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German Star of India for Director Jeo Baby

Feature Film Award for 'The Great Indian Kitchen'

Stuttgart - Director Jeo Baby's socio-critical feature film 'The Great Indian Kitchen' has been awarded the 'German Star of India' in the feature film category of the 18th Indian Film Festival Stuttgart on Saturday. The coveted film award carries a value of 4,000 EUR. The trophy for the best short film, which comes with 1,000 EUR, was awarded to director Ambiecka Pandit for 'Custody'. In the documentary category, the jury chose 'Watch over me' by director Farida Pacha. The documentary film 'Borderlands' by director Samarth Mahajan received a special mention. The 'Director's Vision Award', which is also worth 1,000 EUR, went to director Girish Kasaravalli for his feature film 'Illiralare Allige Hogalaare - Can neither stay here or journey beyond'. The award ceremony was held at the Wilhelma Zoological-Botanical Garden in Stuttgart. Animals and plants from India at the Wilhelma acted as sponsors of the film awards. . The 'Audience Award', endowed with 1,000 euros, went to the feature film 'The Tenant' by Sushrut Jain. Due to the coronavirus pandemic, Europe's largest festival of Indian film once again had to switch to digital cinema. However, three Festival films could also be seen on the big screen at Cinema Stuttgart.

Director Jeo Baby convinced the three-member jury with his feature film 'The Great Indian Kitchen': "It is a homage to the young and strong Indian wife who tries to break out of old traditions and structures, longing for appreciation and self-development." Jeo Baby impressively manages to bring out each character clearly in the oppressive routine between housework, Indian cooking, and sacrificial service to husband and father-in-law. He said his latest film also manages to highlight the blind spots of everyday injustice towards a homemaker who is always taken for granted by both the women and the men of the house.

'Custody' by director Ambiecka Pandit, the winner in the short film category, uses "a bouquet of interesting techniques to create a mood with great compositions and gazes," according to the jury. The winning film is about age-old friendships that are put to the test while a baby's life is at risk.

'Watch Over Me' by director Farida Pacha impressed the documentary jury because it "gives the viewer lessons in patience and empathy – values that are necessary in both life and filmmaking. Shot in black and white, the starkness never lets the film lose its purpose: to uphold the dignity of the dying and their families." The film depicts the daily life of a team working for a palliative care organisation in New Delhi: a doctor, a nurse, and a counsellor.

The documentary film 'Borderlands' by director Samarth Mahajan received an Honourable Mention. According to the jury, the film shows a range of well-chosen and sensitive stories that are uniquely located along the borders of India but become universal in their humanity.

The 'Director's Vision Award' honours a feature film that has the potential to become a great film classic. According to the jury, with 'Illiralar Allige Hogalaare - Can neither stay here or journey beyond' director Girish Kasaravalli subtly and in a multitude of layers expresses a poignant tale of alienation and class difference.

Festival Director Oliver Mahn of organiser Filmbüro Baden-Württemberg hopes that the 19th Indian Film Festival Stuttgart, which will bring modern Indian cinema to the capital of Baden-Württemberg from July 20th to 24th, 2022, can once again be celebrated in the cinema auditorium and with numerous guests from the Indian film industry.

Below the wording of the various jury statements:

LAUDATION FEATURE FILM

The film 'The Great Indian Kitchen' pays homage to the young and strong Indian wife who tries to break out of old traditions and structures, longing for appreciation and self-development. Jeo Baby impressively manages to clearly flesh out each individual character in the oppressive routine between housework, Indian culinary art, and the self-sacrificing service to both the husband and the father-in-law. The film also manages to emphasize the blind spots of daily injustice on a homemaker which are always taken for granted by both women and men of the house.

We were particularly impressed that Jeo Baby and his team succeeded in creating an exciting suspense arc, a firework for all the senses mixed with a subtle but haunting social criticism. Criticism not only relevant in India but all over the world where a stronger appreciation of women and equality to men is still needed. Congratulations!

LAUDATION SHORT FILM

The film 'Custody' uses a bouquet of interesting techniques to create a mood with great compositions and gazes. The casualness of the actors adds to the sense of life and the experience as a whole becomes incredibly immersive. The onus of carrying the story is on no one yet on everyone.

LAUDATION DOCUMENTARY

The film 'Watch Over Me' is a deeply impressive documentary that gives the viewer lessons in patience and empathy – values that are necessary in both life and filmmaking. Shot in black and white, the starkness never lets the film lose its purpose: to uphold the dignity of the dying and their families. It is a well-crafted, intimate, and respectful portrayal of the terminally ill and the three dedicated and compassionate women caregivers tirelessly attending to them. Its theme and treatment are also especially significant given the current times.

HONOURABLE MENTION DOCUMENTARY

The film 'Borderland' shows a diverse selection of well-chosen and sensitive stories that are uniquely located along the borders of India but become universal in their humanity. We admire the filmmakers' craft, courage, and distinguished decisions, which created a powerful platform for the protagonists' stories.

LAUDATION DIRECTOR'S VISION AWARD

The Director's Vision Award goes to Girish Kasaravalli for the film 'Can neither stay here nor journey beyond' for expressing subtly and in a multitude of layers a poignant tale of alienation and class difference.

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