



# 2011 AMSTERDAM FILM FESTIVAL

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

June 7, 2011

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## 2011 AMSTERDAM FILM FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES VAN GOGH AWARDS

*The Secret Friend, Der Sandmann, Wish, and Happy*  
Earn Grand Jury Awards

It is with great pleasure that AFF announce at this time the award winners of the 2011 Amsterdam Film Festival Van Gogh Awards.

This has been another truly remarkable year for the Amsterdam Film Festival. The contest received several hundred submissions representing top storytellers from over 20 countries around the world. The quality of the work that we had the honor of reviewing was simply astounding. Judging from among this exceptionally high caliber of filmmaking talent proved to be extremely difficult as there were so many unique, well-made and worthy projects. After several months of careful consideration, we present to you the very best of the 2011 competition.

The **De grote Prijs van de Jury** was presented to *New Low* directed by Adam Bowers (USA). A neurotic twentysomething struggles to figure out which girl he really belongs with: the best or the worst one he's ever known.

The **Cinematic Vision Award** was presented to *The Greater Good* directed by Chris Pilaro & Kendall Nelson (USA). The Greater Good looks behind the fear, hype and politics that have polarized the vaccine debate in America today. The film re-frames the emotionally charged issue and offers, for the first time, the opportunity for a rational and scientific discussion on how to create a safer and more effective vaccine program.

The **Van Gogh Award** was presented to *Bert's Plan* directed by Yair Shvartz (USA). Bert is a struggling middle-aged writer attempting to get his book published. Downtrodden and plagued with rejection, Bert comes up with a plan. In a twist of hilariously dark, ironic and serendipitous events, Bert's original plan takes an unexpected turn.

The **Prodigy Auteur Prize** was presented to *Victim*, directed by Leon Rowe (USA). Victim is a psychological thriller about a man who is plagued by guilt, anger and vengeance struggling with a decision that will change his life forever.

The **Grand Jury Prize** was presented to *The Secret Friend* directed by Flavio Alves (Brazil). A phone call can be a lifeline. Empty days are given new hope, but when the calls abruptly end a devastated Anna is compelled to surprising action to fill the unbearable void.

The **Grand Jury Prize** was presented to *Der Sandmann* directed by Peter Luisi (Switzerland). One fine morning, Benno finds sand in his bed. While he tries to ignore this at first, he soon must realize that he himself is losing the sand. Day after day the sand increases and soon his time literally starts running short.

The **Grand Jury Prize** was presented to *Wish* directed by Kyle Milardo (USA). One boy makes a wish that will change lives of many.

The **Grand Jury Prize** was presented to *Happy* directed by Roko Belic (USA). Combining powerful interviews with the leading scientists in happiness research and real life stories of ordinary and extraordinary people around the world, HAPPY uncovers the secrets behind our most valued emotion.

The **Special Jury Prize, World Cinema Documentary** was presented to *Sharkwise* directed by Lieven Debrauwer (Belgium). The movie takes place in the beautiful settings of Egypt, Mozambique and South Africa, where Marc Sluszny and his team prepare for the ultimate journey. Marc will attempt to dive with the Great White shark outside of the cage.

The **Special Jury Prize, World Cinema Dramatic** was presented to *Sofia* directed by Shervin Kermani (Canada). In his final moments Joseph, an old reclusive painter, has a dream where he wanders through many of his memories. Over the course of a nostalgic odyssey, he encounters many images from his past including that of his late wife, professor, and a memory of his mother Sofia, a ballerina whose beautiful dancing becomes for the older man an image of redemption.

The **Special Jury Prize, World Cinema Short** was presented to *Return* directed by Cyd Chartier Cohn (USA). Fred Sondermann was fifteen when he and his parents narrowly escaped Nazi Germany just before the outbreak of WWII. Thirty years later, he is offered the opportunity to travel and teach in his native Germany. Though the American political science professor is afraid of what he will find, he is also strangely attracted to this place of horror.

The **Special Jury Prize, World Cinema Student** was presented to *Landlocked* directed by Jerry Melichar (USA). A well-loved Tulsa, Ok, high school teacher is forced to sell candy bars between class periods in order to stock her classroom with Marine Biology supplies. When accused of stealing from the fundraiser, an overwhelming tide of suspicion leads Martha to drastic measures in order to reclaim control of her classroom and her life.

The **Special Jury Prize, World Cinema Music Video** was presented to *Corrupted Scene Behind the Stage* directed by Ivan Mena Tinoco (Spain). Every one of us has a part that we don't share with anyone. The stage and the backstage as a metaphor of our personalities are reflected in this mysterious approach to the video.

The **Special Jury Prize, World Cinema Animation** was presented to *Los Estrandados* directed by Derek Evanick (USA). A hysterical comedy about two men stranded on island dealing with relationship issues.

The **Special Jury Prize, Dutch Documentary** was presented to *Mila's Journey* directed by Annie Perkins & Rinku Kalsy (Netherlands). Mila's Journey follows Mila & her decision to return to India after more than 30 years. The film juxtaposes modern images with the old 8mm footage & pays homage to romance, adventure, spirituality, freedom and female independence. The film shows one Dutch woman's attempt to answer the question 'what would happen if I went back?'

The **Special Jury Prize, Dutch Dramatic** was presented to *In Transit* directed by Kees-Jan Hussenman (Netherlands). A poetic documentary that takes place in a Dutch asylum center where refugees are waiting to hear if they will be allowed to enter the country or not. Sometimes for years people live in insecurity while somebody else decides about their future. In an observational and stylistic manner the film shows people fighting with time while thoughts of traumatic pasts haunt people in silent moments of waiting. We see a man from Somalia, a family from Angola and a family from Iraq, each waiting in their own way.

The **Special Jury Prize for Originality** was presented to *How It Ended* directed by Gabriel Nussbaum (USA). An older invites a younger friend lover to have a lovely dinner and participate in what is certain to be the darkest night in all three of their lives.

The **Special Jury Prize for Spirit of Independence** was presented to *Streets of Flamenco* directed by Marisa Lloreda Saez (USA). The story of internationally acclaimed flamenco dancer Maria Bermudez' inspiring personal journey that took her from East L.A., to living among the gypsies in the southern Spanish town of Jerez de la Frontera, the 'birthplace of flamenco'.

The **Special Jury Prize for Acting, World Cinema** was presented to *Spinster* directed by Pip Satchell (USA). Trying to stay out of trouble while doing community service, a recently paroled ex-con meets his match in a crazy old woman at a nursing home.

The **Special Jury Prize for Acting** was presented to *Sissy* directed by Bonnie Root (USA). Sissy's mother, Bernie, dumps her with a family friend, Charlie, a struggling magician down on his luck. To make ends meet, Charlie takes a job touring schools on Indian reservations and brings Sissy along for the ride. When he makes Sissy his personal assistant he begins to impose responsibilities upon her that are beyond the abilities of a fourteen year old. When Sissy fails to live up to his expectations, Charlie finds other ways to make Sissy useful to himself.

The **Jury Prize: Dutch Short Filmmaking** was presented to *Riding Bikes with the Dutch* directed by Michael Bauch (Netherlands). Riding Bikes with the Dutch is a fast-paced introduction to the bicycle-centered lifestyle in Holland. In comparison to our clogged freeways and parking lots here in the United States, the Dutch are miles ahead of us. Sit back and relax as this short film whips you right out of your lifeless car seat and into a pedal-powered symphony on two wheels.

The **Jury Prize: International Short Filmmaking** was presented to *Falling Apart* directed by Christopher Valori (USA). Have you even loved someone so much that losing them caused you to fall apart? When Audrey breaks up with Alex, he begins falling apart . . . literally. With limbs falling faster than tears, Alex must find Audrey before he falls apart completely.

**First Place Feature Screenplay** was awarded to *You're Sick* written by Donn Warr Lewis. On the outside, The Connells appear to be a 'normal' American family. On the inside, the raw sore of their family life rises to an ugly boil in the sweltering summer of '72 and explodes, erupting into a poisonous infection of primordial hatred,

**Second Place Feature Screenplay** was awarded to *Halfway Home* written by David Schroeder. Gabriel Matthews, a twenty-year old athlete/scholar recovering from a paralyzing injury, reluctantly takes a summer job as a live-in supervisor in a halfway house for the mentally retarded.

**Third Place Feature Screenplay** was awarded to *The Quarry* written by Adam Ford-Smith. The Quarry is a charming coming of age tale set during a blazing hot English summer. Its a tale of adventure and friendship.....and an alien invasion!

**First Place Short Screenplay** was awarded to *Push Bike* written by Tracey Walker. When a married woman's clothes are stolen from a local pool one night, she has no choice but to brave a nude bike ride home.

**Second Place Short Screenplay** was awarded to *Sunset Fire* written by A. Wayne Carter. In Hollywood it's not just the fires that are hot!

**Third Place Short Screenplay** was awarded to *Born as Ghosts* written by Mark Skinner. New London, Greenland, 2099. Shaped by humanity to rise or fall by their own swords, cites and people alike. Sergeant Demarcus Kane believed there was no way out of, or away from his

gangland origins, until, that is, he came face to face with Autumn Roy, a young woman who's abusive father he had shot and killed before joining the force

*AFF is also pleased to announce additional Van Gogh Award Winners listed below, arranged by competition category:*

Documentary Directing Award: Lift Up directed by Philip Knowlton & Huguens Jean (USA)  
Dramatic Directing Award: A Lost and Found Box of Human Sensation directed by Stefan Leuchtenberg & Martin Wallner (Germany)

World Cinema Directing Award: Ronan's Escape directed by A.J. Carter (Australia)  
World Cinema Directing Award: Unravelling directed by Kuldip Powar (United Kingdom)

Excellence in Cinematography Award: Out of the Darkness directed by Stefano Levi (Germany)  
Excellence in Cinematography Award: Hipolito directed by Teodoro Ciampagna (Argentina)  
Excellence in Cinematography Award: Vous Etes Servis directed by Jorge Leon (Indonesia)  
Excellence in Cinematography Award: The Big Uneasy directed by Harry Shearer (USA)

World Cinema Cinematography Award: Protect The Nation directed by C. R. Reisser (South Africa)

World Cinema Cinematography Award: Small Change directed by Cathy Brady (Ireland)  
World Cinema Cinematography Award: Beatboxing - The Fifth Element Of Hip Hop directed by Klaus Schneyder (USA)  
World Cinema Cinematography Award: The Girls in the Band directed by Judy Chaikin (USA)

Best Documentary Film Editing: I am Nancy directed by Arlene Marechal (USA)  
Best Dramatic Film Editing: Vicissitude directed by Will Jobe (USA)  
Best Feature Film Screenplay: Face to Face directed by Michael Rymer (Australia)  
Best Short Film Screenplay: IFAKAT directed by Orhan Tekeoglu (Turkey)

World Cinema Documentary Film Editing Award: May I Be Frank directed by Gregg Marks, Conor Gaffney, Ryland Engelhart & Cary Mosier (USA)  
World Cinema Dramatic Film Editing Award: Vento directed by Marcio Salem (Brazil)  
World Cinema Screenwriting Award, Feature Film: Behind the Eight Ball directed by Mike Graveline (Canada)  
World Cinema Screenwriting Award, Short Film: DILF directed by Geoff Edwards (USA)

World Cinema - Experimental Film: Extincion II: La Cuadratura De Los Círculos directed by Fernando Usón Forniés (Spain)  
World Cinema - Animated Film: Searching directed by Hyun Joo Cho (USA)  
World Cinema - Music Video: Stretch directed by Arturo Cubacub (USA)  
World Cinema - Student: Mezzanotte Obscura directed by Lori Petchers (USA)  
World Cinema - First Time Director: I'm Just Saying directed by Brian Douglas (USA)

Best Action Film: Slashimi directed by Anthony Powell (United Kingdom)  
Best Avant-Garde Film: Hallucination directed by Christian Jean (USA)  
Best Biography: Klondike's Calling directed by Paola Rosà & Antonio Senter (Italy)  
Best Children's Film: Little Gobie directed by Tony Tang (Hong Kong)  
Best Comedy: The Winking Boy directed by Marcus Dineen (Australia)  
Best Coming of Age Film: Een Kleine Duw directed by Philippe Verkinderen (Belgium)  
Best Crime Film: Una Calle Sin Salida directed by Robert Fernandez-Ferreira (USA)  
Best Drama: The Price of Sex directed by Mimi Chakarova (USA)  
Best Educational Film: Harvest of Loneliness directed by Adrian Salinas, Gilbert Gonzalez & Vivian Price (USA)  
Best Environmental Film: Liquid Amber directed by Maggi Payne (USA)

Best Fantasy Film: A Complex Villainelle directed by Nathan Billington, Rebecca Forth, Bart Ovaitt & Ryan Porter (USA)  
Best Horror Film: Message directed by Lee Yat Fung (Hong Kong)  
Best Human Rights Film: Children in Exile directed by Chris Swider (USA)  
Best Mockumentary: Frontman directed by Ben Hyland (United Kingdom)  
Best Musical: Mr. Foley directed by D.A.D.D.Y. (Ireland)  
Best Personal Narrative: Beautiful Enough directed by Claire Oakley (United Kingdom)  
Best Romance: I Love My Woman directed by Otis Kriegel (USA)  
Best Romantic Comedy: Sombras Nada Mas directed by Max Valverde (Costa Rica)  
Best Sci-Fi Film: Cockpit: The Rule of Engagement directed by Jesse Griffith (USA)  
Best Spiritual Film: The Time Machine directed by Mark Kendall (USA)  
Best Sports Film: One Revolution directed by Amanda Stoddard (USA)  
Best Student Film: Amanda directed by Michael Tanner Cusumano (USA)  
Best Urban Film: Storie Urgenti directed by Joseph Edward Rozzo (Italy)

### **Screenplay Official Finalists**

American Trash written by David Kornfield  
Beyond the Horizon written by George Ferris  
Borderline written by Joshua Paolino  
Courting Death written by Heather Silvio  
Cradle of the Stars written by Joey Kent  
En Route written by Philip Howe  
Neon Cactus written by Philip Sedgwick  
Poetease written by Jeffrey Morin  
The Kiarsidia written by Bruce Golde  
The Only Living Man with a Hole in His Head written by Todd Colby Pliss  
There is a Season written by Stuart Creque  
Too Fat to Fly written by Anthony Amenta

### **Screenplay Honorable Mentions**

180 Proof written by Adam Sumner  
A Mind of Glass written by Louise Dautheribes McKerl  
China Girls written by Gary Riester  
Drosselbart written by Effie Bathen  
Eaglet written by Eugene Gavrilenko  
Ghost Light written by Philip Marcoccio  
God's Architect written by Michael Mares  
Happiness in Pieces written by Krzysztof Rostek  
Hunting Paradise written by Craig Harwood  
Meet Jane Doe written by Jacqueline Gault  
Murder in the Lakelands written by Patrick Nash  
Pot Shop written by Judah Ray Neiditch  
The Parting Glass written by Philip Marcoccio  
T.W.I.N written by Malaika Langa  
Wrigly & King written by Cornelius Murphy

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