

SHORTSHORTS

FILM FESTIVAL & ASIA 2017

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SHORT SHORTS FILM FESTIVAL & ASIA 2017
***Sugar and Spice* Wins SSFF & ASIA 2017 Grand Prix**
Films from Myanmar, New Zealand and Brazil awarded at Tokyo Ceremony!

Tokyo, Japan – The 19th Short Shorts Film Festival & Asia (June 1-25) reached a climax with an award ceremony at the prestigious Great Hall at Meiji Jingu Shrine. Chosen from more than 9,000 entries from over 140 countries, *Sugar & Spice*, a documentary about rural life in Myanmar directed by Mi mi Lwin took home the SSFF & ASIA 2017 Grand Prix Award.

“I am so pleased,” said Mi mi Lwin who took to the stage during a glittering ceremony following a presentation of last year’s Short Shorts Film Festival winner *Sing*, which went on to win the Academy Award for Best Live Action Short Film.

“The film depicts the way of life of my parents and I feel so grateful that I was selected” said a delighted Lwin. “I am really taken back, this has brought me power and I will try hard to continue to work on my films. Every day I gave a priority to the lifestyle of my parents and wanted to share it with the people of my country. There are many places unknown in Myanmar so I want people of the world to know better about these places.”



The film had already won the Asia international Competition Best Short Award earlier in the evening, one of three regional awards presented at the ceremony.

The International Competition Best Short Award went to *The World in Your Window* by Zoe McIntosh, a drama about a young boy seemingly trapped in a world of sadness with his father. Casting director Hori Ahipene received the award on behalf of McIntosh, and stepped up to the stage to express his respect for Japan. “I greet your mountains, I greet your rivers and I greet your ancient land humbly from New Zealand. We are humbled to win at this auspicious festival.” he added.

The Japan Competition Best Short Award / Governor of Tokyo Award went to comedian Gori for his work *born, bone, boon*. The story tells of a dysfunctional family who reunite on Aguni Island in Okinawa for a traditional bone washing ceremony. By video, the director expressed his happiness, stating “film making is not just about winning awards, but making people happy. But with this award I feel my work is appreciated. I’ve been submitting for a while, so third time’s a charm!”

The ceremony also included awards for a new initiative titled “Cinematic Tokyo.” Introducing the concept, Governor of Tokyo Yuriko Koike gave a speech to explain that the collaboration with Tokyo Metropolitan City aims to encourage people to visit Tokyo. “We would like to have different people’s perception of Tokyo,” she said. “We will be hosting the Olympics in 2020, and though this

is a festival of sports, we want to make it a festival of Japanese culture and tradition. Hopefully your films will also express the history, charms and the newness of Tokyo.”

The winner of the Cinematic Tokyo Award was announced as “Tokyo Ondo, - Beats and Temperatures” by Shuichi Bamba. A former music video director for Japanese rock bands Spitz and Bump of Chicken, Bamba commented “Tokyo is evolving, and I wanted to present the current Tokyo.”

Amongst other awards, Brazil’s Alois Di Leo won the CG Animation Competition, in collaboration with Digital Hollywood. His work *Way of Giants* was selected from 585 submissions from 64 countries. “I am truly honored and so happy and thankful, said Di Leo. “It’s so good to make many new friends here. It took a little more than two years to make, with a lot of love and I’m happy you enjoyed it.”



SSFF takes place across Tokyo in Shibuya, Omotesando, Harajuku, Ebisu, and Futako Tamagawa as well as in neighboring Yokohama, until June 25.

SSFF & ASIA 2017 AWARD LIST

SSFF & ASIA 2017 Grand Prix

Sugar & Spice – Directed by Mi mi Lwin

International Competition Best Short Award

THE WORLD IN YOUR WINDOW – Directed by Zoe McIntosh

Asia international Competition Best Short Award (Governor of Tokyo Award)

Sugar & Spice – Directed by Mi mi Lwin

Japan Competition Best Short Award (Governor of Tokyo Award)

born, bone, boon. - Directed by Gori

CG Animation Competition

Best Short Award

Way of Giants – Directed by Alois Di Leo

Cinematic Tokyo Award (Governor of Tokyo Award)

TOKYO ONDO -BEATS AND TEMPERATURES – Directed by Shuichi Bamba

Save the Earth! Competition supported by RINREI

Best Short Award (Minister's Award, Ministry of the Environment)

Water, Please – Directed by Mlu Godola (South Africa)

J-Wave Award

Gardeners of the Forest - Directed by Ceylan Carhoglu & Nicole Jordan-Webber (USA)

Branded Shorts - International Award

Notes – Directed by Chris Booth & Joel Pylypiw

Branded Shorts - National Award

THE WORLD IS ONE FUTURE, JAPAN, SOUTH AFRICA, AND AUSTRALIA -Directed by Koichi Iguchi

Book Shorts Award (Reworking of classic novel as basis for upcoming short film)

Oosama no sentaku – Masanori Muroichi (Japan)

International Visual Tourism Award

James Cameron in 100% Pure New Zealand

VISIT JAPAN Special Award

The Great Escape (Bundner entfuhren Stadter in die Berge)

Shibuya Diversity Award

Samira – Directed by Charlotte A. Rolfes (Germany)

Kitemiru Kwagoe Short Film Award

Let's meet in the treasure pond – Directed by Hiroki Inoue

avex digital Award

Minami Goto (Japan)

Fashion Short Award

Fooling UP

Hikari TV Award

Yukotopia – Directed by Daigo Matsui

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Official Competition Jury Comments Filmmaker Nobuhiko Obayashi

General Comments

Younger generations that have never experienced world wars will be our next leaders. War is the embodiment of human greed and desire and at present, fear exists over the uncertainty of war becoming reality. Being young people, there is consequently a genuine, innate sense of the absurdity, stupidity and futility of war. Fear continues to linger.

As a member of the last generation to ever live through world war, these films were judged on the talent and commitment of their creators to capture this feeling of imminent danger and urgency, and several excellent films satisfied that. Additionally, with the excessive proliferation of information-delivering technology such as televisions and computers, everything has become "data" and thus someone else's problem.

In trying to regain a sense of self, I was pleased to come across the superb philosophy developed by the parents depicted in *Sugar & Spice*, who live in the jungle away from the mechanisms of society. Making films is about "making a philosophy," and therefore a kind of "enduring journalism" that can serve as a positive force in our world. Creators must first examine the "self," depict it, and wish for their philosophy to become happily universal. This has strengthened my awareness of cinema's eminent role in social involvement. As a place where diverse individuals come together as one, I believe that is this festival's greatest result.

Comment on Grand Prix Winner *Sugar & Spice*

Through watching television, everything becomes "other people's business." Being caught in the mire of modern TV information, we should do our best to live as if it's our own business. I was moved by the couple depicted in this film.

Nobuhiko Obayashi Profile



Born in Onomichi, Hiroshima prefecture in 1938. Started filmmaking with a kinoscope found in the storeroom of his house when he was 3 years old. His 16mm independent short film "Émotion" was screened at galleries, halls, and universities and won high praise. "The Person Who is Eaten" (1963) won the Special Prize of the Jury at the Brussels International Fantastic Film Festival. "HOUSE" (1977) marked Obayashi's feature film debut, winning the Blue Ribbon Award. The films "I Are You, You Am Me" (1982), "The Little Girl Who Conquered Time" (1983), and "Lonely Heart" (1985) were shot in Obayashi's home town and called the 'Onomichi Trilogy.'

Among Obayashi's many accolades, "The Discarnates" (1988) won the Mainichi Film Award for Best Director, "Beijing Watermelon" (1989) won the Best Director at the Yamaji Fumiko Movie Awards, "The Rocking Horseman" (1992) won the Best Film from the Agency for Cultural Affairs, "SADA"

(1998) won the FIPRESCI Prize at the Berlin International Film Festival, "The Reason" (2004) won Best Director at the Japan Movie Critics Awards and Fujimoto Prize Honorable Mention, "Casting Blossoms to the Sky" (2012) and "Seven Weeks" (2014) were both awarded the Grand Prix at Tama Cinema Forum and more. His latest film "Hanagatami" is set to open this fall.

Nobuhiko Obayashi also received the Medal of Honor, Purple Ribbon in spring 2004 and the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Rosette in fall, 2009.