



**CHICAGO INTERNATIONAL
FILM FESTIVAL** Oct. 12 - 26, 2017

Presented by Cinema/Chicago

**53
NEWS**

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**MARSHALL, AURORA BOREALIS AND THE WORK RECEIVE
TOP AUDIENCE AWARDS AT 53RD CHICAGO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL**

Festival Celebrates Momentous Year of Sold-Out Crowds and Special Guests

Chicago (October 30, 2017) - The Chicago International Film Festival today announces **Festival Audience Award winners** and top highlights from the 53rd edition of the annual film festival. Calculated by votes directly from Festival-goers, the **Audience Award for Best English-language feature** goes to Reginald Hudlin's *Marshall* (U.S.). Celebrated filmmaker Márta Mészáros' *Aurora Borealis* (Hungary) takes home the best foreign-language Audience Award honor; in documentaries, Jairus McLeary and Gethin Aldous's poignant *The Work* (U.S.) takes the Audience Award honor. And the **Audience Award for Best Short Film** is presented to *Kapitalistis* (France, Belgium), written and directed by Pablo Munoz Gomez.

The 53rd Chicago International Film Festival hosted filmmakers and special guests from around the world, presenting hundreds of films to sold-out crowds and honoring both established and emerging talents in the art of cinema. This year's Festival will be remembered as a banner year, including these exceptional highlights:

Spanning the Globe: 231 filmmakers and special guests traveled from 35 countries to join us in Chicago, logging a whopping 273,183 miles traveled to be here for screenings, panels, tributes and conversations.

Top Honors: Of the more than 150 films screened, top honors were given to the following: *A Sort of Family*, (Gold Hugo, International Feature Competition), *No Date, No Signature* (Gold Hugo, New Directors Competition), *Birds are Singing in Kigali* (Silver Hugo, Best Director and Silver Hugo Best Actresses), *Killing Jesús* (Roger Ebert Award winner), *The Other Side of the Wall* (Gold Hugo, International Documentary Competition) and *BPM* (Gold Q-Hugo). Award-winning short film films include: *Night Shift* (Live Action Shorts Competition Winner, U.S.); *Drop by Drop* (Animated Shorts Competition Runner-Up, Portugal); *The Rabbit Hunt* (Documentary Shorts Competition Winner, U.S.); *Airport* (Animated Shorts Competition Winner, Switzerland/Croatia); *Fish Story* (Audience Favorite, United Kingdom); *A Gentle Night* (Live Action Shorts Competition Runner-Up, China); and *The Burden* (Audience Favorite, Sweden).



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Rolling Out the Red Carpet: Chicago truly shined as the Film Festival rolled out the red carpet with star-studded appearances. Kicking off the festival on Opening Night, the cast from *Marshall*, including **Chadwick Boseman**, **Sterling K. Brown**, **Josh Gaad**, **Jussie Smollett**, and **Marina Squerciati**, as well as director **Reginald Hudlin** and producer **Paula Wagner**, were in attendance. Career and Artistic Achievement honors were presented to some of the greatest actors of their generation, including **Vanessa Redgrave**, whose directorial debut *Sea of Sorrow* had its Chicago Premiere during the Festival along with her classic film *Blow Up*. Sir **Patrick Stewart** was honored with a Gold Hugo Career Achievement award and treated audiences to a riveting, in-depth conversation about his illustrious career on the stage and screen. Actress **Alfre Woodard** was also awarded a Career Achievement Award as part of the 21st **Black Perspectives** program. To cap-off the festival, Oscar-nominated actor **Michael Shannon** was presented an Artistic Achievement Award and was on hand to introduce the Closing Night film, Guillermo del Toro's *The Shape of Water*, with co-star **Michael Stuhlbarg** and producer **Daniel Kraus**. Other notables on the red carpet included: acclaimed director **Simon Curtis** (*Goodbye Christopher Robin*); actor **Jon Lovitz** (*Chasing the Blues*); actor **Tracy Letts** (*Ladybird*); actor **Bill Pullman** and director **Jared Moshé** (*The Ballad of Lefty Brown*); **Michael Stuhlbarg** (*Call Me by Your Name* and *The Shape of Water*); and more. See all of the Red Carpet photos [here](#).

Educating the Next Generation: Cinema/Chicago's Education Program welcomed over 2,000 Chicago Public School students to exclusive screenings of some of the Festival's most compelling films, including *The Other Side of the Wall* and *For Ahkeem*. With filmmakers in attendance, students received unprecedented access to industry professionals and independent filmmaking.

An Industry Essential: Now in its third year, the Festival's **Industry Days** program has become a must-attend networking hub for Midwest-based filmmakers. Elevating the film industry in Chicago, guests from every aspect of the business participated in a weekend of events, including a keynote conversation with filmmaker **Joe Swanberg** and a world premiere screening of the second season of his Netflix series *Easy*. The event culminated with The Pitch, in which Maria Abraham and Luz Agudelo's feature film in development *Girl With Child* beat out four other projects for a prize of in-kind production services worth over \$20,000.

The 53rd Chicago International Film Festival opened on October 12 and concluded on October 26, 2017; over 150 feature films from over 50 countries were featured across fifteen days of screenings. Images from the entire Festival are available [here](#). The 54th Chicago International Film Festival will take place October 11-25, 2018.

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About Cinema/Chicago

Cinema/Chicago, the presenting organization of the Chicago International Film Festival, is a year round non-profit arts and education organization dedicated to fostering better communication between people of diverse cultures through the art form of the moving image. In addition to the Chicago International Film Festival, Cinema/Chicago's programs include: International Screenings Program, Chicago International Television Festival, CineYouth Festival, and year-round Education Program. Celebrating its 53rd edition



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October 12-26, 2017, the Chicago International Film Festival is North America's longest-running competitive film festival.

Festival Sponsors and Partners

The 53rd Chicago International Film Festival's sponsors include Official Airline: American Airlines; Premiere Sponsors: AARP, Bloomberg Philanthropies, Wintrust Community Banks; Participating Sponsors: Chicago Line Cruises, TV5Monde, Wansas Tequila; Education Sponsors: Allstate Insurance Company, HBO; Event Partners: AMC Theaters, Sound Investment AV; Hotel Partners: Ambassador Chicago, Conrad Chicago, The Whitehall Hotel; Platinum Media Partners: National CineMedia (NCM); Gold Media Partners: WTTW11, WBBM, WXRT; Silver Media Partners: WBEZ, Firewatch Films; Special support provided by Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, the National Endowment of the Arts, the Illinois Arts Council Agency, Illinois Film Office, Chicago Film Office, and the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE).