



From left to right: festival director Bero Beyer with Tiger Award winner Cai Chengjie (filmmaker) and Jiao Feng (producer/cinematographer)

47th International Film Festival Rotterdam

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During the Awards Ceremony on Friday 2 February, International Film Festival Rotterdam (IFFR) announced the winner of the Hivos Tiger Competition 2018: The Widowed Witch by Cai Chengjie won the prestigious prize. Rami Alayan was awarded the Special Jury Award for exceptional artistic achievement for his screenplay of The Reports on Sarah and Saleem. Gustav Möller's The Guilty was the audience favourite, and therefore winner of the IFFR Audience Award. The Bright Future Award was picked up by Tiago Melo for his film Azougue Nazaré.

This year's VPRO Big Screen Award went to **Nina** by Olga Chajdas; the film therefore will be broadcast on Dutch TV and released in Dutch theatres. All Hubert Bals Fund-supported films screening at IFFR 2018 were eligible for the Hubert Bals Fund Audience Award. This year, the award was won by **The Reports on Sarah and Saleem** by Muayad Alayan.

In congratulating all winners, Festival Director Bero Beyer said: "We're very happy that the strong winners represent the bold spirit of the festival's entire programming. They are filmmakers, both emerging and established, who use their talent to deliver a new view on our world. As diverse as they are, there seems to be a common thread: the beautiful and human thread of cinema!"



Clockwise: The Widowed Witch, The Reports on Sarah and Saleem, Nina, Azougue Nazaré

Two new awards were presented in 2018. **Newsreel 63 – The Train of Shadows** by Nika Autor won the Found Footage Award and **Joy in People** by Oscar Hudson won the Voices Short Audience Award.

Two awards from critics' organisations were presented. The FIPRESCI Award went to **Balekempa** by Ere Gowda. The KNF Award, given by the Circle of Dutch Film Journalists, was won by **Zama** by Lucrecia Martel.

Nervous Translation by Shireen Seno won the NETPAC Award for best Asian film and the winner of the IFFR Youth Jury Award is **The Guilty** by Gustav Möller.



Clockwise: Joy in People, Newsreel 63 – The Train of Shadows, Balekempa, Nervous Translation, Zama, Nervous Translation, The Guilty

Hivos Tiger Competition

The Hivos Tiger Award is IFFR's main, most prestigious award and includes a cash prize of €40,000 to be divided between filmmaker and producer. The Tiger jury also chooses an outstanding artistic achievement within the Tiger competition to receive a Special Jury Award worth €10,000.

Winner Hivos Tiger Award: [The Widowed Witch](#) by [Cai Chengjie](#)

Jury report: “This year’s Hivos Tiger Award winner is a film of epic dimensions with a narrative that is greater than one person or moment. It takes a feminist viewpoint with a strong central character, who refuses to be a victim. The struggle of her journey is framed in an emotional way that depicts her complexity, while never becoming sentimental, and the film even contains a laconic sense of humour. Its bold vision, created by a lyrical layering of cinematographic elements, makes this film stand out.”

Winner Special Jury Award: the screenplay of **The Reports on Sarah and Saleem** written by Rami Alayan (dir. **Muayad Alayan**)

Jury report: “This well-crafted screenplay shows us four humans, each with their own flaws and desires, who have to face the consequences of their actions in a complicated, divided world. The screenplay intertwines the personal and the political and manages to balance a complex plot with convincing characters. This proves to be the basis for a strong film by a talented director and an excellent cast.” **Jury:** Anthea Kennedy, Paula Astorga, Job ter Burg, Valeska Grisebach and Kim Kyungmook.

Bright Future Award

Filmmakers presenting the world or international premiere of their first feature-length film in the Bright Future Main Programme are eligible for the Bright Future Award worth €10,000.

Winner: **Azougue Nazaré** by **Tiago Melo**

Jury report: “For its singular vision, electrifying cinematic language, depiction of the explosive coexistence between good and evil, and for its ability to incorporate supernatural elements in an almost anthropological portrait of a small community, we proudly present the Bright Future Award to Tiago Melo for his film **Azougue Nazaré**.”

Special mention: “What begins as a personal quest gradually transforms into a reflection on loneliness, belonging, and existential homecoming. For this reason, the jury felt compelled to give a special mention to **Malene Choi Jensen**’s **The Return**.”

Jury: Ania Trzebiatowska, Nathalie Alonse Casale and Ryan Krivoshey.

VPRO Big Screen Award

The winner of the VPRO Big Screen Award is chosen by an audience jury of five enthusiastic film-lovers. The film wins a guaranteed release in Dutch theatres and will be broadcast on Dutch public television channel NPO 2. Of the €30,000 in prize money, €15,000 is spent on the winning film’s theatrical release and €15,000 goes towards the production of the filmmaker’s next project.

Winner: **Nina** by **Olga Chajdas**

Jury report: “It was a close call and we'd like to give a special mention to the runner-up, **The Guilty** by Gustav Möller. But another film ultimately connected with us in a more instinctive way. The winning film is a universal story about love, identity and hope. It's about internalising society's expectations and struggling to break free and be true to yourself. The story avoids easy solutions and gives us a somewhat idealised version of the world, thereby avoiding the stereotypical struggles and making it a more personal experience. It's also visually beautiful with lingering and intimate shots and gives us wonderful performances by the main actors.”

Jury: Miriam van den Brink, Nazanin Hedayati, Jasper Jacobs, Mees van Rooij and Tessa Verrijp.

IFFR Audience Award

Using tear-to-vote slips, visitors can rate the films they've watched. The film with the highest rating at the end of the festival wins the IFFR Audience Award, worth €10,000.

Winner: **The Guilty** by [Gustav Möller](#)

Hubert Bals Fund Audience Award

The highest-rated film supported by the Hubert Bals Fund wins the Hubert Bals Fund Audience Award, worth €10,000.

Winner: **The Reports on Sarah and Saleem** by [Muayad Alayan](#)

Voices Short Audience Award

The new Voices Short Audience Award is for narrative-driven short films from the festival's Voices section. IFFR 2018 has screened five different Voices Short compilations, totalling over 20 films from 18 countries. The audience chose the winner (prize money €2,500) using voting cards after each screening.

Winner: **Joy in People** by [Oscar Hudson](#)

FIPRESCI Award

The FIPRESCI Award is given to the filmmaker of the best film among all the world premieres in Bright Future (excluding the Hivos Tiger Competition), by the jury of the Fédération Internationale de la Presse Cinématographique (FIPRESCI).

Winner: **Balekempa** by [Ere Gowda](#)

Jury report: “For its subtle and delightful portrayal of a universal theme against the background of a rich local culture.”

Jury: Beáta-Hajnalka Berecki, Andrea Crozzoli, Paul Van Es, Fahmim Ferdous, Tara Judah, Paige Lim, Flavio Lira, Wilfred Okiche, Eithne Mary O'Neill and Héctor Oyarzún Galaz.

KNF Award

The KNF Award is given to the best Dutch, or Dutch co-produced, feature film that is selected for IFFR 2018, as awarded by a jury from the Circle of Dutch Film Journalists.

Winner: [Zama](#) by [Lucrecia Martel](#)

Jury report: “This bold project illustrates how co-producing can allow an immensely gifted filmmaker to enter different territory, just as the film itself transports the audience to an alien world. Without signposts or hand-holding, viewers are challenged to use all their senses in order to navigate this foreign land. The filmmaker’s sensory approach to cinema also poses a challenge to us critics; we’ve been struggling to find words that do justice to a film that ultimately can only be experienced.”

Jury: Elise van Dam, Hedwig van Driel, Fritz de Jong, Sasja Koetsier and Sabeth Snijders.

NETPAC Award

The NETPAC Award is presented to the best Asian feature film world premiering at IFFR by a jury from the Network for the Promotion of Asian Cinema.

Winner: [Nervous Translation](#) by [Shireen Seno](#)

Jury report: “For its singularly original representation of childhood that beautifully captures a unique view of the world – one that is full of contradictory interactions, introspection, social and political dissonance, and disquietude. With this film, the director has succeeded in creating an unforgettable cinematic universe.”

Jury: Susanna Harutyunyan, Sonali Joshi and Andrei Vasilenko.

IFFR Youth Jury Award

The film that makes the biggest impression on this jury of young people is awarded the IFFR Youth Jury Award.

Winner: [The Guilty](#) by [Gustav Möller](#)

Jury report: “This film captivated us from beginning to end and was able to make the audience aware of its own preconceived notions of reality. The director deliberately withholds information from the audience, thereby creating uncertainty which leaves room for imagination. The film is a masterclass in suspense; it managed to keep our eyes glued to the screen throughout the entire film. Furthermore, we believe that this film will be attractive to a younger audience, as it is a good introduction into arthouse cinema.”

Jury: Borah Spoorenberg, Jan van der Meer, Lana Kujundzic, Noah Bos, Rahab Ahmend and Tsania Hisbaron.

Found Footage Award

The new Found Footage Award is granted to a filmmaker who has made outstanding use of archive material. The award, worth €2,500, is supported by the Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision.

Winner: [Newsreel 63 – The Train of Shadows](#) by [Nika Autor](#)

Jury report: “This film convincingly introduces a new critical paradigm in which every new image questions the entire history of film as a medium and its role within society. It does so through brilliant use of the train as a rich metaphor for human aspiration and technological advancement, connecting the first Lumière film all the way through to the current practice of shooting smartphone footage to document refugees on their quest for a better life.”

Jury: Nicole Brenez, Maarten Brinkerink and John Goff.

