



Press Release

Doha Film Experience to welcome 450 jurors to the second edition of the Ajyal Youth Film Festival

Doha, Qatar; November 12, 2014: Film education and appreciation will once again take centre stage at this year's Ajyal Youth Film Festival (December 1 – 6, 2014) where 450 young jurors from around the world will take part in the five-day youth jury programme – the Doha Film Experience.

The Doha Film Experience is the central initiative of the Ajyal Youth Film Festival and aims to provide young people with access to films and filmmakers from all over the world in a fun, collaborative environment where they can express their thoughts and ideas.

During the course of the Doha Film Experience, young people between the ages of 8 to 21, watch and analyse a dynamic programme of films under three competitive sections – Mohaq, Hilal, and Bader – followed by discussions and events including panels, workshops and Q&A sessions with filmmakers and industry professionals. The participating jurors will vote to award the films most outstanding, relevant and important to them.

A large number of jurors from the inaugural edition are returning for the second edition to build on their film appreciation skills through this unique programme. Of the 450 jurors, 25 are international delegates travelling to Doha from 12 different countries including Australia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Canada, Italy, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Thailand, Tunisia and UAE.

Fatma Al Remaili, Festival Director, said: “The founding motive of the Ajyal Youth Film Festival is to make a positive impact on the lives of young people through cinema. The participation of our young jurors is at the heart of this initiative and we are really proud and excited about their involvement and the impact that this experience will have on their lives. We have more jurors than ever this year and a great number are returning for the second time.

“Our jurors will have the chance to connect with other young people, develop their analytical abilities and discover new perspectives through cinema. This unique programme is very empowering for young people and I look forward to welcoming them in December.”

The Doha Film Experience evolved out of Doha Film Institute's ongoing partnership with Italy's The Giffoni Experience, one of the world's largest and longest running film festivals for young people. Ajyal's official competition sections are based on the Giffoni model and jury delegates from both countries attend each other's festivals in a spirit of cultural exchange.

In total, 61 films will be viewed and critiqued, spanning short films, documentaries, and features. The



programme is categorised under four age groups: Bariq (4-7 years); Mohaq (8-12 years); Hilal (13-17 years); and Bader (18-21 years).

Vying for top honours will be four features and 13 short films in the Hilal category – including **Gente de Bien** by Franco Lolli (Columbia, France), which explores the relationship between a father and his son, **If I Had Wings** (Canada) by Allan Harmon, about a blind's boys dreams of cross country running, **Macondo** (Austria) by Sudabeh Mortezaei, the story of a young refugee living in a camp near Vienna, and **Theeb** (Jordan, Qatar, UAE, UK) by Naji Abu Nowar, the tale of a young Bedouin boy's perilous journey across the desert.

Four feature and 11 short films, adjudicated by jurors from the ages of 18 to 21, will compete in the Bader category including Joe Piscatella's documentary **#chicagoGirl: The Social Network Takes On a Dictator** (USA, Syria), **Difret** (Ethiopia) by Zeresenay Mehari, **Sepideh: Reaching for the Stars** (Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Germany, Iran) by Berit Madsen, which centres around a young woman's dream of becoming an astronaut and **Whiplash** about a teenager's journey to become a top jazz musician.

Additionally, 12 short films will compete for top prizes in the Mohaq Competition segment for ages 8-12 and two out-of-competition features will screen in this category: **Finn** (The Netherlands, Belgium) by Frans Weisz, about a young boy and his magical experience of playing the violin; and **Song of the Sea** (Ireland, Denmark, Belgium, Luxembourg, France) by Tom Moore, a captivating animated adventure inspired by the Ancient Irish legend of the selkies.

Fifteen short films will screen in the Bariq section, which is programmed for children from the age of 4, presented as a public screening during the Festival.

Ajyal's Doha Film Experience juries select a total of five Best Filmmaker awards – each jury selects a best filmmaker in the short film category who will receive USD 5000 towards their next film. The Hilal and Bader juries also select awards in the feature film category for USD 15,000 each.

The Ajyal Youth Film Festival builds on the Doha Film Institute's history of community-based programming. Ajyal, meaning 'generations' in Arabic, invites people of all ages to come together to discuss cinema through events that inspire creative interaction, opening up a fun, collaborative environment where young people can express themselves.

The second annual Ajyal Youth Film Festival will take place from December 1 – 6 at Katara Cultural Village. The programme consists of daily public screenings of local and international films; family days; special events and exhibitions; the Sandbox interactive digital playground; school screenings; and the Doha Film Experience.

For more details on the Ajyal Youth Film Festival, please visit www.dohafilminstitute.com/filmfestival

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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 the Qumra Doha Film Festival. 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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