



Press Release

2nd Ajyal Youth Film Festival concludes with young jurors selecting winners at 'Doha Film Experience'

- *Co-funded by the Doha Film Institute, 'Kahlil Gibran's The Prophet' MENA Premiere marked closing red Carpet Gala Screening*
- *Deliberations of 2nd Doha Giffoni Youth Media Summit to set course for international discussion on cultural initiatives for children and youth*
- *Doha Film Institute launches 'Qatari Film Fund' to support short and feature filmmaking by Qataris*
- *More than 3,000 students from 46 schools attended free School Screening sessions at the festival*

Doha, Qatar; December 6, 2014: The second Ajyal Youth Film Festival, presented by the Doha Film Institute, concluded with the red carpet gala screening of ***Kahlil Gibran's The Prophet***, co-funded by the Institute and attended by a delegation of cast and crew including the film's producer and voice talent Salma Hayek-Pinault, writer-director Roger Allers, co-directors Mohammed Saeed Harib and Joan Gratz, Academy Award Winning composer Gabriel Yared and co-producers Clark Peterson and Jose Tamez.

The closing night gala featured a special performance by Gabriel Yared and a 20 piece orchestra which included two pieces from *Kahlil Gibran's The Prophet*, and one each from *The English Patient* and *The Talented Mr Ripley*.

Underlining the growth of a home-grown film industry in Qatar, the festival recorded the strong participation of more than 20 films directed by Qataris and those who call Qatar home. Over the course of seven days, 90 films from 43 countries were screened in addition to an array of activities for families as part of the family weekend celebrations as well as a special photography exhibition featuring the works of Qatari talents.

A highlight of the festival was the Doha Film Experience, which had 450 young jurors between the ages of 8 and 21 evaluating the best films at the festival in three competitive sections - Mohaq (8-12 years); Hilal (13-17 years); and Bader (18-21 years).

Of the 450 jurors, 25 are international delegates from 12 different countries including Australia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Canada, Italy, Kuwait, Lebanon, Macedonia, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Thailand, Tunisia and UAE. In total, 61 films were viewed and critiqued, covering short films, documentaries, and features. The juries voted for five Best Filmmaker awards in the categories of Mohaq, Hilal, and Bader.



Each jury selected a best filmmaker in the short film category who will receive USD 5000 towards their next film. The Hilal and Bader juries also selected awards in the feature film category for USD 15,000 each.

The winners of the 2014 Doha Film Experience Competition are:

- **Bader:**

Shorts: *Keys of Heaven* (Finland, Turkey; Farsi, 2014), directed by Hamy Ramezan

Feature: *Whiplash* (USA, English, 2014) directed by Damien Chazelle

- **Hilal:**

Short: *Helium* (Denmark, Danish, 2013), directed by Anders Walter

Feature: *If I Had Wings* (Canada, English, 2013) directed by Allan Harmon

- **Mohaq Shorts:**

Ignorant (Kuwait, Arabic, 2014), directed by Yousef Al-Abdullah

Fatma Al Remaihi, Acting Chief Executive Officer of the Doha Film Institute and Director of the Ajyal Youth Film Festival, said: “We are delighted by the remarkable response extended by the filmmakers, our partners and the community in Qatar to the second edition of the festival. What is particularly heartening this year is the enthusiasm and interest shown by young people in watching the films, discussing with filmmakers and interacting with their peers. This, we believe, is fundamental in building a strong home-grown film culture and nurturing the skills and talents of young people in Qatar and the region, which is the festival’s fundamental objective.”

The strong participation of young people at the festival was underlined by more than 3,000 students from 46 schools in Qatar attending the special school screenings organised for each morning through the duration of the Festival. The students represented 41 independent schools and five international schools.

At the festival, Doha Film Institute also announced the launch of a dedicated Qatari Film Fund to support short and feature filmmaking by Qataris. To be rolled out early next year, the Qatari Film Fund will develop up to four feature films and will develop and produce up to eight short films every year through two application sessions for Qatari directors and writers. At least one of the four feature films in development will be selected the following year for production support by the Qatari Film Fund through mentoring and financial support.



Also as part of the festival, the second Doha Giffoni Youth Media Summit hosted over 36 film industry professionals around the world, who exchanged views on the state of cinema for youth with a focus on how new media and social networks are affecting it. Their discussions will set the course for developing an action plan over the course of the next six months to manage cultural events and initiatives for children and youth with the next meeting set to take place in Giffoni in 2015.

The Ajyal Youth Film Festival was supported by several governmental and private sector entities including Katara Cultural Village (Cultural Partner); Occidental Petroleum Corporation (Principal Partner); SONY and Fifty One East, Hilton Doha, Novo Cinemas and Qatar Airways (Contributing Sponsors); Franck Provost Paris, Giffoni Experience, Grand Hyatt Doha, MAC Cosmetics, Ministry of Youth & Sports, National Health Insurance Company, Northwestern University in Qatar, Rayyan Water, and Uber (Friends of the Festival); Al Rayyan TV and Qatar Television (Gold Media Sponsors); and I Love Qatar, International New York Times, Qatar Happening, Time Out Doha and T Qatar – New York Times style magazine Qatar Edition (Silver Media Sponsors).

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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 Youth 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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