



Artis—Naples Naples International Film Festival

Home of The Baker Museum & Naples Philharmonic

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THE 2024 NAPLES INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES FILMMAKER AWARD WINNERS

**Jeremy Power Regimbal's *Between the Mountain and the Sky*
takes both the Jury Prize and the Audience Award
for Best Documentary Feature**

**Steven Grayhm's *Sheepdog* wins the Jury Prize for Best Narrative
Feature, and Anthony Lucero's *The Paper Bag Plan* wins
Audience Award for Best Narrative Feature**

Naples, FL (October 31, 2024) — The 2024 Naples International Film Festival announced the filmmaker award winners during an emotional Closing Night Awards Ceremony on Sunday, October 27. Jeremy Power Regimbal's inspirational ***Between the Mountain and the Sky*** was a two-time winner, taking both the jury prize (and a cash prize of \$2,500) and the Audience Award (and \$1,000) for Best Documentary Feature. The jury prize for Best Narrative Feature (and a cash prize of \$2,500) went to Steven Grayhm's ***Sheepdog***, and the Audience Award for Best Narrative Feature (and \$1,000) went to Anthony Lucero's ***The Paper Bag Plan***. Robert Moniot's ***The Ice Cream Man*** won the Audience Award (and \$500) for Best Short Film.

NIFF's trio of jurors for the 2024 edition of the juried competition included film producer Natalie Metzger (*Be Water, Thunder Road*), critic and film journalist Sabina Dana Plasse (*Film Threat*), and Artis—Naples Sharon and Timothy Ubben Artistic and Music Director Alexander Shelley.

Additional filmmaker awards selected by the festival programmers included Jeff Toyne winning NIFF's signature Focus on the Arts Award and \$1,500 for his film, ***The Opener***; Dianne Houston's ***Freedom Hair*** winning the Impact Award; Joe Wein's ***76 Days Adrift***, selected as the Programmers' Choice honoree; and H. Nelson Tracey, director of ***Breakup Season***, taking Best First Feature honors.

Ama Qamata received the Rising Star Award for her performance in ***Fight Like a Girl***, John Klein and Steve Kniss' ***Never Not Yours*** won NIFF's Indie Spirit Award and Herbert James Winterstern's ***Sanibel*** took the Florida Film Award. Each of these filmmakers also received a \$250 cash prize.

The awards ceremony was an emotional evening with literal tears of joy coming from multiple winners citing their gratitude for their films' receptions from the Naples audiences and the warmth and care exhibited by the NIFF team during their time at the film festival. During his acceptance speech on behalf of his film, ***Sheepdog***, director Steven Grayhm asked the audience to give a standing ovation for veteran Brad Link, who was the real-life inspiration for the film, and they enthusiastically responded. The awards

presentations culminated a week which demonstrated why *MovieMaker Magazine* once again recognized NIFF by naming the festival one of their 50 Film Festivals Worth the Submission Fee in 2024.

NIFF began with its famous Opening Night Film and Party red carpet celebration, which showcased short films with a program entitled Opening Night Shorts: *New Perspectives*. Nearly 1,000 film fans showed up to see six short films in the majestic Hayes Hall on the Artis—Naples Kimberly K. Querrey and Louis A. Simpson Cultural Campus: Sam and David Cutler Kreutz's ***Trapped***, Nick Russell's ***Favourites***, TJ O'Grady-Peyton's ***Room Taken***, Jumai Yusuf's ***Nate & John***, Adam J. Graves' ***Anuja*** and Ballard C. Boyd's ***Night Session***. The strong audience response continued in Naples' newly opened Alamo Drafthouse Cinema, which impressed audiences and filmmakers as it hosted NIFF screenings for the first time. Additional highlights included NIFF's popular Screenings Under the Stars in Norris Garden on the Artis—Naples cultural campus as well as multiple filmmaker receptions, parties and meet and greets designed to encourage networking and promotion of future collaborations. NIFF concluded by highlighting the multidisciplinary style of the festival with a special closing night presentation of ***Batman (1989) in Concert*** presented in Hayes Hall with the film's score performed live by the Naples Philharmonic, conducted by Principal Pops Conductor Jack Everly.

For more information, visit artisnaples.org/niff.

The 2024 Naples International Film Festival Award Winners:

NIFF JURY AWARDS

Best Narrative Feature - \$2,500

Sheepdog

Director: Steven Grayhm

Best Documentary Feature - \$2,500

Between the Mountain and the Sky

Director: Jeremy Power Regimbal

NIFF PROGRAMMERS' AWARDS

Focus on the Arts Award - \$1,500

The Opener

Director: Jeff Toye

Impact Award - \$250

Freedom Hair

Director: Dianne Houston

Indie Spirit Award - \$250

Never Not Yours

Directors: John Klein, Steve Kniss

Programmers' Choice Award - \$250

76 Days Adrift

Director: Joe Wein

Best First Feature - \$250

Breakup Season

Director: H. Nelson Tracey

Rising Star Award - \$250

Ama Qamata, actress

Fight Like a Girl

Florida Film Award - \$250

Sanibel

Director: Herbert James Winterstern

NIFF AUDIENCE AWARDS

Audience Award Winner, Narrative Feature - \$1,000

The Paper Bag Plan

Director: Anthony Lucero

Audience Award Winner, Documentary Feature - \$1,000

Between the Mountain and the Sky

Director: Jeremy Power Regimbal

Audience Award Winner, Best Short Film - \$500

The Ice Cream Man

Director: Robert Moniot

We extend deep gratitude to Festival Presenting Sponsors Dr. Richard Lublin and Christine Lublin. Generous support is also provided by the Collier County Tourist Development Council.

Sincere thanks to Opening Night Film and Party Sponsor The Woodruff Institute; Closing Night Awards Ceremony, Film and Wrap Party Sponsor Scott Meloun; and Theater Sponsors DeVoe Cadillac, Bobbi and David Drobis, Entech, Debra and Vincent Maffeo and Tes and Brian Manley. NIFF is pleased to partner with Gulfshore Life and The Naples Press as exclusive Media Sponsors.

ARTIS—NAPLES

Home of The Baker Museum and the Naples Philharmonic, Artis—Naples is unique among cultural institutions nationwide, equally dedicated to both the visual and performing arts featuring artists of global distinction.

KIMBERLY K. QUERREY and LOUIS A. SIMPSON CULTURAL CAMPUS

Led by CEO and President Kathleen van Bergen and Sharon and Timothy Ubben Artistic and Music Director Alexander Shelley, Artis—Naples offers more than 800 paid and free events annually across its 8.5-acre Kimberly K. Querrey and Louis A. Simpson Cultural Campus. Artis—Naples welcomes hundreds of thousands of visitors each year for a broad array of artistic and educational opportunities perfect for audiences of all backgrounds and interests. The cultural campus is home to five buildings, including two performance halls (Frances Pew Hayes Hall and Myra J. Daniels Pavilion), The Baker Museum, the Toni Stabile Education Building and the Kohan Administration Building.

NAPLES PHILHARMONIC

The Naples Philharmonic has long been recognized as one of the cornerstones of Southwest Florida's arts community. As part of Artis—Naples, the Naples Philharmonic performs more than 140 orchestral and chamber music concerts, as well as opera and ballet, education, community and special event concerts annually between September and June in the 1,477-seat Hayes Hall, the 283-seat Daniels Pavilion and around Southwest Florida. The Naples Philharmonic has enjoyed a history of working with world-class music directors. Following a successful designate year in 2023-24, Alexander Shelley begins his new role as artistic and music director in the 2024-25 season. Renowned violinist James Ehnes continues as artistic partner through the 2024-25 season, working with Naples Philharmonic musicians in a variety of settings with a focus on inspiring and embodying a high level of artistry. Podium leadership also includes Principal Pops Conductor Jack Everly, celebrating 15 years in this role in the 2024-25 season and bringing pops performances that celebrate music across genres.

THE BAKER MUSEUM

The Baker Museum is the foremost fine art museum in Southwest Florida, presenting an ambitious slate of exhibitions annually to complement installations of works from its permanent collection. Comprising more than 3,000 objects, the museum's broad holdings of 20th- and 21st-century art reflect particular strengths in modern art of the United States and Mexico. The Baker Museum's collections reflect the generosity and commitment of area collectors, including significant gifts from the collection of the late Olga Hirshhorn.

With more than two decades of collecting and exhibiting, the museum is committed to the stewardship and scholarship of its collections and to fostering inspiring and transformative experiences with the visual arts. At the same time, The Baker Museum partners with the world's leading arts institutions to make extraordinary exhibitions accessible to the Southwest Florida community—including recently the National Portrait Gallery, London and the Helen Frankenthaler Foundation. In 2020, Artis—Naples celebrated the renovation and expansion of The Baker Museum and adjoining Norris Garden, designed by Weiss/Manfredi Architecture/Landscape/Urbanism, which created new spaces for multidisciplinary exploration and social interaction.

EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY

In addition to creating and presenting visual and performing arts, Artis—Naples provides robust education and community activities for students of all ages in Collier and Lee counties. Each season, thousands of Collier County Public School students interact with Artis—Naples education programming, both on our cultural campus and in their classrooms. Beyond our commitment to youth education, the Lifelong Learning program provides informative lectures and study opportunities for adults seeking to engage more deeply with the arts.

The Friends of Artis—Naples, comprised of more than 3,500 donor households, offers activities, travel experiences and events designed to foster a deeper relationship between patrons and the arts.

In 2017, Artis—Naples acquired the Naples International Film Festival (NIFF), expanding its film offerings and providing a platform for the festival's continued excellence and growth. In 2023, the festival's 15th anniversary year, NIFF was named one of *MovieMaker* Magazine's "20 Great Film Festivals in Vacation Destinations."

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