



VIWFF 2019 Celebrates Women Warriors from Across the Globe

For Immediate (March 10, 2019) Vancouver, BC —Women In Film and Television Vancouver (WIFTV) closed the 14th Vancouver International Women in Film Festival (VIWFF) on Sunday, March 10, 2019. After six days of celebrating women filmmakers from 20 countries around the world, the festival ended with the Closing Night Awards Ceremony, celebrating the Best of the Festival Awards, the Matrix Awards, and the VIWFF Screenplay Competition Awards.

VIWFF both opened and closed the festival with powerful films that were centered around strong leaders. ***Warrior Women*** directed by **Elizabeth Castle and Christina King** follows the work of Lakota activists Madonna Thunder Hawk and her daughter Marcy Gilbert. The film opened the festival on March 5th to a sold-out crowd and went on to take home the **Pacific Backlot Award for Best Documentary** at the Closing Night Awards Ceremony. *“Women will never leave the patriarchy behind until indigenous women are given the respect they deserve. This culturally important documentary elegantly weaves multiple generations of indigenous stories together in an unconventional form. Warrior Women uses humour, fantastic characters, and mixes in archival footage to tell this essential story,”* commented the jury.

Honourable mention went to ***Thank You for the Rain***, directed by Julia Dahr, which was later awarded the **Sim Award for Best Cinematography**. This award was present to **Julie Lunde Lillesæter** for their contribution to the film.

VIWFF was honoured to host the World Premiere of ***Swords and Scepters: The Rani of Jhansi*** which screened on the last day of the festival. The film’s director, **Swati Bhise**, who was in attendance for the premiere, was presented with The **WIFTV Impact Award** in recognition of a powerful film showcasing women’s impact on our world. *“Swords and Sceptres: The Rani of Jhansi reminds us that female empowerment isn’t a new phenomenon. It is, in fact, present throughout our history, led by women like the Queen of Jhansi, who is brought to life in this film with passion and style,”* said Vancouver based actor and WIFTV Board member Aliza Vellani as she presented the award.

Two awards went to the Syrian feature, ***The Day I Lost My Shadow***, directed by **Soudade Kaadan**. The film took home the **IATSE 891 Award for Best Feature**, as well as, the

UBCP/ACTRA Award for Best Performance in a Feature for **Sawsan Ercheid's** performance.

"The chaos of war is heart-wrenching and very real in this gripping and suspenseful film. Sawsan Ercheid's subtle and haunting performance draws you into the story of a somewhat ordinary, middle-class women living through an extraordinary experience and providing a unique dealing of motherhood," noted the jury.

The Iranian mid-length film **Marziyeh**, directed by **Dornaz Hajiha** and edited by **Mastaneh Mohajer** took home both the **DGC-BC Award for Best Direction** and the **Canadian Cinema Editors Award for Best Editing**. The jury expressed that *"exceptional choices were made in this film in every aspect. Marziyeh keeps you gloriously engaged every moment. Movement in both physical spaces and gender spaces is cleverly portrayed. The design of the imagery, characters and story is impressive and works together to achieve something pleasantly different."*

Three local short films were honoured with a **Matrix Award**, presented by Matrix Production Services: **Biidaaban (The Dawn Comes)** directed by **Amanda Strong**; **Good Girls Don't** directed by **Ana de Lara**, and **OChiSkwaCho** directed by **Jules Koostachin**.

The **Casting Workbook Award for Best Performance in a Short** was presented to **Murry Peeter** for their role in **Clinch** from local filmmaker Tricia Collins.

The **ICG 669 Award for Best Cinematography in a Short** went to **Alvilde Naterstad** for their work in the film **The Egg and The Thieving Pie**. The film featured well know English actor Anna Maxwell Martin.

The Icelandic short **ÉG//I**, which had its world premiere at VIWFF, was presented with the **Side Street Post Award for Best Short Film**. Directed by **Vala Ómarsdóttir & Hallfríður Þóra Tryggvadóttir** the film is based on real-life experience of Icelandic Trans Rights Activist Uglá Stefanía Kristjónudóttir Jónsdóttir. *"Exploring nuances of identity against the backdrop of rural life and bureaucracy, this film creates a contemplative space to ponder gender and acceptance and does it with elegance and style. Flawless!"* exclaimed the jury.

The **Ron Heaps Award for Best Editing in a Short** went to **Reema Sengupta** for **Counterfeit Kunkoo**. *"Reema Sengupta's clear vision brings audiences face to face with a world full of injustice, highlighting the difficulty newly single women face finding a flat in contemporary India. Counterfeit Kunkoo draws you in from the first moment, keeps you until the very end, and leaves you wanting more,"* explained the jury.

The **Chandler Fogden Aldous Entertainment Law Award for Best Screenplay** went to **Miracle** which was written (and directed by) **Egle Vertelyte**. *"It is a very clever satire told through a very compelling character. The dry humour and just enough political critique makes it hilarious and thoughtful. In these trying times, what else is there to do but chuckle (or cry?) at the products of religion, communism and capitalism! A truly engaging script"*

Katharina Nuttall took home the **Canadian Federation of Musicians Award for the Best Musical Score** for her work in ***The Feminist***. *“The score, when present, is subtle and melodic and the sounds of real life are seamlessly integrated in this incredible documentary. It is a complement to, rather than competition with, the strong voices of amazing humans in this film.”* VIWFF was honored to have the film’s producer, who is also the president of Women in Film and Television International, **Helene Gravqvist** in attendance to participate in the six-day festival and accept the award on behalf of Katharina.

Out of a record number of submissions to the Vancouver International Women in Film Festival Screenplay Competition, the **Ken Hayward Award for Best Screenplay in the VIWFF Screenplay Competition** was presented to **Katterina Powers** for ***A Better Place***.

All awards are chosen by independent juries. Thanks to Sandra Ignagni (Writer / Director) ; Baljit Sangra (Filmmaker / Producer); Mary Galloway (Writer / Director / Actor); Cari Green (Filmmaker / Educator); Laura Adkin (Filmmaker / Actor); Maja Aro (Writer / Director / Stunt Coordinator); Joan McBeth (Writer); and all the readers who helped choose the finalists in the VIWFF screenplay competition.

The festival was a great success and we thank you, our audience, for being there to make this celebration possible. The Vancouver International Women in Film Festival is grateful to the generous support of our sponsors, community partners, and volunteers. Thanks to Telefilm, Canadian Heritage, BC Arts Council, Bridge Studios, Casting Workbook, CCE, CFM, Chandler Fogden Aldous, CMPA, CreativeBC, DGC BC, Georgia Straight, IATSE 891, ICG 669, Ken Hayward, Line 21, Matrix Production Services, NFB, Pacific Backlot, Ron Heaps, Sandman Hotel, Sim, Super Channel, Sepia Films, Telus, UBCP/ACTRA, VIFF Year Round.

Women In Film and Television Vancouver (WIFTV) is a member-driven, not-for-profit, society which addresses systemic barriers to women’s equal participation in the production and dissemination of screen-based media. Womeninfilm.ca

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