

Jury Statements | 10 November 2024

Awards of the International Competition

Jury of the International Competition

Elene Naveriani (CH), Filmmaker

Vytautas Katkus (LTU), Cinematographer & Director

Claudia Slanar (AUT), Manager, Diagonale – Festival of Austrian Film

Nina Rodriguez (MX), Head of Programming, Guanajuato International Film Festival

Gabriela Bussmann (CH), Producer and Head of GoldenEggProduction

Grand Prize of the International Competition

«Genealogy of Violence» (France 2024) by Mohamed Bourouissa

CHF 12 000.–, donated by Internationale Kurzfilmtage Winterthur

This film begins as an ordinary boy-meets-girl tale that suddenly turns into another story: one about racial profiling, police arbitrariness, and the daily threat and potential violence that people of colour face. But then we follow a stunning journey through abstract worlds that gives the first-person narrator strength. We were impressed by the seamless blending of digital animation with live action, which vividly shows how the body becomes tense, yet still resists. As socio-political realities unfold, the film's form also skillfully conveys a possibility for agency – especially through the activation of imagination.

Promotional Award of the International Competition

«Dreams like Paper Boats» (Haiti 2024) by Samuel Suffren

CHF 10 000.–, donated by the City of Winterthur

In striking black-and-white images, this film tells the story of a separation and the painful absence of a partner, a lover, a parent. We see a man and father navigating this absence during his daily tasks. The only connection to his wife, who left their homeland in search of a better life in the US, are cassette tapes that partially tell of the horrors of the journey and, at other times, lull their little daughter to sleep. The film tells this story without providing much explanation, conveying all the pain in small gestures and brief sentences. Courageous storytelling of a man trying to retain agency over his life in the aftermath of colonialism and capitalist upheavals.

Prix George for the Best Documentary Form in the International Competition

«Maman Danse» (Switzerland 2024) by Mégane Brügger

CHF 10 000.–, donated by the Volkart Foundation

This film guides us through a quiet, powerful journey of healing, where a daughter accompanies her mother in facing the violence and traumas of the past. It delicately unveils the search for a space where reconciliation can exist, where memory weaves a new bond. In this painful and empowering process, the past lingers, making room for what is meant to endure. This testimony is both urgent and important, capturing a profound and timely story. An extraordinary achievement.

Candidacy for the European Film Awards (EFA)

«City of Poets» (Netherlands 2024) by Sara Rajaei

Using both narrative and archival material, the filmmaker succeeds in creating a poetic reflection on what happens when the arts give way to violence and prohibitions dominate the lives of women.

Special Mention, International Competition

«Burnt Milk» (USA 2023) by Joseph Douglas Elmhirst

A tale of a woman drifting between worlds, bearing the quiet ache of home. In haunting images from the past and tender voices, we are drawn into the life of a Jamaican midwife in the UK, her solitude softened by the sweetness of a milk dessert – a distant echo of another place. We give a special mention to this visual poem of resilience and belonging.

Awards of the Swiss Competition

Jury of the Swiss Competition

Luce Grosjean (FR), Co-founder & CEO, Miyu Distribution

Azin Feizabadi (DE), Filmmaker, Visual Artist, Film Programmer

Morgane Frund (CH), Filmmaker

Award for the Best Swiss Film

«2mm» (Switzerland 2024) by Mona Jelić

CHF 10 000.–, donated by SUISSIMAGE and SSA

Artists put themselves at risk, shedding light on one of Europe's lesser-known, yet pressing political battlegrounds. Set in a rural Serbian community, this experimental documentary collects testimonies from residents and environmental activists as they resist their government's attempts to sell land for massive lithium mining in the Jadar Valley region. An equally informative and poetic short film that exemplifies how art and politics can unite to offer a humanistic perspective on our conflictual present. A concise, visually engaging, and well-executed work.

Special Mentions, Swiss Competition

«Cottage Cheese» (Switzerland 2024) by Liina Luomajoki, Janina Müller, Lena Metzger and Alice Kunz

We wanted to highlight «Cottage Cheese» by Liina Luomajoki, Janina Müller, Lena Metzger and Alice Kunz for the unique experience it gave us, blending hilarious moments with yucky feelings. In a time when gender and women's rights seem increasingly insecure, the film powerfully projects onto the screen what we often feel in our own bodies. This representation is itself a form of victory, a defiant presence in the face of mounting threats to fundamental rights.

«Heroine - Necessary Objects» (Switzerland 2024) by Liza T. Raheem

With a simple yet powerful setup and cinematic form, the director skillfully guides us through the stages of grief, using objects that evoke deep empathy and immerse us in this profound journey. For achieving this with such impact, we would like to give a special mention to «Heroine – Necessary Objects» by Liza T. Raheem.

ZKB Audience Award

«The Man Who Could Not Remain Silent» (Bulgaria, Slovenia, France, Croatia 2024) by Nebojša Slijepčević
CHF 10 000.–, donated by Zürcher Kantonalbank

Swiss Film School Day

The jury of the Swiss Competition gives feedback to the students and selects the winner of the Award for the Best Swiss School Film.

Award for the Best Swiss School Film

« L'erbaccia» (Switzerland 2024) by Anna Simonetti
CHF 5000.–, donated by SRG SSR

Escaping the constraints of the role that was assigned to you to find sisterhood beyond cages and categories. With very few words, and a careful choice of sounds and framing, this filmmaker creates a haptic experience for the viewer. A sensitive tale about unzipping your uncomfortable dress, getting mud on your knees, and going under the fence.

Special Mention I, Swiss Film School Day

«1:10» (Switzerland 2024) by Sinan Taner

Ambitious and intelligent, the film explores themes of racism, classism, and masculinity within the microcosm of a school. The film intertwines societal critiques with personal narratives, crafting a story that mirrors both synaptic connections and structural dynamics. By portraying violence subtly and with a thoughtful approach to cause and effect, the director sheds light on how small actions resonate across a complex social fabric. We wanted to give a special mention to this incredible directorial work.

Awards for the Best Films in the Section Sparks

Sparks Jury

Rosanna Müller (19)

Leando Stinn (16)

Severin Kobelt (16)

Award for the Best Film in the Section Sparks

«Hello Stranger» (Canada 2024) by Amélie Hardy

CHF 2000.-, donated by Internationale Kurzfilmtage Winterthur

A story that a friend might tell us: the film shows a beautiful, emotional life, encouraging us to embark on our own self-healing journey. This film will definitely shape our path.

Special Mention, Sparks

«Rumbles of the Earth» (Philippines 2024) by Carl Joseph Lara

The storyline of «Rumbles of the Earth» takes us on a wild ride, and that is precisely what makes this short film so fascinating. It is emotionally overwhelming thanks to great choices in mise-en-scene and visualization. It brilliantly ensures that this spectacle lingers in our minds. That's also what ultimately convinced the jury: the film is like our heads in the most tumultuous times.

Industry Awards

Jury of the Postproduction Award

Nina Cutkovic, Jingle Jungle Tonstudios

Christof Hächler, Internationale Kurzfilmtage Winterthur

Eva Schweizer, SRF Schweizer Radio und Fernsehen

Postproduction Award

«La cabane» by Maya Kosa and Sergio da Costa

CHF 10 000.-, in-kind prize, donated by Jingle Jungle Tonstudios

Hilly landscape, snow-covered forests, and – silence. A hiking group is traversing the Jura mountains. We follow them for a day to the Cabane du Rochefort, which serves as a retreat from the hustle and bustle of everyday life and civilization. Here, the focus is on simple living, being together, and nature.

This documentary project does not boast spectacular imagery of adrenaline-fuelled mountain sports, instead focusing on a more accessible form of immersion in nature. We are convinced that Maya Kosa and Sergio da Costa have a clear vision for their project «La cabane» – to share this simple beauty with us and bring us closer to our local nature as a place of longing. We are looking forward to the work of these two filmmakers, who have already made several films together.

P.AiR.S Project Development Residency 2025

«Cry My Way to Heaven» by Saleh Kashefi

The director examines the matrix of masculinity in the Iranian community he grew up in. By critically examining a highly charged topic, he puts himself at risk. His respectful and sensitive approach towards the archival footage and the protagonists – despite their controversial attitude – is outstanding.

We look forward to seeing how this brave personal project will develop in the seven weeks of residency and wish Saleh an inspiring and encouraging stay in Sigriswil.

Invitation to participate in the European Short Pitch 2025

«Memories of Beyond» by Alicia Mendy

The jury would like to reward an appealing and engaging project driven by strong personal intentions and authenticity, which are blended with eccentric and mystical atmospheres. How to offer a subtle look at a past era? How to overcome the emotional pain of a loss? How to use genre as a more realistic way of capturing feelings and the world that surrounds us?

The invitation to participate in the 2025 edition of European Short Pitch goes to «Memories of Beyond» by Alicia Mendy, produced by Rhea Plangg.