

International film festival and forum on human rights

Geneva
10-19 March
2017



Press release

Geneva, March 18st 2017

Closing and Awards Ceremony of the 15th edition of the FIFDH

For its 15th anniversary, the FIFDH has become a must-see event in the world of major international film festivals. This 15th edition has attracted an ever-growing, increasingly young, audience. This is evidenced by the crowded rooms and queues during the event. The program offers an immersion into often difficult or even tragic themes, such as forced disappearances, torture, rising extremism, financial scandals, but also acts of commitment and courage. Themes usually absent from the screens, which strike our minds and arouse in us the desire and need to take action.

A major meeting point for the human rights field

The struggle against impunity and justice are major themes at the heart of the 2017 FIFDH Forum. Consider, for example, the poignant testimonies from **Mazen al-Hamada**, a survivor of torture in the Syrian regime's prisons, **Tawakkol Karman**, Nobel Peace Prize winner of 2011, who called for an end to the hostilities ignored by the media in Yemen, or those of dissidents such as **Aslı Erdoğan** (by video conference), **Pınar Selek**, **Yavuz Baydar** and **Kerem Altıparmak** who denounced the authoritarian abuses of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.

The women's rights debate brought together feminist activists **Rokhaya Diallo**, **Françoise Girard** and **Agata Czarnacka**. The Ugandan activist **Cleopatra Kambugu**, the protagonist of the film *The Pearl of Africa*, marked the audience with her unforgettable and moving testimony on LGBTI rights.

Former Brazilian President **Dilma Rousseff** called for pro-active policies to reduce poverty, taking advantage of her visit to Geneva to affirm her support for Lula's candidacy in the 2018 presidential election in Brazil.

All the debates can be found on our website www.fifdh.org

Cinema: films rooted in reality

A film with deep symbolic significance in the United States and a great surprise at the last Oscars, *Moonlight*, by Barry Jenkins, had sold out sessions during all of its screenings at the FIFDH.

Reflecting the remarkable style of the Finnish director Aki Kaurismäki, the interaction with the actors of his latest film *The Other Side of Hope* was humorous, profound and humanistic. The two actors, **Sakari Kuosmanen** and **Sherwan Haji**, discussed issues related to the role of Europe in the current migration crisis with an interested and engaged audience.

The Festival's public also exchanged with great filmmakers who traveled to Geneva to present their latest films, such as **Raoul Peck** (*I Am Not Your Negro*), **Bertrand Bonello** (*Nocturama*), **Manon Loizeau** (*Silent War*), **Michele Placido** (*7 Minuti*), **Pamela Yates** (*500 Years*), **Sanjeewa Pushpakumara** (*Burning Birds*) and **Raed Andoni** (*Ghost Hunting*).

Rithy Panh, this edition's artist of honour, presented his installation *Exils* in the presence of Angelina Jolie.

The Cambodian director **Rithy Panh** has created, within the framework of the FIFDH, *Exils*, his first artistic installation which resonates with his eponymous feature film. Exhibited in the courtyard of the Pitoëff theater, this monumental artwork received a surprise visit by the American actress **Angelina Jolie**, who was visiting Geneva for a conference at the UN, invited by the Graduate Institute and the Sergio Vieira de Mello Foundation, a premiere patron of the FIFDH.

An increasingly widespread Festival

Projections organized in partnership with municipalities and associations in more than 40 locations in Greater Geneva and French-speaking Switzerland (theaters, museums, neighborhood houses, hospitals, sports halls, restaurants, etc.) welcomed an increasingly large audience. The user-friendliness of the projection spaces encouraged exchange between the speakers and spectators.

Three of the Hospice General's collective residences for migrants opened their doors during the ten days of the festival. Concerts and buffets were organized by residents who helped to integrate them as full actors into the local life.

For the first time, a film jury composed of detainees from the Brenaz prison viewed a selection of Swiss films during an emotionally-charged selection of screenings. The prize that they awarded is listed on the Festival's official selection.

An unprecedented impact on social networks and the web

The Festival has grown tremendously online with nearly 800,000 people sharing and participating over ten days, in particular thanks to the live streaming of the debates of the Forum. The intervention of **Dilma Rousseff** was followed live by 1351 people, and viewed more than 77,000 times. Mentioned in *trending topics* on Twitter during the first weekend, the FIFDH has become an essential platform for Internet users thanks to the increased exchange of its contents.

Official Awards

The public will have the opportunity to see a second screening of the selected films at the Grütli Cinema on Sunday March 19th.

Creative Documentary Section

The International Creative Documentary Jury was chaired by **Deeyah Khan**, alongside **Laurent Gaudé**, **Farahnaz Sharifi**, **Wu Wenguang** and **Elena Fortes**.

GRAND PRIX OF GENEVA (10'000 CHF)

**Offered by the City
and Canton of Geneva**

***THE WAR SHOW* by Obaidah Zytoon and Andreas Dalsgaard**

«A film of memory and action, *The War Show* highly presents values of freedom. Obaidah Zytoon and Andreas Dalsgaard tell, from an insider's perspective, the courage of a generation. This film remarkably reminds us of the beauty of commitment and engagement. It is also a magnificent tribute to those whom repression has overwhelmed.»

THE GILDA VIEIRA DE MELLO PRIZE IN TRIBUTE TO HER SON SERGIO VIEI- RA DE MELLO (5'000 CHF)

**Offered by the Barbara
Hendricks Foundation for
Peace and Reconciliation**

***I AM NOT YOUR NEGRO* by Raoul Peck**

«By awakening the figure of the writer James Baldwin in the public consciousness, the film shows striking intellect in the face of brutality. The marriage of voices, archival images, and music forms a powerful and captivating artistic piece. In a time when prejudice and racism are expressed shamelessly, **Raoul Peck's** voice reminds us of the urgency of the longstanding struggle for equality.»

YOUTH JURY PRIZE (500 CHF)

**Offered by the Eduki
Foundation**

***THE GOOD POSTMAN*, by Tonislav Hristov**

«Telling the story of a postman in a Bulgarian village who is committed to welcoming migrants, Tonislav Hristov transmits, with emotion and humor, the utopian project of this atypical hero. A theme at the heart of current affairs that represents with brilliance, the stakes at our borders. The unique form of the film, at times reflecting a fiction, as well as the aesthetics of the cinematography contribute to the poetic touch of this once lost quest.»

Jury: Adrien Zulet, Noemi Aeshimann, Sophie Oltramare, Damien Luyet, Awino Mbeche and Enzo Samy Ferrao

Fiction and Human Rights Section

The International Human Rights and Fiction Film Jury was chaired by **mounir fatmi**, alongside **Pinar Selek**, **Farzana Wahidy** and **Clarisse Colliard**.

FICTION AND HUMAN RIGHTS GRAND PRIZE (10'000 CHF)

**Offered by the Hélène
and Victor Barbour
Foundation**

***BURNING BIRDS* by Sanjeewa Pushpakumara**

«The jury unanimously decided to award the Hélène and Victor Barbour Foundation prize to the film *Burning Birds* (Sri Lanka / France / Netherlands / Qatar) by Sanjeewa Pushpakumara.

Combining the art of cinema with talent and commitment to human rights, the filmmaker unveils the situation in Sri Lanka and courageously denounces the harsh reality of women living in war contexts.»

SPECIAL MENTIONS OF THE INTERNATIONAL FICTION JURY

***ERA O HOTEL CAMBRIDGE* by Eliane Caffé**

«The jury has also decided to give a special mention to *Era O Hotel Cambridge* (Brazil, France, Spain) for its originality, mastery and empathy regarding the critical situation of refugees worldwide.»

**YOUTH JURY PRIZE
(500 CHF)
Offered by Peace
Brigades International**

BURNING BIRDS by Sanjeewa Pushpakumara

«The condition of a single woman facing inequalities and her image in society, facing poverty and corrupt totalitarian rule has provoked feelings of revolt and indignation in the jury. The jury decided to award this strong yet revolting film imbued with a powerful aesthetic, notably emphasizing the landscapes, colors and luminous tones, magnificent contrasts and the recurrence of different shots.»

**SPECIAL MENTION
OF THE YOUTH JURY
COMPETITION FICTION**

MIMOSAS, by Oliver Laxe

«We want to give special mention to *Mimosas* by Oliver Laxe, which struck us with the force of its message about spirituality and marveled us with its beauty of the setting, landscapes and costumes.»

Jury: Victor Carranza Martinez, Aijan Muktar, Aurélien Puntos, Collège Claparède, Prisca Rickenbacher, Emma Thorens, Sarah Vorms

OMCT Section

Awarded by the OMCT Jury to a filmmaker whose film demonstrates his commitment to human rights, and to support the production of his or her next film.

**THE WORLD ORGANIZATION
AGAINST TORTURE
(OMCT) GRAND PRIZE
(CHF 5'000)**

SILENT WAR, by Manon Loizeau, co-author Annick Cojean

«*Silent War* treats with subtlety, modesty and incredible power the theme of rape as a weapon of war which, all too often ignored and relegated to the background, continues to plague many women, communities and countries in the world. This double pain that weighs on the victims is the height of this horror film. In addition to being convincing and factual without showing a single scene of the atrocities, this film's call for help is a work of art worthy of being seen by the greatest number of people.»

THE BRENAZ JURY PRIZE

The winner of this first edition at la Brenaz is the documentary film by Nicolas Wadimoff's JEAN ZIEGLER, THE OPTIMISM OF WILLPOWER.

«We have discovered the personal portrait of a man of unwavering commitment to his convictions, his struggles and his courage. We were particularly touched by the strength and love that unite Jean Ziegler and his wife Erika Dauber, as represented through images. We warmly thank Jean Ziegler and Erika Dauber for coming to talk with us during our meeting in the prison. It was an honor, thank you.»

The FIFDH warmly thanks its 132 partners for their trust and commitment.

Full program on
www.fifdh.org

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