

Press Release

## Special 10<sup>th</sup> Edition of Ajyal Film Festival announces winners of the Ajyal Jury Competition

- *My Sister Liv*, *Comedy Queen* and *Bigman* win Best Feature Film Award in Bader, Hilal and Mohaq categories
- *It's Nice in Here*, *It Feels Personal* and *Canary* win the Best Short Film Awards

**Doha, Qatar; October 9, 2022:** The Special 10<sup>th</sup> Edition of the Ajyal Film Festival, presented by the Doha Film Institute, announced the winners of the Ajyal Jury competition at the closing ceremony held in Katara Village, Doha. The winners were selected by a record number of 613 young jurors, aged 8 to 25, who watched 38 specially curated films in three categories – Bader (18- to 25-year-old jurors), Hilal (13 to 17 years) and Mohaq (8 to 12 years). The award ceremony was attended by the jurors, their parents, and several distinguished guests.

The winners of the Best Feature Film Awards are: ***My Sister Liv*** (Australia, USA/2022), directed by Alan Hicks, in the Bader category; ***Comedy Queen*** (Sweden/2021), directed by Sanna Lenken in the Hilal category; and ***Bigman*** (The Netherlands, Germany/2022), directed by Camiel Schouwenaar in the Mohaq category.

The winners of the Best Short Film Awards are: ***It's Nice In Here*** (The Netherlands/2022) by Robert-Jonathan Koeyers (Bader); ***It Feels Personal*** (UK/2021) by Hugh Clegg (Hilal); and ***Canary*** (Canada/2022) by Pierre-Hugues Dallaire and Benoit Therriault (Mohaq).

Addressing the audience of distinguished guests and the Ajyal Jurors, Fatma Hassan Alremaihi, Festival Director and Chief Executive Officer of the Doha Film Institute, said: "Ajyal continues to showcase the marvel of cinema and its power to take us outside of ourselves, enabling us to think and dream beyond boundaries. Being at Ajyal is like being part of a family, with members across the world, who come together, dream together, and grow together. This spirit of collaboration and friendship defines Ajyal, and also demonstrates the potential of young leaders to make the world a better place."

She added: "To date, we have presented 546 short films and 221 features films from 813 directors representing 95 countries and 73 languages. They have served as important building blocks in amplifying diverse perspectives and fostering cultural understanding and empathy. These films open our eyes to new cultures and people – and the fundamental understanding that across the world, wherever we are, we all share the same hopes and aspirations."

***My Sister Liv*** reveals the realities of stigma around mental health, and the aftermath for those left behind after a suicide. As a family learns to cope, they find hope in fearlessly talking about mental health and fighting to save young lives. ***Comedy Queen*** is a coming-of-age drama of Sasha, a 13-year-old girl, who suffers from immeasurable sorrow, but finds a creative outlet for her grief and anger in the form of comedy. ***Bigman*** is based loosely on screenwriter Job Tichelman's own life as a disabled football player, and deals compassionately with the heartrending realities of coming to terms with being differently abled than one's peers

*It's Nice In Here* is a fragmented portrait of a boy nicknamed Crimson, seen through the eyes of the police officer that took his life and his best friend who witnessed it all. *It is Personal* is a short desktop documentary about the blurry lines of intellectual property in the shared and borderless digital community. *Canary* is an animated short about honesty, integrity, and friendship, in which a young boy trains his pet canary to play dead so they can take the day off.

The Ajyal Jury Experience screened a specially curated programme of important stories from around the world to the youth jurors. They also took part in the Ajyal Talks and Spotlight sessions in addition to several lively discussions on cinema.

Katara is the Cultural Partner of the Special 10<sup>th</sup> Edition of the Ajyal Film Festival. Contributing Partners include Darwish Holding, the Official Electronics Provider; with FNAC, Sony and 51 East; Qommunication is the Social Media Partner; and Friends of the Festival include Alkalive, the Official Water Sponsor; Giffoni, Qatar Museums, Leisure (Virtuocity).

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