

Ajyal 2024 Marks Qatar-Morocco 2024 Year of Culture with Special Showcase of Moroccan Short Films

Doha, Qatar; November 6, 2024: As part of the Qatar-Morocco 2024 Year of Culture, the 2024 Ajyal Film Festival presented by Doha Film Institute will screen a specially curated showcase of contemporary Moroccan short films that capture the essence of the country's rich cultural landscape and evolving social fabric.

The 'Made in Morocco' programme at Ajyal presented in partnership with the Marrakech Short Film Festival and Qatar-Morocco 2024 Year of Culture will offer audiences a unique glimpse into the creative vibrancy of Morocco's emerging cinema scene. Following the earlier 'Made in Qatar' screenings at the Marrakech Short Film Festival, Ajyal's showcase pays rich tribute to the strong cultural ties between the two nations.

Fatma Hassan Alremaihi, Chief Executive Officer of DFI and Festival Director, said: "The special showcase of Moroccan short films at Ajyal is a testament to the power of cinema to bridge worlds and bring people closer together. Film has a unique ability to invite us into each other's lives, to share stories, dreams, and challenges that, while rooted in specific places, resonate universally. By celebrating Morocco's rich cinematic storytelling here in Qatar, we honour the deep cultural ties that connect us and reaffirm our shared commitment to understanding, unity, and friendship through the arts."

The Scarecrow (Morocco/2024) by Anas Zematiis is about Said who longs for a better future with his beloved Zineb. As they plot their escape from the oppressive reality that binds them, his inner turmoil and fear of the unknown threaten to keep him trapped in his circumstances. The film reflects on the courage needed to pursue change in the face of uncertainty.

Why Did You Leave The Horse Alone? (France/2023) by Faouzi Bensaïdi is a contemplative exploration of decision making in the creative process, set against the vastness of nature, where artistic challenges and practical realities collide.

Moon (Palestine, France, Qatar, Jordan, UAE /2024) by Zineb Wakrim tells the story of Hasna and Samad, who find solace in painting. Against the harsh, sunbaked landscape, their brightly coloured artwork seem alien to the local environment. The film uses a visually compelling contrast to explore themes of isolation, resilience, and the pursuit of light in the darkest circumstances.

What Else Grows on the Palm of Your Hand? (Morocco, Belgium, France /2023) by Dhiaa Biya is a visually intimate film that explores the bond between Hayat and her late grandmother, conveyed through the simplest of gestures. The film is a poignant look at how the small, seemingly insignificant actions of daily life keep loved ones present long after they are gone.

Bye Bye Benz Benz (France, Morocco/2023) by Mamoun Rtal Bennani and Jules Rouffio follows Kbir, one of the last Mercedes taxi drivers in Morocco, as he faces the modernization of public transportation. As newer, safer taxis gain popularity, this documentary preserves the fading legacy of these iconic vehicles, capturing both the nostalgia and the inevitability of change.

Bottles (Morocco/2024) by Yassine El Idrissi is about 13-year-old Said who collects empty bottles to sell. Driven by compassion, he uses the earnings to feed a dog he secretly cares for, challenging his family's and community's beliefs about what is forbidden. Said wrestles with loyalty, religious expectations, and his own values in this moving short film about personal conviction.

The Made in Morocco programme will be screened at various festival venues from November 16-23, 2024. Each screening will be followed by live discussions with the filmmakers in attendance, providing audiences with deeper insights into Morocco's contemporary cinema landscape and the creative processes behind these compelling works.

Tickets are available online at <https://my.dohafilminstitute.com/ajyal/films/>

-END-

About Doha Film Institute

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

About Ajyal Film Festival

Ajyal Film Festival is an annual celebration of film designed to nurture young minds and support the development of mindful global citizens and thoughtful future leaders. 'Ajyal', Arabic for 'generations', builds on the Institute's history of community-based programming, and brings people of all ages together through screenings and events that inspire creative interaction and stimulate cinematic dialogue. Through its' jury programme, youth between the ages of 8 and 25 are given an opportunity to watch, analyse and discuss global cinema and culture, developing self-confidence, independent critical thinking skills, self-expression, and an appreciation of cinema, while making new friends and discovering global cultures.

Doha Film Institute:

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