



## 4<sup>th</sup> Ajyal Youth Film Festival opens today (Wednesday, Nov. 30) with opening red carpet of 'The Eagle Huntress'

- *Six-day event to also introduce Ajyal Talks that promote social responsibility among youth through insightful discussions on global issues and trends*

**Doha, Qatar; November 29, 2016:** The fourth Ajyal Youth Film Festival, presented by the Doha Film Institute, will roll out today (Wednesday, November 30, 2016) with the opening night red carpet of the inspiring Kazakh film, ***The Eagle Huntress*** (Mongolia, UK, USA/ 2016), a heartwarming celebration of the passion of a determined young woman, the special bond she shares with her father, and of the ability of the human spirit to rise to a challenge.

Otto Bell, director of *The Eagle Huntress* and actress Aisholpan Nurgaiv will attend the opening ceremony, which will also host the Ajyal Jurors, over 550 young people from across the world, who evaluate the films in competition at Ajyal in three categories – Mohaq, Hilal and Bader.

This year, Ajyal highlights the theme of positive social change with 70 thought-provoking films that will inspire the youth and stimulate discussions about real and relevant issues that affect them globally. The motivational line-up includes 24 features and 46 short narratives/documentaries, from 33 countries. There will be 42 public screenings, 18 jury screenings, interactive panels and master-classes, red carpets, exhibitions and family activities.

The themes of the films at Ajyal range from women empowerment to the global displacement crisis, the loss of loved ones, financial dependence, separation and every day struggles, presented with an underlying spirit of optimism and hope that will warm the hearts of the viewers.

During the six-day event, Ajyal Youth Film Festival will also will introduce three engaging sessions of insightful discussions under 'Ajyal Talks', that provide an inspiring interaction with people who have a positive influence on youth, and highlight the issues affecting the youth of the region.

A thought-provoking conversation series with regional experts on global issues and trends, Ajyal Talks 2016 will be headlined by three eminent social influencers: **Omar Hussein**, who works with Syrian refugees through the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) as well as with AJ+, Al Jazeera's online news and current affairs channel; **Mohammed Al Hajji**, a doctoral student and teaching assistant in the social and behavioural sciences at Temple University in Philadelphia; and **Khaled Khalifa**, UNHCR Regional Representative to the States of the Gulf Co-Operation Council.

All Ajyal Talks are open for free to the public, and are aimed at promoting intercultural dialogue to foster original thinking and positive action.

Fatma Al Remaihi, Festival Director and CEO of Doha Film Institute, said: "Through Ajyal Talks, we aim to engage the youth meaningfully, promote debate and dialogue on global and regional issues, and inspire critical thinking among them. With topics ranging from the refugee crisis to digital media and youth



empowerment, we are confident that these interactive discussions will have a positive impact on the minds of our youth.”

The first Ajyal Talks will be by Omar Hussein, a Saudi public figure who specialises in digital media, on December 1, 7.30 PM at the Katara Opera House. He will discuss on ***‘When 1 Thousand > 1 Million,’*** which will highlight the difference between passively watching and being affected by digital content – and how that content can spur people to action rather than simply gathering a larger viewership. A comedian, Hussein wrote and presented the YouTube programmes ‘On the Go’ and ‘Truth Be Said’, and was the presenter of ‘Al Jami3a’ on television.

Mohammed Al Hajji will speak on ***‘What I Learned in My Twenties’*** on December 2 at 6 PM at Katara Drama Theatre. He will outline the major life lessons he learned as a young GCC student living in the USA. Al Hajji co-founded Genome, a social entrepreneurship project that aims to curb hereditary diseases in Saudi Arabia. His online content focuses on empowering his peers by providing scientifically based self-development methods that help the young generation make the most of their daily lives.

Khaled Khalifa’s Ajyal Talks on ***‘Why Refugees Matter’*** is on December 4, 7 PM at the Katara Opera House, and will follow the screening of the film ***Born in Syria*** (Spain, Denmark / 2016), a Special Screening at the Ajyal Youth Film Festival. He will share his insights on the current global displacement crisis, with a focus on the situation of Syrian refugees.

Directed by Hernán Zin, *Born in Syria* follows seven young refugees over the course of a year – from their escape from their homeland, experiences in camps in the Middle East, arrival in Europe, and the settling into their new homes. The film will screen on Dec. 4 at 5 PM.

This year, Ajyal highlights the theme of positive social change with 70 thought-provoking films that will inspire the youth and stimulate discussions about real and relevant issues that affect them globally. In addition to regular screenings, the Festival also features Special Screenings, Thematic Tributes, Cinema Under the Stars, Family Weekend activities and a Creativity Hub.

Tickets are priced QR25 for general screening, and are available for purchase 24 hours a day at [ajyalfilm.com](http://ajyalfilm.com) or from the Ajyal Katara Main Box Office in Katara Building 12 or Ajyal FNAC Ticket Outlet, FNAC Qatar (at Lagoon Mall).

Katara is the Cultural Partner and Oxy Qatar is the Principal Partner for the 2016 edition. Qatar Tourism Authority is the Signature Partner of the festival this year. For more details on the Ajyal Youth Film Festival, please visit [www.dohafilminstitute.com/filmfestival](http://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 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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