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VAUGHAN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES FILM NOMINEES AND INDIVIDUAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS AT SPRING LAUNCH

Virginia to Vegas to Give Headline Performance at VFF Awards

VAUGHAN, ON (May 17, 2023) – The **Vaughan International Film Festival (VFF)** held their annual Spring Launch yesterday evening at Roy Foss Cadillac Woodbridge to announce the film nominees, individual achievement awards, and other details of their 11th edition. Reshmi Nair, host of *The Rush* on Newstalk1010, led the presentation and City of Vaughan’s Ward 3 Councillor, **Rosanna DeFrancesca**, attended to share her support of the festival.

“Festival week is fast approaching and the VFF team is thrilled to bring this exciting event to life,” said **Antonio Ienco, VFF Co-Founder and Director of Sponsorship and Events**. “With new screening venues and an Indie-Pop headline performer at the Awards, VFF ‘23 is sure to be a memorable experience.”

“I want to thank you for putting Vaughan on the map”, said **Rosanna DeFrancesca, City of Vaughan’s Ward 3 Councillor**. “I want to thank you for opening me up to the film industry in the way that you have, with short films. You opened it up to new talent to come to Vaughan and showcase the City and now that means that we’re important. It’s important to us as a city to embrace that too.”

On June 19th, the festival will open with the Student Screening at York University’s Sandra Faire and Ivan Fecan theatre, followed by networking in the theatre lobby. Sponsored by Panasonic, the Student Screening lineup will spotlight 16 films from 13 different high schools submitted from across the province of Ontario. On this evening, three student finalists will be announced and, for the first time, each of them will be awarded with a Panasonic Lumix DC-S5M2K Full-Frame Mirrorless Camera valued at over \$3400.

The International Film Blocks are composed of 17 films from 10 different countries, including Iran, Switzerland, United Kingdom, and China. Block One will screen on Tuesday, June 20th and Block Two on Wednesday, June 21st. The screenings will take place at the Terrace Banquet Centre, followed by exclusive afterparties at Chop Steakhouse & Bar.

The VFF Awards will be hosted by Breakfast Television’s Stephanie Henry and will take place at the Terrace Banquet Centre on June 22nd. The headline performer of the evening will be Virginia to Vegas, an American-born, Toronto-based singer-songwriter known for his infectious lyrics and upbeat, electronic melodies.

VFF's 2023 nominees and Individual Achievement Award recipients were also revealed at the Spring Launch. The three nominees for Best Film are from Brazil, Canada, and Belgium. See below for the full list.

Best Actor

- Daniel Guzmán, *Cemento y Acero (Concrete and Steel)*
- Bobby Lee, *Death and Ramen*
- Luis Tosar, *Cemento y Acero (Concrete and Steel)*

Best Actress

- Sarah Zhai, *A Roadside Banquet*
- Rosalie Fortier, *L'Autre Rive (A Shore Away)*
- Camille Chen, *Make the Call*

Best Cinematography

- Nicolas Abaunza, *Trail*
- Norm Li, *Same Old*
- Stefan Nachmann, *Death and Ramen*

Best Director

- Zoel Aeschbacher, *Fairplay*
- Patrick Hanser, *Aperio*
- Oriol Villar, *Cemento y Acero (Concrete and Steel)*

Best Film

- *Aperio*
- *L'Autre Rive (A Shore Away)*
- *Un Mariage Heureux (Just Married)*

Internationally renowned Canadian actor-producer-writer, **Laura Vandervoort**, was announced as VFF's 2023 Indie Leader. This year's Sandra Piccolo Trailblazer Award will be given to **Mark Lanza**, President of Motion Picture Sound Editors (MPSE).

Tickets for VFF '23 are available at vaughanfilmfestival.com.

About VFF

The Vaughan International Film Festival, based in a neighbouring city of Toronto, is a not-for-profit organization highly invested in securing the future of the short film industry. Through public film screenings, scholarship opportunities as well as engaging and informative panels, webinars, and industry events, VFF strives to support both experienced and aspiring filmmakers.

After over ten years, the festival continues to offer a platform for independent creators to share their films and further excel within the industry. Between the festival week, promotional events, and unique screenings, filmmakers have the opportunity to reach an audience of over 20,000 people.