



Nashville Film Festival Announces 54th Festival Film and Screenplay Competition Award Winners

Narrative feature MAMACRUZ earns Best Narrative Film honors; Liza Mandelup's CATERPILLAR wins Best Documentary

Nashville, Tenn. (October 2, 2023) — The [Nashville Film Festival](#) (NashFilm) today announces the 54th edition's award winners, including best films in each category and the winning scripts in the organization's esteemed screenplay competition. Spanish film MAMACRUZ, written and directed by Patricia Ortega, was named Best Narrative Feature, while Liza Mandelup's CATERPILLAR earned the Best Documentary Feature award; DUSTY & STONES received Best Music Documentary honors, and Ryan Martin Brown's FREE TIME received the Best New Directors Feature. Additionally, in the shorts categories, OUR MALES AND FEMALES was named Best Narrative Short, LITURGY OF ANTI-TANK OBSTACLES received the Best Documentary Short award and EEVA was named Best Animated Short.

Juries in each festival category named their best films for the 2023 Nashville Film Festival during an awards ceremony at Arc Studios on Sunday, October 1, hosted by Nashville Film Festival Director of Programming Lauren Thelen. The complete list of film and script award winners can [be found here](#) and below.

"This year's award winners are among more than 130 exceptional films that were featured at the 54th festival," said Thelen. "We're confident in our juries' selections of these winning films and are excited to support the future success of all filmmakers involved in the festival as they build connections through this platform in Nashville and beyond."

In the Screenplay Competition, Nicky Rudolph Calloway's THE MANY DEATHS OF WALLACE BADGER was named Best Drama Feature Script, while Courtney Harrell's PROUD and Jason Kaleko's EFFIGY earned Best Comedy and Best Horror Feature Script honors, respectively. The Best Tennessee Writer was awarded to Adam Murphy for THE PAIN BODY. The Screenplay competition also awarded honors for scripts in categories including Best Short Script, Best Half Hour Pilot Script and Best Hour Pilot Script.

The 54th Nashville Film Festival continues through Wednesday, October 4 with screenings at Nashville's historic Belcourt Theatre and Regal Green Hills, with diverse films rooted in culture and community like FLORA AND SON and FOOD ROOTS. This year's event closes with Garth Davis' FOE, a haunting exploration of marriage and identity set in an uncertain world, and a closing night party celebration at Nashville's historic music venue, Exit/In at 8 pm.

“We proudly congratulate all of the impressive and talented winners of the 54th Nashville Film Festival,” said Jason Padgitt, executive director of Nashville Film Festival. “It’s an honor and a privilege to be able to celebrate the diverse, powerful and engaging work of these filmmakers and screenwriters and to provide an environment that will help further their stories and foster their success.”

The 54th Nashville Film Festival winners are as follows:

Best Narrative Feature	MAMACRUZ (d. Patricia Ortega)
Best Documentary Feature	CATERPILLAR (d. Liza Mandelup)
Best Music Documentary Feature	DUSTY & STONES (d. Jesse Rudoy)
Best New Directors Feature	FREE TIME (d. Ryan Martin Brown)
Best Graveyard Shift Feature	THE SACRIFICE GAME (d. Jennifer Wexler)
Best Tennessee Feature	COUNTRY BRAWLERS (d. Curren Sheldon)
Best Narrative Short	OUR MALES AND FEMALES (d. Ahmad Al Yaseer)
Best Documentary Short	LITURGY OF ANTI-TANK OBSTACLES (d. Dmytro Sukholytkyy-Sobchuk)
Best Animated Short	EEVA (d. Lucija Mrzljak, Morten TŠinakov)
Best 'The Edge' Short	IT SMELLS LIKE SPRINGTIME (d. Mackie Mallison)
Best Graveyard Shift Short	MURDER CAMP (d. Clara Aranovich)
Best Tennessee Short	Eat It (d. Katie Lambert)
Best Tennessee Student Short	EXIT 207: THE SOUL OF NASHVILLE (d. Chase Thompson)
Best NextGen Short	PRIMERO, SUEÑO (d. Andrés Lira)
Best Music Video	PORTRAIT OF A BLANK SLATE (d. Ted Nivison)

The Nashville Film Festival Screenplay Competition winners are as follow:

Best Drama Feature Script	THE MANY DEATHS OF WALLACE BADGER, written by Nicky Rudolph Calloway
Best Comedy Feature Script	PROUD, written by Courtney Harrell
Best Horror Feature Script	EFFIGY, written by Jason Kaleko
Best Genre Feature Script	THE RIFLE BROTHERS, written by Brett Prieto
Best Short Script	A WICKED GAME, written by DERRICK BENTON
Best Half Hour Pilot Script	SWOLE, written by David Koutsouridis
Best Hour Pilot Script	ASHES TO ASHES, written by Rachel McClard
Best Tennessee Writer	THE PAIN BODY, written by Adam Murphy

About the Nashville Film Festival

The Nashville Film Festival (NashFilm) is a globally recognized nonprofit organization and cultural event presenting the best in world cinema, American independent films and documentaries by veteran masters, up-and-coming directors, and first-time filmmakers. With Academy Award® qualifying status, the Nashville Film Festival celebrates innovation, music and the many voices of the human spirit through the art of film. Originally founded in 1969, the Nashville Film Festival is one of the first film festivals in the United States. For more information, visit www.nashfilm.org.