



24 inspirational short films from 19 countries to stimulate youth expression at 4th Ajyal Youth Film Festival

- *Nine shorts each in Mohaq and Bader segments and Six in Hilal to be evaluated by young Ajyal jurors in competition*

Doha, Qatar; November 20, 2016: This year's line-up of 24 short films in competition at the fourth Ajyal Youth Film Festival presents a rich showcase of inspiring tales from 19 countries, that will help raise awareness on global issues amongst the youth and stimulate their creativity and thought process. From political statements to heartwarming tales of love and loss, the shorts include international film festival award winners, that invariably make an emotional connect with audiences.

The films will be evaluated by the Ajyal Jurors during the six-day festival to be held from November 30 to December 5, 2016, at the Katara Cultural Village. Jurors aged 8 to 12 will watch and discuss films under the Mohaq category with nine short films to be screened. Jurors aged 13 to 17 comprise the Hilal jury, who will watch six short films. The Bader jury comprising young people aged 18 to 21 will watch nine short films.

Each of the three Ajyal Juries will choose the Best Film from their categories, and the directors of the winning films will receive funding support for their next film. This year, four short films that are part of the Ajyal Competition will also vie for the top honours in the Made in Qatar awards open for filmmakers from Qatar or those who call Qatar home.

Fatma Al Remaihi, Festival Director and CEO of Doha Film Institute, said: "We are proud of our selection of films in the Shorts category, one of the most difficult formats. We sourced films from across the world to present our jurors a vivid cross-section of movies that present new perspectives on life and contributes to their development as responsible global citizens. In line with the theme of our festival, we focused on films that inspire our audiences with the lighter as well as profound side of life, and encourages them to contribute to positive social change."

The short films in the Mohaq category include: ***Dana's Kite*** (Qatar / 2016) directed by Noor Al-Nasr about Dana who plays on the beach and tries to get her brother's attention; he is too busy messaging his friends to watch out for her. ***Fish*** (USA / 2015) by Andrew Ruiz is about grief-stricken Armando who isn't very happy that he and his father are emigrating to Mexico.

Directed by Honey B. Singh, ***Heer*** (Canada, India, Singapore / 2015) depicts Heer's inseparable relationship with her dead mother's baby goat, while ***I Don't Even Like Her*** (Lebanon / 2016) by Christelle Al-Kayssar is about eight-year-old Youssef who is in love with his classmate and how he hatches a plan to see her.



I've Just Had a Dream (Spain / 2014), directed by Javi Navarro, depicts two girls with different perspectives on similar dreams, while *Kashta* (Qatar / 2016) by AJ Al Thani is about a father who teaches his sons how to hunt in the quiet desert, where a careless struggle between the two brothers leads to disaster.

The Moustache (Finland / 2015) by Anni Oja narrates the story of two vain men who are impressed with their moustache, while *Riceballs* (Australia / 2016), directed by Shingo Usami, is about Josh who is mourning the loss of his mother with his dad's reliance on Japanese culture not making things any easier. *Tangency* (Jordan / 2015) by Bashi Kasawneh presents the story of young Hikmat, who barely makes ends meet by collecting recyclables from dumpsters.

The films in the Hilal category are equally diverse: *Ari* (Australia / 2015), directed by Alex Murawski, has the eponymous hero different from other kids at school but finds the best way to gain respect for himself. *Gaurav and the Kites* (Germany / 2015) by André Hörmann is about 12-year-old Gaurav, whose life is consumed by designing and making kites.

All except Younes and Kelvin, whose fathers have other plans for them, are marking King's Day holiday in *King's Day* (The Netherlands / 2015) directed by Steven Wouterlood while *More Than Two Days* (Qatar / 2016) by Ahmed Abdelnaser is an enigmatic short about how difficult it can be to speak about emotional and physical trauma.

A gentle documentary that celebrates the bravery of a bone cancer patient Pien, who also is the youngest bee keeper in The Netherlands, is the theme of *Pien, Queen of the Bees* (The Netherlands / 2015) directed by Ellen Vloet. Oualid Mouaness presents a coming-of-age parable against the never-ending circle of vengeance in *The Rifle, the Jackal, the Wolf and the Boy* (Lebanon / 2016).

The nine films in Bader tackle some bold themes with the 2016 Oscar-nominated *Ave Maria* (Palestine, Germany, France / 2015) directed by Basil Khalil, discussing the breaking down of stereotypes in a film about Arab nuns and Israeli settlers in West Bank.

Damaged Goods (Bosnia and Herzegovina / 2015) by Nermin Hamzagić is about Tarik who develops a crush on a woman and feels the pressure of a society that considers showing emotion to be a sign of weakness. *Mariam* (France, Qatar, Saudi Arabia / 2014) by Faiza Ambah is about a girl who finds her life becoming very complicated when France passes a law that bans Muslim women from wearing headscarves in public institutions.

In *The Silence* (Italy, France / 2016), directed by Ali Asgari and Farnoosh Samadi, is about a young Kurdish refugee who accompanies her mother on a visit to the hospital but is terrified of the diagnosis. Sherif Elbendary's *Dry Hot Summers* (Egypt, Germany / 2015) depicts how a straightforward errand turns into a wild goose when an elderly man crosses paths with a bride-to-be in a taxi cab.

A New Home (Slovenia / 2016) by Žiga Virč shows a woman who is terrorized by her own imagination when she takes up residence in a brand-new apartment, while in *The Waiting Room* (Qatar / 2016), Hend Fakhroo tells the story of two young women who explore the universality of caring for a loved one in distress.



The Palme d'Or winner at Cannes, **Waves '98** (Lebanon, Qatar / 2015) by Ely Dagher is an intriguing film about the complex relationship of Beirut-residents to their troubled home city, while **Yellow** (Saudi Arabia / 2016) by Mohammed Salman is an intimate look at everyday life on the streets of Dammam.

Dana's Kite, Kashta, More Than Two Days and **The Waiting Room** are also part of the 'Made in Qatar' category.

Tickets go on sale from 16 November and are priced QR25 for general screening. Tickets are available for purchase 24 hours a day at ajyalfilm.com or from the Ajyal Katara Main Box Office in Katara Building 12 or Ajyal FNAC Ticket Outlet, FNAC Qatar (at Lagoona Mall).

Katara is the Cultural Partner and Oxy Qatar is the Principal Partner of Ajyal. Qatar Tourism Authority is the Signature Partner of the festival this year.

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About Doha Film Institute:

Doha Film Institute is an independent, not-for-profit cultural organisation. It supports the growth of the local film community through cultivating film appreciation, enhancing industry knowledge and contributing to the development of sustainable creative industries in Qatar. The Institute's platforms include funding and production of local, regional and international films; skills-sharing and mentorship programmes; film screenings; the Ajyal Youth Film Festival; and Qumra. With culture, community, learning and entertainment at its foundation, the Institute is committed to supporting Qatar's 2030 vision for the development of a knowledge-based economy.

Doha Film Institute

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