

7th Ajyal Film Festival Unveils Special Screenings Programme that Represents the Limitless Possibilities of Cinema

- *Focus on Sudan special presentation shines a light on underrepresented Sudanese cinematic gems*
- *Inclusive trans-adapted screening features popular short films by Qatari filmmakers*
- *Ajyal 2019 to roll out the kids red carpet for a special screening of cherished classic *The Wizard of Oz* at VOX Cinemas Doha Festival City*
- *A curated selection of local and international favourites to shine in Sony Cinema Under the Stars at the Museum of Islamic Art park*

Doha, Qatar; 05 November 2019: Signifying film as a powerful tool for cultural inclusion, the 2019 Ajyal Film Festival presented by the Doha Film Institute (DFI), will offer an exciting showcase of cinematic experiences in this year's Special Screenings programme.

The 2019 Ajyal Special Screenings will feature undiscovered cinematic masterpieces of modern Sudanese cinema; the return of the popular trans-adapted screening to mark the UN International Day of Persons with Disabilities; a special Kids Red Carpet to delight Qatar's youngest film enthusiasts and festival goers; and an open-air cinema experience under the beautiful night sky of Doha to round up the programme.

Fatma Hassan Alremaihi, Festival Director and Chief Executive Officer of DFI, said: "The Special Screenings programme at Ajyal 2019 continues to represent the limitless possibilities of film to share perspectives, celebrate culture, and inspire people of all abilities. It is deeply inspiring to enable all people to experience the power of film, regardless of physical obstacles. We extend our appreciation to the students at Hamad Bin Khalifa University for being an essential part of our efforts to use cinema to raise awareness and foster inclusion of people with different abilities.

"In Sudan, filmmaking has echoed the country's intricate balance between reform and peace consolidation efforts. DFI is proud to continue its global investment in film production, and we are excited to present our collaborative works with Sudan's most promising cinematic voices at this year's festival. From Qatar and Sudan, and across the globe, our Special Screenings provide a truly memorable experience for our audiences, and we are delighted to provide equal access to films that will inspire and entertain."

The Focus on Sudan section will present two award-winning films by the nation's emerging cinematic voices. *Talking About Trees* (2019), a DFI-supported documentary by director Suhaib Gasmelbari follows the quest of a group of retired filmmakers to retrieve Sudan's film industry from the shadows of censorship and fundamentalism. Following its premiere at the Berlin International Film Festival, Gasmelbari's requiem to the lost parts of Sudan's rich heritage has captivated audiences around the world. It is followed by Amjad Abu Alala's festival favourite *You Will Die at Twenty* (2016), the story of Muzamel, a boy whose life is caught between the doom of a Dervish prophecy and the mesmerising

fantasy of cinema. The DFI-grant production won the Lion of the Future (Luigi de Laurentiis) Award for Best Debut Feature at the 76th Venice International Film Festival.

In the fifth year of one of the most unique cinematic presentations in the world, Ajyal's inclusive screenings experience returns with five inspiring DFI-supported short films from Qatar's promising filmmaking talent. Presented in collaboration with the Translation and Interpreting Institute of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences at Hamad Bin Khalifa University, the trans-adapted presentation will provide visually impaired audiences with descriptive audio, while hearing impaired viewers and those with limited speech processing and comprehension will benefit from descriptive subtitles enriched with information about sound effects and music.

The showcase includes audience favourites and previous Made in Qatar winners: ***Sh'hab*** (2018) by Amal Al-Muftah, a charismatic journey through the depths of a little girl's curiosity and imagination as she embarks on an adventurous search for a shooting star; ***1001 Days*** (2017) by Aisha Al-Jaidah introduces audiences to a modern-day Sheherezade in an animated short film that captures her significance as a legendary heroine fighting for independence, dignity and freedom; Rawan Al-Nassiri and Nada Bedair's ***Treasures of the Past*** (2017) is an intriguing tale of three older Qatari women's staunch resolve to launch their own business, highlighting an interplay between tradition and gender equality; Jassim Al-Rumaihi's ***Amer: An Arabian Legend*** (2016) documents the story of Amer, one of the most iconic stallions in Arabian horseracing history, through conversations with people whose lives were closely intertwined with Amer's career as a champion in racing and breeding; and ***Fragile*** (2017) by Kholoud Al-Ali, an animated short film that follows a ceramic girl's journey of self-discovery and reinvention as she sets off to conquer the mountains separating her from the world beyond her home.

Ajyal's popular SONY Cinema Under the Stars programme returns at the MIA park with a selection of family-friendly films that will appeal to audiences of all ages. With a diverse range of shorts and feature films, the line-up includes: ***Al-Johara*** (Qatar/2016) by Nora Al-Subai, a Qatari take on the classic fairy tale of Cinderella; ***Kashta*** (Qatar/2016) by A.J. Al-Thani, about a brotherly hunting adventure that results in a conflict; ***The Fishermen*** (Qatar/2017) by Obada Yousef Jarbi, about three fishermen in search of the best catch for the Doha market; ***The Palm Tree*** (Qatar/2015) by Jassim Al-Rumaihi, an observational nature documentary; ***Where Are You Right Meow?*** (Qatar/2018) by Maysam Al-Ani, about a lost cat; ***Al Muqana3*** (Qatar/2012) by Tarek Abu-Esber, about one of Doha's most prolific 'automobile artists'; ***Makh'bz*** (Qatar/2015) by Aisha Al Muhannadi, an ethnographic journey through the stages of traditional breadmaking; ***Smicha*** (Qatar/2016) by Amal Al-Muftah, about cross-generational family bonds; and ***Voices from the Urbanscape*** (Qatar/2017) by Shaima Al Tamimi and Mariam Salim, a travelogue through Doha's urbanisation projects.

Ajyal 2019 will roll out the kids carpet again for a fun and family-friendly screening of the cherished classic ***The Wizard of Oz*** (1939) by Victor Fleming at the VOX Cinemas in Doha Festival City. The fantasy musical continues to enthral generations as they follow Dorothy's path down the yellow brick road to the Emerald City to see the Wizard.

مؤسسة الدوحة للأفلام

DOHA FILM INSTITUTE

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.

Doha Film Institute

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