

## The LUX Prize selection panel gets stuck in

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This year, the selection-panel meeting for the LUX Prize took place a little earlier than usual. It is normally organised in June, but the European elections, set to happen from 23-26 May, have pushed the rendezvous to be brought forward to 25 and 26 April. Last week, the European Parliament welcomed the members of the committee in charge of deciding the titles that will form part of the 2019 LUX Prize Official Selection.

A highly varied initial shortlist of films was considered for the debates and was consequently discussed by the 21 European film professionals who carefully suggested, watched and selected them. A selection of refreshing and eye-opening European works, including first features, fiction films and documentaries, directed by both male and female directors, hailing from every country on the Continent, were discussed, evaluated, unpicked and compared by the selection-panel members.

Four of these members were newcomers to the panel, as announced in February (read more <https://luxprize.eu/news/lux-film-prize-unveils-selection-panel-2019> <sup>[1]</sup>): Icelandic filmmaker Benedikt Erlingsson, director of the 2018 LUX Prize winner *Woman at War*, Swedish cinema exhibitor Mathias Holtz, Slovenian film critic and Ljubljana International Film Festival board member Tina Poglajen, and Lithuanian programmer at the Vilnius Film Festival Mante Valiunaite.

“For me, it’s a humbling experience because now I know the process that’s behind these decisions,” said Benedikt Erlingsson. “It’s very important that people know what this prize stands for, and the committee is trying to find films that fit in with these criteria. The reality is that we are drowning in entertainment – we are living in the age of entertainment, and the role of the LUX Prize is a bit like the role of a pig that sticks its face in the mud to sniff out something edible and lift it up out of the dirt. This is also the role of the juries, festival

programmers and prizes – to help people choose what they're going to be spending their time with," he continued.

In order to do this, the members must have clear points of view, such as that expressed by Mante Valiunaite: "We need to speak about the importance of the topics but also about other criteria like artistic decisions and visions. Sometimes, we veer too much towards what pleases the audiences. I understand that it's important to strike a balance and for people to see films that they will easily understand. But I may have higher expectations of the audiences, and I think we should always discuss the diversity of film language in more depth, and not only the topics and the geographical aspects of the movie."

Tina Poglajen adds into the mix the importance of bringing the award's work closer to the people who will have the power to make decisions in the future. "I'm one of the youngest members of the panel. I think it's important to include the points of view of the younger generations because they grew up during different times compared to the older generations. They face different challenges when they're looking for work, and they have different lives, starting, for example, with finding a place to live. We have to have these experiences in the selection, and to have young people giving their opinions."

These socially aware young people are one of the target audiences that the LUX Prize is aiming at, and it gets through to them thanks to events and screenings, which Matthias Holtz thinks European cinemas should participate in. "I'm Swedish, and a lot of these films won't get regular distribution there, or in other territories. One of the great things about this prize is that it screens good films in theatres. As an exhibitor, I'm really fond of seeing movies in the cinemas, in the best possible way, and after having been picked by the LUX Prize, these kinds of films will be able to reach a bigger audience. I'm happy to be part of that."

The 2019 LUX Prize Official Selection will be revealed during the upcoming Karlovy Vary International Film Festival (28 June-6 July), while the three finalists will be unveiled during the GIORNATE DEGLI AUTORI press conference, set to take place in Rome on 24 July.

Place your bets on the Official Selection films now!

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