
7—13

Nov

2021

Ajyal Film Festival



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**Film
Catalogue**

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QATAR

Ajyal Film Festival

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The Ajyal Film Festival focuses on one central goal: to build a strong cinematic industry in Qatar serving talented new film artists. We make this our priority because we believe in the power of cinema to influence humanity for the better.

This year's Festival will present strong narratives about community, as more people and families join in celebrating cinema through inspiring and energising in-person events. Looking back over the past two years, we can see that these events are proof in themselves of the wonderful potential of cinema.

As the Festival begins, the world at large is still struggling to recover from the widespread social and economic consequences of the pandemic. Confronted by these daunting challenges, we have nevertheless witnessed the ability of the human spirit to bounce back, proving that together, we can move mountains.

There was no better demonstration of that than here in Qatar, where we united to reinvigorate our creative community, and with our shared commitment became one of the first nations to speed back toward normalcy. It will, however, not be the normal that we knew. It is a new reality full of heightened awareness of our social and individual responsibility, and one in which we have learnt to adapt and embrace technology to connect with one another.

Most important of all, the past two years have shown us how the creative industry has transformed itself to break down barriers of geography and strengthen our artistic voice that is now heard across borders, languages, and cultures. The spirit of creativity has emerged brighter than ever.

Ajyal Film Festival helped lead the way last year by hosting one of the world's first hybrid cultural celebrations, in person and online. The shift to a new approach was furthered by the year-round activities of the Doha Film Institute, which continues to nurture new talent, identify new voices and bring together the international film community to tell the stories of humanity around the world.

As we push innovation even further this year in the ninth edition of the Ajyal Film Festival, we are continuing to deliver on our promise to young, emerging and talented filmmakers to provide a solid platform to pursue their dreams. While our nation prepares to host the world's biggest sporting event, the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, we have the unique opportunity to present the most special edition of Ajyal, showing the world another aspect of our can-do attitude, our innate strength and our unwavering commitment to nurture creative talents wherever they are in the world.

Our message from Qatar to the rest of the world can be distilled in one word: Hope.

Fatma Hassan Alremaihi**Chief Executive Officer,
Doha Film Institute****Festival Director,
Ajyal Film Festival**

A rewarding year of dedicated efforts by the Doha Film Institute to nurture young talent in cinema has come to fruition at the ninth Ajyal Film Festival, and what a journey it has been!

Despite the challenges of the pandemic that limited the mobility and physical interaction traditionally considered crucial to the creative and film industry, we discovered that together we could overcome these constraints, and that the passion of our creative talents demonstrated for cinema is stronger than the roadblocks they faced.

We continue to engage with film talents in our unwavering commitment to providing quality organised virtual training events, ensure meaningful networking with cinematic Masters, and identify new projects for grants and funding to build a stronger roster of DFI-supported films, we are rewarded with perseverance manifested in several films supported by the DFI such as 'Made in Qatar' projects being selected for international film festivals in the past months, and our films being acknowledged for continuing to build a uniquely compelling range of independent cinema.

Our decision to host the first hybrid film celebration last year is further validated as our talents benefit from a platform to engage with the global film industry, and more importantly, for our community to step out and experience the real world of cultural events we missed for all these months. That is why we have themed our Ajyal campaign as 'Press Play'. It signals the return of playfulness, which we have so missed; it underlines the need to rekindle people's passion for play, exploration and discovery through shared cultural experience. From pause, we are going into full-on play mode, to relieve our everyday stresses and recharge our spirits.

Amplifying our hybrid model, we further the belief that while we are well on our way to normalcy. We must do it in a way that

ensures everyone's safety, and the 'Ajyal Universe' we've created will entice the community and empower everyone to create more memorable moments.

As we prepare for the ninth edition—the longest serving in the region—we are exceptionally proud of our 450 young Ajyal Jurors, who remind us of the experience of cinema from uniquely different learning perspectives, and who remain the very heart of what we do. We are also grateful to the new voices in cinema who trust and share with us their creative projects to be brought to reality.

With 85 films to be showcased from 44 countries, this year's Ajyal Film Festival will offer several special features including a brilliant line-up of the best in world cinema today, and the Ajyal Creativity Hub that will brim with activities to delight every visitor.

We extend our sincere appreciation to our distinguished Board of Trustees, partners, staff and volunteers, who have worked tirelessly and have been open and receptive to exciting new approaches to delivering the cinematic experience, to deliver this festival to you.

Together, let us celebrate the power of cinema to bring us closer, enable us to understand each other more deeply, and discover that we are all united in our hope for peace and positivity. So, let us 'Press Play' and enjoy the festival.

Ajyal Programming Team

Festival Director, Ajyal Film Festival
Fatma Hassan Alremaihi

Deputy Director, Ajyal Film Festival
Abdulla Al Mosallam

Director of Strategy & Development
Hanaa Issa

Programmers
Aya Al-Blouchi
Majid Al-Remaihi
Rawda Al-Thani
Farah El-Buy
Karem Kamel

Animation Programming Advisor
Maryam Al-Khulaifi

Pre-Screeners
Amna Al Ali
Anthea Devotta
Ben Robinson
Shorooq Shaheen

Cultural Partners

Katara Cultural Village Foundation



Launched in 2010, the Katara Cultural Village Foundation is considered Doha’s cultural hub, encompassing an open-air amphitheatre, an opera house, a drama theatre and a series of well-frequented international restaurants.

Katara presents a varied range of regular performances and exhibitions by international and local artists, orchestras, and opera and theatre companies. Katara is home to the Doha Film Institute year-round offices and many Qatari associations; as well, several important visual and performing arts organisations have their offices in Katara.

Giffoni Film Festival



The Giffoni Film Festival is one of the most relevant international cultural events for youth. Named after the town in the south of Italy where it originated, it was launched in 1971 by then 18-year-old Claudio Gubitosi, and has made

its mark internationally thanks to its unique ability to select and present the best in films for young people. Giffoni’s main focus is making children and young adults, who attend from 50 countries worldwide, the protagonists of the event by providing them with the opportunity to sit on the juries that decide the festival’s winners. The event has developed over the years, becoming a truly global experience for children, youth and their families. Capable of attracting celebrities and industry professionals from around the world, Giffoni is now a comprehensive, year-long cultural event that is exported worldwide.

Festival Overview



Ajyal Competition

The stars of our festival are our young Ajyal Jury. From ages 8 to 25, they form the juries of the Ajyal Competition and select the festival's ultimate award winners. By providing young people access to acclaimed international cinema and renowned filmmakers, Ajyal helps them develop their understanding of the world around them and grow into confident and mindful global citizens. The Ajyal Competition inspires creative thinking, cooperation and self-expression—leading to friendships that will last a lifetime.

Ajyal Jury

The Ajyal Competition Jury is divided into three sections by age group. The three juries are:



Mohaq

Mohaq means 'New Moon' in Arabic, and these are Ajyal's youngest jurors, aged 8 to 12. They will get to watch one programme of inspiring short films as well as four captivating feature-length films.



Hilal

Ajyal's jurors aged 13 to 17 make up the Hilal jury, which means 'Crescent Moon' in Arabic. Four compelling feature films and one programme of fascinating shorts make up this jury's film selection.



Bader

The most mature of Ajyal's juries, Bader—Arabic for 'Full Moon'—jurors are aged 18 to 25 and will select their favourite films from five thought-provoking features and two programmes of engaging short films.

Awards

Each of the three Ajyal Juries awards a Best Film prize to their favourite short and feature-length films, for a total of six awards. The directors of the winning films are granted funding toward their next film, so jurors are empowered to support and promote future content that is relevant and meaningful to them.

Our youngest audiences will vote for their favourite film in the Bariq short film programme. A jury of regional industry professionals will decide the Best Film in the 'Made in Qatar' presented by Ooredoo section. While the general public will determine our Ajyal Audience Award.

Special Screenings & Events

In addition to our incredible selection of films for this year's Ajyal Competition, we are once again delighted to host an array of special screenings and events at the festival.

Msheireb is home to Ajyal's Creativity Hub, including our ever-popular events such as Geekdom, the multimedia art exhibit 'We Will Not Leave' and Ajyal Tunes.

Always a crowd-favourite, the Ajyal Drive-in Cinema experience returns to Lusail with something for everyone on this year's programme—from classic family favourites to our terrifying midnight screenings.

Ajyal also returns to VOX Cinemas, Doha Festival City, with an exciting selection of internationally award-winning features and compelling short programmes for audiences to enjoy.

In partnership with the Translation and Interpreting Institute of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences at Hamad Bin Khalifa University, we are delighted to bring our popular inclusive experience back to the silver screen at Katara with a DFI supported film, Oualid Mouaness' critically acclaimed '1982'.

Festival Films

Opening Night

A Hero

Iran, France / Farsi / 2021
127 mins / Colour



Rahim 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 no good deed goes unpunished, and he soon finds himself caught up in a quagmire of increasingly complex moral dilemmas—all stemming from a single, seemingly inconsequential falsehood.

Thrust into the limelight as social media's latest celebrity, Rahim quickly finds expectations and responsibilities building around him, higher than the walls of his medium-security jail ever were. Confronted at every turn, our hero's journey is certainly not the archetypal, obvious circle. While it may appear a simple story on the surface, the twists of fate unfold to create a rich tapestry of human (mis)behaviour and deep philosophical quandaries. A truly riveting tale of morality in the age of social media from two-time Academy award-winner and collaborator with Doha Film Institute, Asghar Farhadi.

MENA Premiere
Winner of a Grand Prix Award
at Cannes Film Festival 2021

Director /
Screenwriter: **Asghar Farhadi**
Producer: **Alexandre Mallet-**
Guy, Asghar Farhadi
Cinematographer: **Ali Ghazi**
Editor: **Haydeh Safiyari**
Cast: **Amir Jadidi, Mohsen**
Tanabandeh, Fereshteh Sadrorafai
Sales: **Memento International**
Distribution: **Falcon Films FZCO**



A long-time friend and collaborator with Doha Film Institute, **Asghar Farhadi** was born in Iran.

He studied theatre, receiving his BA from the University of Tehran and his MA from Tarbiat Modares University. Farhadi was a Qumra Master in 2017 and has won two Academy Awards for Best Foreign Language Film—his first for 'A Separation' (2012) and the second for 'The Salesman' (2017), which was supported by DFI. His other directorial credits include 'Fireworks Wednesday' (2006), 'About Elly' (2009), 'The Past' (2013), and 'Everybody Knows' (2018).

Made in Qatar

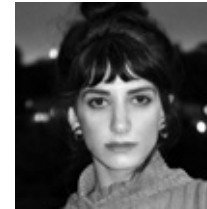
Presented by Ooredoo

This special film showcases and celebrates the work of Qatari filmmakers, and those who call Qatar home. The programme presented this year features some internationally shown and award-winning short documentaries and narratives.

Made in Qatar Awards

The Made in Qatar awards are decided by a jury of three internationally renowned and respected arts professionals.

Made in Qatar Jury



Sheila Vand
Head of the Jury

Sheila Vand is an actress and artist who has appeared in numerous award-winning films such as 'The Rental' (2021), 'We the Animals' (2018), 'A Girl Walks Home Alone at Night' (2014), and the Academy Award-winning 'Argo' (2012). Sheila can currently be seen as the lead of internationally-acclaimed artist Shirin Neshat's feature film 'Land of Dreams', which premiered at the 2021 Venice Film Festival, and is showing at this year's Ajyal. Sheila has served on juries of the Sundance Film Festival and the Vimeo Film Festival.



Ahmed Al Baker

'From Dream to Reality' was the title of Ahmed Al Baker's TED speech back in 2010, in which he spoke about changing his career from oil and gas to the Film industry. Now, a decade later, Ahmed has worked on two science-fiction shows—'The Pact' and 'Medinah'—as a showrunner and produced several feature films, shorts, documentaries, and TV programmes. Since 2011, Mr Al Baker has served as a Film and TV Specialist for Katara Cultural Village. Mr Al Baker is also currently serving as Executive Board Member and CEO at Katara Studios.



Farah Nabulsi

Farah Nabulsi is an Academy Award-nominated and BAFTA Award-winning Palestinian British filmmaker. In 2016 she started working in the film industry as a writer and producer of short fiction films, including 'Today They Took My Son', which screened at the United Nations. 'The Present', her directorial debut, which she co-wrote and produced, premiered at Clermont-Ferrand International Short Film Festival 2020 and won the coveted Audience Award for Best Film. It went on to win over 40 International Film Festival Jury and Audience Awards, a BAFTA Award and an Oscar Nomination. Farah has been invited to serve as a jury member at numerous festivals and is a member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

And Then They Burn the Sea

Doha Film Institute Supported Film

Qatar / Arabic / 2021

13 mins / Colour

Middle East Premiere



Qatar's first-ever short to be selected in competition at Locarno Film Festival, 'And Then They Burn the Sea' is an elegiac contemplation on familial memory and loss. Filmmaker Majid Al-Remaihi ruminates on the experience of witnessing his mother's gradual and terminal memory loss over the course of many years. Weaving a personal family archive, reenacted dreams and rituals, the film underlines the promise of cinema as a medium for memories even at their most irretrievable.

Director / Screenwriter: **Majid Al-Remaihi**

Producer: **Basel Owies**

Editor: **Amit Chowdhury**

Cinematographer: **Mesa Prum**

Sales / Distribution: **Square Eyes Film**

Majid Al-Remaihi is a filmmaker and film programmer from Doha, Qatar. His short film 'And Then They Burn the Sea' premiered at Locarno 2021. He produced it under the mentorship of Academy Award-nominated director Rithy Panh and with the support of the Qatari Film Fund. Currently, he is developing his next short film. He is also part of the Film Programming team at the Doha Film Institute.

Atlal (Remnants)

Qatar / Arabic / 2021

11 mins / Colour

World Premiere



'Atlal (Remnants)' is a fictional documentary that follows Bassam, a Palestinian man in his fifties, on a journey between the past and present. An abandoned school, the remains of a beach club, and a dusty cinema hold Bassam's cherished memories from his life in Qatar. Through personal archives and interviews with Bassam and his wife, Laila, we get a deeper look into their stories—slowly revealing the dismaying thoughts behind Bassam's nostalgia.

Director: **Balkees Al-Jaafari, Tony El Ghazal**

Producer: **Amal Barakat**

Editor: **Mayyassa Gaddas**

Cast: **Abdul Ghani Maqboul, Manal**

Maqboul, Abdullah Shaat

Tony El Ghazal is a Lebanese director and filmmaker. He has directed several narrative short films, both fiction and non-fiction. His films centre around stories from the Arab world that are universal in their appeal. Tony graduated from Northwestern University in Qatar, where he was awarded two Studio 20Q grants to direct his newest short films, 'Bayt El Omor' (2020) & 'Ibn El Ballad' (2021).

Balkees Al-Jaafari is an Iraqi filmmaker and director. She has previously worked on-set as a producer, sound recordist, director, script supervisor, and editor. Al-Jaafari is well versed in screenplays and scripts revolving around non-fiction narratives and issues that occur in the Middle East.

Border

Doha Film Institute Supported Film

Qatar / English, Arabic / 2021

12 mins / Colour

World Premiere



Mohammed attempts to travel through a border to see his family, but first, he must navigate the new world's rules and regulations. Despite his best efforts in following the complex system, his passage is not an easy one. At every turn, he faces institutionalised apathy and ever-increasing suspicion about his previous whereabouts and future intentions. In a world where we are all colour codes and faceless—judgement seems to turn into prejudice easily.

Director / Screenwriter: **Khalifa Al-Thani**

Producer: **Poppy Clinton, Jamie Riordan,**

Fatma Al-Ghanim, Vibhav Gautam

Cinematographer: **Yasser Mustafa**

Khalifa Al Thani is a Qatari filmmaker, curator and visual artist. He has worked on a variety of projects, ranging from films to exhibitions. His work focuses on the interdisciplinary exploration of Qatari and identity themes. He has directed, wrote, and produced several films, most notably 'A Tale of a Song' with Al Jazeera Documentary. Al Thani ventured into curatorial works with 'Outbreak', which took place during the Ajyal Film Festival 2020. He attained a BFA in Film and Video from the School of Visual Arts in New York City and is currently a part of the Doha Film Institute.

Don't Get Too Comfortable

Doha Film Institute Supported Film

Yemen, USA, Netherlands, Qatar, UAE / English,

Swahili, Arabic / 2021

9 mins / Colour

Middle East Premiere



Nominated for an Orizzonti Award for Best Short Film at this year's Venice Film Festival, 'Don't Get Too Comfortable' is a heartfelt, introspective letter to the filmmaker's deceased grandfather. The letter questions the continuous pattern of movement amongst Yemenis in diaspora. The film fuses archival photographs, sourced footage, parallax animation, and abstract videos to create an audio-visual body of work that calls attention to the collective feeling of statelessness and sense of being felt by Yemeni (or non-Yemeni) migrants.

Director: **Shaima Al-Tamimi**

Producer / Editor: **Mayar Hamdan**

Cast: **Shaima Al-Tamimi, Saleh Al-Tamimi, Ramla Al-Tamimi, Sanaa, Iman, Mohammed, Sultan Al-Tamimi**

Shaima Al-Tamimi is a Yemeni-East African visual storyteller based in the GCC. Her work explores migration, identity, and culinary culture through introspection and a deeply-rooted documentary approach. Using photography, film, audio and writing as mediums, she merges historical and family archives with present-day portraits and visuals to create vivid narratives. Challenging mainstream and linear notions of identity, her work offers unique perspectives and calls for a more nuanced understanding of native experiences. Previous projects include the 2020 global "Prints for Yemen" fundraiser and 'Voices from the Urbanscape' (2017).

Fever Dream

Doha Film Institute Supported Film

Qatar, Poland, USA / English / 2021

8 mins / Colour

World Premiere



Created in DFI's Short Documentary Lab with Rithy Panh, 'Fever Dream' is a documentary about a reality that is stranger than fiction. Sick with the coronavirus, a couple films themselves in a Qatari quarantine facility—a 20th-floor suite in a five-star hotel with a sea view and sealed windows. From this gilded (and hermetically sealed) cage, the pair look down on the live stream of cars and people below them. Suspended between realities, they pretend to participate in the passing of time as everyone's fate hangs in the balance.

Director / Producer / Editor: **Ania Hendryx Wójtowicz**
Cinematographer: **Sebastián Betancur Montoya**
Cast: **Sebastián Betancur Montoya, Ania Hendryx Wójtowicz, Gloria Amparo Montoya Diez, Nedal Rabhi Hammouda, Marek Wójtowicz**

Ania Hendryx Wójtowicz is a Polish/American creative producer and artist whose work emphasises cultural hybridity, blurring the lines between genres and exploring the intersections of film with other creative fields. She has produced multimedia performance installation artworks for the British Council exhibition 'The Place I Call Home' (2019), Qatar Foundation, and Kuwait Pavilion at the Venice Biennale (2016). Since 2015, Ania has worked with DFI, playing a key role in producing nearly 40 shorts and organising the Qumra Shorts film industry programme.

A Lens Under Water

Qatar / Arabic / 2021

17 mins / Colour

World Premiere



Passionate about photography since his childhood in Syria, Faisal Jarkas now spends his time capturing the immense beauty of Qatar's coastal waters and the colourful marine life that call it home. Always in a buoyant mood, Faisal shares his best footage from years of dedicated work, for which he was honoured by the Ministry of the Environment in 2021. A short documentary bursting with life and an important environmental message.

Director / Producer / Editor: **Fatma Zahra Abderrahim**
Cinematographer: **Fatma Zahra Abderrahim, Mohammed Al Agha**
Cast: **Faisal Jarkas**

Fatma Zahra Abderrahim is a journalist, a voice-over artist, and an emerging documentary filmmaker from Algeria. She is the founder of the first online broadcasting radio station in English for Algerian youth, "Algerian Youth Voices". She is also a recent alumna of the journalism program at the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies. Her filmography includes 'A Lens Under Water' (2021), which she produced, directed, photographed and edited; 'Al Battulah' (2021) (DOP and editor); as well as 'Fann Al Nahma' about Qatar's traditional sea chants, where she contributed as a cinematographer (2021).

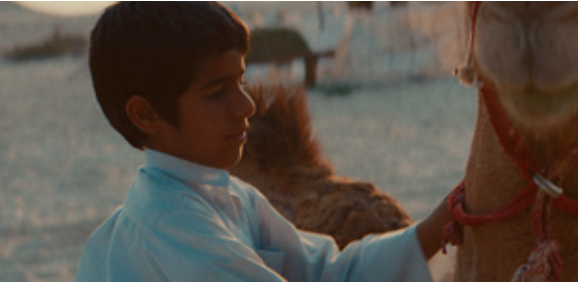
Olayan

Doha Film Institute Supported Film

Qatar / Arabic / 2021

18 mins / Colour

Home Premiere



A Bedouin boy named Hamad forms a strong bond with a newborn camel, who he calls Olayan. When Olayan is later sold to market by his father, young Hamad embarks on a daring mission to rescue his best friend. Set in 1990s Qatar, 'Olayan' is a moving portrait of a young boy on the cusp of adolescence. The film tenderly captures the nuanced relationship between father and son as Hamad begins to establish his sense of self and independence.

Director/ Screenwriter: **Khalifa Al-Marri**
Producer: **Basel Owies**
Editor: **Abdul Jabbar Maki**
Cinematographer: **Ian Coad**
Cast: **Saleh Salem Al Marri, Ali Naji Al Marri, Mohammed Al Sunni, Mishaal Al Dosari, Maryam Hayati**

Khalifa Al-Marri is a visual artist and filmmaker who has made several contributions to the fine arts community in Qatar. Al-Marri holds a degree in communications from Qatar University and a diploma in directing from NYFA. His debut short film, 'Man of the House', premiered at Ajyal in 2015 and received multiple awards on the festival circuit. His short entitled 'Fragile' participated in DFI's exchange with La Fémis workshop in Paris. Khalifa recently completed an experimental short film called 'Embodiment' before writing and directing 'Olayan', which was produced through DFI's Qatari Film Fund.

There Were People

'Kan Fe Nas' / Qatar, Lebanon / Arabic / 2021

10 mins / Colour

World Premiere



Filmed in the aftermath of the tragic explosion that rocked the city of Beirut last August, 'There Were People' explores the authentic stories of Lebanese residents as they endure hardships on a daily basis. The insightful and poignant short documentary questions how individuals can stay so resilient in the face of such immense adversity.

Director: **Mohamed Al Hamadi**

Mohamed Al Hamadi is a TV presenter and filmmaker with a particular interest in humanistic and cultural themes. His career began in 2010 at Qatar Television, followed by presenting roles at various local radio stations. He graduated from the Faculty of Law at Qatar University in 2021. He has also been the TV host for several Ajyal red carpet events in the past.

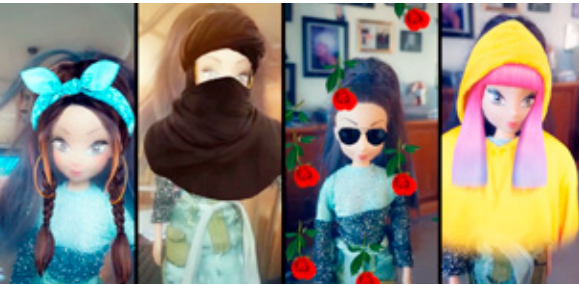
Virtual Voice

Doha Film Institute Supported Film

Sudan, Qatar / English / 2021

7 mins / Colour

MENA Premiere



In this satirical review of our times, Suzi doll is an ego-warrior. An online avatar marching to the algorithms of social media. She is lit by temporary outrage. A trending indignation. A passion that is fashion. A politics of the popular. She copies and pastes and forwards blame. Sometimes uplifting, sometimes bandwagon bullying. Her activism is abstract. Her help is hypothetical. We know many girls like Suzi, and many times we are her—vacuous virtual voices, echoing injustices.

Director / Screenwriter / Producer: **Suzannah Mirghani**
Editor: **Suzannah Mirghani, Socheat Cheng**
Cinematographer: **Suzannah Mirghani, Rodney Sharkey**
Cast: **Suzannah Mirghani**

Suzannah Mirghani is a writer, researcher, and independent filmmaker. Mixed-race Sudanese and Russian, she is interested in stories about the complexity of identity. Suzannah is the writer, director, and producer of 'Al-Sit' (2020), which won 18 international awards, including three Academy Award qualifying prizes in 2021: Best of Fest at LA Shorts; Grand Prix at Tampere Film Festival; and Best Short Film at BronzeLens. Her latest short, 'Virtual Voice' (2021), had its World Premiere at Tribeca Film Festival. Suzannah is working on her first feature, 'Cotton Queen', a magical realist tale set in the cotton fields of Sudan.

When Beirut was Beirut

Qatar, Lebanon, USA / Arabic / 2021

12 mins / Colour

MENA Premiere



This poetic hybrid documentary introduces us to three majestic, abandoned buildings that witnessed Beirut’s tumultuous history—coming to life through a casual conversation amongst themselves. Using animation and archival audiovisuals, this film takes us back to the Golden Era of Beirut, when the Piccadilly Theater was filled with glamorous entertainment, the Egg was bustling with people in its local markets, and Beit Beirut housed an iconic hair salon and families living under its art-deco roof. Sadly, when the Lebanese Civil War erupted in 1975, the lives of these buildings changed completely.

Director / Screenwriter / Producer: **Alessandra El Chanti**
Music: **Joey Semaan**
Cast: **Mohamed El Chanti, Issam Younes, Laeticia Semaan**

Alessandra El Chanti is a Lebanese documentary filmmaker, activist, and artist. Her interests lie in the stories of the Levant, ranging from its culture, social issues, and politics. El Chanti holds an MFA in Documentary Media from Northwestern University.

Bariq

Our youngest audiences sparkle with energy. The films in this section are selected to satisfy the excitement and curiosity of children from the age of four and are appropriate for the whole family.

Colourful Feathers

'Plumas De Colores' / Mexico / No dialogue / 2021

3 mins / Colour

MENA Premiere



A family of blue chickens are ostracized from their white flock just for being a bit different. But when a prowling fox arrives, they quickly learn to focus on what they all have in common rather than what separates them. 'Colourful Feathers' is a delightful animated short on the importance of seeing past the superficial differences that divide us—and instead, trying to recognise the traits that unite us all.

Director / Screenwriter: **Maribel Suárez**

Producer: **Esteban Azuela**

Music: **Quique Rangel**

Maribel Suárez studied Industrial Design at the National Autonomous University of Mexico, before attaining her Master's in Design Research at the Royal College of Art, London. As well as being a filmmaker, Suárez has been a prolific children's book editor and illustrator since 1985.

Ink

'Inkt' / The Netherlands / No dialogue / 2020

2 mins / Colour

Gulf Premiere



In this ultrashort animated film, we follow an octopus who is a bit of a neat freak. But sometimes, even though you have so many arms, you still cannot reach what you want! Fast-paced and fun, the film is set perfectly to 'Zorba's Dance', an instrumental by Greek composer Mikis Theodorakis. Film connoisseurs might recognise the song from the academy-award winning film 'Zobra the Greek' (1964).

Director / Screenwriter / Producer: **Joost van den Bosch, Erik Verkerk**

Music: **Mikis Theodorakis**

Sales: **SND Films**

Distribution: **KLIK! Distribution**

Joost van den Bosch and **Erik Verkerk** serve as directors, creators and production supervisors of their studio, Ka-Ching Cartoons. They have been working together since art academy, and after that, they worked for one year in Ireland at the Cartoon Saloon before returning to the Netherlands to start their own company in 2007. They created the international series, 'The 3D-Machine' for Nintendo and 'George and Paul', a stop-motion TV series. Gradually the studio moved towards longer formats, and recently worked on several feature-length projects as a service studio, or as a complete creative studio, including direction.

Kenya’s Symphony

USA / No dialogue / 2020
5 mins / Colour
MENA Premiere



Kenya, a young girl, is reluctantly dragged to a symphony by her mother only to discover a new passion blossoming within. Enchanted by the music, Kenya’s imagination soars with the whimsical notes in a colourful epiphany. After the piece’s conclusion, Kenya is triumphantly declared the newest and youngest patron of the orchestra. This animated short is a touching story about the power of a young mind and how it can discover inspiration in the most unlikely of places.

Director / Producer: **Carlos Douglas Jr.**
Music: **Michael Van Bodegom Smith**

Carlos Douglas Jr is an animator, director and producer. Born and raised in Chicago, Carlos began creating art at a very young age and continued his study into adulthood. He is a spring 2020 graduate of Columbia College Chicago under the Interactive Arts and Media program, earning his Bachelor of Arts in Traditional Animation. He is also the producer of the animated short ‘Buster and Jamson’ as part of the Animation Production Studio course at Columbia.

Little Snowman

Russia / No dialogue / 2021
4 mins / Colour
Qatar Premiere



A family of musical snowmen live in a snowy valley. Their active little son keeps losing his carrot nose, which is replaced diligently by his mother from her store every evening. But when a rabbit discovers their secret stash, the whole family must find new noses! A bite-sized and ambrosial animated short about the importance of compassion, understanding and forgiveness.

Director: **Aleksey Pochivalov**
Screenwriter: **Mariya Kostiukevich**
Producer: **Boris Mashkovtsev**
Music: **Galaktion Prudkovo Orchestra**
Cinematographer: **Aleksey Pochivalov**
Distribution: **Soyuzmultfilm Film Studio**

Alexey Pochivalov was born in Moscow in 1974. He worked as an artist at the Gzhel Factory and as a sculptor at the Moscow Porcelain Factory. He also runs restoration workshops as well as clay modelling classes for summer camps. He was a participant in the Moscow exhibition ‘Triennale’ and currently works as an artist, animator and director for the studio, Pilot.

Orchestra Rehearsal

Russia / No dialogue / 2021
6 mins / Colour
Qatar Premiere



A busy dad and musician is late for his philharmonic orchestra concert. With not a minute to waste, he must quicken his tempo and get there presto as the rest of the ensemble has already started. Inspired by French Fauvist painter Raoul Dufy, filmmaker Tatiana Okruzhnova uses an oil painting on glass technique to convey the expressiveness, lightness and airiness of the story.

Director / Screenwriter: **Tatiana Okruzhnova**
Producer: **Boris Mashkovtsev**
Editor: **Sergey Kapkov**
Distribution: **Soyuzmultfilm Film Studio**

Tatyana Okruzhnova is an artist, animator, and director. She completed an animation course at the studio of Alexander Petrov in 2009. Her previous films include ‘One More time!’ (2010) and ‘Swimming Lesson’ (2016).

Under the Clouds

Russia / No dialogue / 2021
4 mins / Colour
MENA Premiere



On an island in the middle of the ocean, Walter the Lamb dreams of one day becoming a cloud. He’s certainly got the fluffiness to achieve his ambition, but it won’t be an easy journey! When his ravenous flock devours the whole island’s natural food supply, things look bleak for Walter. But suddenly, he is swept away in a storm and drenched in water. It’s not all bad though, as wherever he goes now, he brings rain to help the grass grow!

Director / Screenwriter: **Vasilisa Tikunova**
Producer: **Boris Mashkovtsev**
Music: **Maria Leonova**
Cast: **Vasilisa Tikunova**
Distribution: **Soyuzmultfilm Film Studio**

Vasilisa Tikunova was born in Belgorod, Russia in 1998. She was a student at the Gerasimov Institute of Cinematography (VGIK). ‘Under the Clouds’ is her first studio film created at Soyuzmultfilm Animation Studio.

Mohaq Competition

The new moon is full of hope and endless possibilities. The critical minds of young people will be challenged and inspired by these films, which are appropriate for audiences 8 years of age and older.

Asteroid

Iran / Balochi, Farsi / 2021

78 mins / Colour

MENA Premiere



Ebrahim is only twelve years of age but bears much of the responsibility for his household of five younger siblings with his destitute mother. His father and older brother left the family two years ago to find work, but neither has returned. Living in a remote desert, the close-knit family mostly gets by on odd jobs and seasonal work when tourists arrive. Ever the industrious boy, Ebrahim finds work wherever and whenever he can as he dutifully helps his family in their dream to build a house in the local village.

Even though he carries an incredible weight on his young adolescent shoulders, Ebrahim never looks to complain or rebel. Indeed, he seems to genuinely revel in the responsibility of primary breadwinner that has been thrust upon him at such a tender age. Wise beyond his years, he comforts his mother and seems to be the glue of the family's bond as they endure their hardships with good humour and love. A portrait of filial responsibility and steadfast loyalty, 'Asteroid' is an earnest family drama with genuine heartfelt moments between a talented young cast.

Winner of a Best Film Award at Fajr International Film Festival 2021

Director / Screenwriter / Producer:

Mehdi Hoseinivand Aalipour

Cinematographer: **Davood Rahmani**

Editor: **Mojtaba Esfehiani**

Music: **Arya Aziminejad**

Cast: **Hadi Kazemi, Ghazal Shojaie,**

Ebrahim Zarozehi

Distribution: **IRIMAGE**



Born in Tehran, **Mehdi Hoseinivand Aalipour** is a prolific film editor best known

for his cooperation with Dariush Mehrjui, Masoud Jafari Jozani and Ebrahim Hatamikia. A graduate of IRIB University, Hoseinivand has edited 35 feature films, 30 TV series, 27 TV movies and a number of documentary and short films all through his career. He has also directed four short films, one TV series and one TV movie. 'Asteroid', his debut directorial venture, won the Best Film Award in the Eastern Vista section at the 38th Fajr International Film Festival.

Winner of the Grand Jury Prize for Best Documentary at SXSW 2021

Director / Editor: **Jeremy Workman**
Producer: **Jeremy Workman, Robert J. Lyons**
Cinematographer: **Michael Lisnet, Jeremy Workman**
Distribution: **Wheelhouse Creative**



Jeremy Workman is a filmmaker and editor. His features include 'The World Before

Your Feet' (2018), about Matt Green's 7-year mission to walk every block of New York City, and 'Magical Universe' (2013), about Barbie doll photographer Al Carbee. He made his feature documentary debut with 'Who Is Henry Jaglom?' (1995). A two-time Emmy Award nominee, Jeremy is also the Creative Director of Wheelhouse Creative, a movie trailer company that caters to indie film.

Lily Topples the World

USA / English / 2021
90 mins / Colour
MENA Premiere



The visually spectacular and utterly satisfying 'Lily Topples the World' follows 20-year-old Lily Hevesh—the world's greatest domino "toppler" and the only woman in her field. A delicate balance of engineering and creativity, Lily's unique brand of art is an absolute delight to watch with appearances by Jimmy Fallon, Katy Perry, Will Smith, YouTuber Casey Neistat, and a steady stream of Gen-Z creators. Filmed over three years, the documentary is a wholesome coming-of-age story cloaked within a unique portrait of an artist and a shining example of how passion and dedication can make dreams come true.

Touching on the topics of adoption and cultural integration, this inspirational documentary is a tale of perseverance and integrity. Lily embraces what makes her different and shows us how people can truly shine in environments where their talents are recognised and nurtured. For such a young woman, Lily certainly knows who she is and what she wants to achieve in life. It's a joy to witness her succeed over and over again and share her infectious passion for art and creativity with others across the world through her YouTube videos that now have over 1 billion views.

Playground

'Un Monde' / Belgium / French / 2021
72 mins / Colour
MENA Premiere



7-year-old Nora and her big brother Abel are back to school. When Nora witnesses Abel being bullied by other kids, she rushes to protect him by warning their father. But Abel forces her to remain silent. Caught in a conflict of loyalty, Nora will ultimately try to find her place, torn between children's and adults' worlds—each with their own set of seemingly paradoxical rules. Nora's father does all he can to help, but his mature and reasoned response is powerless in the senseless and naive conflicts the children find themselves embroiled in more and more.

Childhood is a delicate and complex time of life. One filled with first discoveries when experiences and relationships are lived in a very profound way. It is at this time that our inner landscape is drawn and constructed. The film is shot almost entirely from a child's perspective, with the adult characters all but secondary to the visceral drama that begins to unfold for our young protagonists. A totally immersive and powerfully authentic look at the micro-society of an everyday schoolyard, 'Playground' shows us the intense realities of growing up and the integration of the self in broader society.

Winner of the FIPRESCI Prize at Cannes Un Certain Regard 2021

Director: **Laura Wandel**
Producer: **Stéphane Lhoest**
Cinematographer: **Frédéric Noirhomme**
Editor: **Nicolas Rimpl**
Cast: **Maya Vanderbeque, Günter Duret, Karim Leklou, Laura Verlinden**
Sales / Distribution: **Indie Sales**



Laura Wandel was born in 1984 in Belgium, where she studied filmmaking at the Institut

des Arts de Diffusion (IAD). Her graduation film, 'Murs', was selected for many festivals around the world. Wandel's first professional short film was 'O Négatif' (2010), followed by 'Les corps étrangers' (2014). 'Playground (Un Monde)' is her debut feature and won the FIPRESCI Prize in Un Certain Regard at Cannes Film Festival 2021.

Director: **Yusuke Hirota**
Screenwriter: **Akihiro Nishino**
Producer: **Yusuke Kitahashi, Ryoichi Fukuyama, Eiko Tanaka**
Music: **Youki Kojima, Yuta Bando**
Cast: **Tony Hale, Antonio Raul Corbo, Stephen Root, Misty Lee, Hasan Minhaj**
Distribution: **Kiyuki Inc.**

Yusuke Hirota joined Studio 4°C in 2001. He served as the Studio’s computer graphics director first on the TV series ‘Piropo’ (2001), and then on many titles including the Animatrix–‘Beyond’ (2003), Genius Party–‘Baby Blue’ (2007), Genius Party Beyond–‘Moondrive’ (2008), ‘Berserk The Golden Age Arc 1–The Egg of The King, and Harmony’ (2015) for which he was also the co-director. ‘Poupelle of Chimney Town’ (2020) is his directorial debut.

Poupelle of Chimney Town

Japan / English / 2020
100 mins / Colour
MENA Premiere



Young Lubicchi lives in the aptly named Chimney Town, a place where the sky is eternally grey due to the countless smokestacks that billow out soot into the air. Lubicchi’s father, who has mysteriously disappeared, used to tell him stories of blue skies and twinkling stars that lie above the thick layers of smog. One Halloween, Lubicchi meets a friendly monster made of garbage which he names Poupelle. Convinced that “if you believe, you’ll find a way”, Lubicchi and Poupelle, embark on a daring mission to discover a new world beyond the smoke.

The heartwarming friendship that develops between Lubicchi and Poupelle shows us that often “monsters” are just misunderstood or rejected by society solely because they are different from the norm. While mostly centring on their relationship, the film explores poignant themes in Lubicchi’s emotional journey after the loss of his father—all within a larger context of a compelling eco-fable dealing with environmental destruction due to economic greed. Based on a bestselling illustrated children’s book by one of Japan’s most famous comedians, ‘Poupelle of Chimney Town’ is a breathtaking visual adventure that is sure to delight anime fans of all ages.

Adaptation

‘Adaptação’ / Portugal / Portuguese / 2020
15 mins / Colour
MENA Premiere



A young red-haired boy draws the ire of local bullies because of his unique appearance. To make things worse, he has a crush on one of the girls in the gang that is bullying him, a feeling that appears to be reciprocated. A chance meeting with another boy hatches a strategy that ultimately leads to him standing up for himself in this short about exclusion, empathy, and courage.

Director: **Ngima Gelu Sherpa**
Screenwriter: **Kristo Kaas**
Producer: **Fiona Worlanyo Ansah**
Cinematographer: **Danilo Miranda Cares**
Editor: **Lawrence Agbetsise**
Cast: **Bruno Lagrange, Sónia Balacó**

Ngima Gelu Sherpa is a photographer turned writer, director and producer. His debut short film ‘Phulsiri’ (2016) won the Best Children’s Film award in Nepal and was screened in dozens of film festivals across the world. In 2018, he received a full Erasmus plus scholarship to pursue a master’s in film direction at Kino Eyes: The European Movie Master’s program in Lisbon, Edinburgh, and Tallinn. ‘Adaptation’ (2020) is his graduation short film. The same year, he also made ‘Home’ (2020). The film premiered at Internationale Kurzfilmtage Oberhausen, where he was awarded the Prize of Ecumenical Jury–Honorable Mention.

Bambirak

USA / Germany / German, Dari, Farsi / 2020
14 mins / Colour
MENA Premiere



When 8-year-old Kati stows away in her father’s delivery van, Faruk must juggle his responsibilities as a single dad while holding down his first job in a new country. They make a great team travelling from delivery to delivery together. But as their relationship deepens, a brush with covert racism tests the bond between a father and daughter in this heartfelt short drama about family, immigration and overcoming prejudice.

Director / Screenwriter: **Zamarin Wahdat**
Producer: **Joy Lauren Jorgensen**
Cinematographer: **Lorena Duran**
Editor: **Alan Wu, Jenn Ruff**
Cast: **Kailas Mahadevan, Lara Cengiz, Merle Collet, Oskar Zikur**
Sales / Distribution: **Interfilm**

Born in Afghanistan and raised in Germany, **Zamarin Wahdat** attended New York University’s graduate film program as a Dean’s Fellow. Her work as a cinematographer premiered at the 2020 Sundance Film Festival and the 2019 Berlin International Film Festival, and she contributed camera work to the Academy Award-winning ‘Learning to Skateboard in a Warzone (If You’re a Girl)’. Wahdat was selected for the American Society of Cinematographers’ Vision Mentorship Program.

Just for the Record

Serbia, Canada / No dialogue / 2020
7 mins / Colour
MENA Premiere



In an abandoned attic, a little robot voice recorder named 'REC' sits lonely and unused. When a songbird perches itself on a window nearby, REC tries to communicate with it, but his last recording is frightening to both of them. Undeterred, he goes about enticing the bird back so he can record it before his battery runs out. 'Just for the Record' is a gorgeously animated short about communication and overcoming differences before it's too late with a surprisingly dark twist.

Director / Screenwriter: **Vojin Vasović**
Producer: **Vojin Vasović, Senka Radivojević, Ivana Lovre**
Cinematographer: **Nikola Stepković**
Editor: **Marko Kovačević, Vojin Vasović**
Music: **Dalibor Bekerević**
Sales: **Magnet Film**

Vojin Vasović is a film and theatre director, scriptwriter and producer, and an animation teacher at The Academy of Arts in Belgrade. His films include '5 Minutes Each', 'Twice Upon a Time', 'Breathtaking', and have been shown in more than 150 international film festivals for which he has won over 50 awards. He currently operates the To Blink Animation Studio based in both Belgrade and Toronto.

A Lens Under Water

Qatar / Arabic / 2021
17 mins / Colour
World Premiere



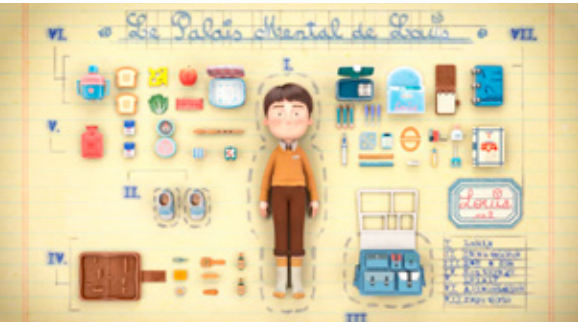
Passionate about photography since his childhood in Syria, Faisal Jarkas now spends his time capturing the immense beauty of Qatar's coastal waters and the colourful marine life that call it home. Always in a buoyant mood, Faisal shares his best footage from years of dedicated work, for which he was honoured by the Ministry of the Environment in 2021. A short documentary bursting with life and an important environmental message.

Director / Producer / Editor: **Fatma Zahra Abderrahim**
Cinematographer: **Fatma Zahra Abderrahim, Mohammed Al Agha**
Cast: **Faisal Jarkas**

Fatma Zahra Abderrahim is a journalist, a voice-over artist, and an emerging documentary filmmaker from Algeria. She is the founder of the first online broadcasting radio station in English for Algerian youth, "Algerian Youth Voices". She is also a recent alumna of the journalism program at the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies. Her filmography includes 'A Lens Under Water' (2021), which she produced, directed, photographed and edited; 'Al Battulah' (2021) (DOP and editor); as well as 'Fann Al Nahma' about Qatar's traditional sea chants, where she contributed as a cinematographer (2021).

Louis' Shoes

'Les Chaussures de Louis' / France / French / 2020
5 mins / Colour
MENA Premiere



Inspired by interviews and testimonials from people with autism, 'Louis' Shoes' shows us the world through the eyes of an eight-year-old boy who has just joined a new school. Seeing the world from his unique point of view give us a new appreciation for everyday things that we tend to accept and never question. An embracing animated short about understanding, empathy, and inclusiveness.

Director: **Théo Jamin, Kayu Leung, Marion Philippe, Jean Géraud Blanc**
Producer: **MoPA**
Editor: **Théo Jamin**
Music: **Lolita Del Pino**
Cast: **Ronan Guilloux**
Distribution: **Yummy Films**

'Louis' Shoes' is the first short created by a talented group of students from the French school MoPA, namely **Théo Jamin, Kayu Leung, Marion Philippe, and Jean Géraud Blanc**.

My Friend Tiger

Russia / No dialogue / 2021
7 mins / Colour
International Premiere



A tiger cub and little girl grow up together in a busy city. Inseparable, they do everything as a pair on an increasingly cramped bike. But as the tiger grows, their once big city doesn't seem so big anymore! A short animation with a colossal heart, 'My Friend Tiger' deals with the subjects of companionship, personal growth, and self-actualisation.

Director: **Tatiana Kiseleva**
Screenwriter: **Tatiana Kiseleva, Tatiana Pankratova**
Distribution: **Soyuzmultfilm Film Studio**

Tatiana Kiseleva graduated from VGIK (Gerasimov Institute of Cinematography) as an animation and computer graphic artist under A. Gorlenko. Since 1998 she has been working as an animator with various Moscow studios, on more than 40 animated films, including such animated features as 'New Bremen', 'Prince Vladimir', 'Ku! Kin-Dza-Dza', and 'The Tale of Peter and Fevronia'. She is a multiple award winner of the Suzdal Festival / Animation competition (2011-2014), and winner of the Icarus national award in the Animator category (2016).

My Name is Fear

Germany / English / 2021
5 mins / Colour
MENA Premiere



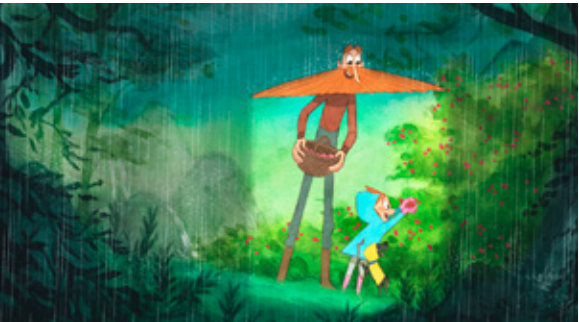
The surprisingly charming emotion “Fear” that lives in your head wants to give an interview. Maybe you can become friends? You see, for Fear, it is not so easy as everyone avoids him or finds him embarrassing! But sometimes he can be really helpful. You could even say that he is a superpower. This adorably animated short teaches us about an emotion that can often be hard to comprehend, but nevertheless plays an integral part in our psychological development.

Director / Screenwriter / Editor: **Eliza Płoceniak-Alvarez**
Music: **Johannes Weiland**

Eliza Płoceniak-Alvarez is a director and animator who specialises in content for children. She holds a master’s in Hispanic Literature and a diploma in animation from the Filmakademie Baden-Württemberg. Born in Poland, Eliza has lived in 11 cities from Norway, through Portugal to Mexico. Shortly before lockdown, she moved to Leipzig, where she is working on new projects with her animation collective Blaue Pampelmuse. Her previous work includes ‘The Very Hairy Alphabet’ (2019), ‘Frog Perspective’ (2016) and ‘Sitzung’ (2015).

Umbrellas

France, Spain / No dialogue / 2020
12 mins / Colour
MENA Premiere



In a remote village where the rain never stops, six-year-old Kyna spends her days playing happily, protected under her father Din’s umbrella beard. One night, her beloved dog Nana disappears. To find her, Kyna embarks on an adventure of self-discovery, and must face the one thing she is most afraid of—the rain. This charming animation shows us that an essential part of growing up is facing our greatest fears in order to gain a sense of resilience and independence.

Director / Editor: **José Prats, Álvaro Robles**
Screenwriter: **José Prats, Álvaro Robles, Alicia Canovas, Jesus Lopez**
Producer: **Diana Hentulescu, Keota Dengmanara**
Music: **Pablo Mirete**
Cast: **Alejandro Garrido Martinez, Celia Lopera Gonzales**
Distribution: **Studio Wasia**

José Prats is a filmmaker, storyboarder and illustrator, and works for Aardman Studios. In 2015, he collaborated on the animated feature film ‘Capture the Flag’ and studied filmmaking and screenwriting at the Metropolis Film School.

Álvaro Robles graduated from the Metropolis Film School with a Screenwriting/Directing Degree. He then pursued a professional career as an editor at several advertising agencies in Madrid. He co-directed and wrote the short film ‘Mara, Maravillas’ with José Prats.

Hilal Competition

Carried along by the crescent in their teenage years, soon-to-be adults will find films in this section that encourage their self-expression. Hilal films are suitable for audiences 13 years of age and older.

Brother's Keeper

'Okul Tiraşı' / Turkey / Kurdish, Turkish / 2021

85 mins / Colour

MENA Premiere



Yusuf and his best friend Memo are pupils at a boarding school for Kurdish boys, secluded in the mountains of Eastern Anatolia. When Memo falls mysteriously ill, Yusuf is forced to struggle through the bureaucratic obstacles put up by the school's repressive authorities to try to help his friend. But by the time the adults in charge finally understand the seriousness of Memo's condition and try to get him to the hospital, the school has been buried under a sudden, heavy snowfall. With no way out, teachers and pupils engage in a blame game where grudges and hidden secrets emerge—as time ticks mercilessly by and threatens to run out.

Through Yusuf's story, the film sets out to examine corrupt systems and the cycles of abuse often found within them. The children are the heroes of the narrative, symbols of purity, innocence and, most importantly, hope. By contrast, it is the metaphor of a boarding school run with an iron fist and unyielding bureaucracy that is used to deftly illustrate the callous nature of corrupt institutions that all too often shirk the responsibilities entrusted to them. Beautifully shot and with a compellingly layered plot, 'Brother's Keeper' is a harrowing coming-of-age story with profound undertones.

Winner of a FIPRESCI Prize
at Berlin International
Film Festival 2021

Director: **Ferit Karahan**

Screenwriter: **Ferit**

Karahan, Gülistan Acet

Producer: **Kanat Doğramacı**

Cinematographer:

Türksoy Gölebeyi

Editor: **Sercan Sezgin, Hayedeh**

Safiyari, Ferit Karahan

Cast: **Samet Yıldız, Ekin Koç,**

Mahir İpek, Nurullah Alaca, Cansu

Fıncı, Melih Selçuk

Sales: **Intramovies**

Distribution: **MC Distribution**



Ferit Karahan

was born in Muş,
Turkey. His short
films 'Before
the Flood' and
'Yusiv's Dream'
have been

screened at numerous festivals,
winning several awards and
honourable mentions. His feature
debut 'The Fall from Heaven'
premiered at the Antalya Film Festival,
where it won Best Film and was later
screened at more than 15 festivals
and won 10 awards. He also created
"Eski Köye Yeni Adet" for FOX
as a TV movie, but the film was later
released in cinemas around Turkey.

Director / Producer: **Ali El Arabi**
Cinematographer:
Mahmoud Basher
Editor: **Menna El Shishini**
Sales: **Dogwoof Sales**
Distribution: **Film Clinic**
Indie Distribution



Ali El Arabi
is a document-
tary director
and producer
who has worked
with Dream
TV (Egypt), ZDF,

Stern TV Germany, and National Geo-
graphic. In 2015 El Arabi set up Ambi-
ent Light—a Cairo-based production
company that focuses on topics
relevant to the MENA region, such
as refugee displacement and
women's and children's rights. His
directorial debut, 'Captains of Zaatari',
was at Sundance as an entry for the
World Documentary Competition,
and the film was named one of the
best 15 films at Sundance by Variety.

Captains of Zaatari

Egypt / Arabic / 2021
75 mins / Colour
Middle East Premiere



After fleeing the war in Syria, best friends Mahmoud and Fawzi have spent the last five years in Jordan's Za'atari refugee camp. Though they both have little sense of what the future may hold for them, they focus their energy on their shared love—soccer. Despite the dire circumstances in the camp, the pair practice day in and day out, firmly believing that playing professional football is their ticket to freedom and a brighter future. When Aspire Academy, one of the world's leading sports academies, arrives to pick players for an international tournament in Qatar, the friends seize their chance.

The visiting scouts quickly identify Mahmoud as a promising talent and fly him to Doha, while Fawzi has an anxious delay due to a selection technicality. Reunited, the friends train hard for the most important day of their burgeoning careers—a televised match that will be watched by their families back in Za'atari thanks to a hastily erected satellite dish. A profoundly authentic and human story, 'Captains of Zaatari' highlights the real struggles faced by people uprooted and displaced by conflict. As Mahmoud himself succinctly proclaims at the post-match press conference, refugees don't need pity; they need opportunities.

Fighter

South Korea / Korean / 2020
103 mins / Colour
MENA Premiere



After a courageous escape from North Korea, Jina spends some time in a social inclusion facility in the south before moving to a small studio in Seoul. Free from the regime that controlled every aspect of her life, she takes the first tentative steps towards independence by taking a job as a cleaner. Money she desperately needs in order to rescue her father, who is still trapped in the north. While working at a local gym, she notices female boxers as they train. Awakened a fighting spirit inside her, Jina decides to enter the ring and compete. However, as any first-generation immigrant can attest, Jina's fight is not confined to the ring.

At every corner, she faces challenges from isolation and discrimination to trouble gaining employment, potential exploitation, and the persistent culture shock of living in a modern capitalist economy. Burdened by a sense of abandonment and displacement born of her mother's desertion when she was only twelve, Jina finds herself battling internally as well as externally. Seong-mi Lim, who portrays Jina, gives an award-winning performance in this confronting drama about a refugee's fight for freedom where few seem to be in her corner.

Winner of the NETPAC
Award at Busan International
Film Festival 2020

Director / Screenwriter: **Jéro Yun**
Producer: **Kim Min-kyoung**
Editor: **Jéro Yun**
Cinematographer: **Lim Chang-wook**
Cast: **Lim Seong-mi, Baek Seo-
bin, Oh Kwang-rok**
Sales / Distribution:
M-Line Distribution



Born in Busan,
South Korea,
Jéro Yun
studied art,
photography
and film
at the ENSAD

in Nancy and Le Fresnoy in Paris. His
short documentary 'Promise' (2011)
won the Grand Prize at the Asiana
International Short Film Festival, and
his omnibus short 'The Pig' (2103)
screened at Cannes and Busan. His
feature documentary 'Mrs. B. A North
Korean Woman' (2016) won the best
documentary award at Moscow Film
Festival and Zurich Film Festival.
In 2018, his debut feature film
'Beautiful Days' opened the Busan
International Film Festival.

Winner of a Special Jury Prize
at Hot Docs Canadian International
Documentary Festival 2021

Director / Screenwriter:
Mohamed El Aboudi
Producer: **Pertti Veijalainen, Hind
Saih, Lamia Chraibi**
Cinematographer: **Hannu-Pekka
Vitikainen, Marita Hällfors.,
Päivi Kettunen**
Editor: **Lizi Gelber, Florence
Bresson, Mikko Sippola**
Music: **Richard
Horowitz, Andrew Silagy**
Distribution: **Bellota Films**



**Mohamed
El Aboudi** was
born in Morocco
and currently
resides
in Finland, where
he was awarded

in 2006 by the Finnish Broadcasting
Company YLE in connection with the
10th anniversary of its multicultural
services. His feature documentary,
'Dance of Outlaws', had its world
premiere at Locarno International
Film Festival, where it received the
prize Premio Zonta Club Locarno.
The film has also received several
other prizes, including the Human
Rights Award at DokuFest in Kosovo
and Grand Prix of Mediterranean
Issues at Primed in Marseille. Other
works of Mr El Aboudi include the
documentaries 'Fight of Fate' (2009)
and Netizen Mo (2015).

School of Hope

Finland, France, Morocco, Qatar / Arabic / 2020
88 mins / Colour
MENA Premiere



In the vast expanse of desert, East of Atlas Mountains in Morocco, seasonal rain and snow once supported livestock, but now the drought seems to never end. Hardly a blade of grass can be seen, and families travel miles on foot to get water from a muddy hole in the ground. Yet the children willingly ride donkeys and bicycles or walk for miles across rocks to a "school of hope" built of clay. Following both the students and the teachers in the Oulad Boukais Tribe's community school for over three years, 'School of Hope' shows students Mohamed, Miloud, Fatima, and their classmates, responding with childish glee to the school's altruistic young teacher, Mohamed.

Each child faces individual obstacles—supporting their ageing parents; avoiding restrictions from relatives based on traditional gender roles—while their young teacher makes do in a house with no electricity or water. The Oulad Boukais Tribe is just one of many rural communities worldwide struggling to establish adequate schooling for their children. 'School of Hope' conveys the passion and commitment of the tribe in securing academic opportunities for their children, despite the roadblocks of their environment and the apparent indifference of their government in this intimate and charming portrait of optimism in the harshest of conditions.

Don't Get Too Comfortable

Doha Film Institute Supported Film
Yemen, USA, Netherlands, Qatar, UAE / English,
Swahili, Arabic / 2021
9 mins / Colour
Middle East Premiere



Nominated for an Orizzonti Award for Best Short Film at this year's Venice Film Festival, 'Don't Get Too Comfortable' is a heartfelt, introspective letter to the filmmaker's deceased grandfather. The letter questions the continuous pattern of movement amongst Yemenis in diaspora. The film fuses archival photographs, sourced footage, parallax animation, and abstract videos to create an audio-visual body of work that calls attention to the collective feeling of statelessness and sense of being felt by Yemeni (or non-Yemeni) migrants.

Director: **Shaima Al-Tamimi**
Producer / Editor: **Mayar Hamdan**
Cast: **Shaima Al-Tamimi, Saleh Al-Tamimi, Ramla Al-Tamimi, Sanaa, Iman, Mohammed, Sultan Al-Tamimi**

Shaima Al-Tamimi is a Yemeni-East African visual storyteller based in the GCC. Her work explores migration, identity, and culinary culture through introspection and a deeply-rooted documentary approach. Using photography, film, audio and writing as mediums, she merges historical and family archives with present-day portraits and visuals to create vivid narratives. Challenging mainstream and linear notions of identity, her work offers unique perspectives and calls for a more nuanced understanding of native experiences. Previous projects include the 2020 global "Prints for Yemen" fundraiser and 'Voices from the Urbanscape' (2017).

Night

Doha Film Institute Supported Film
Germany, Qatar, Jordan, Palestine / Arabic / 2021
16 mins / Colour
Middle East Premiere



Based on the true story of a mother the filmmaker met in Palestine, 'Night' is a haunting and superbly crafted stop-animation about war, bereavement, and unimaginable sorrow. When the sun sets, and what little warmth and light that is left disappears, Night begins to watch over the people below. But in a city devastated by bombings, it can be difficult to sleep, let alone dream. To ease a women's anguish, Night tricks her into seeing her missing child one last time.

Director / Screenwriter: **Ahmad Saleh**
Producer: **Jessica Neubauer, Saleh Saleh, Fabian Driehorst**
Distribution: **Fabian&Fred**

Ahmad Saleh is an Academy Award-winning writer, director, and art director. His unique storytelling voice is inspired by his engineering studies in the Westbank. Winning a young writers award in Palestine encouraged Ahmad to leave engineering and pursue a career in filmmaking instead. His debut film, 'House' (2012), came runner up in the German Short Film Awards, and his second film, 'Ayny' (2016), won an Academy Award. His third short film is 'Night', had its world premiere at the Locarno Film Festival.

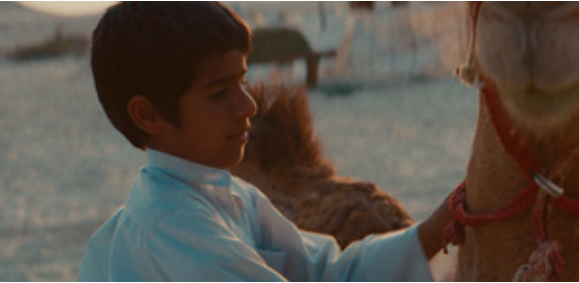
Olayan

Doha Film Institute Supported Film

Qatar / Arabic / 2021

18 mins / Colour

Home Premiere



A Bedouin boy named Hamad forms a strong bond with a newborn camel, who he calls Olayan. When Olayan is later sold to market by his father, young Hamad embarks on a daring mission to rescue his best friend. Set in 1990s Qatar, 'Olayan' is a moving portrait of a young boy on the cusp of adolescence. The film tenderly captures the nuanced relationship between father and son as Hamad begins to establish his sense of self and independence.

Director/ Screenwriter: **Khalifa Al-Marri**

Producer: **Basel Owies**

Editor: **Abdul Jabbar Maki**

Cinematographer: **Ian Coad**

Cast: **Saleh Salem Al Marri, Ali Naji**

Al Marri, Mohammed Al Sunni, Mishaal

Al Dosari, Maryam Hayati

Khalifa Al-Marri is a visual artist and filmmaker who has made several contributions to the fine arts community in Qatar. Al-Marri holds a degree in communications from Qatar University and a diploma in directing from NYFA. His debut short film, 'Man of the House', premiered at Ajyal in 2015 and received multiple awards on the festival circuit. His short entitled 'Fragile' participated in DFI's exchange with La Fémis workshop in Paris. Khalifa recently completed an experimental short film called 'Embodiment' before writing and directing 'Olayan', which was produced through DFI's Qatari Film Fund.

Peek-A-Boom

'Ba'oussi' / Lebanon / Arabic / 2021

5 mins / Colour

MENA Premiere



Surrounded by her loving family on her birthday, a startling event occurs that will shape young Mira's life forever. 'Peek-A-Boom' is an unexpectedly affecting animation that deals with the tragic 2020 Beirut explosion, which left over 200 dead and 7,000 injured. Although heartbreaking in its content, the filmmaker leaves us on an optimistic note with the city rebuilt and thriving in the future.

Director / Screenwriter: **Maya Zankoul, Toni Yammine**

Editor / Music: **Toni Yammine**

Distribution: **Wezank**

Maya Zankoul is a Lebanese illustrator and author.

She's the creative director at Wezank animation studio in Lebanon. She has directed the animated web series 'Beirut+ TV' and currently runs YouTube hit channel Lila TV producing animated content for children in Arabic.

Toni Yammine is a Lebanese multidisciplinary artist. For the last 20 years, he has worked as a producer, writer, and director. He is passionate about photography and music and spends most of his time at Wezank, a Lebanese film boutique he co-founded and co-manages.

Shadegan

Iran / No dialogue / 2020

15 mins / Colour

MENA Premiere



A day in the life of a 12-year-old Arab fisherman on his boat in Shadegan Pond, Khuzestan, Iran. The young boy sees the marshy water as a second home, which is also the primary source of his family's livelihood. He worries about the uncertain future of Shadegan Pond, and his own future should it cease to exist in this ruminating short about environmental degradation and its possibly devastating effect on people who are already subsistence living.

Director / Producer / Cinematographer: **Ako Salemi**

Editor: **Mohammad Shirvani**

Cast: **Milad Khorasani**

Ako Salemi has been taking photos since 2000. He has worked for several national and international outlets as a documentary photographer. His images have been published in Time, The New York Times, The New Yorker, and Vox, and he has won several awards and grants for his photography. His first short documentary film, 'Shadegan', won best documentary film for children at IDFA (International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam) in 2020.

Silence

Norway, Iraq / Kurdish / 2020

15 mins / Colour

MENA Premiere



Inspired by the filmmaker's own mother and her experience with hearing loss, 'Silence' is an insightful short that tells the story of a young deaf girl who struggles to fit in. Nine-year-old Bahar has recently lost her ability to hear due to an infection. Her parents cannot afford to send her to a special needs school, so she begins to feel increasingly isolated from her peers. This feeling of alienation is the beginning of a series of desperate acts culminating in an attempt to cure herself.

Director: **Brwa Vahabpour**

Producer: **Renée Mlodyszewski**

Cinematographer: **Łukasz Zamaro**

Editor: **Brynjar Lien Aune**

Cast: **Ebru Ayse Caki, Hussein**

Hassan, Shabu Solimany

Distribution: **Oslo Pictures AS**

Brwa Vahabpour is a Kurdish-Norwegian filmmaker from Trondheim with a bachelor's degree in directing from The Norwegian Film School (2018). He has directed the award-winning short films 'Pomegranate', 'The Shepherd' and 'Silence', which screened at A-festivals such as Short Shorts, Palm Springs, Aesthetica Short Film Festival, Encounters and Aspen short fest. 'Silence' won the Screen Talent Europe-pitch prize in 2019 and won best edit at The Norwegian short film festival in 2020.

Summer Fasting

‘Jeûne d’été’ / France / French / 2020

18 mins / Colour

MENA Premiere



Scorching beneath the summer sun, eleven-year-old Kader is determined to observe Ramadan for the first time. He is accompanied on this monumental endeavour by his best friend Rudy, who isn’t Muslim and considers this tradition a new game. To survive the day, the two children must elude hunger, thirst, and boredom. ‘Summer Fasting’ is a light-hearted short about moral duty, friendship and family satiated with a generous serving of humour and candour along the way.

Director / Screenwriter: **Abdenoure Ziane**

Producer: **Archibald Martin**

Editor: **Julie Léna**

Cast: **Sabri Ouamar , Timi-Joy Marbot, Younès**

Bouab , Naidra Ayadi

Distribution: **Melocoton Films**

Following his bachelor’s degree, **Abdenoure Ziane** joined Luc Besson’s Ecole de la Cité in the screenplay department. Since 2015, he has worked as a technician and assistant on sets. He is a member of Sans Gêne, a group that organises exhibitions and cultural events in Paris. In 2019 he directed his first short ‘Manifesto’ starring Darina Al-Joundi, Antonio Buíl and Guillaume Cloud-Roussel. His second film ‘Jeûne d’été (Summer Fasting)’ won the Moulin D’Andé Grand Prix and was selected by the Clermont-Ferrand International short film festival.

Tomorrow My Love

India / No dialogue / 2021

4 mins / Black & White

MENA Premiere



Prompted by the Covid-19 crisis, filmmaker Gitanjali Rao painstakingly illustrated frame by frame this moving short during her time in lockdown. The piece centres on an old man who has been tragically separated from his hospitalised wife due to the pandemic. Creatively using shadows and music, the work shows us that no matter the challenges, love will always find a way in this contemporary and affecting short about connection and loss.

Director / Screenwriter / Producer: **Gitanjali Rao**

Gitanjali Rao is the writer and director of ‘Bombay Rose’, an animated feature film supported by DFI that won seven awards, including the Silver Hugo at the 53rd Chicago Intl Film Fest and had its MENA premiere at Ajyal in 2019. Gitanjali emerged on the international stage with the animated short film ‘Printed Rainbow’, which premièred and won three awards at Cannes Critics Week, 2006. The film also made it to the Oscar shortlist in 2008 and won 25 awards. A self-taught animator and filmmaker, Gitanjali has independently produced seven animated short films which have been to over 150 International film festivals and received more than 30 awards.

Bader Competition

Young adults have completed the circle of youth and are now taking their own steps on the path of life. Their opinions resonate more strongly, and this appealing programme exposes them to cinema as a contemporary art form.

Dear Future Children

Germany, UK, Austria / English, Spanish, Cantonese, Luganda / 2021

89 mins / Colour

MENA Premiere



With global protests on the rise, 'Dear Future Children' is a film about the new generation at the heart of this seismic political shift. The intimate documentary follows three activists—Rayen protests for social justice in Chile, Pepper fights for democracy in Hong Kong and Hilda battles the devastating consequences of climate change in Uganda. Facing almost impossible odds and grappling with the staggering impact of their activism on their lives, the film captures all the energy, anger, and ingenuity of these inspirational young women as they struggle to create a brighter future for themselves and the world.

Focussing on three strong female protagonists for a welcome change, 'Dear Future Children' examines a side of activism that is usually ignored by mainstream media and traditional eco-political documentary filmmaking. The audience is transported to the frontline of each of their respective causes, where we learn just as much about the activists themselves as the movement they belong to. A timely and important film about the power of the individual in addressing some of the world's most pressing issues and the psychological sacrifice they must make in their personal lives to help society as a whole.

Winner of an Audience Award
at Hot Docs Canadian International
Documentary Festival 2021

Director: **Franz Böhm**

Producer: **Ansgar Wörner,**

Johannes Schubert, Franz Böhm

Cinematographer: **Friedemann Leis**

Editor: **Daniela Schramm Moura**

Music: **Hannes**

Bieber, Leonard Küßner

Sales / Distribution:

Magnetfilm GmbH



Franz Böhm

is a filmmaker
from Stuttgart,
Germany.

At just 16, after
working his way
up to Assistant

Director, he made his first solo film, 'Harmonie der Anderen'. His next project found him living with youth experiencing homelessness, the resulting documentary, 'Christmas Wishes', was selected as the opening film for the German Youth Film Awards. Franz then directed the short drama 'Good Luck', which premiered at the British Independent Film Festival. Franz is currently developing new projects in London, and 'Dear Future Children' is his debut feature film.

Winner of the Critics' Week Grand Prize at Cannes Film Festival 2021

Director: **Omar El Zohairy**
Screenwriter: **Ahmed Amer, Omar El Zohairy**
Producer: **Juliette Lepoutre**
Editor: **Hisham Saqr**
Cinematographer: **Kamal Samy**
Cast: **Demyana Nassar, Samy Bassiouny, Fady Mina Fawzy, Abo Sefen Nabil Wesa**
Sales: **Heretic**
Distribution: **Film Clinic Indie Distribution**



Omar El Zohairy began work as an assistant director on feature films of Egypt's most prominent

filmmakers, including Yousri Nasrallah. Zohairy's first short film, 'Breathe Out' (Zafir), premiered at the 8th Dubai International Film Festival and won the Muhr Special Jury Prize for Short Films. His second short film, 'The Aftermath of the Inauguration of the Public Toilet at Kilometre 375', was the first Egyptian film selected for the Cinéfondation competition at the 2014 Cannes Film Festival, and the film went on to win several awards around the world.

Feathers

France, Egypt, Netherlands, Greece / Arabic / 2021
112 mins / Colour
Middle East Premiere



When a magic trick goes terribly awry at a children's birthday party, the autocratic father of an impoverished family is turned abruptly into a chicken. This ludicrous event causes an avalanche of coincidental absurdities to befall everyone else. The dutiful mother, whose mundane life was dedicated to her husband and children, is now thrust to the forefront as head of the new, unusual household and primary breadwinner for her family. While trying everything to bring her husband back and secure their financial survival, she undergoes a considerable transformation of her own.

Even as a chicken, her husband seems to be demanding as ever, and you get the impression that this henpecking behaviour started long before he became poultry. Treated with darkly humorous absurdity, the film uses its farcical premise to highlight more profound issues of gender and wealth inequality that many households in Egypt face. The wife's place in the family has fundamentally changed, and she will do everything to protect her newfound liberation in this brilliantly composed comedic satire of patriarchy. Filmmaker Omar El Zohairy made history with this film by winning the Grand Prize at Critics' Week in Cannes this year, becoming the first Egyptian film to win in this segment of the festival.

Little Palestine, Diary of a Siege

Doha Film Institute Supported Film
Lebanon, France, Qatar / Arabic / 2021
89 mins / Colour
Middle East Premiere



The district of Yarmouk in Damascus, Syria, sheltered the largest Palestinian refugee camp in the world from 1957 to 2018. When the Syrian revolution broke out, Bashar Al-Assad's regime saw Yarmouk as a refuge of rebels and resistance, besieging the camp from 2013 onwards. Gradually deprived of food, medicine and electricity, Yarmouk was cut off from the rest of the world. Filmmaker Abdallah Al-Khatib was born in Yarmouk, living there until his expulsion by Daesh in 2015. Between 2011 and 2015, he documented the besieged inhabitants' daily lives, who chose to face bombing, displacement and hunger with rallying, study, music, love and joy.

Countless lives were irremediably transformed by the war and siege—from Abdallah's mother, who became a nurse taking care of the elders of the camp, to the fiercest activists whose passion for Palestine became gradually undermined by hunger. Al-Khatib accompanies each increasingly heartbreaking scene with his odic and often incisive view of the situation. Indeed, 'Little Palestine' can be difficult watch to watch at times because of the deeply affecting subject matter—but a rewarding and poignant experience, one that speaks truth to power and is a testament to the resilience of the beleaguered people of Yarmouk.

Winner of the Interreligious Award at Visions du Réel Film Festival 2021

Director / Screenwriter: **Abdallah Al-Khatib**
Producer: **Mohammad Ali Atassi, Jean-Laurent Csinidis**
Editor: **Qutaiba Barhamji**
Sales / Distribution: **Lightdbox**



Abdallah Al-Khatib was born in 1989 in Yarmouk. He studied sociology at the University

of Damascus. Before the revolution, he worked for the UN as coordinator of activities and volunteers. He created the humanitarian aid association Wataad with several friends, which carried out dozens of projects in several regions of Syria, particularly in Yarmouk. The German magazine Peace Green identified him as one of 2014's "Peacemakers". In Sweden, he received the Per Anger Human Rights Award in 2016. Abdallah currently lives in Germany, where he was recently granted refugee status.

Director: **Danis Tanović**
Screenwriter: **Danis Tanović, Nikola Kupresanin**
Producer: **Mirsad Purivatra, Amra Bakšić Čamo, Jovan Marjanović**
Cinematographer: **Damir Sagolj**
Editor: **Redžinald Šimek**
Music: **Brano Jakubović**
Cast: **Branko Đurić, Izudin Bajrović, Helena Vuković, Kerim Čutuna, Almir Palata Prle**



Danis Tanović is a Bosnian director, screenwriter, and producer. This is his second

time showing at Ajyal, and he was also a Qumra Master in 2015. 'No Man's Land', which he directed and wrote, won the Oscar for Best Foreign Language Film at the 74th Academy Awards. He is also a two-time winner of the Silver Bear Award at the Berlin International Film Festival for the films 'An Episode in the Life of an Ironpicker' (2013) and 'Death in Sarajevo' (2016). At the 20th edition of the Sarajevo Film Festival in 2014, he received the Honorary Heart of Sarajevo Award.

Not So Friendly Neighbourhood Affair

'Deset u pola' / Bosnia and Herzegovina, Turkey / Bosnian / 2021
90 mins / Colour
MENA Premiere



Enis and Izo are two friends living in the picturesque Old Town area of Sarajevo. Running similar restaurants across from each other, they don't seem overly concerned that they are business competitors. On the contrary, Enis wants Izo to join him in his latest venture. But as Izo warns—if you do business with friends, you either mess up the business or you mess up the friendship. One day, everything changes for the pair when a seemingly harmless courtesy thrusts Izo and his now-famous "Cevapi"—a grilled dish of minced meat—into the national spotlight.

Izo does not welcome the increased attention or even the extra business. He's far more concerned about the pandemic and having time to spend with his daughter and potential new grandkids to chase newfound success or wealth. Enis does not share his same worldview, already drowning in debt and used to flashy cars, he borrows the money for his new business from some unscrupulous gangsters. What follows is a deadpan series of comedic misunderstandings that leaves the whole town in turmoil and wondering who does have the best Cevapi in Sarajevo?

Writing with Fire

India / Hindi / 2021
93 mins / Colour
MENA Premiere



Amid a crowded, patriarchal news landscape emerges India's only newspaper run by Dalit (low caste) women. Chief Reporter Meera and her journalists break traditions, be it on the frontlines of India's biggest issues or within the confines of their homes, redefining what it means to be powerful. Following Meera and her journalists' personal and rapidly changing professional worlds, we see them negotiate obstacles and inch closer to their dream of becoming a relevant independent news agency. But how will Meera re-wire the traditional mindsets of a society that has never experienced the power of a Dalit woman with a smartphone?

'Writing With Fire' is a story of our times with modern Dalit women taking centre stage, not as victims of their circumstances but as writers of their own destiny. India now stands at an important crossroads, and the choices made now will define the very future of a nation. As powerful witnesses, Meera and her team diligently interpret and report on this decisive moment in India's history. In bringing together these different but deeply connected layers, the film stays close to its characters while exploring a country's deep, complex wounds and how women like Meera are treating these wounds—with compassion and persistence.

Winner of an Audience Award at Sundance Film Festival 2021

Director / Producer / Editor: **Sushmit Ghosh, Rintu Thomas**
Cinematographer: **Sushmit Ghosh, Karan Thapliyal**
Cast: **Meera Devi, Suneeta Prajapati, Shyamkali Devi, Alima Tarannum, Alka Manral**
Sales / Distribution: **Autlook Filmsales GmbH**

Rintu Thomas and Sushmit Ghosh are award-winning director-producers from India whose work has been supported by the Sundance Institute, Chicken & Egg Pictures, Tribeca Institute, Doc Society, SFF Film Fund, IDFA, and The Bertha Foundation, among others. Rintu and Sushmit are also Sundance Fellows who enjoy producing films that have the power to create transformative social impact. In 2009, they founded Black Ticket Films, a production company invested in the power of non-fiction storytelling. Rintu and Sushmit were recognised for their filmmaking work with a President's Medal in 2012, the highest honour given to filmmakers in India.



And Then They Burn the Sea

Doha Film Institute Supported Film

Qatar / Arabic / 2021

13 mins / Colour

Middle East Premiere



Qatar’s first-ever short to be selected in competition at Locarno Film Festival, ‘And Then They Burn the Sea’ is an elegiac contemplation on familial memory and loss. Filmmaker Majid Al-Remaihi ruminates on the experience of witnessing his mother’s gradual and terminal memory loss over the course of many years. Weaving a personal family archive, reenacted dreams and rituals, the film underlines the promise of cinema as a medium for memories even at their most irretrievable.

Director / Screenwriter: **Majid Al-Remaihi**

Producer: **Basel Owies**

Editor: **Amit Chowdhury**

Cinematographer: **Mesa Prum**

Sales / Distribution: **Square Eyes Film**

Majid Al-Remaihi is a filmmaker and film programmer from Doha, Qatar. His short film ‘And Then They Burn the Sea’ premiered at Locarno 2021. He produced it under the mentorship of Academy Award-nominated director Rithy Panh and with the support of the Qatari Film Fund. Currently, he is developing his next short film. He is also part of the Film Programming team at the Doha Film Institute.

Before Darkness

Iran, Afghanistan / Afghan, Persian, Turkish / 2021

18 mins / Colour

MENA Premiere



An Afghan woman hides her child in a bag because she does not have enough money to take them both across Iran’s border. But her plan is exposed with heartbreaking consequences. Forced to leave her unsympathetic smuggler’s truck, she is put in an unforgiving position with only unthinkable options left. This tense and visceral, dramatic short puts viewer uncomfortably close to the types of seemingly impossible decisions faced by millions of displaced people around the world.

Director / Screenwriter: **Mosayeb Hanaei**

Producer: **Fariba Keshavarzi**

Cinematographer: **Masoud Talebi**

Editor: **Mosayeb Hanaei**

Cast: **Shahbanoo Mohamadi, Iraj Tadayon, Reza Ahmadi, Narges Hazar**

Mosayeb Hanaei was born in 1986 in Shiraz, Iran. He holds a BA in cinema (Directing) from Sooreh Art University in Tehran and a MA in cinema from the Iran Broadcasting University. He began making short films in 2010 with a project called ‘Anything Unimportant’ and has completed three films, two fiction and one documentary.

BJ’s Mobile Gift Shop

USA / English, Korean / 2020

16 mins / Colour

MENA Premiere



BJ, a young Korean-American hustler, tirelessly runs throughout the city of Chicago making hard-earned sales out of his infinitely convenient “mobile gift shop”. This endearing short is a story about our struggle with significance. In a culture that constantly questions if we’re living our biggest and best lives, this film shows us someone who chooses the alternative. Even though he may live “small”, every day is an adventure for BJ—coming across unique situations constantly and enjoying every moment life has to offer.

Director / Screenwriter: **Jason Park**

Producer: **Julianna Imel, Jason Park**

Cinematographer: **Brandon Hoeg**

Editor: **Zoe Kraft**

Music: **MasterClass, The NoiseSymphony**

Cast: **Johnnyboy Tellem, Dat Le, Andrew Cawley, Elizabeth Hartwig**

Jason Park has written, produced, and directed several short films and music videos that have played at several international film festivals, including ‘Teachers’ starring Tatyana Ali, ‘Under the Boardwalk’, and ‘BJ’s Mobile Gift Shop’, which premiered at the 2021 Sundance Film Festival. Park is currently developing his first feature film, ‘Transplant’, a film he co-wrote and will direct, which was selected for the 2020 Sundance Screenwriting Intensive. He is also a 2020 Sundance Feature Film Fellow.

Have a Nice Dog!

Germany, Syria / Arabic / 2020

13 mins / Colour and Black & White

MENA Premiere



Trapped in war-surrounded Damascus, a lonely man is desperately waiting for a chance to leave the country. In his isolation, he loses himself more and more into constant fantasies of escape and monologues. With only his dog for company, he ventures deeper into the darker recesses of his mind. A profoundly harrowing look at the all too unnoticed effects that war can have on mental health.

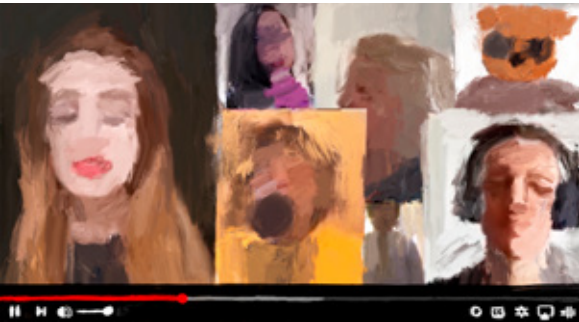
Director / Screenwriter: **Jalal Maghout**

Producer: **Karsten Matern**

Jalal Maghout is an animation filmmaker who graduated with a bachelor’s degree in Visual Communication from the University of Damascus in 2010. He worked as a teacher at Damascus University before leaving for Berlin in 2013, where he immediately started working on his anima-doc ‘Suleima’. The film about a Syrian female opposition activist was screened at many animation film festivals worldwide. In 2015 he started his master studies in animation directing at The Konrad Wolf Film University of Babelsberg.

I Gotta Look Good for the Apocalypse

France, Turkey / English, Spanish / 2021
6 mins / Colour
MENA Premiere



March 2020. The whole planet locks itself in. Our world, which we call “real”, is drained of what used to be its substance, and forms of digital life multiply; avatars share a common life in a virtual universe. But what if the crisis we are actually experiencing is not a pandemic, but an accelerated derealisation of our lives? A mixed media animation about the Covid-19 lockdown, and its effect on relationships and increasingly digitised lives.

Director / Screenwriter: **Ayce Kartal**
Producer: **Damien Megherbi, Justin Pechberty**
Distribution: **Les Valseurs**

Ayce Kartal graduated from Anadolu University in Eskişehir with a Master of Fine Arts in 2010. His last film, ‘Wicked Girl’ received the Césars Award for the Best Animated Short Film in 2019. It’s also the first animated short in 40 years to win the National Grand Prize in Clermont-Ferrand.

Junko

Nepal / Nepali / 2021
15 mins / Colour
MENA Premiere



A newlywed girl is left to live with her mother when her husband leaves to find work in India. He gives her a mobile phone as he departs, and this is to be the sole method of communication between the couple. She waits patiently for her husband to call, but it is in vain. As days pass, longingness turns to loneliness, then resignation to resolve. The girl and her mother ultimately find solace in each other in this affecting film about solitude, abandonment, and self-actualization.

Director / Screenwriter: **Minsho Limbu**
Producers: **Prem Prasad Adhikary, Minsho Limbu**
Cinematographer: **Niraj Bhusal**
Editor: **Pasang Dawa Sherpa**
Music: **Shardool Shrestha**
Cast: **Garima Singh, Sarita Giri**

Minsho Limbu is an independent filmmaker based in Kathmandu, Nepal. He graduated in screenwriting and direction from Everest Film Academy, and ‘Junko’ is his debut short film. It was selected to have its world premiere at the 44th Drama International Short Film Festival. Currently, he is working as the Unit Production Manager of Nabin Subba’s Nepali Independent feature film ‘A Road to the Village’.

Khadiga

Egypt, France / Arabic / 2021
20 mins / Colour
Gulf Premiere



Khadiga, a young mother of just 17 years of age, is left to raise her child alone when her husband moves away to find work in another city. Moving through the hustle and bustle of Cairo streets, her deteriorating state of mind leads her to make an unimaginable decision. The film deals with isolation and mental health and is the final part of a film series, featuring three mothers of different ages, nationalities and social backgrounds who experience social pressures.

Director: **Morad Mostafa**
Screenwriter: **Morad Mostafa, Mohamed Mamdouh**
Producer: **Safei Eldin Mahmoud, Sawsan Yusuf**
Cinematographer: **Mostafa El Kashef**
Editor: **Mohamed Mamdouh**
Cast: **Malak Tarek, Fatima Fawzi, Zizi Moustafa, Ayman Abdelaziz**
Sales / Distribution: **Lights On**

Morad Mostafa is an Egyptian filmmaker who started his career as an Assistant Director on various independent films. He collaborated as an Executive Director on ‘Souad’, which was part of the official selection for Cannes Film Festival 2020 and Berlinale 2021. He has written and directed two short films, ‘Henet Ward’ and ‘What We Don’t Know About Mariam’. Both had their world premieres at Clermont-Ferrand and have been selected in other major festivals, winning more than 30 international awards.

Light Fingers

Lebanon / Arabic / 2021
14 mins / Colour
MENA Premiere



Sahar and Omar have just moved to a new town. When Sahar runs down to the local supermarket to grab some first-night essentials, the store owner accuses her of something that seems preposterous. She returns to the apartment, where her and Omar’s apparently stagnant relationship is evident in their lack of communication. Through Sahar and Omar, the often taboo issues of mental illness, along with the intricacies of love, are brought to life in this film that subtly portrays the delicateness and complexity of human relationships.

Director / Producer / Editor: **Carina Ashkar**
Cinematographer: **Jad Misri**
Cast: **Petra Serhal, Tarek Yaacoub, Mohammad Bsar, Patrick Chemali**

Carina Ashkar is a Lebanese/Palestinian filmmaker and multimedia artist. She was born in Beirut and raised across the MENA region. She then moved to Los Angeles and attended Santa Monica College for a few years before moving back to Lebanon to graduate with a BA in Filmmaking at the Lebanese American University (LAU). While in university, she worked on several documentaries as well as music videos. ‘Light Fingers’, awarded Best Capstone Project Award in the Television and Film Department at LAU, is the first fiction film that she has written, directed, and produced.

Neon Phantom

'Fantasma Neon' / Brazil / Portuguese / 2021
20 mins / Colour
MENA Premiere



Joao works on the streets of Brazil as a delivery driver in the so-called “gig” economy. Him and his friend dream about buying a motorcycle, travelling the country, and transforming their lives into a sweet fairytale-like musical. But sadly, even their indulgences into operatic and beautifully choreographed fantasy crash back to their harsh reality of inadequate wages, unempathetic customers and constant threats that surround them. A thought-provoking short about inequality and imbalance of power in zero-hour contract employment.

Director / Screenwriter: **Leonardo Martinelli**
Producer: **Ayssa Yamaguti Norek, Leonardo Martinelli, Rafael Teixeira**
Cinematographer: **Felipe Quintelas**
Editor: **Lobo Mauro**
Cast: **Dennis Pinheiro, Silvero Pereira**

Leonardo Martinelli is an audiovisual artist from Rio de Janeiro. His films have been selected at more than three hundred film festivals and museums worldwide, including Locarno, San Sebastian, BFI London, Montreal and others. Through a vote among several film critics, Leonardo Martinelli was listed as one of the Top 10 New Brazilian Filmmakers by Papo de Cinema. In 2021, his film 'Neon Phantom' won the Golden Leopard for Best International Short Film at the Locarno Film Festival.

No Leaders Please

USA / English / 2020
2 mins / Colour
MENA Premiere



'No Leaders Please' is an eloquently animated film based on a poem about self-discovery and reinvention by Charles Bukowski. The composition is inspired by artists Basquiat, Banksy, Haring, and A Weiwei. Filmmaker Joan Gratz skillfully uses her pioneering technique of “Claypainting”—working directly before the camera, applying bits of clay, blending colours and etching fine lines to create a seamless flow of captivating images.

Director / Screenwriter / Producer: **Joan Gratz**
Music: **Judith Gruber-Stitzer**
Sales: **Gratz Film Production**

Joan Gratz is an Academy Award-winning director of animated short films and commercials. Her films range in content through painterly expressions of poetry, improvised abstraction, and animated social documentary. Joan developed animated painting when an architecture student at the University of Oregon, then shifted from paint to clay while working with Will Vinton Studios. During that time, her work included design and animation for the Academy Award Nominees 'Return to Oz', 'Rip Van Winkle', and 'The Creation'. She established her own studio, Gratzfilm, in 1987 and has served on major film festival juries in Asia, Europe, and North America.

Peel

'Ecore' / Switzerland / No dialogue / 2020
15 mins / Colour
MENA Premiere



The daily routine of a retirement home unfolds as time seems to stand still—the pencilled residents come to life on paper. Some are active, others rest or follow a fixed schedule to be repeated each day; one of medication, meals, and games. Around them, machines are flashing, caregivers are busy, and there is always something to remind them of their fragile mortality. An atonal hand-drawn short dealing with the issues of ageing and palliative care.

Director / Screenwriter: **Silvain Monney, Samuel Patthey**
Sales: **Square Eyes**
Distribution: **Square Eyes, Wouter Jansen**

Samuel Patthey was born in Berlin. As the son of an architect and a painter, he spent a lively childhood immersed in art, culture, and creativity. Inspired from an early age, Patthey went on to study animation at Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts (HSLU). He currently works as a film animation director in Switzerland.

Silvain Monney studied Animation at Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts (HSLU). Based in Fribourg, Switzerland, he works as a freelance animator and illustrator (press, posters, logos, comics, etc.) and gives drawing and paper cutting classes.

Shark

Australia / English / 2021
14 mins / Colour
MENA Premiere



Completing the trilogy of dark comedy shorts that began with 'Spider' and 'Bear', Nash Edgerton's 'Shark' explores the relationship of a rambunctious young couple. Jack, a serial prankster, finds his perfect match in the equally daring Rose. But the pair's constant quest to outdo each other in the name of comedy leads them to some very troubled waters for both of them in this whimsical short with a bit of bite.

Director: **Nash Edgerton**
Screenwriter: **Nash Edgerton, David Michôd**
Producer: **Michele Bennett**
Cinematographer: **Aaron McLisky**
Editor: **David Whittaker**
Music: **Ben Lee**
Cast: **Nash Edgerton, Rose Byrne, Natalie Tran, Madeleine Levins, Timothy Walker**
Distribution: **Salau Morisset**

Nash Edgerton is a true multi-hyphenate. He is a writer, director, producer, stuntman, actor, and editor. He has directed nine multi-award-winning short films and music videos for artists such as Bob Dylan, Brandon Flowers, Empire Of The Sun, Ben Lee and Eskimo Joe. His feature films include 'The Square', an Australian film noir and the US action caper 'Gringo', starring David Oyelowo, Charlize Theron, and Joel Edgerton. In television, he has directed all three seasons of the highly acclaimed FX series 'Mr Inbetween'.

Time Flows in Strange Ways on Sundays

‘Yi yi’ / Singapore / English, Mandarin / 2021
17 mins / Colour
MENA Premiere



A mother, trapped in the comfort of memory and mourning, confronts her grief when she is invited to the wedding of her late son’s childhood sweetheart. Inspired by the filmmaker’s own feelings of grief from a family estrangement, ‘Time Flows in Strange Ways on Sundays’ is a mournful short about how memory affects people through the passage of time, and the bittersweet melancholy that remembrance and eternal love can bring.

Director: **Giselle Lin**
Screenwriter: **Giselle Lin, Lim Xiang Yin**
Producer / Cinematographer: **Clyde Kam**
Editor: **Dionne Goh**
Cast: **Wendy Toh, Peter Yu, Iris Li**

Giselle Lin is a writer-director born and raised in Singapore. She graduated from the Puttnam School of Film & Animation. Her thesis film ‘Yi yi (Time Flows in Strange Ways on Sundays)’, had its world premiere at the 74th Locarno Film Festival. Giselle has always wanted to tell stories about women, for women—depicting women’s passions, disappointments, and routines. She finds inspiration in human interaction, the transience of life, and the emotional quality present in all things, living or not.

Trumpets in the Sky

Palestine, Lebanon, France, Belgium /
No dialogue / 2021
15 mins / Colour
MENA Premiere



Boushra, one of the Syrian potato-picking girls in Lebanon, returns from a long day in the field only to learn that today—her childhood will come to an end. Without dialogue, ‘Trumpets in the Sky’ is a poetic visual contemplation on landscapes and the complexity of human traditions. Part fiction, part documentary, and purposely blurring the distinction, the bleakness of the narrative explores a dark socio-political critique of patriarchy, the repercussions of war, and the myth of sacrifice.

Director: **Rakan Mayasi**
Screenwriter: **Rakan Mayasi, Wahid Ajmi**
Producer: **Rakan Mayasi, François Morisset, Laura Jumel**
Cinematographer: **Pôl Seif**
Editor: **Rakan Mayasi, Marie-Rose Osta**
Cast: **Boushra Matar, Azra Al Nazzal**
Distribution: **Salaud Morisset**

Rakan Mayasi is an independent filmmaker from Palestine, born in Germany and currently based in Lebanon. He studied Cinema, Theatre and Psychology in Lebanon and then received film training with Abbas Kiarostami in South Korea at the Asian Film Academy. He has written, directed and produced several short films. His film ‘Roubama’ was an official selection at the Locarno Film Festival in 2012. His short film ‘Bonboné’ was the recipient of 28 Best Short Awards at international film festivals, namely Küstendorf Film and Music Festival and the 40th Moscow International Film Festival.

When Beirut was Beirut

Qatar, Lebanon, USA / Arabic / 2021
12 mins / Colour
MENA Premiere



This poetic hybrid documentary introduces us to three majestic, abandoned buildings that witnessed Beirut’s tumultuous history—coming to life through a casual conversation amongst themselves. Using animation and archival audiovisuals, this film takes us back to the Golden Era of Beirut, when the Piccadilly Theater was filled with glamorous entertainment, the Egg was bustling with people in its local markets, and Beit Beirut housed an iconic hair salon and families living under its art-deco roof. Sadly, when the Lebanese Civil War erupted in 1975, the lives of these buildings changed completely.

Director / Screenwriter / Producer: **Alessandra El Chanti**
Music: **Joey Semaan**
Cast: **Mohamed El Chanti, Issam Younes, Laeticia Semaan**

Alessandra El Chanti is a Lebanese documentary filmmaker, activist, and artist. Her interests lie in the stories of the Levant, ranging from its culture, social issues, and politics. El Chanti holds an MFA in Documentary Media from Northwestern University.

When Light is Displaced

Palestine, USA / Arabic / 2021
6 mins / Colour
MENA Premiere



Interested in its parallels with the fate of the Jaffa oranges, the filmmaker tells her father about her intention to film the last orange grove in Los Angeles, USA. Their disagreement transforms the grove into a space of contemplation on the politics of storytelling in the multi-generational experience of Palestine in exile.

Director: **Zaina Bseiso**
Producer: **Luis Gutierrez Arias**
Cinematographer: **Zaina Bseiso, Luis Gutierrez Arias**
Music: **Brian Griffith**

Zaina Bseiso is a film director, producer, and curator working primarily in documentary and experimental cinema. Her work explores the relationship between the materialities of place and issues of memory, surveillance, corporeality, and nationalism. She received her master’s degree in film and video from the California Institute of the Arts. Bseiso is based in Los Angeles and was raised in Egypt by Palestinian parents. Her practice mainly traverses Egypt, Palestine, Cuba, Mexico, and the US. She is co-founder of Bahía Colectiva, a community of filmmakers that collaborate in practice and curation.

Ajyal Spotlight

The Ajyal Film Festival is honoured to present global personalities in film and arts as our special guests for this year's 'Ajyal Spotlight'. As always, our jurors will have the opportunity to engage with these renowned individuals through a series of inspiring and interactive discussions. We are also excited to announce that these fascinating sessions will be opened up to the public this year.



Michael Douglas

An actor with over forty years of experience in theatre, film, and television, Michael Douglas branched out into independent feature production with the Academy Award-winning 'One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest' (1975). Since then, as a producer and actor-producer, he has shown an uncanny knack for choosing projects that reflect changing trends and public concerns. Over the years, he has been involved in influential motion pictures such as 'The China Syndrome' (1979) and 'Traffic' (2000), as well as popular films including 'Romancing the Stone' (1984), 'Fatal Attraction' (1987), 'Basic Instinct' (1992), 'Behind the Candelabra' (2013) and 'Wall Street' (1987)—for which he won an Academy Award for Best Actor. He is currently shooting his third 'Ant Man' feature film for Marvel Studios.

In 1998, Douglas was made a United Nations Messenger of Peace by Kofi Annan. His main concentrations are nuclear non-proliferation and the control of small arms. He was the recipient of the 2009 AFI Lifetime Achievement as well as the Producers Guild Award that same year. In 2011 Douglas was awarded the 'Chevalier de Arts et des Lettres' in France by Frederick Mitterand and was awarded a second French Cesar for Career Achievement in 2016, becoming the only American to be given this honour twice.



Mark Mangini

Mark Mangini is an Academy Award-winning, and five-time nominated sound designer best known for films including 'Blade Runner 2049' (2017), 'Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home' (1986), 'The Fifth Element' (1997), 'Gremlins' (1984) and 'Raiders of the Lost Ark' (1981). Mangini won the 2015 Academy Award for Best Sound Editing for his work on 'Mad Max: Fury Road' (2015).

A native of Boston, Mark Mangini was a foreign language major in college, until he could no longer ignore his love of film and moved to Los Angeles to pursue a career in sound design. He has since spent his entire 40-year career in Hollywood imagining and composing altered sonic realities for motion pictures.

Mangini founded and ran Weddington Productions, a successful Hollywood post-production sound company, for 25 years. Today he works at the Formosa Group in Hollywood, California continuing his work as a supervising sound editor, sound designer and re-recording mixer on such films as 'Black Mass' (2015), 'The Accountant' (2016) as well as the recently released and critically-acclaimed 'Dune' (2021).



Andria Tayeh

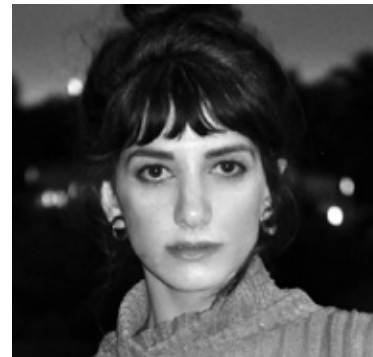
Andria Tayeh is a 20-year-old actress who recently played the leading role of Mariam in the Jordanian Netflix series 'AlRawabi School for Girls'. She is currently pursuing her bachelor's degree in Business Administration with a focus on Management from the Lebanese American University in Lebanon.

Growing up, Andria had several hobbies other than acting, including drawing, dancing, and playing basketball. At the age of ten, she won an international drawing competition for Philips, was professionally trained as a dancer with Yes Academy-New York and participated in many national and international basketball tournaments in Jordan and other countries. Andria's passion for acting will always be an ongoing journey of growth. Her goal in the next couple of years is to participate in many Middle Eastern and international leading roles.



Noor Taher

Noor Taher is a Jordanian actress of Palestinian origins. She first discovered her passion for acting when she was a six-year-old child performing in school plays and landing roles in Hollywood productions. Best known for her role as Layan on the Netflix series 'AlRawabi School for Girls', Noor is also a classically trained ballerina as well as in other dance forms.



Sheila Vand

Sheila Vand is an actress and artist who has appeared in numerous award-winning films such as 'The Rental' (2021), 'We the Animals' (2018), 'A Girl Walks Home Alone at Night' (2014), and the Academy Award-winning 'Argo' (2012).

Her stage work includes a Broadway debut alongside Robin Williams in the Pulitzer Prize finalist 'Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo', as well as the world premiere of Frank Zappa's '200 Motels' at the Walt Disney Concert Hall with the LA Philharmonic. Sheila can currently be seen as the lead of internationally-acclaimed artist Shirin Neshat's feature film 'Land of Dreams', which premiered at the 2021 Venice Film Festival, and is showing at this year's Ajyal.

She also features in the upcoming third season of Netflix/TNT's 'Snowpiercer' alongside Daveed Diggs and Jennifer Connelly. Sheila has served on juries of the Sundance Film Festival and the Vimeo Film Festival. Her own original works include 'Sneaky Nietzsche'—a theatrical experience mounted at LACMA—and 'MILK: What Will You Make of Me?'—a visual art collaboration with TED-fellow Alexa Meade.



Christopher Walken

Christopher Walken won an Academy Award and the New York Film Critic's Circle Award for his now-legendary performance in 'The Deer Hunter' (1978). Walken also received an Academy Award nomination and won BAFTA and SAG awards for 'Catch Me if You Can' (2002). In 2010, he was nominated for a Tony Award and Drama Desk Award for his performance in 'A Behanding in Spokane'.

Spanning an incredible seven decades, Walken's illustrious career in cinema includes classics such as 'Annie Hall' (1977), 'The Dogs of War' (1980), 'Brainstorm' (1983), 'The Dead Zone' (1983), 'A View to a Kill' (1985), 'King of New York' (1990), 'Batman Returns' (1992), 'True Romance' (1993), 'Pulp Fiction' (1994), 'Antz' (1998), 'Vendetta' (1999), 'Sleepy Hollow' (1999), 'Hairspray' (2007), and 'Seven Psychopaths' (2012). Walken has also played the lead in the Shakespeare plays 'Hamlet', 'Macbeth', 'Romeo and Juliet', and 'Coriolanus'.

As prolific as ever, Walken is set to star in Ben Stiller's upcoming thriller series 'Severance' alongside John Turturro and Patricia Arquette for Apple TV+, as well as Stephen Merchant's 'The Outlaws' for BBC/Amazon.

Special Screenings

1982: An Inclusive Experience

Working in partnership with the Translation and Interpreting Institute of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences at Hamad Bin Khalifa University—Ajyal Film Festival is delighted to bring our popular inclusive experience back to the silver screen this year with a DFI supported film, Oualid Mouaness' critically acclaimed '1982'. Visually impaired audiences will be able to view the film through sound alone, with

audio description of those visual elements that cannot be understood through voice, music or sound effects. While our viewers who are deaf, hard-of-hearing or have difficulty understanding speech will benefit from enriched subtitles in Arabic and English, as well as sign-language interpretation. By adapting the film to the needs of audiences with different abilities, we hope to make cinema universally accessible.

Director / Screenwriter: **Oualid Mouaness**
Producer: **Georges Schoucair, Oualid Mouaness, Alix Madigan, Myriam Sassine**
Cinematographer: **Brian Rigney Hubbard**
Editor: **Jad Dani Ali Hassan, Sabine El Gemayel**
Music: **Nadim Mishlawi**
Cast: **Nadine Labaki, Mohamad Dalli, Rodrigue Sleiman, Aliya Khalidi**
Sales: **WaZabi Films**
Distribution: **MC Distribution**

1982 **Doha Film Institute Supported Film**
Lebanon, USA, Norway, Qatar / Arabic, English / 2019
100 mins / Colour



As the academic year draws to a close in the mountains of Lebanon, eleven-year-old Wissam struggles to pluck up the courage to reveal his true feelings to classmate Joanna. But before he can, and with his school in the midst of their final exams, the air invasions on Beirut begin, and the pupils are to be sent home. However, the imminent danger only makes Wissam even more resolute, as it becomes clear that no one knows what tomorrow will bring.



Oualid Mouaness is a Liberian-born producer, writer, and director who grew up in Lebanon. His work traverses narrative and documentary features, music films, music videos and commercials. He looks for material that pushes art and tackles social and human issues. His first feature film as director, '1982', premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival in 2019 where it won the NETPAC Award and won the FIPRESCI International Critics Prize at El-Gouna Film Festival in Egypt. The film was selected to represent Lebanon for Best International Feature Film at the 92nd Academy Awards 2020.

Winner of a NETPAC Award
at Toronto International
Film Festival 2021

Director: **Mounia Akl**
Screenwriter: **Mounia Akl, Clara Roquet**
Producer: **Myriam Sassine, Georges Schoucair**
Cinematographer: **Joe Saade**
Editor: **Carlos Marques-Marcet, Cyril Aris**
Cast: **Nadine Labaki, Saleh Bakri, Nadia Charbel, Ceana Restom**
Sales: **mk2 Films**
Distribution: **Film Clinic Indie Distribution**



Mounia Akl is an award-winning Lebanese filmmaker. Her short film, 'Submarine' (2016), was

in the Official Selection of the 69th Cannes Film Festival (Cinéfondation), SXSW, TIFF and Dubai Film Festival, where it won the Muhr Jury Prize. In 2017, Mounia took part in the Lebanon Factory and co-directed the short film 'El Gran Libano', which opened Cannes Directors' Fortnight and screened at BFI London. 'Costa Brava, Lebanon' was developed during the Cannes' Cinéfondation Residency. Mounia is currently developing new projects in both TV and film, one of which being her second feature film.

Costa Brava, Lebanon

Doha Film Institute Supported Film
Lebanon, France, Spain, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Qatar / Arabic / 2021
107 mins / Colour
Middle East Premiere



In 'Costa Brava, Lebanon', the free-spirited Badri family escape the overwhelming pollution and social unrest of Beirut by seeking refuge in a utopic mountain home they built for themselves. Unexpectedly, an illegal garbage landfill begins construction right next door, and with it comes the very trash and corruption they were seeking to escape. As the landfill rises, so do family tensions. The Badris are left with a choice—stay off the grid or leave their idyllic home and face the reality they fled, hoping to stay true to their ideals.

Nadine Labaki, whose film 'Capernaum' screened at Ajyal 2018, brilliantly plays Souraya—a well-known singer and activist who toured the world with her music. Her husband, Walid (Saleh Bakri), leads the family to nature and a simpler way of life, but not without sacrifice. The family's escapist fantasy soon begins to unravel, and the external threat to their home dredges up old internal rifts and yearnings that were merely buried by their self-imposed isolation. A confident and compelling feature debut by Mounia Akl, backed by stellar performances, the film is a thoroughly enjoyable family drama and clever political parable all in one.

Land of Dreams

Doha Film Institute Supported Film
USA, Germany, Qatar / English, Farsi / 2021
113 mins / Colour
MENA Premiere



Simin is an Iranian woman on a journey to discover what it means to be a free American. She works for the Census Bureau, which, in an effort to control its citizens, has begun a programme to record their dreams. Unaware of this devious plot, Simin is torn between her compassion for those whose dreams she is recording and a truth she must find within. Haunted by the fact that her father was executed in Iran, Simin has developed a coping mechanism through a world of fantasy and playacting. She captures her interviewees' dreams, secretly impersonates them in Farsi and publishes them on social media, where she finds a growing Iranian audience.

Soon Simin meets Mark; a drifter, a free soul, and a poet who declares his love for her at first sight; and Alan, a cynical cowboy turned detective, full of machismo and the American spirit of adventure. As Simin enters the triad, she finds the two men's competition and conflicts amusing and silently enjoys the ride. Playful and poignant, 'Land of Dreams' acknowledges in a surreal and satirical way, the greatness of the American experiment while offering a warning beacon for what could come.

Director: **Shirin Neshat, Shoja Azari**
Screenwriter: **Jean-Claude Carrière, Shoja Azari**
Producer: **Amir Hamz, Sol Tryon, Christian Springer**
Editor: **Mike Selemon**
Cinematographer: **Ghasem Ebrahimian**
Cast: **Sheila Vand, Matt Dillon, William Moseley, Isabella Rossellini**
Sales / Distribution: **Beta Cinema**



Shirin Neshat is an Iranian artist and filmmaker living in New York. She has been the recipient of the Golden

Lion Award at the 48th Venice Biennale (1999), and the Silver Lion Award at the 66th Venice Film Festival (2009), for her first feature film 'Women Without Men'. Shirin Neshat's second feature 'Looking for Oum Kulthum' (2017), which screened at Ajyal, was based on the life of the legendary Egyptian singer Oum Kulthum.



Shoja Azari is a visual artist and filmmaker living in New York. He has directed several feature films, including 'K',

based on short stories by Franz Kafka (2000); 'Windows' (2006); 'Simple Little Lives' (2015); and 'Badria' (2017). Azari has been a long-time collaborator with Shirin Neshat, co-directing 'Women Without Men', and 'Looking for Oum Kulthum'. Azari's artworks have been widely exhibited internationally and are in major museum collections.

Director /
Screenwriter: **Bouli Lanners**
Producer:
Jacques-Henri Bronckart
Editor: **Ewin Ryckaert**
Cinematographer:
Frank Van Den Eeden
Cast: **Bouli Lanners, Michelle Fairley, Julian Glover, Clovis Cornillac**
Sales / Distribution: **Playtime**



Bouli Lanners was born in Moresnet-Chapelle, Belgium. He is a familiar face on Belgian

and French screens in recent years, working as a director alongside his prolific acting career, celebrated by both critics and audiences. His directorial credits include 'Muno' (2001), 'Ultranova' (2005), 'Eldorado' (2008), 'The Giants' (2011), and 'The First, the Last' (2016). 'Nobody Has to Know' (2021) is his latest film.

Nobody Has to Know

Belgium, UK, France / English, French / 2021
99 mins / Colour
MENA Premiere



Working as a farmhand on a remote and weather-beaten Scottish island, middle-aged Phil is an outsider that speaks his mind. After a sudden stroke, Phil wakes up with no memories of his past, a case of apparent amnesia due to his ordeal. A demure but enterprising girl named Millie soon comes to his rescue. The daughter of Phil's boss, she is on-hand to nurse him back to health and restore his seemingly lost memories, soon revealing a clandestine secret—the pair were more than mere acquaintances. As Phil slowly regains his memories, prompted by the ever-encouraging Millie, it seems the couple will reignite their forgotten connection.

Much like Phil's foggy past, as time passes, things become clearer and appear to be not quite what they initially seemed. But which is more important, the truth or love? Our memories are our identity, the strange electrical impulses that make us who we are. The thought of losing these, our very history and the experiences we've shared with loved ones is truly heartbreaking. Premiering at this year's Toronto International Film Festival, 'Nobody Has to Know' treats these themes with tender delicacy to create a humane romantic drama that challenges our preconceptions of truth.

Orca

Doha Film Institute Supported Film
Qatar, Iran / Farsi / 2021
108 mins / Colour
Home Premiere



Elham, a young divorced Iranian woman, survives a horrific beating at the hands of her estranged husband. Haunted by the traumatic experience and seeking to rediscover herself after the separation, she finds some solace and salvation in the open expanse of water. Courageous, determined and encouraged by her supportive father, Elham soon makes her mark as a formidable endurance swimmer of the Caspian Sea. In the fight of her life, Elham faces political, ideological, and personal obstacles in search of her ultimate goal—the Guinness world record for swimming the longest distance with her hands bound.

Made with the support of Doha Film Institute and Katara Studios, 'Orca' is the true story of Iranian swimmer Elham Asghari and her quest for sporting recognition in her home country. Her incredible journey from a near-death domestic violence episode to the pinnacle of one of the most challenging and arduous sports in the world is an inspiring watch. A true heroine's journey, 'Orca' shows us how one brave woman at the lowest point in her life fought her way back from the abyss and turned the darkness into a miracle.

Director: **Sahar Mossayebi**
Screenwriter: **Tala Motazedi**
Cast: **Taraneh Alidoosti, Mahtab Keramati, Mahtab Nasirpour, Masoud Karamati, Mohammad Rashno**



Sahar Mossayebi was born in Tehran in 1975. She graduated in Theatre with a BA from

The Azad University of Art and Architecture and began her career in 1996 as an actor in a performance by Davoud Mirbagheri called 'Eshgh Abad'. She has worked across diverse positions in the world of cinema, including as a production manager, planner, script supervisor, and assistant director.

Made in USA

Shorts Programme

A selection of the very best in contemporary American short-form filmmaking.

Character

USA / English / 2020

17 mins / Colour

MENA Premiere



Actor Mark Metcalf made his reputation playing aggrieved authority figures, most famously in National Lampoon's Animal House and Buffy the Vampire Slayer. Now in his 70s, he takes a critical look back on his life and career in this meditation on power, privilege, and the perils of being a "type". See-sawing between essay and portrait film, 'Character gives us a fascinating insight into the world of method acting and Metcalf's considerable career.

Director / Producer / Editor: **Vera Brunner-Sung**

Cinematographer: **Ori Segev**

Vera Brunner-Sung was born in Michigan to parents from Korea and Switzerland. Her films have been screened at festivals and museums around the world. Her first feature, 'Bella Vista', premiered at the 2014 International Film Festival Rotterdam (Bright Future) and won her the George C. Lin Emerging Filmmaker Award at the San Diego Asian Film Festival. She is the recipient of a Sundance FilmTwo and Center for Asian American Media fellowship.

The Chicken

USA / English, Japanese / 2020

14 mins / Colour

MENA Premiere



Hiro, a Japanese immigrant in New York City, decides to butcher a live chicken for dinner. While showing around his cousin Kei, who is visiting from Japan, they run into a medical emergency on the street, which they badly mishandle. As the day wears on, the results of Hiro and Kei's small acts hint at the growing ways that their lives are witness to, or complicit in, the structural violence happening all around them.

Director / Screenwriter: **Neo Sora**

Producer: **Albert Tholen, Jackson Segars, Jane JI**

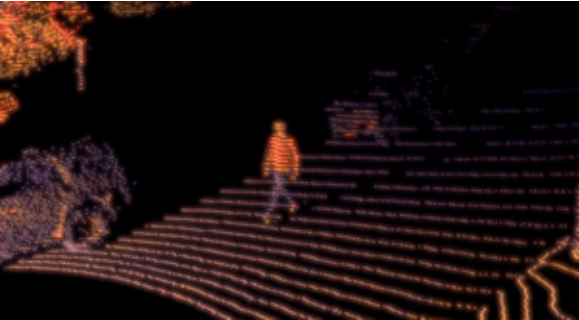
Cinematographer: **Bill Kirstein**

Editor: **Albert Tholen**

Neo Sora is a filmmaker, artist, and translator based in New York and Tokyo. In 2015, Neo co-directed a documentary entitled 'Ainu Neno an Ainu' as one-third of the collective Lunch Bee House. Since then, he has directed, shot, and produced short narrative and documentary films, music videos, fashion spots, and a concert film. His artworks have been exhibited this year alongside artists such as Jean-Luc Godard at the Dojima River Biennale.

Forever

USA / English / 2020
7 mins / Colour
MENA Premiere



A life insurance company uses an AI algorithm to determine the risk of a new applicant, but the subsequent denial sparks a period of introspection. The film was created using LiDAR to capture real-life moments and environments. The LiDAR unit used was originally designed for self-driving cars. This junction of technology and filmmaking intersects with the subject of the film. AI uses LiDAR to “see” humanity in accurate detail but has resolution limitations. ‘Forever’ explores the boundary of advanced technology and the human experience.

Director: **Mitch McGlocklin**
Cast: **Mitch McGlocklin, Jeanette Bonds**

Mitch McGlocklin is a filmmaker from San Diego who works across a variety of mediums. He received his BA in art from the University of California San Diego and an MFA in animation and digital arts from the University of Southern California. McGlocklin creates exploratory work in both form and content, intersecting human life with our digital facsimiles. McGlocklin freelances as a CG artist/ animator while continuing to make personal work.

The Jog

USA / English, Spanish / 2019
7 mins / Colour
MENA Premiere



A young black man in America awakes to some great news; he has just been accepted into the police academy. In good spirits and with his future now seemingly secured, he goes for his usual morning jog around the neighbourhood. But when he sees a woman in distress and attempts to help, his altruistic gesture leads to tragic consequences. Captured on a hand-held camera in one take, this short yet intense story deals with preconceptions and racial inequality.

Director / Screenwriter: **Joseph Lee Anderson**
Producer: **Joseph Lee Anderson, Kyle Kelley**
Editor / Cinematographer: **Trevor Hawkins**
Cast: **Joseph Lee Anderson, Ashley Kennedy, Vilma de Leon, Stephen Matlock**

Joseph Lee Anderson is an actor, writer, director and Kansas City-transplant based in Los Angeles, USA. He has appeared on ‘Harriet’, ‘S.W.A.T.’, ‘American Soul’, ‘Timeless’, and much more. Joseph is also a filmmaker, most known for directing ‘The Jog’, a short film which screened at many film festivals including South by Southwest.

Lonely Blue Night

USA / English, Mandarin / 2020
15 mins / Colour
MENA Premiere



An awkward family reunion at a business dinner leads a Chinese mother to realize the consequences of leaving her daughter in the care of an American homestay family. ‘Lonely Blue Night’ is a nuanced portrait of a family and their largely unspoken relationships. It was an official selection in competition at the 2020 AFI FEST, where it won the Audience Award. Starring Diana Lin, who also featured in ‘The Farewell’, a film screened at Ajyal 2019.

Director / Screenwriter: **Johnson Cheng**
Producer: **Apoorva Charan, Steve Y. Kim**
Cinematographer: **Carlo Canlas Mendoza**
Editor: **Leo Chan**
Music: **Johnny Macmillan**
Cast: **Diana Lin, Lydia Zhou, Peter Boon Koh, Jack Wang**

Johnson Cheng is an award-winning Chinese American writer/director. He is an alumnus of Columbia University’s M.F.A. Film Directing/Screenwriting program in NYC, the NYFF Artist Academy, and Film Independent’s Project Involve. An HBO APA Visionary and recipient of the Princess Grace Award, his films have been screened at over 100 international film festivals. Johnson’s debut short, ‘Iron Hands’, screened at Tribeca, TIFF Kids, Palm Springs (Best Student Film).

Moving

USA / English / 2019
8 mins / Colour
MENA Premiere



Transporting an old mattress up several flights of stairs and into a new apartment becomes an absurdist, cinematic one-woman choreography, full of humour and pathos in this wordless vignette of city life. Drawing inspiration from her move after college, Dancyger captures a Sisyphean-like endeavour that is all too familiar to city-dwellers the world over. The short stars the talented Hannah Gross, best known for her role as Debbie Mitford in the Netflix drama ‘Mindhunter’.

Director / Screenwriter / Editor: **Adinah Dancyger**
Producer: **Gabby Green**
Cinematographer: **Mia Cioffi Henry**
Cast: **Hannah Gross, Richard Vetere, John Wilson, Oda Johnson**

Adinah Dancyger is a Korean-Polish, first-generation American filmmaker from NYC. Her short films have been screened at various festivals: ‘Moving’ (Slamdance 2020, Grand Jury Award for Narrative Short Film, New York Film Festival 2019). ‘Cheer Up Baby’ (Sundance Film Festival 2018, NYFF 2017), Chopping Onions (Berlinale 2015, Hamptons Film Festival 2015). Dancyger is a fellow of the 2017 New York Film Festival’s Artist Academy and the 20th annual Hamptons Screenwriting Lab.

To Know Her

USA, Hong Kong / Chinese, English / 2020

15 mins / Colour



Filmed decades apart on the same MiniDV camcorder, 'To Know Her' is a poetic exploration of the filmmaker’s complex relationship with her mother, who passed away when she was just 14 years old due to clinical depression. As the director explains, “I inherited my camera tendencies from my mother because she always pointed the camcorder at the subject who mattered to her most. I want to throw that loving gaze out back towards her”.

Director / Screenwriter / Editor: **Natalie A. Chao**
Cinematographer: **Natalie A. Chao, Stephanie A. Chao**
Music: **John Russell, Jonah Sanchez, Jonathan Ricks**

Natalie A. Chao is a filmmaker and visual artist who completed her BA degree in Film Production at USC in Los Angeles, focusing on cinematography. Born, raised, and currently based in Hong Kong, she is interested in bridging the gap between realism and poetry to tell stories through a more engaged and intentional gaze—one that can map out our memories, not draw lines between camera and subject, identity and politics. She is currently a 2020 Sundance Ignite x Adobe Fellow, and her documentary short, 'To Know Her', premiered at the 2021 Sundance Film Festival.

Ajyal Drive-in Cinema

In partnership with Qatar Tourism

Annabelle

USA / English / 2014

99 mins / Colour



John Form has found the perfect gift for his expectant wife, Mia—a beautiful, rare vintage doll in a pure white wedding dress. But Mia's delight with Annabelle doesn't last long. On one horrific night, their home is invaded by members of a satanic cult, who violently attack the couple. Spilt blood and terror are not all they leave behind. The cultists have conjured an entity so malevolent that nothing they did will compare to the sinister conduit to the damned that is now...Annabelle.

Director: **John R. Leonetti**
Cast: **Brian Howe, Eric Ladin, Annabelle Wallis, Alfre Woodard**
Distribution: **Warner Bros.**

Child’s Play

USA / English / 1988
88 mins / Colour



Director: **Tom Holland**
Screenwriter: **Don Mancini**
Producer: **David Kirschner, John Lafia, Tom Holland**
Cinematographer: **Bill Butler, A.S.C.**
Editor: **Edward Warschilka, Roy E. Peterson**
Music: **Joe Renzetti**
Cast: **Catherine Hicks, Chris Sarandon, Alex Vincent, Brad Dourif**
Distribution: **Park Circus**

Gunned down by Detective Mike Norris, dying murderer Charles Lee Ray uses black magic to put his soul inside a doll named Chucky—which Karen Barclay then buys for her young son, Andy. When Chucky kills Andy’s babysitter, the boy realizes the doll is alive and tries to warn people, but he’s institutionalized. Now Karen must convince the detective of the murderous doll’s intentions before Andy becomes Chucky’s next victim in this wildly original and truly creepy horror classic.

The Conjuring

USA / English / 2013
109 mins / Colour



In 1970, paranormal investigators and demonologists Lorraine and Ed Warren are summoned to the home of Carolyn and Roger Perron. The Perrons and their five daughters have recently moved into a secluded farmhouse, where a supernatural presence has made itself known. Though the manifestations are relatively benign at first, events soon escalate in horrifying fashion, especially after the Warrens discover the house’s macabre history.

Director: **James Wan**
Cast: **Vera Farmiga, Patrick Wilson**
Distribution: **Warner Bros.**

Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone

UK, USA / English / 2001
152 mins / Colour



Director: **Chris Columbus**
Screenwriter: **Steve Kloves**
Producer: **David Heyman**
Editor: **Richard Francis-Bruce**
Music: **John Williams**
Cinematographer: **John Seale**
Cast: **Daniel Radcliffe, Rupert Grint, Emma Watson, John Cleese, Robbie Coltrane, Warwick Davis, Richard Griffiths, Richard Harris**
Distribution: **Warner Bros.**

An adaptation of the first of J.K. Rowling's popular children's novels about Harry Potter, a boy who learns on his eleventh birthday that he is the orphaned son of two powerful wizards and possesses unique magical powers of his own. He is summoned from his life as an unwanted child to become a student at Hogwarts, an English boarding school for wizards. There, he meets several friends who become his closest allies and help him discover the truth about his parents' mysterious deaths. A big-screen magical caper celebrating its 20th anniversary this year!

Maya the Bee 3: The Golden Orb

Germany, Australia / English / 2021
80 mins / Colour
Qatar Premiere



When Maya, a headstrong little bee, and her best friend, Willi, rescue an ant princess, they find themselves in the middle of an epic bug battle that will take them to strange new worlds and test their friendship to its limits. A genuine feel-good family movie about the importance of friendship, freedom and facing our fears.

Director: **Noel Cleary**
Screenwriter: **Fin Edquist**
Producer: **Tracy Lenon, Benjamin Ey, Brian Rosen**
Cast: **Coco Jack Gillies, Evie Gillies, Benson Jack Anthony, Justine Clarke, Shane Dundas and David Collins**
Distribution: **Empire International Gulf LLC**

One Hundred and One Dalmatians

Kids' Red-Carpet Screening

USA / English / 1961

79 mins / Colour



Director: **Wolfgang Reitherman, Hamilton Luske, Clyde Geronimi**
Distribution: **Disney**

Dalmatian Pongo is tired of his bachelor-dog life. He spies lovely Perdita and manoeuvres his master, Roger, into meeting Perdita's owner, Anita. The owners fall in love and marry, keeping Pongo and Perdita together too. After Perdita gives birth to a litter of 15 puppies, Anita's old school friend Cruella De Vil wants to buy them all. Roger declines her offer, so Cruella hires the criminal Badun brothers to steal them—so she can make herself a fur coat!

'Under the Trees' Cine-Concert

Ajyal is delighted to once again partner with Forum des Images to present an audio-visual feast for the senses!

Making its Qatar premiere, 'Under the Trees' is an endearing and oh-so-fun musical show full of poetry and sweetness—accompanied live by talented musicians Leslie Bourdin and Rémi Foucard.

According to Birds

The great owl arrives as the leaves begin to fall. Smaller birds take flight soaring into the air, looking for warmer climates as winter begins in the forest.

Director: **Linde Faas**

Netherlands / 2008 / 5 mins

Raccoon and the Light

Late at night in the deep dark forest, a curious racoon discovers a mysterious new friend. Strange at first, the pair soon form an illuminating friendship!

Director: **Hanna Kim**

USA / 2018 / 4 mins

The Fox Who Followed the Sound

An enchanting sound is coming from the woods. What could it be? A curious little fox goes to investigate and discovers the music within himself.

Director: **Fatemeh Goudarzi**

Iran / 2012 / 10 mins

The Last Day of Autumn

All the forest animals have been squirrelling away parts to build their bikes for the big race on the last day of Autumn, but who will win?

Director: **Marjolaine Perreten**

Switzerland, Belgium, France / 2019 / 7 mins

Ajyal Creativity Hub

Msheireb is home to Ajyal's Creativity Hub this year, including our ever-popular events such as Geekdom, the multimedia art exhibit 'We Will Not Leave' and Ajyal Tunes.

We Will Not Leave

An Exhibition by Doha Film Institute

Curated by Sheikh Khalifa Abdulla Al-Thani



Throughout history, oppressors have used the imbalance of power to subjugate and control dissenting voices. Traditionally, mainstream media has sided with the dominant force, often misinterpreting, misreporting, or purposefully misrepresenting the powerless to appease the powerful.

There is no more tragically true example of this today than the struggle of the Palestinian people. Their voices have been muted, their cries silenced and their viewpoints all but ignored by unjust and partisan forces in global media and industry. But with the rise of new media, comes a glimmer of hope. Thanks to the brave people of Palestine and the ascent of citizen journalism, the world is beginning to see the true nature of their plight.

Drawing inspiration from the Al-Kurd family living in the embattled Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood, this year's exhibit 'We Will Not Leave' derives its name from their defiant and now iconic piece of graffiti art. Qatar's creative community has come together in a spirit of solidarity, support and kinship for our Palestinian brothers and sisters to present a multimedia experience that aims to manifest both the poignant beauty and affecting hardships of their current subjugation...

Artists

Twenty-seven artists have graciously supported this year’s cause with their artworks. We would like to sincerely thank each of them for their generous contribution of time and talent in making this year’s exhibit a success.

- Jumanah Abbas
- Abdullah Ahmadi
- Hanof Ahmed
- Ibrahim AlBaker
- Shaikha Al-Elaiwy
- AlAnoud Al-Ghamdi
- Reem Al-Haddad
- Anfal Al-Kandari
- Sharefa Al-Mannai
- Saad Al-Mslamani
- Noof Al-Naama
- Amira Alnamla
- Hazem Asif
- Maryam Al-Tajer
- Buthaina Al Zaman
- Nour El-Basuni
- Sumaia El Kilani
- Yousef Fakhroo
- Ahmad Tariq Hamad
- Obada Jarbi
- Fatima Javed
- Arman Mansouri
- Hayyan Monawar
- Lana Shaheen
- Tanya Shamil
- Haytham Sharrouf
- Mala Waseem

Exhibition Talks

As part of our ‘We Will Not Leave’ multimedia exhibit, we are honoured to host a series of insightful talks with esteemed guests from the region and beyond. Taking place in our screening room at Sikkat Wadi Msheireb, each of these hour-long discussions will shine a light on an important topic related to the Palestinian struggle.



A Conversation with Elia Suleiman
Moderator: Jovan Marjanovic



Cinematic Hope: The Present and Future of Palestinian Filmmaking
Guests: Farah Nabulsi
Moderator: Rafia Hussain Oraidi

Amplified Voices: The Rise of Digital Advocacy.
Guests: Muna El-Kurd, Tariq Al-Baker and Muna Hawwa
Moderator: Salam Hindawi

Inescapable Truth: Palestine Online
Guests: Ala Hamdan
Moderator: Ahmed Shihab Eldin

Public Open Mic Evening: The Poetry of Palestine
Guests: Public
Moderator: Sana Uqba

Ajyal Tunes

The historical setting of Msheireb Museums' Company House will stage Ajyal Tunes' incredible programme of live music this year, glistening with Qatar-based talent and a few special international guests too.

Film Tunes

A cinematic feast for all film fans with a concert featuring music from Disney classics to Bollywood and everything in-between.

World Tunes

A trip around the world of music with medleys from different genres and languages featuring special guests from Jordan, Ahmad Al Zmaili & Mohammad Bashar.

Geekdom Night

A special Geekdom concert brimming with classic songs from all your favourite anime and animated series from the 1970s to today.



Geekdom



Welcome back one and all to Qatar's largest pop-culture event. We may have been apart for a while, but we hope you're ready to be a part of the action once more as Geekdom 2021 returns in all its glory. This year, we've moved to the amazing Sikkat Wadi Msheireb and play host to all your favourite events, such as awesome video game tournaments, unmissable screenings, talented artists, fun karaoke and much more.

Beauty and the Beast

USA / English / 1991
84 mins / Colour



An arrogant young prince and his castle’s servants fall under the spell of a wicked enchantress, who turns him into the hideous Beast until he learns to love and be loved in return. The spirited, headstrong village girl Belle enters the Beast’s castle after he imprisons her father, Maurice. With the help of his enchanted servants, including the matronly Mrs Potts, Belle begins to draw the cold-hearted Beast out of his isolation in this classic animation with plenty of wonderful musical numbers.

Director: **Gary Trousdale, Kirk Wise**
Producer: **Don Hahn**
Editor: **John Carnochan**
Music: **Alan Menken, Howard Ashman**
Cast: **Paige O’Hara, Robby Benson, Richard White, Jerry Orbach**
Distribution: **Buena Vista Pictures Distribution, Inc.**

Josee, the Tiger and the Fish

Japan / Japanese / 2020
98 mins / Colour
MENA Premiere



Tsuneo is a university student with dreams of diving abroad. While out walking one day, he gets a job assisting Josee, an artist whose imagination takes her far beyond her wheelchair. But when the tide turns against them, they push each other to places they never thought possible and inspire a love fit for a storybook. A gorgeously animated and effortlessly charming melodramatic animated feature based on a short story and young adult novel of the same name by Seiko Tanabehe.

Director: **Kotaro Tamura**
Screenwriter: **Sayaka Kuwamura**
Producer: **Shuuzou Kasahara, Kouichirou Mukai, Mari Suzuki**
Cinematographer: **Tsuyoshi Kanbayashi**
Editor: **Kumiko Sakamoto**
Music: **Evan Call**
Cast: **Taishi Nakagawa, Kaya Kiyohara**
Distribution: **Kodokawa Animation**

The Lion King

USA / Arabic / 1994
88 mins / Colour



Emotionally stirring and richly drawn, ‘The Lion King’ follows the adventures of young lion Simba, the heir of his father, Mufasa. Simba’s wicked uncle, Scar, plots to usurp Mufasa’s throne by luring father and son into a stampede of wildebeests. But Simba escapes, and only Mufasa is killed. Simba returns as an adult to take back his homeland from Scar with the help of his friends Timon and Pumbaa in this Disney favourite with unforgettable songs by Elton John and Tim Rice.

Director: **Roger Allers, Rob Minkoff**
Screenwriter: **Irene Mecchi, Jonathan Roberts, Linda Woolverton**
Producer: **Don Hahn**Editor**Ivan Bilancio**
Music: **Hans Zimmer**
Cast: **Matthew Broderick, Jonathan Taylor Thomas, James Earl Jones, Jeremy Irons**
Distribution: **Buena Vista Pictures Distribution, Inc.**

Mulan

USA / Arabic / 1998
88 mins / Colour



Fearful that her ailing father will be drafted into the Chinese military, Mulan takes his spot—though, as a girl living under a patriarchal regime, she is technically unqualified to serve. She cleverly impersonates a man and goes off to train with fellow recruits. Accompanied by her dragon, Mushu, she uses her smarts to help ward off a Hun invasion, falling in love with a dashing captain along the way in this vibrantly animated tale about war, honour, gender roles and family pride.

Director: **Barry Cook, Tony Bancroft**
Screenwriter: **Rita Hsiao, Philip LaZebnik, Chris Sanders, Eugenia Bostwick-Singer**
Producer: **Pam Coats**
Editor: **Michael Kelly**
Music: **Jerry Goldsmith, Matthew Wilder, David Zippel**
Cast: **Ming-Na Wen, Eddie Murphy, B.D. Wong, Miguel Ferrer, June Foray**
Distribution: **Buena Vista Pictures Distribution, Inc.**

Poupelle of Chimney Town

Japan / English / 2020
100 mins / Colour
MENA Premiere



Young Lubicchi lives in Chimney Town, a place where the sky is eternally grey due to the countless smokestacks that billow out soot into the air. Lubicchi’s father, who has mysteriously disappeared, used to tell him stories of blue skies and twinkling stars that lie above the thick layers of smog. One Halloween, Lubicchi meets a friendly monster made of garbage which he names Poupelle. Convinced that “if you believe, you’ll find a way”, Lubicchi and Poupelle, embark on a daring mission to discover a new world beyond the smoke.

Director: **Yusuke Hirota**
Screenwriter: **Akihiro Nishino**
Producer: **Yusuke Kitahashi, Ryoichi Fukuyama, Eiko Tanaka**
Music: **Youki Kojima, Yuta Bando**
Cast: **Tony Hale, Antonio Raul Corbo, Stephen Root, Misty Lee, Hasan Minhaj**
Distribution: **Kiyuki Inc.**

Tarzan

USA, UK / Arabic / 1999
78 mins / Colour



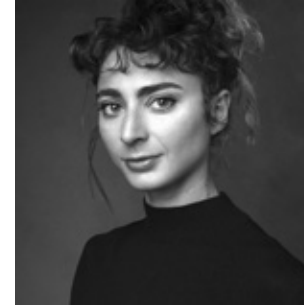
The orphaned Tarzan grows up in the remote African wilderness, raised by the gentle gorilla Kala. When a British expedition enters the jungle, Tarzan encounters the beautiful Jane and recognizes that, like her, he’s human. Falling in love with Jane, Tarzan is torn between embracing civilization and staying with his gorilla family, which becomes threatened by the ruthless hunter Clayton in this thrilling animated action-adventure.

Director: **Chris Buck, Kevin Lima**
Screenwriter: **Tab Murphy, Bob Tzudiker, Noni White**
Producer: **Bonnie Arnold**
Editor: **Gregory Perler**
Music: **Mark Mancina**
Cast: **Brian Blessed, Glenn Close, Minnie Driver, Tony Goldwyn, Nigel Hawthorne**
Distribution: **Disney**

Ajyal Talks

For 2021, we are delighted to present two fascinating talks on the power of dreams and having the courage to pursue them.

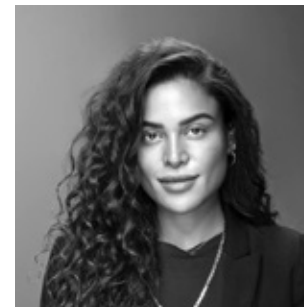
**Replace 'can't' with 'maybe'—
Alexi Pappas on how to chase
big dreams.**



Olympian, actress, filmmaker, and author Alexi Pappas shares the lessons she's learned about setting ambitious goals in life—and how to care for your mental health along the way. We must remember to be as kind to ourselves as we are hard on ourselves. Alexi will also share the best advice she's ever heard, called "the rule of thirds," which applies to anyone who is chasing big dreams.

Meet the Gamechangers

In this inspirational talk, we'll meet a panel of young entrepreneurs who are transforming the Qatari business landscape. They'll discuss how they built their unique brands using time-honoured storytelling techniques to create intrigue and engagement with their audiences. These forward-thinking business brains are shining a light on some of the most important issues in today's world and inspiring the next generation of leaders. Guests include Joujou Al Fardan (Evergreen, Green & Go, Ox Fitness), Kerem Mergen (Workinton Qatar) and Sheikh Abdullah Al-Thani (Rasen Sports).



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