



AWARDS

Press release

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21st International Film
Festival and Forum on
Human Rights

Award winners and closing ceremony of the 21st edition of the FIFDH

The 21st edition of the International Film Festival and Forum on Human Rights brought together more than 29,000 festival-goers at 121 events. More than 220 guests came to Geneva to share their experiences and commitment. The list of award winners includes 11 outstanding films that, in the Creative Documentary Competition, explore the question of decolonisation of narratives; and, in the Fiction Competition, depict the tyranny of an arbitrary Iranian regime. The emancipation of women and the fight against femicides, as well as press freedom in Afghanistan are at the heart of the other award-winning films of the 2023 edition of the FIFDH. These films will be screened at the Festival on Sunday, 19 March.

The list of awards for this 21st edition of the FIFDH honours films with personal narratives that transcend both borders and temporalities. The jurors selected the superb films ***Aurora's Sunrise*** by Inna Sahakyan (Grand Geneva Award) and ***Colette and Justin*** by Alain Kassanda (Gilda Vieira de Mello Award) which, through an original narrative based on archival images, interviews or animation, allow the filmmakers to reclaim their narratives. Whether it is about historical genocides or contemporary struggles, women's perspectives were also celebrated with ***Seven Winters in Tehran*** by Steffi Niedertzoll (Special Mention of the Creative Documentary Jury) and ***My Name is Happy*** by Nick Read and Ayşe Toprak (Fiction Youth Jury Award and winner of the Impact StoryBoard Collective's Impact Fund Award). From Iran to Afghanistan, activists' struggles left a lasting impression on the jurors, who awarded the Fiction Grand Award to ***Beyond the Wall*** by Vahid Jalilvand and the Focus Competition prize to ***Etilaat Roz*** by Abbas Rezaie. Two films that defy the constraints imposed by political contexts to bring the viewer in proximity to the protagonists.

This 2023 edition was opened in the presence of the President of the Swiss Confederation, **Alain Berset**, the patron of the FIFDH, singer **Barbara Hendricks**, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights **Volker Türk**, who all paid a powerful tribute to the first patron of the Festival, **Sergio Vieira de Mello**, assassinated in Baghdad 20 years ago, a few months after the creation of the FIFDH.

For 10 days, the Festival has hosted debates on current events, forgotten abuses and invisible struggles to collectively reflect on the world of yesterday and tomorrow. How can justice be obtained from a State for crimes against humanity or crimes of aggression? How can we make our societies more inclusive for young trans* people and for people living with disabilities? What solutions exist to hold accountable governments or companies that do not respect their commitments on climate change, access to health care, or that plunder the private data of its citizens? These questions, among others, were discussed with notable guests, including **Oleksandra Matviitchouk**, President of the NGO Centre for Civil Liberties, which was awarded the 2022 Nobel Peace Prize, Right Livelihood Award winners **Vandana Shiva** and **Ilwad Elman**, authors **Reed Brody** and **Giuliano Da Empoli**, Professor **Julia Steinberger**, journalist **Victoire Tuaille**, filmmaker **Toni Kamau**, as well as Iranian activists and more than 200 other guests.

Highlights

This edition was characterized by strong emotional moments, notably during the meetings with **Mutlu** and **Songül Kaya**, protagonists of the film *My Name is Happy*, who are fighting to bring justice and give a voice to women victims of violence. The taboo of incest was discussed during a forum with authors **Iris Brey** and **Juliet Drouar** (*La culture de l'inceste*) and the anthropologist **Dorotheé Dussy**, who reminded the chilling fact that in western countries 5 to 10% of children experience sexual violence within their close family circle. Emotions were also stirred during a meeting with the **Dabbagh family** and their lawyer **Clémence Bectarte**, who spoke of their long struggle to obtain justice against the Syrian regime. During the Impact Days, the Industry programme of the Festival, the daughter of Ugandan activist **Stella Nyanzi**, protagonist of the film *The Woman Who Poked The Leopard*, made a moving appeal for the better protection of activists' children, who are all too often the collateral victims of an activism they did not choose.

Laura Longobardi, Head of Impact and Industry FIFDH; David Rimer, Founder, The StoryBoard Collective ; Jon-Sesrie Goff, Program Officer, JustFilms/ord Foundation; Cara Mertes, Founder and Director, IRIS; Mara De Monte, Executive Director, Geneva Centre for Philanthropy



5th edition of the Impact Days

It was a record year for the Impact Days, the FIFDH Industry programme which facilitates impact alliances between filmmakers and key players in the international ecosystem. More than 150 participants from 34 countries came together for conferences, workshops and meetings organized over a period of 3 days. For the first time, the teams of the 16 selected projects participated in a pitching session to present their film and their impact strategy to an audience of NGOs, potential financial partners, journalists and film professionals.

At the awards ceremony, which concluded this professional programme, the films **Scarlet Girls** by Paula Cury (Dominican Republic) won the Docs Up Fund Award and **Land of Women** by Aymar El Amir and Nada Riyadh (Egypt) won the Sublimages Award. The StoryBoard Impact Award went to **My Name is Happy** by Ayşe Toprak (Turkey) & Nick Read (UK).

First films

The programme of this 21st edition also highlighted the work of young filmmakers with the screening of six first films. This was the case for **Carmen Jaquier's Foudre**, which the public was able to discover on the closing night. Other Swiss films that showcase the talent of a new generation of filmmakers include **Fisnik Maxville's** spellbinding drama **The Land Within** and **Simon David's Zadveners**, which takes us to the heart of ecological activism. Lebanese director **Ali Cherri** presented his first feature film, **The Dam**, thus adding to his international career in contemporary art.

Young audiences

For the first time at the FIFDH, younger audiences also had their own screenings and debates, in collaboration with **Les Cinémas du Grütli** and **La Lanterne Magique**, on themes that are sometimes difficult to tackle, such as exile or child labour. Secondary I and II students attended screenings, followed by interactions with directors, protagonists and guest speakers. This year, the educational programme covered subjects such as the experiences of young people in exile, the labour of immigrants in Switzerland, the inclusiveness and the rights of young trans* people, and ecology and civil disobedience.

The FIFDH continues throughout the year

In order to pursue its mission to raise awareness of human rights and to bring culture and cinema to all, the FIFDH is now extending its programming to the entire year. Several screenings and discussions will take place in **Geneva's municipalities** and also internationally with the **Human Rights Film Tour**, organised with the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (DFAE). The full programme can be found on the agenda page of the [FIFDH website](#).

Upcoming dates: 22 March with the Festival du Film Vert - 24 March in Bernex - 25 March in Présinge - 28 March in Plan-les-Ouates - 1 April in Carouge - 5 April in Satigny



Aurora's Sunrise, Inna Sahakyan

Awards 2023

The winning films will be screened on Sunday 19 March at the Cinémas du Grütli. Opening hours and information are available on fifdh.org

Creative Documentary Competition

The International Creative Documentary Jury is composed of **Anna Glogowski, Delphine Kemneloum Djiraibé, Dominique De Rivaz** and **Luciano Barisone**.

Grand Geneva Award

Grant of CHF 10'000, offered by the City of Geneva

Aurora's Sunrise by Inna Sahakyan

The reconstitution of memories through a mise en scène that combines the strength of testimony, images from a film that was thought to be lost and the use of watercolour animation that carries the weight of tragic events. A cinematographic work that aims to prevent the Armenian genocide from being forgotten.

Gilda Vieira de Mello Award in honour of her son Sergio Vieira de Mello

Grant of CHF 5'000, offered by the Barbara Hendricks Foundation for Peace and Reconciliation, awarded by the International Jury

Colette et Justin by Alain Kassanda

A politically engaged film based on the archives of the oppressor, which reveals the tumultuous history of colonisation and a false independence. An intimate dialogue that reveals truths that can form the basis of a peace and reconciliation process.



Special Mention of the Jury

Seven Winters in Tehran by Steffi Niederzoll

The film takes us through the maze of arbitrary justice, culminating in the hanging of an innocent woman and the total denial of freedom of speech for women.



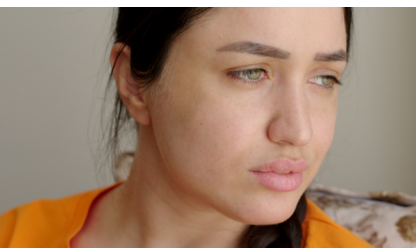
Youth Jury Prize - Documentary

Grant of CHF 1'000, offered by Peace Brigades International (PBI)

The Jury is composed of **Miranda De Thorpe Engler, Anton Jakob, Hossain Jan Noori, Matteo Renda, Lucien Tripet** and **Yuna Vifian**.

My Name is Happy by Ayşe Toprak & Nick Read

This film stirred up great emotions with its strong, universal and essential message: the fight against violence towards women. Its images and its story moved us. The structure of the film, which alternates between shots of very different types but remarkably well edited, allows us to experience, as closely as possible, the incredible twists and turns that this family experiences.





Beyond the Wall de Vahid Jalilvand

Fiction Competition

Fiction Grand Award

Grant of CHF 10'000, offered by the H el ene and Victor Barbour Foundation, awarded by the International Jury, composed of **Jean-Pierre Greff, Kaltrina Krasniqi, Thierry Oppikofer** and **Toni Kamau**.

Beyond the Wall by Vahid Jalilvand

The virtuosity of the editing of the shots and sequences, articulating different spaces and time-frames, imaginary or real, heightens the message of the film, which combines a powerful protest against the arbitrary violence of a tyrannical regime and the exaltation of human dignity. The jury salutes the refinement and efficiency of the direction, the subtlety and audacity of the director's aesthetic choices and the flawless acting. A true cinematic masterpiece.



Youth Jury Prize - Fiction

Grant of CHF 1'000, offered by the Eduki Fondation. Jury, composed of **Diego Delgado, Lo isia Hernandez, Ca ique Interlandi, Antoine Miermon, Em elie Van Engen** et **Milena Watzlawick**.

A Room of My Own by Ioseb «Soso» Bliadze

The honest and remarkable performances of the two main actresses as well as its mise-en-sc ene in close proximity to the protagonists have succeeded in immersing us in this intimate and true story. In our opinion, the film's message of emancipation is particularly resonant in this era of «wokism». This film is another reminder that through reflection and enlightenment it is possible to escape from conservative traditions and societies. The film offers a perfectly controlled mix of credibility and humour.

Focus Competition

Prize of the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT)

Grant of CHF 5'000, awarded by the OMCT Jury, awarded to a filmmaker, whose film demonstrates a commitment to human rights, to support the writing of his/her next film.

Etilaat Roz by Abbas Rezaie

This documentary shows the bravery of journalists confronting the Taliban. It reminds us that every day, men and women are fighting for human rights in Afghanistan. We must not forget them.





My Name is Happy, Ayşe Toprak et Nick Read

Impact Days Competition

Storyboard Impact Award

Grant of CHF 10,000, offered by the StoryBoard Collective's Impact Fund. Aims to build impact media production capabilities through strategic partnerships and direct grants.

My Name is Happy by Ayşe Toprak & Nick Read

The inspirational story of young singing sensation Mutlu Kaya as she makes a remarkable journey from gunshot victim in an attempted femicide to fearless survivor. As she struggles to regain her voice, she campaigns for women's rights in Turkey and further afield.

Docs Up Fund Award

Grant of €1,500, to support an impact campaign and provide consulting services for the entire editing phase of the film.

Scarlet Girls by Paula Cury

A lyrical documentary in which women of all ages speak about the challenges and consequences of illegal abortion in the Dominican Republic.

Sublimages Impact Award

Translation and subtitling of a film from the selection, offered by Sublimages, in order to reach a target audience identified in its impact strategy.

Land of Women by Aymar El Amir & Nada Riyadh

The film follows a group of energetic and humorous young Coptic women who rebel against their society's norms by forming an all-female street theatre troupe.

Cultural Action Section

Artopie Award

The Artopie Jury, composed of young adolescents from different units of the HUG

Je suis Noires by Juliana Fanjul & Rachel M'Bon

We award the Artopie prize to the film Je suis Noires, because it champions a current and intergenerational theme that is known to all but not sufficiently discussed, especially in Geneva and within Switzerland.

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