

## **The Marrakech International Film Festival**

### **The Curtain falls on a Luminous, Powerful and Popular Edition**

- *L'Etoile d'or of Marrakech was awarded to JOY, by Sudabeh Mortezaei (Austria)*  
- *As many as 100,000 persons have attended the various screenings and activities programmed for the Festival.*

The curtain has fallen on the 17<sup>th</sup> Edition of the Marrakech International Film Festival—an edition rich in images, debates, and emotions. The 17<sup>th</sup> Edition of this world-class cinematographic event has likewise been marked by huge enthusiasm and involvement by the Moroccan public in the various scheduled screenings and activities.

On Saturday, December 8, the Jury of the 17th Edition, chaired by American director, James Gray, gave its verdict at the conclusion of a 9 day-long competition, during which 14 films have been watched and appreciated.

*L'Etoile d'Or* of the Marrakech International Film Festival has been awarded to JOY, directed by Sudabeh Mortezaei (Austria). The Jury Award has been given to LA CAMARISTA by Lila Avilès (Mexico). The Best Directing Prize is awarded to TERET by Ognjen Glavonic (Serbia).

Equally much awaited, are the Best Actor and Best Actress categories. Following their deliberations, the nine Jury members have given the award to Nidhal Saadi and Aenne Schwaz, respectively for their roles in REGARDE MOI by Nejib Belkadhi (Tunisia) and ALLE IST GUT by Eva Trobisch (Germany).

The 17<sup>th</sup> Edition of the Festival has also paid tribute to three great names in world cinema. Robert De Niro, Agnes Varda, and Jillali Ferhati have received the *Etoile d'Or* in recognition of their prestigious careers. They have shined with their talent and their generosity, and they have graced the red carpet of the *Palais des Congres in Marrakech*.

**Lessons of cinema and life:** another great success of the 17th Edition of the Festival is certainly the « Conversation with » section which has allowed a large and eclectic public to meet the giants of world cinema, namely Martin Scorsese, Robert de Niro, Guillermo Del Toro, Thierry Frémaux, Agnès Varda, Yousry Nasrallah and Cristian Mungiu. Sessions of high-caliber exchanges and debates have also been organized during which 7 major cinema professionals have generously and smartly shared their experiences and their perspectives on cinema with the public.

Each day, the different venues of the festival were full, with an eclectic audience of professionals, students, journalists and film enthusiasts, who also flocked in large numbers to the "Conversations With", broadcast live on the Internet.

**The Spotlight cast on Moroccan Cinema:** the 17th Edition of the Festival has likewise set aside a central place for Moroccan cinema. The festival welcomed more than 200 professionals from the Moroccan movie industry. Out of the 80 films programmed for the official selection, 12 are Moroccan. In addition to the film *Une urgence Ordinaire*, or a Common Emergency by Mohcine Besri, screened as part of the Official Competition, 7 other national films have been shown in the *Panorama du Cinema Marocain* section, which has drawn a wide audience. The latter included international professionals who have had the chance to discover some of the most recent Moroccan productions.

### **Great Popular Success:**

Some 100,000 persons have attended the various Festival screenings and activities over a 9-day period. The events were all free of charge and open to the general public. Starting from 11am, the rooms of the Marrakech-based *Palais des Congres* were filled with a large public eager to see the films in the competition. The same can be said about the sessions devoted to *Panorama of Moroccan Cinema*, the screenings given in the *Colisee*, at Yves Saint Laurent Museum or the special sessions devoted to films which have been nominated for the *Golden Globe Award*.

Every evening, stars such as Yousra, Leila Eloui, Martin Scorsese, Abdallah Ferkous, Bouchra Hraich, Laurence Fishburne, Aziz Dades, or Monica Bellucci convened with the public at *Jemaa El-Fna* Square. The stage set up in the mythical *Red City* has drawn more than 70.000 spectators during the Festival, with between 7,000 and 12,000 spectators per evening.

### **Fruitful Professional Encounters:**

*Les Ateliers de l'Atlas* is a program that has lived up to its promises. The new program: MIFF's industry and talent development was held from December 2-5, 2018, with the support of *Netflix*. It gathered together professionals from Morocco, the Middle East, Africa, Europe and North America, as well as 25 international film festival directors and programmers (Cannes, Rotterdam, Busan, Locarno, Morelia, Karlovy Vary, El Gouna, Sofia, Tokyo, etc.). The 8 projects in progress and 6 films in the post-production stage have been selected in the framework of the program, and have benefitted from counseling given by 17 international professionals, generating over 200 individual meetings.

### **Citizen and Social Commitment:**

More than 100 visually-impaired persons, originating from all of the country's regions have also had access to a special program in audio-description. They have been able to attend the five films programmed for them in addition to the

various activities organized on their behalf (conferences, poetry, songs, music, and others).

Young people have also come in great numbers to benefit from the screenings scheduled for them. All in all, 3,500 pupils from the region of Marrakech, accompanied by their teachers, have been able to watch the films programmed for them in this particular section. Some of the children have had the chance to access a movie theater for the first time in their lives.

The 17<sup>th</sup> Edition of the Marrakech International Film Festival has also been marked by the organization of a new medico-social campaign, under the presidency of His Royal Highness, Prince Moulay Rachid. Centered on cataract-removal surgery, the campaign took place at *Mohammed VI* Hospital at *Tahannout* from December 3-8, 2018. This solidarity-based and citizen-gearred campaign has made it possible to operate on 322 patients from the region. More than 650 patients suffering from cataract have likewise benefitted from free medical treatment provided by a team of volunteering ophthalmologists.

After a year of pause and reflection, the *Marrakech International Film Festival* has come back with enhanced force, more innovation, and varied cinematographic and artistic content. The event has asserted itself as a major cinematographic event in Morocco and the whole region.

#### **REMINDER OF THE PALMARES OF THE 17TH EDITION OF THE FIFM**

- L'Étoile d'or - Festival Grand Pize : JOY de Sudabeh Mortezaei (Autriche)
- Jury Prize : LA CAMARISTA de Lila Avilés (Mexique)
- Best Directing Prize : TERET de Ognjen Glavonić (Serbie)
- Best performance by an actor : Nidhal Saadi - REGARDER MOI de Nejib Belkadhi (Tunisie)
- Best performance by an actress : Aenne Schwarz - ALLES IST GUT de Eva Trobisch (Allemagne)