

Europe warms to Cold War at the European Film Awards

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The 31st European Film Awards were handed out in the beautiful, warm and welcoming Spanish city of Seville on Saturday 15 December. There, Polish filmmaker **Pawel Pawlikowski** – who also triumphed in these same categories with his previous feature, 2014 LUX Prize winner *Ida* – not only picked up the European Film and European Director Awards, but his latest oeuvre, the Polish-French-British co-production *Cold War*, also prevailed over its competitors by taking home the Awards for European Screenplay (written by the director himself), European Actress (**Joanna Kulig**, who was in Hollywood this weekend but sent a message of thanks read out by the filmmaker) and European Editor for **Jarosław Kamiński**. Pawlikowski said, "I want to thank my producers because they didn't want to make a film for commercial purposes, but to tell a story. Thank God this kind of cinema is being made."

The European Discovery – FIPRESCI Award category saw the 2018 LUX Prize Official Selection title *Girl* (Belgium/Netherlands) by young helmer **Lukas Dhont** claim victory, while the new films by previous LUX Prize competitor **Luca Guadagnino** picked up the People's Choice Award for *Call Me by Your Name* (Italy/France/USA/Brazil). Other titles present in this year's LUX Prize Official Selection had already been graced with technical prizes, such as *U-July 22* by **Erik Poppe** (European Cinematographer - Prix Carlo di Palma for **Martin Otterbeck**) and *Border* by **Ali Abbasi** (European Visual Effects Supervisor for **Peter Hjorth**).

In a very political evening, two of the most topical concepts in Europe right now, right-wing populism and Brexit, were present during the whole ceremony. French actress **Amira Casar**, one of the evening's hosts, said, "as a child of Europe, when I was being raised between many countries, my Europe felt safe, harmonious, united, a Europe based on a solid cultural heritage, but sadly, our Europe today is increasingly resembling the disastrous divided Europe of the 1930s", while director **Armando Iannucci** joked, "as the first person from the UK on

stage tonight, I have to say: I love Europe, it's a very good idea! I'm going to bring this idea back to the UK!" And Russian actor **Ivan Shvedoff**, another one of the evening's hosts, claimed, "Possibly the most important date in contemporary European history is coming up, on 23 May 2019, the European Elections. Please, vote! Because when good people don't vote, bad things happen!"

Furthermore, EFA deputy chairman **Mike Downey** and EFA chair **Agnieszka Holland** went on stage to stand with Sakharov Prize winner **Oleg Sentsov** and fellow countryman **Kirill Serebrennikov**, both facing charges in Russia, "The situation in Europe is changing drastically. The twisting of the truth is fighting its way into our lives. Our freedom as artists and filmmakers is in danger. Colleagues and friends are put behind bars. There is a growing disrespect for culture and artistic freedom. State censorship threatens to scare artists into self-censorship. We must not let governments silence us. We must speak up for those who lose their voices!"

The honourees at this edition also came up on stage to collect their honorary prizes in person. **Costa-Gavras**, who received the Honorary Award of the EFA President and Board, spoke up in support of the unity of the continent and the acceptance of others in his speech; stating, "tonight gives us an example of what Europe can be!" Spanish actress **Carmen Maura**, who collected a Lifetime Achievement Award from EFA president **Wim Wenders**, declared, "I love being a European actress". Lastly, European Achievement in World Cinema Award recipient **Ralph Fiennes** said, "I have wondered what it is to feel European. Is it a feeling of belonging, of shared history, shared wounds? In England right now, there's only the noise of division. But with film we can celebrate our differences and our common humanity."

Greece's **Konstantinos Kontovrakis** and **Giorgos Karnavas** from the company Heretic picked up the Eurimages Co-Production Award, which they dedicated to their audience, their team and Eurimages itself. Other winners of the evening included *Another Day of Life* (Spain/Poland/Belgium/Germany/Hungary), directed by **Raúl de la Fuente** and **Damian Nenow (which triumphed in the European Animated Film category)**, *Dogman* (Italy/France) by **Matteo Garrone** (European Actor for **Marcello Fonte**), *Bergman – A Year in a Life* (Sweden) by **Jane Magnusson**. (European Documentary), *The Death of Stalin (UK/France)* by **Armando Iannucci** (European Comedy) and *The Years* by **Sara Fgaier** (European Short Film).

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