerfully introspective documentary, we spend a day under the shade of a lemon tree with a Palestinian woman named Khaldieh, who was abruptly exiled from her hometown of Tulkarem in 1967. Preparing herself a humble breakfast of za'atar and breathing in the smell of sage, she recreates her old life through an assemblage of simple elements. Though they may seem trivial, for many Palestinians they are among the only tangible pieces of their lost homeland that they still possess.

Director: **Noor Alasswad**

Producer: **Yasmine Hammoudi**

Cinematographer: **Yasser Mustafa, Mesa Prum**

Noor Alasswad is a Palestinian filmmaker whose works explore the multidirectional connections between memory, identity, loss, history, home, land, heritage and addressing the feminist issues. She was born and raised in Syria until she had to leave in 2012 due to the political turmoil. Her raw and earnest style invites the viewer to jump through time and perspective. Her previous works include 'Noah' (2018) and 'Samha' (2017). Her latest short, 'Under the Lemon Tree' (2020), which was created in conjunction with DFI's Short Documentary Lab with Rithy Panh, won Best Director for short documentaries at the South Film Arts and Academy Festival.

Ya Hoota

Doha Film Institute Supported Film

Qatar / Arabic / 2019

11 mins / Colour

MENA Premiere



A curious little girl is determined to save the moon from a lunar eclipse. She sets off on a search for mythological characters from her grandmother's stories, hoping they can help her reach the moon. Her cousin comes along for the journey, but he is more than a little sceptical about the existence of such creatures. That is until the pair run into the Afternoon Donkey! A delightfully charming adventure about the power of storytelling and how it can inspire young minds to explore the world around them.

Director / Screenwriter: **Abdulaziz Yousif,**

Latifa Al-Darwish

Producer: **Ben Robinson**

Abdulaziz Yousif (aka "crocodile") is a social and political cartoonist. He was awarded the bronze Promax Award, along with his graphic design team, for their work on the advertising campaign of the "Jeem Cup" football tournament. He curated and co-curated the 'leBlockade' and '[Re]action' exhibits in collaboration with Doha Film Institute.

Latifa Al-Darwish is an award-winning filmmaker and storyteller. Her work ranges between documentaries and cartoons. She is interested in telling untold stories and draws inspiration from her city of Al Wakra and her grandmothers' stories. She obtained her BSc in Communication from Northwestern University in Qatar, and her MA from King's College London in culture and creative industries.

HILAL COMPETITION

Carried along by the crescent in their teenage years, soon-to-be adults will find films in this section that trigger new thoughts and ideas, and encourage their self-expression. Hilal films are suitable for audiences 13 years of age and older.

My Favorite War

'Mans mīlākais karš' / Latvia, Norway / English, Latvian / 2020

80 mins / Colour

MENA Premiere



A personal, animated documentary that tells the compelling story of the director's formative years growing up in Latvia, part of the Soviet Union from 1970 to 1990. The Cold War regime of the time famously used World War II as a vital ideological weapon to intimidate and oppress the population. However, when young Ilze discovers the remains of a German soldier in her sandbox, she begins to question the stated reality. Emboldened by the discovery, she starts digging for other stories buried deeper underneath the propaganda.

The film compassionately draws out the internal pressures of her family, contrasting her father, who earnestly served the Communist Party until his tragically premature death, with her mother, who lived under the shadow of her own father's conviction as an official "enemy of the state." Striking the perfect balance between stylized animated scenes, privy narration, and archival footage, 'My Favorite War' is a unique coming-of-age story with universal appeal about finding one's own identity, truth, and loyalty.

Winner of the Annecy Feature Film
Contrechamp Award, 2020.

Director / Screenwriter: **Ilze**

Burkovska - Jacobsen

Producer: **Trond Jacobsen,**

Guntis Trekteris

Cinematographer: **Andrejs**

Verhoustinskis, Trond

Jacobsen, Mārcis Ābele

Editor: **Julie Vinten, Reinis Rinka**

Composer: **Kārlis Auzāns**

Sound Design: **Ernests Ansons**

Distribution: **Ego Media**



Ilze Burkovska

is a Latvian
born film
director living
and working
in both Norway
and Latvia. She

has created eight documentaries
and more than 20 hours
of TV animation/documentary
series. Her documentary
'My Mother's Farm' was screened
in IDFA mid-length competition
in 2009, and it went on to win the
Best Latvian Documentary as well
as Best TV Documentary in Norway.
Her company's TV animation/
documentary series, 'My Body
Belongs to Me' was awarded
an International Emmy in 2018.

Winner of the Sundance World Cinema Documentary Audience Award, 2020.

Director: **Jerry Rothwell**
 Producer: **Jeremy Dear, Stevie Lee, Al Morrow**
 Cinematographer: **Ruben Woodin Dechamps**
 Editor: **David Charap**
 Composer: **Nainita Desai**
 Sales: **Met Film Sales Ltd**



Jerry Rothwell is a filmmaker whose work includes the award-winning feature documentaries

'How to Change the World', 'Sour Grapes', 'Town of Runners', 'The School in The Cloud', 'Donor Unknown', 'Heavy Load' and 'Deep Water'. His films have won numerous accolades including two Grierson Awards, a Sundance Special Jury Prize, an RTS Award, the IDA Pare Lorentz Award and a BAFTA nomination.

The Reason I Jump

UK, USA / English, Krio / 2020
 82 mins / Colour
 MENA Premiere



Based on the best-selling book by Naoki Higashida, 'The Reason I Jump' is an immersive cinematic exploration of neurodiversity through the experiences of non-speaking autistic people from around the world. The film blends Higashida's revelatory insights into autism, written when he was just 13, with intimate portraits of five remarkable young people. It opens a window for audiences into an intense and overwhelming, but often joyful, sensory universe—with the compelling narrative power to irrevocably change how you think about an often-misunderstood community.

The film is a deeply profound and compassionate call for understanding, lending a powerful voice to those living with autism. Moments in the lives of each of the characters are linked by the journey of a young Japanese boy through an epic landscape; narrated passages from Naoki's writing reflect on what his autism means to him and others, how his perception of the world differs, and why he acts in the way he does—the reason he jumps. The film distils these elements into a sensually rich tapestry that leads us to Naoki's core message: not being able to speak does not mean there is nothing to say.

Winner of the Lanterna Magica Award at Venice Film Festival, 2020.

Director: **Majid Majidi**
 Screenwriter: **Majid Majidi, Nima Javidi**
 Producer: **Majid Majidi, Amir Banan**
 Cast: **Ali Nasirian, Javad Ezzati, Tannaz Tabatabaie, Rouhollah Zamani, Mahdi Mousavi, Shamila Shirzad**
 Cinematographer: **Hooman Behmanesh**
 Editor: **Hassan Hassandoust**
 Composer: **Ramin Kousha**
 Sales: **Celluloid Dreams**

Sun Children

'Khorshid' / Iran / Farsi / 2020
 99 mins / Colour
 MENA Premiere



The captivating story of 12-year-old Ali and his three friends who work hard to survive on the streets of Tehran. The boys support their families by doing odd jobs in a garage and committing petty crimes on the side to make fast money. In a turn of events that seems almost miraculous, Ali is entrusted to find a hidden treasure underground. He recruits his gang, but first, to gain access to the tunnel, the children must enrol at the Sun School—a charitable institution that tries to educate street kids and child labourers—close to where the treasure is located.

The Sun School, facing money problems of its own, is initially reluctant to take the boys in until Vice Principal Mr. Rafie, impressed by a show of passion, intercedes on their behalf. The natural ingenuity of the kids is evident, using their building site experience to solve geometry problems, wire drills to light fittings, and even fix the school's temperamental bell. A spellbinding and absorbing film, as you would expect from renowned director Majid Majidi, who dedicates it to the 152 million children globally, forced to work and so deprived of an education that would allow them to uncover the true buried treasure—their full potential.



Born in Tehran in 1959, **Majid Majidi** is the first Iranian director to receive an Academy Award®

Nomination for Best Foreign Language Film for 'Children of Heaven' (1996). His debut feature, 'Baduk' (1991), was presented at Cannes Directors' Fortnight, and his second effort 'Father' (1995) secured Majidi's first major prize, at the San Sebastian Film Festival. Majid is a triple winner of the Grand Prix des Amériques at the Montreal World Film Festival for 'Children of Heaven', 'The Colour of Paradise' and 'Baran' (2001). His movie 'The Song of Sparrows' (2008) won the Golden Bear for Best Actor at the Berlin International Film Festival. Since then, he has directed 'Muhammad, The Messenger of God' (2017) and 'Beyond the Clouds' (2019).

Winner of the Grand Prize
of the Jury KPlus at the Berlin
International Film Festival, 2020.

Director: **Samuel Kishi Leopo**
Screenwriter: **Samuel Kishi Leopo, Sofía Gómez Córdoba, Luis Briones**
Producer: **Inna Payán Stoupignan, Leticia Carrillo Silva**
Cast: **Martha Reyes Arias, Maximiliano Nájjar Márquez, Leonardo Nájjar Márquez, Cici Lau, Johnson T. Lau**
Cinematographer: **Octavio Arauz**
Editor: **Yordi Capó, Carlos Espinoza Benítez, Samuel Kishi Leopo**
Music: **Kenji Kishi Leopo**
Sales: **FiGa Films**



Samuel Kishi Leopo holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree in audiovisual arts from the University

of Guadalajara. His work has been shown in over 100 festivals around the world, including Clermont Ferrand and the Berlinale, where he competed on the Generation Kplus section with his feature film debut 'Somos Mari Pepa'. Some of his awards include the Morelia International Film Festival's Silver Eye, the Mexican Academy of Cinematographic Arts and Sciences' Best Short Film for 'Mari Pepa', as well as three Ariel nominations for his feature film debut 'Somos Mari Pepa'.

The Wolves

'Los Lobos' / Mexico / Spanish, Cantonese, English / 2019
95 mins / Colour
MENA Premiere



Together with their mother Lucia, brothers Max and Leo have just crossed the border from Mexico into the United States of America in search of a better life. But it is not easy for them to gain a foothold in their new home country. Lucía tries her best to make ends meet by doing odd jobs, and while she is at work, the two brothers spend their days building an imaginary universe with their drawings and think about mom's promise of one day going to Disneyland—their land of dreams.

In the film, the elusive Disneyland stands as the ultimate promise of a seemingly unattainable paradise for the children. There is an almost fairytale feel to the boys' lives as they spend their days locked in a room, hoping for a magic lamp or similar fantastical trope to whisk them away to a better world. But real life is not like that, especially for an immigrant single mother. Director Samuel Kishi Leopo recalls aspects of his own childhood in 'The Wolves' and this empathy shows in what is a tender retelling of a mother doing her best to survive adversity—fiercely honest, pessimistic at times, yet also full of hope.

Al-Sit

Doha Film Institute Supported Film
Sudan, Qatar / Arabic / 2020
20 mins / Colour
Home Premiere



In a cotton-farming village in Sudan, 15-year-old Nafisa has a crush on Babiker, but her parents have arranged her marriage to Nadir, a young Sudanese businessman living abroad. Nafisa's grandmother Al-Sit, the powerful village matriarch, has her own plans for Nafisa's future. But can the young girl choose for herself? A compassionate story from Sudan about women—both powerless and powerful—exploring opposing ends of the social chain and how these roles might be changing in a modernizing world.

Director / Screenwriter: **Suzannah Mirghani**
Producer: **Eiman Mirghani, Suzannah Mirghani**
Cast: **Mihad Murtada, Rabeha Mahmoud, Mohammed Magdi**
Cinematographer: **Khalid Awad**
Editor: **Abdelrahim Kattab, Suzannah Mirghani**
Sound Design: **Falah Hannoun**

Suzannah Mirghani is a writer, researcher, and independent filmmaker, highlighting stories from the Arab world. Being of multicultural Sudanese and Russian backgrounds, she is interested in stories that examine the complexity of identity. Suzannah is a media studies and museum studies graduate, and the writer and director of several short films, including, 'Caravan' (2016), 'Hind's Dream' (2014), and 'Hamour' (2011).

The Best Orchestra in the World

Austria / German / 2020
14 mins / Colour
Qatar Premiere



A gifted double-bass player named Ingbert dreams of a career in the illustrious Vienna State Orchestra, and duly wows the demanding professors at his "blind" audition. There is just one small problem though—chatty, self-confident Ingbert's very unusual appearance. A whimsical delight, this hilarious and creative tribute to tenacity, talent and individuality warms the heart while playing all the right comedic notes.

Director: **Henning Backhaus**
Screenwriter: **Henning Backhaus, Rafael Haider, Albert Meisl**
Producer: **Lukas Rosatti**
Cast: **Thomas Mraz, Jörn Hentschel, Dominic Oley**
Cinematographer: **Matthias Halibrand**
Editor: **Jana Libnik**
Music: **Carl Ditters Von Dittersdorf, Johann Sebastian Bach, Henning Backhaus**

Henning Backhaus was born in Dresden, Germany. He moved to Vienna to study directing with Austrian / French film director Michael Haneke at the Filmakademie Wien. In 2013 Backhaus shot his film debut 'Local Heroes' on 16mm and 35mm film. From 2013 to 2018 he was an assistant director at the Vienna State Opera. Most recently he worked in the sound department of Terrence Malick's 'A Hidden Life'.

Falafel Cart

Kuwait / No Dialogue / 2019

14 mins / Colour

Qatar Premiere



During a stormy night, a lonely falafel cart owner stumbles upon a mysterious flower that whirls him into the memories of his past. 'Falafel Cart' deftly puts the audience literally in the heart and soul of the protagonist, allowing them to live his life and memories as if they are their own. The film was inspired by the ongoing conflicts of the middle east, highlighting the impact on people who are merely seeking a better life.

Director / Screenwriter: **Abdullah Al-Wazzan**

Composer: **Dan Phillipson**

Sound Design: **Andrew Vernon**

Abdullah Al-Wazzan is a director, writer, and producer, born in Kuwait in 1990. He graduated with a Bachelor of Architecture in 2012. Al-Wazzan's professional directing debut was with the animated short film 'Falafel Cart' which qualified and was submitted to the 2020 Academy Awards for Best Animated Short Film. The film was also officially selected at the prestigious Hiroshima International Animation Festival and won Best International Short Film at the Los Angeles Animation Festival in 2019.

Matilda and the Spare Head

'Matilda ir atsarginė galva' / Lithuania /

Lithuanian / 2020

13 mins / Colour

MENA Premiere



Matilda's head is bursting at the seams with lots of useful, and not so useful facts. She memorizes everything from polar bears to the phonebook! One day, her mother decides her head is already full to the brim, so she orders a second one and goes about filling that one too! But it seems that two heads might not be better than one in this wacky animation about the importance of learning from experiences rather than just books.

Director: **Ignas Meilūnas**

Screenwriter: **Dangiras Bugas, Ignas Meilūnas**

Producer: **Marija Razgute**

Editor: **Ignas Meilūnas**

Music: **Rytis Koreniukas**

Distribution: **Miyu Distribution**

Ignas Meilūnas graduated from Vilnius Gediminas Technical University with a BA in Computer Engineering in 2008. He has worked with O. Koršunovas and G. Varnas' theatre troupes as a sound designer and video projection operator. Since 2011, Ignas started working as a freelance 3D and stop-motion animator and director. His debut short animated fiction film 'Woods' won the Lithuanian Film Academy Award for Best Animation of 2015 and his short animation 'Mr. Night Has A Day Off' was selected at more than 50 film festivals worldwide.

The Present

Palestine, Qatar / Arabic, English, Hebrew / 2019

24 mins / Colour

Middle East Premiere



Yusef (Saleh Bakri) is a family man from the West Bank, battling enormous queues at dawn to get to work every day, exacerbated by severe back pain and surrounded by military blockades. To celebrate his wedding anniversary, he takes his daughter Yasmine on a trip to buy a surprise gift for his wife. This affecting short about the harsh realities of living in a divided land was the winner of the Audience Award for Best Film at Clermont-Ferrand International Short Film Festival 2020.

Director: **Farah Nabulsi**

Screenwriter: **Farah Nabulsi, Hind Shoufani**

Producer: **Ossama Bawardi**

Cast: **Saleh Bakri, Maryam Kanj**

Cinematographer: **Benoit Chamillard**

Editor: **Hind Shoufani**

Distribution: **Philistine Films**

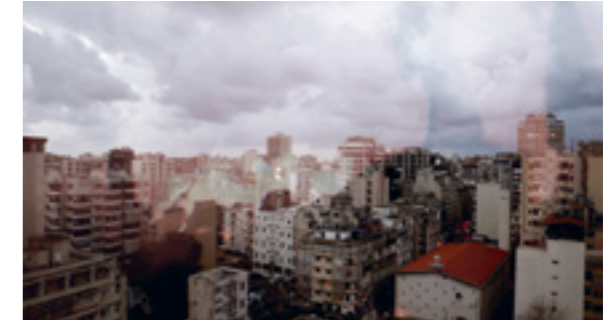
Farah Nabulsi is a Palestinian filmmaker and director. She started working in the film industry as a writer and producer of short fiction films, exploring Palestine related topics that matter to her. This includes 'Today They Took My Son' endorsed by renowned Director Ken Loach, screened at the United Nations, and top international film festivals. 'The Present' won the Jury Award for Best Live Action Short at the Cleveland International Film Festival, thereby qualifying it for the 2021 Oscars.

Quarantine

Lebanon / Arabic / 2020

5 mins / Colour

MENA Premiere



In this experimental short, we are transported to Beirut, which under quarantine orders has become a veritable ghost town. The unnerving screams and echoes of a deafening silence reign in every little corner of this city. The sadness, the craziness, the reverberations of the dead, the desperate voices of protestors and people trying to fight for it.

Director: **Ghadi Al Alam**

Ghadi Al Alam is a Lebanese cinema student at the Saint Joseph University of Beirut and an Ajyal Film Festival alumnus. His primary focus in life is filmmaking, but he is also greatly interested in photography as it is his main hobby. In photography, he essentially likes to explore the beauty of nature and its entanglement with human emotions. He has developed this everlasting passion for visual arts and storytelling at a very young age and has been developing his skills ever since.

Under Her Skin

Doha Film Institute Supported Film

'À fleur de peau' / Qatar, France, Algeria / Arabic / 2020

15 mins / Colour

MENA Premiere



Making its world premiere in the Orizzonti Short Films Competition at Venice Film Festival this year, Meriem Mesraoua's 'Under Her Skin' explores a young Algerian girl's rite of passage as she struggles for control over her self-image. Disturbed by her daughter Sarah's sudden nervous habit of nail-biting, a domineering mother attempts to correct the behaviour. But deeper issues are at play in this profoundly nuanced portrait of adolescence and rebellion.

Director / Screenwriter: **Meriem Mesraoua**

Producer: **François d'Artemare**

Cast: **Amina Hilal, Salima Abada, Mohammed Benameur, Hayem Delfi**

Cinematographer: **Mohamed Tayeb Laggoune**

Editor: **Marie Molino**

Production Design: **Maya Mancer Sihem**

Sound Design: **Hafidh Moulfih, Mikhael Kurc**

Meriem Mesraoua earned a BSc with Honours in Media Industries and Technologies from Northwestern University. Her short films include 'Coucou' (2009), 'Our Time Is Running Out' (2017), and 'Under Her Skin' (2020). She is currently developing her first feature narrative, 'The Other Wife'.

We Have One Heart

Poland / Polish / 2020

10 mins / Colour

MENA Premiere



After his mother dies, Adam comes across some letters exchanged years ago between his Polish mother and his father, a Kurd living in Iraq. This is an opportunity for him to find out more about his father, who he never knew. The juxtaposition of animated drawings and archival material takes us back forty years into the past and enables us not only to feel the emotions linking the lovers living in different parts of the world, but also to uncover an extraordinary family secret.

Director / Screenwriter: **Katarzyna Warzecha**

Cinematographer: **Grzegorz Hartfiel**

Editor: **Piotr Kremky**

Music: **Adam Witkowski**

Distribution: **Munk Studio**

Born in Gdańsk in 1989, **Katarzyna Warzecha** graduated from the Krzysztof Kieslowski Film School in Katowice and the Wajda School & Studio in Warsaw. Her graduation film, 'It's Really Awesome', was screened at numerous international festivals and won a series of awards. She has worked with directors such as Filip Bajon and Marcin Wrona. She loves good food and has a special fondness for potatoes.

Witness

France, Iran / Farsi / 2020

14 mins / Colour

MENA Premiere



A mother helps an elderly woman in a shopping mall in Tehran. A tragedy occurs, brutally confronting her with the impact of her actions.

Director: **Ali Asgari**

Screenwriter: **Ali Asgari, Farnoosh Samadi**

Producer: **François Morisset, Laura**

Jumel, Khorshid Alami

Cast: **Anahita Afshar, Nasrin Kourdi, Selena Moradi**

Cinematographer: **Hamed Hosseini**

Editor: **Ehsan Vasegh**

Music: **Ali Birang**

Distribution: **Saloud Morisset**

Ali Asgari is an Iranian filmmaker and scriptwriter.

He is a graduate of cinema in Italy and an alumnus of Berlinale Talent Campus 2013 and Locarno Summer Academy 2016. Two of his short films 'More Than Two Hours' (2013) and 'The Silence' (co-directed with Farnoosh Samadi, 2016) were in the short film competition at Festival De Cannes. His short film 'The Baby' competed at Venice Film Festival 2014. His short films were screened in more than 700 film festivals and won more than 200 international awards. 'Disappearance', his first feature film was developed at Cinefondation La Residence of Festival De Cannes and had its world and North American premiere at Venice Film Festival and Toronto Film Festival. He is also a member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

BADER COMPETITION

Young adults have completed the circle of youth and are now taking their own steps on the path of life. Their opinions resonate more strongly, and this appealing programme exposes them to cinema as a contemporary art form.

200 Meters

Doha Film Institute Supported Film

Palestine, Jordan, Qatar, Italy, Sweden / Arabic, English, Hebrew / 2020

96 mins / Colour

Middle East Premiere



Mustafa (Ali Suliman) and his wife Salwa live a mere 200 metres apart in two Palestinian villages, separated by a dividing wall. One day he gets a call every parent dreads—his son has been in an accident. Rushing to cross the checkpoint, Mustafa is denied on a technicality. But a father's love won't give up, and he will do anything to reach his son. A 200-metre distance becomes a 200-kilometre odyssey. Mustafa left with no choice, attempts to smuggle himself to the other side of the wall.

Seasoned trafficker Nader is willing to help, but for a price. One that is shared between a motley crew of fellow passengers who join Mustafa on his endeavour. There is the young and brash Rami, artsy activist Kifah and German photographer Anne, who attempts to film the whole experience. Caught between two divided worlds, where distance is relative, the film beautifully closes the gap both geographically and emotionally between its characters and subject matter. The depiction of everyday life in an occupied land and the obstacles the people there face are a universal appeal to breaking down barriers the world over.

Director /

Screenwriter: **Ameen Nayfeh**

Producer: **May Odeh**

Cast: **Ali Suliman, Lana Zreik, Samia Bakri, Tawfeeq Nayfeh, Maryam Nayfeh, Salma Nayfeh,**

Cinematographer: **Elin Kirschfink**

Editor: **Kamal El Mallakh**

Music: **Faraj Suliman**

Sales: **True Colours**



Ameen Nayfeh

was born in Palestine in 1988, and spent his formative years moving between

Jordan and Palestine. Despite an early interest in filmmaking, in 2010 he earned his BSc in Nursing from Al-Quds University in East Jerusalem. Two years later, he attained an MFA in film producing from the Red Sea Institute of Cinematic Arts in Jordan. Ameen Nayfeh's previous films include 'The Crossing' (2017), 'Suspended Time / Zaman Muaalaq' (2014), 'The Eid Gift' (2012), and 'The Uppercut' (2012). '200 Meters' is his first feature film.

Winner of the Panorama Audience Award at the Berlin International Film Festival, 2020.

Director: **Srdan Golubović**
Screenwriter: **Srdan Golubović, Ognjen Sviličić**

Producer: **Jelena Mitrović, Boris T. Matić, Lana Matić, Alexander Ris, Cedomir Kolar, Marc Baschet, Danis Tanović, Danijel Hočevar, Amra Bakšić Čamo, Adis Djapo**

Cast: **Goran Bogdan, Boris Isaković, Nada Šargin, Milica Janevski, Muharem Hamzić, Ajla Šantić,**

Cinematographer: **Aleksandar Ilić**
Editor: **Petar Marković**

Distribution: **Moving Turtle**

Sales: **The Match Factory GmbH**



Srdan Golubović's first feature film 'Absolute Hundred' screened at Toronto, San Sebastian,

Rotterdam, Pusan and won numerous international and regional film awards. In 2007, His second feature film 'The Trap' premiered at Berlinale, participated at more than 50 international film festivals, and won 21 international awards. 'Circles', his third feature film, had its world premiere in 2013 at Sundance Film Festival where it won the Special Jury Prize. He is a member of the EFA and President of the Board of Auteur Film Festival, Belgrade. Golubović works as a professor of Film Directing at the Faculty of Dramatic Arts in Belgrade.

Father

'Otac' / Serbia, France, Germany, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina / Serbian / 2020

120 mins / Colour
Middle East Premiere



In a small town in Serbia, loving father of two Nikola is forced to give up his children to social services after poverty and hunger drive his wife to commit a desperate act. Until he can provide adequate conditions for their upbringing, the children will be placed in foster care. Despite Nikola's best efforts and several appeals, the head of the social services centre refuses to reunite the family and his situation seems hopeless. But when Nikola discovers the local administration may be corrupt, he decides to travel across Serbia on foot and take his case directly to the national ministry in Belgrade.

Against all odds and driven by equal measures of both love and despair, this dedicated father refuses to give up on justice and his right to raise his children. Every hero's story needs a villain, and in this case, it is the role of the bureaucrats he encounters along the way, void of empathy and motivated only by their own self-interest. His odyssey is dotted with acts of kindness from strangers that help Nikola on his journey, creating a portrait of a society where everyday people show compassion, even though the system they live under may not.

Gevar's Land

Doha Film Institute Supported Film

'La terre de Gevar' / France, Qatar / Arabic, French / 2020

75 mins / Colour
Middle East Premiere



Newly settled with his partner and son in a suburb of Reims, Gevar—who has arrived from Syria, has decided to invest in the rental of a small patch of land to grow vegetables. Before clearing the earth, he draws up plans, imagines what can be grown there and produces seedlings, all while dreaming of a fruitful garden. They arrived only a short time ago and will now have to put down roots here, as returning home is out of the question. The small patch of land is sometimes more welcoming than the rest of the country, and they must acclimatise and find their way in the culture, the language, neighbourhood spats and the gaze of the others.

Filmmaker Qutaiba Barhamji films them over four seasons as they settle on this new ground that often rebels against the couple's hopes. 'Gevar's Land' explores the mysterious power of the earth, and its capacity to restore an ineffable link between an exiled and uprooted man, and his new surroundings. The film questions the idea of territory, which often goes hand in hand with the need to erect borders. Here, what is mine, and there, what is yours.

Director / Cinematographer/ Editor:

Qutaiba Barhamji

Producer: **Karim Aitouna,**

Thomas Micoulet

Sound Design: **Benoit**

Chabert d'Hieres

Sales: **Haut Les Mains Productions**



Born in the Damas suburbs, **Qutaiba Barhamji** spent his childhood between Syria and Russia,

where he studied medicine. In 2005, he settled in Paris and studied film at ESEC. In 2016, he made the short, 'Wardé', co-produced and broadcast by Arte. In parallel, he has worked as an editor on some thirty documentary and fiction films, including 'Still Recording' by Saeed Al Batal and Ghiath Ayoub, Fawzi Saleh's 'Poisonous Roses' and 'L'Homme qui penche' by Olivier Dury and Marie-Violaine Brincard.

Director / Producer /
Editor: **Kamal Aljafari**
Distribution: **Aljafari Films**



Kamal Aljafari lives in Berlin. He works with moving and still images, interweaving between fiction,

non-fiction, and art. Kamal's past films include 'Recollection' (2015), 'Port of Memory' (2009), and 'The Roof' (2006). He was a featured artist at the Robert Flaherty Film Seminar (NYC) and was a Fellow at Harvard University's Radcliffe Institute and Film Study Center. His short film 'It's a Long Way from Amphioxus' premiered at the Berlinale (2019), and his latest film 'An Unusual Summer' (2020) was selected at Visions du Réel 2020.

An Unusual Summer

Doha Film Institute Supported Film
Palestine, Germany / Arabic, English / 2020
80 mins / Colour



Following an act of vandalism, Palestinian filmmaker Kamal Aljafari's father decides to install a surveillance camera to record the scenes unfolding in front of their house. By doing so, he unconsciously immortalises vignettes of everyday family life, neighbours going to work, and children off to school. 'An Unusual Summer' captures these fleeting moments of poetry and all the while in the background, the daily choreography of Ramla, comes to the surface. From these low-quality images of an unwavering surveillance camera's point of view, the film subtly manages to gradually reveal unexpected storylines.

"In the distant past, many years ago, in front of this house, there stood a fig tree in a garden, which has now vanished, bulldozed into memory, and swept up by History and Time". Composing with visual material of low-definition aesthetics, finely punctuated with sound effects, Kamal Aljafari creates a mechanical diary of a life that scrolls past the window and succeeds with patience and infinite grace in transfiguring a 'film à dispositif' based on a security device—into a personal and eminently political fresco.

Yalda, A Night for Forgiveness

France, Germany, Switzerland, Luxemburg, Lebanon, Iran / Farsi / 2019
89 mins / Colour
MENA Premiere



The talented Sadaf Asgari, who also appears in the '180 Degree Rule' at this year's Ajyal, plays Maryam a young woman sentenced to death for the murder of her much older husband. Though details of the crime remain ambiguous, the country's law has placed her fate firmly in the hands of the victim's daughter, Mona (Behnaz Jafari). In front of millions of viewers on live television during Yalda—a Zoroastrian celebration that marks the beginning of winter—Maryam and Mona discover that true forgiveness can be difficult when they are forced to relive their shared past.

A captivating mix of courtroom drama, reality TV and social protest, 'Yalda, A Night for Forgiveness' sees accomplished filmmaker Bakhshi turn his insightful eye to questions of gender and class politics in modern-day Iran. Winner of the World Cinema Grand Jury Prize for Drama at Sundance Film Festival this year, the film delicately tackles the complex issues of morality, justice and the desire for revenge. Showing how these can become twisted and disfigured when placed under the very unforgiving spotlight of sensationalism and new media.

Winner of the World Cinema
Grand Jury Prize for Drama at the
Sundance Film Festival, 2020.

Director / Screenwriter:
Massoud Bakhshi
Cast: **Sadaf Asgari, Behnaz Jafari, Babak Karimi, Fereshteh Sadre Orafaee, Forough Ghajebglou, Arman Darvish, Fereshteh Hosseini**
Cinematographer:
Julian Atanassov
Editor: **Jacques Comets**
Distribution: **MC Distribution**
Sales: **Pyramide Films**



Born in Tehran, Iran, **Massoud Bakhshi** has worked as a film critic, scriptwriter and producer,

before making 12 documentaries and short films which were awarded internationally. His first feature film 'A Respectable Family' was selected at Cannes Film Festival 2012 (Quinzaine des réalisateurs). 'Yalda, A Night for Forgiveness' is his second feature film, winner at the World Cinema Dramatic Competition Sundance Film Festival 2020 and selected at the 70th Berlin International Film Festival Generation 14+ Competition 2020.

Apfelmus

Austria / German / 2019

7 mins / Colour

Qatar Premiere



While two uniformed guards idly chat and sing the day away, animals carry on philosophical dialogues about confounding existential issues they face. A beautiful pencil-drawn animation style gives this esoteric short a fairytale feel, where the only truly answerable question posed is how to make great apple sauce—"you just have to wash, peel, cut, and mash it".

Director: **Alexander Gratzner**

Cast: **Alexander Gratzner, Johannes Forster**

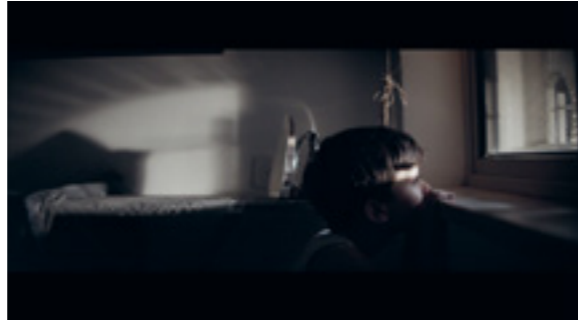
Alexander Gratzner is an Austrian filmmaker. During his studies at the Institute for Fine and Media Art at the University of Applied Arts, Vienna (2012 - 2018), he decided to begin creating animated short films. After graduating, he went on to study at the Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design in Budapest. He currently lives in Vienna and works as a freelance artist.

Bethlehem 2001

Palestine / Arabic / 2020

14 mins / Colour and Black & White

Qatar Premiere



While reflecting on the present, a young Palestinian recalls his childhood memories of the military invasion and siege of Bethlehem in 2001 during the second Palestinian uprising (Intifada). By trying to understand how his parents led him through those difficult times, he hopes to find the strength and support he needs to cope with the present. Bethlehem 2001 is a personal cinematic exploration to understand childhood trauma and its effects it can have on later life.

Director / Screenwriter/

Cinematographer: **Ibrahim Handal**

Producer: **Ibrahim Handal, Wisam Al Jafari**

Cast: **Muhammad Mughrabi, Yousef Abushkaidem, Hind Abushkaidem, Tarek Abusalameh, Karam Al-Salaymeh**

Editor: **Ibrahim Handal, Belal Abu Alia**

Distribution: **MAD Solutions**

Ibrahim Handal is a Palestinian filmmaker and cinematographer from Bethlehem. In 2019 he obtained his BFA in Cinematography at Dar Al-Kalima University. Ibrahim directed several narrative and experimental short films and has worked as a director of photography on various short films including the Cannes Cinefondation 2019 winner 'Ambience' by Wissam Al Jafari. He also worked on several feature film productions in Palestine in the camera and lighting departments. Ibrahim is currently developing his first feature film.

Clouds

Oman, Qatar / Arabic / 2019

14 mins / Colour

Home Premiere



In 1978, in the south of Oman, Dablan, a widower lives with his children Salma and Amr in a traditional rural village. In a region where leopards are seen as the ultimate test of a hunter's mettle, Dablan faces pressure from his tribe to kill one that is threatening the village—pressure that only increases when he resolves to set the animal free. A contemplative and affectionate depiction of a tribal society as it adapts to a new world.

Director: **Muzna Al-Musafer**

Producer: **Intisar Said**

Cast: **Bander Alshihri, Amal Bait Noyra, Hassan Almarshani, Sharif Alamri, Musalam Alshihri, Wanas**
Cinematographer: **Giovanni C. Lorusso**

Muzna Al-Musafer's fascination with imagery started at an early age through her father, who is a painter and a photographer. Her short film 'Cholo' won Best Script at Abu Dhabi Film Festival. 'Pashk' and 'The Goats of Dana', two creative documentaries that Al-Musafer participated in, both screened at DOX Film festival in Copenhagen, FIFAK in Tunisia, and Women Deliver world conference. Al-Musafer has served as a jury member at the Kuwait Film Festival in 2019 and as a board member of the Oman Film Society, as well as deputy artistic director at the Muscat International Film Festival in 2018.

David

USA / English / 2020

12 mins / Colour

Qatar Premiere



A severely depressed man reaches out for an emergency therapy session. He's not the only one who needs help.

Director: **Zach Woods**

Screenwriter: **Brandon Gardner, Zach Woods**

Producer: **Kevin Chinoy, Francesca Silvestri, Zach Woods, Andrew Porter**

Cast: **Will Ferrell, William Jackson Harper, Fred Hechinger, Corey Jantzen, Sebastian Vale**

Cinematographer: **Andre Lascaris**

Distribution: **Saloud Morisset**

Zach Woods currently stars in Armando Iannucci's follow-up HBO series to 'Veep', 'Avenue 5'. Zach recently finished a six-season run on the HBO hit comedy 'Silicon Valley' as Jared Dunn. In film, Zach was most recently seen in the Searchlight feature 'Downhill' alongside Will Ferrell and Julie Louis-Dreyfus. He has also appeared in Steven Spielberg's 'The Post', 'Other People', 'In the Loop', 'Damsels In Distress', 'Spy', and 'The Heat'. He began his career at the Upright Citizens Brigade Theater where he still performs. His first role on television was as Gabe Lewis on NBC's 'The Office'. Zach has also appeared on 'Veep', 'The League', 'Playing House', and 'The Good Wife'. This June, Zach made his directorial debut with his short film 'David', which he co-wrote, starring Will Ferrell, William Jackson Harper and Fred Hechinger. It was the sole official short film selection from the U.S. to compete in this year's Cannes Film Festival.

Encountering Samir

'Lqaa Samir' / Jordan, Germany / No Dialogue / 2020

5 mins / Colour

MENA Premiere



In a war zone, four-year-old Farah, and her brother Ramzy become friends with an enemy counterpart, Samir. They begin to play together and turn the once harsh and barren battlefield into a whimsical playground. The sudden piercing sound of a bullet disrupts their game, bringing them back to reality where they find themselves stuck in the crossfire. The new friends soon realise that the only way out is the magic they carry inside them.

Director / Screenwriter: **Rand Beiruty**

Producer: **Flavia Oertwig**

Editor: **Abdilh Sada, Rand Beiruty**

Distribution: **Tama Filmproduktion -**

Flavia Daina Oertwig

Rand Beiruty is a Jordanian filmmaker who obtained her MA degree in Media Arts from Bauhaus University Weimar and is currently pursuing a practice-based PhD from Film University Babelsberg Konrad Wolf. She was nominated for the Robert Bosch co-production Film Prize in 2016 and 2018. Beiruty won the ESP Jury Prize for the International Script Pitch at Interfilm Berlin 2016 for her short animation 'Encountering Samir' and the Tribeca Film Institute IF/Then Pitch Competition at CP:DOX, 2017 for her short documentary 'Nudar'.

Family Plot

Japan / Japanese / 2019

23 mins / Colour

MENA Premiere



How far would you go for free Wi-Fi? In this humorous Japanese short, our protagonist Dobashi has just moved into a new apartment, but disastrously he has no internet connection yet. Unable to stream his favourite films, he notices that there is a Wi-Fi signal emanating from the Sada family next door. To get the password, he will have to step into the neighbours' house, and when he does, he finds himself stepping into a lot more than he ever bargained for!

Director / Screenwriter: **Shuichi Okita**

Cast: **Toshiyuki Kitami, Yuriko Osaki, Tatsunosuke**

Arima, Kuu Ijima

Cinematographer: **Yoshihiro Ikeuchi**

Editor: **Takashi Sato**

Music: **Shunsuke Kida**

Distribution: **Soda Communications**

A year after graduating from Nihon University College of Art, **Shuichi Okita** won the Grand Prix in the shorts section of a local film festival. His feature, 'The Woodsman and The Rain' (2011), won Best Screenplay and Best Actor at the Dubai International Film Festival. His recent film 'Mori's Place' (2018) won Best Screenplay at the Yokohama Film Festival, and this work, 'Family Plot', received a Special Mention at Clermont-Ferrand.

Going After Refuge

Turkey / No Dialogue / 2020

4 mins / Colour

Gulf Premiere



"Only the dead have seen the end of war" is a quote by the philosopher Plato. War is an endless phenomenon and a crucial, yet dreadful part of human nature. As soon as one war ends, it seems another begins somewhere else on earth. In this affecting short, a wounded soldier tries desperately to escape the battlefield as one such war rages all around him.

Director: **Ibrahim Abazeed, Barış Elçin**

Cast: **Nihat Gülses**

Ibrahim Abazeed is a student and filmmaker moving between Doha and Ankara. After finishing high school in Doha, he moved to Ankara to complete a major in communication and design at Bilkent University. There, he produced most of his work which combines a multitude of mediums to deliver a visually compelling story, ranging from photography to film.

Barış Elçin is a student and filmmaker based in Ankara. He previously worked as a photographer and video editor while studying film. To further his career and knowledge, he decided to move to Ankara and major in communication and design at Bilkent University, where he is currently studying.

How My Grandmother Became a Chair

Germany, Lebanon, Qatar / No Dialogue / 2020

10 mins / Colour

MENA Premiere



An ageing grandmother loses her five senses, one after the other before finally becoming a wooden chair. Throughout her transformation, she realizes that her housekeeper is not the wild animal she once thought she was, but the caring and loyal family member she was sadly lacking. A poignant story about illness and growing old which employs imagination and metaphor to show the difficult and painful process of departing.

Director: **Nicolas Fattouh**

Producer: **Fabian Driehorst, Nermine Haddad**

Editor: **Frédéric Schuld**

Distribution: **Fabian&Fred**

Nicolas Fattouh is a Lebanese visual artist and director. He has participated in many local and international exhibitions and is an animation graduate from Academie Libanaise des Beaux-Arts. In 2018 his debut project 'How Grandmother Became a Chair' received The Film Prize of the Robert Bosch Stiftung for a German-Lebanese co-production. In 2019 he opened the Fattouh Art Gallery in Monsef.

I am Afraid to Forget Your Face

Egypt, France, Qatar, Belgium / Arabic / 2020

15 mins / Colour

MENA Premiere



After being separated for over two months, Adam travels down a rough road to be reunited with the one he loves, whatever it takes. This poignant and reflective short by Egyptian director Sameh Alaa, tells the story of a man battling a great deal of adversity while in search of redemption, reunion, and closure. The film recently won Cannes Film Festival's most coveted short film award, the Palme d'Or du court métrage (Short Film Palme d'Or).

Director / Screenwriter: **Sameh Alaa**

Producer: **Muhammad Taymour, Martin Jerome**

Cast: **Seif Hemeda, Nourhan Ahmed**

Cinematographer: **Giorgos Valsamis**

Editor: **Yasser Azmy**

Distribution: **Square Eyes**

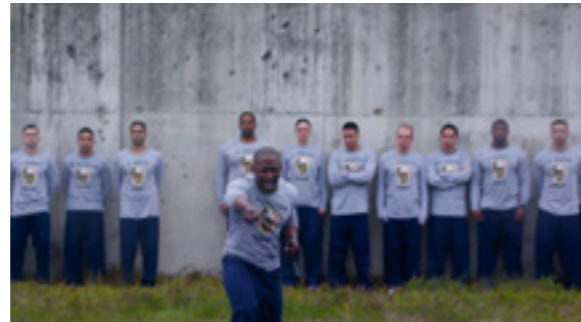
Born in Cairo, Egypt, **Sameh Alaa** studied German literature at Cairo University. Before moving to Europe, he worked as an assistant director in advertising and feature films. In 2016, he finished his MA in filmmaking at EICAR film school in Paris. Sameh's first short film 'Fifteen' premiered at Toronto International Film Festival 2017 and won several awards around the world. His last short film 'I am Afraid to Forget Your Face', is the first Egyptian film in 50 years to be selected for the Official Short Film Competition at Cannes Film Festival 2020.

Important Police Sh!t

USA / English / 2019

12 mins / Colour

MENA Premiere



An immersive and genuinely raw experience, 'Important Police Sh!t' explores the critical issues of gender discrimination and abuse of power that can sadly sometimes occur in male-dominated sectors. The dialogue-light story follows a group of police cadets are mercilessly hazed, gassed and tasered as they suffer through the worst day of their training, their "hardship day".

Director / Screenwriter / Editor: **Andrew T. Betzer**

Producer: **Lynda Meier, Daniel Cowen,**

Andrew T. Betzer

Cast: **Eleanore Pienta, Armando Horsey, Scott**

Swope, Derrick Ward

Cinematographer: **Daniel Cowen**

Distribution: **Andrew T. Betzer (Some**

Came Running LLC)

Andrew T. Betzer is an independent filmmaker based in New York. A graduate of the University of Maryland (UMBC) film program, his films have played in numerous festivals including Cannes, London Film Festival, Rotterdam, AFI, Tribeca, SXSW, Slamdance and The New York Film Festival. In 2008, his short film 'Small Apartment' won the Grand Jury Award for Best Narrative Short Film at SXSW. His short 'John Wayne Hated Horses' was an official selection of the 2009 Cannes Directors' Fortnight and was followed by his first feature film in 2016, 'Young Bodies Heal Quickly'.

J'ai Le Cafard

Doha Film Institute Supported Film

Kuwait, Egypt, Sudan, Qatar / Arabic / 2020

14 mins / Colour

Home Premiere



A woman unable to make sense of her downhearted mood struggles to keep up appearances in front of her chirpy and driven office colleagues. When an encounter with a dying cockroach in a restroom at work develops into an absurd friendship, it becomes both the companion she needs and the source of her angst.

Director / Screenwriter: **Maysaa Almumin**

Producer: **Eiman Mirghani**

Cinematographer: **Mostafa Sheshtawy**

Editor: **Sara Abdullah**

Sound Design: **Emeline Aldeguer**

Music: **Severin Favriau**

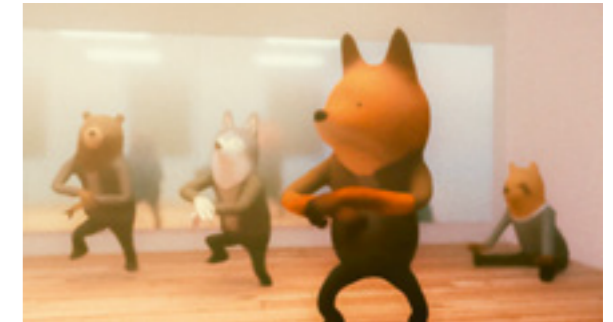
Born in Kuwait, **Maysaa Almumin** is currently working as an assistant professor of design in Qatar. She grew up in London where she trained and practised in architecture before moving to Kuwait and then Qatar to begin acting, scriptwriting and eventually filmmaking. She has trained with directors, filmmakers, and academics such as Scandar Copti and Daniel Suissa and has been involved in film projects in Kuwait, Italy, Egypt and Qatar. Maysaa was granted by AFAC and Doha Film Institute to make her first short film 'J'ai Le Cafard'.

Mascot

South Korea / Korean / 2019

7 mins / Colour

Qatar Premiere



A fox dreams of one day becoming a city mascot and studies hard at the prestigious mascot training academy. In his non-stop daily grind, he takes on odd jobs to make ends meet, practices until the early hours of the morning, and even undergoes plastic surgery to appear more youthful and cuter. But is the dream of stardom worth the gruelling sacrifice? 'Mascot' tells of the youths' disillusionment in the "Korean dream" and the frustrations of the seemingly impossible-to-breakthrough and overly-superficial entertainment industry.

Director / Editor: **Kim Leeha**

Producer: **Kwak Kihyuk**

Music: **Shin Seungmin**

Distribution: **Korean Independent Animation**

Filmmakers Association

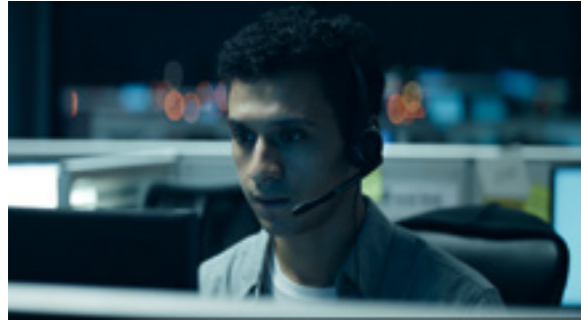
Kim Leeha was born in Daegu, South Korea in 1980. He graduated from the Department of Visual & Image Design, Hansung University in 2008 and went on to achieve his master's from the Department of Animation at the Korea National University of Arts in 2017. He is currently producing short animations at Studio Leeha.

Nightshift

Egypt / Arabic / 2020

14 mins / Colour

MENA Premiere



Zein seems content with his job as a customer service representative for an internet service provider. During one of his shifts, he receives a call from an audibly disgruntled customer, Akram. Complaining about a continuous malfunction, Akram's frustration starts growing. His dissatisfaction with the process gradually becomes an abusive rant, during which he lashes out at Zein, taking aim at the supposed drudgery of his work, his powerlessness, and the hopelessness of his life.

Director: **Karim Shaaban**

Screenwriter: **Wael Hamdy**

Cast: **Essam Omar, Ahmed Kamal, Marwa Anwar**

Cinematographer: **Fawzi Darwish**

Editor: **Karim Shaaban**

Music: **Khaled El Kammar**

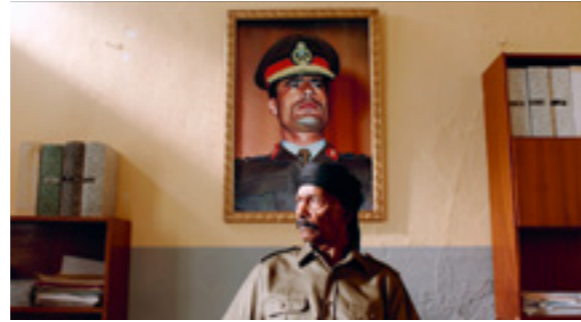
Karim Shabaan is a director, filmmaker and storyteller from Cairo, Egypt. He has worked across the full spectrum of creative film endeavours, from experimental short films and music videos to advertising, documentaries and feature films. His first feature film, 'Fi Youm' (In a Day), was awarded a Special Mention at the 37th Cairo International Film Festival, and his first short 'What's Going On?!' was screened at multiple local film festivals.

Prisoner and Jailer

Libya, Qatar / Arabic / 2019

15 mins / Colour

Gulf Premiere



The story of two contrasting Libyans—one a key official in the former regime, the other one of the most prominent figures of the post-revolutionary period in Libya. Through these two characters, we discover the circumstances surrounding one of the most influential events in modern Libyan history: The Abu Salim Prison Massacre. Many of the events and dialogue that feature in the film were taken directly from testimonies of former prisoners and wardens.

Director / Screenwriter / Editor: **Muhannad Lamin**

Producer: **Muhannad Lamin, Yasmine Dhoukar**

Cast: **Ali Elshol, Eisa Abdolhafeez, Hamza Souii**

Cinematographer: **Ikbal Arafa**

Music: **Seifalah Kechrid**

Distribution: **Sudu Connection**

Muhannad Lamin is a Libyan filmmaker who graduated from Tripoli's art institute with a directing and screenwriting degree. He has been involved in producing several public-awareness campaign projects for such clients as the Electoral High Authority, the Ministry of Justice, the Warriors Affairs Commission, BBC Media Action, and other organizations. In addition to his involvement in several documentary projects, Lamin directed several shorts that have been screened at various international festivals. Muhannad is currently co-founding "Khayal" a Libyan production company working on the development of Libyan cinema.

The Visit

Iran / Farsi / 2019

14 mins / Colour

MENA Premiere



After six agonizing months apart, Elahe is finally allowed to visit her political prisoner husband. She and her little daughter, Tara, have just one day to prepare for this precious meeting. Which the pair lovingly spend getting a photograph taken as a keepsake for their indentured husband and father. But things soon take a dispiriting turn in this sensitive and deeply personal short about prisoners' rights and the effect incarceration can have on families and young children.

Director / Screenwriter/ Producer: **Azadeh Moussavi**

Cast: **Mahin Sadri, Maneli Nafar, Lili Farhadpour**

Cinematographer: **Mohammad Hadahi**

Editor: **Hamid Najafi-rad**

Distribution: **Lights On**

Azadeh Moussavi is an Iranian independent director and producer. She graduated in 2009 and soon after she directed the documentary 'From Iran, A Separation' (2013) which won many prizes and appeared on well-known TV channels such as Cine+ (France) and Channel 4 (UK). Her latest documentary 'Finding Farideh' (2018) won many prizes in the international film festivals and was selected to be Iran's official contender at the Oscars. In 2019 she directed the short film 'The Visit', which is based on her own childhood memories.

Watchmaker at Time's End

India / Malayalam / 2020

5 mins / Colour

MENA Premiere



Time is uncomfortably relative in our hero's world as he struggles to make the perfect watch to keep up with the times. A labour of love, this animated science fiction is set in the director's hometown of Kerala. Impressively made using only open-source software; this temporal adventure is testament to what can be created at no cost with a bit of talent and well—time.

Director: **Shaheen Sheriff**

Producer: **Abida Mohamed Sherief**

Cast: **Vishnu Chandran, Kiran Ravindran, Sunakshi Puri, Shaheen Sheriff**

Shaheen Sheriff animates and illustrates for a living and fun. He likes to experiment with mixed media, including traditional techniques, digital animation, projection mapping, etc. Shaheen made this short film 'Watchmaker at Time's End' utilizing only open source tools and enjoys creating animations set in Indian contexts.

Why Slugs Have No Legs

Switzerland / No Dialogue / 2019

11 mins / Colour

MENA Premiere



A cohort of fun-loving slugs have a hard time keeping up with the pace of life in the city of insects. Shirking their office duties for more enjoyable pursuits such as taking care of a flowerpot, they prefer to live life at their own leisurely pace. But when a financial crisis hits, the industrious bees only see one solution. Absurd animated imagery and a catchy soundtrack converge in this charming modern parable.

Director / Screenwriter: **Aline Höchli**

Producer: **Marcel Derek Ramsay, Michèle Wannaz**

Editor: **Marcel Derek Ramsay**

Composer: **Thomas Schranz, Samuel Schranz**

Music: **Gurpreet Kaur**

Distribution: **Square Eyes**

Aline Höchli decided at the age of four that she would spend her time telling stories later on in life. She learned the craft of animated storytelling at the Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts, finishing in mid-2015.

Woman of Steel

Doha Film Institute Supported Film

'Okht Rjal' / Jordan, Qatar / Arabic / 2020

16 mins / Colour

World Premiere



An earnest and empathetic portrait of a matriarch who works tirelessly for her family. Um Mohamed is a proud mother and a wife. Due to her husband's post-polio disability, he is incapable of working. As a result, Um Mohamed roams the streets of Irbid, collecting scrap metal and recyclables to sell in the male-dominant industrial area. Though she provides for her family and has undoubtedly earned the title of "breadwinner", she lacks the recognition and power often afforded to a man in her situation.

Director: **Obada Yousef Jarbi**

Editor: **Amit Chowdhury**

Sound Design: **Severin Favriau, Falah Hannoun**

Obada Yousef Jarbi is a Jordanian resident of Qatar who holds a bachelor's degree in Mass Communication and Broadcast Journalism from Qatar University. He made his directorial debut with the documentary 'Addicted to Alienation' (2016). His second short film 'The Fishermen' (2017), created through Doha Film Institute's documentary workshop, screened in several international film festivals. In 2016 he started developing his documentary 'Okht Rjal', going through the development process at Qumra 2018 and beginning filming in 2019 as a part of DFI's documentary workshop with 'Rithy Panh'.

AJYAL SPOTLIGHT

The Ajyal Film Festival is delighted to present global personalities in film, arts, and humanities as our special guests for this year's 'Ajyal Spotlight'. Our jurors will have the opportunity to engage with these esteemed individuals through a series of inspiring and interactive discussions on the Ajyal digital platform.



Her Excellency Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani

Chairperson of Qatar Museums

Her Excellency Sheikha Al Mayassa Bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani is engaged in the fields of formal and informal education. She is Chairperson of Qatar Museums, Doha Film Institute and Qatar Leadership. In having the privilege to serve her country in multiple fields – among them culture, leadership, philanthropy and education – she has been able to facilitate

conversations across borders and fields. As a public servant, her objective is to invest in Qatar's local community, and celebrate Qatar's diversity using the visual arts as a vehicle for communication.

Her current interests are in human development, cultural regionalism and economic growth, using culture as a catalyst for education, dialogue and exchange. Through her public work and support of Qatar Vision 2030, she is building an exciting creative future for Qatar that will connect artistic communities in all areas of culture.



Zach Woods

Zach Woods currently stars in Armando Iannucci's follow-up HBO series to 'Veep', 'Avenue 5'. Zach recently finished a six-season run on the HBO hit comedy 'Silicon Valley' as Jared Dunn. In film, Zach was most recently seen in the Searchlight feature 'Downhill' alongside Will Ferrell and Julie Louis-Dreyfus. He has also appeared in Steven Spielberg's 'The Post', 'Other People', 'In The Loop', 'Damsels In Distress', 'Spy', and 'The Heat'.

He began his career at the Upright Citizens Brigade Theater where he still performs. His first role on television was as Gabe Lewis on NBC's 'The Office'. Zach has also appeared on 'Veep', 'The League', 'Playing House', and 'The Good Wife'. This June, Zach made his directorial debut with his short film 'David', which he co-wrote, starring Will Ferrell, William Jackson Harper and Fred Hechinger. It was the sole official short film selection from the U.S. to compete in this year's Cannes Film Festival.



Kunal Kapoor

In addition to being a trained pilot, a rally car driver, a writer, and an entrepreneur, Bollywood actor Kunal Kapoor is a tech geek at heart and an innovative change-maker who uses cinema as a tool for positive social development. Kunal co-founded Asia's largest crowdfunding platform Ketto.org in 2012 to raise money for social and individual causes. To date, the platform has raised close to 120 million dollars.

A Special Jury Award winner at the Toronto International South Asian Film Awards for his role in Malayalam film 'Veeram', Kapoor began his career as an assistant director on 'Aks' starring Amitabh Bachchan, and made his acting debut in renowned artist MF Hussain's 'Meenaxi: A Tale of Three Cities'. He was nominated for the Filmfare Best Supporting Actor Award for his performance in 'Rang De Basanti', which received a Best Foreign Film nod at the 2007 BAFTA Awards. Kunal co-wrote and starred in 'Luv Shuv Tey Chicken Khurana', which was hailed by critics as one of the ten best films of the year, and is famous for his performances in successful films such as 'Aaja Nachle', 'Lamha', 'Don 2' and 'Bachna Ae Haseeno' among others.



Goran Bogdan

Goran Bogdan is an acclaimed Croatian actor with over 40 film appearances to his credit including roles in Kristijan Milić's 'Number 55' (2014), Vlatka Vorkapić's 'Sonja and the Bull' (2012) and Ivona Juka's 'Croatian Story'—part of the omnibus film 'Some Other Stories' (2010). He plays the leading role in 'Father' (2020), which won the Panorama Audience Award at the Berlin International Film Festival 2020, and features as part of the Bader jury programme at this year's Ajyal Film Festival.

Bogdan has also appeared in many television series, most notably 'The Last Panthers' (2015), 'Guardian of the Castle' (2017-), and the third season of the critically-lauded ' Fargo '. Bogdan studied at the Academy of Dramatic Arts in Zagreb, where he received his master's degree. He has been a permanent member of the Zagreb Youth Theatre company since 2010, appearing in a number of plays staged internationally by prominent theatre directors.



Claudio Gubitosi

Claudio Gubitosi was born in Giffoni Valle Piana, near Salerno. A cinema devotee from a young age, he founded the International Children and Youth Film Festival of Giffoni Valle Piana in 1971. One of the most highly acclaimed events in the cinematographic and cultural world the event would later become the Giffoni Film Festival, the Giffoni Experience and now, in its 50th year, simply Giffoni.

Gubitosi has received numerous awards from both public and private organisations for his work, including the AGIS Golden Cross, the Timone d'Oro for tourism, the Follaro d'Oro and acknowledgements from prestigious social, cultural and economic organisations at both a national and international level. He currently lectures on cinema for children and on the organisation of events in numerous Italian and foreign universities such as the Bocconi in Milan, the Federico II in Naples, the IED in Turin, the University of Salerno and also in Tirana, Warsaw, Jerevan.

Launching the Giffoni World Alliance, Gubitosi exported the GFF formula to other nations, partnering with the Doha Film Institute for many years. His most recent initiatives include Creative-House, the Giffoni Village, Giffoni Opportunity, and the Giffoni Multimedia Valley, which is the largest facility for production, training, and innovation in Southern Italy.



Saara Chaudry

Saara Chaudry is an award-winning Canadian actor, dancer and singer that began her career in television. Moving to theatre, she won a 2014 Broadway World Award for best female performer in a featured role and was nominated for a Young Artists Award for best theatre performance.

After her theatre run, Saara returned to television where she currently plays Amy on Emmy nominated 'Holly Hobbie' and Saara in Emmy and Canadian Screen Award winner, 'Dino Dana', as well as 'Dino Dana, the Movie' (2020) which features at this year's Ajyal. Saara was also the voice of Parvana in the Oscar, Golden Globe and Canadian Screen Award-nominated feature film, 'The Breadwinner'—which was the opening night screening at the 2017 Ajyal Film Festival.

An aspiring writer and producer, Saara co-wrote an episode of Dino Dana with Emmy winner, J.J. Johnson, and is currently in development on a feature film. Outside of film and media, Saara is an award-winning international debater, and a vociferous advocate for gender and racial equality as well as girls' education. Saara was recently appointed and currently serves as a youth advocate with UNICEF Canada.

SPECIAL SCREENINGS

Made in Qatar: An Inclusive Experience

Working in partnership with the Translation and Interpreting Institute of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences at Hamad Bin Khalifa University, we are excited to bring our popular inclusive experience to an online audience this year.

Visually impaired audiences will be able to view the film through sound alone, with audio description of those visual elements that cannot be understood through voice, music or sound effects. While our viewers who are deaf, hard-of-hearing or have difficulty understanding speech will benefit from enriched subtitles in Arabic and English, as well as sign-language interpretation.

By adapting the film to the needs of audiences with different abilities, we hope to make cinema universally accessible. This year's inclusive screening features a compelling programme of shorts made right here in Qatar with the support of Doha Film Institute.

Beit Byoot

Doha Film Institute Supported Film

Jordan, Qatar / Arabic / 2019

7 mins / Colour



Set in a dystopian dollhouse, Jameela, a friendly little girl wants nothing more than to fit in with the other girls in the house. But as she doesn't look like all of the carbon-copied girls that play there, she is cavalierly rejected by them. That's when she meets odd Yasmine and ultimately, must choose between true friendship and being an outcast or fake friendships and fitting in.

Director / Screenwriter: **Mayar Hamdan**
Producer: **Ghouna Jaber**
Cinematographer: **Shadi Chaaban**
Editor: **Maryam Al Sahli, Amit Chowdhury**
Sound Design: **Falah Hannoun**

Mayar Hamdan is a multimedia storyteller, filmmaker and visual artist. She graduated from Northwestern University. During her studies, Mayar was awarded two Studio20Q grants for 'Asfoora' (2015) and 'Man Down' (2015). 'Asfoora' has screened and found success at various film festivals, museums, schools and themed screenings. Hamdan is currently getting an MFA at CalArts, focusing on art, film and new technologies. Her independent work can be defined as the interdisciplinary exploration of Arab feminist themes, expressed under the canopy of an intense fascination by colour theory, such is reflected in her photography, digital art, films and installation pieces.

The Black Veil

Doha Film Institute Supported Film

Qatar / Arabic / 2018

17 mins / Colour



Unfortunately, many women around the world are currently suffering under oppression and desperately dream of escaping it. 'The Black Veil' is the story of one such woman who puts her very life at risk to find her freedom. Helped by a reluctant but willing taxi driver, she escapes the clutches of her domineering household. However, her journey of emancipation is fraught with danger, and the potential of recapture lurks around every corner.

Director / Screenwriter: **A.J. Al-Thani**

Producer: **Vibhav Gautam**

A.J. Al-Thani is a Qatar-born filmmaker. She began to pursue her dream of being a filmmaker with the launch of the Doha Film Institute. Her relationship with the Institute began in 2010 when she participated in one of its first film workshops, which opened the door for many local filmmakers to pursue their passion. For seven years she has been developing her skills with the help of the Institute. 'Kashta' was made through a grant from the Doha Film Institute and went on to win best short narrative film at the Ajyal Film Festival in 2016.

Elevate

Doha Film Institute Supported Film

Qatar / Arabic, English, Tagalog / 2017

14 mins / Colour



After a hard day's shopping, Latifa, a rude and vain woman and her long-suffering maid Rosie get trapped in an elevator. Already haughty and dismissive, Latifa becomes downright nasty in her treatment of Rosie, even going so far as to blame her for the mechanical failure. This brings emotions to a head, and Latifa goes on a journey in her mind, in which she confronts her own egotistical nature and rediscovers the lessons of humility and respect she learned as a child.

Director / Screenwriter: **Hamida Issa**

Producer: **Basel Owies**

Cast: **Dalal Ahmad, Kristine Lory Santos Ombajen, Ashiq Khan, Um Rashid**

Cinematographer: **Chris Moon**

Editor: **Youssef Al Madadi**

Hamida Issa is a Qatari filmmaker, writer and producer. She graduated with a BA in Politics from University College London and a MA in Global Cinemas and the Transcultural from SOAS, specialising in the Middle East. Hamida worked for the education team at Doha Film Institute at its inception and made her first short film '15 Heartbeats' which premiered at the Doha Tribeca Film Festival in 2011. She is the first Qatari woman in history to step foot on Antarctica in 2014, and is making her first feature documentary, 'To The Ends of the Earth' about environmental sustainability and her experience.

Ya Hoota

Doha Film Institute Supported Film

Qatar / Arabic / 2019

11 mins / Colour

MENA Premiere



A curious little girl is determined to save the moon from a lunar eclipse. She sets off on a search for mythological characters from her grandmother's stories, hoping they can help her reach the moon. Her cousin comes along for the journey, but he is more than a little sceptical about the existence of such creatures. That is until the pair run into the Afternoon Donkey! A delightfully charming adventure about the power of storytelling and how it can inspire young minds to explore the world around them.

Director / Screenwriter: **Abdulaziz Yousif,**

Latifa Al-Darwish

Producer: **Ben Robinson**

Abdulaziz Yousif (aka "crocodile") is a social and political cartoonist. He was awarded the bronze Promax Award, along with his graphic design team, for their work on the advertising campaign of the "Jeem Cup" football tournament. He curated and co-curated the 'leBlockade' and '[Re]action' exhibits in collaboration with Doha Film Institute.

Latifa Al-Darwish is an award-winning filmmaker and storyteller. Her work ranges between documentaries and cartoons. She is interested in telling untold stories and draws inspiration from her city of Al Wakra and her grandmothers' stories. She obtained her BSc in Communication from Northwestern University in Qatar, and her MA from King's College London in culture and creative industries.

Director / Screenwriter:

Farnoosh Samadi

Producer: **Ali Mosaffa**

Cast: **Sahar Dolatshahi,**

Pejman Jamshidi

Cinematographer: **Masoud Salami**

Editor: **Meisam Molaei**

Music: **Peyman Yazdanian**

Distribution: **Pluto Film**

Distribution Network GmbH



Farnoosh Samadi

is an Iranian director and scriptwriter who graduated from the Fine

Art Academy of Rome, Italy. Her scripts include 'More Than Two Hours', nominated for a Palme d'Or at Cannes and a Grand Jury Prize at Sundance Film Festival (2013), and 'The Baby', premiered in Venice Film Festival (2014). Her short film, 'Gaze', which had its world premiere in competition of Locarno Film Festival (2017) and qualified for an Oscar. She later became a member of the Academy in 2018. She has served on the jury of several prominent film festivals and 'The 180° Rule' is her first feature film.

The 180° Rule

Iran / Farsi / 2020

83 mins / Colour

MENA Premiere



Sara, a schoolteacher from Tehran, is preparing for a wedding in northern Iran with her daughter and husband, Hamed. But when an unforeseen emergency at work arises, Hamad suddenly forbids the rest of his family from attending without him. When reasoning and a charm offensive do not work, the determined Sara hatches an insidious plan that would allow her and her daughter to go in secret. But an unexpected event at the wedding causes Sara's minor act of petty rebellion to snowball into something much more severe.

Inspired by real events and signalling the first film in an upcoming trilogy about secrets and lies, Farnoosh Samadi's feature directorial debut is a fascinatingly layered story. One of tragedy, injustices, conjecture, and pivotal choices that all lead Sara ultimately on a painful path to atonement. The 180-degree rule is a common filmmaking guideline for spatial relations between two characters on screen. Very fitting for a tale of complex ethical dilemmas which can always be perceived differently depending on your point of view.

I Am Greta

Sweden / English, Swedish / 2020

97 mins / Colour

Gulf Premiere



In 2018, Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg held a school strike outside her country's Parliament building in Stockholm. At first, she sat alone, handing out information and answering questions. Slowly, others began to join her, and within months she had sparked a worldwide movement. Directed by Nathan Grossman, 'I Am Greta' offers a personal and inspiring glimpse inside Greta's path to becoming an internationally known environmental activist. Shot in the style of cinema vérité and with support from the Thunberg family, cameras capture Greta's meetings with government leaders, headline-making public appearances, and global protests.

The film also depicts Greta's life outside of the news channels worldwide: laughing at home with her family, writing impassioned speeches, and trying to handle the mounting stress of nonstop travel, public scrutiny and becoming the face of the climate change cause. The story culminates with Greta's arduous two-week journey by sailboat to the UN Climate Action Summit in New York City. Today, her #FridaysForFuture movement has organised climate strikes on every continent except Antarctica. As she tells the UN, "The world is waking up, and change is coming whether you like it or not".

Director: **Nathan Grossman**

Producer: **Cecilia**

Nessen, Fredrik Heinig

With: **Greta Thunberg**

Cinematographer:

Nathan Grossman

Editor: **Hanna Lejonqvist,**

Charlotte Landelius

Music: **Jon Ekstrand,**

Rebekka Karijord

Distribution: **Dogwoof**



Nathan Grossman

is a Swedish documentary filmmaker and photographer whose work

often explores environmental issues. A graduate of the Stockholm Academy of Dramatic Arts, Grossman began his career as a photographer for Rolling Stone India before shifting his focus to film. Grossman gained global attention for his 2015 short film 'The Toaster Challenge', which received over 15 million views. In 2017, he completed 'Köttets Lustar', his first full-length TV series for public broadcaster SVT about the growing meat consumption in Sweden. The series was also nominated for a Kristallen television award for best factual programme of the year.

Winner of the CCU – CROUS Student Award for First Work at the Montpellier Mediterranean Film Festival, 2020.

Director / Cinematographer / Sound Design: **Lina Soualem**
Producer: **Marie Balducci**
Editor: **Gladys Joujou**
Distribution: **Sweet Spot Docs**



Lina Soualem is a French-Palestinian-Algerian filmmaker and actress, born and based

in Paris. After studying History and Political Science at La Sorbonne University, Lina worked as a journalist and as a programmer in film festivals such as the International Human Rights Film Festival in Buenos Aires, Argentina. She currently works on film and documentary projects as an author and director. Lina acted in three feature films directed by Hafsia Herzi, Hiam Abbass and Rayhana.

Their Algeria

Doha Film Institute Supported Film

'Leur Algérie' / Algeria, France, Switzerland, Qatar / Arabic, French / 2020

72 mins / Colour

Middle East Premiere



After 62 years of living together, Lina's grandparents, Aïcha and Mabrouk, have decided to separate. They have moved out of their shared apartment and opted to live in two buildings facing each other instead. The enduring couple came together from Algeria to Thiers, a small medieval town in the middle of France, more than six decades ago. Side by side, they have experienced this chaotic immigrant life. For Lina, their separation is an opportunity to question their long journey of exile and their silence.

Aïcha and Mabrouk got married in 1952, in the village of Laouamer in Algeria, without knowing each other. Their story is like many Algerian families of the time, uprooted from their home with a promise of a better one across the sea, one which they never truly succeeded in making. Through this intimate portrait of the filmmakers own grandparents, 'Their Algeria' shines a light on the infinite and often closely guarded secrets of an entire generation, allowing us to share in both the laughter of shared moments and the tears of dissolution.

SHORTS PROGRAMME

Co-curated with Clermont-Ferrand ISFF

Mémorable

France / French / 2019

12 mins / Colour

Qatar Premiere



Inspired by the experiences of the artist William Utermohlen who passed away in 2007, Louis, a painter, and his wife Michelle begin to experience strange events. At first, her husband seems merely forgetful, but as the film progresses, his dementia becomes more and more apparent. Objects melt and shapeshift in his hand, and other characters appear strange and monstrous. Oscar-nominated 'Mémorable' breathtakingly mixes animated puppets and computer-generated 3D special effects to create a profoundly moving exploration of the ageing process and relationships.

Director / Screenwriter / Cinematographer: **Bruno Collet**

Producer: **Mathieu Courtois, Jean-François Le Corre**

Cast: **Dominique Reymond, André Wilms**

Editor: **Jean-Marie Le Rest**

Music: **Nicolas Martin**

Distribution: **Vivement Lundi**

Bruno Collet was born in Saint-Brieuc, France in 1965. He obtained his degree in art from the school of Fine Arts in Rennes in 1990. From 1993, he worked as a set designer on numerous stop-motion productions before starting his career as an author-director in 2001.

Nefta Football Club

France / Arabic, French / 2018

17 mins / Colour

Qatar Premiere



Nominated for the 2020 Academy Award for Best Live Action Short Film, 'Nefta Football Club' is the brilliantly comedic tale of two Tunisian brothers who bump into a donkey lost in the middle of the desert on the border of Algeria. Discovering a mysterious white substance in the mule's bags, the pair bring the packages back to their home. The older brother plans to sell the powder, while the younger brother has a far more judicious use for it in mind...

Director: **Yves Piat**

Producer: **Damien Megherbi, Justin Pechberty**

Cast: **Mohamed Ali Ayari, Lyes Salem, Hichem**

Mesbah, Eltayef Dhaoui

Editor: **Jérôme Bréau**

Music: **Jérôme Rossi**

Distribution: **Les Valseurs**

A fascination for cinematography and its meaning gives **Yves Piat** his natural gift of storytelling, and he has assisted the director Joël Tasset in his work. Yves discovered the world of cinema through his technician work as a decorator and studio manager on set for the production 'Fouillet Wieber'. His short film 'Tempus Fugit' was interpreted by Maurice Garrel and produced by Lazennec Tout Court. 'Nefta Football Club' is his first film in collaboration with Les Valseurs.

Pile Poil

France / French / 2018

21 mins / Colour

Qatar Premiere



In just three days, Élodie will take the hair removal test as part of her eagerly awaited beautician diploma. Her father would prefer she spent more time helping him in the family butcher shop, but Élodie has other things on her mind—she must find a willing model for the exam! A comical story about parental support in even the “hairiest” of situations, brushed with the bittersweet feelings that come with the end of adolescence and children leaving the nest. ‘Pile Poil’ won this year’s César Award for Best Short Film.

Director / Screenwriter: **Lauriane Escaffre, Yvonnick Muller**

Producer: **Emmanuel Wah, Adrien Bretet**

Cast: **Madeleine Baudot, Gregory Gadebois**

Cinematographer: **Noémie Gillot**

Distribution: **Manifest Pictures**

Comedians, **Lauriane Escaffre** and **Yvonnick Muller**, have worked with numerous directors including Pierre Jolivet, Cyprien Vial, Tonie Marshall, Philippe Le Guay, Abdellatif Kechiche, Isabelle Brocard, and Mads Mathiesen. In 2011, the duo formed the Happy Collective, which brings together writers, directors, and actors. They have co-written and directed the three short films, ‘Alpe d’Huez’, ‘Raintance’, and ‘Meudon’ which have been shown on TV in France and abroad. They are currently working on two feature film projects.

To Hell With Codes

‘Mort aux codes’ / France / French / 2018

14 mins / Colour

Qatar Premiere



A panicked wife calls for an ambulance as her husband has just suffered a heart attack. The paramedics rush to the scene but struggle to reach the man in time as the building’s high-security means that numerous locked gates and doors stand in their way. Based on actual events, the film poses the question that while we may fear outsiders and build walls around ourselves for protection—these “strangers” can more often than not be our saving grace.

Director: **Léopold Legrand**

Producer: **Charlotte Reichenbach**

Cast: **Olivier Rabourdin, Slimane Dazi, Marouan**

Iddoub, Michèle Goddet

Cinematographer: **Julien Ramirez Hernan**

Editor: **Agathe Zimmer**

Distribution: **Epithète Films**

Léopold Legrand is a 24-year-old French student. His studies began when he completed two years of preparatory literary classes in Paris. He then moved to the United States where he entered the Tisch School of the Arts at New York University, where he studied editing, writing and directing for a year. Back in Europe, Legrand joined INSAS in Brussels, and directed his graduation film, ‘Angelika’.

Traces

France, Belgium / No Dialogue / 2019

13 mins / Colour

Qatar Premiere



Thirty-six thousand years ago, in the Ardèche river gorge, if an animal was painted—it was hunted. When it is again time to go hunting, Gwel is appointed head of the group while Karou, the animal tracer, and his apprentice Lani set off to paint the walls of the great cavern. But they had not counted on meeting a ferocious cave lion during their ritual in this homage to prehistoric art, beautifully illustrated using animated paintings and sand.

Director / Screenwriter / Editor: **Hugo Frassetto,**

Sophie Tavert Macian

Producer: **Arnaud Demuynck**

Cast: **Claudio Dos Santos, Emilie Charbonnier**

Editor: **Christian Cuilleron, Cyril Besse, Hugo Frassetto,**

Sophie Tavert Macian

Distribution: **L’Agence du court métrage**

Sophie Tavert holds a degree in film production and made eight experimental films during her studies. In 2009, she wrote and directed ‘Un Amour’, which was selected for Clermont-Ferrand and Uppsala, followed by ‘MAD’ in 2016, which won the Grand Prix at the Kinoma festival, and the special jury prize at the Alès Film Festival.

After graduating from the Clermont-Ferrand school of Fine-Art, **Hugo Frassetto** continued his studies at the La Poudriere animated film school in Bourg-les-Valence. Since 2009, he has worked as an animator on several films including ‘Sous un coin de Ciel bleu’, and ‘Vasco’, as well as the TV series ‘Bingo Bongo’ and ‘Miru Miru’.

AJYAL DRIVE-IN CINEMA

In partnership with
Qatar National Tourism Council

Bambi

USA / English / 1942 / 70 mins



In this enduring, endearing, and moving Disney classic, a fawn named Bambi joins his new friends—a young rabbit named Thumper and Flower the skunk in happily exploring the woods. Bambi is captivated with a young doe named Faline, and he learns from his doting mother and his father—the Great Prince of the Forest—that besides the delights of the forest, there is danger in open meadows where hunters can see them. Though fear and tragedy touch Bambi's life, another spring brings renewal.

Director: **David Hand, James Algar, Samuel Armstrong**

The Blair Witch Project

USA / English / 1999 / 82 mins



'The Blair Witch Project' follows a trio of filmmakers on what should have been a simple walk in the woods but quickly becomes an excursion into heart-stopping terror. As the three become inexplicably lost, morale deteriorates. Hunger sets in. Accusations fly. As the end of their journey approaches, they realize that what they are filming now is not a legend—but their own descent into unimaginable horror.

Director: **Daniel Myrick, Eduardo Sánchez**

Chicken Run

UK, USA, France / English / 2000 / 84 mins



The award-winning DreamWorks claymation tells the story of a band of chickens doomed to a life of egg-laying on a Yorkshire chicken farm. When a flamboyant American rooster arrives on the scene, the hens hope he can teach them all to fly to freedom. However, when a chicken-pie making machine is installed, their need for liberation becomes even more urgent, and they must devise other means of escape. The award-winning DreamWorks claymation tells the story of a band of chickens doomed to a life of egg-laying on a Yorkshire chicken farm. When a flamboyant American rooster arrives on the scene, the hens hope he can teach them all to fly to freedom. However, when a chicken-pie making machine is installed, their need for liberation becomes even more urgent, and they must devise other means of escape.

Director: **Peter Lord, Nick Park**

The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe

UK, USA / English / 2005 / 140 mins



During the World War II bombings of London, four English children are sent to a country house where they will be safe. One day Lucy finds a wardrobe that transports her and her siblings to an enchanted world called Narnia. There they join the magical lion, Aslan (Liam Neeson), in the fight against the evil white witch, Jadis (Tilda Swinton). With first-rate special effects and compelling storytelling, this adaptation stays faithful to its source material and will please moviegoers of all ages.

Director: **Andrew Adamson**

Cinderella

USA / English / 1950 / 74 mins



With a wicked stepmother and two jealous stepsisters who keep her imprisoned and in rags, Cinderella stands no chance of attending the royal ball. When her fairy godmother appears and magically transforms her reality into a dream come true, Cinderella enchants the handsome Prince Charming, but must face the wrath of her enraged stepmother and sisters when the spell wears off at midnight. The rich colours, sweet songs, adorable mice and lovable heroine make Cinderella a nostalgically abiding family-favourite.

Director: **Clyde Geronimi, Wilfred Jackson, Hamilton Luske**

Frankenstein

USA / English / 1931 / 70 mins



Still unnerving to this day, Frankenstein explores the fine line between genius and madness. The iconic horror film follows the obsessed scientist, Dr Henry Frankenstein, as he attempts to create life by assembling a creature from body parts of the deceased. Aided by his loyal misshapen assistant, Fritz, Frankenstein succeeds in animating his monster, but, confused and traumatized, it escapes into the countryside and begins to wreak havoc. Frankenstein searches for the elusive being and eventually must confront his tormented creation.

Director: **James Whale**

Lupin III The First

Japan / Japanese / 2020 / 93 mins

MENA Premiere



The legendary Lupin III returns in an action-packed, continent-spanning adventure. The “gentleman thief” and his colourful underworld companions race to uncover the secrets of the mysterious Bresson Diary, before it falls into the hands of a dark cabal that will stop at nothing to resurrect the Third Reich. The gang tackles trap-filled tombs, and daring prison escapes with the trademark wit and visual finesse that have made this one of the most storied animation franchises in the world, in a thrilling caper that is sure to delight fans old and new.

Director: **Takashi Yamazaki**

AJYAL CREATIVITY HUB

Geekdom



Geekdom enters the virtual world this year with a host of fantastic events taking place online. Our controller-crunching video game tournaments return, along with an online version of our fan-favourite cosplay competition. We also have two exclusive anime screenings taking place, one at VOX Cinemas, Doha Festival City and the other at our Ajyal Drive-in Cinema in Lusail.

Outbreak



An Exhibition by Doha Film Institute

This year's thought-provoking multimedia exhibition, featuring the work of 24 local artists, centres around the theme of 'Outbreak'. With "unprecedented" becoming the word of the year, we have seen challenges arise from forest fires to the COVID-19 pandemic, social distancing measures to economic disruption, and the reemergence of social and political tensions across the globe. Through art, we are not only able to record, honour, and make sense of what was lost—but also make room to imagine and give hope for a better future.

Ajjal Tunes



Music has an incredibly transformative ability, the power to change both our physical and emotional wellbeing through sound alone. Join us at our Ajjal Drive-in Cinema for a series of concerts that explores this metamorphic force of melody! Our first explores the duality of music's energy-giving and relaxing properties, while our second focuses more on the emotional side of the art form. We round off the series with a special Geekdom concert that is sure to delight all anime and cartoons fans.

Digimon Adventure: Last Evolution Kizuna

Japan / English / 2020 / 95 mins
Qatar Premiere



The last adventure of Tai and Agumon!
An unprecedented phenomenon occurs, and the DigiDestined discover that growing up means an end to their relationships with their Digimon. On top of that, the DigiDestined realize that the more they fight with their Digimon, the faster their bond breaks. Will they fight for others and risk losing? The time to choose and decide is approaching fast. Tai and Agumon, along with the rest, will be forced to risk everything in their epic last adventure.

Director: **Tomohisa Taguchi**
Screenwriter: **Akatsuki Yamatoya**
Cinematographer: **Tetsuya Kawata**
Editor: **Kentaro Tsubone**
Sound Design: **Satoki Iida, Yuji Furuya**
Music: **Harumi Fuuki, Koji Wada, Ayumi Miyazaki, Aim**
Distribution: **Front Row Filmed Entertainment**

Lupin III The First

Japan / Japanese / 2020 / 93 mins
MENA Premiere

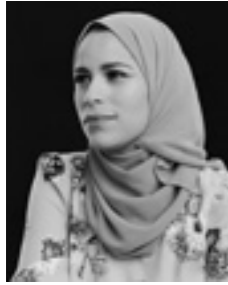


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Director / Screenwriter: **Takashi Yamazaki**
Producer: **Koji Nozaki, Naoaki Kitazima, Takeshi Ito**
Cast: **Kanichi Kurita, Kiyoshi Kobayashi, Daisuke Namikawa, Miyuki Sawashiro, Koichi Yamadera, Suzu Hirose**
Editor: **Tomokazu Takahashi**
Music: **Yuji Ohno**
Distribution: **TMS Entertainment Co., Ltd**

Ajyal Talks

In Conversation with ...



Dr. Alaa Murabit

Join us for a fascinating discussion with international speaker Dr. Alaa Murabit. Celebrated as a Forbes 30 Under 30, one of Canada's 100 most impactful women in history, and a Nobel Peace Prize nominee—Dr. Murabit has spoken at some of the most prestigious events and institutions around the world, including SXSW, Oxford, and TED.

Affectionately nicknamed the “The Libyan Doogie Howser” by Jon Stewart because she attended medical school at 15, Dr. Murabit serves as an advisor to many organizations, including the UN Women Global Advisory Board, and the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR). In 2019, Murabit was selected as one of the Top 20 of the ‘World’s 100 Most Influential People in Gender Policy’ alongside Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Melinda Gates, and Michelle Obama.



Dana Al Fardan

Time-and-again humans have proved their resilience in the face of adversity. Often in moments of struggle, unique voices emerge—artists who use their craft to create compelling work and help pave the way to progress. This inspiring Ajyal Talk highlights world-renowned composer Dana Al Fardan and asks how artists can lean into the trials caused by the recent pandemic and turn them into triumph.

Join us as we delve into Dana's intriguing creative process, with certain topics and important points beautifully illustrated through excerpts of accompanying compositions. In this discussion, we will learn where the artist draws her inspiration from, and what it means to create melodic narratives as a way to tell engaging stories through music.



Sophia Kianni

Sophia Kianni is an 18-year-old environmental activist and founder of Climate Cardinals—an international nonprofit with over 6,000 volunteers in 40+ countries. She represents the United States as the youngest member on the inaugural United Nations Secretary-General's Youth Advisory Group on Climate Change. Sophia's activism has been featured in news outlets including Forbes, CNN, The Guardian, CNBC, and The Washington Post.

She was previously a fellow with PBS NewsHour and has written for MTV News, BuzzFeed, Teen Vogue, Refinery 29, and Cosmopolitan. Sophia has been publicly commended by the Congressional Committee on the Climate Crisis and the United Nations Foundation for her advocacy.

For their individual assistance, Ajyal would like to thank:

4 Stars Films

Charles Debs

Ajyal Tunes

Dana Al Meer
Alaa Alhakawati
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Aljafari Films

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Celluloid Dreams

Pascale Ramonda

CEO's Makeup for Opening Night

Lydia Khybenyk (@lydiahybenik_makeup)

CEO's Opening Night Abaya

Fil Noir Confection (@filnoirconfection)

Darwish Holding

Bader Abdullah Al Darwish
Saoud Abdullah Al Darwish
Ziad Asmar
Pierre Bassil

Dogwoof

Luke Brawley
Jim Cherry
Asha Hurree

The e18hteen by Assets Real

Estate Development
Moutaz Al Khayyat
Ramez Al Khayyat
Marwan Dimas
Aladdin Idilbi

Ego Media

Guntis Trekteris
Ilze Pelnēna

Elan Qatar WLL

Jaber Al Ansari
Jamie Ball
Leyla Israilova

Epithète Films

Charlotte Reichenbach

Fabian&Fred

Fabian Driehorst

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