



Festival International  
de Films de Fribourg

31<sup>e</sup> 31.03 > 08.04 2017

Press release  
8 April 2017

## South Asia is making its mark in Fribourg

All the juries at the 31<sup>st</sup> Fribourg International Film Festival are celebrating the rise of South Asian cinema. Three films, from Singapore, Bhutan and Nepal, shared most of the prizes at the closing ceremony, which on Saturday night wrapped up a festival attended by a number of personalities and where the public confirmed its love for the event. Thierry Jobin, FIFF's Artistic Director, sees the feature film juries' choices as a confirmation of the observations he and his team made during the long process of crafting the programme: "The sparks we've seen in South Asia since the rise of digital media and how easy it has made filmmaking is becoming a steady flame: we haven't heard the last from this part of the world and are set to see the emergence of more great filmmakers like those who have just been celebrated in Fribourg."

The second feature from a 33 year-old filmmaker, **Apprentice**, by Singaporean **Boo Junfeng**, won the **FIFF Grand Prix**, a prize worth CHF 30,000.- courtesy of the State and the City of Fribourg. This portrayal of an apprentice executioner on Singapore's death row also won the **Critics' Choice Award**.

**Honeygiver Among the Dogs** by **Dechen Roder**, the first feature film by a Bhutanese woman, went home with the **Special Jury Award** of CHF 10,000. This poetic thriller, a hypnotic investigation in the Bhutanese mountains, won the **Youth Jury Award COMUNDO** (CHF 5,000.-) and obtained a **Special Mention from the International Federation of Film Societies**.

Nepal was the focus for the New Territory section and many of the screenings were sold out. The section was a worldwide first for the country and a Nepalese film won four prizes: **White Sun** by **Deepak Rauniyar** was celebrated with a **Special Mention from the International Jury**, the **Don Quijote Award from the International Federation of Film Societies (IFFS)**, the **Ecumenical Jury Award** (CHF 5,000.-) and the **Public Prize**, worth of CHF 5,000.- courtesy of the Banque Cantonale de Fribourg.

With one of the three winners from among the 12 feature filmmakers in Competition, Dechen Roder, having been discovered by FIFF in 2015 with a short film entitled *3 Year 3 Month Retreat*, there is always a lot of attention on the **International Competition: Short Films**, as it could introduce a future great talent.

This year, the competition juries chose a Lebanese filmmaker, **Raed Rafei**, winner of the **Best International Short Film Award** with **Salam**, who was also awarded a **Special Mention** by the **CH Cinema Network Jury**, composed of film students from major Swiss audiovisual schools. This jury gave its main prize to a Senegalese director, **Mamadou Dia**, for his film **Samedi Cinéma**.

The highly original **Foreign Visa Prize**, which is a first for this year's festival, offers major Swiss film schools, such as the HEAD (Geneva), the ECAL (Lausanne), the ZHdK (Zurich) and the HSLU (Lucerne) to submit their students' best films for consideration by the special guests in the New Territory section. The prize has had its first winners: the Nepalese festival guests were won over by the offerings from the German-language schools, and a Special Mention was awarded to **Wo der Euphrat in di Sava mündet**, by **Andreas Muggli** (HSLU Lucerne), while **Millimeterle**, by **Pascal Reinmann** (ZHdK Zurich), won the **Foreign Visa Prize**, worth CHF 1,000.-.



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### **Highlights of the 31<sup>st</sup> FIFF and key figures**

As well as these competitions, which are followed closely by audiences, the FIFF also ran a rich and diverse programme in parallel, from the Genre Cinema: Ghost Stories section to the Midnight Screenings, and from Douglas Kennedy and Myret Zaki's Cartes Blanches to a Hommage à... Freddy Buache, that was lauded by the media and audiences alike.

The festival reinforced its position as the most popular film event in western Switzerland by once again surpassing 42,000 entries. "The sun and heat have," according to Thierry Jobin, "no doubt kept some film-goers out of screenings. But the FIFF team has once again pulled off a miracle: with a budget limited to 2.2 million francs, the festival should close with only a slight deficit. We hope that this latest success will convince our private partners to launch themselves into the FIFF adventure, which further raises the profile of the city, the canton and the country every year, and that they will help us to strengthen our organisation to face the challenges presented by the event's exponential growth. We will be turning our efforts towards them from tomorrow."

**The 32<sup>nd</sup> edition of the Fribourg International Films Festival will take place from March 16<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> 2018**

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