



## Official opening of the 5<sup>th</sup> Ajyal Youth Festival kicks off with Red Carpet night

*Qatari film community and international movers and shakers turn out in full-force*

**Doha, Qatar; November 29, 2017:** In an evening that brought high profile members of the community out to show their support for Qatar's cultural resilience and creativity, the opening of the 5<sup>th</sup> Ajyal Youth Film Festival's Red Carpet event notable attendees included DFI Board of Trustees H.E. Sheikh Thani Bin Hamad Bin Khalifa Al-Thani, H.E. Sheikh Saif Bin Ahmed Bin Saif Al-Thani, H.E. Salah Bin Ghanim Al Ali, Minister of Culture and Sports, and H.E. Issa bin Mohammed Al Mohannadi. Among the event's key guests were H.E. Dr. Hamad Bin Abdulaziz Al Kuwari, Advisor at Emiri Diwan, who was recognized for his contributions and support of arts and culture.

The evening was a demonstration of resilience and solidarity, showing a strong turn-out for the MENA premier of Nora Twomey's much-anticipated feature animation, ***The Breadwinner (Canada, Ireland, Luxembourg/2017)***. A tale of female empowerment and a celebration of Afghani culture, it was produced by Oscar award-winning actress, Angelina Jolie and is illustrated by award-winning Irish animation studio, the Cartoon Saloon.

Other prominent local attendees included Qatari filmmaker Saad Burshaid and artist Fahad Al-Kubaisi, as well as **Made in Qatar** jury members, Dana Madouh and Salah Al Mullah.

Distinguished regional guests included actress Buthaina Al Raisy, Malik Al Musilmani, filmmaker Maitham Al Musawi, Bashar Awadh and regional distributor, Issac Fahed. Faruk Šabanović, director of the feature ***Birds Like Us***, art director Reza Riahi and directors of ***Loving Vincent***, Dorota Kobiela and Hugh Welchman.

Also walking the carpet was 13 year-old Saara Chaudry, the voice of Parvana, the main character in ***The Breadwinner***, who is forced to disguise herself as a boy in order to help her family make ends meet after her teacher father is unfairly imprisoned.

With a good showing of local and international press, the presence of so many local VIPs ensured that the evening, and the festival, got off to an excellent start.

The 5<sup>th</sup> Ajyal Youth Festival runs from November 29 to December 4 and its compelling slate of 103 films from 43 countries, including 20 feature films and 83 short films, illustrate the ability of storytelling to transcend borders, transform minds and touch hearts. Inspiring to film enthusiasts of all ages, this year's selection once again demonstrates the power of filmmaking to stimulate discussions about real, globally relevant issues and power and resilience of creativity.



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**About Doha Film Institute:**

The 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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