

MIFF 2020 SHORTS AWARDS WINNERS ANNOUNCED

The Melbourne International Film Festival (MIFF) last night announced the recipients of the 2020 MIFF Shorts Awards, which sees \$35,500 awarded to five short films featured in this year's digital festival – MIFF 68½. In a ceremony hosted by comedian and presenter Jo Stanley, this year's awards were judged by a jury consisting of acclaimed screen practitioners and MIFF Ambassadors: Aaron Pedersen, Chris Pang and Rachel Griffiths.

Winners of the 2020 MIFF Shorts Awards include Anthony Nti's *Da Yie* (Ghana/Belgium), Jon Bell's *The Moogai* (Australia), Eeva Mägi's *The Weight of All the Beauty* (Estonia), Élodie Dermange's *Inès* (France/Switzerland) and Nevena Desivojević's *Outside the Oranges Are Blooming* (Portugal/Serbia).

This year saw Australia's oldest and most prestigious film festival made available to audiences right around Australia for the very first time. The festival streamed 44 shorts, largely presented within five distinct bundles and provided to audiences for free: Australian Shorts, International Shorts, Documentary Shorts, Animation Shorts, and the MIFF Shorts Retrospective: Connections.

One of the most prominent short film competitions in the Southern Hemisphere, the MIFF Shorts Awards are Academy Awards® accredited, with the winners of the Best Short Film, Best Australian Short Film and Best Documentary Short Film awards eligible to submit their film for the 93rd Academy Awards® in 2021.

“As the world around us shifts, it is pertinent that every winner this year tells a unique story of social consciousness,” says Shorts Programmer Mia Falstein-Rush. “MIFF is so grateful that each of these storytellers has chosen to share their personal experiences with us, no matter how confronting or intimate.”

The Best MIFF Shorts package features the following winners of these awards, and is available captioned and audio-described at miff.com.au.

2020 MIFF SHORTS AWARD WINNERS:

City of Melbourne Grand Prix for Best Short Film

Da Yie (Ghana/Belgium)

Dir. Anthony Nti

Jury Statement:

“The jury was unanimous in awarding the City of Melbourne Grand Prix to Da Yie, directed by Anthony Nti. The film really struck a chord with us for its accomplished cinematic realisation and extraordinarily empathetic storytelling, as it explores the fragile innocence of children in communities vulnerable to exploitation. The film walks an emotional tightrope: in refusing to dehumanise its apparent antagonist, it asks us instead to face broader questions around our culpability in systems of inequality. It also emphatically affirms the unique privilege available to humans to choose the righteous path of collective responsibility.” – Rachel Griffiths

With a Jury Award for Best Performance awarded to **Matilda Enchil** from *Da Yie*.

Jury Statement:

“The jury was so moved by Da Yie that we chose to confer a special Jury Award to one of its incredible leads, the young Matilda Enchil, whose standout performance carried much of the film. It is extremely difficult to draw a rich and dynamic performance from a short-form work, but Matilda’s turn was outstanding and intrinsic to the strength of this powerful film. You just can’t take your eyes off her.

She inhabits her role so completely that the audience are with her every breath – on the edge of our seats, hoping desperately that misfortune and dark forces do not prevail. She is both wildly expressive on screen and stunningly contained, effortlessly making lightning turns from joy to unease to fear.

Matilda’s performance is movie-star-specific – both in gesture and in confident, fast-paced dialogue delivery – yet, somehow, she comes to embody the potential and vulnerabilities of all girls born into structural disadvantage across the globe. This ability to authentically portray the experiences of a single person as well as those of a collective is something an actor can spend a lifetime trying to master. We hope this award brings her to the attention of other filmmakers, should she wish to continue to pursue acting.” – Rachel Griffiths

Film Victoria Erwin Rado Award for Best Australian Short Film**The Moogai** (Australia)

Dir. Jon Bell

Jury Statement:

“The Moogai is more than just a genre film – it’s the truth. Director Jon Bell depicts the fear and the devastating impact on Indigenous families right across this nation. This film is only too real, as it’s the past, the present, the future; it’s now even more relevant in that Aboriginal children are disproportionately represented in out-of-home care and at growing rates. The reality is, taking our children away in the first place is the horror.” – Aaron Pedersen

With a Special Mention awarded to **Day in the Life** by **the Karrabing Film Collective**.

Jury Statement:

“The ‘day in the life’ highlighted by the Karrabing Film Collective is a day in the life of disgusting and repetitive behaviour displayed by the Australian Government. Day in and day out, it’s a crush of lies where ‘nobody really cares and somebody’s making money” said Aaron Pedersen (Arernte and Arabana) of the film’s central concerns. “Aboriginal disadvantage is the central factor. It’s deplorable that people have been ripped off in remote communities for many, many years; the money not spent on Aboriginal communities is being siphoned off and spent on non-Indigenous communities. This is disgusting and it has to stop. First Peoples first.”

Abercrombie & Kent Award for Best Documentary Short Film**The Weight of All the Beauty** (Estonia)

Dir. Eeva Mägi

Jury Statement:

“In The Weight of All the Beauty, director Eeva Mägi captures its subject Villi’s vulnerability, showing us his insightful wisdom as an elder, and allowing us a window into what he has loved and what he has lost in his world. His stillness and silence reflect the inner peace that he has found as well as the physical courage that he needed as a young man in order to be a survivor.” – Chris Pang

HP & Storm FX Award for Best Animation Short Film

Inès (France/Switzerland)

Dir. Élodie Dermange

Jury Statement:

“Inès is a graceful illustration of the complexity of emotions a woman faces when confronted with unprepared pregnancy. Élodie Dermange’s purposeful yet free style of watercolour animation perfectly communicates the anxiety and fears of motherhood, and allows us to enter both the reality and mind of the subject. Whether a pedestrian conversation or a panic-inducing headspin, the film’s ability to express volumes with its simplicity demonstrates storytelling at its finest.” – Chris Pang

Blackmagic Design Award for Best Cinematography in a Short Film

Outside the Oranges Are Blooming (Portugal/Serbia)

Dir. Nevena Desivojević

Jury Statement:

“While the distinction between direction and cinematography can be ambiguous, there is no doubt here that they are one and the same. Through Nevena Desivojević’s lens, inanimate scenes breathe life and her subjects bare their souls, as her incredible ability to romanticise the ordinary finds beauty in every frame. With masterful composition and framing, she perfectly encapsulates the loneliness and desolation of a moment in this man’s life. The haunting imagery stays with you long after the film’s conclusion.” – Chris Pang

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NOTES TO EDITORS

- The MIFF Shorts Awards and the Best MIFF Shorts package are presented by Mountain Goat Beer.
- MIFF 68½ streams across Australia until Sunday 23 August.
- Explore the program and purchase tickets at miff.com.au

Images and further information can be found at the [MIFF Media Centre](#).

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