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51ST CHICAGO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL REVEALS ITS COMPETITION WINNERS AT AWARDS NIGHT
Films From Around The World Competed for the Gold and Silver Hugo

Festival Celebrates Midwest Premiere of "Where To Invade Next" with Founder's Award Honor for Director Michael Moore

(CHICAGO, Oct 23, 2015) - Michael Kutza, Founder & Artistic Director of the Chicago International Film Festival, Programming Director Mimi Plauché, and Programmers Anthony Kaufman and Camille Lugan and Competitions Coordinator Sam Flancher proudly announce the winners of the 51st Chicago International Film Festival Competitions.

Hosted by Managing Director Vivian Teng, the Awards Ceremony was held Friday, October 23 at 8:30pm and was held at The Peninsula (108 E. Superior, Chicago). Awards were presented in the following categories: International Feature Film Competition, New Directors Competition, Documentary Competition, Roger Ebert Award, Chicago Award, Q-Hugo Award, and Short Films. Award Nights was sponsored by Michigan Avenue Magazine and Wintrust Community Banks.

Top honors went to: Philippe Claudel's powerful A Childhood (France), winner of both the Gold Hugo for Best Film and the Silver Hugo for Best Actor (for first-time child actors Alexi Mathieu and Jules Gauzelin); Pengfei Song's illuminating ode to modern Chinese society, Underground Fragrance (China, France), winner of the New Directors Competition Gold Hugo; Pablo Larrain's profound story of revenge and compassion, The Club (Chile), winner of three Festival awards; and João Pedro Plácido’s sensitive depiction of a rural Portuguese farming village Volta à Terra, winner of the Gold Hugo for best documentary.

Complete details of the winners listed below.

Past award winners have gone on to win Oscars® and Golden Globe® awards, among other notable recognitions. Awards Night is a night for the 51st Chicago International Film Festival juries, filmmakers and guests to come together and celebrate.
**Founder’s Award**
*The Founder’s Award is given to that one film across all categories that captures the spirit of the Chicago International Film Festival for its unique and innovative approach to the art of the moving image.*

**Founder’s Award:**
*Where To Invade Next*
Country: USA
Director: Michael Moore

The 51st Chicago International Film Festival presented Director Michael Moore with the Founder’s Award for his film *Where To Invade Next*. “Chicago is the Capitol of the Midwest and I just won the Founder’s Award here,” said Michael Moore.

**International Film Competition**
*Representing a wide variety of styles and genres, these works compete for the Festival’s highest honor, the Gold Hugo, a symbol of discovery.*

**Gold Hugo, Best Film:**
*A Childhood*
Country: France
Director: Philippe Claudel

The winner of the 51st Chicago International film Festival’s International Competition for the Best Picture goes to *A Childhood* directed by Philippe Claudel for this emotionally powerful insight into dysfunctional family life in a working class French neighborhood, which relies on the strength of two half brothers, surviving pain and poverty.

**Silver Hugo, Special Jury Prize:**
*Paulina*
Country: Argentina, Brazil
Director: Santiago Mitre

A beautifully realized film from Argentina which poses complex political questions that sidestep easy moralizing, causing us to stop and consider how far we would go to preserve our own sense of moral justice.

**Silver Hugo, Best Director:**
*The Club*
Country: Chile
Director: Pablo Larrain

For masterful direction of actors and assured handling of suspense which stares into the abyss of human depravity.

**Silver Hugo, Best Male Actor:**
Alexi Mathieu, Jules Gauzelin (*A Childhood*)
Country: France
Director: Philippe Claudel
The winner for Best Actor goes to the two child actors, Alexi Mathieu and Jules Gauzelin, in director Philippe Claudel’s *A Childhood* who as half brothers deliver amazingly believable first time performances revealing how children must play adults to survive their brutal upbringing.

**Silver Hugo, Best Female Actor:**
Lizzie Brochere (*Full Contact*)
Country: Netherlands, Croatia
Director: David Verbeek

Lizzie Brochere is a compelling talent with qualities of an innocent gamine and sultry seducer in her multi-faceted performance as a nightclub pole dancer in a Nevada military environment to a luggage-processing clerk in a French airport.

**Silver Plaque, Best Ensemble:**
The Club
Country: Chile
Director: Pablo Larrain

The Jury award for Best Actor Ensemble is awarded to *The Club* for this incredibly powerful assemblage of great Chilean actors.

**Silver Plaque, Best Cinematography:**
Frank Van den Eeden (*Full Contact*)
Country: Netherlands, Croatia
Director: David Verbeek

Directed by David Verbeek, Frank Vanden Eeden’s powerful imagery speaks to what great motion pictures strive for with expertly realized light, camera motion and framing.

**Silver Plaque for Best Screenplay:**
Writers Guillermo Calderon, Daniel Villalobos, Pablo Larrain (*The Club*)
Country: Chile
Director: Pablo Larrain

The winner for Best Screenplay goes to *The Club* from Chile, written by Guillermo Calderon, Daniel Villalobos and director Pablo Larrain, for delivering a truly profound reality of revenge and compassion.

**Silver Plaque for Best Art Direction:**
Toma Baqueni (*My Golden Days*)
Country: France
Director: Arnaud Desplechin

Production designer, Toma Baqueni and his team reveal lushly realized worlds in director Arnaud Deapchelin’s film with a precise sense of style and realism covering periods of over 50 years from Russia, Eastern Europe, Tajikistan, and Paris.
New Directors Competition
This selection of first and second feature films receiving their U.S. premieres in Chicago celebrates the spirit of discovery and innovation upon which the Festival was founded.

Gold Hugo:
Underground Fragrance
Country: China, France
Director: Pengfei Song

The Gold Hugo goes to Underground Fragrance (China), director Pengfei Song’s illuminating ode to modern Chinese society. Two couples navigate through a world in transition, striving to locate stability within the rapidly evolving spaces. There’s a Chaplinesque physicality to the blinded man’s plight, dodging obstacles in his path while stumbling into a poignant romance worthy of “City Lights.”

Silver Hugo:
Sparrows
Country: Iceland, Denmark
Director: Runar Runarsson

The Silver Hugo goes to Sparrows (Iceland), which explores arrested lives in a deceptively tranquil community. Ethereal imagery is juxtaposed with acts of shocking violence, creating an indelible portrait of lost innocence. Director Runar Runarsson elicits superb performances from his actors, who brought their fractured father-son dynamic to vivid life.

Roger Ebert Award: The Roger Ebert Award will be presented annually to an emerging filmmaker whose film presents a fresh and uncompromising vision. Films competing in the Festival’s New Directors Competition are eligible for this award.
Nahid
Country: Iran
Director: Ida Panahandeh

The Roger Ebert Award goes to Nahid (Iran), where we follow a strong-willed woman as she attempts to escape the narrow confines of her societally imposed trap. Director Ida Panahandeh pulls no false punches in her portrayal of an uncompromisingly difficult character. To paraphrase Roger’s review of another acclaimed Iranian film, A Separation, she may be tending against our own sympathies, but we understand why she does so and may be correct to do so.

Documentary Competition
This selection of international documentaries competing for the Gold Hugo go beyond the headlines in telling those true stories that surprise, entertain and challenge us.

Gold Hugo:
Volta à Terra
Country: Portugal, Switzerland
Director: João Pedro Plácido
For a film that interweaves aesthetic rigor with sensitive observation, agrarian portraiture with an investment in individual experience, that moved us by its intimacy with its subjects, an ambitious audio-visual presentation, and a dual sense of time-li-ness and time-less-ness, the Gold Hugo goes to *Volta à Terra* by João Pedro Plácido.

**Silver Hugo:**
*In The Underground*
Country: China
Director: Song Zhantao

For a film that is both intensely experiential and emotionally insightful, that manages to honor and explore both the underground terrain of labor and the above ground human dramas of the domestic sphere, the Silver Hugo goes to *In the Underground* by Song Zhantao.

**Gold Plaque Special Mention:**
*Time Suspended (Tiempo Suspendido)*
Country: Mexico, Argentina
Director: Natalia Bruschtein

We’d like to make special mention of a film that combines archival with vérité footage to explore the tension between trauma and memory through the experience of a compelling individual who confronted political dictatorship and memory loss. The Jury’s Special Mention goes to *Time Suspended (Tiempo Suspendido)* by Natalia Bruschtein.

**Q Hugo Award**
*Chosen from the Festival’s OUT-Look program, the winners of this award exhibit new artistic perspectives on sexuality and identity.*

**Gold Q Hugo:**
*Carol*
Country: USA
Director: Todd Haynes

For its cinematic perfection.

**Silver Q Hugo:**
*Henry Gamble’s Birthday Party*
Country: USA
Director: Stephen Cone

For its beautifully acted, intelligently directed, richly nuanced approach to the troubled relations between religion and sexuality.

**Chicago Award**

**Chicago Plaque**
*Radicl Grace*
Country: USA
Among the many worthy candidates of films made by Chicago- and Illinois-based filmmakers, the jury chose to recognize this unique film, which celebrates the bravery, devotion, and social engagement of the nuns on the bus. *Radical Grace* chronicles the individual stories of an extraordinary group of Catholic nuns and their collective movement to stand up for values of equality and justice in the face of a hierarchy deeply resistant to change. The humanistic filmmaking of *Radical Grace* is both timely and timeless and reminds us of both the power of documentary cinema and the possibility that compassion and human dignity may prevail in our world.

**Short Film Awards**

**Gold Hugo, Live Action:**  
*Leidi*  
Country: Colombia, UK  
Director: Simón Mesa Soto

*Leidi* is a reminder that great short films tell stories that are just the right size. A character study set in a broad urban landscape framed by mountains, this portrait of a day in the life of a teenage mother in Medellin, Colombia immerses the audience in its heroine’s concerns and yearnings. Simón Mesa Soto’s sensitive direction gives weight to the subtle and meaning to the unspoken.

**Silver Hugo, Live Action:**  
*The Exquisite Corpus*  
Country: Austria  
Director: Peter Tscherkassky

With *Exquisite Corpus*, experimental filmmaker Peter Tscherkassky takes viewers on an odyssey into the dark subconscious of film. Orchestrating layers of footage from old nudist films, skin flicks, and pornographic cheapies, he has created what can only be described as a mesmerizing nightmare of erotic possibilities.

**Gold Plaque, Live Action:**  
*One-minded*  
Country: South Korea  
Director: Sébastien Simon and Forest Ian Estler

Forest Ian Etsler and Sébastien Simon’s playful and boldly original *One-Mined* frames the relationship between two young roommates in Seoul from a genuinely unique point-of-view: that of their oscillating fan, locked in a perpetual back-and-forth pan across their apartment.

**Silver Plaque, Live Action:**  
*Over*  
Country: UK  
Director: Jörn Threlfall
The aftermath of a death is presented in disconnected pieces in Jörn Threlfall’s *over*, a film that puts a seemingly clinical style to humane ends, offering insight into our own short-sightedness in matters of genuine tragedy.

**Silver Plaque, Live Action:**
*Ramona*
Country: Romania
Director: Andrei Cretulescu

Immediately riveting, Andrei Cretulescu’s *Ramona* presents an enigmatic, gruesome revenge spree in long, wordless takes—a drive through a nightscape of violence and mystery that is stark and tantalizing as the classic Bauhaus song that plays over its end credits.

**Silver Hugo, Documentary:**
*Santa Cruz del Islote*
Country: US, Colombia
Director: Luke Lorentzen

This film balances a quiet and hypnotic lull of the ocean with charming moments of everyday life on the island. The cinematography captures the beauty of the island poised between its present and future. Story development is engaging and the technical challenges of production illustrate the depth of talent the filmmakers possess. However the story isn't overworked. There's enough room to wander with it and enjoy the scenery while getting a sense of the underlying concern starting to develop the next generation.

**Gold Plaque, Documentary:**
*A Tale of Love, Madness and Death*
Country: Chile
Director: Mijael Bustos Gutiérrez

The filmmaker presents a strong character by approaching a very difficult subject matter with empathy and visual sensibility. His simple though compelling, balanced and innovative storytelling makes the film an important voice in understanding schizophrenia and showing its many facets.

**Silver Hugo, Animated:**
*Sunday Lunch*
Country: France
Director: Céline Devaux

For its dynamic animation and explosion of the humor and horror found in the mundane subtleties of family life, love, and comforting, predictable dysfunction.

**Gold Plaque, Animated:**
*The Same River Twice*
Country: USA
Director: Weijia Ma
... a family history in five succinct, interlocking acts told with beautiful subtlety, imaginative animation, and a distinctly charming personality.

**Silver Plaque, Animated:**
*Waves ’98*
Country: Lebanon, Qatar
Director: Ely Dagher

For its quiet bombast and nostalgia explored through a disarming blend of media, emotion, and fantasy.

**INTERCOM**
*One of the longest-running international competitions of its kind, INTERCOM honors a wide range of corporate-sponsored, educational and branded films.*

**Gold Hugo, Business - Communications**
*Patrick Frost*
Company/Entrant: Seed Audio-Visual Communications

**Silver Hugo, Sales & Marketing**
*Black Ink*
Company/Entrant: Kemper Kommunikation GmbH

**Gold Plaque, Public Relations**
*Porsche at Le Mans 2015*
Company/Entrant: Kemper Kommunikation GmbH

**Gold Plaque, Business - Communications**
*Argyle Pink Diamonds, Beyond Rare*
Company/Entrant: Bengar Films

**Silver Plaque, Business - Promotion**
*Soapbox Race 2015*
Company/Entrant: Strange Loop Studios

**Silver Plaque, Business - Communications**
*Australia Post, Privacy and You*
Company/Entrant: Bengar Films

**Silver Plaque, Educational - Youth Audience**
*Summiteers*
Company/Entrant: Seed Audio-Visual Communications

**Certificate of Merit, Sports & Recreation**
*Spa 2015*
Company/Entrant: Kemper Kommunikation GmbH

**Certificate of Merit, Science/Research/Technology**
*Antarctic Edge: 70 Degrees South*
ABOUT CINEMA/CHICAGO
Cinema/Chicago is a not-for-profit arts and education organization dedicated to encouraging better understanding between cultures and to making a positive contribution to the art form of the moving image. The Chicago International Film Festival is one of the year-round programs presented by Cinema/Chicago, which also include its Television Awards, CineYouth Festival, INTERCOM Competition, International Screenings Program, and Education Program.

Celebrating its 51st anniversary this year, the Chicago International Film Festival is North America's longest-running competitive film festival, running Oct 15-29, 2015 at the AMC River East (322 E. Illinois St, Chicago). Photos and media accreditation may be found at ChicagoFilmFestival.com/press.

This year's Festival slate now includes six World Premieres, 15 North American Premieres, 45 U.S. Premieres, and counting! View the 2015 Festival lineup at ChicagoFilmFestival.com/films. Individual tickets and multi-film passes are now available. The full festival schedule is available at ChicagoFilmFestival.com/schedule.

AWARDS NIGHT SPONSORS
Evening Hosts: Michigan Avenue Magazine and The Peninsula; Lead Partner: Wintrust Community Banks; Evening Partners: Stella Artois, Wansas Tequila, Effen Vodka, and Dark Horse Wine.

FESTIVAL PARTNERS

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