



## Press Release

# **Ajyal Youth Film Festival to Instill Film Appreciation amongst Young Audiences**

***Doha Film Experience to Feature 29 Films Competing in the 'Mohaq', 'Hilal' and 'Bader' sections of the Festival***

**Doha, Qatar; November 11, 2013:** Building on its mandate to encourage young enthusiasts to develop a genuine appreciation for film, the inaugural Ajyal Youth Film Festival will showcase a selection of in-competition films under the Doha Film Experience 'Mohaq', 'Hilal' and 'Bader' segments.

The in-competition line-up includes 8 features and 21 shorts in three distinct segments, guaranteed to stimulate, inspire, and encourage young jurors participating in the Doha Film Experience to contribute to the region's burgeoning cinematic landscape.

Presenting rich insights into the minds of some of the most prolific up-and-coming filmmakers, the Ajyal Youth Film Festival will screen seven shorts in the 'Mohaq' category, four features and six shorts in the 'Hilal' segment while the 'Bader' section screens four features and eight shorts.

Fatma Al Remaihi, Festival Director, Ajyal Youth Film Festival, said: "Our young generation is the future of our country and the region. We would like to inspire them, broaden their horizons, and spark their creative interests. The themes, storylines, and characters in each film under the 'Mohaq', 'Hilal' and 'Bader' sections have been curated to motivate and trigger new thoughts and ideas for the next wave of filmmakers from the region and we are very excited to engage with this important audience."

'Mohaq,' which derives its name from the Arabic word for 'new moon,' has been designed to stimulate the minds of young audiences and encourage conversations, for age groups between 8 and 12.

Seven short films from across the world will feature in the 'Mohaq' showcase. Headlining the line-up is Austrian and German co-production, ***No One Pukes in Heaven (2013)***, by Katja Benrath, Florian Hirschmann, and Daniela Sandhofer, which tells the story of a cancer-stricken mother and her young daughter, both of whom are trying to create memories that will last a lifetime.

Satsuki Okawa's ***Little Kyoto Neon Hood (2012)***, from Japan, is the story of Kyota, and the two things he cannot live without – his old English vocabulary book and his disaster-prevention hood. ***Yim & Yoyo (2012)*** by Dutch director Anna van Keimpema follows Yim, a young boy who suffers from speech anxiety, but learns to overcome this obstacle with the help of his imaginary friend, Yoyo the Panda.

***Casparade – It's Best to Be Yourself (2013)*** by Polish filmmakers Wojtek Wawszczyk and Kamil Polak, is the hearty story of Casper and his trials; all of which he overcomes with a little bit of support from his family; while Emirati director, Abdulla Al-Hemairi's ***Our Home (2012)***, highlights how lack of attention towards one's children can result in dramatic setbacks.



British director, Chris Palmer's ***The Boy with Chocolate Fingers (2012)*** presents clever rhymes and inventive performances to embody each person's unique quality; and Eka Papiashvili's ***The Girl from Gori (2012)*** from Georgia, is the story of the new kid in school, Tamari, who loses something that is precious to her when a classmate she likes ruins it.

'Hilal', which originates from the Arabic word for the 'crescent', will screen films that trigger new thoughts and ideas amongst teenagers and soon-to-be adults from ages 13 to 17. The segment will showcase six short films and four feature films from Belgium, Colombia, Egypt, Greece, Iraq, Jordan, Netherlands, Palestine, and the UAE.

Headlining the four feature films in this section is ***When I Saw You (2012)*** by Annemarie Jacir, a co-production between Jordan, Greece, Palestine, and the UAE, depicting the story of Tarek and his mother, both of whom are stranded in a refugee camp, while his father remains in Palestine. Homesick and lacking patience, he decides to set off on a journey back home.

'Hilal' will also play host to three feature productions from the Netherlands. ***Kauwboy (2012)*** by Boudewijn Koole, which tells the tale of Jojo, a 10-year old boy who lives in a rural area of the Netherlands, with his father. Jojo's exuberance is his way of coping with the absence of his country-singer mother, who is expected home soon after her tour of the America. His only solace is a friendship with the abandoned baby jackdaw, which becomes the trigger for reconnecting with his emotionally detached father.

***Mike Says Goodbye (2012)*** by Maria Peters is the story of Mike, who is on the brink of being sent to a foster home when his mother does not turn up to have him discharged. Mike and his friend Vincent must now foil a devious strategy to get him home for Christmas to be with his mother. ***Regret (2013)***, by Dave Schram, puts the spotlight on bullying, with Jochem, an easy target for his class bullies. When their class mentor organises a party and Jochem does not show up, the next day their principal informs them that Jochem never made it home the night before.

Six short films under 'Hilal' will bring some of life's vignettes to the big screen. Headlining the showcase is Colombian filmmaker, Giovanni Granada's ***The Invention (2012)***, the story of two 12-year old boys, Danny and Andrès, both of whom are trying to learn about girls by mastering the art of photography.

Egyptian director, Ahmed Ibrahim's ***Noor (2012)***, follows Fings and his mission to hang Ramadan lights on his building, when an array of obstacles arise; while the Belgium, Iraq, and UAE co-production, ***Baghdad Messi (2013)*** by Sahim Omar Kalifa, narrates the story of Hammoudi and his friends, all of whom who are obsessed with football, and find themselves stuck in a situation when Hammoudi's television breaks down... just before the final match of the Champions League.

***Fatih (2012)*** by Danyael Sugawara depicts the story of young Fatih, who lives with his mother and sisters, and questions if his uncle Ahmed is really a good role model for him; and ***Sounds of Mazin (2012)*** by Ingrid Kamerling, a compelling documentary following Mazin, the story of a young boy, who after being deaf, hears sounds for the first time. Both short films originate from the Netherlands.



Syrian filmmaker, Hani Kichi's ***The Legend (2011)***, will provide audiences with a gorgeous, animated rendition, of the tale of the unification of the United Arab Emirates, combined with the mythology of Ancient Greece.

Boasting of films from Denmark, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Iran, Kuwait, Poland, Taiwan, UAE, UK, and the USA, the 'Bader' section aimed at jurors between the ages of 18 to 21, derives its names from the Arabic word for 'full moon'.

Guaranteed to encourage young adults to take their own steps on the path of life, the in-competition films under the 'Bader' showcase include four features and eight shorts.

The segment will include ***The Way Way Back (2013)***, by American filmmakers Jim Rash and Nat Faxon, that relays the story of 14-year old Duncan, his mother, and her overbearing boyfriend on a summer vacation. Duncan has trouble fitting in until he strikes up an unlikely friendship with Owen, the easygoing manager of the Water Wizz water park. Duncan eventually finds his place in the world in this charming coming-of-age tale that features great performances from Liam James, Toni Collette, Steve Carell, and Sam Rockwell.

An Afghanistan and France co-production, ***Wajma (An Afghan Love Story)(2013)*** by Barmak Akram, portrays the story of Wajma, a young woman bound for law school, who is seduced by Mustafa, a gregarious waiter. The two begin a playful, clandestine relationship that gets Wajma deep into trouble. ***The Inevitable Defeat of Mister and Pete (2013)*** by American director George Tillman Jr., depicts how over the course of a very tough summer, Mister and Pete learn how to survive on their own.

From Hong Kong and Taiwan is Rong-ji Chang's ***Touch of the Light (2012)***, which is based on the real-life story of Taiwanese piano prodigy Huang Yu-Siang. When Siang leaves his rural home and family to attend university in the city, he meets Jie, a beautiful yet unhappy girl who dreams of becoming a dancer, and they inspire each other to pursue their dreams against all odds.

Headlining the showcase of short films is ***The Chase (2012)*** by French filmmaker Philippe Gamer, portraying the story of four loud-mouthed, gun-toting gals in a spectacular car chase with the cops; German director, Joscha Thelosen's ***The Hour Glass (2012)***, in which death finds an abandoned orphan on his doorstep and raises the child as his own; and Iranian director Ali Asgari's ***More Than Two Hours (2013)***, emphasising how the law stands between an ailing woman and the medical attention she desperately requires.

Kuwaiti director Meshal Alhulail's ***Men's Barbershop (2012)*** is a riveting tale of how some things are seemingly insurmountable – such as the man who cuts your hair; while the Denmark and Iceland co-production, ***Whale Valley (2013)***, by Guðmundur Arnar Guðmundsson is about the powerful bond between two brothers that keeps them going strong in the isolation of the remote Icelandic countryside.

***Toto (2013)*** by Polish filmmaker Zbigniew Czapla, narrates the tale of a boy who meets a mysterious man on a sunny summer's day, presenting a beautifully animated rendition of the unexpected end of childhood.



From UAE, Omar Ibrahim's *Ice (2013)* shows a run-of-the-mill day during Ramadan, where everything is business as usual... until a horrendous accident takes place at Iftar; while Fatima Helal Al Baloushi's *In Case You Forgot (2012)*, depicts the moral codes for men and women in the UAE society and what happens when young people step outside of their boundaries.

The Ajyal Youth Film Festival builds on the Doha Film Institute's history of community-based programming. Ajyal invites generations to come together to discuss cinema through events that inspire creative interaction, opening up a fun, collaborative environment where young people can express themselves.

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#### **Sponsor Recognition:**

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#### **About the Doha Film Institute:**

Doha Film Institute is an independent, not-for-profit cultural organisation established in 2010. It organically supports the growth of the local film community by enhancing industry knowledge, cultivating film appreciation and contributing to the development of sustainable creative industries in Qatar.

Doha Film Institute's platforms include funding and production of local, regional and international films, educational programmes, film screenings, the Ajyal Youth Film Festival and the Qumra Doha Film Festival.

With culture, community, education and entertainment at its foundation, the Doha Film Institute serves as an all-encompassing film hub in Doha, as well as a resource for the region and the rest of the world.

Doha Film Institute is committed to supporting Qatar's 2030 vision for the development of a knowledge-based economy.

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