

NaturVision award ceremony celebrates the environmental and nature film

Ludwigsburg: Film prizes in ten categories were presented at the award ceremony of the NaturVision Film Festival on Saturday evening. In an emotional appeal, the filmmakers called for more action on conservation and climate protection. The event was entertainingly compered by Dana Hoffmann with great journalistic skill.

A brief hush descended on the audience as the awards stage in the Central Filmtheater filled up with filmmakers and festival organisers who unfurled a 7-metre long banner with the slogan "Mehr Raum für die Natur" (More Room for Nature). When director Oliver Götzl and screenwriter and film editor Mirjam Zimmermann had finished reading the "Ludwigsburg appeal", the silence gave way to long-lasting applause: In this paper, filmmakers and festival actors call on policymakers to take effective action to protect nature, wildlife, species and climate as a matter of urgency.

A brilliant example of the infinite scope of the environmental and nature film to inform, shine a light on backgrounds and rouse the viewers is the winning entry in the NaturVision Best Story category. In their documentary ***The Serengeti Rules***, Nicolas Brown and Sean B. Carroll show meticulously and suspensefully, in the manner of a thriller, how entire ecosystems collapse when just a single species is wiped out.

The German Biodiversity Film Award, sponsored by HAHN-KOLB Werkzeuge GmbH, is one of the Festival's three main awards, carrying €10,000 in prize money. In 2019 it goes to ***Der unsichtbare Fluss – Unter Wasser zwischen Schwarzwald und Vogesen*** by Serge Dumont. The film tells of a special geological feature – the sources of the groundwater stream in the Upper Rhine Valley. Superb underwater shots reveal a fascinating visual world. But the writers want more: Little by little, the film becomes a plea for more water protection and against agricultural industrialisation. The documentary also convinced the youth jury, thanks to its impressive balancing act between beautiful images and critical observation, so much so

The NaturVision Film Festival is organised by Earth Vision UG, in partnership with Film & Medienfestival gGmbH, the city of Ludwigsburg and the Central Filmtheater. The Festival is sponsored by the Ministry of the Environment, Climate and the Energy Industry for Baden-Württemberg, the Filmförderung Baden-Württemberg, the State Institute for Communication Baden-Württemberg and the RNE (German Council for Sustainable Development). Partners and supporters in 2019 include IBA'27, SportRegion Stuttgart, Wohnungsbau Ludwigsburg and the Wirtschaftsförderung Region Stuttgart. Media partners are arte, forum Nachhaltig Wirtschaften, enorm, greenup, bioNachrichten, utopia, LIFT and the Ludwigsburger Kreiszeitung.

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that the €2,000 Youth Jury Award, sponsored by the Ministry of the Environment, Climate and the Energy Industry for Baden-Württemberg, also went to Serge Dumont and his team. Also sponsored by the Ministry – to the tune of €10,000 – is the prestigious German Conservation and Sustainability Film Award, which this year went to a particularly bold investigative film: ***A Plastic Surgery: Coca-Cola's Hidden Secrets*** by Sandrine Rigaud. The jury was impressed by the writer's precisely prepared and persistent interviews, which expose contradictions and lies behind the recycling promises of the Coca-Cola Company and puts the responsibility for environmental pollution through plastic bottles firmly at the door of the manufacturer.

The €10,000 prize money for the German Wildlife Film Award 2019 (sponsored by the city of Ludwigsburg and the Central Filmtheater Ludwigsburg) is shared between ***Herrscher einer vergessenen Welt – Biokos Drills [Lost Kings of Bioko]*** by Oliver Goetzl and ***Birth of a Pride*** by Beverly and Dereck Joubert. The jury thought both films stood out especially in their "portrayal of the story of a single species in such a way as to do justice to the creatures' life history while at the same time capturing the audience's imagination."

The NaturVision Camera Award goes to Austria, to ***Jiří Petr and Michael Schlamberger*** for their extraordinary camerawork in ***Österreich – Die Kraft des Wassers: Im Fluss der Zeit***. Composer **Nainita Desai** won the award for the best film music, deemed to optimally support the film dramaturgy of ***Untamed Romania***. Henning Kopp and Adrian Rydzicki – media students at Rheinbach vocational college – tackled our often problematic treatment of animals in their film ***Skrupellos***, winning the NaturVision Newcomer Award, sponsored by dieUmweltDruckerei to the tune of €1,000.

"Kreislauf statt Kollaps – die Natur macht's vor" [Recycle, not ruin – Nature leads the way] was the theme of this year's €5,000 NaturVision Short Film Award, sponsored by Audi Stiftung für Umwelt GmbH. The winner in this category was ***Unravel*** by Meghna Gupta, a film about the recycling industry in northern India, which humorously opens our eyes to the absurdity of our consumer behaviour.

The sincerity and self-confidence of the children's jury is always admirable and moving as they take to the stage to give their self-written jury statement. This year they chose two films: ***Checker Tobi und das Geheimnis unserer Erde*** by Martin Tischner, which earned a Special Mention, and ***Thomas und Korduni – Bienen retten Elefanten*** by Frank Feustle, who expressed his delight at winning the NaturVision Children's Film Award in a special video message from Kenya.

After the official award ceremony, guests partied in the inner courtyard of the Central Filmtheater to the sound of the Ludwigsburg Caligari Band until late in the night.