



eL Seed takes 'Ajyal Talk' audience on a journey to gain a new 'Perception' of art

Doha, Qatar; December 1, 2018: eL Seed, the French-Tunisian 'calligraffiti' artist familiar to the Qatar community for his large-scale murals along Salwa Road, took audiences through an inspiring journey into how art can touch, unite and add to the civic pride of communities at the first Ajyal Talks, organised as part of the sixth Ajyal Film Festival.

The annual cinema event hosted by the Doha Film Institute at Katara Cultural Village presented an insightful discussion by eL Seed on 'The Freedom of Self-Expression', a theme that resonates with the life of the artist, whose masterpiece works include 'Perception' in the Manshiyat Nasr neighbourhood of Cairo.

A compelling visual experience created through calligraphy work covering over 50 buildings in the community of people, whose primary vocations include garbage collection, *Perception* was an enlightening experience for eL Seed, who said he uses "art as a tool to create a human experience" adding that "my work is not a response to anything; it is about how you use art to change perceptions and connect to people."

eL Seed said he is now documenting 'Perception' into the film form, adding that the community art project had a visible impact in promoting stronger camaraderie and self-pride among the community. He shared his journey of growing up in France confused about his identity, and then, in his teens studying Arabic and discovering calligraphy without a formal teacher.

"In creating calligraphy, you need to know its rules, and you must learn the artform from a master, who has learnt from another master, and so on, going back to a tradition of over 1,400 years," said eL Seed. "But I didn't know the rules to break them." Instead, he pursued the passion, which he would eventually call as 'calligraffiti.' eL Seed said that "ironically, Arabic calligraphy helped me accept my French identity because I wouldn't have tried to shape it differently if I had followed the normal course."

He discussed about his works in Tunisia and a special project linking South and North Korea through a calligraphy bridge. While the 'bridge' itself had to be scaled down in its size, he says the experience was gratifying, more so, with the cordial relations being nurtured now by the two nations.

He then zeroed in on his passion project – *Perception* – which has lent a mesmerising visual effect on a neighbourhood that did not have a very complementary 'perception'. eL Seed said that working on the project helped him cancel out his own misconceptions about people and places. The residents may be collecting garbage for a living but they return to clean homes, he observed.

The session was moderated by Emmy-nominated journalist Ahmed Shihab-Eldin.

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.

Twitter: @Ajyalfilm; Instagram: @ajyalfilm, #ajyal18