



Audience Award Winners at AFI DOCS 2017

Description

Posted by Larry Gleeson

THE AMERICAN FILM INSTITUTE ANNOUNCES AFI DOCS 2017 AUDIENCE AWARD WINNERS

Best Feature Goes to STEP
Best Short Goes to FISH STORY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE — JUNE 19, 2017, WASHINGTON, DC — The American Film Institute has announced the AFI DOCS 2017 Audience Award winners, concluding the five-day festival in Washington, DC, and Silver Spring, MD. This year's Audience Award for Best Feature went to STEP, directed by Amanda Lipitz. This year's Audience Award for Best Short went to FISH STORY, directed by Charlie Lyne.

With 112 films from 28 countries, this year's AFI DOCS presented films and discussions on topics ranging from the environment and sports to politics and art, along with profiles of extraordinary individuals. Among the attendees were filmmakers and notables including Trish Adlesic and Mariska Hargitay (I AM EVIDENCE), Matthew Heineman (CITY OF GHOSTS), Michael Pack (THE FALL OF NEWT GINGRICH), Laura Poitras (AFI DOCS Charles Guggenheim Symposium honoree), Samuel Pollard (ACORN AND THE FIRESTORM), Morgan Spurlock (NO MAN'S LAND, TOUGH GUYS), as well as scientist Bill Nye (BILL NYE: SCIENCE GUY) and Owner and CEO of Monumental Sports & Entertainment Ted Leonsis.

This year's festival was one of spirited audience engagement — with discussion and examination of issues led by some of the nation's top journalists: ABC News' Political Director Rick Klein; Climatewire's Emily Holden and Scott Waldman; CQ Roll Call Deputy Editor Jason Dick; FRONTLINE Executive Producer Raney Aronson-Rath; Governing Magazine's Mattie Quinn; NPR podcast "Invisibilia" hosts Alix Spiegel and Hanna Rosin, and "Dispatches" podcast host Morgan Givens; NPR's "The Big Listen" host Lauren Ober; PBS NewsHour correspondent John Yang; The Undeclared's Culture Writer Soraya Nadia McDonald and Senior Writer Clinton Yates; Variety's Senior Editor Ted

Johnson; and The Washington Post's Chief Film Critic Ann Hornaday, Food and Dining Editor Joe Yonan, Opinion Writer Alyssa Rosenberg, National Reporter Wesley Lowery and Style Writer Monica Hesse.

Presented in collaboration with NBCUniversal, the third edition of the AFI DOCS Impact Lab provided participating filmmakers with professional development in preparation for advancing their causes and meetings with policy leaders and advocates.

As part of AFI DOCS 2017, AFI and The Annenberg Foundation Trust at Sunnylands invited select filmmakers and public policy experts to a roundtable to explore ways documentary film can impact worldwide efforts on behalf of women and girls. The conversation allowed NGO leaders and government officials to interact with content creators to discuss new ways to strengthen narratives that advocate for women and girls.

Six films with AFI Conservatory alumni credits were included in this year's festival: 32 PILLS: MY SISTER'S SUICIDE, ATOMIC HOMEFRONT, BRIMSTONE & GLORY, CHAVELA, TAKE EVERY WAVE: THE LIFE OF LAIRD HAMILTON and WHITNEY. "CAN I BE ME".

MORE ABOUT THE AUDIENCE AWARD-WINNING FILMS:

STEP

Meet the "Lethal Ladies," the amazing step dance team from the Baltimore Leadership School for Young Women. Amanda Lipitz's inspiring portrait will have you cheering as the Ladies attempt to finish first in the city's dance competition and to become the first women in their families to go to college.

FISH STORY

FISH STORY investigates a mysterious gathering rumored to have taken place in 1980s Wales, at which an unlikely group of people with one thing in common came together.

AT&T is the presenting sponsor of AFI DOCS 2017. American Airlines returned as the official airline of AFI. Official Sponsors included the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, NBCUniversal and VIZIO. Major Sponsors included the CrossCurrents Foundation; CuriosityStream; DC Office of Cable Television, Film, Music and Entertainment; Embassy of Canada; Embrey Family Foundation; IMDbPro; Maryland Film Office; Participant Media; and Yorktel.

About the American Film Institute

Celebrating its golden milestone, the American Film Institute began its mission on June 5, 1967 — to preserve the heritage of the motion picture, to honor the artists and their work and to educate the next generation of storytellers. Established by Lyndon B. Johnson's presidential mandate in the White House Rose Garden, AFI is America's promise to educate today's audiences and tomorrow's artists. The Institute was anchored by a foundation of luminaries from the film community including Gregory Peck as Chair, Sidney Poitier as Vice Chair, George Stevens, Jr., as Director and CEO with board members Francis Ford Coppola, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., and Jack Valenti.

In 1969, AFI opened the Center for Advanced Film Studies, now called the AFI Conservatory, an elite MFA program whose inaugural class included Terrence Malik, Caleb Deschanel and Paul Schrader. The program's acclaimed film and television alumni include Andrea Arnold, Darren Aronofsky, Julie Dash, Patty Jenkins, Janusz Kamiński, David Lynch and Robert Richardson, among others.

In addition to the AFI Conservatory, AFI programs include the *AFI Catalog of Feature Films* and the **AFI Archive**, which preserve film heritage for future generations; the **AFI Life Achievement Award**, the highest honor for a career in film; **AFI AWARDS**, honoring the most outstanding movies and TV series of the year; **AFI's 100 Years...100 Movies** television events and movie reference lists, which have introduced and reintroduced classic American movies to millions of film lovers; year-round and special event exhibition through **AFI FEST presented by Audi**, **AFI DOCS** and the **AFI Silver Theatre and Cultural Center**. For more information about AFI, visit AFI.com or connect with AFI at twitter.com/AmericanFilm, facebook.com/AmericanFilmInstitute, and youtube.com/AFI.

About AFI DOCS

AFI DOCS is the American Film Institute's annual documentary festival in Washington, DC. Presenting the year's best documentaries, AFI DOCS is the only festival in the U.S. dedicated to screenings and events that connect audiences, filmmakers and policy leaders in the heart of our nation's government. The AFI DOCS advisory board includes Ken Burns, Davis Guggenheim, Chris Hegedus, Werner Herzog, Barbara Kopple, Spike Lee, Errol Morris, Stanley Nelson, D A Pennebaker, Agnès Varda and Frederick Wiseman. Now in its 15th year, the festival will be held June 14–18, 2017, in landmark Washington, DC, venues and at the historic AFI Silver Theatre in Silver Spring, MD. Visit AFI.com/AFIDOCS and connect on twitter.com/AFIDOCS, facebook.com/AFIDOCS, youtube.com/AFI and instagram.com/AmericanFilmInstitute.

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not available in all areas. Coverage may vary per country and be limited/restricted in some countries.

(Sources: Gabrielle Flamand, AFI DOCS PR, gabrielle@prcollaborative.com or Liza Ameen, American Film Institute, lameen@AFI.com.)

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1. #AFIDOCS

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