



**CHICAGO INTERNATIONAL
FILM FESTIVAL** Oct. 10 - 21, 2018
Presented by Cinema/Chicago

**54
NEWS**

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MEDIA CONTACTS

Matthew Bryant/Nick Harkin
Carol Fox and Associates
matthewb@carolfoxassociates.com
nickh@carolfoxassociates.com
773-969-5033, 773-969-5034

**TOP AUDIENCE AWARDS AT 54th CHICAGO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL GO TO
*THE HATE U GIVE, BECOMING ASTRID AND UNITED SKATES***

Festival Celebrates Momentous Year of Sold-Out Screenings and Visits from Special Guests

CHICAGO - The **Chicago International Film Festival** today announced the **Audience Award winners** and top highlights from its 54th edition. Festival-goers presented the Audience Award for Best English-language feature to **George Tillman, Jr.’s** powerful and moving ***The Hate U Give***. **Pernille Fischer Christensen’s *Becoming Astrid***, a biopic about Astrid Lindgren (author of the “Pippi Longstocking” books), took home the best foreign-language feature Audience Award honor; Dyana Winkler and Tina Brown’s ***United Skates***, a rousing tribute to roller skating’s pivotal role in the African American community, won the Documentary Audience Award honor; and the Audience Award for Best Short Film was presented to Darius Clark Monroe’s ***Black 14***, a reflection on power and control in 1960’s America that uses archival footage to tell the story of a racial protest at the University of Wyoming.

“We are grateful to so many for making this year’s Festival such a remarkable success,” said Managing Director **Vivian Teng**. “We want to acknowledge the groundswell of support we received from so many people, including our Governing Board, sponsors, the film community worldwide, our hard-working juries, hundreds of volunteers, and most of all, the dedicated audiences that packed so many houses and enthusiastically embraced innovative filmmaking from across the globe.”

The 54th Chicago International Film Festival hosted more than 150 filmmakers and special guests from more than 20 countries, honoring both established and emerging talents in the art of cinema. The Festival presented 175 films, comprised of 124 features and 51 shorts, from 58 countries. There were 65 sold-out shows, exceeding last year’s sold-out films by more than 50 percent. This year’s Festival will be remembered as a banner year with highlights including visits from legendary auteurs, top contemporary filmmakers, and exciting new talents; thought-provoking post-screening conversations with directors, producers, and actors; the Festival’s first-ever foray into Virtual Reality; and more. The 54th Festival will also be remembered as the capstone Festival in the remarkable career of Founder and CEO **Michael**

Kutza, the longest running festival director, who will retire from the organization at the end of 2018 to pursue the next chapter of his career, including completing a memoir. Other Festival highlights include:

Rolling Out the Red Carpet: Chicago truly shined as the Film Festival rolled out the red carpet. Kicking off the Festival on Opening Night, *Beautiful Boy* director **Felix van Groeningen** and actor **Andre Royo**, as well as celebrated Chicago actress and playwright **Regina Taylor** were in attendance. In addition, the Gala Presentation of the acclaimed new film *Widows* included Red Carpet appearances by director and co-screenwriter **Steve McQueen**, stars **Viola Davis**, **Liam Neeson**, **Michelle Rodriguez**, **Cynthia Erivo** and **Brian Tyree Henry**, author and co-screenwriter **Gillian Flynn**, and producer **Iain Canning**.

Career and Artistic Achievement honors were presented to some of the greatest filmmakers of their generation, including **William Friedkin**, who accepted a Lifetime Achievement Award; **Carey Mulligan**, who accepted her Artistic Achievement Award in conjunction with the presentation of Festival Centerpiece *Wildlife*; and acclaimed costume designer **Ruth E. Carter**, who accepted a Career Achievement Award at the annual **Black Perspectives Tribute**. Posthumous tributes were also presented to prolific artist **Art Paul** (who created the iconic *Playboy* bunny logo); and to actress **Colleen Moore**, who played an integral role in founding the Chicago International Film Festival.

To cap off the festival, Oscar®-nominated director **Jason Reitman** was on hand to present his new film, *The Front Runner*. Other notables on the red carpet included: actress **Amandla Stenberg**, director **George Tillman, Jr.** and producer **Robert Teitel** (*The Hate U Give*); actor/singer **Troye Sivan**, director **Joel Edgerton**, and writer **Garrard Conley** (*Boy Erased*); actor **Robert Forster** and writer/director **Elizabeth Chomko** (*What They Had*); actors **Yalitza Aparicio** and **Marina de Tavora**, and producer **David Linde** (*Roma*); and more. See all of the Red Carpet photos [here](#).

Top Honors: Of the 175 films screened, top honors were given to the following: *Happy as Lazzaro*, (Gold Hugo, International Feature Competition), *The Third Wife* (Gold Hugo, New Directors Competition), *Ash is Purest White* (Silver Hugo, Best Director and Silver Hugo Best Actress), *Little Tickles* (Roger Ebert Award winner), *[Censored]* (Gold Hugo, International Documentary Competition) and *Retablo* (Gold Q-Hugo). Award-winning short films include: *Mamartuille* (Gold Hugo, Live Action Shorts Competition); *Bloeistraat 11* (Silver Hugo, Animated Short Film Competition); and *Circle* (Silver Hugo, Documentary Shorts Competition).

For the press release outlining all of the Festival's winners, click [here](#).

Educating the Next Generation: Cinema/Chicago's Education Program welcomed nearly 2,000 students from 36 Chicago Public Schools to exclusive screenings of some of the Festival's most compelling films with filmmakers and special guests in attendance. The education lineup included *The Hate U Give*; *Say Her Name: The Life and Death of Sandra*

Bland; and **United Skates**. Students had the opportunity to engage with filmmakers and film subjects, making connections between the films and their own lives on a meaningful level. At the education screening of **United Skates**, Harper High School Educator Papedia Evans said, "The screening experience exceeded my expectations." At both **The Hate U Give** and **Say Her Name: The Life and Death of Sandra Bland**, students jumped at the chance to ask Amandla Stenberg about her experiences as well as talk one-on-one with Sandra Bland's sister Shante Needham, family Attorney Cannon Lambert, and directors Kate Davis and David Heilbroner. The education screenings not only provide access to unique arts education experiences for students and educators in CPS, but also engage them with the art of filmmaking and the subjects of the films on a deep level.

An Industry Essential: Now in its fourth 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 Oscar®-nominated producer **Albert Berger** and a Master Class with Academy Award®-winning director **Steve McQueen**. The event culminated with The Pitch, in which C.J. Arellano's feature film-in-development, *Case Unsolved*, beat out four other projects for a prize of in-kind production services worth over \$20,000.

The 54th Chicago International Film Festival opened on October 10 and concluded on October 21, 2018; a wide selection of feature, documentary and short films were presented across twelve days of screenings at the AMC River East 21 in Chicago. Images from the entire Festival are available [here](#). The 55th Chicago International Film Festival will take place October 16-27, 2019.

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Festival Sponsors

The 54th Chicago International Film Festival's sponsors include Premiere Sponsors: Bloomberg Philanthropies, Wintrust Community Banks; Official Wine Sponsor: Chloe Wine Collection; Education Sponsor: HBO; Participating Sponsor: British International School of Chicago; Airline Partner: LOT Polish Airlines; Headquarters Hotel: St. Jane Hotel; Event Partners: AMC Theaters, The Gwen Hotel, Little Goat Diner; Platinum Media Partner: NCM; This program is supported in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts and a grant from the Illinois Arts Council Agency. Additional support provided by the Illinois Film Office, Chicago Film Office, the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE), and Lagunitas Brewing Company.

About Cinema/Chicago

Cinema/Chicago, the presenting organization of the Chicago International Film Festival, is a year-round nonprofit arts and education organization dedicated to fostering better communication between people of diverse cultures through the art of film and the moving image. Cinema/Chicago's programs include the Chicago International Film Festival,

International Screenings Program, Chicago International Television Festival, CineYouth Festival, and year-round Education Program. Celebrating its 54th edition October 10-21, 2018, the Chicago International Film Festival is North America's longest-running competitive film festival. For more information, please visit www.chicagofilmfestival.com or follow us on Facebook, Instagram, Vimeo and Twitter.