

Press Release



Jury for the Best First Feature Award

Since 2006, when it introduced the Best First Feature Award, the Berlinale has been even more committed to supporting the next generation of film makers. The award is endowed with 50,000 Euros, donated by the GWFF (Gesellschaft zur Wahrnehmung von Film- und Fernsehrecht), a society dedicated to safeguarding film and television rights. The prize money is to be split between the producer and the director of the winning film. Additionally, the director will be awarded with a high-quality viewfinder as both a useful instrument and memorable trophy.

Festival Director Dieter Kosslick and the heads of the *Competition*, *Panorama*, *Forum*, *Generation*, and *Perspektive Deutsches Kino* sections have nominated a total of 18 directorial debuts. The winners will be announced at the official Award Ceremony in the Berlinale Palast on February 20.

A three-person jury will decide on the Best First Feature Award:

Enrico Lo Verso (Italy)

Enrico Lo Verso was born in Palermo in 1964 and grew up in Syracuse. His first leading role, in *The Stolen Children* (1992) by Gianni Amelio, brought the Sicilian actor to international attention as well as gaining him nominations for the European Film Award and the Golden Globes in the Best Actor category. Following this he appeared before the camera for Gérard Corbiau in *Farinelli* (1994), Gianni Amelio in *Lamerica* (1994, European Film Award) and Ridley Scott in *Hannibal* (2001). He went on to later film with Giuseppe Tornatore *Baaria* (2009). In addition, he has worked with such greats as Ettore Scola and Ricky Tognazzi. In 2012 audiences saw him in Edoardo Ponti's *The Nightshift Belongs to the Stars*, which won the Best Narrative Short award at the Tribeca Film Festival.

Ursula Meier (Switzerland / France)

Part Swiss part French director Ursula Meier studied film at the Institut des Arts de Diffusion (IAD) in Belgium. She was second assistant director on two films by Alain Tanner while also making her own short films. After two documentaries, she directed the TV film *Strong Shoulders* for Arte. Her first feature for the big screen, *Home*, premiered at the 2008 Cannes Film Festival Semaine de la Critique. Her next film, *Sister*, was shown in *Competition* at the 2012 Berlinale and won a Silver Bear Special Award. Both films were the Swiss submissions for Best Foreign Language Film Oscar, *Home* in 2009 and *Sister* in 2013. Ursula Meier directed the *Quiet*

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Mujo segment of the omnibus film *Bridges of Sarajevo* presented in official selection at the 2014 Cannes Film Festival. Ursula Meier was at the 2015 Berlinale with her documentary short *Kacey Mottet Klein, Birth of an Actor (Generation)*.

Michel Franco (Mexico)

Director and producer Michel Franco was born in Mexico City and started making films whilst he was still a student. After various short films and commercials, he celebrated his feature debut in 2009 with *Daniel & Ana*, which was invited to the Directors' Fortnight sidebar in Cannes. Three years later he received the Un Certain Regard Award for *After Lucia*, also in Cannes. In 2015 he returned to the Croisette, where his *Chronic*, with Tim Roth in the lead role, won the Best Screenplay Award in the Competition. That same year *600 Miles*, which Franco produced and was directed by Gabriel Ripstein, screened in the *Panorama* section of the Berlinale, winning the award for Best First Feature. Franco was also involved as a producer in the Venezuelan-Mexican coproduction *Desde allá* (D: Lorenzo Vigas), which won the Golden Lion at the 2015 Venice Film Festival.

The following 18 films are nominated for the Best First Feature Award:

Competition (2)

Genius - United Kingdom / USA

By Michael Grandage

With Colin Firth, Jude Law, Nicole Kidman, Laura Linney, Guy Pearce

Inhebbek Hedi (Hedî) - Tunisia / Belgium / France

By Mohamed Ben Attia

With Majd Mastoura, Rym Ben Messaoud, Sabah Bouzouita, Hakim Boumessoudi, Omnia Ben Ghali

Panorama (5)

Aloys - Swiss / France

By Tobias Nölle

With Georg Friedrich, Tilde von Overbeck

Já, Olga Hepnarová (I, Olga Hepnarová) - Czech Republic / Poland / Slovak Republic / France

By Tomáš Weinreb, Petr Kazda

With Michalina Olszanska, Marta Mazurek, Ondrej Malý



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Nakom - Ghana / USA

By Kelly Daniela Norris, TW Pittman

With Jacob Ayanaba, Grace Ayariga, Abdul Aziz, Justina Kulidu, Shetu Musah, Esther Issaka, Thomas Kulidu, James Azudago, Felicia Awinbe, Sumaila Ndaago

San Fu Tian (Dog Days) - Hong Kong, China / People's Republic of China

By Jordan Schiele

With Huang Lu, Tian Mu Chen, Luo Lan Shan

Shelley - Denmark / Sweden

By Ali Abbasi

With Ellen Dorrit Petersen, Cosmina Stratan, Peter Christoffersen

Forum (4)

Akher ayam el madina (In the Last Days of the City) - Egypt / Germany / United Kingdom / United Arab Emirates

By Tamer El Said

With Khalid Abdalla, Laila Samy, Hanan Youssef, Maryam Saleh, Hayder Helo

Barakah yoqabil Barakah (Barakah Meets Barakah) - Saudi Arabia

By Mahmoud Sabbagh

With Hisham Fageeh, Fatima AlBanawi, Sami Hifny

Deadweight - Germany / Finland

By Axel Koenzen

With Tommi Korpela, Ema Vetean, Archie Alemania, Jeanne Balibar

Zhī fán yè mào (Life after Life) - People's Republic of China

By Zhang Hanyi

With Zhang Li, Zhang Mingjun, Wang Ji Shan, Wie Xiao Min, Zhang Zhi Min

Generation (5)

6A - Sweden

By Peter Modestij

With Emine Özkan, Tyra Olin, Omeya Lundqvist, Caroline Söderström



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Rara - Chile / Argentina

By Pepa San Martín

With Julia Lübbert, Emilia Ossandón, Mariana Loyola, Agustina Muñoz

Valderama - Iran

Von Abbas Amini

Mit Hamed Alipour, Nafiseh Zare, Gity Ghasemi, Assadolah Monjazi

Woorideul (The World of Us) - Republic of Korea (South Korea)

By Yoon Ga-eun

With Choi Soo-in, Seol Hye-in, Lee Seo-yeon

Zhaleika - Germany

By Eliza Petkova

With Anna Manolova, Snezhina Petrova, Mihail Stoyanov, Stoyko Ivanov

Perspektive Deutsches Kino (2)

Agonie (Agony) - Germany

By David Clay Diaz

With Samuel Schneider, Alexander Srtschin, Alexandra Schmidt

Meteorstraße (Meteor Street) - Germany

By Aline Fischer

With Hussein Eliraqui, Oktay Inanc Özdemir, Bodo Goldbeck

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