



4th Ajyal Youth Film Festival Celebrates Home-Grown Talent with 17 'Made in Qatar' Films

- *Captivating programme of short films that include narratives, documentaries and essays*
- *Made in Qatar films derive inspiration from life in Qatar and the nation's heritage*
- *2016 programme marks milestone with world premieres of the first completed projects from the 2015 Qatar Film Fund recipients*
- *A remarkable showcase of Qatari talent, the films underline the deep interest of youth in filmmaking, bringing fresh perspectives and narrative styles*

Doha, Qatar; November 8, 2016: Qatar's home-grown film industry marks another milestone in its evolution with the Doha Film Institute showcasing 17 captivating 'Made in Qatar' films at the fourth edition of the Ajyal Youth Film Festival to be held at Katara Cultural Village from November 30 to December 5, 2016.

One of the most popular segments of the Ajyal Youth Film Festival, the programme was conceptualised in 2009 as a platform to screen one-minute films from Qatar based aspiring filmmakers, and has since then grown into an integral programming strand highlighting the diversity of creative talent that exists in Qatar.

The programme has witnessed remarkable evolution over the years in the diversity of storytelling, quality of filmmaking and narrative styles, and increased representation from national talents especially from young women filmmakers, and is now recognised as the definite platform to discover the talent of Qatari filmmakers and those who call Qatar home.

This year, Ajyal brings two programmes of short films that include narratives, documentaries and essays, and marks a milestone with the world premieres of the first completed projects from the 2015 Qatar Film Fund recipients; Al-Johara and Amer-An Arabian Legend, and The Waiting Room and Kashta, recipients of the Institute's Grants Programme.

The dedicated showcase curates an annual slate of films conceptualised and produced by the new generation of filmmaking talent including Qatari directors and filmmakers based in the country. Several of these films are made by independent filmmakers, students of Qatar University or Northwestern University in Qatar, or with the support of the Doha Film Institute's workshops and funding programmes.

An eminent jury of film industry professionals will evaluate the 'Made in Qatar' showcase to award the Best Film. This year, the jury comprises Bahraini actress Haifa Hussain, Director of the Fire Station Gallery Khalifa Al-Obaidly and Emirati director and producer Nayla Al Khaja.

Following their screenings at Ajyal, the Doha Film Institute curates a special travelling series of Made in Qatar films that are screened at markets of international film festivals including Clermont-Ferrand, Cannes Short Film Corner, Berlinale, Dubai International Film Festival, Giffoni Film Festival and Sarajevo Film Festival among others.



Fatma Al Remaihi, Festival Director and CEO of Doha Film Institute, said: “The ‘Made in Qatar’ films are our national pride. They reflect the founding aspiration of the Doha Film Institute and our continued focus on film education, funding and support to nurture a new generation of filmmaking professionals, right here in Qatar.

“This year’s focus on short films was led by our vision to not only extend the opportunity to more talents but also to challenge the creativity and executional brilliance of our filmmakers. Short films are a tough medium to execute; their brevity makes the effort more challenging and we wanted our young filmmakers to bring out their best.

“Each film in ‘Made in Qatar’ this year is an outstanding example of the creative standards of our filmmakers and their ability to push boundaries in making their dream film. This year’s programme is extra special for us as it includes the world premieres of the first completed projects from the Qatar Film Fund. We are also happy to note several young filmmakers returning with their second films. This underlines the positive environment that Qatar offers them to evolve as professional filmmakers. We hope that every member of the community will come to Ajyal to watch their works, encourage them and take pride in our very own filmmakers.”

The selection of films, which will be screened in the ‘Made in Qatar’ segment at the 2016 Ajyal Youth Film Festival includes:

- **9956**, directed by Zaki Hussain is a masterful satire about Hassan, who is told he would never walk. When he discovers he can crawl, he never looked back. The film is as heartfelt as it is hilarious.
- **Amer: An Arabian Legend** is the latest work of Jassim Al-Rumaihi, who won the Best Documentary Film Award at last year’s Ajyal for *The Palm Tree*. It follows the story of Amer, a legendary purebred Arabian racehorse through conversations with those he deeply touched over the course of his career.
- **Ben Al Alam w Al-Din (Between Science and Religion)** is directed by Hamida Issa, the first Qatari woman to set foot on Antarctica. Her first short ‘15 Heartbeats’ screened in Doha in 2011. This poignant but inspiring short reminds us to be always mindful of the present in our all-too-short time on Earth.
- **Daz** by Shoog Shaheen is a clear-eyed look at the passion many young Qatari men have for high-speed drag racing.
- **Al-Johara** directed by Nora Al-Subai is a Qatari take on the classic Cinderella fairy tale, which accentuates Arab traditions with a modern twist.
- **Kashta** directed by AJ Al Thani, depicts a father teaching his sons how to hunt in a quiet desert. But a careless struggle between the two brothers leads to disaster.
- **Shishbarak** by Bayan Dahdah is a gentle, humorous film that captures the wonderful effects of spending time with loved ones even if they aren’t actually there.
- **Makh’bz** is directed by Aisha R. AlMuhannadi, whose documentary *Mubarak AlMalik* was recently screened at Focus on Qatar. In Makh’bz, she transforms the making of bread into a mesmerising vision told through moving images only.
- **Caravan** by Suzannah Mirghani, whose film *Hind’s Dream* screened in ‘Made in Qatar’ in 2014 and won an award for ‘artistic vision and poetic screenwriting.’ *Caravan* depicts the minds of Doha residents meandering in a state of dreamlike suspension when trapped in a traffic jam.



- ***Dana's Kite*** by Noor Al-Nasr has Dana playing on the beach and trying to get her brother's attention but he is too busy messaging his friends to watch out for her.
- ***Dunia*** by Amer Jamhour is about 9-year-old Dunia, whose mother is on a mission but won't share the details, and then, an already strange night becomes a life-or-death struggle.
- ***Love Blood Test*** is directed by Mostafa Sheshtawy, whose film 'Immortalizing Memories' screened in Made in Qatar last year. The new short narrates the story of Baghat and Waneesa, who have passed their love blood test and all they need is her father's blessing. But the path to true love is never simple.
- ***Fragile*** by Khalifa Al Marri deals with the issues of break-up and depicts the struggles of one half of an ex-couple who is having a lot of trouble letting go.
- ***More Than Two Days*** is an enigmatic short by Ahmed Abdelnaser Ahmed, which explores how difficult it can be to talk about emotional and physical trauma.
- ***Passport*** by Dana Al-Meer is a fast-paced and very funny short about Reem and Mahmoud who want to go to America but circumstances keep getting in the way.
- ***Um Khalifa*** by Alanood Al-Kuwari is about 10-year-old Khalifa born with Down Syndrome, and his frank conversation with his loving mother, looking at her experience raising him.
- ***The Waiting Room*** is directed by Hend Fakhroo, who is also developing a feature narrative supported by Doha Film Institute's grants. This short is about two families from two different backgrounds who share a room at a hospital's ICU, and share their hopes and struggles.

Amer: An Arabian Legend and Al-Johara are recipients of the 2016 Qatari Film Fund while Kashta and The Waiting Room received funding support from the DFI grants programme in 2015.

The 'Made in Qatar' films will be screened with a Red Carpet ceremony to be attended by the young filmmakers on Thursday, December 1 at 7 PM at Katara Drama Theatre. Tickets are priced QR25 and are available at the Ajyal Box Office from Wednesday, 16 November at 2:00 PM.

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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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