

21st Ji.hlava IDFF announces its winners!

The best Czech documentary film is *The Limits of Work* by Apolena Rychlíková. The most notable world documentary title is *The Wall* by Russian filmmaker Dmitry Bogolubov. The Between the Seas section was dominated by *Opera about Poland*. The best feature-length debut is *Meteors* by Turkish director Gürcan Keltek and *Panoptic* by Lebanese filmmaker Rana Eid. The Contribution to World Cinema Award was presented to Marcel Ophuls. Jih.lava IDFF's visitors could see 342 out of the total of 3,600 film submission for this year's programme. The films competed in ten sections. The festival treated the audience to 70 world, 12 European and 22 international premieres.

"As said by Marcel Ophuls in Jihlava today, documentary film is not here to give us false hope but to try to get close to the truth. Because there's no real hope without the truth. Documentarians may be able to reflect on politics, but they shouldn't be involved in politics because in the hands of politicians, their films would be transformed into ideological or marketing instruments. And this is what Ophuls always tended to avoid, refusing stereotypes and calculated simplifications. In his hands, film became an opportunity to learn more about himself," says Ji.hlava IDFF's director Marek Hovorka.

This year's 21st Ji.hlava IDFF followed up on the phenomenal success of the festival's twentieth edition. A rich programme, packed screening halls and dozens of inspiring discussions and Q&As filled the audience with energy and the joy of discovery. The Mecca of documentary cinema – as Manoel de Oliveira nicknamed Ji.hlava years ago – has become a real celebration of creative and inquisitive filmmaking.

Czech Joy to the Limits of Work

Czech Joy's main prize was granted to Apolena Rychlíková and her film, *The Limits of Work*. *"The jury values the human investment on the part of Saša Uhlová, who managed to look at the everyday reality of exploited people through honest, focused, and empathic eyes, free of ideological bias. We appreciate Apolena Rychlíková's directing approach, being able to look at Saša Uhlová in the same way,"* said the jury composed of Andrea Hanáčková, Miroslav Janek, Tomáš Bojar, Rozálie Kohoutová, Alice Krajčírová and Krištof Kintera. The film was created for the Czech Television series *The Czech Journal*. *The Limits of Work* also won this year's Audience Award. Two Special Mentions were awarded in the Czech Joy section. *"The jury was impressed by its radical form, suggestive minimalist approach and unique authenticity,"* said the jury statement in relation to *The Last Shift of Tomáš Hisem* by director Jindřich Andrs. For poetically charged images and her unrestrained use of the filmic language, the jury acknowledged Viola Ježková's film *Everything Has its Own Time*. *"A tripping movie, an abstract testimony about one's real life,"* said the jury members.

Opus Bonum dominated by Stalin

The Best World Documentary Film at this year's Ji.hlava IDFF is *The Wall* by Russian filmmaker Dmitry Bogolubov about the disturbing cult of J. V. Stalin in contemporary Russia. *"I appreciate the film for using the film language to express the inexpressible,"* said documentarian Laila Pakalniņa, the sole juror of the Opus Bonum competition section. *"Imagine thousands of Jews praying at Hitler's grave. You think it's impossible? How can people worship somebody who was a mass murderer? You can see such an absurd situation in contemporary Russia,"* says the director about his film.

Between the Seas award goes to Opera about Poland

The Best Central and Eastern Documentary Film Award has been presented to Polish documentarian Piotr Stasik for his travelogue collage about the search for Polish identity entitled **Opera about Poland**. *“World emergency! Hysterical analysis. Destructive mosaic. Heretic essay. Audio attack. Anti-catharsis. Opera about Poland by Piotr Stasik,”* stated the international five-member jury composed of: Nicole Brenez, Tiffany Pritchard, Robert Kirchhoff, Ilya Gladshstein and Thomas A. Østbye. *“I guess we need psychotherapy. But before that we should take a look at our country and at ourselves. I believe that there exists something like a spirit of country and the spirit of time,”* said Stasik commenting on his film. Special Mention in the Between the Seas section was awarded to **People Pebble** by the duo of authors Jivko Darakchiev and Perrine Gamot. *“Harmonising fragmented landscapes. Experimenting with Textures. Creating a grey marriage between horizon and frame,”* says the jury statement.

Migration celebrates the victory in the Fascinations

The Best Experimental Film at this year's Ji.hlava IDFF is **Boat People** by British director Sarah Wood. The film appealed to the jury with its combination of a subjective perspective, historical reflection and especially the role of the moving image in depicting tragic events associated with the loss of home. *“The film is a contemplation on the role of migration in the history of humankind. Based on scenes taken from other films and a poetic voice-over, it compiles an account of migration on the backdrop of the history of Great Britain as a maritime power and an unforeseeable movement of human masses,”* stated the jury composed of artist Zdeněk Baladrán and his family. *“We also acknowledged the focus on hospitality as a human way of relating to others”,* adds the family jury. The jury's Special Mention goes to Macedonian filmmaker Milcho Manchevski for his film, **The End of Time**. *“Within the framework of several minutes, the film shows a seconds-long moment from everyday reality, thus opening a time window to a multitude of hidden details celebrating life. The jury appreciated mainly the director's straightforward approach and his ability to build up tension in a seemingly timeless atmosphere of a street in Cuba. Microstories revealed through an uneven slow-motion of the images sets off small miracles that escape our perception under the standard speed of the flow of time,”* the jury praised the five-minute film miniature.

Expmntl.cz acknowledged the Can

The award of the Expmntl.cz section goes to filmmaker Lucie Navrátilová and her film collage entitled **Can**. *“The film humorously elaborates on the topic of storing and preserving, with the ambition to conserve the folklore of the Haná region, dying trees, as well as forms of narration that are becoming inadequate and are slowly disappearing,”* stated the jury that appreciated the filmmaker's humorous angle and playfulness and her work with the form. *“It is a collage of several layers of narration, fused into a highly personal testimony about the end of adolescence and the inevitable end of everything that is connected with the intimate exploration of the world,”* added the Baladráns. A Special Mention in the same section was awarded to **Tradition** by student of FAMU, Kateřina Turečková. *“Film that originated as a school exercise on a 35mm film, poetically reflecting Moravian-Slovakian folklore traditions in the town of Kyjov and the consumption of crystal meth popular among the local youth,”* stated the jury describing the film and appreciating the film's subtle irony in combining old and new traditions. *“We also value the attempt to integrate crystal meth into the film's sensitive layer resembling a smut preventing social reflection. We believe that the film will catalyse discussion and changes in a town that have allocated funds for its making,”* adds the jury.

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First Lights shining twice

The Best Feature-length Documentary Film Debut award goes to Turkish director Gürcan Keltok and his film **Meteors**. The same award was given Lebanese filmmaker Rana Eid for her work called **Panoptic**. *"We wish to make clear that this is a reflection of our collective and equal enthusiasm for both. This is not in any way a compromise born of divided opinion,"* emphasises the jury. *"While differing dramatically from each other in form and tone, these two films speak to the dark times in which we live. Both are complex inquiries into the roots of conflict, in Turkey, in Lebanon, and beyond. Old hatreds are laid bare in the most brutal of ways in wars that seem to have no end. And yet, Gürcan Keltok and Rana Eid serve the honourable cause of the documentarian who bears witness to sufferings that have purposefully been kept hidden from us. The poetry of their difficult images deepens our empathy in regarding the pain of others. Only in doing so can we ever hope to come out of the darkness that hangs over us all. The jury awards the prize of First Lights to Meteors and Panoptic. We do so feeling inspired and hopeful about the future of documentary filmmaking,"* added the jury composed of Giona A. Nazzaro, Hisam Falláh, Josh Siegel, Evgenyi Gusyatinskyi and Augustín Masaedo.

Students voted for Milda

Student jury was most impressed by **Milda** directed by Pavel Křemen. *"Our choice stems from the need to point out that also those of us who sit on the student jury and who didn't experience the absurdity of the previous regime, find it important to bring attention to and reflect on the atrocities of the communist era. We would like the film to enter the consciousness of the younger generation as we believe that in their hands lies the chance to change our society and to avoid making the same mistakes,"* said the jury's representative, Daniel Bauška.

The Silver Eye Award granted to Sand and Blood

The Silver Eye Award presented by the Institute of Documentary Film to best docs selected for the East Silver Market will travel to Austria with director Matthias Krepp who was awarded for his film **Sand and Blood**. *"The film presents a story about Iraqi and Syrian war conflicts and its refugees by using self-shot images and home videos, and it finds a brave conceptual solution to the necessary anonymity of the characters that grasps the viewers' attention from the beginning to the end. It is a heart-taking, crude and tough film, but highly necessary to understand the complexity of humankind when put under extreme conflict and confrontation,"* said the jury member Elena Subira i Roca.

Wrapping up with the Best Poster

The Best Festival Poster Award travels to Serbia, won by festival **Beldocs**. The winner was selected in by the festival's visitors as well as film professionals: Beldocs won in both categories of the competition.

Full overview of the accorded awards: <http://www.ji-hlava.com/festival/juries/2017>

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