

Press release | Award winners and festival closing | 13 November 2022

26th Internationale Kurzfilmtage Winterthur: Arrival in a New Reality

From animations to documentaries made in Switzerland, the Andean nations, and Israel, but also from the US, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Mongolia: over the past six days, the 26th edition of Internationale Kurzfilmtage Winterthur showcased the broad range of current international short filmmaking. Thanks to the festival's move to Sulzerareal, all film programmes were screened in fully equipped cinemas for the first time. The Grand Prize of the International Competition goes to Douwe Dijkstra's documentary «Neighbour Abdi» from the Netherlands; Jorge Cadena's fictional short «Flores del otro patio» wins the Swiss Competition. The ZKB Audience Award goes to the Russian filmmakers Maxim Arbugaev and Evgenia Arbugaeva for «Haulout» (United Kingdom 2022), a documentary about an annual natural event on a remote coast of the Siberian Arctic. The festival counted approximately 17 000 admissions.

Social turmoil and identity politics

This year's Focus and competition programmes offered short glimpses of foreign realities and extremely diverse perspectives on current crises and upheavals. The approaches could hardly be more different: from documentaries and experimental works to hopeful and humorous approaches to self-empowerment. Issues surrounding Russia's war of aggression in Europe, climate change, and identity politics were equally noticeable at the Industry Events, where international film professionals – including Ukrainians and Russians – gathered, as they were in the Focus and competition programmes: In the award-winning «Neighbour Abdi» (Netherlands 2022), Abdi from Somalia reenacts his life with the help of filmmaker Douwe in an attempt to understand his past full of war and crime. Another award winner, the documentary «45th Parallel» (United Kingdom 2022), presents a monologue about the borders of nations and jurisdictions and the limits of freedom. The Best Swiss film, «Flores del otro patio» by Jorge Cadena, concerns a queer activist group and their performative protest against the exploitation in Colombia's largest coal mine. A total of 13 films received awards and special mentions.

Click [here](#) for the detailed jury statements and a list of all award winners.

Highlights and audience favourites

The complex and socially relevant themes, which are part of Kurzfilmtage's DNA, also resonated with audiences. The shorts programme by Person in Focus: Kurdwin Ayub; the political programmes Free Your Mind, Free Your Body and Stories of the Uncanny from the Main Focus: Los Estados Andinos; and Mother/Daughter and Borderline from the Country in Focus: Israel were among the most sought-after screenings. Several competition programmes also sold over 95% of seats. And due to high demand, the programme Death by Sports had to be moved to the largest auditorium, blue Cinema Maxx 1, which also hosted the festival's opening night, among

others. «After two Covid years and many cinema closures, it was an incredibly satisfying feeling to moderate the opening programme of this year's Kurzfilmtage in a cinema filled to capacity», says Stefan Dobler, Managing Director of Kurzfilmtage.

The Master Class with Kurdwin Ayub was another undisputed highlight of this year's edition. Ayub's career from her first steps to her recent feature «Sonne» (Austria 2022), which just won the Vienna Film Award, demonstrates her love for experiments as well as her penchant for self-mockery. Ayub emphasized that she did not claim to speak for all Kurds or all Muslims. Rather, she is currently preoccupied with how to reconcile filmmaking with care work – which was also a big theme at this year's Industry Lab. The Master Class and the following shorts programme allowed audiences to trace the themes and companions that have influenced Ayub's first feature film, which was also screened at Kurzfilmtage for once.

Successful innovations of the 26th edition

With 17 000 admissions and over 600 industry guests, the festival team is very happy with the first edition at Sulzerareal. As John Canciani, Artistic Director of Kurzfilmtage, states: «It was a cinematic fireworks display. Especially filmmakers who have been visiting the festival for some time were thankful and excited that we are finally able to show all films in cinemas equipped with appropriate sound systems». And if it wasn't obvious before, the stroll around Sulzerareal with the Hamburg-based collective A Wall is a Screen on Friday made it clear that Kurzfilmtage and the old industrial site are a perfect match. In sum, «it feels like a completely new and very cool festival», says John Canciani.

The 27th Internationale Kurzfilmtage Winterthur will take place from 7 to 12 November 2023.

Information for media professionals

Login to view films: available by request from media@kurzfilmtage.ch

Film stills and images

Portraits and film stills of the award winners and impressions from the 26th festival edition are available on Flickr.

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