



FIFDH

19TH INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL AND FORUM
ON HUMAN RIGHTS

THE FIFDH ANNOUNCES THE 2021 AWARD WINNERS

Geneva, 13 March 2021 - The International Film Festival and Forum on Human Rights (FIFDH) announces the winners of its 19th edition, which ends tomorrow with a very positive outcome given the current sanitary situation. The primarily digital edition of the FIFDH brought together leading personalities, high-level films and set up several new cultural activities. The FIFDH has established itself as an international event capable of adapting to all constraints.

Over the course of ten days, the FIFDH reached a total audience of nearly 45,000 people, including those who streamed our films, debates as well as the various audio and video content available online. The Festival also recorded **43,000 visits to the [fifdh.org](https://www.fifdh.org) website** and **166,000 people were reached on social media**. Thousands of Geneva residents discovered our artistic performances in the public space, and we received **media coverage in 26 countries**. «*This edition has pushed us to rethink the way the Festival addresses its audience. We have invested in new formats, new spaces and new content. Although we regret not having been able to open the Festival to a physical audience, some of the experiments carried out this year will be continued. We must pay tribute to the FIFDH team, who has proved able to adapt to numerous challenges with tenfold energy*», says Isabelle Gattiker, General and Programme Director.

AN ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY FEMALE LIST OF AWARD WINNERS

The 29 films in the official selection available online and on demand proved to be a great success, with over 14,000 views in ten days. This year's Festival ended with an almost exclusively female prize list. The International Jury for Creative Documentaries awarded the Geneva Grand Prix to ***Shadow Game***, by directors Eefje Blankevoort and Els Van Driel. The film's immersion into the lives of young migrant minors trying to reach Europe, also won the Youth Jury Prize. The OMCT Prize for the best Grand Reportage is awarded to the documentary ***Coded Bias***, by the American Shalini Kantayya. The Grand Prize for Fiction and Human Rights is awarded to Mongolian filmmaker Byambasuren Davaa's film ***The Roots of the World***, which also won the Youth Jury Prize. The Impact Award went to ***72 Hours*** by Anna Savchenko. The FIFDH's first Audience Award goes to ***Dear Future Children***, a documentary by 21-year-old director Franz Böhm, who paints the portrait of three women activists in Uganda, Hong Kong and Chile.

A PLACE OF EXPRESSION AND EXCHANGE FOR ACTIVISTS

The debates, interviews and original content produced by the FIFDH have allowed the voices and messages of those who fight for human rights, in sometimes extremely difficult conditions, to be heard. The debates, as well as the audio and video content produced by the FIFDH, have so far reached more than 25,000 views. This edition was marked by the visit of **Svetlana Tikhanovskaya**, a leading figure of the Belarusian opposition, for a debate bringing together several members of the opposition in exile. Her visit to Switzerland was marked by numerous political meetings, both in Geneva and in Bern, reinforcing the role of the FIFDH as a space for exchange and networking for activists from all over the world. The Festival audience will also remember an exceptional meeting with the activist **Angela Davis**, concluded by singer and patron of the FIFDH **Barbara Hendricks**. Other notable guests at the Festival include **Arundathi Roy**, **Ai Weiwei**, **Alain Berset**, **Milo Rau** and **Alain Damasio**.

REACHING OUT TO NEW AUDIENCES

The FIFDH 2021 has reached new audiences by combining the opportunities offered by digital technology with the strength of face-to-face meetings. **850 people from 70 countries around the world took part in the Impact Day**, which brings together professionals from the film industry and from international Geneva. **The student audience increased by 300%**: 3,600 students will watch the festival's films with online screenings and discussions continuing until next week. Nearly 600 people benefited from free VOD screenings thanks to invitations distributed via the Colis du cœur, the HUG and numerous social associations. Finally, screenings were organised in several medical and social institutions, as well as accommodation centres for migrants.

THE FIFDH ON THE STREETS OF GENEVA

The FIFDH 2021 did not limit itself to online events and took to the public space, successfully exploring new forms of interaction with the public. On Saturday 6 March, thousands of people discovered **We Are Watching** on the Plaine de Plainpalais, a monumental work by artist **Dan Acher**. Images of this symbol of citizen mobilisation in the face of the climate emergency were picked up by the media worldwide. Video artist **Khalil Joseph** has been presenting **BLKNWS** in the Geneva-Champel station since 2 March, in partnership with the Mire project. The Festival will leave a lasting mark on the city thanks to a giant fresco created in the heart of Geneva, in front of the HUG, by artists **Amikal**, **Nadia Seika** and **Zeinixx**, the latter travelling specially from Senegal.

The Festival was also present in the region for 10 days with its radio programme **Comme un écho**, produced in partnership with **Radio Vostok**, during which the inhabitants of 10 municipalities in the Greater Geneva area were invited to express their views on the themes addressed at the FIFDH.

NEW PERMANENT FORMATS

All the debates, meetings and original content of the 2021 FIFDH are now available online and can be watched or listened to on demand on the Festival website. The Festival is also embarking on a year-long exploration of **Women Conquering Public Spaces**, bringing together texts, artistic creations and major interviews.

The hopefully in-person 20th edition of the FIFDH will take place from 4 to 13 March 2022.



AWARDS CREATIVE DOCUMENTARY COMPETITION

The International Jury for Creative Documentaries was chaired by **Oleg Sentsov**, alongside **Lamia Maria Abillama**, **Yulia Mahr** and **Arnaud Robert**.

Grand Geneva Award

10'000 CHF - Offered by the City and Canton of Geneva – Awarded by the International Documentary Jury

Shadow Game, by Eefje Blankevoort and Els Van Driel

“An amazing and haunting film, *Shadow Game* deals with a crucial issue in modern time: young migrants alone on their road, trying to cross boundaries and as they say: “playing their game”. With the use of videos and social media material produced by the teenagers themselves, it has innovative filmmaking and it is pushing cinematic boundaries in many ways.”

Gilda Vieira De Mello Award, as a tribute to her son Sergio Vieira De Mello

5'000 CHF Offered by the Barbara Hendricks Foundation for Peace and Reconciliation

Awarded by the International Documentary Jury

En route pour le milliard, by Dieudo Hamadi

“We have chosen *En route pour le milliard* for its powerful and brave character-orientated filmmaking, about reparations for forgotten communities who endured atrocities (the Six-Day War in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 2000). This film is haunting and shows such a rage of the protagonists seeking justice and reparations.”

Special mention

Awarded by the International Documentary Jury

Once Upon a Time in Venezuela, by Anabel Rodríguez Ríos

“*Once Upon a Time in Venezuela* is a beautiful film and a crafted study of the disintegration of a small town in Venezuela, Congo Mirador, due to environmental problems and facing indifference of the politicians. The filmmaking is fabulous as Anabel Rodríguez Ríos approaches the protagonists in a very crude and yet subtle way, showing brilliantly the inextricable relation between industrial pollution, political and electoral constraints as well as citizens welfare. No doubt the message of the film will cross borders and appeal to everyone.”

Youth Jury Award

1000 CHF Offered by the Peace Brigades International (PBI)

Jury: Selma Bentaleb, Rémi Collin, Midha Husain, Lucy Jan, Sabrina Pichard, Vukasin Rafailovic, Priscilla Rey

Shadow Game, by Eefje Blankevoort and d'Els Van Driel

“The eight documentaries we have had the opportunity to watch bring to light people who too often remain in the shadows, whose voices are not heard. The movie we have chosen to award does that particularly well.

This film spoke to us on a deep level, because it created an intimate bond between the viewer and the young migrants it portrays.

We find ourselves immersed into the Game they are playing, as we can draw clear parallels between their lives and ours. This illustrates that youth is a universal experience. However, in this film, the differences are at an even higher stake than the similarities: these young people have to be incredibly persevering to win, whereas our victory is guaranteed.

These stories take place in Europe. This movie brings to our attention we need not look far to find human rights' violations. This confrontation makes it necessary to take greater responsibility at the sight of this injustice and to abandon the often-stereotypical image of migrants.

For all those reasons, the jury would like to reward the documentary *Shadow Game* by Eefje Blankevoort and Els van Driel. It is deeply humane and greatly contributes to the dialogue needed to solve the rising tensions and injustices linked to immigration. Thus, it is not only a great documentary, but also a movie everyone should watch.”

AWARDS FICTION COMPETITION

The International Jury for Fiction and Human Rights was chaired by **Danielle Lessovitz**, alongside **Santiago Amigorena**, **Laïla Marrakchi** and **Philippe Cottier**.

Fiction Grand Award

10'000 CHF - Offered by the Hélène et Victor Barbour Foundation. Awarded by the International Fiction Jury

Les racines du monde, by Byambasuren Davaa

“Through its simple, yet sweeping depiction of a nomadic Mongolian boy and his family, Byambasuren Davaa's *Veins of the World* achieves the remarkable. Its delicate layering of social and cinematic elements - landscapes that are at once human, natural, traditional and modern, lead us to a singular, unexpected, moment of transcendence. This is a film which points beyond itself, towards a formless totality, a shared human experience often forgotten and instantly remembered where the beauty and pain of a profoundly essential human longing is unearthed and laid bare.”

Special mention

Awarded by the International Fiction Jury

Si le vent tombe, by Nora Martirosyan

“*Should the Wind Drop* is an important film, especially in the current context where borders are moving and closing and where it is difficult to travel. Director Nora Martirosyan immerses us in the incredible and sensitive history of this Caucasian country, in which the opening of the airport is a major issue for its recognition. All the characters who gravitate around this place are touching, on the edge, such as the character of Grégoire Colin who takes us into this world through his eyes. The staging is accurate and sensitive.”

Youth Jury Award - Fiction

1000 CHF - Offered by the Eduki Foundation

Jury: Zoia Atkinson, Laura Blanco Hoyos, Liam Fouchault, Severina Kraljevic, Natalia Vonlanthen, Philip Walker-Arthur

Les racines du monde, by Byambasuren Davaa

“This film was a unanimous favorite. We were won over by the very endearing and touching protagonists. The beauty of the shots and the virtuosity of their arrangement plunged us into total immersion, giving us the impression of being part of the scenes and the plot.

The slow, contemplative pace, coupled with the wide shots of the Mongolian countryside and their dreamlike, remarkably clean photography, greatly enhanced the sense of immersion. The use of shadows leaves room for suggestion and creates an unreal climate that allows us to access the psyche of the characters.

Moreover, the themes of the forced displacement of nomads, water pollution, gold mining and child labour are issues that the film brings to light and that we find dark and extremely important at the present time.

The parallels between the song sung by Amra’s character (to which the film’s title refers) and the struggle of Amra and his community are also linked in very relevant ways.

This film has approached them with great finesse, revealing the issues in a sensitive, intense and profound way, highlighting the importance of the voice and the cultural traditions of these nomadic peoples. It is therefore both touching and culturally enriching. The persistence of the characters in this unfair struggle is very inspiring and poetic. For all these reasons, this film is very deserving of the Youth Jury Prize.”

COMPETITION GRAND REPORTAGE

The World Organization Against Torture (OMCT) Award

5'000 CHF - Offered by the world Organization against Torture (OMCT)

Awarded by the OMCT Jury

Coded Bias, by Shalini Kantayya

“The jury at the World Organisation Against Torture awards its 2021 prize to *Coded Bias*, by Shalini Kantayya. The film powerfully depicts the threats that artificial intelligence poses to our liberties, including by hardwiring into algorithms racist and sexist biases. Yet Kantayya also leaves us with hope by showing that determined action can ensure that our future is better than our dystopian present.”

PUBLIC AWARD

5'000 CHF – Offered by the FIFDH

Dear Future Children, by Franz Böhm

“In the months leading up to the pandemic, 50 countries saw civil movements protesting against corruption, with high school students everywhere on strike for the climate. Twenty-year-old Franz Böhm travelled to Hong Kong, Uganda and Chile to portray three young activists who have committed themselves entirely to fighting for the environment, for democracy and against corruption.”

Impact Day Award

Industry programm - EUR 15 000 impact strategic package provided by Think-Film Impact Production

72 Hours, by Anna Savchenko

This intimate film portrays the story of Liubou, whose life has been incomplete ever since her son was wrongfully accused, sentenced to death and executed within a year. Sharing her story, she transforms from a grieving mother to a symbol of the struggle against the death penalty in Belarus.

Artopie Award

Jury HUG - Day hospital, medicine A2 hospitalisation, Malatavie crisis unit, le Salève

Petite fille, by Sébastien Lifshitz

“We, the jury of the Artopie programme, award the prize for best film to *Petite fille*, by Sébastien Lifshitz. The subject of the film highlights the suffering and difficulties that transgender people face in having their identity recognised. It is with many tears and emotions that this film went right through us. The information it conveys is essential for everyone to be aware of the complexity of the road to acceptance. We thank Sacha and his family for their courage and their fight.”

Contact

Sara Dominguez
Responsable relations médias
s.dominguez@fifdh.org
+41 78 601 08 96

Luisa Ballin
Attachée de presse
l.ballin@fifdh.org
+41 (0)79 649 71 45