

Awards of the Ecumenical Jury by SIGNIS (OCIC) and INTERFILM since 1994-2017

2017

Award: The Cakemaker, by Ofir Raul Graizer, Israel, Germany 2017

With a gentle approach, the film portrays a journey towards acceptance and the pursuit of love. The unique bond formed between the characters strengthens a healing process that brings them a new life. It allows the viewer to connect to the most important of human values, something that overcomes all prejudices: love.

Members of the jury: Laura Lots (Switzerland), Ennio Terrasi Borghesan (Italy), Petr Vacík (Czech Republic)

2016

Award: The Confessions | Le confessioni, by Roberto Andò, France, Italy 2016

A film with a balanced use of symbolism and a clean aesthetic, reflecting on silence, time and human vulnerability as well as the possibility of redemption, which calls out for breaking away from pragmatic cynicism and control in power decision making as opposed to consciousness and return to essential principles of Christianity.

Members of the jury: Susanne Charlotte Knudstorp (Denmark), María José Martínez Ordoñez (Ecuador), Joel Ruml (Czech Republic), Stanislav Zeman (Czech Republic)

2015

Award: Bob and the Trees, by Diego Ongaro, USA 2015

The central character is Bob, a lively North American logger. His whole life is riddled with mistakes: in his job, with his family and in his relationships. Nevertheless, he has the courage to take responsibility for all of them, which allows him to transform his whole life into a message of hope. The film is simply told, but with truth and honesty. Bob, the main character in the film, is played by Bob Tarasuk himself, who in real life is a logger, not an actor.

Commendation: Song of Songs | Pesn pesney, by Eva Neymann, Ukraine 2015

The Ukrainian film "Song of Songs" deals with spiritual issues in a very original way. The director Eva Neymann uses stylized images to recreate the atmosphere of a Jewish shtetl at the beginning of the 20th century which no longer exists. The biblical Song of Songs serves as background for the story of a young boy's dreams and childhood love.

Members of the jury: Michael Otrisal, Praha (Czech Republic), Vit Poláček, Plzeň (Czech Republic), Lothar Strüber, Freiburg-Tiengen (Germany), Rita Weinert, Hamburg (Germany)

2014

Award: Corn Island | Simindis kundzuli, by George Ovashvili, Georgia/Germany/France/Czech Republic/Kazakhstan 2014

Corn Island is a story of an old man who transmits the wisdom of life to his granddaughter. We are invited to reflect the importance of harmony between man and nature and also to reflect the respect and take care for the others. The film raises attention towards human creativity and the never ending cycle of life.

Commendation: Rocks in My Pockets, by Signe Baumane, USA/Latvia

Rocks in My Pockets is an animated film telling a personal story of a woman, director and illustrator Signe Baumane, who courageously fights with her psychological illness. She tries to understand her uneasy personal situation and through artistic work she shows always fragile but possible balance of her everyday life.

Members of the jury: Brigitte Affolter, Biel (Switzerland), Lukas Jirsa, Praha (Czech Republic); Joel Ruml, Praha (Czech Republic), Blandine Salles, Lyon (France)

2013

Award: Bluebird, by Lance Edmands, USA 2013

When a female school bus driver fails to notice a sleeping boy in the back of her bus, this causes a tragedy that overshadows not only her life and family but also the lives of many others in her economically depressed small hometown. Lance Edmands' debut deals with topics like guilt, estrangement and isolation but first and foremost centers around the tragic lack of connection, closeness and the search for a place in this world. "Bluebird" is the most thoughtful and mature, the most atmospheric, superbly restrained, yet deeply emotional work we have ever seen by a first time feature-length film director.

Members of the jury: Jan Regner, SJ (Czech Republic.), Lothar Strüber (Germany), Marisa Villareale (Germany), Helena Zvolská-Babická (Czech Republic)

2012

Award: Camion, by Rafaël Ouellet, Canada 2012

A tragic accident brings a scattered family after a long time together again. Sharing everyday activities, they find reconciliation with the past and themselves. Through an intimate mode of narration, the conflicts of the characters are slowly unravelled. The grandiose nature mirrors the almost imperceptible changes within the family. Finally its members discover new visions for their future and transforms life into a positive challenge.

Commendation: Estrada de Palha | Hay Road, by Rodrigo Areias, Portugal/Finland 2011

In an audacious combination of a Western setting and 19th century philosopher In Thoreau's manifesto about the duty of Civil Disobedience, a lonesome shepherd pursues his strong idea of justice in a timeless landscape. With a striking link between an impressive soundtrack and a visually stunning cinematography life is presented as an unpredictable, endless quest.

Members of the jury: Daria Pezzoli-Olgiati (Switzerland), Barbara Lorey Lacharrière (France), Heinz Kersten (Germany), Michael Ořřisal (Czech Republic), Rafal Wieceyński (Poland), Lukáš Jirsa (Czech Republic)

2011

Award: Die Unsichtbare | Cracks in the shell, by Christian Schwochow, Germany 2011

Through the dramatic story of the young actress Fine, who always used to be the “good girl”, Especially to her handicapped sister who catches all the love of the mother, the film point out a common issue: Kindness can be an obstacle to find ourselves. Struggling for her role in theatre she is pushed to face her dark sides, very different from what she seems to be. Accepting this, and going through threatening feelings, she cracks the shell, becoming visible as a person, able to be really “good”, both on stage and in life. The brilliant performance of the main characters gives this film its reliability.

Commendation: Roméo Onze | Romeo Eleven, by Ivan Grovic, Canada 2011

This feature film debut gives us a sensitive portrait of a young man, living in a community of Christian Lebanese immigrants in Montreal, in his search for identity and love. After the catastrophe wrecking of his hopes to overcome his physical restrictions and his family’s expectations by cyber-dating as “Romeo11” he is able to star a new life in acceptance of his limitations. A story that can happen everywhere, told with high cinematographic artistry.

Members of the jury: Jes Nysten (Denmark), Milan Simacek (Czech Republic), Waltraud Verlaguet (France), Jan Elias (Czech Republic), Catherine Wong (Hong Kong), Reinhold Zwick (Germany)

2010

Award: Drugoje Nĕbo | Another Sky, by Dmitrij Mamulija, Russia 2010

„Another Sky” is the first feature film by this director of Georgian origin in the best tradition of the transcendental style in film. Depicting a shepherd of Central Asian origin who goes to a big Russian city, doesn't speak Russian and is trying to find his wife and the mother of his son, the film evokes the eternal subject of sacrifice and rebirth. It is the story of a deep spiritual journey that provokes the viewer to see anew the world we live in.

Commendation: Hitler à Hollywood | Hitler in Hollywood, by Frédéric Sojcher, Belgium/France/ Italy 2010

The jury gives a commendation for „Hitler in Hollywood” because it is a plea for the diversity of cultures and the need for expression of plurality, against uniformity and manipulation. This film is delivered in a brilliant, intelligent, cheerful and humorous style.

Members of the Jury: Helena Babická (Czech Republic), Lukáš Jirsa (Czech Republic), Charles Martig (Switzerland), Cindy Mollaret (France), Hans-Joachim Schlegel (Germany), Jean-Michel Zucker (France).

2009

Award: Bist | Twenty, by Abdolreza Kahani, Iran 2009

The culture and day-to-day reality of Iran is prominently displayed for us in this interesting and contemporary film. The emotional capacity of the characters and how they accept and handle their reality is admirable.

The setting takes place within a small cafeteria regularly used for mourning receptions. As the characters show their human strength in coping with the challenge of being deprived of the

work they cherish, they illuminate the capacity of the human spirit to navigate difficult circumstances with courage, love and hope. The women in this film –as mothers, as wives, and as children – are especially presented with kindness and with an abundance of human strength.

Members of the Jury: *Daniela Magálová (Slovakia, president of the jury), Heinz Kersten (Germany), Ieva Pitruka (Latvia), Douglas P. Fahleson (USA), Lothar Strüber (Germany), Jan Eliáš (Czech Republic).*

2008

Award: The Photograph, by Nan T. Achnas, Indonesia/France/Netherlands/Switzerland/Sweden 2007

Set in modern day Indonesia, „The Photograph“ tells the story of Sita, a country woman forced to work as a prostitute in a big city in order to support her sick grandmother taking care of her child. Sita finds shelter in the studio of an old photographer with a tragic past. The photographs reveal the truths and lies of their lives. We honour this beautifully photographed film in which guilt can be confessed and caring for each other becomes essential.

Members of the Jury: *Jan Eliáš (Czech Republic), president of the jury, Monica Lienin (Switzerland), Werner Schneider-Quindeau (Germany), Lucia Cuocci (Italy), Helena Babická (Czech Republic), Karel Deburchgrave (Belgium)*

2007

Award: Prostyje Vešči | Simple Things, by Alexey Popogrebsky, Russia 2006

Set against a backdrop of contemporary Russia, about a man's struggle to choose between what is right and what is convenient. Living through the conflicts, temptations, difficulties and blunders within his family and professional life, he finally makes a decision.

Commendation: Dialogue avec mon jardinière | Conversation With My Gardener, by Jean Becker, France 2007

Members of the jury: *Dietmar Adler (Germany), president, Jan Elias (Czech Rep.), Johannes Horstmann (Germany), Denyse Muller (France), Květoslava , Šamajová (Czech Rep.), Teresa R.Tunay (Philippines).*

2006

Award: El destino/Destiny, by Miguel Pereira, Argentina/Spain 2005

Disguised in priests clothes, a man lands after a violent drug transaction in a small, isolated border town. Acting as a priest in the community provokes a struggle in search of his real identity. The director succeeds convincingly in telling the story as a parable of the recurrent choice in life between good and bad as a conflict between progress and tradition. The composition of music and images leads to an excellent aesthetical experience.

Commendation: Shab Bekheir Farmandeh | Goodbye Life, by Ensieh Shah-Hosseini, Iran 2006

Members of the jury: *Jos Horemans (Belgium), president, Elena Jecu Dulgheru (Romania), Julia Laggner (Austria), Kai Voigtländer (Germany), Milos Rejchrt (Czech Rep.), Jan Elias (Czech Rep.)*

2005

Award: Kinamand/Chinaman, by Henrik Ruben Genz, Denmark/China 2005

Whose prosaic, everyday reality is the driving force behind a well-constructed story redolent in ecumenical, redemptive and liberating significance concerning the bridging of the divide between Danish and Chinese cultures. The jury was impressed with the film's emphasis of the vulnerability of the legal status of immigrants and the transformation of the main character, Keld, who transcends his own limitations and fulfils his obligation to a woman with whom he had initially entered into an inauthentic marriage but who takes on a duty of care and responsibility towards her that surpasses even her death in the performance of a Chinese burial ritual.

Members of the jury: *Margrit Frölich (Germany), Magali Van Reeth (France), Cris Deacy (United Kingdom), Jan Elias (Czech Rep.) Matthias Loretan (Switzerland), Petr Siska (Czech Rep.) as President.*

2004

Award: Cavedweller, by Lisa Cholodenko, USA 2004

The Jury has awarded this film for the convincing interpretation of the necessity to cope bravely, wisely, and with humour with the consequences of one's own failures and those of others and of the fundamental need of finding inner peace and mutual forgiveness.

Members of the jury: *Juray Drobny (Slovak Rep.), Jan Elias (Czech Rep.), Hilde Van Liempt (Belgium), Bojidar Manov (Bulgaria), Michael Otrisal, (Czech Rep.), Anita Uzulniece (Latvia)*

Award of honour to Dr. Eva Zaoralova

for her artistic commitment, the quality of the festival programme and the support of the Ecumenical Jury throughout the years on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the Ecumenical Jury at the International Film Festival Karlovy Vary (*Laudatio by Hans Hodel and Guido Convents*)

2003

Award: Babusja, by Lidija Bobrovova, Russia 2003

A Babusja needs asylum within her family in Russia today. By showing this the film confronts its viewers with the significance of their social responsibility. The face of the old woman reflects dignity and courage expressing a spirituality that may bring hope of community and solidarity between generations.

Members of the jury: *Jan Elias (Czech Rep), Piet Halma (Netherlands), Matthias Loretan (Switzerland), Claire Openshaw (United Kingdom), Milos Rejchrt (Czech Rep), Rita Weinert (Germany).*

2002

Award: Cizza/Silence, by Michal Rosa, Poland 2001

for the original and sophisticated way the movie shows the process of finding deeper levels of personal self understanding. A strange man offers to the main character the mirror which she needs to find the way being able to reconcile with her past and accepting the challenge of her present life.

Commendation: Filament, by Jinsei Tsuji, Japan 2001

Members of the jury: Jan Elias (Czech Rep), Julia Helmke (Germany), Jan Lipansky (Czech Republic), Matthias Loretan (Switzerland), Michael Otrisal (Czech Rep), Patricia Rohner (France).

2001

Award: Chico, by Ibolya Fekete, Hungary/Germany/Croatia/Chile 2000

for a convincing illustration of the way in which the ideal of freedom undergoes continual transformation in history without ever being fully attained. The film shows in a novel way that some wars are drawn into the logic of their development, willingly or unwillingly. The Ecumenical Jury commends the film for showing the spiritual dimension of human existence that lasts, while ideologies come and go.

Commendation: Ghost world, by Terry Zwigoff, USA/Great Britain 2000

Members of the jury: Jan Elias (Czech Rep), Bob Fliedr (Czech Rep), Heike Kühn (Germany), Eric Pireyre (France), Milos Rejchrt (Czech Rep).

2000

Award: Duze zwierze | The Big Animal, by Jerzy Stuhr, Poland 1999

The story on a camel left behind by a circus deepens into a multi-level parable of timeless presence. It depicts, with humour, different attitudes towards the strange, and shows that there are values of life beyond mere existence.

Commendations: Paromitar ek din | House of Memories, by Aparna Sen, India 1999

and

Long Night's Journey Into Day, Frances Reid/Deborah Hoffmann, USA 1999

Members of the jury: Alexandr Askoldov (Russia), Hans Werner Dannowski (Germany), Jan Elias (Czech Rep), Milos Rejchrt (Czech Rep), Reinhold Zwick (Germany).

1999

Award: A Reasonable Man, by Gavin Hood, South Africa 1998

for the understanding of different religious, cultural and ethnical roots. The film compares traditional values with today's by the means of reasonable and intuitive behavior. It searches to human solutions to different ways of approaching truth.

Commendations: Hachaverim shel Yana, by Arik Kaplun, Israel 1998

and

Beautiful People, by Jasmin Dizdar, Great Britain 1998

Members of the jury: Lada Arnautova (Czech Rep), Christoph Fritze (Germany), Franziska Lienert (Switzerland), Anna Petrzekova (Czech Rep), **Milan Simacek (Czech Republic)**.

1998

Award: Comedian Harmonists, by Joseph Vilsmaier, Germany/Austria 1997

for its sensitive handling of human beings in an impossible situation and for its exploration of the values of loyalty, courage and forgiveness and for its integrity in dealing with real people and real event.

Commendation: Je treba zabit Sekala | Sekala Has To Die, by Vladimir Michalek, Czech Rep, 1998

Members of the jury: Jana Hyklova (Czech Rep), Jan Jandourek (Czech Rep), Vera Ivanova (Russia), Bo Torp Pedersen (Denmark), **Kate Roux (United Kingdom)**.

1997

Award: Zapomenuté Svetlo | Forgotten Light, by Vladimir Michalek, Czech Republic

Par sa tentative franche et vraiment humaine de raconter l'histoire d'un homme qui respecte ses principes mêmes dans les difficiles moments de manque de confiance en soi et de tentation en vue de sauver la pureté des valeurs de foi, refusant des compromis boiteux et la collaboration avec les pouvoirs en place.

Commendations: Jugofilm, by Goran Rebic, Austria

and

Nespatrene, by Miroslav Janek, Czech Republic

Members of the jury: Guido Convents (Belgium), Latavra Doularidze (Russia), Bo Torp Pedersen (Denmark), Michael Otrisal (Czech Republic), Milan Simacek (Czech Republic).

1996

Award: Kavkazskij Plennik, by Sergej Bodrov, Russia/Kazachstan

For the personal commitment, the courage and artistic qualities by means of which the film is defending human and moral values against violence, war and murder in our contemporary society related especially to the present caucasion conflict.

Commendations: Un divan à New York, by Chantal Ackermann, France/Germany

and

Mladi Muzi Poznavaji Svet, by Radim Spacek, Czech Republic

Members of the jury: Ambros Eichenberger (Switzerland), Jan Elias (Czech Republic), Michael Otrisal (Czech Republic), Karsten Visarius (Germany).

1995

Award: Zahrada | The Garden, by Martin Sulik, Slovak Republic 1995

In a garden full of secrets the young teacher Jakub is confronted with the mysteries of life – as he takes a spiritual voyage full of wisdom and love. Finally, Jakub realizes that life is not based on material assets and nature cannot be considered an investment opportunity. An outstanding feature film, whose visual language is understandable to all generations. Zahrada bears witness to the continuous presence of “miracle” in today’s world.

Commendation: A rezleg | The section, by Peter Gothar, Hungary 1994

Members of the jury: Latavra Doularidze (Russia), Jan Elias (Czech Republic), Kveta Samajova (Czech Republic), Kai Voigtländer (Germany).

1994

Award: Ladoni, by Arthur Aristakisjan, Russia 1993

The author has succeeded to question radically the common systems and superficial patterns of life with unconventional and strong metaphor and apocalyptic visions as well as through an internal monologue of true poetic quality. Thus, he suggests first steps to a new vision of man related to Christ.

Commendation: Janani | Mother, by Sanat Dasgupta, India 1993

Members of the jury: Ambros Eichenberger (Switzerland), Karsten Visarius (Germany), Kveta Samajova (Czech Republic).