

‘A Hero’ is the story of the hour and its language of humanity resonates with all, says cast

- *Opening gala of 9th Ajyal Film Festival moves audiences with its perspectives on social media manipulation*
- *Directed by Academy Award winning filmmaker and DFI collaborator and Qumra Master Asghar Farhadi, the film won Grand Prix at Cannes Film Festival earlier this year*

Doha, Qatar; 8 November 2021: As the dangers of social media manipulation become evident across all walks of lives, including its use as a repressive tact by many nations, a powerful film that depicts it against the frailties and failings of ordinary men moved audiences in Qatar as the opening film of the ninth Ajyal Film Festival.

A Hero (Iran, France/2020), directed by Academy Award winning filmmaker and DFI collaborator and Qumra Master Asghar Farhadi, received rousing applause at its screenings at the festival, as it highlighted the anguish of a man who finds himself caught up in a quagmire of increasingly complex moral dilemmas—all stemming from a single, seemingly inconsequential falsehood.

Addressing the media, the film’s cast shared their views on the film, how its theme is relevant to a global audience, as well as on women empowerment and how the location of the film, Shiraz, played an integral role in helping connect the film with the old and new generations.

Amir Jadidi and Fereshteh Sadrorafaii, the lead cast of the film, said the most important message that the film conveys is how social media distortions and disinformation campaigns affect people across the world. “The impact of social media platforms is pervasive and is something most people anywhere in the world can relate to,” said Jadidi. “That is also one of the reasons this film will find universal resonance.”

He added that the film is essentially ‘human centric.’ “What it shows is that across the world, we need a human standard. The language of humanity is something that people understand irrespective of language or where they are from.” He said he is confident of the film’s success [commercially] because it is all about human connections.

They said shooting the film in Shiraz was a significant decision as it will address several questions children ask about various issues. “The location, with its rich history, in itself serves as a bridge to engage the older and newer generations.”

Sadrorafaii said it was a privilege to be part of the film, which also underlines the important role that women in play in society today. “Women are half the world and it is important to understand and appreciate their perspective. In fact, it is heartening to be here in Doha and to listen to H.E. Sheikha

Al Mayassa Bint Hamad Bin Khalifa Al-Thani [Chair of Doha Film Institute] and Fatma Hassan Alremaihi [Chief Executive Officer, Doha Film Institute and Festival Director, Ajyal Film Festival]. We see what women empowerment means here.”

A Hero is a powerful story about Rahim, who finds himself in jail for incurring a business debt he is unable to repay. While on a two-day leave, his girlfriend offers him a gilded opportunity to secure his freedom, albeit at a dubiously immoral price. Unable to balance the weight of his newly ill-gotten gold coins with his conscience, Rahim does the ethical thing and attempts to find their rightful owner by putting up posters around town. But it leads to unintended consequences as Rahim is thrust into the limelight as social media's latest celebrity.

Tickets for Ajyal 2021 and can be purchased at www.dohafilminstitute.com/festival.

The seven-day festival from Nov. 7 to 13, 2021 has a diverse mix of virtual and in-person events including film screenings, interactive discussions, multi-media art exhibit, Qatar's largest pop-culture event Geekdom, and a drive-in cinema as part of a multisensory experience for all ages.

-ENDS-

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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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', brings people of all ages together through screenings and events that inspire creative interaction and stimulate cinematic dialogue.

Ajyal Film Festival builds on the Doha Film Institute's history of community-based programming. 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.

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