



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE // SEPTEMBER 23, 2025**

# **ANNOUNCING THE 2025 JURY AWARD WINNERS!**

**Calgary, AB** - The Calgary International Film Festival was honoured to welcome a distinguished panel of jurors from the global film community to the 2025 edition of the festival. These esteemed voices brought their diverse perspectives and expertise to the CIFF jury, and were tasked with the exciting challenge of selecting this year's most outstanding feature-length and short films.

"This year's selections reflect the strength and innovation of cinematic voices from around the world," said Brian Owens, CIFF's Executive Director. "We are deeply grateful to our jurors for their insight and care in recognizing these remarkable films, and we extend a huge thanks to our partners at Vancouver Film School, Sunbelt Rentals, and Saturation IO. CIFF is proud to give out over \$60,000 in cash and prizes."

After much deliberation, CIFF is proud to announce the winners of the 2025 Jury Awards:

## **FEATURE FILM JURIED AWARDS**

### **Canadian Narrative Feature Award: Grand Jury Prize**

**Winner: FOLLIES, directed by Eric K. Boulianne**

Honourable Mention: THE THINGS YOU KILL, directed by Alireza Khatami

### **Jury Statement:**

"We were swept away by the raw talent and diverse approach to filmmaking on display in this year's lineup of Canadian films. While this made it a real challenge to make our final selections, it is our great pleasure to present this award to a film that is distinctive and fresh, an honest examination of modern relationships that felt like an ongoing conversation full of laughs and insight. Watching the main characters navigate the complex waters of an open relationship was both surprising and relatable, heartwarming and hilarious, without ever poking fun at the characters or their situation. Director Eric K. Boulianne's debut film is unique and self-assured with an incredible ensemble cast, and for these reasons, we are happy to present the Canadian Narrative Feature award to FOLLIES."

**Canadian Narrative Feature Jury:** Nick Johnson, Mazyar Khatam, Jessie Posthumus

### **International Narrative Feature Award: Grand Jury Prize**

**Winner: THE PLAGUE, directed by Charlie Polinger**

Honourable Mention: LUCKY LU, directed by Lloyd Lee Choi

#### **Jury Statement:**

"THE PLAGUE is an accomplished directorial debut from Charles Pollinger that engrosses you in the troubling dynamics of a boys' water polo camp. The film doesn't shy away from the ickiness of adolescence, whether bodily or socially — it festers in those spaces, leading to a fidgety, discomfiting but utterly convincing watching experience. Stylish, vibrant 35mm cinematography from Steven Breckon elevates the film's visual language, but it is the alchemy of the young cast that creates the film's atmospheric sincerity. The standout is the baby-faced antagonist, played by Kayo Martin. A perfect little shit leader of other little shit teenage boys, he wields a kind of wise-beyond-his-years cadence and a Teflon self-confidence disarmingly mixed with a cherubic, pre-pubescent appearance. You don't know whether to punch him in the face or pour him a glass of milk. Joel Edgerton, who also serves as producer, is equally remarkable as the team's ineffectual coach. The lone adult in their world, he is helplessly out of touch with the toxic masculinity carnage unfolding under his watch."

**International Narrative Feature Jury:** Adrián G. de la Peña, Immanuela Lawrence, Travis Weedon

### **Canadian Documentary Feature Award: Grand Jury Prize**

**Winner: SAINTS & WARRIORS, directed by Patrick Shannon**

Honourable Mention: SIKSIKAKOWAN: THE BLACKFOOT MAN, directed by Trevor Solway

**Canadian Documentary Feature Jury:** Dave Cheung, Hermione Malone, Nancy Pettinicchio

### **International Documentary Feature Award: Grand Jury Prize**

**Winner: COMPARSA, directed by Vickie Curtis, Doug Anderson**

Honourable Mention: MR. NOBODY AGAINST PUTIN, directed by Razny Mahardhika

#### **Jury Statement:**

"In a strong slate of international documentaries, COMPARSA stood out by balancing an urgent call for women's justice in Guatemala with a portrait of the unwavering power of sisterhood, community and the arts in overwhelming circumstances. Directors Doug Anderson and Vickie Curtis slowly and artfully reveal the suffocating forces women in Ciudad Peronia are up against while taking care not to re-victimize

their subjects and focus instead on the exhilarating creativity sisters Lesli and Lupe are still able to summon to inspire joy and change around them.”

**International Documentary Feature Jury:** Yuqi Kang, Chris Krieger, Cam Maitland

## **SHORTS FILM JURIED AWARDS**

**Jury for all Shorts Awards:** Sarah Ashley-Hewitson, Taras Demian Groves, Anna Lopez, Mireille Tremblay-Caron, Isiah Williams

### **Short Film Grand Jury Prize**

**Winner: A SPARROW'S SONG, directed by Tobias Eckerlin**

### **Jury Statement:**

“A SPARROW’S SONG navigates the universal feeling of loss in the face of looming doom, but still finds the light and beauty that comes with optimism and hope. Created as a student project and inspired by a real life event, this narrative transcends the need for language or dialogue, is visually striking, and emotionally fulfilling. Beautifully realized, we look forward to seeing what creative endeavours these filmmakers will bring us in future.” - Anna Lopez

### **Live Action Short Film Award**

**Winner: COYOTES, directed by Said Zagha**

Honourable Mention: I WANT TO GO TO MOSCOW, directed by Sarah Baskin

### **Animated Short Film Award**

**Winner: RETIREMENT PLAN, directed by John Kelly**

### **Documentary Short Film Award**

**Winner: GRANDMA'S FOUR COLOR CARDS, directed by Sally Phuong Tran**

### **Devon Bolton Memorial Alberta Short Film Award**

**Winner: SEND AND RECEIVE, directed by Dominique Keller**

### **Ross Faulder Memorial Experimental Short Film Award**

**Winner: WORLD AT STAKE, directed by Susanna Flock, Adrian Jonas Haim, Jona Kleinlein**

### **Student Short Film Award**

**Winner: DETLEV, directed by Ferdinand Ehrhardt**

### **Youth By Youth Cinema International Short Film Award**

**Winner: SILENCED, directed by Zeynab Mousavi, Houri Shafieioun**

Honourable Mention: DANCING IN THE STARS, directed by Lazar Jovanović

Special Jury Mention: JUST ONE MORE, directed by Bingqing Liu

### **Youth By Youth Cinema Canada Short Film Award**

**Winner: SKYFALL, directed by Daniel Evan Ta**

Honourable Mention: KEEPER OF THE NIGHT SKY, directed by Karina Loerchner

Special Jury Mention: THE SECRETS

CIFF extends its congratulations to all award recipients and heartfelt thanks to the filmmakers, jurors, and audiences who continue to make CIFF a vibrant celebration of cinema.

More information on this year's judges: <https://www.ciffcalgary.ca/festival/jury-2025/>

Stay tuned post-festival for the Winners of the 2025 CIFF AUDIENCE CHOICE AWARDS, PRESENTED BY TELUS - The best of the fest, decided by the fans themselves! Most films at the festival are eligible for our Audience Awards, which are based on the collective score of the audience ballots collected at each screening online and in cinema. Winners will be announced post-festival.

**MEDIA IMAGES** - <https://vp.eventival.com/ciffcalgary/2025/film-catalogue>

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**CIFF | Calgary International Film Festival**

**September 19 – September 29, 2024**

**ciffcalgary.ca | @CIFFcalgary**

**#260, 999 8 St. SW Calgary, AB**

### **About the Calgary International Film Festival**

Founded in 2000, the Calgary International Film Festival (CIFF) is a not-for-profit charitable organization that brings films and filmmakers from around the world to Calgary for its annual Fall festival and year-round programming. CIFF is now the largest event of its kind in Alberta and the sixth-largest film festival in Canada, bringing audiences together for remarkable and engaging cinematic experiences. CIFF is proud to present its 26th festival from September 18 – September 28, 2025 with in-cinema screenings, celebrating stand-out stories and offering once-in-a-lifetime experiences.

**CIFF thanks their Presenting Partner**



## CIFF thanks their 2025 Public Funders

