

Press Release

Influential Speakers Highlight Global Issues in Four Captivating Ajyal Talks at 5th Ajyal Youth Film Festival

- *Panelists include regional and international media personalities using film and media to amplify their voices on global issues*
- *Intimate inspiring talks highlight key issues affecting youth in the region and beyond*

Doha, Qatar; November 22, 2017: The 5th edition of the Ajyal Youth Film Festival will feature four thought-provoking discussions covering a broad range of social impact topics, led by prominent artists, international filmmakers, media personalities, and local emerging talents in the 2017 Ajyal Talks series.

Building on the success of the first Ajyal Talks in 2016, the sessions create space for inspiring interactions between youth and today's strongest cultural influencers, bringing into discussions key issues affecting youth in the region.

Ajyal Talks 2017 center around relevant topical sessions such as how art and film is created in environments of adversity as a voice of expression, examining the social influence and impact of media on everyday life, exposing contemporary child trafficking and the use of film in healing trauma, and an intimate dialogue with internationally acclaimed visual artist and filmmaker **Shirin Neshat**.

Admission is free and sessions take place from November 30 through December 3. Tickets are required for admission and are available 24 hours a day at ajyalfilm.com or from the Ajyal Katara Main Box Office in Katara Building 12 and Ajyal FNAC Ticket Outlet, FNAC Qatar (at Festival City Mall).

Fatma Al Remaili, Festival Director and Chief Executive Officer of Doha Film Institute, said: "Ajyal Talks is a platform for meaningful engagement between role models and youth, promoting healthy discourse on potentially divisive issues and inspiring creative solutions to real world concerns. We are confident that this series will continue to have a positive impact on our youth, at Ajyal and beyond the Festival."

The first 2017 Ajyal Talks is ***Perceptions: Media Influences on our Daily Lives***. Journalist **Ahmed Shihab-Eldin**, **Dana Mado**, founder of Kuwaiti communications agency Twentytwo 11 and avid traveler and TV show host **Ali Bin Towar** will share their views on the current state of the media and how it impacts our daily lives, followed by an insightful group discussion afterwards that includes a moderated Q&A.

History has proven that struggle and social movements can inspire compelling works of art and film. Unique voices from enlightening perspectives are amplified, paving creative paths to progress. ***Overcome: How Art Beats Adversity*** invites Qatari artists **Shoug Shaheen** and **Abdulaziz Yousef**, and **Mirsad Purivatra**, Director of the Sarajevo Film Festival, to share their experiences of creating art under extraordinary circumstances – the challenges, similarities, differences, and impact.

Not for Sale: A Focus on Child Trafficking, is a poignant dialogue with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime Qatar representative **Jenna Dawson-Faber** and Professor of Law at Qatar University, **Dr. Mohamed Y. Mattar**, a legal expert in the field of human trafficking, and filmmakers **Sky Neal** and **Elhum Shakerifar** with two survivors of child trafficking profiled in their film, ***Even When I Fall***, which will screen a day before the talk.

Ajyal Talks will conclude with ***In Conversation with Shirin Neshat***, a fascinating discussion with the world-acclaimed Iranian visual artist and filmmaker. Moderated by Fatma Al Sehlawi, Shirin will discuss her expansive body of work, which spans photography, film and video work. Her latest film, ***Looking for Oum Kulthum***, is part of 2017 Ajyal Special Screenings.

2017 Ajyal Talks:

Perceptions: Media Influences on our Daily Lives: November 30, 6PM, Katara Drama Theatre

Overcome: How Art Beats Adversity: December 1, 6:30PM, Katara Drama Theatre

Not for Sale: A Focus on Child Trafficking: December 2, 4:30PM, Katara Opera House

In Conversation with Shirin Neshat: December 3, 6PM, Katara Opera House

The Ajyal Youth Film Festival is made possible thanks to its partners: Katara Cultural Village as its Cultural Partner; Qatar Tourism Authority is the Strategic Partner, and Occidental Petroleum Corporation and Ooredoo are the Principal Partners. For more details on the Ajyal Youth Film Festival, please visit www.dohafilminstitute.com/filmfestival

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Note to Editors:

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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