



The Jury Statements of the 69th IFFMH

International Jury

Members of the jury: Jessica Kiang, Jan Bonny, Mathilde Henrot

International Newcomer Award (€25,000)

MY MEXICAN BRETZEL

Director: Nuria Giménez Lorang

Country: Spain

Statement of the jury: "It is our pleasure to award the festival's highest honour to a film that came to us all, watching separately in our living rooms, as a lovely, communal surprise. Right from the disorientingly silent opening, there is a quietly spectacular ingenuity to the way sound is deployed against image, fact against fiction and text against a complete absence of dialogue. Such an experiment could easily end up a cold, intellectual exercise but this magical movie is also miraculously accessible: it's as moving and melancholy as it is mischievous. This year's ON THE RISE competition was very impressive, but nothing had as much fun and delivered as much joy in interrogating just what a film can be, and can do, as this hugely eccentric, entertaining debut that tricks you without cheating you, dazzles you without showing off, and lies to you so that, in every way that matters, it's absolutely truthful. The jury's unanimous choice for the International Newcomer Award worth €25,000 is MY MEXICAN BRETZEL directed by Nuria Giménez Lorang."

Rainer Werner Fassbinder Award (€10,000)

SINGLE CYCLE (Original title: YÈ YÍ Jǐ YÈ)

Director: Zhang Qi

Country: China

Statement of the jury: "Knowing what to reveal and what to withhold is a skill most writers take time to learn. But this beautiful, haunting and strange first film from China strikes that balance perfectly. Although it boasts superb sound design and photography full of ghostly clues that flutter around the edge of consciousness,



the film's cool, clever curiosity was first formed on the page. And so we're delighted to give the Rainer Werner Fassbinder Award for Screenwriting endowed with €10,000 to writer-director Zhang Qi for SINGLE CYCLE, a wonderful mystery that is all the more satisfying for being impossible to solve."

Special Mention of the International Jury

COME CLOSER (Original title: DER SIEBZEHNTE)

Directors: Saskia Walker & Ralf Walker

Country: Germany

Statement of the jury: "All of the films we've chosen to recognise display an unusual level of bravery. But filmmaking bravery can take lots of different forms, and possibly none of the films in this very strong section risked quite as much as this one. There's a reckless intimacy to this story of a couple, played by the directors themselves, exploring and exploding the boundaries of their relationship in sometimes witty, often messy, but always frank and honest ways. The international jury gives a Special Mention for creative fearlessness to COME CLOSER, directed by Saskia and Ralf Walker."

Special Mention of the International Jury

BEGINNING (Original title: DASATSKISI)

Director: Dea Kulumbegashvili

Countries: Georgia, France

Statement of the jury: "The films in the ON THE RISE section are all from emerging directors, but it is still hard to believe that this provocative, profoundly disturbing drama from Georgia could possibly be a debut. There is a precision and a formal confidence that would be remarkable in a seventh film, let alone a first, especially considering this exquisite craft is applied to such a devastating and discomfiting story. As a way to celebrate the arrival of a major new talent, the international jury gives a Special Mention for uncompromising vision to director Dea Kulumbegashvili for BEGINNING."



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FIPRESCI Jury

Members of the jury: Dr. Christina Stojanova, Schayan Riaz, Ernesto Diezmartínez

FIPRESCI Award

MY MEXICAN BRETZEL

Director: Nuria Giménez Lorang

Country: Spain

Statement of the jury: "This year at the International Film Festival Mannheim-Heidelberg we saw a great selection of films that were representative, very well-balanced and showed a lot of promise. It was a difficult decision to choose a winner out of these films. In the end, we chose a title that playfully questions the notion of what is real, what is fake, and what it means to construct a story. We were impressed by the artistry, the cinematic craft unique to the found footage genre, and in making the viewer privy to the intimate life of characters in the 40s and 50s through home movies. Reinforced by the subjective stream of consciousness, the film forcefully confronts us with questions endemic to our times. The FIPRESCI prize 2020 at the International Film Festival Mannheim-Heidelberg goes to MY MEXICAN BRETZEL by Nuria Giménez Lorang."

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Ecumenical Jury

Members of the jury: Gergely Hajnal, Michael Kranzusch, Uta Losem, Mina Radovic, Rianne Wijmenga-van Dijk

Ecumenical Award (€2,500)

UNA PROMESSA (Original title: SPACCAPIETRE)

Directors: Gianluca De Serio & Massimiliano De Serio

Countries: Italy, France, Belgium



Statement of the jury: "The film tells the story of a widowed father and son forced to work as illegal farm laborers in southern Italy. Framed by a scene of familial warmth and tenderness and told through an intensely personal aesthetic, UNA PROMESSA shows the deeper significance of love in a world of poverty, humiliation, and death. The film leaves us with a strong statement on human dignity and the need for breaking the circle of exploitation and violence. A sign of hope remains with the boy who can begin something new."

Special Mention of the Ecumenical Jury

THE SLAUGHTERHOUSE (Original title: KOSHTARGAH)

Director: Abbas Amini

Country: Iran

Statement of the jury: "THE SLAUGHTERHOUSE follows the fate of three men who cover up the traces of corpses they discover in the company meat freezer. Shot as a crime film with a stark visual palette, the film places an internal moral crisis at the heart of the narrative rather than representing a more straightforward external conflict with the authorities. The film asks us, how can we be human in inhumane circumstances and in that sense bears a universal message that echoes well beyond the borders of Iran."

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Student Jury

Members of the jury: Sabrina Mertens, Nico Hagel, Ruth Lang Fuentes

Award of the Student Jury (€5,000)

LORELEI

Director: Sabrina Doyle

Country: United States of America

Statement of the jury: "In her debut, the director and screenwriter crafts a compelling film through expressive images, a multi-layered plot and a strong portrayal of social problems with great attention to detail. The combination of social criticism and love story is



underlined by a humorous and emotional touch. The whole cast impresses with strong performances, from which we would like to particularly highlight those of the three young newcomers.

In the true-to-life and diverse sequences, which depict the struggle of the newly founded family against the hopelessness and challenges of everyday life, we experience well-written scenes that allow us to immerse ourselves in the conflicts and inner lives of the characters.

The set design is convincing throughout and the various, carefully chosen settings are fascinating to explore. The director uses the possibilities of the medium of film to combine fantastic and realistic (image) worlds in an inspiring way. The essential story is enriched and intensified by casual observations, such as the little boy's preference for girls' clothes. All in all, the film is an impressive debut that offers a wealth of discovery.

The Student Jury Prize of the 69th International Filmfestival Mannheim-Heidelberg, endowed with €5,000, goes to the film LORELEI by Sabrina Doyle."

Special Mention of the Student Jury

SHITHOUSE

Director: Cooper Raiff

Country: United States of America

Statement of the jury: "We would like to award a special film with a Special Mention, as it was met with enthusiasm by the Student Jury. The movie made an impression through its direct and authentic dialogues, and its skilful and deliberate play with the conventions of its genre. SHITHOUSE is a very honest and humane film with great ideas, strong acting and an endearing humour that does not ridicule, as often happens in other films of the same genre. The fact that Cooper Raiff, who is only 23 years old, was simultaneously the scriptwriter, director, producer and leading actor is highly remarkable.

Our Special Mention goes to the film SHITHOUSE."



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