



4 - 20 April 2019

A World Beyond



Minneapolis St Paul
International Film Festival 38



FILM
SOCIETY

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38th MINNEAPOLIS ST. PAUL INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES THE MSPIFF JURY AWARDS

MINNEAPOLIS – April 20, 2019. At an Awards Brunch Ceremony held this morning at the A-Mill Artist Lofts, the **Programmers and Jury Members of the 38th Minneapolis St. Paul International Film Festival announced the winners of the 2019 MSPIFF Jury Awards.** Several of the Juries also chose to award Runners Up and Honorable Mentions in their respective categories, as well as include statements about their choices.

The Minneapolis St. Paul International Film Festival (MSPIFF) is Minnesota’s largest film event, one of the longest-running film festivals in the country, and *the* largest annual arts events in the region. MSPIFF is presented by the MSP Film Society, a dynamic 501(c)(3) non-profit dedicated to fostering a knowledgeable and vibrant appreciation of the art of film and its power to inform and transform individuals and communities. For further information, visit MSPfilm.org

The winners of the 2019 MSPIFF Jury Competitions are:

Nextwave Competition

Nextwave is a program of the MSP Film Society that celebrates and engages the next generation of international films and talent. The Nextwave Youth Film competition is a program of short films by diverse filmmakers from around the globe aged 11 to 18. Nextwave films are selected and reviewed by a Youth Jury, who honor two of the selections with awards.

Jurors: Qwayed Akuei, Baine Avent, Sage Curry-Wynne, Amasa Eveson, AJ Joaj, Ethan Marek, Ceci Obetz, Max Reynolds, Essence Young

Excellence in Youth Filmmaking Winner: *Meeting at Half Past Five* – Directed by Daria Litichenko

Jury Statement: This film had excellent compositions with smooth editing that used mixed media and abstraction to tell a story with a unique voice. Creative animation and comedic perspective subverted audience expectations to deliver a refreshing plot twist.

Youth Jury Award (Favorite Film) Winner: *Gossamer* – Directed by Jeanette Fantone

Jury Statement: Gossamer's beautiful color and amazing editing mesmerized the jury as it pulsed with the music. Artistic ambiguity sparked debate over possible interpretations. With great re-watch value, the jury was happy to shout out the animators.

Documentary Short Film Competition

This juried competition recognizes national, international, and local short form documentary filmmaking that exemplifies the very best in presentation, diversity, innovation, and powerful storytelling.

Jurors: Phil Anderson, Film Professor; Emily Goldberg, Filmmaker; Andres Parra, Filmmaker

Winner: *Lowland Kids* – Directed by Sandra Winther

Fiction Short Film Competition

This juried competition recognizes national, international, and local short form fiction filmmaking that exemplifies the very best in presentation, diversity, innovation, and powerful storytelling.

Jurors: E.G. Bailey, Filmmaker; Erika Frederick, Film Distributor

Winner: *All These Creatures* – Directed by Charles Williams

Visionary Award: *Reruns* – Directed by Rosto

Documentary Competition

This juried competition recognizes national and international non-fiction filmmaking that exemplifies the very best in presentation, diversity, innovation, and powerful storytelling in the documentary form.

Jurors: Jeffrey Palmer, Filmmaker; Gary Smaby, Producer; Carmen Vicencio, Supervising Producer of *America ReFramed*

Winner: *Always in Season* – Directed by Jacqueline Olive

Minnesota Made Documentary Competition

Representative of the abundance of talent and diversity of vision in local filmmaking, the Minnesota Made competition includes a slate of must-see films from Minnesota-based and Minnesota-native filmmakers. Awards are given for films that exemplify standout achievements in filmmaking.

Jurors: Maxine Davis, Filmmaker; Tom Debiaso, Filmmaker; John Whitehead, Filmmaker

Winner: *Love Them First: Lessons from Lucy Laney Elementary School* – Directed by Lindsey Seavert and Ben Garvin

Special Jury Award: *The Interpreters* – Directed by Sofian Khan and Andres Caballero

Honorable Mention: *Stalag Luft III - One Man's Story* – Directed by Louise Woehrle

Emerging Filmmaker Competition

This juried competition recognizes new and up-and-coming filmmakers from around the world for their achievements in feature fiction filmmaking. The award is given to a film and filmmaker that demonstrates excellence in creativity, storytelling, technique, and innovation in the dramatic form.

Jurors: Ajuawak Kapashesit, actor; Jennifer Kramer, filmmaker; Musa Syeed, filmmaker

Winner: *Tremors* – Directed by Jayro Bustamante

Jury Statement: *Complimented by a visually and sonically rich world, the overwhelmingly powerful human story within TREMORS lies in its nuanced, moving performances by an incredibly talented ensemble.*

Special Jury Award: *Volcano* – Directed by Roman Bondarchuk

Jury Statement: *Expertly weaving together surreal comedy, striking visuals, and strong performances, VOLCANO tells a timely story in a most unexpected, surprising way.*

Honorable Mention: *The Longest Night* – Directed by Gabriela Calvache

Jury Statement: *Gabriela Calvache has created a unique and insightful look into a gut-wrenching story on human trafficking, with multiple layers of issues and character motivations intertwined. Her extensive research into the subject matter has paid off in spades.*

Spotlight: Disruption Documentary Competition

For this year's Spotlight on the World program, MSPIFF presented a selection of films united by their willingness to address momentous cultural, social, political, or humanitarian issues facing the local and global community today. The theme for 2019 MSPIFF was stories of Disruption, and those individuals who dare to put themselves in the way of the status quo in order to instigate change, challenge structures of power, reveal what is obscured, and make possible a more just and hopeful world.

Jurors: Roma Calatayud-Stocks, Author and Composer; Jeremy Iggers, Journalist; Graeme Stout, Senior Lecturer and Film Studies Coordinator at the U of MN

Winner: *Ghost Fleet* – Directed by Shannon Service and Jeffrey Waldron

Jury Statement: Shannon Service and Jeffrey Waldron's *Ghost Fleet* - their first feature film - exposes the widespread use of slave labor in the Thai fishing industry. Using an array of persuasive documentary and cinematic techniques, they reveal to us the hidden realities of labor and human rights abuses taking place across South East Asia. The most moving element of the film was the directors' ability not only to bring awareness to a grave injustice happening in the Thai Fishing industry, but to also to draw in the viewer with profound empathy and compassion for the thousands of kidnapped and exploited people. It is an important story, skillfully told in such a way that individual stories are balanced with critiques of global economics. In so doing it clearly shows the complicity that we as Western consumers have in the use of slave labor in the fishing industry around the world, and the responsibility that we have to change the way we consume.

As this year's competition for documentary feature seeks out films that disrupt dominant narratives to "instigate change and challenge structures of power," *Ghost Fleet* tells a story that raises awareness, offers hope, and refuses to compromise either in its storytelling or its critical lens. The genius of Service and Waldron's film it allows the stories and struggles of Patima Tungpuchayakul - the founder and manager of the Labour Rights Promotion Network Foundation - and Tun Lin - a former slave turned organizer and advocate - to serve as the central focus of the film. As they risk their lives to help free others, their commitment to human rights shows us that justice is not simply a word but a hope turned into a reality by those who never cease to struggle for it.

Honorable Mentions: *Freedom Fields* – Directed by Naziha Arebi and *Whispering Truth to Power* - Directed by Shameela Seedat

Jury Statement: Filmmakers Naziha Arebi (*Freedom Fields*) and Shameela Seedat (*Whispering Truth to Power*) provided powerful and personal portraits of their subjects - women who are struggling against oppression and for justice and equality. In her portrayal of the Libyan women's football team, Arebi offers a group portrait that captures the hopes, struggles and stories of women living through the Libyan Revolution and engaging in their love of sport and community. In Seedat's portrayal of South Africa's Public Protector, Thuli Madonsela, we are able to trace the recent history of South African politics and economics through the work of an undaunted proponent of justice and public responsibility. In their persuasive and well-crafted films, Arebi and Seedat show us the personal face of those who stand up against power.

The Minneapolis St. Paul International Film Festival is generously supported by many sponsors including The Star Tribune, Cedarwoods Foundation, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, Minnesota State Arts Board Legacy Amendment Funding, National Endowment for the Arts, McKnight Foundation, US Bank, Best Buy, Knock, Inc., Jazz 88, Indeed Brewing, Fox Rothschild, Depot Renaissance Minneapolis Hotel, numerous locally owned and based businesses, consulates from around the world, our Masters and Auteurs Member Circles and the 2,500+ Members and Donors of the Film Society of Minneapolis St. Paul.

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