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**31st Helsinki International Film Festival ends on a high note**

*The 31st Helsinki International Film Festival – Love & Anarchy closed on Sunday with a sold-out screening of Russian director Kirill Serebrennikov’s SUMMER. Finland’s biggest film festival gathered more than 60 000 visitors this year. The audience award goes to Boots Riley’s SORRY TO BOTHER YOU. A selection of festival films can be seen on the HIFF tour, YLE and at cinema Orion.*

The 31st edition of Helsinki International Film Festival culminated on Sunday with a sold-out screening of **Kirill Serebrennikov’s** SUMMER. Finland’s number one film festival brought more than 60 000 visitors to cinemas, festival clubs and side events. The ticket sales of the film screenings surpassed last year’s figures. During the 11 days of the festival 164 feature films and 191 short films were screened in almost 500 screenings of which one in four were sold out.

HIFF had the honour of hosting dozens of filmmaker guests including this year’s Guest of Honour, director **Spike Lee**, film star **Shia LaBeouf** with the art collective **LaBeouf, Rönkkö & Turner’s** film #TAKEMEANYWHERE and AMERICAN HONEY as well as the returning guest **Stephan Elliott** (THE ADVENTURES OF PRISCILLA, QUEEN OF THE DESERT and SWINGING SAFARI) who attended the 7th HIFF in 1994.

Alongside the opening and closing films COLD WAR and SUMMER, the audience’s favourites included **Boots Riley’s** absurd comedy SORRY TO BOTHER YOU, **Nicolas Cage’s** mad action mayhem MANDY, anime films MIRAI and MARY AND THE WITCH’S FLOWER, U.S. indie films FIRST REFORMED and LEAVE NO TRACE, Kenyan Lesbian drama RAFIKI, Palme d’Or winner SHOPLIFTERS, **Oscar Wilde** biopic THE HAPPY PRINCE, **Lars von Trier’s** serial killer epic THE HOUSE THAT JACK BUILT, Swedish fantasy drama BORDER, teenage trans girl movie GIRL and zombie high school musical ANNA AND THE APOCALYPSE.

The second *Cut to the Chase – R&A Shorts* sidebar awarded **Virva** and **Vuokko Kunttu’s** short documentary STAR SHAPED SCAR with the R&A LIFT Award. The jury gave special mention to **Tia Kouvo’s** short film FAMILY TIME. **Jan Ijäs’** short documentary WASTE NO.1 MONEY won the Audience Award.

R&A Shorts again drew a record audience, gaining altogether more than 2 800 visitors. The R&A Shorts National Competition screenings were especially loved by the audience.

 **Audience Award to Sorry to Bother You**

The HIFF Audience Award, organised in collaboration with the National Audiovisual Institute, went to **Boots Riley’s** SORRY TO BOTHER YOU. Oakland rapper turned film director, Riley’s debut feature is an absurd comedy about capitalism and race. SORRY TO BOTHER YOU will be screened five times at cinema Orion in November: 3.11., 6.11., 18.11., 21.11. and 30.11.

**Love & Anarchy on tour and on TV**

The Love & Anarchy Tour brings a selection of festival favourites to approximately 20 locations after the festival. The tour films include among others the Icelandic HIFF guest **Ása Helga Hjörleifsdottir’s** THE SWAN, RBG, a documentary about American pioneer of women’s rights **Ruth Bader Ginsburg** and the newly digitized Studio Ghibli classic KIKI’S DELIVERY SERVICE (1989). During the tour, HIFF films will screen among other places in Turku, Kuopio, Joensuu and Vaasa. The tour schedule will be updated at the HIFF website hiff.fi/kiertue.

A selection of films from the 31st HIFF programme will be shown on Yle’s TV channels. Alongside many Finnish films, A PARIS EDUCATION will be televised on Teema’s Film Festival in late 2018.

**Finnish Film Affair presented domestic films to international buyers**

The seventh HIFF industry sidebar Finnish Film Affair presented domestic films to international buyers and journalists. The three-day event awarded a film project showing international potential with the Best Pitch Award, which is sponsored by the Finnish Film Foundation. The winner was *One-Off Incident* by 15 female directors and screenwriters. Other works in progress that gathered special interest included such titles as the horror film *Birds of a Feather* by **Hanna Bergholm**, period drama *Maria’s Paradise* by **Zaida Bergroth** and English language horror film *The Twin* by **Taneli Mustonen**.

The 32nd Helsinki International Film Festival will be organised on September 19th to 29th, 2019.

See you next year!

**Further information:**

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