

Ajyal 2024 to Spotlight Standout Storytelling by Hiam Abbass and Misan Harriman

Doha, Qatar; November 9, 2024: 2024 Ajyal Film Festival, presented by Doha Film Institute (DFI), will host renowned Palestinian actress **Hiam Abbass** and acclaimed filmmaker and photographer **Misan Harriman** in this year's **Ajyal Spotlight** sessions, bringing their powerful perspectives on the intersection of storytelling and social change to young audiences.

Ajyal Spotlight honours storytellers who inspire change and aligned with this year's theme of Moments that Matter, the two influential voices featured bring an unyielding commitment to storytelling as a force for change. Their shared insights and personal journeys will inspire young audiences to explore the transformative power of art as a catalyst for understanding, compassion and empathy.

Fatma Hassan Alremaihi, Chief Executive Officer of DFI and Festival Director, said: "Our Ajyal Spotlight guests this year truly represent the transformative power of artistic expression. Through their work, both Hiam Abbass and Misan Harriman have embodied the potential of creative voices to challenge perspectives, inspire positive change, and foster deeper cultural understanding. We are honoured to welcome them to inspire Ajyal audiences with how genuine commitment of artists can shape compelling narratives that promote positive social change through shared understanding and mutual respect."

Hiam Abbass is one of the most recognisable voices in global cinema. Born in Nazareth and raised in Deir Hanna, her career spans continents, cultures, and decades. Her roles in *'The Syrian Bride'* and *'Lemon Tree'* received international acclaim, and she captivated audiences with her performances in *'Amreeka'*, and, more recently, in the acclaimed series *Succession*, where her work garnered widespread recognition. Her feature directorial debut, *Inheritance*, was selected for the Venice Film Festival, marking a significant milestone in her multifaceted career. At Ajyal Spotlight, Abbass's influence will guide the next generation of artists, encouraging them to create works that resonate across cultures and ignite truly meaningful conversations that matter.

Misan Harriman, a Nigerian-born photographer, creative director, and founder of 'What We See', has carved a unique space in the world of photography. From his documentation of London's Black Lives Matter protests to his historic role as the first Black photographer to capture a British Vogue's cover, Harriman's work is a visual commentary on the human spirit, resilience, and the fight for social justice. Described by The Evening Standard as the most talked about photographer of our times," Harriman's images span activism, cultural commentary, and celebrity portraiture, making him a powerful advocate for diversity and inclusion in the arts. His presence at Ajyal serves as a powerful reminder of photography's role in shaping narratives, building resilience, and inspiring action.

Ajyal 2024 features 66 thought-provoking films from 42 countries depicting themes that will resonate with and inspire audiences with stories of resilience, hope and community

empowerment. The event will also have interactive discussions, inclusive screenings, film exhibition, Qatar's largest pop-culture event – Geekend. Events will be held across key locations, including Katara, Sikkat Wadi Msheireb, Lusail and VOX Cinemas Doha Festival City.

Tickets can be purchased online at <https://my.dohafilminstitute.com/ajyal/films/>

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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 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:

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