



## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **The 28<sup>th</sup> Annual Miami International Film Festival Honors the Best Selections in World and Florida Cinema at Annual Awards Night Ceremony**

Marimbas From Hell, The Interrupters, The Piano in a Factory, Jean Gentil *and* Hamill  
*capture top Grand Jury Prizes and Audience Awards;*  
Magic City Memoirs *Executive Producer Andy Garcia, Director Aaron Salgado and Producer Jaydee*  
*Freixas receive Lexus Pursuit of Perfection Award*

**Miami, FL** – Organizers of the 28<sup>th</sup> annual Miami International Film Festival, produced and presented by Miami Dade College, tonight celebrated 9 days (with another day of screenings still to come) of 100 films from 30 countries with the Awards Night Ceremony at the Gusman Center for the Performing Arts. A special screening of 2011 Best Foreign Language Film Academy Award nominee *Incendies*, the French Canadian-Arab drama from director Denis Villeneuve, followed the ceremony.

Juried awards were presented in the following competition categories: Ibero-American, DOX and World, all sponsored by the John S. & James L. Knight Foundation; and Short Film, sponsored by the University of Miami. The Festival presented two Audience Awards—for Best Feature Film and Best Short Film—both sponsored by VeneMovies.

Earlier in the week, the Festival presented a Tribute Award for Career Achievement to Susanne Bier, who brought her recently won Oscar for *In A Better World* with her to the ceremony; and the Festival also presented awards to the winners of Cinemaslam, the Festival's inaugural Miami-area college student film competition.

The Festival inaugurated a new awards category this year: the Innovation in Industry Award, sponsored by the Miami Beach Visitor & Convention Authority, which honors a director that presents a unique vision in international filmmaking. This award was selected by the Festival's programmers and awarded to Morgan Spurlock's *The Greatest Movie Ever Sold*.

New Festival sponsor, luxury automaker Lexus, presented the company's signature Lexus Pursuit of Perfection Award—designed to honor outstanding professional and civic achievements by minorities—to the trio representing the World Premiere of the made-in-Miami independent film *Magic City Memoirs*: Academy Award-nominated actor, producer and director Andy Garcia (who served as executive producer), director Aaron Salgado and producer Jaydee Freixas.

"This year's films were fierce, and, therefore, so was the competition," said Executive Director Jaie Laplante. "Congratulations to all the winners, but especially to all the filmmakers who shared their dreams and visions with us this year."

"This has truly been a memorable Festival. Congratulations to the competition winners and also to Jaie, the entire MIFF and college teams, and all the volunteers who make our beloved festival possible," said Dr. Eduardo J. Padron, president of Miami Dade College.

Corporate presenters and sponsors included the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, the Jordan Alexander Ressler Charitable Fund, Lexus, the Miami Beach Visitor & Convention Authority, the Miami Coalition for the Homeless, VeneMovies and the University of Miami.

**AND THE 2011 MIAMI INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL WINNERS ARE:**

**KNIGHT FOUNDATION IBERO-AMERICAN COMPETITION:**

- Knight Foundation Grand Jury Prize: ***Marimbas From Hell (Las marimbas del infierno)*** by **Julio Hernández Cordón** (Guatemala/France/Mexico)—a \$20,000 USD cash prize awarded by the Miami-based John S. and James L. Knight Foundation
- Honorable Mention: ***Half of Oscar (La mitad de Óscar)*** by **Manuel Martín Cuenca** (Spain/Cuba)

**KNIGHT FOUNDATION WORLD COMPETITION:**

- Knight Foundation Grand Jury Prize: ***The Piano in a Factory (Gang de qin)*** by **Zhang Meng** (China)—a \$20,000 USD cash prize awarded by the Miami-based John S. and James L. Knight Foundation
- Honorable Mention: ***Intimate Grammar (Hadikduk Hapnimi)*** by **Nir Bergman** (Israel)

**KNIGHT FOUNDATION DOX COMPETITION:**

- Knight Foundation Grand Jury Prize: ***The Interrupters*** by **Steve James** (USA)—a \$10,000 USD cash prize awarded by the Miami-based John S. and James L. Knight Foundation
- Honorable Mention: ***If a Tree Falls: A Story of the Earth Liberation Front*** by **Marshall Curry** (USA)

**UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI SHORTS COMPETITION:**

- University of Miami Grand Jury Award for Best Short Film: ***Blokes (Blockes)*** by **Marialy Rivas** (Chile)—a \$2,500 USD cash prize awarded by the University of Miami
- Honorable Mention: ***Yuri Lennon's Landing on Alpha46*** by **Anthony Vouardoux** (Switzerland/Germany)

**THE JORDAN ALEXANDER RESSLER SCREENWRITING AWARD:**

- The husband-and-wife directing and screenwriting team of **Israel Cárdenas** and **Laura Amelia Guzmán** of ***Jean Gentil***—a \$5,000 USD cash prize awarded by the Jordan Alexander Ressler Charitable Fund; open to films in the Ibero-American Competition

**MIAMI BEACH VISITOR & CONVENTION AUTHORITY INNOVATION IN INDUSTRY AWARD:**

- ***The Greatest Movie Ever Sold*** by **Morgan Spurlock** (USA)—sponsored by the Miami Beach Visitor and Convention Authority

**VENEMOVIES AUDIENCE AWARD, BEST FEATURE FILM:**

- ***Hamill*** by **Oren Kaplan** (USA)

**VENEMOVIES AUDIENCE AWARD, BEST SHORT FILM:**

- ***Yuri Lennon's Landing on Alpha46*** by **Anthony Vouardoux** (Switzerland/Germany)

**FLORIDA FOCUS COMPETITION: CINEMASLAM** for COLLEGE filmmakers in Miami

- Winner: ***Augustus*** by **Bobby Douge** of Miami International University of Art & Design
- Honorable Mention: ***Nurse Interrupted*** by **Lara Fuchsbrauner** of Miami International University of Art & Design

**FLORIDA FOCUS COMPETITION: MIAMI COALITION FOR THE HOMELESS** for HIGH SCHOOL filmmakers in Miami

- Winner (Overall): ***Homelessness: Just Look Around*** by **Kasey Gonzalez, Emily Galvez and Lauren Thermes**, South Dade Senior High

- Winner (Public Service Announcement): *The Road to Ruin*, by **Eric Flemons**, University School of Nova Southeastern University

#### **LEXUS PURSUIT OF PERFECTION AWARD:**

- Given to **Andy Garcia** (executive producer), **Aaron J. Salgado** (director) and **Jaydee Freixas** (producer), *Magic City Memoirs*

#### **ABOUT THE COMPETITIONS, JURORS AND AWARDS:**

##### **WORLD COMPETITION**

This category celebrates the works of up-and-coming filmmakers from around the globe. One of the 10 films in this competition will win a Knight Grand Jury Prize in the amount of \$20,000 USD from the Miami-based John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, which seeks to enhance Miami's reputation for quality film programming as one way to promote informed and engaged communities.

**World films in competition:** *(818)* by Robert Lee King (USA); *Amador* by Fernando León de Aranoa (Spain); *Hamill* by Oren Kaplan (USA); *Intimate Grammar (Hadikduk Hapnimi)* by Nir Bergman (Israel); *Jo for Jonathan (Jo pour Jonathan)* by Maxime Giroux (Canada); *Mandoo* by Ebrahim Saeedi (Iraq); *Microphone* by Ahmad Abdalla (Egypt); *The Piano in a Factory (Gang de qin)* by Zhang Meng (China); *A Quiet Life (Una vita tranquilla)* by Claudio Cupellini (Italy/Germany/Switzerland); and, *Tilva Rosh (Tilva Roš)* by Nikola Ležaić (Serbia).

##### **World Competition jury:**

- **Sylvain Auzou (France and Italy)**, international film festival industry program and relations consultant, including Cannes Market; co-founder of Venice Days, the independent side section and film market of the Venice Film Festival; and creator of the industry section, new Rome International Film Festival.
- **Peter Debruge (USA)**, senior film critic and features editor for *Variety*, who moderated this year's REEL Education Seminar "A Conversation With...Morgan Spurlock" at MIFF and has served as a juror in film festivals around the world, including Miami and SXSW.
- **Gregory Allen Howard (USA)**, award-winning screenwriter, producer, author and playwright whose current credits include *Remember the Titans* and *Ali*, plus the upcoming *Better Angels*, starring and directed by Oscar winner Forest Whitaker, scheduled to be shooting in June 2011 in Uganda and New York.

##### **IBERO-AMERICAN COMPETITION**

This category, a specialty of the Miami International Film Festival, presents the feature films by first-, second- and third-time directors from Spain, Portugal and Latin America. One of the 9 films in this competition will win a Grand Jury Prize in the amount of \$20,000 USD from the Miami-based John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, which seeks to enhance Miami's reputation for quality film programming as one way to promote informed and engaged communities.

**Ibero-American films in competition:** *All Your Dead Ones (Todos tus muertos)* by Carlos Moreno (Colombia); *Half of Oscar (La mitad de Óscar)* by Manuel Martín Cuenca (Spain/Cuba); *The Invisible Eye (La mirada invisible)* by Diego Lerman (Argentina); *Jean Gentil* by Israel Cárdenas and Laura Amelia Guzmán (Dominican Republic/Mexico/Germany); *Marimbas From Hell (Las marimbas del infierno)* by Julio Hernández Cerdón (Guatemala/France/Mexico); *No Return (Sin retorno)* by Miguel Cohan (Argentina); *A Stone's Throw Away (A tiro de piedra)* by Sebastian Hiriart (Mexico); *A Useful Life (La vida útil)* by Federico Veiroj (Uruguay/Spain); and, *Water and Salt (Agua y sal)* by Alejo Taube (Argentina).

##### **Ibero-American Competition jury:**

- **Peter Belsito (USA)**, a founding member of the Independent Feature Project (IFP) in New York City, and blogger for SydneysBuzz blog on IndieWIRE (by his wife, Sydney Levine), which specializes in covering international independent films and film markets around the world.

- **Santiago Loza (Argentina)**, director and screenwriter, whose credits include debut feature *Extraño*, which won the Tiger Award for Best Picture at the 2003 Rotterdam International Film Festival; *The Invention of Flesh (La invención de la carne)*, which screened at Locarno in 2009 and MIFF's Cutting the Edge Competition in 2010; and, *Los labios*, an Official Selection of the *Un Certain Regard* section of the 2010 Cannes Film Festival.
- **Julia Solomonoff (Argentina and USA)**, producer, director, screenwriter and Columbia University film directing instructor, whose credits include *Sisters (Hermanas)*, *The Motorcycle Diaries*, *Cocalero*, *The Last Summer of La Boyita (El último verano de La Boyita)*, winner of the Best Screenplay Award at MIFF 2010; and, the upcoming *Everyone Has a Plan (Todos tenemos un plan)*, starring Viggo Mortensen, to be filmed in summer 2011 in Argentina.

## DOX COMPETITION

This category presents some of the world's most provocative documentary feature films that examine social issues, diverse cultures, icons and inspiring people and events. One of the 10 films in this competition will win a Grand Jury Prize in the amount of \$10,000 USD from the Miami-based John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, which seeks to enhance Miami's reputation for quality film programming as one way to promote informed and engaged communities.

**Documentary films in competition:** *The Black Power Mixtape 1967-1975* by Goran Hugo Olsson (Sweden/USA); *Bobby Fischer Against the World* by Liz Garbus (USA); *How to Start Your Own Country* by Jody Shapiro (USA); *If a Tree Falls: A Story of the Earth Liberation Front* by Marshall Curry (USA); *The Interrupters* by Steve James (USA); *Little Voices (Pequeñas voces)* by Jairo Carrillo and Oscar Andrade (Colombia); *Magic Trip: Ken Kesey's Search for a Kool Place* by Alex Gibney and Alison Ellwood (USA); *Page One: A Year Inside The New York Times* by Andrew Rossi (USA); *Project Nim* by James Marsh (United Kingdom); and *The Redemption of General Butt Naked* by Daniele Anastasion and Eric Strauss (USA).

### DOX Competition jury:

- **Heather Croall (England/United Kingdom)**, director of Sheffield Doc/Fest, the premier documentary festival and film market in the United Kingdom and former director of the Australian International Documentary Conference and MeetMarket.
- **Jeremy Kay (USA and United Kingdom)** Los Angeles-based U.S. Editor for *Screen International* and *ScreenDaily.com* who covers film festivals around the world.
- **A.J. Schnack (USA)**, founder of the top U.S. blog dedicated to covering documentary films, *AllTheseWonderfulThings.com*, and award-winning independent film director, producer and editor whose credits include *Convention*, *Kurt Cobain: About a Son*, *The Art of Making Money*, *Beats, Rhymes and Life: A Tribe Called Quest* and an upcoming documentary about the U.S country music and tourism mecca of Branson, Missouri.

## SHORTS COMPETITION

This category features the latest works from independent shorts filmmakers from around the world. One of the 9 films in this competition will win the Grand Jury Prize in the amount of \$2,500 USD from the University of Miami, sponsor of this event.

**Short films in competition:** *Blokes (Blockes)* by Marialy Rivas (Chile); *Good Luck (Buena Suerte)* by Max Jubin (Denmark/Spain); *In the Privacy of My Home (En la privacidad de mi hogar)* by Angel Manuel Soto (Puerto Rico/USA); *Los 4 McNifikos* by Tucker Davila Wood (Spain); *Love Patate* by Gilles Cuvelier (France); *Rosa* by Monica Laraina (Argentina); *Roxy* by Shirley Petchprapa (USA); *Spider Fang!* By Justin Perkinson (USA); *Sunny (Ensolorado)* by Ricardo Targino (Brazil); and, *Yuri Lennon's Landing on Alpha46* by Anthony Vouardoux (Switzerland/Germany).

### Shorts Competition jury:

- **Konstantia Kontaxis (USA)**, director of the Motion Picture Program at the University of Miami and associated producer of the Miami Short Film Festival from 2007-2009.

- **Lucas Leyva (USA)**, founder and “Minister of the Interior” of the Miami-based Borscht Film Festival, an international short film competition.
- **Dennis Scholl (USA)**, vice president of the Miami-based John S. and James L. Knight Foundation and short film producer and screenwriter, whose credits include the Emmy-winning short *Sunday’s Best*.

### **THE JORDAN ALEXANDER RESSLER SCREENWRITING AWARD**

This special category and award recognizes and supports young people as they embark on their careers as professional screenwriters. It was created by the South Florida family of Jordan Alexander Ressler, an aspiring screenwriter and Cornell University film studies graduate who, during his brief entertainment career, held production positions with the Tony award-winning Broadway hits *700 Sundays* with Billy Crystal and *Jersey Boys*. He died in a tragic hiking accident while traveling in Nicaragua at age 23, before he realized his dream. This Grand Jury Prize in the amount of \$5,000 USD will be awarded to a screenwriter or screenwriters of a feature film in the Ibero-American Competition by the Jordan Alexander Ressler Charitable Fund.

### **FLORIDA FOCUS COMPETITION**

This category was created to encourage and promote the next generation of Florida filmmakers. This category supports high school and college students in Miami Dade County and their short films.

The awards are sponsored by Film Florida, the not-for-profit trade association that works to promote the creation of film industry jobs and economic incentives that will attract film productions and companies to Florida. Film Florida will present two \$500 USD Sarah Fuller Student Scholarships, one each in the high school and college categories. Winners will also receive \$500 USD worth of film from Eastman Kodak and movie scheduling and budgeting software from Movie Magic.

And, for the fifth consecutive year, the Miami Coalition for the Homeless is sponsoring three contests, open to Miami-Dade County high school students, designed to bring public attention to the plight of the homeless: an original song, a 30-second public service announcement and a short film. These contests offer symbolic prizes awarded by the Coalition.

#### **Florida Focus Competition jury:**

- **Michael Dagnery (USA)**, a Miami Dade College graduate and VP of Content Services and Development for MTV TR3s.
- **Rhonda Mitrani (USA)**, director, Cuba Mia and former development executive with Miramax Films and MTV Networks Latin America
- **Viviane Spinelli (USA)**, director, Brazilian Film Festival of Miami

#### **About the Miami International Film Festival**

Now in its 27<sup>th</sup> year, MIFF utilizes Miami’s advantageous geographical and cultural position as the gateway to Latin America and the Caribbean to make the festival a premier international venue for Ibero-American films. MIFF offers debut and emerging filmmakers from Spain, Portugal and Latin America a launching pad into the U.S., Canadian and European film markets. Both juried and audience awards are presented in the World, Ibero-American, DOX (documentary), Shorts, Diesel Online Shorts, Cutting the Edge and Florida Focus competitions. The festival’s popular REEL Education Seminar series consistently attracts top Hollywood and independent film industry executives from Sony Pictures Classics, Paramount Pictures, Warner Bros., Universal Pictures, DreamWorks Animation, IFC Films, Fox Searchlight, HBO Films/HBO Latino, William Morris Endeavor, the Screen Actors Guild and Eastman Kodak, among others. The festival’s *Encuentros* program (Spanish for “encounters”) has nurtured the debuts and follow-up films of numerous Ibero-American directors, including Peru’s Claudia Llosa (*Madeinusa*, her feature debut and a 2005 Ibero-American Competition selection) and Spain’s Manuel Hueriga (*Son & Moon, Diario de un astronauta*, a 2010 DOX Competition selection). The 2009 festival featured more than 150 films and attracted more than 65,000 attendees. For more information, visit [www.miamifilmfestival.com](http://www.miamifilmfestival.com) or call 305-237-FILM (3456).

#### **About Miami Dade College**

Miami Dade College has a long and rich history of involvement in the cultural arts, providing South Florida with a vast array of artistic and literary offerings, including The Miami Book Fair International; the *Cultura del Lobo* performing arts series; The Cuban Cinema Series; nine visual arts galleries, including The Freedom Tower at Miami Dade

College; and the School of Entertainment & Design Technology, in addition to the Miami International Film Festival. MDC is the largest institution of higher education in the country and is nationally recognized for its many academic and cultural programs. With an enrollment of more than 170,000 students, MDC is the nation's top producer of associate in arts and associate in science degrees. The college's eight campuses and outreach centers offer more than 300 degree programs, including baccalaureates in education, nursing, public safety management and other in-demand fields.

#### **About the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation**

The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation advances journalism in the digital age and invests in the vitality of communities where the Knight brothers owned newspapers. The Knight Foundation focuses on projects that promote informed, engaged communities and lead to transformational change. For more, visit [www.knightfoundation.org](http://www.knightfoundation.org).

#### **About the Jordan Alexander Ressler Charitable Fund**

This fund recognizes and supports young people as they embark on their careers as professional screenwriters. It was created by the family of Jordan Alexander Ressler, an aspiring screenwriter and Cornell University film studies graduate who, during his brief entertainment career, held production positions with the Tony award-winning Broadway hits *700 Sundays* with Billy Crystal and *Jersey Boys*. He died in a tragic hiking accident while traveling in Nicaragua at age 23, before he realized his dream. By contributing to the growth of the cultural, educational and socially responsible landscapes of the communities in which they live, work and play, Jordan's family hopes to create, shape and nurture the legacy he never had the opportunity to cultivate. Projects funded in Jordan's memory include: The Jordan Alexander Ressler Screenwriting Award at the Miami International Film Festival; The Jordan Alexander Ressler Endowment of the La Jolla Playhouse, San Diego; The Jordan Alexander Ressler Endowed Performing Arts Chair of Hillel Day School, Miami; The Jordan Alexander Ressler Performing Arts Theatre at Hillel Day School, Miami; and, The Jordan Ressler Memorial Library, Avalon Air Force Base, Sinai Desert, Israel.

#### **About Lexus**

Lexus is the leading luxury automaker in the United States. With its reputation for high-quality products and exemplary customer service from its 229 dealers, Lexus has been the top-selling luxury automaker for eleven years in a row. In addition, Lexus is the luxury hybrid leader, offering five hybrids that provide the best in innovative technology and first-class luxury. When Lexus was established in 1989, it offered two models of vehicles. Now, more than 20 years later, Lexus offers variations of 10 vehicles, from the sporty CT 200h hybrid to the V10 supercar, the LFA.

#### **About the Miami Beach Visitor and Convention Authority**

The Miami Beach Visitor and Convention Authority (MBVCA) is a seven-member authority that was established by the State of Florida in 1967 to support the tourism industry in Miami Beach. By law, MBVCA funding comes from a portion of the bed-resort tax in Miami Beach and must be re-invested in tourist-related opportunities. The MBVCA strategically focuses funding and programming on events and programs that: improve the tourist experience, enhance the global marketing and branding of Miami Beach, attract visitors to stay in Miami Beach and result in significant and positive media visibility.

#### **About SomosTV/VeneMovies**

VeneMovies is a pay-TV channel that broadcasts Spanish-language films 24 hours a day, with no commercial breaks and is part of SomosTV, a company devoted to the exploitation, development and promotion of the growth of pay TV in the US Hispanic market and Puerto Rico.

#### **About the University of Miami**

The University of Miami's mission is to educate and nurture students, to create knowledge, and to provide service to our community and beyond. Committed to excellence and proud of our diversity of our University family, we strive to develop future leaders of our nation and the world. The School of Communication at UM is dedicated to a global educational perspective and is committed to providing a socially responsible and ethically grounded learning environment. Providing quality undergraduate and graduate programs in communication, including motion pictures, that emphasize the relationship between theory and practice, the School believes in freedom of expression and creativity, and encourages both collaboration and independent thinking as we prepare future scholars, professionals and leaders for a lifetime of service and learning. Located on campus and open to the public, the Bill Cosford Cinema presents a wide variety of contemporary, classic and foreign films in a classic wide screen format, and by hosting lectures from renowned actors and directors. For more information, visit [www.miami.edu](http://www.miami.edu).

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