

## Find the Essence of India in 2019 Ajyal Film Festival's 'Made in India' programme

- *Special programme celebrating Qatar-India 2019 Year of Culture*
- *Eight powerful short films that explore cultural similarities and differences*
- *Special screening of DFI supported Bombay Rose by Gitanjali Rao to charm audiences with a hand painted tale of life and love*

**Doha, Qatar; 11 November 2019:** Promoting deeper cultural understanding and appreciation, the seventh edition of Ajyal Film Festival, presented by the Doha Film Institute from 18-23 November, marks the **Qatar-India 2019 Year of Culture** with an exciting **Made in India** programme of eight short films from the country that offer an insight into modern India and are a testament to the country's rich filmmaking heritage.

Curated by the Institute's cultural partners, The Mumbai Academy of Moving Images (MAMI), the special **Made in India** programme will screen on 21<sup>st</sup> November at 8.30 PM at Katara Opera House and includes a selection of short narrative and documentary films by up-and-coming Indian directors that present fascinating insight into the country's filmmaking trends, culture and people. A Qatar Museums initiative, the Year of Culture is a year-long programme developed to deepen understanding between nations through exchange of arts, culture, heritage and sport.

As part of the initiative, a special Made in Qatar film showcase was successfully screened at the recently concluded 2019 Jio MAMI Mumbai Film Festival with Star. MAMI has also nominated four Indian jurors to participate in the 2019 Ajyal Film Festival.

Fatma Hassan Alremaihi, Festival Director and Chief Executive Officer of DFI, said: "The Qatar India 2019 Year of Culture recognises the contribution of the Indian community to Qatar and reinforces the significant cultural relationship between our nations. Ajyal's special programme shines a spotlight on our cultural partnership with India, one of the most prolific film producers in the world. Using the medium of film to find similarities and contextualise culture through art, this carefully curated selection of short films will promote dialogue between our communities to find a deeper understanding of modern Indian cinema. Uniting two cultures and countries through film allows us celebrate and explore common values and find new stories and talent."

Short films screening in the **Made in India** programme are:

- **Grandfather** (2018) by Uma-Gaiti - A heart-warming tale about love, friendship and the everlasting companionship of two soulmates—a little girl and her "Baaje" (grandfather).

- **Apna Apna Andaz** (2017) by Avishkar Bharadwaj - After their tickets to a highly anticipated film are stolen, a pair of teenage boys seek the help of the local police to recover them from the thieves.
- **Steam** (2019) by Harsh Hudda – A contemplative portrayal of the harsh reality of everyday patriarchy that is woven through the lives of many women living in India.
- **Mother Promise** (2017) by Gautam Vaze – After his mischievous cousin casually swears on his own mother's life during a cricket match, young Soham fears for his aunt's safety all weekend.
- **Batti** (2019) by Akshay Sarjerao Danavale – Ten-year old Batti is trying to make ends meet selling literature in Mumbai's trains when an irksome passenger challenges him to read from one of his own books.
- **Hey Ram!** (2019) by Yashwardhan Goswami - Inspired by actual events, the film offers insightful commentary on how differences in faith and beliefs can form a basis for persecution.
- **Vacancy** (2017) by Anurag B. Worlikar - Durgesh Kumar is going for a very unusual kind of interview. There is a "vacancy", but quite a lot of competition for it.
- **The Thought of You** (2014) by Ahmed Roy - An unassuming dinner party turns to tragedy after a jealous wife and her husband continue their heated fight on the drive home.

In addition, Ajyal 2019 will also present a special screening of acclaimed actor, director and animator Gitanjali Rao's **Bombay Rose** (India, France, UK, Qatar/2019), a DFI Grant production. The haunting musical romance set on the streets of Bombay unfolds through exquisite hand-painted animation and storytelling techniques by Rao, who will be in attendance. The film opened the prestigious Critics Week programme at the 2019 Venice Film Festival and won the India Gold Silver Gateway Award and the Manish Acharya Award for New Voices in Indian Cinema at the 2019 Mumbai International Film Festival.

Tickets for Ajyal Film Festival 2019 are available for purchase from at the Ajyal Main Box Office located in Katara Building 10 at the Ajyal Box Office; at VOX Cinemas Doha Festival City for screenings taking place at VOX Cinemas; and from the Novo Cinemas Box Office for screenings at Novo Cinemas, The Pearl. For up-to-date information and ticket purchase, please visit: [www.dohafilminstitute.com/festival](http://www.dohafilminstitute.com/festival).

2019 Ajyal Film Festival's Official Partners include: **Katara Cultural Village** – Cultural Partner; **Qatar National Tourism Council** – Principal Partner; **Novo Cinemas, Ooredoo**– Strategic Partner, **St. Regis Doha** - Signature Partner.

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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 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.

**مؤسسة الدوحة للأفلام**

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