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MONTREAL HUMAN RIGHTS FILM FESTIVAL

A successful 4th edition!

A greater number of people.

Faces by Gérard Maximin wins the Audience Prize

The documentary Grand Prize goes to Rodrigo Vazquez

For *Child Miners*

**Christophe Chammartin receives the Grand Prize of Anthropographia's 1st
Competition of photojournalism on human rights, for *Prison de plastique*
(*Plastic Prison*)**

Montreal, Monday March 23, 2009 – For four years now, the **Montreal Human Rights Film Festival** (MHRFF) has been putting on the foreground major social issues and honouring gestures of reconciliation, while offering great cinematographic moments and discussions with several guests. A curious and open-to-the world audience was there in a greater number for this 4th edition.

The closing ceremony was held at Cinema du Parc, with the North American première of **Xavier de Lauzanne's** documentary *D'une seule voix (With One Voice)* in the presence of the director. The film tells about the French tour of a group of Israeli and Palestinian musicians, comprised of Christian, Jewish and Muslim artists. It was the occasion for the MHRFF to proceed to the **prize remittance** in the presence of its partners, guests and the audience.

Eight films were in competition for the Documentary Grand Prize and 45 for the Audience Prize. **The Audience Prize**, accompanied offered with \$2000 by the francophone section Amnistie internationale Canada, went to **Gérard Maximin** for his documentary film *Faces*, recounting the incredible adventure of JR, the photographer, and Marc Berrebi, the producer, to achieve, without any authorization, a most unusual exhibition: men and women of the same trade, Palestinians and Israelis, agreed to make faces in front of the camera. Their gigantic portraits were posted illegally on both sides of the separation wall, and in several cities.

The Documentary Grand Prize, accompanied with \$2500 offered by the International Center for Information and Documentation on Haiti, the Caribbean and the Afro-Canadian Community (CIDIHCA), went to **Rodrigo Vazquez** for his moving film *Child Miners*, focusing on the personal lives of two child miners in Bolivia. By his sensitive and respectful approach the director succeeded in recounting the brutal exploitation of children forced to work in the mines of Bolivia.

This year's jury was comprised **Annika Gustafson**, producer, director and winner of the 3rd 2008 MHRFF for her film *Killing Time*, **Diego Briceno-Ordaz**, screenwriter, director, producer and editor, and **Peter Leuprecht**, international law expert and member of a committee of four "wise" persons whose mission is to develop a human rights programme for the European Union.

During the festival, an exhibition of photo reportages on human rights took place at the UQÀM's Coeur des sciences, organised by **Anthropographia** which was also revealing the three winners of the **first edition of the Competition of photojournalism on human rights**.

The Grand Prize, accompanied with \$1000 offered by ethnopolis.ca, went to **Christophe Chammartin from the Swiss agency Rezo**, for *Prison de plastique (Plastic Prison)* about the extremely difficult living conditions of North African immigrants piled up in shanty towns and exploited by agricultural companies in southern Spain. [Photo-reportage also published in the francophone magazine *Passe-Frontière*]

Two honorary mentions were attributed to **Alfonso Moral**, for his work on heroin addiction in Kabul, Afghanistan and to **Ed Ou**, for his work on the consequences of nuclear weapons tests on Kazakhstan's civilians.

The **Montreal Reporter Prize** went to **Olivier Hanigan** for *Attaque à la cible* describing a brutal reality while respecting the victims' intimacy and decency. [Photography published in *Photo solution* and photo book offered by Magnum Photos.]

The jury for this competition consisted of five persons known for their commitment to human rights and photography: **François Bugingo, Benoit Aquin, Pierre Pascal, Mary Ellen Davis and Roy Hartling**.

The **Audience Prize** went to **G.M.B. Akash** for *Born to Work*, about working children under 14 in Bangladesh, reminding us that in that country, 6.3 millions children work in factories. [Collection of 12 portfolios offered by Reporters without Borders Canada]

Member of the Human Rights Film Network, the MHRFF presented from March 12 through 22, 2009, 72 films from 22 countries on the screens of Cinema du Parc and the NFB Cinema. **Laure Waridel** was this year's spokesperson. The festival opened with the North American première of "8" directed by **Jane Campion, Gael Garcia Bernal, Jan Kounen, Mira Nair, Gaspar Noé, Abderrahmane Sissako, Gus Van Sant and Wim Wenders**, about the eight Millennium Development Goals. About thirty guests from Québec, Canada and abroad were here to present their films, thus multiplying debates with the audience.

Pour un instant la liberté (Freedom for a Moment), first feature film of the Iranian-Austrian director **Arash T. Riahi**, will be on screens in June 2009. The film follows Iranian refugees, men, women and children, having to go through Turkey to obtain the visa allowing them to reach Europe. (Distribution in Québec: K Films)

Until the 5th edition of the Montreal Human Rights Film Festival, in March 2010, the MHRFF will continue with its monthly presentation of the Human Rights Encounters.

The 4th MHRFF was presented thanks to the support of Amnistie internationale, Immigration et des Communautés culturelles Québec (MICC), Images interculturelles, the French General Consulate in Québec city, the Austrian General Consulate, the International Documentation and Information Centre on Haïti, the Caribbean and Afro-Canadian Community (CIDIHCA), Rights & Democracy, TV5, the Office franco-québécois pour la jeunesse (OFQJ) and the Institut de coopération pour l'éducation des adultes (ICEA).

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