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NEWS

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52nd CHICAGO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES WINNERS

*Romanian Oscar submission SIERANEVADA takes top honors;
Asghar Farhadi, Rebecca Hall and Finland's Oscar submission
THE HAPPIEST DAY IN THE LIFE OF OLLI MÄKI among winners*

Chicago (October 21, 2016) - The Chicago International Film Festival today announces the complete list of award winners honored at the 52nd edition, which runs through October 27. The Romanian drama **SIERANEVADA takes home top honors in the Festival's prestigious International Feature Competition category, earning the Gold Hugo for Best Film.** The film's director Cristi Puiu is also awarded Silver Hugo Best Director honors. The Festival's **Jury Prize, helmed by Jury President Geraldine Chaplin, is awarded to Asghar Farhadi's THE SALESMAN.** The **Gold Hugo in the New Directors Competition is presented to Juho Kuosmanen's THE HAPPIEST DAY IN THE LIFE OF OLLI MÄKI,** while the **Gold Hugo for Best Documentary is awarded to Festival world premiere SAMUEL IN THE CLOUDS.** The full list of award winners is as follows; notes from the Festival Juries are included below.

International Feature Competition - Honoring those superb new films from around the world representing a wide variety of styles and genres.

Gold Hugo for Best Film: *Sieranevada*

Silver Hugo Special Jury Prize: *The Salesman*, dir. Asghar Farhadi

Silver Hugo Best Director: Cristi Puiu, *Sieranevada*

Silver Hugo Best Actor: Adrian Titieni, *Graduation*

Silver Hugo Best Actress: Rebecca Hall, *Christine*

Silver Plaque Best Screenplay: Cristian Mungiu, *Graduation*

Silver Plaque Best Cinematography: Kacper Fertacz, *The Last Family*

Silver Plaque Best Art Direction: Jagna Janicka, *The Last Family*

Founder's Award - *Paradise*, dir. Andrei Konchalovsky - Germany/Russia

The Founder's Award is given to one film across all categories that captures the spirit of the Chicago International Film Festival for its unique and innovative approach to the art of the moving image.

New Directors Competition - Recognizing emerging talents in filmmakers presenting their first or second feature films.

Gold Hugo: *The Happiest Day in the Life of Olli Mäki*, dir. Juho Kuosmanen

Silver Hugo: *Fado*, dir. Jonas Rothlaender

Roger Ebert Award: *Kills on Wheels*, dir. Atilla Till

Documentary Competition - Awarded to documentaries that expertly craft their stories with honesty and candor.



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Gold Hugo: *Samuel in the Clouds*, dir. Pieter van Eecke

Silver Hugo: *Where You're Meant to Be*, dir. Paul Fegan

Chicago Award - Celebrates the tireless efforts of regional talents who contribute to the art of cinema.

Among Wolves, dir. Shawn Convey

Honorable Mention: *Fragments*, dir. Carlos Cova

Q Hugo Awards - Honoring those films in the OutLook program featuring LGBT stories and perspectives.

Gold Q Hugo: *Heartstone*, dir. Guðmundur Arnar Guðmundsson

Silver Q Hugo: *PARIS 05:59*, dirs. Olivier Ducastel and Jacques Martineau

Short Film Awards

Live Action Gold Hugo: *Madre*

Live Action Silver Hugo: *Rhapsody*

Documentary (Gold Plaque): *Moriom*

Documentary (Silver Hugo): *Home of the Brave*

Animation (Gold Plaque): *Blind Vaysha*

Animation (Silver Hugo): *Moms on Fire*

Animation (Honorable Mention): *I, Destini*

Festival honors were presented at Awards Night on Friday, October 21, a reception and ceremony at the Festival's host venue, AMC River East in the heart of downtown Chicago. The evening, presented by Chloe Wine Collection, was hosted by Richard Roeper of the *Chicago Sun-Times*. The 52nd Chicago International Film Festival continues through October 27, with several films yet to screen, including a **special presentation of MOONLIGHT with filmmaker Barry Jenkins, cast and crew in attendance** and a selection of award winners slated for the Festival's "Best of the Fest" series, providing another opportunity for Chicago audiences to catch these acclaimed films.

Below, the Festival Juries comment on their selections:

International Feature Competition

Gold Hugo for Best Film: *Sieranevada*, dir. Cristi Puiu - Romania

The registration of what seems to be reality instead of fiction on any level is shown as if it took no effort at all. This film is an incredible cinematic achievement and fully immerses the audience in a family gathering and makes us aware of them not only on a personal level but also embodies the spirit of the times we live in. The award for Best Film goes to *Sieranevada* by Cristi Puiu.

Silver Hugo Special Jury Prize: *The Salesman*, dir. Asghar Farhadi - Iran

A film that gives us unique insight into the problems that arise from a case of sexual assault and the way Iranian society deals with it. At the same time, the film is an immensely powerful tale of revenge that is universal and, in this case, told in a realistic way which features extremely painful dilemmas. It is a tale which uncovers the human condition on many levels. The Special Jury Prize goes to **The Salesman** by Asghar Farhadi.

Silver Hugo Best Director: Cristi Puiu, *Sieranevada* (Romania)

For seamless control over a large cast that is as natural and true to life as it can be and for the placement of the camera as an extremely intimate observer. The award for Best Director goes to **Cristi Puiu** for *Sieranevada*.

Silver Hugo Best Actor: Adrian Titieni, *Graduation* (Romania/France)

For the subtle yet hard-hitting impression he delivered of a father getting himself into corruption for which he pays a heavy price. His portrayal of his love for his daughter as well as his pushiness to control her future is extremely captivating. The award for Best Actor goes to **Adrian Titieni** in *Graduation*.

Best Actress: Rebecca Hall, *Christine* (U.S.)

For a truly chilling performance depicting a woman on a downwards spiral. Both her neurotic outbursts and also her fragility have made an unforgettable impression on us. The award for Best Actress goes to **Rebecca Hall** in *Christine*.

Best Screenplay: Cristian Mungiu, *Graduation*

For a narration that works with suspense as well as slice of life, creating a who-dun'-it story structure while staying emotionally extremely close to the main character, the prize goes to **Cristian Mungiu** for the masterfully narrated *Graduation*.

Best Cinematography: Kacper Fertacz, *The Last Family* (Poland)

For creating a beautifully claustrophobic atmosphere which both sets the mood of the time as well as being incredibly immersive, showing a neighborhood in all its detail. The award for Best Cinematography goes to **Kacper Fertacz** for *The Last Family*.

Best Art Direction: Jagna Janicka, *The Last Family*

For the extremely detailed portrayal a family's living space over decades; chaotic yet controlled. The award for Best Production Design goes to **Jagna Janicka** for *The Last Family*.

New Directors Competition (Sponsored by Columbia College Chicago)

Gold Hugo: *The Happiest Day in the Life of Olli Mäki*, dir Juho Kuosmanen - Finland

The Happiest Day in the Life of Olli Mäki boasts an astonishing confidence of vision and execution with its story of a boxer struggling to focus on his preparation for the world championship while his feelings for a woman are threatening to eclipse that very ambition. Told with gorgeous black & white cinematography, pure emotion and a sense of humor, ***The Happiest Day in the Life of Olli Mäki*** offers nuanced and naturalistic performances and originality with its many potent choices. It is a fresh film for all of the senses.

Silver Hugo: *Fado*, dir. Jonas Rothlaender - Germany

Fado is a disturbing yet compelling exploration of jealousy that plunges the audience into the emotional turmoil of the characters psyche. Assured direction by Jonas Rothlaender takes the viewer on a reluctant yet compelling journey that concisely articulates the dangers of extreme male entitlement.

Roger Ebert Award: *Kills on Wheels*, dir. Atilla Till - Hungary

From the Jury: Attila Till's genre-mashing and certainly surprising *Kills on Wheels* takes us through the looking glass into the world of handicapped assassins. A highly entertaining dark comedy and action-thriller, the film is distinguished by the equanimity with which it treats its protagonists, who are rarely seen on the silver screen. This is a movie with cojones.

Documentary Competition (Sponsored by SundanceNow Doc Club)

Gold Hugo: *Samuel in the Clouds*, dir. Pieter van Eecke - Belgium/Netherlands

The Gold Hugo goes to a visually astonishing and quietly heartbreaking film that makes you experience climate change, not just think about it. In a humble cabin at the top of the world, science and spirituality might offer possible solutions to the frightening changes that endanger our future. Subtle yet urgent, modest yet ambitious, this film challenges us to confront the reality of global warming, but like its main character, it encourages us to keep hope alive.

Silver Hugo: *Where You're Meant to Be*, dir. Paul Fegan - U.K.

The Silver Hugo goes to a film that presents complex contradictory characters with a light touch. It is surprisingly emotional and celebrates the risks involved in making art, and with great spirit, brings the past to life.

Chicago Award

Among Wolves, dir. Shawn Convey

Among Wolves won for its strong storytelling, lyrical moments, and very human story. The director chose a difficult and largely unknown topic for most viewers and showed the complexity of the members of a Bosnian motorcycle club. By showing us the complexity of these individuals, and their moral convictions, we see a glimpse of ourselves, human, flawed, but engaged in the world.

Honorable Mention: *Fragments*, dir. Carlos Cova

Fragments is receiving a honorable mention from the jury for its beautiful and unique storytelling and important subject matter.

Q Hugo Awards

Gold Q Hugo: *Heartstone*, dir. Guðmundur Arnar Guðmundsson - Iceland

For its piercingly honest portrait of adolescent sexuality, its alternately tough and warm empathy, and for how it effortlessly and evocatively captures a place and time, the Gold Q Hugo Awards goes to *Heartstone*.

Silver Q Hugo: *Paris 05:59*, dirs. Olivier Ducastel, Jacques Martineau - France

For its erotic daring and its exploration of time and passion in their rawest and most intimate forms, the Silver Q Hugo goes to *Paris 05:59*.

Short Film Awards

Live Action Gold Hugo: *Madre*

Madre is a powerful portrayal of the emotional trauma and desperation of a teenage girl exploited by the porn industry. The film masterfully depicts the innocence and the desperation of the young girl, her inner pain, and the brutality of the business with a subtle quiet intimate approach, (and minimal use of actors and settings) through beautiful cinematography that moves from brightness towards darkness as the film concludes with the girl's moments of realization. For this we award the Gold Hugo to **Madre** by Simon Mesa Soto.

Live Action Silver Hugo: *Rhapsody*

Rhapsody is an engaging and charming look at the life of a lonely man whose only connection to the outside world is his neighbor's baby. The film successfully shows his warm joyful time with the baby as well as his distance/alienation from others. The tiny fragile body of the baby echoes the inner gentle side of the large man. For this we award **Rhapsody** a Silver Hugo.

Documentary - Gold Plaque: *Moriom*

This beautifully photographed, yet harrowing film challenges our understanding of the truth when a young Bangladeshi woman shares a story of her violent assault, changing the course of her life and her parents perception of their daughter forever. For this we award a Gold Plaque to **Moriom** by Francesca Scalisi and Mark Olexa.

Documentary - Silver Hugo: *Home of the Brave*

This film celebrates our universal language and cross cultural connection to sports through members of a small town in Sweden in their preparation for the gathering of the century that leads to the homecoming of the local hero, where the people of the town ultimately learn and change their own life aspirations in the process. We award the Silver Hugo to **Home of the Brave** by Gustav Hugosson & Andreas Nilsson.

Animation - Gold Plaque: *Blind Vaysha*

This animated short is presented through a compelling woodcut style to tell a simple fable of vision and blindness, through a character who can only see the past in one eye and future in the other. The sumptuous expression of the animation has a fluid beauty which culminates in a vital and necessary philosophy. For evoking the importance of staying in focus, in an unforgettable visual journey, we award a gold plaque to **Blind Vaysha** by Theodore Ushev.

Animation: Silver Hugo: *Moms on Fire*

This is an animated short which uses stop motion claymation and creates a audacious and authentic commentary on pregnancy, family values, isolation and everyday mendacity. Using ordinary settings, intricately detailed art, unique character design, and a hilarious screenplay, the filmmaker constructs an evolved sensibility for a familiar animated format. Sex, marshmallows and Jamaica will never be the same, and for this we award the Silver Hugo to **Moms on Fire** by Joanna Rytel

Honorable Distinction: *I, Destini*

This use of the short animated platform, with hypnotic design and illustration, demonstrates the African American experience through the plights and anguish of one family, as they maintain their will to survive while one of their own is incarcerated. For expressing a commonality between all humans, during the current climate of profiling and misunderstanding in race relations, we award a Special Mention to **I, Destini** by Destini Riley and Nicholas Pilarski.

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About Cinema/Chicago

Cinema/Chicago, the presenting organization of the Chicago International Film Festival, is a year round not-for-profit arts and education organization dedicated to fostering better communication between people of diverse cultures through the art of film and the moving image. Proceeds from the Festival benefit Cinema/Chicago's programs throughout the year, including the International Screenings Program, the Chicago International Television Festival, CineYouth Festival, the Education Program and Members Film Screening Series. Celebrating its 52nd edition October 13-27, the Chicago International Film Festival is North America's longest-running competitive film festival.

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