

Czech cinema scored twice in Annecy by winning two jury awards

Two Czech feature films have been honored during the awards ceremony of the 45th Annecy International Animation Film Festival. Czech-French-Slovak animated drama, *My Sunny Maad*, directed by Michaela Pavlátová and produced by Petr Oukropec & Kateřina Černá of **Negativ** received the Jury Award. Moreover, the Jury Distinction award went to French-German-Czech co-production *The Crossing* by Florence Mialhe, which is co-produced by MAUR film and Czech Television on the Czech side. Both films were also backed by the Czech Film Fund.

The year 2021 marked a comeback for Czech animation in the main competition at Annecy after an absence of 28 years. In 1993, Czech animation legend Břetislav Pojar unveiled the story of a boy and his adventure with a fairy in *The Butterfly Time* (1990). Now, picking up where he left off, another acclaimed Czech illustrator, Michaela Pavlátová, premiered her feature-length debut, *My Sunny Maad*, and won the prestigious **Jury Award**.

In her film, celebrated animator Michaela Pavlátová paints a picture of society in post-Taliban Afghanistan using the story of Herra, a Czech woman, who falls in love with Nazir, an Afghan, and has no idea about the life that awaits her in a new country, nor about the family she is about to join.

Pavlátová garnered international attention with her short film *Words, Words, Words* in Annecy in 1991 (followed by an Oscar nomination in 1993), and also presented at the festival shorts *Repete* (in 1995, Berlinale's Golden Bear for Best Short Film same year), *Carnival of Animals* (in 2007) and *Tram* (winner of The Annecy Cristal in 2012). This year, the director celebrates a comeback with her long-prepared animation feature *My Sunny Maad* which will compete in Annecy's Feature Films in Competition. The film is produced by Petr Oukropec and Kateřina Černá of **Negativ** in co-production with French Sacrebleu Productions, Slovak BFILM, Alkay Animation Prague, Czech Television, Gao Shan Pictures and Innervision (both FR).

The project received support from the Czech Film Fund for both development and production with a total of €806,923, as well as in the Production Incentives program, with additional backing from Eurimages, the National Centre for Cinema and the Moving Image (commonly known as CNC), the Slovak Audiovisual Fund, and the French regional funds Eurometropole and Région Réunion.

Jury Distinction for The Crossing

At Saturday's award ceremony, Czech cinema recorded another success because the **Jury Distinction** award went to French-German-Czech co-production *The Crossing* by Florence Mialhe. A story of never-ending human effort to find a new home, where one can find a better life, is produced by Dora Benousilio of Les Films de l'Arlequin and co-produced by German Balance Film, established Czech company MAUR film, ARTE (FR, DE), Czech Television (CZ) and XBO films (FR).

Several Czech animators participated in the making of this film: Lucie Sunková, Polina Kazak, Eva Skurská, Anna Paděrová and Zuzana Studená. The film was also backed by the Czech Film Fund with EUR 115 000 and it also received support from Eurimages (EUR 400 000), Creative Europe MEDIA, CNC and more.

Press Service:

Jaroslav Kejzlar

Editor & Communication

Czech Film Center / Czech Film Fund

Národní 28, 110 00 Praha 1

telefon: +420 601 326 883

e-mail: jaroslav@filmcenter.cz

www.filmcenter.cz

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