



Statement of the International Jury: Special Mention, Rainer Werner Fassbinder Award and International Newcomer Award

We would like to thank Festival Director Dr. Sascha Keilholz, and Head of Programme Frédéric Jaeger, along with the entire festival team, for their fierce programming and welcoming, generous hospitality. We greatly appreciated the festival program's poetry, which we felt deeply in our emotional journey as audience.

For the Rainer Werner Fassbinder Award for Best Screenplay, we'd like to first give a Special Mention. This film succeeds when it explores the absence of the written word. Like the *dorayaki* consumed in the film, this cinematic *tanka* sustains and fulfills us. We celebrate the blank pages of the script.

This Special Mention goes to ›Haruhara-san's Recorder‹, written and directed by Kyoshi Sugita.

The Best Screenplay Award goes to a film that paints a vivid and authentic portrait of a young woman trying to live the seductive, instagrammable life while camouflaging the existential angst underneath. We were struck by the in-situ script development; the playful way the writers deal with global precarity; the punitive response to revealing human emotions, and the cat-and-mouse games of job interviews and client services where one is obliged to constantly perform.

The Rainer Werner Fassbinder Award for Best Screenplay goes to ›Zero Fucks Given‹, written and directed by Julie Lecoustre and Emmanuel Marre.

For the final award, our choice recognizes an expanded notion of the word "newcomer", unrestricted by time as well as the language of cinema. This film struck us through its uniqueness of voice, the sensations and contours of exploration, and its seductive cinematic meditateness - a visual exploration, a thriller of sensations that are physical and emotional.

The film goes deep beneath the surface to illuminate the darkness surrounding the passage of time.



In support of the artistic intent of pure cinema, the International Newcomer Award goes to ›Il Buco‹, directed by Michelangelo Frammartino.

FIPRESCI Award

THE SLEEPING NEGRO

Alternately a visual essay and a chamber drama, Skinner Myers' debut feature ›The Sleeping Negro‹ interweaves a young African American man's rage against the system and his troubled psyche with political analysis. It juxtaposes archival images of the past and moments of surrealism in the present, all while unflinchingly problematizing issues of eurocentrism, colonialism, racism, and identity politics. With a unique film language, it is forthright, elegant, and deeply humane at the same time.

Ecumenical Award

MY NIGHT

The affirmation of one's own life begins with saying no to the most diverse offers of an externally determined life. The path that the protagonist Marion takes on the birthday of her sister Alice, who died five years prior, leads right into the dark. It is the darkness of her own grief that challenges her to take a different look at life, a look that does not allow itself any distraction from seductive illusions, for example from a casting offer or her peer group. The breakthrough to a new beginning, however, also requires a leap of faith – in this case towards a coincidental companion who shows himself to be a soulmate. At the same time, this means allowing closeness and taking the risk of life. All of this breaks through in a leap into the Seine, which seems like an intimate baptismal experience that allows lightness and makes room for new beginnings. From the acceptance of one's own vulnerability, one finally reaches for the blue of the sky, thus crossing the boundaries of transience and overcoming grief. Antoinette Boulat



has succeeded in creating a magical cinematic moment with ›My Night‹, magnificently performed by an outstanding Lou Lampros.

Award of the Student Jury

THE FIRST FALLEN

›The First Fallen‹ not only fascinates us with its unconventional structure and departure from classic dramaturgy, but also holds fast to the audience's attention with its poignant and sensitive portrayal of the characters at every moment. The film illuminates a significant part of LGBTQ history from a perspective rarely seen before, in which the protagonists are not defined by their illness but defy it to shape their lives and remain true to themselves. The story's tragedy, focusing on the first victims of the AIDS epidemic in Brazil, is authentically emphasized through a documentary style, which does not detract from the ultimately hopeful perspective in the final scene.