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CINEMA/CHICAGO’S CINEYOUTH FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES AUDIENCE AND JURY AWARD WINNERS AFTER SUCCESSFUL 15TH EDITION

Passionate crowds filled the Music Box Theatre, and filmmakers traveled from across the United States and from as far away as Germany to attend.

CHICAGO — CineYouth Festival, presented by Cinema/Chicago, announced award winners for the 2019 edition led by Best Overall Film winner No Such Sunrise by 22 year olds Dana Brandes-Simon, Laura Li, and Cella Wright from Oberlin, OH. The Audience Award was won by 22 year old Kylie Murphy of Shrewsberry, NJ for her short film Mad Lib Pixie Dream Girl which screened in the “She Persisted: Women in Cinema” program. Select prize-winning films will be screened together at the 55th Chicago International Film Festival, October 16–27, 2019 as well as on WTTW in the fall. In total, CineYouth 2019 showcased 64 films from 18 countries by filmmakers 8-22 years old over three days at the Music Box Theatre. Photos from CineYouth Festival are available here.

“It felt like such an honor to get to be screened along with all those other great films,” says Blue Was Here director Tristan Jackson from Portland, OR. “It has been the highlight of our year!”

“I’ve been a part of CineYouth since my first film at the age of 14, and CineYouth has been an important part of my extended film family ever since,” said Canadian filmmaker Morgana McKenzie whose short film Wild won the CineYouth Women in Cinema Award. “Four key people in the Wild team also happen to be CineYouth filmmakers, and they have become my closest friends. Great relationships make great films, and CineYouth creates opportunities for filmmakers to be recognized and find each other.”

“I watch a lot of movies at the Music Box, so this is pretty surreal,” said Chicago filmmaker Emilio Nieto while receiving a Special Mention in the Chicago category for his film PANZóN. “Thank you to everyone at CineYouth.”

CineYouth celebrated Opening Night on April 26 with the Chicago premiere of feature documentary Jawline which won the Special Jury Award for Emerging Filmmaker at the 2019 Sundance Film Festival. Director Liza Mandelup, recently included on Variety’s 10

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Documentary Filmmakers to Watch in 2019, attended CineYouth to present the film and give a post-screening conversation moderated by Thavary Krouch of the Chicago Film Office.

Screenings of festival films were held on Saturday, April 27 and Sunday, April 28 at the Music Box Theatre. Filmmakers attending CineYouth to present their films included Germany’s Alexander Bergmann, who won the festival’s LGBTQ+ Award for his film Julie, and Connor O’Keefe who won the Chicago Award for his film Our Transition. Sriram Papolu from Ann Arbor, MI attended the festival both to present his short documentary Boober and to participate in the CineYouth Film Pitch at which selected participants presented their works-in-progress to a panel of industry professionals. The winner of the CineYouth Film Pitch was 20-year-old Emily Gray from DePaul University for her project The Scholar.

On Sunday, April 28 CineYouth presented “Cinema of Chicago”, a program of films that showcases the work of a diverse range of filmmakers who call Chicago home. The program featured 7 short films and a post-screening discussion with the filmmakers in attendance including João Pereira-Webber, Emilio Nieto, Christopher Rohrbeck, Natalie Braye, Liliana Bravo, Myles Keogh, and Connor O’Keefe.

CineYouth is sponsored by Columbia College Chicago and Flashpoint Chicago, a Campus of Columbia College Hollywood, with additional support from WTTW, DCASE, and the Illinois Arts Council Agency.

The full line up of 2019 CineYouth award winners is as follows:

**Best Overall Film**

*No Such Sunrise*
Dana Brandes-Simon, Laura Li, Cella Wright | Oberlin, OH | Age 22
Award Partner: Chicago International Film Festival

**Chicago Award**

*Our Transition*
Connor O’Keefe | Chicago, IL | Age 21
Award Partner: Brenda Robinson

**Special Mention: Chicago Award**

*PANZÓN*
Emilio Nieto | Chicago, IL | Age 19

**Best Animation**

*Everyflower*
Cai Yuanqing | China/France | Age 22
Award Partner: Flashpoint Chicago, a Campus of Columbia College Hollywood
Special Mention: Animation
*Pitiguá*
Paula Martínez Cirilo | Puerto Rico | Age 22

**Best Comedy**
*Harls*
Kenzie Sutton | Longwood, FL | Age 21
Award Partner: Harold Ramis Film School

**Best Documentary**
*Lost Time*
Leo Pfeifer | Seattle, WA | Age 20
Award Partner: Columbia College Chicago

**Best Drama**
*Wasteland*
Gustav Bondeson | Sweden | Age 20
Award Partner: Byron and Judy Pollock

Special Mention: Drama
*Ladies Day*
Abena Taylor-Smith | UK | Age 22

**Best Experimental**
*Umbilical Cord to Heaven*
Don Josephus Raphael Eblahan | Philippines | Age 22
Award Partner: Dr. Jennifer S. Kim

**Best Horror**
*Butterfly*
Ella McKeon | Los Angeles, CA | Age 11
Award Partner: Charles Droege and Julie Wroblewski

**Best International**
*Look Into My Eyes*
Students of Rey Pastor High School (Madrid) | Spain | Ages 16-17
Award Partner: Pasfarda Arts & Cultural Exchange

Special Mention: International
*Onye Nmefie (The Trespasser)*
William Boyd | UK | Age 22
Best LGBTQ+
Julie
Alexander Bergmann | Germany | Age 22
Award Partner: Steven H. Kwate

Rising Star Award
Grey Heart
Theo Tapiitz | Los Angeles, CA | Age 15
Award Partner: Chicago International Film Festival Associate Board

Special Mention: Rising Star
Socks
Callahan Bracken | Canada | Age 17

Women in Cinema Award
Wild
Morgana McKenzie | Canada | Age 18
Award Partner: Flashpoint Chicago, a Campus of Columbia College Hollywood

Special Mention: Women in Cinema
Party of Two
Maria Alvarez | Los Angeles, CA | Age 21

Audience Award
Mad Lib Pixie Dream Girl
Kylie Murphy | Shrewsberry, NJ | Age 22

Prodigy Camp Scholarship
Butterfly
Ella McKeon | Los Angeles, CA | Age 11

CineYouth Film Pitch Winner
The Scholar
Emily Gray | Chicago, IL | Age 20

For more information on the CineYouth Festival, visit www.chicagofilmfestival.com/cineyouth.

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CineYouth Sponsors and Partners
The 15th annual CineYouth Festival sponsors include Lead Sponsors: Columbia College Chicago and Flashpoint Chicago, A Campus of Columbia College Hollywood; Media Partner: WTTW; Award Partners: Harold Ramis Film School, Prodigy Camp, Second City Training Center Kid and Teen Program; Host Partner: Music Box Theatre. CineYouth is supported in part by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council Agency.

About CineYouth Festival
CineYouth Festival, founded in 2005 and presented by Cinema/Chicago, is a free three-day international film festival for filmmakers 22-years-old and younger. Held annually in the spring, the festival showcases films created by youth, providing a public platform to highlight the next generation of filmmakers. Select filmmakers are awarded hands-on scholarship and internship opportunities in the industry in order to provide them with meaningful training and experience. CineYouth also presents free filmmaking workshops, discussions, panels and other hands-on development opportunities to inspire creativity in youth. CineYouth celebrated its 15th edition April 26-28, 2019 at Chicago’s iconic Music Box Theatre. For more information, please visit www.chicagofilmfestival.com/cineyouth or follow us on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube.

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, Summer Screenings Program, CineYouth Festival, and year-round Education Program. Celebrating its 55th edition October 16-27, 2019, 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, YouTube and Twitter.