



6th Ajyal Film Festival opens in Doha reconnecting cinema to its roots and celebrating values of hope and courage

- *Celebrities from the Arab world and international cinema attend red carpet opening gala at Katara Cultural Village*
- *Festival opens with **Freedom Fields**, an inspiring film on women empowerment*

Doha, Qatar; November 28, 2018: The sixth edition of the Ajyal Film Festival, the annual cinema event by the Doha Film Institute, marked a colourful opening at Katara Cultural Village. Opening Night's red carpet was attended by high ranking officials including DFI board members His Excellency Sheikh Thani Bin Hamad Al Thani and His Excellency Mr. Issa bin Mohammed Al Mohannadi and distinguished guests from the region as well as celebrities from the Arab world and international cinema.

Reviving the true spirit of cinema and lending voice to emerging filmmakers from Qatar and around the world, the sixth Ajyal Film Festival will be held until Dec. 3, with an assortment of activities including film screenings, the insightful Ajyal Talks, and family-oriented activities at the Ajyal Creativity Hub. For the first time, the film screenings will also be held at Novo Cinemas, The Pearl, bringing meaningful cinema closer to the audiences.

At the opening ceremony, Fatma Hassan Alremaihi, Festival Director and Chief Executive Officer of the Doha Film Institute, said that Ajyal has cemented its reputation in the cultural scene as a force bringing young and established talents together, and providing them an inspiring platform to present their films and ideas to the public.

"Ajyal Film Festival revives the fundamental spirit of cinema, by connecting people to our shared roots through stories that resonate with our aspirations and hopes. In today's fast-paced tech era, it is important that we find a true balance between the sublime message of art and the use of technology. Ajyal serves the purpose of bridging this important gap in today's cultural scene."

Thanking the leadership of Qatar and all government and private sector entities that inspire and contribute to the success of the festival, she added: "Ajyal Film Festival's spirit is underlined by its new theme, 'A Voice for Generations' and it serves as a space for highlighting the power and responsibility that comes with having a voice and reflects the vision of Qatar's leadership – and that of the Doha Film Institute – to celebrate the values of openness, mutual dialogue, respect for others and diversity."

Guests from Qatar who walked the red carpet include: Ali Abdulsatar, Faleh Fayaz, Saad Burshaid, Ahmad Al Maadeed, among others. Guests from the region and international cinema included: Evangeline Lily, Engin Altan Duzyatan, Bulent Inal, Shuaib Rashed, Saleh Zaal, Mohammad Al Hamli, and Muna Shaddad, among others.

In line with its overarching theme, the Ajyal Film Festival 2018 opened with **Freedom Fields** (Libya, UK, Netherlands, USA, Qatar, Lebanon, Canada/2018), a compelling story about three brave women and their efforts to build a football team in post-revolution Libya, even as the country descends into civil war. Directed by Naziha Arebi, the DFI-supported film was nominated for the Best Documentary Award at the Stockholm Film Festival 2018. The screening of the film also builds on the aspirations of



the Supreme Committee for Qatar 2022 to deliver the first-ever FIFA World Cup™ in the Middle East, and coincides with the symbolic handover year of the World Cup from Russia to Qatar.

At the opening ceremony, Ajyal Film Festival also paid rich tribute to legendary actors Abdul Aziz Jassim, who passed away recently. A special 'Abdul Aziz Jassim Best Actor Award' has been instituted for the best performance in a film in the 'Made in Qatar' presented by Ooredoo programme.

This year, the festival showcases 81 films from 36 countries that express the power of storytelling to transform minds. There are 23 features and 58 shorts, including 24 from the Arab World and 44 by women filmmakers. The programme also includes a special 'Made in Russia' segment to mark the 2018 Qatar – Russia Year of Culture. Keenly awaited is the 'Made in Qatar' presented by Ooredoo programme that celebrates the talents of Qatari and Qatar-based filmmakers, which underlines homegrown talent and the robust state of filmmaking in the country.

The Jury Competition line-up at Ajyal 2018 will consist of 13 feature films. This year, there are 550 jurors from 55 nationalities including 25 international jurors who will travel to Doha for the event from places such as Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Italy, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Spain, Turkey and the United Kingdom.

Tickets to the screenings are priced QR25 and are available at FNAC stores (Lagoona Mall and Doha Festival City) and the Ajyal Katara Main Box office, Building 12. Tickets can be purchased online www.dohafilminstitute.com/filmfestival. Holders of Culture Pass by Qatar Museums will get a QR5 discount on all general screenings.

2018 Ajyal Film Festival's Official Partners include: Katara Cultural Village – Cultural Partner; Ooredoo – Principal Partner; Novo Cinemas – Strategic Partner and St. Regis Doha – Signature Sponsor.

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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 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.

Twitter: @DohaFilm; Instagram: @DohaFilm; Facebook: www.facebook.com/DohaFilmInstitute

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 in a creative and educational environment. 'Ajyal', Arabic for 'generations', 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 21 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. 6th Ajyal Film Festival takes place from the 28th of November to the 3rd of December.



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