

Turkish stars Esra Bilgiç and Birkan Sokullu applaud 2024 Ajyal's youth-centric focus

Doha, Qatar; November 17, 2024: Acclaimed Turkish actors Esra Bilgiç and Birkan Sokullu highlighted the 2024 Ajyal Film Festival's distinctive focus on nurturing youth talent in cinema.

"What makes Ajyal special is its commitment to nurturing young voices in film," said Bilgiç. "As artists, we strive to be positive role models, and to contribute to building a world based on mutual respect and understanding. This festival's emphasis on youth perspectives makes this particularly meaningful."

Sokullu, who is visiting the region for the first time, shared his perspective on representing Turkish culture internationally: "As actors, we serve as cultural ambassadors. By sharing our stories and traditions, we are representing our values and promoting stronger understanding. I feel a distinct connection to this at Ajyal, which brings together independent voices in cinema from around the world."

Both actors reflected on what they find most rewarding about their profession. "The ability to step into different lives, be empathetic and understand various perspectives is one the most fulfilling aspect of being an actor," said Bilgiç.

The actors said they are keen to explore the city's cultural landscape. "We're looking forward to visiting Doha's museums and experiencing its rich cultural heritage," said Sokullu. "The city's blend of tradition and modernity is fascinating."

They said they feel very close to Arab films, and said they appreciate Arabic literature, poetry and culture. "The MENA region is one of our biggest viewing demographics. When we produce a cinematic work, we take into consideration the Arab viewers as well as international audiences, yet executing them in our unique creative way. Today, our works resonate with global audiences because human emotions are universal."

The actors also highlighted their new series, ***Doors of Destiny***, produced by TOD Studios. The series, directed by Yunus Ozan Korkut, tells the story of a reclusive computer genius whose life transforms when he meets the enigmatic daughter of an influential Turkish figure. The series is exclusively available on TOD reaching audiences across the Middle East, North African countries, and Turkey.

The 12th edition of Ajyal features 66 films from 42 countries, and includes several programmes such as ***Voices from Palestine*** and the ***Intaj: From Ground Zero Experience*** exhibition. Ajyal 2024 continues through November 23 with screenings and events across various locations including Katara Cultural Village, Sikkat Wadi Msheireb, Lusail, and VOX Cinemas Doha Festival City. Tickets are available online at www.dohafilminstitute.com/filmfestival.

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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 Arab film community through cultivating film appreciation, enhancing industry knowledge and contributing to the development of sustainable creative industries in Qatar and the region. 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.

About Ajyal Film Festival

Ajyal Film Festival is an annual celebration of film designed to nurture young minds and support the development of mindful global citizens and thoughtful future leaders. 'Ajyal', Arabic for 'generations', builds on the Institute's history of community-based programming, and brings people of all ages together through screenings and events that inspire creative interaction and stimulate cinematic dialogue. Through its' jury programme, youth between the ages of 8 and 25 are given an opportunity to watch, analyse and discuss global cinema and culture, developing self-confidence, independent critical thinking skills, self-expression, and an appreciation of cinema, while making new friends and discovering global cultures.

Doha Film Institute:

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