

LA FILM FESTIVAL

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2016 LA FILM FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES WINNERS AND GRANT RECIPIENTS

LOS ANGELES (June 9, 2016) – Today the LA Film Festival, produced by Film Independent announced the winners of the 2016 Festival at the Awards Cocktail Reception. The Reception was hosted by Roya Rastegar, Director of Programming and Jennifer Cochis, Creative Director.

“With all the talk about diversifying Hollywood, the LA Film Festival provides proof that talented filmmakers with new voices are out there, they just need a platform and that’s what we’re providing,” said Stephanie Allain, Festival Director. “One of the more satisfying aspects of this job is watching new directors blossom in the spotlight. I’m grateful to our esteemed jurors for their service and congratulate the winners.”

The Festival hosts juried awards including the U.S. Fiction Award, World Fiction Award, Documentary Award, LA Muse Award and Nightfall Award, as well as the Short Fiction Award and the Short Documentary Award. Audience awards are presented for Fiction Feature Film, Documentary Feature Film, Short Film and Web Series.

The **U.S. Fiction Award** went to **Remy Auberjonois** for ***Blood Stripe***, which made its World Premiere at the Festival.

The **World Fiction Award** went to **Anaïs Volpé** for ***HEIS (chronicles)***, which made its World Premiere at the Festival.

The **Documentary Award** went to **Jonah Markowitz** and **Tracy Wares** for ***Political Animals***, which made its World Premiere at the Festival.

The **LA Muse Award** was given to **Heidi Saman** for ***Namour***, which made its World Premiere at the Festival.

The **Nightfall Award** went to **Jackson Stewart** for ***Beyond The Gates***, which made its World Premiere at the Festival.

The **Audience Award for Fiction Feature Film** went to ***GREEN / is / GOLD***, directed by **Ryon Baxter** which made its World Premiere at the Festival.

The **Audience Award for Documentary Feature Film** was given to ***Political Animals***, directed by **Jonah Markowitz** and **Tracy Wares**.

The **Award for Short Fiction** went to ***The Beast (Zvjerka)***, directed by **Daina Oniunas Pusić**. The **Award for Short Documentary** went to ***The Gatekeeper***, directed by **Yung Chang**. The **Audience Award for Short Film** went to ***Into Darkness*** directed by **Rachida El Garani**. The **Audience Award for Web Series** went to ***Instababy***, directed by **Rosie Haber**.

The U.S. Fiction jury consisted of writer and director Alex Rivera (*Sleep Dealer*), public broadcasting anchor and reporter Shirley Jahad (KPCC, WBEZ, WTTW), costume designer Sophie De Rakoff (*Legally Blonde, Legally Blonde 2: Red, White & Blonde, In Her Shoes, McFarland, USA*).

The World Fiction jury was comprised of producer Gail Mutrux (*The Danish Girl, Kinsey, Donnie Brasco*), award-winning composer, producer and former President of Fox Music Robert Kraft, and *The Hollywood Reporter* film critic and Reviews Editor Jon Frosch.

The Documentary jury consisted of producer Ron Najor (*Short Term 12, I Am Not a Hipster*), *Access Hollywood* film critic Scott Mantz and Wendy Guerrero, President of the Bentonville Film Festival.

The LA Muse jury included Rachel Polan Director of Development, Television at Lionsgate, actress and director Jennifer Prediger (*Apartment Troubles, Red Flag, Uncle Kent*) and Jonathan Wells, curator of the *Flux Screening Series* at the Hammer Museum.

The Nightfall jury consisted of acquisitions executive Jeff Deutchman, Mia Chang producer and partner Brio Entertainment (*It Follows, Struck By Lightning, Boulevard*) and actor and producer Reza Sixo Safai (*A Girl Walks Home At Night, The Loner*).

The Shorts jury consisted of actor Drew Droege (*Cocktails and Classics, Drunk History*), Danielle Hinde, producer and owner of Doomsday Entertainment (*Nine Types of Light, Chet Faker: Gold, Childish Gambino: Sober*) and Slamdance Film Festival, Festival Manager Clementine Leger.

Grants were also awarded to **David Saveliev**, winner of the **Ed Elias Future Filmmaker Award for Narrative Film** for ***Wonderful World*** and an **Ed Elias Future Filmmaker Honorable Mention** to ***Lucky Numbers*** directed by **Chester Milton**. **Josh Jaffe** is the winner of the **Ed Elias Future Filmmaker Award for Documentary Film** for ***In Twenty Years: Central District*** and an **Ed Elias Future Filmmaker Honorable Mention** was given to ***The Skin I'm In*** directed by **Rajaiah Jones**. **Liam O'Connor-Savaria** is the winner of the **Ed Elias Future Filmmaker Award for Animated or Experimental Film** for ***WorryWart*** and an **Ed Elias Future Filmmaker Honorable**

Mention was attributed to ***A Little Love Goes a Long Clay*** directed by **Juliet Buckholdt**.

Also announced during the Festival at the Film Independent Fast Track finance market were two Alfred P. Sloan Grants given to films that engage with science and technology themes and characters. The Alfred P. Sloan Fast Track Grant was awarded to **Mark Levinson** for his project ***The Gold Bug Variations***.

The LA Film Festival kicked off on Wednesday, June 1 with the World Premiere of **Ricardo de Montreuil's *Lowriders*** and will close today June 9 with **Jonás Cuarón's *Desierto***. Special Screenings included the World Premiere of **Zedd *True Colors*** and ***The Conjuring 2***. The 2016 LA Film Festival Guest Director was **Ryan Coogler**; the recipient of the Jaeger-LeCoultre Glory to the Filmmaker Award was **Maryse Alberti**, this year's Spirit of Independence Award was bestowed upon **Ava DuVernay** and **Array Releasing**. The LA Film Festival is a qualifying festival in all categories for the Film Independent Spirit Awards and for the Narrative and Animated Short Film categories at the Academy Awards.

Awards were given out in the following categories:

U.S. Fiction Award

Winner: *Blood Stripe*, directed by Remy Auberjonois

Country: USA

Screenwriter: Kate Nowlin, Remy Auberjonois

Producer: Schuyler Weiss, Julie Christeas, Remy Auberjonois, Kate Nowlin

Cast: Kate Nowlin, Tom Lipinski, Chris Sullivan, Rusty Schwimmer, Rene Auberjonois

Film Description: After a third tour of duty in Afghanistan, a Marine sergeant returns home to find herself hemorrhaging anxiety and paranoia from unseen wounds. *World Premiere*

The U.S. Fiction Jury awarded the following special mentions:

Special Mention for Comedy: *Chee and T*, directed by Tanuj Chopra

Country: USA

Screenwriter: Tanuj Chopra, Chee Malabar

Producer: Sohini Sengupta

Cast: Dominic Rains, Sunkrish Bala, Asif Ali, Noureen DeWulf, Rebecca Hazlewood, Bernard White, Karan Soni, Himanshu Suri, Scott Rogers

Film Description: A delirious ride with two hot henchmen, who are tasked with getting their South Asian boss's out-of-control nephew presentable for his engagement party by day's end. *World Premiere*

Special Mention for Visual Accomplishment: *Paint it Black*, directed by Amber Tamblyn

Country: USA

Screenwriter: Amber Tamblyn, Ed Dougherty

Producer: Wren Arthur, Amy Hobby, Anne Hubbell, Amber Tamblyn

Cast: Janet McTeer, Alia Shawkat, Alfred Molina, Emily Rios, Rhys Wakefield

Film Description: Barely able to process the death of her true love, Josie is drawn into a twisted relationship with the deceased's mother as irrational grief explodes in beautiful and terrifying ways. *World Premiere*

World Fiction Award

Winner: *HEIS (chronicles)*, directed by Anaïs Volpé

Country: France

Screenwriter: Anaïs Volpé

Producers: Anaïs Volpé

Cast: Alexandre Desane, Matthieu Longatte, Emilia Derou-Bernal, Akéla Sari, Anaïs Volpé

Film Description: A millennial artist returns to her mother's home in Paris, only to have her personal ambitions confronted by her family's expectations in this energetic and visually distinct debut film. *World Premiere*

The World Fiction Jury awarded a special mention to:

Special Mention: *Lupe Under the Sun*, directed by Rodrigo Reyes

Country: Mexico/USA

Screenwriter: Rodrigo Reyes

Producers: Su Kim

Cast: Daniel Muratalla, Ana Muratalla

Film Description: After a lifetime working in the California fields, Lupe learns that he is about to die and desperately struggles to return home to his family in Mexico to make amends—before it is too late. *World Premiere*

Documentary Award

Winner: *Political Animals*, directed by Jonah Markowitz, Tracy Wares

Country: USA

Screenwriter: Jonah Markowitz

Producers: Anne Clements

Cast: Carole Migden, Sheila Kuehl, Jackie Goldberg, Christine Kehoe

Film Description: The first openly gay California State Representatives, Sheila Kuehl, Jackie Goldberg, Christine Kehoe, and Carole Migden, had to utilize cunning, strategy and endurance when authoring and introducing the legislation that fundamentally changed the landscape of LGBT rights. *World Premiere*

LA Muse Award

Winner: *Namour*, directed by Heidi Saman

Country: USA

Screenwriter: Heidi Saman

Producers: Matthew Keene Smith

Cast: Karim Saleh, Waleed Zuaiter, Mona Hala, Nicole Haddad

Film Description: Set in the City of Angels during the economic recession of the late 2000's, a twenty-something Egyptian American valet driver must come to grips with his dead-end job, disintegrating family and disappearing relationships in this stylish homage to Los Angeles. *World Premiere*

The LA Muse Jury awarded a special mention to:

Special Mention: *No Light and No Land Anywhere*, directed by Amber Sealey

Country: USA

Screenwriter: Amber Sealey

Executive Producer: Miranda July

Producers: Drea Clark, Alysa Nahmias, Amber Sealey

Cast: Gemma Brockis, Jennifer LaFleur, David Sullivan, Kent Osborne, Deborah Dopp, Jade Sealey

Film Description: Grieving over her mother's death, Lexi abruptly leaves her life and husband in London to come to Los Angeles in pursuit of the father who abandoned her when she was three. *World Premiere*

Nightfall Award

Winner: *Beyond The Gates*, directed by Jackson Stewart

Country: USA

Screenwriter: Jackson Stewart, Stephen Scarlata

Producers: Barbara Crampton, Amanda Mortimer

Cast: Graham Skipper, Chase Williamson, Brea Grant, Sara Malakul Lane, Barbara Crampton

Film Description: Two estranged brothers dig through their missing father's video store, discovering a VCR board game that holds a connection to their father's disappearance and deadly consequences for anyone who plays it. *World Premiere*

Award for Short Film

Winner: *The Beast (Zvjerka)*, directed by Daina Oniunas Pusić. Croatia.

Film Description: A complicated relationship between an elderly mother and daughter is forever altered when a bat flies into their lives.

The Shorts jury awarded special mentions to:

Special Mention for Breakthrough Performance: *Thunder Road*, directed by Jim Cummings. USA.

Film Description: Officer Arnaud loved his mom.

Special Mention for Excellence in Animation: *The Lingerie Show*, directed by Laura Harrison. USA.

Film Description: A drug addict throws a lingerie show to seduce her boyfriend away from his sugar daddy, which devolves into mayhem.

Award for Documentary Short

Winner: *The Gatekeeper*, directed by Yung Chang. Japan.

Film Description: A retired police detective patrols Tojinbo Cliffs, a notorious destination for suicides in Japan.

Audience Award for Fiction Feature Film

Winner: *GREEN / is / GOLD*, directed by Ryon Baxter

Country: USA

Screenwriter: Ryon Baxter

Producers: Anthony Burns, Ryon Baxter

Cast: Jimmy Baxter, Ryon Baxter, David Fine, Liz Clare, Shelley Mitchell

Film Description: After his father goes to prison, a wayward tween has nowhere to live except with his high school dropout brother, who is building—at all costs—a marijuana business. *World Premiere*

This award is given to the fiction feature audiences liked most as voted by a tabulated rating system. World Premiere fiction feature-length films screening in the following sections were eligible for the Audience Award for Best Fiction Feature: U.S. Fiction, World Fiction, Limelight, LA Muse, and Nightfall.

Audience Award for Documentary Feature Film

Winner: *Political Animals*, directed by Jonah Markowitz, Tracy Wares

Country: USA

Screenwriter: Jonah Markowitz

Producers: Anne Clements

Cast: Carole Migden, Sheila Kuehl, Jackie Goldberg, Christine Kehoe

Film Description: The first openly gay California State Representatives, Sheila Kuehl, Jackie Goldberg, Christine Kehoe, and Carole Migden, had to utilize cunning, strategy and endurance when authoring and introducing the legislation that fundamentally changed the landscape of LGBT rights. *World Premiere*

This award is given to the documentary feature audiences liked most as voted by a tabulated rating system. World Premiere documentary feature-length films screening in the following sections were eligible for the Audience Award for Documentary Feature: Documentary and LA Muse.

Audience Award for Short Film

Winner: *Into Darkness*, directed by Rachida El Garani

Film Description: This documentary gives insight into a deeply religious Moroccan family as they struggle with blindness and extreme poverty.

This award is given to the short film audiences liked most as voted by a tabulated rating system. Short films screening in the Shorts Programs or before feature films in the Festival were eligible for the Audience Award for Short Film.

Audience Award for Web Series

Winner: *Instababy*, directed by Rosie Haber

Description: Gay adoption is illegal in Mississippi, so Toni and Keeta look for a baby on Instagram.

This award is given to the web-series audiences liked most as voted by a tabulated rating system.

To download images and clips from the winning films, please visit filminddependent.org/press, then click Press Materials.

Online & Social Media:

www.lafilmfest.com

Find us on Facebook at facebook.com/LAFilmFest and Twitter @LAFilmFest.

Official event hashtag: #LAFilmFest.

ABOUT THE LA FILM FESTIVAL

The LA Film Festival is a key part of the exhibition arm of Film Independent, showcasing new American and international cinema that embraces diversity, innovation and unique perspectives. The Festival produces one-of-a-kind events featuring critically acclaimed filmmakers, industry professionals and award-winning talent from Los Angeles and around the world. The Festival's signature programs include the Filmmaker Retreat, Celebrating Women Filmmakers, Master Classes, Spirit of Independence Award, Coffee Talks, LA Muse and more. The Festival also screens short films created by high school students. Presenting Media Sponsor is the Los Angeles Times. Premier Sponsor is Peroni Nastro Azzurro and Principal Sponsor is Jaeger-LeCoultre. Platinum

Sponsors are American Airlines, Dolby Laboratories, Inc., EFILM I Company 3 and HBO. The University Sponsor is Loyola Marymount University School of Film and Television. WireImage is the Official Photography Agency. More information can be found at lafilmfestival.com.

ABOUT FILM INDEPENDENT

Film Independent is the non-profit arts organization that champions creative independence in visual storytelling and supports a community of artists who embody diversity, innovation and uniqueness of vision. Film Independent helps filmmakers make their movies, builds an audience for their projects and works to diversify the film industry. Film Independent's Board of Directors, filmmakers, staff and constituents, is comprised of an inclusive community of individuals across ability, age, ethnicity, gender, race and sexual orientation. Anyone passionate about film can become a member, whether you are a filmmaker, industry professional or a film lover.

Film Independent produces the Spirit Awards, the annual celebration honoring artist-driven films and recognizing the finest achievements of American independent filmmakers. Film Independent also produces the LA Film Festival, showcasing the best of American and international cinema and the Film Independent at LACMA Film Series, a year-round, weekly program that offers unique cinematic experiences for the Los Angeles creative community and the general public.

With over 250 annual screenings and events, Film Independent provides access to a network of like-minded artists who are driving creativity in the film industry. Film Independent's Artist Development program offers free Labs for selected writers, directors, producers and documentary filmmakers and presents year-round networking opportunities. Project Involve is Film Independent's signature program dedicated to fostering the careers of talented filmmakers from communities traditionally underrepresented in the film industry. For more information or to become a member, visit filmindependent.org.

ABOUT ARCLIGHT CINEMAS

ArcLight Cinemas, created by Pacific Theatres, a privately owned, Los Angeles based company with 60 years of theatrical exhibition history throughout California, Hawaii and Washington is a premiere moviegoing experience with an unparalleled commitment to bringing a variety of rich cinematic content to moviegoers in all markets. ArcLight Cinemas operates eight theaters in California including Hollywood, Pasadena, Sherman Oaks, El Segundo, Santa Monica, Culver City and La Jolla, as well as one theater in Bethesda, Md, Chicago and Glenview, Ill, with a new location in Boston for early 2018. ArcLight also owns and operates the historic Cinerama Dome and programs the TCL Chinese Theatre and IMAX in Hollywood. Pacific Theatres currently operates theaters in Los Angeles that include The Grove and The Americana at Brand in Glendale, Calif. Additional information about ArcLight Cinemas is available at www.arclightcinemas.com/

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