

# HAMPTONS INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

## THE 31ST HAMPTONS INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES AWARD WINNERS FOR BEST NARRATIVE FEATURE AND BEST DOCUMENTARY FEATURE

*20,000 SPECIES OF BEES AND TELL THEM YOU LOVE ME*

Best Short Film Winners Include *XIAOHUI AND HIS COWS* and *THE WAITING*

Feature Films *FRESH KILLS* and *ANGEL APPLICANT*  
Short Films *FORGOTTEN FOUNDERS: DAVID HEMPSTEAD, SENIOR* and *MERV*  
Receive 2023 Audience Awards

### Additional Special Award Winners Announced

**East Hampton, NY (October 13, 2023)** – The 31st Hamptons International Film Festival, presented by HamptonsFilm, today announced the winners for feature and short competition sections and audience awards. This year HIFF screened a lineup of films that are 49% female-directed and represent 42 countries from around the world. The festival had a record number of submissions this year and screened 72 features and 46 shorts with 8 World Premieres, 3 North American Premieres, 12 US Premieres, 13 East Coast Premieres, and 7 New York Premieres. All feature and short competition section screenings were sponsored by Silvercup Studios.

**20,000 SPECIES OF BEES**, directed by **Estibaliz Urresola Solaguren**, won the Award for Best Narrative Feature. The film received a \$2,500 cash prize, and \$72,500 in in-kind goods and services, sponsored by Panavision, Hamptons Locations, and On Location Education.

“The narrative feature award is given to **20,000 SPECIES OF BEES**, an exceptionally sensitive and nuanced portrayal of childhood, shown largely from the perspective of an eight-year-old struggling to understand their identity. The performances are heartbreaking, anchored by young Sofia Otero, who is a revelation. As gender issues are currently debated in loud and polemic terms, this outstanding film presents the feelings of a child with uncommon grace,” said Narrative Competition Jury members Arianna Bocco, David Koepp, and Matt Singer.

The Narrative Competition Jury also recognized **THE FEELING THAT THE TIME FOR DOING SOMETHING HAS PASSED** with a Special Mention for director **Joanna Arnow’s** authentic, singular, and hilarious voice.

**TELL THEM YOU LOVE ME**, directed by **Nick August-Perna**, received the Award for Best Documentary Feature. The film received a \$2,500 cash prize and \$20,000 in in-kind goods and services, sponsored by GreenSlate and 91 East Productions.

“With a strong group of documentary contenders at HIFF this year, we are proud that our selection for Best Documentary Feature is Nick August-Perna’s World Premiere feature film, **TELL THEM YOU LOVE ME**. We were greatly impressed with the way August-Perna constructed the telling of this controversial story—one that addresses issues of power, consent, and truth in the context of race, gender, and disability—with a sophisticated nuance that respects not only its subjects but the audience as well,” said Documentary Competition Jury members Caryn Coleman, Marie Therese Giurgis, and Carlos Sandoval.

**XIAOHUI AND HIS COWS**, directed by **Xinying Lao**, received the Award for Best Narrative Short Film, and **THE WAITING**, directed by **Volker Schlecht**, won for Best Documentary Short Film. Both films received \$1,000 cash prizes and will qualify for Academy Awards® consideration.

Hamptons International Film Festival audiences selected narrative feature **FRESH KILLS**, directed by **Jennifer Esposito**, and documentary feature **ANGEL APPLICANT**, directed by **Ken August Meyer** for this year's Audience Awards. **FORGOTTEN FOUNDERS: DAVID HEMPSTEAD, SENIOR**, directed by **Sam Hamilton** and **Julian Alvarez**, and **MERV**, directed by **Sam Roebling** tied for this year's Audience Award for Best Short Film.

The festival also announced winners for additional special awards:

**THE BREAKTHROUGH**, directed by **Daniel Sinclair**, was awarded the 2023 Peter Macgregor-Scott Memorial Award. The award, which is accompanied by a \$10,000 cash prize, aims to continue the celebrated producer's mentorship for a new generation of passionate filmmakers. Sponsored by Susan Macgregor-Scott, this award is specifically designed to recognize narrative short filmmakers and reward creative approaches to solving practical production challenges in the service of storytelling.

**A REVOLUTION ON CANVAS**, directed by **Sara Nodjoumi** and **Till Schauder**, and **BEYOND UTOPIA**, directed by **Madeleine Gavin**, were awarded the Brizzolara Family Foundation Award to Films of Conflict and Resolution. The two films will split a \$5,000 cash prize. This award recognizes films in the Films of Conflict & Resolution program, which is dedicated to showcasing films that deal with the complex issues and societal effects of war and violence. These films are selected because of their excellence in filmmaking and depiction of provocative and dramatic content. Since this signature section was launched over 20 years ago, it has continued to stimulate discussion about major issues and conflicts of our time.

**SMOKE SAUNA SISTERHOOD**, directed by **Anna Hints**, was presented with the Victor Rabinowitz & Joanne Grant Award for Social Justice. The annual award, which is accompanied by a \$2,000 cash prize presented by Mark Rabinowitz, is presented to a film that exemplifies the values of peace, equality, global justice, and civil liberties, and is named in honor of two people who spent their entire lives fighting for those values: civil rights lawyer Victor Rabinowitz and his wife Joanne Grant, an author, filmmaker and journalist.

**WILDING**, directed by **David Allen**, received the Zelda Penzel Giving Voice to the Voiceless Award. Presented to a film in the Compassion, Justice & Animal Rights Signature program, the award recognizes a film that inspires compassion, compels social change, and raises public awareness about the moral and ethical treatment and the rights of animals, as well as environmental protection. The film was awarded a \$2,500 cash prize.

**THESE DAYS**, directed by **Junior Gonzalez**, was awarded the 2023 Suffolk County Next Exposure Grant. This \$3,000 grant is awarded to a feature film in the Views From Long Island Signature Program. This program supports the completion of high quality, original director-driven, low budget independent films from both emerging and established filmmakers who have completed 50% of principal photography within Suffolk County, New York. Sponsored by the Suffolk County Film Commission.

Two awards were given for this year's inaugural Sherzum Award. Sponsored by producer Jayne Baron Sherman, a long time LGBTQ+ activist, this award is designed to acknowledge and foster stories about LGBTQ+ people, issues and concerns. Named for Jayne and her wife Deborah Zum, the Sherzum Award will encourage films that show the realities and challenges—as well as successes—of the people and communities it represents. **RUSTIN**, directed by **George C. Wolfe**, received a \$5,000 cash prize, and **SUMMER QAMP**, directed by **Jen Markowitz**, received a \$2,500 cash prize.

**FANCY DANCE**, directed by **Erica Tremblay** and **BEYOND UTOPIA**, directed by **Madeleine Gavin** were awarded the New York Women in Film & Television Award for Excellence in Narrative Filmmaking, and the New York Women in Film & Television Award for Excellence in Documentary Filmmaking, respectively.

These awards honor outstanding female filmmakers who have demonstrated exceptional artistic vision and dedication to their craft. Both films received a \$1,000 cash prize and a six month membership to NYWIFT.

**FRESH KILLS**, directed by **Jennifer Esposito**, also received a New York Women in Film & Television Award Honorable Mention for Excellence in Narrative Filmmaking.

The festival also announced the recipients of the University Short Film Awards, honoring emerging young talent and awarding five filmmakers cash prizes of \$500 each. Awardees include **SO THEY SAY "Así Dicen"**, directed by **Natalia Luque** (Columbia University), **FIRST, I DREAM "Primero, Sueño"**, directed by **Andrés Lira** (California State University, Sacramento), **CLASSMATES**, directed by **Major Dorfman** (Columbia University), **ME & AYDAROUS**, directed by **Sara Balghonaim** (NYU Tisch Graduate Film Program), and **DAYDREAMING SO VIVIDLY ABOUT OUR SPANISH HOLIDAYS**, directed by **Christian Avilés** (Escola Superior de Cinema i Audiovisuals de Catalunya).

This year's Narrative Feature Competition Jury was composed of former President of IFC Films **Arianna Bocco**; American film director and screenwriter **David Koepp**; and ScreenCrush film critic and current Chair of the New York Film Critics Circle **Matt Singer**.

The Documentary Feature Competition Jury included The Future of Film is Female founder **Caryn Coleman**; producer and Head of Documentary at Play/Action Pictures **Marie Therese Giurgis**; and Emmy-nominated and Sundance award-winning filmmaker **Carlos Sandoval**.

This year the Festival was honored to partner with the New York Film Critics Circle for the fifteenth year.

"Congratulations to all of this year's winners!" said HamptonsFilm Artistic Director David Nugent. "We were honored to welcome so many returning filmmakers as well as those sharing their films with our audiences for the first time here in the Hamptons. Our community came out in droves and welcomed this year's films and guests with such warmth and enthusiasm."

"As we close out our 31st edition, we want to express our utmost gratitude to not only our incredible audiences for their continued support of the festival, but also to our diligent staff, volunteers, sponsors, partners, and esteemed guests for making it possible to program another year of dynamic screenings and conversations," said HamptonsFilm Executive Director Anne Chaisson.

Attendees of the 2023 festival included David Allen, Behi Djanati Atai, Joanna Arnow, Rosanna Arquette, Robert Ascencio, Ken August Meyer, Nick August-Perna, Bob Balaban, Alec & Hilaria Baldwin, Alexander Bernstein, Jamie Bernstein, Nina Bernstein, Sam Bisbee, Christie Brinkley, İlker Çatak, Bruce Cohen, Scott Cohen, Matt Creed, Ron Delsener, Eugenio Derbez, Griffin Dunne, Alden Ehrenreich, Jesse Eisenberg, Jennifer Esposito, Christian Friedel, Madeleine Gavin, Alex Gibney, Patricia Gillespie, Jason Goldman, Junior Gonzalez, David Gutnik, Mary Heilmann, Matt Heineman, Miles Heizer, Oskar Hes, Cord Jefferson, Maryam Keshavarz, Renee King-Sonnen, Jen Markowitz, Hilla Medalia, Jesse Moss, Sheila Nevins, Nicky Nodjoumi, Sara Nodjoumi, Timothy Nordwind, Margreth Olin, Noah Pritzker, Petter Ringbom, Christian Robinson, Michael Rowley, Joanna Rudnick, Tonje Schei Hessen, Liev Schreiber, Paul Simon, Slavko Sobin, Celine Song, Marquise Stillwell, Stella Stocker, Bonnie Stoll, Jake Sumner, Finn Taylor, Irene Taylor, Chai Vasarhelyi, Carla Vila, Brendan Walsh, DK Welchman, Hugh Welchman, George C. Wolfe, Jessica Yu, Christopher Zalla, and more.

The festival awarded prizes to filmmakers in cash and goods and services of over \$124,000 this year, with over \$5 million awarded in competition funds and services over the past 31 years.

HIFF thanks the sponsors and supporters for this year's festival, including returning Premiere Sponsor Audi; Lead Sponsor The Macallan; Signature Sponsors King & Spalding, and UBS; Supporting Sponsors Naturopathica, Dragon Hemp, Silvercup, and Regal Cinemas; as well as official Media Sponsors *Variety*, *WNBC*, *The Purist*, *The East Hampton Star*, Signature Sponsor *The Atlantic*, and new supporting sponsor

*MUBI*; Contributing Sponsors Assemble Media, Montauk Brewing Company, Natural Geographics, Netflix, Owl's Brew, Wolffer Estate Vineyard, and long term support from New York State Council on the Arts, and Suffolk County Film Commission. For more information, please visit [www.hamptonfilmfest.org](http://www.hamptonfilmfest.org).

**HAMPTONS INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL CONGRATULATES THE 2023 WINNERS:**

**HIFF Award Winner for Best Narrative Feature**

20,000 SPECIES OF BEES, directed by Estibaliz Urresola Solaguren

**HIFF Best Narrative Feature Special Mention**

THE FEELING THAT THE TIME FOR DOING SOMETHING HAS PASSED, directed by Joanna Arnow

**HIFF Award Winner for Best Documentary Feature**

TELL THEM YOU LOVE ME, directed by Nick August-Perna

**HIFF Award Winner for Best Narrative Short Film**

XIAOHUI AND HIS COWS, directed by Xinying Lao

**HIFF Award Winner for Best Documentary Short Film**

THE WAITING, directed by Volker Schlecht

**HIFF Audience Award Winner for Best Narrative Feature**

FRESH KILLS, directed by Jennifer Esposito

**HIFF Audience Award Winner for Best Documentary Feature**

ANGEL APPLICANT, directed by Ken August Meyer

**HIFF Audience Award Winner for Best Short Film**

FORGOTTEN FOUNDERS: DAVID HEMPSTEAD, SENIOR, directed by Sam Hamilton and Julian Alvarez  
and

MERV, directed by Sam Roebing

**The Peter Macgregor-Scott Memorial Award**

THE BREAKTHROUGH, directed by Daniel Sinclair

**The 2023 Brizzolara Family Foundation Award to Films of Conflict and Resolution**

A REVOLUTION ON CANVAS, directed by Sara Nodjoumi and Till Schauder  
and

BEYOND UTOPIA, directed by Madeleine Gavin

**Victor Rabinowitz and Joanne Grant Award for Social Justice**

SMOKE SAUNA SISTERHOOD, directed by Anna Hints

**The Zelda Penzel Giving Voice to the Voiceless Award**

WILDING, directed by David Allen

**Suffolk County Next Exposure Grant**

THESE DAYS, directed by Junior Gonzalez

**The Sherzum Award**

RUSTIN, directed by George C. Wolfe

and

SUMMER QAMP, directed by Jen Markowitz

### **New York Women in Film & Television Award for Excellence in Narrative Filmmaking**

FANCY DANCE, directed by Erica Tremblay

### **New York Women in Film & Television Award for Excellence in Narrative Filmmaking Honorable Mention**

FRESH KILLS, directed by Jennifer Esposito

### **New York Women in Film & Television Award for Excellence in Documentary Filmmaking**

BEYOND UTOPIA, directed by Madeleine Gavin

### **University Short Film Awards**

SO THEY SAY "Así Dicen", directed by Natalia Luque

FIRST, I DREAM "Primero, Sueño", directed by Andrés Lira

CLASSMATES, directed by Major Dorfman

ME & AYDAROUS, directed by Sara Balghonaim

DAYDREAMING SO VIVIDLY ABOUT OUR SPANISH HOLIDAYS, directed by Christian Avilés

### **HIFF Narrative Feature Competition Jury**

**Arianna Bocco**, former President of IFC Films

**David Koepp**, American film director & screenwriter, best known for writing JURASSIC PARK; THE LOST WORLD: JURASSIC PARK, and INDIANA JONES AND THE KINGDOM OF THE CRYSTAL SKULL,

**Matt Singer**, ScreenCrush.com film critic & Chair of the New York Film Critics Circle

### **HIFF Documentary Feature Competition Jury**

**Caryn Coleman**, Founder of The Future of Film is Female

**Marie Therese Giurgis**, Head of Documentary at Play/Action Pictures

**Carlos Sandoval**, Emmy-nominated and Sundance award-winning filmmaker, best known for AMERICAN EXPERIENCE, CLASS APART, and FARMINGVILLE

### **ABOUT HAMPTONSFILM**

HamptonsFilm, home of the Hamptons International Film Festival (HIFF) was founded in 1992 to celebrate the art of film and to introduce a unique and varied spectrum of international films and filmmakers to our audiences. A non-profit organization with year-round screenings of global narrative and documentary films, an annual Screenwriters Lab, a summer documentary showcase, and extensive educational initiatives, HamptonsFilm offers programs that enlighten, educate, and provide invaluable exposure for filmmakers, while also providing the East End of Long Island with an educational and cultural experience that enriches the lives of its citizens and contributes to the local economy. HIFF, celebrating its 31st year, is an annual premiere film event in New York State, and an intimate showcase of some of the year's best offerings in contemporary cinema from around the world. Awarding prizes to filmmakers in cash and goods and services of over \$130,000, each year, with over \$5 million awarded in competition funds and services over the decades, our program continues to play an important role during awards season. For more information, please visit [hamptonsfilmfest.org](http://hamptonsfilmfest.org).

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