

2010 *Alaska*

INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 15, 2010

Alaska International Film Festival Announces 2010 Winners

Blindlings and *Ori* triumph with Jury Awards, *Héen Táak (Bottom of the Water)* wins Best of Alaska

The Alaska International Film Festival proudly premieres its selections juxtaposing local and foreign talent. Selections include films by Alaskan filmmakers and documentaries narrating rich Alaskan history and showcasing breathtaking Alaskan vistas. Among such commendations are documentaries like *Héen Táak (Bottom of the Water)*, *We Live by the River*, and *Generations*, which highlight the importance of environmental education and natural preservation.

Powerful foreign narratives also enrich this year's selections, displaying imaginative storytelling, provoking thought and evoking deep emotion. Noteworthy are *Blindlings* and *Ori*, which garnered highest jury acclaims for alluring cinematography, avant-garde direction, and moving scripts.

Screenwriting competition winners also deliver impressive work crafting tales of dark games, hopeful dreams, and tragic love, which are supported by memorable characters and strong story development as seen in Steven Doxey and Brandon Pearson's "In the Belly of the Whale," Jeff Trently & Anthony Stitt's "Chances," and Dennis Cohen's "Caroline and Johann: A Love Story."

The Alaska International Film Festival congratulates and thanks all its winners for translating their passions and demonstrating superior skill in producing their outstanding, quality work.

Best of category film synopses and other honors are listed below:

The honor of the **Grand Jury Award** was given to *Blindlings* directed by Wolfgang Weigl (Germany). A narrative feature in poetic images, *Blindlings* tells a tale of broken trust and the false prejudices that arise when love is lost.

The honor of the **Special Jury Prize** was given to *Ori* directed by Gorka Gómez Andreu (Spain). Nino crosses a vast waste ground in the outskirts of Tbilisi. The young Georgian woman tries to push her life forward, but it is not easy. In the remote mountains of the Caucasus, solitary Beqa is visited by his nephew Tazo, a refugee from the Russian bombings. When the echoes of the war still persist, both lives are crossed by this bittersweet story of silences and cigarettes.

The honor of **Best Narrative Feature** was given to *The River Why* directed by Matthew Leutwyler (USA). Based on the novel of the same title, this coming-of-age story is about Gus Orviston, who leaves his eccentric parents in the city for what he thinks is fly-fishing bliss along the banks of a wild river. It quickly turns into a journey of self-discovery and the meaning of life. Most of all, it is a

love story: the love of a man for the wilderness and for the beautiful woman who comes to share it with him.

The honor of **Best Documentary Feature** was given to *Mount St. Elias* directed by Gerald Salmina (Austria). Mount St Elias is a dramatic and awe-inspiring feature documentary following three of the world's greatest ski mountaineers to Alaska's Mount St. Elias in their attempt to realize the longest ski descent of the world.

The honor of **Best Director** was given to JorDan Fuller for *My Father's Son* (USA). After an American father picks up the son he had never met from a Mexican orphanage, they head for the States by car. When they get stranded in the desert overnight will their estrangement and inability to speak each other's language keep them from getting out and having a future together?

The honor of **Best Actor** was given to Zach Gilford in *The River Why* directed by Matthew Leutwyler (USA). Gilford gives an outstanding performance playing protagonist Gus Orviston in this coming-of-age story about discovering love in his connection with nature and his relationship with a beautiful woman.

The honor of **Best Actress** was given to Hallee Hirsh for *16 to Life* directed by Becky Smith (USA). Hirsh gives a great performance portraying Kate, a rural American teenager whose angst about sexual inexperience drives a comic quest for love and understanding on a birthday to end all birthdays. Kate's irreverent fantasies of sexual awakening and guilt, fueled by obsessive reading of books on bizarre subjects (currently the Chinese Cultural Revolution) drive this explosive day. Kate is turning 16 and has never been kissed! Before the clock strikes midnight, Kate will learn more about love than most 16-year-olds could imagine. And Kate will learn what a 16-year-old American girl has in common with a 16-year-old Chinese girl half a world, and a cultural revolution, away.

The honor of **Best Narrative Short** was given to *Lights* directed by Giulio Ricciarelli (Germany). *Lights* is a tragicomic story of a small-town police officer who dreams of being a hero. As his peaceful village offers no opportunity for heroism, he decides to take matters into his own hands. He puts up a traffic light on a rarely-used bridge in the middle of nowhere — and the fight begins.

The honor of **Best Documentary Short** was given to *Alaska King Salmon on a Fly* directed by David Ondaatje (USA). A father-son story. Written and narrated by a 12-year old boy on a trip of a lifetime with his father.

The honor of **Best Foreign Film** was given to *Zorion Perfektua* directed by Jabi Elortegi (Spain). Ainhua, a woman of about thirty-five, shocked by the news she has just read in the paper, is run over in a street in central Barcelona. After awakening from a coma caused by the accident, and when things appear to finally come to a happy ending, she becomes aware that one of her hands is seriously impaired, which would totally thwart everything she has fought for, a successful career as a pianist.

The honor of **Best Experimental Film** was given to *Das möblierte Zimmer (The Furnished Room)* directed by Nina Jäckle (Germany). Two people meet. They come closer. They walk and walk while they exchange thoughts; they arrive at his house, an empty villa in which only the bedroom is furnished. Here, he asks an unusual favor. Distant and unemotional, the camera follows the encounter from a perspective that allows the viewer to feel close, but not involved. *The Furnished Room* is characterized by its prosaic dialogue, language as an art form, as austere as its imagery.

The honor of **Best Student Feature** was given to *Entertainer's Last Stand* directed by Carlos Pagan (USA). *Entertainer's Last Stand* consists of two different stories. The first one is told backwards and is about an amateur stand up comedian named Jordan. The second is about two musicians that get caught up in the mob. Midway through the stories both Jordan and the musicians come across Walter, who unknowingly connects everyone's paths so that in the end they solve each other's problems.

The honor of **Best Student Short** was given to *The Architect* directed by Joshua Demers (Canada). An aspiring architect struggles to prove to his wife and work that he can still see after suffering a workplace accident.

The honor of **Best Music Video** was given to *The Moving Town* directed by Alberto Nacci (Italy). A picture for images, music and concrete sounds. The International Airport of Orio al Serio (Bergamo - Italy) is like a... moving town in which passengers co-exist with space and time in the rare knowledge of living an in-between moment connecting the present and the future! Sound represents the element that was used to create this piece. Sounds, produced by aircrafts, machinery for transporting luggage, other vehicles in the airport, or the mobile phones of passengers waiting for their flights... become the engine of a music composed by Alberto Nacci using the same tones and rhythms.

The honor of **Best Animation** was given to *Henhouse* directed by Elena Pomares (UK). A hungry fox finds shelter from the city and the rain in the Hen House Café.

The honor of **Best of Alaska Award** was given to *Héen Táak (Bottom of the Water)* directed by Nathalie Lasselin (Canada). *Héen Táak* explores the wilderness of the inside passage in Alaska. A voyage from the tip of the glacier to the bottom of the ocean with men and women who live a privileged relation with water.

Kodiak Awards

Generations by Teton Gravity Research
Yellow Cake directed by Joachim Tschirner
Beijing Punk directed by Shaun Jefford
The Antarctica Challenge: A Global Warning directed by Mark Terry
Africa's Lost Eden directed by James Byrne
Snow and Ashes directed by Charles-Olivier Michaud
L'appello directed by Emilio Briguglio & Federico Rozas
Island of the Gondoliers directed by Guido Muzzarelli
Elf Sparkle Meets Christmas The Horse directed by Beth Roose and Emily Sien
Anne Jennings directed by Hitoshi Yoshikawa

Denali Awards

We Live by the River directed by Karin Williams
At Home By Myself... With You directed by Kris Booth
Chrysalis directed by Mariana Magnavita
The Legend of Buffalo Calf Girl directed by Roger Slagle
A Long-distance Call directed by Joe Chang
But Some Are Brave directed by Grace Channer
Michael Jackson Shining directed by Trevor Parham
Plan directed by Slawomir Pstrong & Aleksander Kulakowska
Bruja directed by Andres Peyrot
Breadwinner directed by Cornelius Murphy

Northern Lights Emerging Talent Awards

Dog Gone Addiction - Inspired by the Women of the Yukon Quest directed by Becky Bristow

Beautiful Islands directed by Tomoko Kana

Water and a City directed by Swati Dandekar

State of Aloha directed by Anne Misawa

RE: Session by Teton Gravity Research

Medium Raw: Night of the Wolf directed by Andrew Cymek

Skylight directed by David Baas

Careful What You Wish For directed by Tim Vogel

El Hecho Imposible directed by Sven Heinrich

We Are All Here directed by Yonghwa Choi

The Alaska International Film Festival also recognizes its top winners and finalists in the 2010 screenplay competition:

First Place Screenplay was given to "In the Belly of the Whale" by Steven Doxey & Brandon Pearson.

Second Place Screenplay was given to "Chances" by Jeff Trently & Anthony Stitt.

Third Place Screenplay was given to "Caroline and Johann: A Love Story" by Dennis Cohen.

The **Kodiak Award** for screenwriting was given to "Heart of Alaska, Part 1 and 2" by John Michael Sudol and Robert Charles Leshner.

The **Denali Award** for screenwriting was given to "Up River" by Roger Slagle.

The **Northern Lights Emerging Talent Award** for screenwriting was given to "Sun Breaks" by Yarrow Vincent-Wayman.

Official Finalists

"Erasure" by Michael Grebb

"Lucid Dreams of Wickedness" by Paul Dupree

"Carla" by Christoph Schinko

"The Road to Atonement" by John F. Maffucci

"Picture Man" by Broderick Fox

"Anemia" by Bobby Floyd

"The Katmai Tragedy" by Tara Erin Blake

"Soiled Doves" by Mark Esslinger

"Towing" by Cari Callis

"There Are No Superheros" by Benjamin Bates

"Kennedy's Children" by Patricia Edmisten

"Greenhorn" by Matthew Bombeck and Brandon Robinson

"Pink Ladder" by Mona Nahm

"The Kidnap Wish" by Teague Kennedy

"The Ace of Aces" by Geoffrey Breuder

###