



NORTHWESTERN
UNIVERSITY
IN QATAR

بيان صحفي News Release



جامعة نورثويسترن
في قطر

MEDIA CONTACT

Zeena Kanaan
+974 5585 3590
zeena.kanaan@northwestern.edu

NU-Q Filmmakers Win Awards at Ajyal Youth Film Festival 2017

Doha, Qatar – 5 December 2017 – Films on gender stereotyping, family relationships, and cultural barriers were recognized at the Ajyal Youth Film Festival’s “Made in Qatar.”

The films, produced by Northwestern University in Qatar (NU-Q) students and alumni, were made independently or with the support of NU-Q and Doha Film Institute’s workshops or funding programs.

“NU-Q has supported Ajyal since its inception five years ago and are delighted to see so many film entries from NU-Q students, graduates and faculty, each carrying an important message that addresses social, cultural, or political constructs. The awarding of four of these films is also an indication of the high-quality production our students, graduates, and faculty are bringing to the film industry,” said Everette E. Dennis, dean and CEO of NU-Q.

NU-Q student Amal Al-Muftah – who won the Best Narrative Award for her film, *Smicha* – also received the Qatar Woman of the Year Award 2017 for Best Young Talent. Her film tells the story of the bond between a seven-year-old girl, Lulwa, and her elderly grandfather, who is beginning to show signs of senility. It has also just been announced that Al-Mufath’s film will also be available for viewing on Qatar Airway flights.

Rawan Al-Nassiri and Nada Bedair, also NU-Q students, won Best Documentary/Experimental Award for *Treasures of the Past*, a documentary that follows three older Qatari women as they strive to defy gender stereotypes by starting their own businesses.

The documentary was also screened at the Middle Eastern Studies Association annual meeting in Washington D.C., and will be displayed during Qatar Foundation’s upcoming Town Hall event, “I AM QF.”

"The award is a celebration of the Qatari women from previous generations who constantly fought against forced gender stereotypes. To me personally, it is an acknowledgment of those warriors who refused to lean on anyone but themselves," said Al-Nassiri.

"As two female filmmakers, we are particularly honored to win this award. We hope it inspires women around the country to follow their passions no matter the odds," said Bedair.

NU-Q alumna Rawda Al-Thani received the Special Jury Documentary/Experimental Award for her abstract film *I Have Been Watching You All Along*. The short film follows a woman as she explores an abandoned cinema, guarded by men, through a trance-like journey into its past by using the film reels she finds.

"It was an honor to win the experimental film award, I cannot wait to work on my next ventures now. I was not expecting to win anything, and I was so proud of all the films in the program overall," said Al-Thani.

Also recognized at the festival was NU-Q Professor Rana Kazkaz for her film, *Mare Nostrum*, which she co-directed with Anas Khalaf.

In addition to the four award-winning films, four other films by NU-Q students and alumni were screened at the festival. These were *The Palm Tree* by Jassim Al Rumaihi, *Kashta* by AJ Al-Thani, *Makh'bz* by Aisha AlMuhannadi, and *Our Time is Running Out* by Meriem Mesraoua.

Kashta – which explores the relationship between a father and his two sons on a traditional hunting trip – was selected to be screened at an inclusive cinema experience, where visually impaired attendees were able to view the film through sound and audio descriptions of elements that cannot be understood by voice.

-ENDS-

About Northwestern University in Qatar

Northwestern University in Qatar draws from its parent organization, [Northwestern University](#) (Evanston, Illinois), a distinguished history, famous programs and an exceptional faculty. Founded in partnership with Qatar Foundation, NU-Q provides a framework through which students explore the world and, ultimately, shape its future through its distinguished schools of [communication](#), [journalism and strategic communication](#), and liberal arts.