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HBF announces first 2021 selection

Seven female and five male directors from countries including Lesotho, Brazil, Thailand and Kazakhstan awarded in funding round

As International Film Festival Rotterdam (IFFR) prepares to celebrate its 50th edition in June, its Hubert Bals Fund (HBF) awards ten film projects €10,000 each for Script and Project Development. Out of 373 applications, a committee of industry experts from across the globe selected ten projects from countries including Lesotho, Brazil, Thailand and Kazakhstan. The selection consists of five female and five male directors, with four of those first time feature filmmakers, three second time, and three at more advanced stages in their careers. In addition, two projects by female directors are the first to receive the new figure of €75,000 from the Netherlands Film Fund (NFF) as part of the NFF+HBF Co-production Scheme.

Marit van den Elshout, head of IFFR Pro: “No matter what stage you are at in your career, your previous successes, or your future potential, no project is easy to bring to fruition. We have worked extremely hard to spread our support as far as we can take it in this latest selection, across a wide range of projects that demonstrate diversity in their regions, backgrounds and career stages. The increased contribution to projects selected for our co-production scheme with the Netherlands Film Fund recognises our success in inspiring creative collaborations between HBF-supported filmmakers and producers in the Netherlands.”

Esther Bannenberg, interim HBF manager: “This selection round we experienced once more the demand for assistance from the Hubert Bals Fund, which maintains its vital role in supporting filmmakers. Despite tough political and economical situations, the submission of truly meaningful projects persists. We hope that this contribution continues to inspire the development and realisation of such work.

HBF Script and Project Development

A Script and Project Development grant provides funding of up to €10,000 to support a narrative feature film in its early stages, for example in the further development of a script or financing strategy. The former Bright Future and Voices categories have been discontinued to align with IFFR’s wider programme structure, meaning applications in this round from first and second time directors were assessed in tandem with those from more experienced directors.

The selection of ten projects includes the latest by Lesotho's Lemohang Jeremiah Mosese, **The Chattering of Teeth**, whose film **This Is Not a Burial, It's a Resurrection** screened at IFFR 2020. Natalya Meshchaninova from Russia receives support for **My Little Nighttime Secret**, after feature selections at IFFR in 2014 and 2019. Filipino filmmaker, alumni of the Résidence de la Cinéfondation du Festival de Cannes, and recipient of the Berlinale Silver Bear Jury Prize for Short Film in 2020, Rafael Manuel, is supported for his debut feature **Patrimonio**.

The HBF also celebrates a new partnership with Projeto Paradiso which can offer extra support to the two selected projects from Brazil. Director, playwright and actress Grace Passô is supported for her debut feature **Deaf Love 1500**, after she starred in **Temporada** by André Novais Oliveira which screened at IFFR 2019. Maya Da-Rin, whose debut **The Fever** received an HBF development grant before it screened at IFFR 2020, is awarded support for her second feature titled **Nightsong**.

The HBF is also thankful for the engagement of the Tiger Film Mecenaat and the Netherlands Film Fund who make these funding schemes possible.

Script and Project Development full selection:

- **The Chattering of Teeth**, Lemohang Jeremiah Mosese, Lesotho/South Africa
- **Deaf Love 1500**, Grace Passô, Brazil
- **Flat Girls**, Jirassaya Wongsutin, Thailand/Singapore
- **Guras**, Saurav Rai, India/Nepal
- **In the Shadow of the Horns**, Ognjen Glavonić, Serbia
- **My Little Nighttime Secret**, Natalya Meshchaninova, Russia
- **Nightsong**, Maya Da-Rin, Brazil
- **Patrimonio**, Rafael Manuel, Philippines/Singapore
- **Te veré mañana**, Santiago Loza, Argentina
- **A Winner is Seen at the Start**, Zhannat Alshanova, Kazakhstan

NFF+HBF Co-production Scheme

The NFF+HBF Co-production Scheme is a joint initiative by the Netherlands Film Fund (NFF) and the Hubert Bals Fund (HBF) to support projects with Dutch co-production partners that were previously supported by the HBF in the development phase. The two projects selected for this round will be the first to receive the increased award of €75,000. These are:

- **The City is a Battlefield**, Mouly Surya, Indonesia/Philippines/Singapore/Netherlands
- **The Station**, Sara Ishaq, Yemen/Jordan/France/Netherlands

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