



## 73rd IFFMH: Award-winning films announced – International Newcomer Award goes to ›Manas‹, a feminist drama from Brazil

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›Manas‹ by Marianna Brennand received the 30,000-euro International Newcomer Award for the best film in competition. +++ The 15,000-euro Rainer Werner Fassbinder Award for the best screenplay went to Sarah Friedland for ›Familiar Touch‹. +++ Laura Weissmahr received the 10,000-euro Young Actors Award for her role in ›Salve Maria‹. +++ The Young Jury also honoured ›Manas‹ with the Student Award, valued at 5,000 euros. +++ ›Bound in Heaven‹ by Huo Xin received the Ecumenical Jury Award of 2,500 euros. Christopher Andrews' ›Bring Them Down‹ was honoured with the FIPRESCI Award. +++ The Audience Award of 5,000 euros went to ›Across the Sea‹ by Saïd Hamich Benlarbi.



Filmstill ›Manas‹ | © Bendita Film Sales

The award-winning films of the 73rd International Film Festival Mannheim-Heidelberg were honoured at the gala Award Ceremony at the Karlstorbahnhof in Heidelberg this evening. Alongside the remarks by the juries, speeches were given by festival director Dr Sascha Keilholz and Andrea Edel, director of Heidelberg's Cultural Affairs Office, as well as the award sponsors Catharina Seegelken, managing director of the Manfred Lautenschläger Foundation, Juliane Lorenz-Wehling, managing director of the Rainer Werner Fassbinder Foundation, and Holger Scheel, managing director of the Heidelberg-based consulting firm cbs.

The top award of 30,000 euros, the International Newcomer Award, has gone to ›Manas‹ by Brazilian director Marianna Brennand, who accepted it in person. ›Manas‹ is Brennand's feature-film debut and the result of ten years of research into the Amazon region. This stirring drama tells of the terrible injustice suffered



by many young women in their home country, but is also an unforgiving and powerful story of female self-empowerment.

The Young Actors Award was presented this year for the first time; films in all sections were eligible. Presented by the international jury, the award went to actress Laura Weissmahr for her role in ›Salve Maria‹, a film by Spanish director Mar Coll from the PUSHING THE BOUNDARIES section. In this film, Weissmahr plays a young woman who struggles with being a mother and embarks on an increasingly obsessive search for answers as she loses her grip on reality. Her performance brilliantly counterbalances the many tonalities of the film.

A total of 16 first and second films by talented emerging international directors once again competed for six awards in the ON THE RISE competition. Five of these awards are presented by four juries. A sixth film selected by the audience receives the Audience Award. This year, two actresses from films in competition and one from another section were nominated for the Young Actors Award, which was presented for the first time. All the award-winning films will have a repeat screening at the IFFMH by 17 November.

The entire IFFMH team would like to congratulate the award-winners. Festival director Dr Sascha Keilholz thanked all the juries for their dedicated work. In view of the numerous sold-out cinemas and the consistently enthusiastic feedback from international guests, he gave a very positive interim assessment of this edition of the festival.

**The juries made the following statements:**

## **INTERNATIONAL JURY**

**Jury members: Angela Bundalovic, Graham Foy, Johanna Süß**

International Newcomer Award - Best Director (30.000 euros)

**›Manas‹**

**Director: Marianna Brennand (Brazil, Portugal)**

The jury stated: “A claustrophobic setting immediately immerses us in a psychological space, hard to escape. Cinematography, sound, cast and editing work together in a humble way to create a unified whole. An unspoken and brutal reality is revealed in front of our eyes by the expertly calibrated performance of Jamilli Correa and Fátima Macedo, leaving us stunned at how such simple gestures can carry so much weight. These performances mirror the film’s spirit, its strength and immediacy. It brought us on a journey that, even while confronted with so many other outstanding and beautiful films, this one never left us. We would like to award ›Manas‹ by Marianna Brennand the International Newcomer Award in the ON THE RISE Competition of the 73rd edition of IFFMH.”



The International Newcomer Award, the IFFMH's top award, is sponsored by the Manfred Lautenschläger Foundation.

### Rainer Werner Fassbinder Award – Best Screenplay (15,000 euros)

#### **›Familiar Touch‹ Screenplay and director: Sarah Friedland (USA)**

The jury stated: “For the Rainer Werner Fassbinder Award, the jury was deeply touched by a screenplay whose quality resides in its transition from text to cinema and its ability to transport us to an inner world. A film whose authorship and text transcend the page and choreograph the characters’ mind, body, gestures and silences to write a story that activates the viewer’s imagination to participate within its narrative. Focusing the screenplay on a character who is not represented in conventional cinema was not only courageous but also a masterfully researched, written and ultimately delivered complex portrait of a person who insists on living. There are many films that try to tell you that, in the midst of crisis, life can reveal joy, friendship and meaning, but it is rare to find a film that shows you how. We would like to award ›Familiar Touch‹, written and directed by Sarah Friedland, the Rainer Werner Fassbinder Award for the best screenplay in the ON THE RISE competition.”

The Rainer Werner Fassbinder Award for the best screenplay is sponsored by the Rainer Werner Fassbinder Foundation.

### Young Actors Award – Best Acting Performance (10,000 euros)

#### **Laura Weissmahr ›Salve Maria‹ (director: Mar Coll, Spain)**

The jury stated: “In ›Salve Maria‹, Laura Weissmahr delivers with intensity and intelligence the performance of a young woman feeling alienated in her new role as a mother. The actress embodies the complexity of this case in few words, but a wide range of emotions and thoughts. She manages to alternate between darkness and madness, leaving the audience in a constant state of suspense and curiosity about what’s going to happen.”

The Young Actors Award is sponsored by the consultancy firm cbs from Heidelberg.



## Young Jury

Jury members: Allegra Bosch, Linda Luna, Sirius Naraghi Marin

Student Award (5,000 euros)

›Manas‹

**Director: Marianna Brennand (Brazil, Portugal)**

The jury stated: "We are honouring a movie that has illustrated the power and poetry of the unsaid with an unforgettable stirring emotionality. Its scenes remain in our memories because of their ominously suspenseful atmosphere and incredibly strong symbolism. Beyond the movie, these pictures remained with us throughout this festival, repeatedly sparking emotional conversations between us. As the student jury, we wish to honour not only the strong uneasy message but also the remarkable artistic capacity of the film."

## Ecumenical Jury

Jury members: Gaëlle Courtens, Tom Alesch, Jörg Breu

Ecumenical Award (2.500 euros)

›Bound in Heaven‹

**Director: Xin Huo (China)**

The jury stated: "They meet in the streets of a big city: the investment banker and the street vendor. At first glance, they couldn't be more different, yet a deep bond develops between them. Together they rediscover the joy of life. The young couple declares every day a holiday, precisely because they are aware of their own fragility and finiteness. With images of impressive beauty, the film speaks of love, respect, dignity, wishes, tenderness and care. A film that defies death, violence, illness, loneliness and social conventions, yet never drifts into the banal. The Ecumenical Jury of Interfilm and Signis presents its award, sponsored by the Protestant Church in Germany (EKD) and the Catholic German Bishops' Conference (DBK), to the film ›Bound in Heaven‹."

## FIPRESCI Jury

Jury members: Achim Forst, Shahla Nahid, Ioannis Raouzaïos

FIPRESCI Award

›Bring Them Down‹

**Director: Christopher Andrews (Ireland, UK, Belgium)**



The jury stated: “First of all, as the jury of FIPRESCI, we would like to emphasise that our final award selection was not easy, as the competition program was of a very high quality. ... For the dramatic development that could resemble that of an ancient Greek tragedy, because of the relationships between the characters and their inner worlds and psychology through a nonlinear narrative that powerfully colours both the past and the beginnings of a probably more promising future, and also the wonderful editing and astonishing cinematography, we award the FIPRESCI Prize of the 73rd International Film Festival Mannheim-Heidelberg to the film ›Bring Them Down.‹”

## The Audience

### Audience Award (5,000 euros)

›Across the Sea‹

Director: Saïd Hamich Benlarbi (Morocco, France, Belgium)

This year’s Audience Award goes to a story of exile that tells of friendship, love and the difficulty of leaving one life behind and entering a new one. 27-year-old Nour is from Morocco and is living in France illegally. When he and his friends are arrested, he is given a second chance from an unlikely source. ›Across the Sea‹ follows its main character for some ten years and thus not only tells of the personal burden of migration, but also paints a picture of an entire era.

### **The 73rd IFFMH is being held from 7 to 17 November.**

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## About the IFFMH

With “New Film Experience” as its credo, the IFFMH has been venturing new, interdisciplinary perspectives on and through the art of film since 1952. This makes it the longest-running film festival in Germany after the Berlinale, and it continues to be a major platform for cultural, social and political dialogue. With each subsequent edition, the IFFMH, as a festival for the public in cinemas, invites festivalgoers to discover the rising stars of the international film scene as well as to follow the careers of established filmmakers and to become more familiar with film in the context of other art forms. The 73rd IFFMH is being held from 7 to 17 November 2024.



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The festival would like to thank its sponsors and partners.

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