

ALTERNATIVA FILM AWARDS UNVEILS THE SHORTLIST FOR THE INAUGURAL 2023 EDITION

Alternativa Film Awards shortlist includes 14 feature and 7 short films from Central Asia and other Asian countries. The winners will be announced at the first Awards ceremony that will take place in Almaty on December 2, 2023.

The selection committee of the Awards has shortlisted 8 fiction and 6 documentary films: ***Bauryna Salu*** by Askhat Kuchinchirekov (Kazakhstan), ***Bride Kidnapping*** by Mirlan Abdykalykov (Kyrgyzstan), ***The Prisoner of Wakhan*** by Janyl Jusupjan (Kyrgyzstan), ***Cotton 100%*** by Michael Borodin (Uzbekistan), ***Qoryqpa*** by Katerina Suvorova (Kazakhstan), ***Who Is Next?*** by Nurzhamal Karamoldoeva and Sultan Usualiev (Kyrgyzstan), ***Sunday*** by Shokir Kholikov (Uzbekistan), ***Tul*** by Sharipa Urazbayeva (Kazakhstan), ***12 Weeks*** by Anna Isabelle Matutina (Philippines), ***A Childless Village*** by Reza Jamali (Iran), ***Whispers of Fire and Water*** by Lubdhak Chatterjee (India), ***No Winter Holidays*** by Rajan Kathet, Sunir Pandey (Nepal), ***Haeil*** by Yujeong Noh, Yeeun Lee, Dabeen An, Soyeon Kim (South Korea), ***Joseph's Son*** by Haobam Paban Kumar (India).

The nominees for the Shorts Award are the films exclusively from Central Asia countries: ***A Birdsong*** by Tolomush Zhanybekov (Kyrgyzstan), ***Bride Stone*** by Guzel Duishenkulova (Kyrgyzstan), ***Dordoi City*** by Tomiris Orozoeva (Kyrgyzstan), ***Fairy Tale*** by Kamila Rustambekova (Uzbekistan), ***Sary Omir*** by Rustem Dastanuly, ***Son of The Sun*** by Dastan Madalbekov (Kyrgyzstan), ***The Late Wind*** by Shugyla Serzhan (Kazakhstan).

The shortlist of the nominees for the Alternativa Film Awards is available on its official webpage alternativa.film. It represents an independent expert opinion and has been selected by the committee consisting of film critics and journalists, curators, and artistic and programming directors of film festivals from Central Asia and other Asian countries. This year, there were more than 350 submissions from 25 countries.

Gulnara Abikeyeva, member of the Selection Committee: "Films that we selected are, to a certain extent, an alternative to those that are predominantly screened in the cinemas in Central Asia, an alternative to pure entertainment. Appealing to social issues, they inspire us to reflect, take a pause, and reconsider the existing reality. And that means that these are the films that transform our lives. We call this a social impact: on people, on society, on each of us. Human rights, the role of the individual in transforming reality, migration, gender equity, and civilization issues are the topics that are vividly reflected and illuminated in the chosen films. Are we satisfied with the selection? By all means, it resulted not only in the quantity, but in the quality of the submitted films, and thus reassured us in the importance and relevance of our Awards."

Liza Surganova, head of Alternativa Film Project: "We're happy that within the first year of existence of the Alternativa Film Awards, we succeeded in cementing its international status, having received submissions from 25 countries. At the same time, we have maintained the focus on films from Central Asia, with more than half of the nominated feature films representing this region. We're grateful to the members of the independent Selection Committee. Together, they watched more than 350 submitted films and chose works on

different topics from various countries. They paid attention both to the already acclaimed filmmakers and to those who are at the beginning of their professional path. We're looking forward to the decision of the International Jury who will define the winners of the Alternativa Film Awards inaugural edition."

Alternativa Film Awards is an alternative system of recognition that honors artistic merits, filmmaking potential, and work that amplifies the social impact of cinema, as well as more mainstream films with wide audience appeal.

The winners will be chosen by the independent International Jury of socially responsible film directors and producers from Asia and Europe, as well as social activists, community leaders, and NGO representatives. Director and producer Brillante Mendoza serves as Head of the Jury. He is the first Filipino to receive the Best Director award at the Cannes Film Festival for his film *Kinatay* in 2009 and the only Filipino to receive France's Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Arts et Lettres (Knight of the Order of Arts and Letters).

The organizing committee of the Alternativa Film Awards does not interfere in this process and does not participate in defining the nominees and laureates of the Awards.

The total prize fund stands at \$100,000, to be equally divided among the five festival winners so as not to establish hierarchy. Rather than the traditional Best Picture, Best Director, and Best Actor prizes, the ceremony will bestow awards for titles and talents exemplifying cultural, societal, and industry impact. Evergreen awards include the **Spotlight Award**, which honors a film that shines a light on a topic or story under the public's radar, and the **Future Voices Award**, given to a debutant filmmaker with the potential to contribute to changes in the film industry and society in general. Other distinctions include the **Alter Award**, which commemorates a film that addresses critical social issues (such as human rights, migration, war crimes, and the environment), and the **Nativa Award**, which designates a film that touches upon topics of national or cultural identity. The **Short Award** will be given to a short film produced exclusively in Central Asia and aims to support local talents in their pursuit of new paths.

Besides that, a special prize for Central Asian filmmakers **Resonance** is designated to celebrate an outstanding success with an audience. This prize is not part of the open call and does not carry a monetary reward.

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Alternativa Film Awards is one of the pillars of the newly launched Alternativa Film Project by the global technology company inDrive. This is a new system of initiatives aimed to support and promote filmmakers, as well as discover new voices from developing but less visible film industries. Its mission is to help talents whose work can enrich our perception of the world enter the limelight. Committed to inDrive's mission to challenge injustice, it seeks to build an impactful international project that will transform the status quo in the world of cinema by boosting the development of local industries and communities. The project is a nomadic initiative that will gradually expand its geography. In 2023, it kicks off in Central Asia with three film labs and the first international awards ceremony, to be held in Kazakhstan.

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