

MINUTES OF THE JURY

Mountainfilm Graz 2017



Grand Prix Graz

Magnetic Mountains
Steve Wakeford

14.-18. November 2017
www.mountainfilm.com

This film about extreme mountaineering starts, like many others like it, with the definition of an Alpine goal and the preparations to reach it. However, after a calamity, the film takes a 180° turn and deflects from documenting a difficult climb to focusing on a journey into the psyche of the protagonist. The projected ascent and photo of a successful summit attempt turns out to become a descent into the depth of a human soul. This film does not only answer the question about the meaning of taking such a risk, it also answers the question which almost all submitted films deal with: Why?

Therefore, the Grand Prix Graz 2017 goes to Steve Wakeford for Magnetic Mountains.

Category A

Alpinism and Expeditions

Ninì
Gigi Giustiniani

Making such a film requires courage. To narrate this touching story of a mountain love in the 1930s, exclusively with original material, is a daring adventure - but one that works. Thanks to his meticulous preparation and his precise sense of just the right way of presenting the story, the director manages to revive the freeze images of old photo albums and to create a touching life story in the minds of the viewers. Ninì, who found her love on the mountains, was one of the few women who dared to climb mountains and to shoot her adventures with a 16mm camera. When, some years later, her partner was killed in an accident, her adventure came to an end, and Ninì dedicated herself to her child from those happy years. It was more than half a century later that her son found those old materials and won over the director Gigi Giustiniani to film this story. The result was so vivid, that the jury almost fell in love with Ninì.

The Alpine Camera in Gold in the category A - Alpinism and Expeditions - goes to Gigi Giustiniani for the creation of *Ninì*.

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Honourable Mentions

Encordés

Frédéric Favre

Is it about victory? Is it about an outstanding sporting achievement? Is it about pushing yourself beyond your limits? In an amiable yet thrilling way, “Encordés” manages to answer these very questions by setting the perfect stage for each individual protagonist.

Link Sar West

Jonathan Griffith

An adventure in extreme exposed conditions and extreme weather. The protagonists fail to reach their actual goal, despite longstanding efforts. Their faces and the pictures do not reflect heroism and pathos, but fear and apprehension whether they will survive this adventure. In the end, a compromise has to be accepted, which means, that they have to content themselves with a smaller goal.

Nevertheless, they come out from this adventure not disappointed but stronger. In claustrophobic pictures, the mountain mutates from an “Alpine problem” into a master.

Category S

Sports in mountains and nature

Diving into the Unknown

Juan Reina

The film begins with a nightmare, a disaster. A disaster, which puts into question one’s actions and one’s passion as such. From there, the film develops an absorbing parable about guilt, responsibility, and, above all, a story of an unwavering companionship and love beyond death. Human intimacy and warmth contrast with an inhuman, dark and cold environment. Even the taciturn protagonists fall silent, facing the quiet and the calm of the bizarre underwater world, and an insignia of bravery attempts to soften the eternal inner pain.

The Alpine Camera in Gold in the category S - Sports in Mountains and Nature - goes to *Diving Into The Unknown*.

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Honourable Mention

The Great Alone

Greg Kohs

This film shows the protagonist's superhuman fight for victory and acknowledgement. However, it is not a question of winning one of the hardest dog-sled races in the world, but the lonely fight of a son, who suffers extreme hardship to win the refused love and acknowledgement of his father. The dogs of his sled are the only living beings to whom the lonesome athlete feels attracted. On their long leashes, they pull him not only to his victory, but also out of his loneliness. The dog-sled race is the "battlefield" on which the son confronts his father and enforces the restoration of the "order of love".

Last Exit

Puria Ravahi

7 Minutes and a few shots suffice for the director to tell a great drama. Everybody knows: the next base jump may be the last. In the faces of the mother and the girlfriend, and in the minds of the viewers, the fatal end seems imminent - because it is the last jump. However, the base jumper survives.

Category N

Nature and Environment

Biene Majas wilde Schwestern

Jan Haft

According to a recently published study, 75% of the Central-European insect species have vanished over the last decades. However, the anxiety about this scaring result soon calmed down. What one doesn't know one doesn't protect - this sentence resulting from the experiences of biologists is true also in this context.

For instant, who knows that besides honeybees, in Central Europe there also exist 560 species of wild bees, whose lifestyle is very different from their domesticated relatives and whose ecological value is hardly known.

This documentary gives them a stage, it brings them into focus with all the means of modern nature films, providing surprising insights into a world which we thought we perfectly knew. We watch a poppy bee constructing a "nursery of red velvet" for her offspring, made of fingernail-sized corn poppy blooms. We admire a bee, whose tower-like earth buildings look like mini-models of termite hills, or the two-coloured mason-bee who deposit the pollen in empty snail shells as supplies for the larva.

When we were little, we already learnt to love Maya the Bee. Now we are touched by

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the destiny of her wild relatives. Therefore, the Alpine Camera in Gold in the category N - Nature and Environment - goes to „Biene Majas wilde Schwestern“.

Honourable Mention

Atlantic

Risteard O'Domhnaill

Politics, economy, ecology, nature protection, society. “Atlantic” addresses these topics and challenges which the world community will be forced to deal with. The three easily comprehensible stories succeed in giving the viewers an understanding of these complex problems sensitizing them to these truly vital issues.

Category M

People & Culture

Yasuni Man

Ryan Patrick Killackey

This film states its message distinctly because of the interest, empathy and personal passion of the filmmaker. He describes the struggle for survival of the Waorani tribe, and despite the repeatedly shown brutality the film never becomes voyeuristic but depicts reality clearly. One can call this film a “true avatar” because it presents in an unvarnished way the tragedy caused by the modern economic greed for profit. The dilemma faced by that part of mankind who cannot or do not want to compete must not be hidden from the spectators.

The Alpine Camera in Gold in the category M - People and Cultures - goes to “Yasuni Man”.

Honourable Mention

Samuel in the Clouds

Pieter Van Eecke

With a wink and razor-sharp observation, the filmmaker manages to give a touching insight into the changes our planet undergoes and their impact on the everyday life of mankind.

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Alpine Camera Austria

Homebird Nepal

Andrea Leichtfried, Simon Spädtker

Whereas most of the films about Nepal deal with magnificent mountain panoramas, spectacular pictures in high altitudes and countless adventures in the climbers' world, this film focusses on the people in Nepal. In short but precise and well-presented individual portraits, this film offers an interesting insight into the every-day challenges the Nepalese have to face in their country today, that have become even more demanding after the earthquake in 2015.

The Alpine Camera Austria goes to "Homebird Nepal".

Honourable Mention

Brahmaputra - Die Serie

Klaus Feichtenberger, Jeremy Hogarth, Heinz Leger
preTV, dreiD.at

The still lasting collision between the two continents Asia and India, which once were separated, had created the Himalayas as well as the river system of the Brahmaputra. Under these conditions the team succeeded in capturing pictures - also with the help of drones - of this forbidden and almost inaccessible land, which have never been seen before. The powerful canyon system of the Yarlung-Tsangpo, the upper course of the Brahmaputra, is far more powerful than the Grand Canyon. For 50 millions of years, the concentrated water and sediment masses penetrated with an enormous amount of energy deeper and deeper into the fast rising youngest rocks of our planet. In the lowlands of Bangladesh, fed by the two more giant rivers, Ganges and Meghna, it finally creates the biggest coast delta on earth as well as the Sundarbans, the world's most species-rich mangrove forest.

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