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40th Havana Film Festival Came to An End

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The 40th Havana International Film Festival concluded on Sunday with the screening in this capital of several of the award-winning films.

The present edition, held from December 6 to 16, exhibited in Cuba 373 films from 40 countries and awarded a Coral of Honor to Mexican producer Bertha Navarro and a Special Coral to the Sundance Institute of the United States.

The list of personalities of the seventh art in Havana included Serbian director Emir Kusturica; North Americans Geraldine Chaplin, Michael Moore, Matt Dillon, Spanish Iciar Bollain and Scot Paul Laverty.

Moore showed in Cuba his new documentary Fahrenheit 11/9, in which he accuses the president of his country, Donald Trump, of destroying the American dream.

While Dillon presented the most current creation of Danish director Lars von Trier, The House That Jack Built, about a serial killer embodied by the actor himself.

Argentinean director Tristan Bauer brought here an urgent work: El camino de Santiago. Desaparición y muerte de Santiago Maldonado (The Way of Santiago.

Disappearance and death of Santiago Maldonado), a documentary that moved the jury of the 40th Havana Film Festival; because it granted the documentary a Special award.

This year 20 feature films, 18 raw operas, 25 documentaries, 22 shorts and medium-length films, 26 animated films, 19 unpublished scripts, 24 posters and seven films in post-production competed for the Coral Prize.

Some of the winning pieces were Pájaros de verano (Summer Birds), by Ciro Guerra and Cristina Gallego (Colombia, Mexico, Denmark, France), opera prima Retablo (Peru, Germany and Norway), by Alvaro Delgado and Aparicio L; and Inocencia (Innocence), by Alejandro Gil (Cuba).

The latter, won the Audience Award of the 40th edition, and among the distinguished films also stood out Joel, by Argentine director Carlos Sorin (Script Coral Award), and La noche de 12 años (A Twelve-Year Night), by Uruguayan Alvaro Brechner (Sound and Edition Coral Awards).

Both films obtained most of the Festival's Collateral Awards and, in addition, La noche de 12 años won the Glauber Rocha Prize awarded by Latin American News Agency Prensa Latina and the awards granted by Casa de las Américas and Radio Habana Cuba, the latter with the name of Roque Dalton.

Within the 40th edition of the event, several seminars took place, including one about its four decades of history, to reflect on the future of Latin American cinema, and another dedicated to outstanding Cuban director Tomas Gutierrez Alea (1928-1996), aka Titon.

Likewise, the event paid tribute to one of its founders, Argentinean filmmaker Fernando Birri, who died in December 2017.

The section of Galas exhibited feature films already awarded at several international events such as Yuli, of Bollain, and Roma (Rome), by Mexican Alfonso Cuarón, the winner this year of the Golden Lion at the Venice International Film Festival with this piece.

The cinemas were crowded every day, the public was not intimidated by the inclemency of the weather, nor by the long queues, and still, some were not able to enter certain sessions, due to the saturation of the room; normal, rather traditional scenes of this festival.

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