

Press Release

Doha Film Institute to Launch Two New Film Festivals

- *Qumra Film Festival, Doha, to focus on emerging directors and expand competition to films from around the world*
- *Ajyal Film Festival for the Young offers community-based programming*
- *Qumra Film Festival a committed advocate of first- and second-time directors*
- *Ajyal Film Festival fosters film appreciation among youth*

Cannes, 18 May, 2013: Doha Film Institute (DFI) today announced that its annual slate will now include two film festivals. Films from first- and second-time filmmakers are the focus of the new Qumra Film Festival, Doha. The inaugural festival will take place in March, 2014 and will include international competition sections for feature-length and short films, and provide opportunities for creative collaboration among filmmakers and industry professionals. The Ajyal Film Festival for the Young is a community-based event that brings cinema and film-related activities to Doha to promote film appreciation among families and educators. Its first edition takes place in November, 2013.

“Over the last four years, our community-based programming has been extremely popular among the residents of Doha,” said Abdulaziz Al Khater, CEO of DFI. “We want to harness the momentum we’ve generated there and continue developing film appreciation in Qatar. At the same time, the Institute has decided to focus on emerging filmmakers and expand its competitions to include films from around the world. The best path to achieving our goals is to build two separate film festivals.”

The Qumra Film Festival, Doha is committed to exploring the imagination and lyrical visions of upcoming directors, helping them to bring their projects to fruition and providing a launchpad for their work. International competitions for first- and second-time filmmakers are at the heart of the eight-day festival. Awards will be decided by international juries in feature-length and short film categories, including Made in Qatar.

Out-of-competition sections include a panorama of films from contemporary auteurs, established directors and new talent, selected for their artistry, formal innovation and compelling subject matter; a carte-blanche section that invites acclaimed directors to share films that played a role in shaping their cinematic sensibility; and a tribute that pays homage to the contributions of significant figures to the history of world cinema. Extending its focus on directors’ early works, the Qumra Film Festival also provides a rare chance to see the first films of celebrated filmmakers.

Industry Days will include master classes, workshops, panels and the Doha Projects initiative, which puts together DFI grant recipients with producers and key players from the film industry. Exhibitions and musical performances complement the film programme throughout the festival.

Recently appointed to the post of Artistic Advisor for DFI, world-renowned filmmaker Elia Suleiman said: “The intention is clear and sincere – to build a cinematic house of culture, anchored to the principle of hope. I believe we can find the essence of such hope in the new generations of visual poets from around the globe. Today this is an ecological necessity.”



In November, the five-day Ajyal Film Festival for the Young builds on DFI's history of community-based programming, bringing generations together and offering them film-related activities and events that will inspire creative interaction. The festival gives hundreds of young people the opportunity to sit on the juries that decide the winners of Ajyal's competition, which is presented in three age-appropriate programmes. Family-friendly special screenings, thematic retrospectives and tributes round out the film selection, while master classes for students of all ages, workshops for children, parents, teachers and industry professionals and panels enhance film education.

"We have designed Ajyal to enhance film education and make it a lot of fun by engaging families and educators through cinema," said Fatma Al Remaili, the Festival Director of the Ajyal Film Festival for the Young and DFI's Head of Programmes. "At the same time, we want to open a space for dialogue about the complex issues facing youth today and to empower them by giving them a platform for expression. It's an investment in today's youth – so it's really an investment in the Qatar of the future."

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About Doha Film Institute:

Doha Film Institute (DFI) is an independent, not-for-profit cultural organisation established in 2010 to incorporate Qatar's film initiatives under one banner. It organically supports the growth of the local film community by enhancing industry knowledge, cultivating film appreciation and contributing to the development of sustainable creative industries in Qatar.

DFI's year-round platforms include funding and production of local, regional and international films, educational programmes and film screenings.

With culture, community, education and entertainment at its foundation, DFI serves as an all-encompassing film hub in Doha, as well as a resource for the region and the rest of the world.

DFI is committed to supporting Qatar's 2030 vision for the development of a knowledge-based economy.

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