



Meg Ryan to Present Her Directorial Debut *Ithaca* at 4th Ajyal Youth Film Festival

Ajyal 2016 to celebrate film icon's inspirational career with Ajyal Honorary Award

Doha, Qatar; November 21, 2016: The fourth Ajyal Youth Film Festival presented by the Doha Film Institute, is excited to bring to Qatar audiences a special screening of Meg Ryan's directorial debut *Ithaca* (USA / 2015), in the presence of the celebrated filmmaker.

During her time at the Festival, the acclaimed actor will discuss her film with the young jurors and will also be presented with the Ajyal Honorary Award, to celebrate her inspirational career.

Actor Meg Ryan steps into the director's chair with *Ithaca*, a beautifully staged adaptation of William Saroyan's novel "The Human Comedy", in which a teenage boy takes on a part-time job as a telegram delivery boy in a fictional US town during World War II, with deeply moving results. Ryan takes a pivotal role in the film and recruits her regular co-star Tom Hanks in a cameo, while Sam Shepard stars as a crotchety telegraph operator nearing retirement. The film highlights the acting talents of three young actors, including Ryan's son Jack Quaid, and newcomers Alex Neustaedter, and Spencer Howell.

Fatma Al Remaihi, Festival Director and CEO of Doha Film Institute, said, "Meg Ryan will attend the 2016 Ajyal Youth Film Festival to screen her directorial debut *Ithaca*, a coming-of-age-film about a youth's transformation into a responsible young man. The heartwarming and poignant film will resonate with our jurors, as it deals with the subject of self-discovery, values of familial bonding and the re-kindling of hope in tough situations.

"Meg Ryan has earned her rightful position as one of the most successful actors on the big screen, with an impressive filmography that spans more than three decades. She is an inspiration to people of all ages, not only for her perseverance in lending diversity to her roles, but also for her commitment to improving the lives of other women. We look forward to screening her work to audiences in Qatar and are confident that our jurors will gain invaluable insights by interacting with such an accomplished individual, and her transition from an actor to a director."

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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 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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