



7th Ajyal Film Festival Presents 96 Inspirational Films from 39 Countries including 19 Doha Film Institute Supported Projects

- Festival to open with the Middle East Premiere of Palestinian Auteur Elia Suleiman's Critically Acclaimed '**It Must Be Heaven**'
- Programme includes **23** Features and **73** shorts; **50** from the Arab World; **56** by women filmmakers and **19** films supported by the Institute
- Celebrating Year of Culture with a special **Made in India** section
- World Premiere of **2** new projects from previous Qatari Film Fund recipients
- Ajyal Jury is comprised of over **400** jurors from **41** countries including **48** international jurors

Doha, Qatar; November 3, 2019: The seventh Ajyal Film Festival, presented by the Doha Film Institute (DFI), will present a compelling slate of **96** films from **39** countries that demonstrate the power of storytelling to transform minds, and will inspire audiences and stimulate discussions about real and relevant issues that affect them.

The six-day event, to be held from November 18- 23 at Katara Cultural Village, will feature public screenings, Ajyal jury screenings, interactive discussions, red carpet events, and community-oriented activities that will delight all ages. Ajyal 2019 is expanding its public screenings beyond Katara to include screenings at Novo Cinemas in the Pearl and VOX Cinemas at Doha Festival City.

This year's Opening Night Gala of **Ajyal Film Festival** will present Palestinian auteur Elia Suleiman's **It Must Be Heaven** (France, Qatar, Germany, Canada, Turkey), co-financed by the Institute. The dark satire is an autobiographical account of Elia's experience of leaving Palestine to find an alternative homeland. The promise of a new life turns into a comedy of errors; however far he travels, from Paris to New York, something always reminds him of home. A comic saga exploring identity, nationality, and belonging, the film won the Jury Special Mention and the FIPRESCI Critics Award at the 2019 Cannes Film Festival.

Tickets for the 7th Ajyal Film Festival are available for purchase from today, November 3rd at the Ajyal Main Box Office located in Katara Building 10, at the Ajyal Box Office at VOX Cinemas Doha Festival City for screenings taking place at VOX Cinemas and from the Novo Cinemas Box Office for screenings at the Novo Cinemas Pearl. For up-to-date information and ticket purchase please visit: www.dohafilminstitute.com/festival

"Films allow us to escape our daily lives to visit fascinating new worlds. As we discover ourselves in characters and stories and find more similarities than differences, we find the great value of our own realities. Ajyal 2019 captures this very spirit of self-discovery with the theme 'Find Film, Find Life' to ignite a resounding celebration of cinema," said Fatma Hassan Alremaihi, Festival Director and Chief Executive Officer of the Doha Film Institute, at the official press conference of Ajyal Film Festival 2019. "Whether it's wonder, adventure, beauty, or hope, the things we find through film will contribute to a creative dialogue and exchange that will instill deeper cultural understanding and connection in our lives."



2019 PROGRAMMING HIGHLIGHTS

Drawn from distinctive milieus from around the world, Ajjal Film Festival continues to showcase directors of all backgrounds and stages of their careers. The diverse programme consists of **23** features and **73** shorts, including **50** from the Arab World and **56** by women filmmakers.

The programme includes festival favourites and award winners such as the winner of the NETPAC Award at the 2019 Toronto International Film Festival **1982** by Oualid Mouaness; 2019 Sundance Film Festival Audience Award Winner **The Farewell** by Lulu Wang; 2019 Sundance Grand Jury prize winner for Best Documentary Film **Honeyland** by Ljubomir Stefanov and Tamara Kotevska and **For Sama** by Waad al-Kateab and Edward Watts, winner of the Golden Eye Documentary prize at the 2019 Cannes Film Festival

Ajjal 2019 shines the spotlight on emerging voices from Sudan with the special Focus on Sudan section that will present two award-winning films by the nation's emerging cinematic voices. **Talking About Trees** (2019), a DFI-supported documentary by director Suhaib Gasmelbari, and Amjad Abu Alala's **You Will Die at Twenty** (2016), a DFI-grant production that won the Lion of the Future (Luigi de Laurentiis) Award for Best Debut Feature at the 76th Venice International Film Festival.

In the fifth year of one of the most unique cinematic presentations in the world, Ajjal's inclusive screenings experience returns with five inspiring DFI-supported short films from Qatar's promising filmmaking talent. Presented in collaboration with the Translation and Interpreting Institute of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences at Hamad Bin Khalifa University, the trans-adapted presentation marks the UN International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

Film lovers will be immersed in the thought-provoking and vital cinematic artform of short films with an eclectic programme of **73** films from across the globe including a selection of contemporary short films from up-and-coming directors from India as part of the **Made in India** special presentation, to celebrate the 'Qatar-India 2019 Year of Culture'. Curated by the Mumbai Academy of Moving Images, the shorts offer us an insight into modern India and are a testament to the country's vibrant filmmaking heritage.

MADE IN QATAR PRESENTED BY OOREDOO

The 2019 Made in Qatar programme presented by Ooredoo comprises **22** inspiring films, including the world premieres of next completed projects from the Qatari Film Fund recipients, Ahmad Al Sharif's **End of the Road** and Kholood Al-Ali's **Fragile**, shining the spotlight on Qatari talents and presenting our stories to the world.

SPECIAL GUESTS

Ajjal 2019 is proud to host some key personalities in films, arts and humanity from Qatar and international; Master filmmakers Elia Suleiman and Kiyoshi Kurosawa, upcoming Arab filmmakers Amjad Abu Alala and Oualid Mouness, visual artist Bouthayna Al-Muftah, filmmakers Jason Silva



in partnership with WISE-Qatar Foundation and Gitanjali Rao, actor and producer Chace Crawford in partnership with beIN and Sundance TV and actor Kris Hitchen among others.

DFI SUPPORTED FILMS

Ajyal 2019 will also screen **19** films supported by the DFI Grants programme, co-financing, Qatari Film Fund or projects mentored through its labs and workshops. These include: ***It Must Be Heaven, To the Ends of the Earth, 1982, Bombay Rose, You Will Die at Twenty*** among others.

JURY HIGHLIGHTS

The Jury Competition line-up at Ajyal 2019 will consist of **15** feature films and a series of short programmes. This year, we have over **400** jurors from **41** nationalities including **48** international jurors who will travel to Doha for the event from Armenia, Bosnia Herzegovina, Italy, Iraq, India, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Mozambique, Oman, Palestine, Turkey, Tunisia and the United Kingdom.

Each jury category of Mohaq, Hilal, and Bader will watch a carefully curated selection of films, discuss them collectively and with industry experts, evaluate the individual creative and emotional impact of these films, and participate in events including panels, workshops and Q&A sessions with filmmakers.

AJYAL CREATIVITY HUB

Ajyal Creativity Hub presents a vibrant programme of cultural and creative activities which includes Qatar's largest and one-of-its-kind pop-culture event Geekdom, a dynamic approach in the community in Qatar to discover and engage with alternate forms of media; Ajyal Talks – gathering leaders from film, art, television and technology for inspiring and insightful discussions on a broad range of topics, the new Ajyal Tunes, which will shine the spotlight on the country's underground music scene by bringing together Qatar-based performers and internationally acclaimed musicians; and the ARC Exhibition celebrating the art of storytelling.

PARTNERS

2019 Ajyal Film Festival's Official Partners include: **Katara Cultural Village** – Cultural Partner; **Qatar National Tourism Council** – Principal Partner; **Novo Cinemas, Ooredoo**– Strategic Partner, **St.Regis Doha**- Signature Partner.

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Note to Editors:

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 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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