

5th Ajyal Youth Film Festival Unveils Special Screenings Programme that Brings the Magic of Cinema to All

- *Trans-adapted screenings of **Al-Johara** and **Kashta** offer a unique inclusive cinema experience for people of all abilities*
- *Special presentation of internationally acclaimed film **Looking for Oum Kulthum***
- *Ajyal continues a rich tradition of inspirational animation programming with a special screening of **In This Corner of the World***
- *A curated selection of Made in Qatar competition favourites to shine in **Sony Cinema Under the Stars** segment*
- *To celebrate the 60th birthday of everyone's beloved blue friends, Ajyal will roll out the blue carpet for a special screening of **The Smurfs***

Doha, Qatar; November 27, 2017: The 2017 Ajyal Youth Film Festival will present an exciting showcase of cinematic experiences in the Special Screenings programme that demonstrate the limitless possibilities of film to present perspectives, celebrate culture, and inspire people of all abilities.

Featuring a screening of acclaimed filmmaker and visual artist Shirin Neshat's latest film with the director in attendance; a trans-adapted screening in honour of UN International Day of Persons with Disabilities; a stunning anime film that keeps with the Festival's rich roots in animation; an open-air cinema experience under the beautiful night sky of Doha; and a 60th anniversary celebration of everyone's favourite blue friends, complete with a screening of **The Smurfs**.

Ajyal is honoured to present visual story master Shirin Neshat's **Looking for Oum Kulthum** in collaboration with Shoja Azari (Germany/ Austria/ Italy/ Qatar/ Lebanon/2017) with the director in attendance. Neshat once again breaks convention with her uniquely intimate exploration of an icon of modern Arab culture, moving artfully beyond biopic in a movie-within-a-movie. Through the simultaneous exploration of three main female characters, the narrative reveals how women face the same predicaments of sacrifice, despite the glory of achieving fame and success.

In the 3rd year of one of the most unique cinematic presentations in the world, 2017 Ajyal also presents the screening of Ajyal 2016 Award Winners, **Al-Johara** by Nora Al-Subai and **Kashta** by A.J. Al Thani, to mark the UN International Day of Persons with Disabilities in a special trans-adapted screening, presented in collaboration with the Translation and Interpreting Institute of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences at Hamad Bin Khalifa University. The inclusive presentation will provide visually impaired audiences with descriptive audio, and hearing impaired viewers and those with limited speech processing and comprehension will benefit from descriptive subtitles, enriched with information about sound effects and music.

Festival Director and CEO of Doha Film Institute, Fatma Al Remaihi said: "We at DFI are committed to bringing the magic of cinema to all audiences, and strive towards pushing ourselves towards that goal each year at Ajyal. It is deeply inspiring to have each and every one of us experience the power of film, regardless of physical obstacles presented in front of us. We extend our appreciation to the students at Hamad Bin Khalifa University for their painstaking commitment in adapting the films for all audiences."

“We believe this edition of the Ajyal Youth Film Festival is set to be our strongest yet, as the Festival’s reputation continues to grow each year. The range of works from filmmakers across the globe, will provide a truly memorable experience for our audiences and our young jurors, and we’re delighted to be bringing these films to Qatar.”

Honouring Ajyal’s history of stunning animation, director Sunao Katabuchi’s international award-winning anime film, *In This Corner of the World* (Japan), narrates the experiences of 18-year-old Suzu among the cruel chaos of World War II. As Suzu and her family face great adversity with resilience and creativity, hope shines through and flourishes.

Ajyal’s popular SONY Cinema Under the Stars returns to present audience favourites from previous Made in Qatar Programmes: *10%* by Yousef AlMoadhadi; *Charlie* by Ali Ali; *dRAIN* by Papanapattu Ganesh and Imad Hachem; *Immortalizing Memories* by Mostafa Sheshtawy; *Kashta* by A.J. Al Thani; *Al-Kora* by Amal Al-Muftah; *Light Sounds* by Kareem Kamel; *Makh’bz* by Aisha R. Al Muhannadi; *My Hero* by Nora Al-Subai; and *The Palm Tree* by Jassim Al-Rumaihi

Ajyal 2017 will roll out the blue carpet for a fun and family-friendly screening of *The Smurfs* by Raja Gosnell (USA) to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the global phenomenon in 2018, complete with Papa Smurf and Smurfette. As the blue companions embark on an unexpected wild adventure in New York City, they make fabulous new friends while foiling the evil plans of their nemesis Gargamel.

Tickets are on sale and are priced QR25 for general screening. Tickets are available for purchase 24 hours a day at ajyalfilm.com or from the Ajyal Katara Main Box Office in Katara Building 12 or Ajyal FNAC Ticket Outlet, FNAC Qatar at Doha Festival City.

The Ajyal Youth Film Festival is made possible thanks to its partners: Katara Cultural Village as its Cultural Partner; Qatar Tourism Authority is the Strategic Partner, and Occidental Petroleum Corporation and Ooredoo are the Principal Partners. For more details on the Ajyal Youth Film Festival, please visit www.dohafilminstitute.com/filmfestival

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Note to Editors:

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.

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