



Women and Latin America win big at FIFF 2019

On Saturday evening, the winners of the 33rd Fribourg International Film Festival awards were announced. The FIFF Grand Prix went to the Mexican feature film *The Good Girls*. The other prize-winners were *Compañeros – La noche de 12 años*, *The Third Wife* and *Dreamaway* (features), as well as *And What Is the Summer Saying*, *Kado* and *Come un'eco* (shorts); two films – *Volcano* and *Bashkimi United* – received special mentions. No fewer than five women directors took home awards.

The decision to apply last year's winning formula – offering fewer films while still enjoying financial and public success – paid dividends for the 33rd Fribourg International Film Festival. With over 40,000 tickets sold, the Festival can move forward with confidence and continue to build on its achievements. All sections proved popular with festival goers: from Caribbean films and romantic comedies to *Being a black woman is not my job* and the Carte Blanche selection, which this year celebrated South Korean cinema. Perhaps one of the most unforgettable moments of the 2019 Festival was the standing ovation which actor and director Adewale Akinnuoye-Agbaje received at the end of his film *Farming*. Another highlight was undoubtedly the evening given over entirely to Fribourg film makers. The Festival closed with the touching, bittersweet Filipino romantic drama *Meet Me in St. Gallen*, which includes a cinematic love letter to Switzerland in its stunning final scene.

The Good Girls by Mexican director Alejandra Márquez Abella won the Grand Prix of the Fribourg International Film Festival, which is endowed with a cash prize of CHF 30,000 courtesy of the City and Canton of Fribourg. According to the International Competition jury, the film was “creatively inspiring, with a complex storytelling”. In its closing remarks, the jury also applauded “the outstanding cinematographic quality and diversity of the films in competition, which hail from countries whose films are rarely shown in Europe.” The Special Jury Award went to *Compañeros – La noche de 12 años*, a feature film by Uruguayan director Álvaro Brechner, described as “a tribute to political prisoners and those who fight against human brutality”. It is set for release in cinemas across Western Switzerland and France on 27th March 2019.

Latin America, and specifically *Compañeros*, once again came out top, both in the Audience Award and in the Ecumenical Jury Award – which also gave a special mention to *Volcano* by Ukrainian director Roman Bondarchuk.

As for the Critics' Choice Award, the jury, which comprises members of the Swiss Film Journalists Association, unanimously voted for *Dreamaway*, a documentary by Marouan Omara and Johanna Domke which examines the fortunes of the once popular beach resort of Sharm El-Sheikh, which terrorist attacks have left all but deserted. The jury was impressed by the film's originality, poetic visuals and humour. The Swiss Cinema Network Prize awarded *Kado* from Indonesian director Aditya Ahmad. And, finally, the winner of the Youth Jury Award COMUNDO was the feature film *The Third Wife* by Vietnamese director Ash Mayfair.

The Best International Short Film Award went to Indian director Payal Kapadia for her film *And What Is the Summer Saying*.

The Foreign Visa Prize, which is open to Swiss film schools, went to the short film *Come un'eco* by Anna Spacio, a student at the International Academy of Audiovisual Sciences (CISA) in Locarno. The

jury, which is made up of members of the *New Territory* section – this year composed of producers and directors from the Caribbean – also gave a special mention to Lasse Linder for *Bashkimi United*.

“The 2019 edition of FIFF epitomises what the Festival is capable of delivering with the means at its disposal”, declared Thierry Jobin, FIFF Artistic Director during the closing Ceremony. “It did so with a practically brand-new team whose energy and dedication were second to none; each and every member gave their all. Their commitment is reflected in the fact that the film makers who attended the Festival now speak of their ‘FIFF family.’”

[Download the full list of winners](#)

UPCOMING CINEMA RELEASES IN WESTERN SWITZERLAND

27th March 2019: *Compañeros – La noche de 12 años*

24th April 2019: *Walter*

The 34th Fribourg International Film Festival will take place from 20th to 28th March 2020.

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