

The tribute to Concha Velasco and Patricia Ferreira closes the 69th edition of SEMINCI

- *French director Alain Guiraudie picked up the Golden Spike and the award for best screenplay for his film 'Misericordia', a rural thriller with irreverent humour.*
- *The Spanish premiere of the film 'Sing Sing', by Greg Kwedar, closed this year's edition of the Festival*

Valladolid, 26 October 2024. Remembrance, but not melancholy. Music and images that are already part of the history of cinema and television flew over the stage of the Calderón Theatre during the Closing Gala of the 69th edition of the Valladolid International Film Festival (SEMINCI) to remember **Concha Velasco** and **Patricia Ferreira**, two regular filmmakers at the Festival who will not be sitting in its cinemas again since last year. A stage where, through the words of some of the award winners, the memory of the suffering currently being experienced in Palestine and Lebanon and the desire for peace were also shared.

Once again this year, this SEMINCI has been quite a party, recalled Elena Sánchez, presenter, together with **Miss Beige**, at the gala held tonight at the Calderón Theatre in Valladolid, 33 years after a young and unknown Brad Pitt picked up the Golden Spike awarded to Ridley Scott's film *Thelma and Louise*. The ceremony, at which León Benavente presented their latest single, *La aventura*, featured live music by arcodeonista Jorge Arribas, of the duo Fetén Fetén.

During this edition, the filmmaker, critic and disseminator **Fernando Méndez-Leite** and the Iranian film director **Mohammed Rasoulof** received the Honorary Spikes; the fourth edition of the MERCI meeting of independent film distributors and the first meeting of women filmmakers were held. Among the directors and performers who visited Valladolid to present their latest works were **Marta Nieto**, **Paz Vega**, **Ángela Molina**, **C. Tangana**, **Eduard Fernández**, **Ingvar Sigurdsson** and **David Lynch**, incarnated at this gala by Joaquín Reyes in a humorous monologue that included hoovers and dancing.

The most emotional moment of the gala was the performance of two great women of Spanish cinema. **Emma Brasó Ferreira** received the Honorary Spike awarded posthumously to her mother, the filmmaker **Patricia Ferreira**, 'for her contribution to the advancement of women in the film industry', according to **José Luis Cienfuegos**, director of SEMINCI, who was accompanied by the directors and screenwriters **Cristina Andreu** and **Juana Macías**. Both recalled Patricia Ferreira's awareness and social commitment, her fight for equality and her achievement in obtaining quotas. 'Women have the same talent, but we didn't have opportunities', was her motto. Her daughter, for her part, recalled her mother's 'long and deep' relationship with SEMINCI, where her documentary *Señora de* won a prize in the section Time of History.

Similarly, **Concha Velasco**, the night's other honoree, winner of two Honorary Spikes plus another for her performance in **Jaime de Armiñán's** *La hora bruja* (The Witching

Hour). ‘Concha Velasco was the best version of the Spain of her time; her way of understanding the profession is still alive in us, and tonight she is present’, said the actress and musician **Julia de Castro**, before the musical number and images of the deceased actress from Valladolid during her time at different previous editions of SEMINCI.

Award Ceremony

French film director **Alain Guiraudie** collected the Golden Spike, the highest award given by SEMINCI, for his film *Misericordia*. ‘A story of great intellect with a lightness that conceals a profound meditation on desire and guilt’, according to international jury member **Luis López Carrasco**. The filmmaker, who was accompanied on stage by Spanish co-producer **Montse Triola** (Underground Films), recalled that he began filming just after the ‘horrible attack by Hamas and Israel’s inhumane response’ and called for a just and lasting peace for Palestine, which includes the creation of a Palestinian state’. The director also received the Miguel Delibes award for best screenplay from German producer **Ingmar Trost**, ‘my favourite part of making a film, the moment when I dream the film in my head’, said Guiraudie.

The Silver Spike, which went ex aequo to the films *Stranger Eyes*, by **Yeo Siew Hua**, and *They Will Be Dust*, by **Carlos Marques-Marcet**, was awarded by the American critic **Devika Girish**. ‘I hope that cinema will help us to communicate, to break the taboo of death’, said the director of *They Will Be Dust*, a film that will be released in Spain on 15 November, and whose protagonists, **Ángela Molina** and **Alfredo Castro**, won a special mention for the subtlety of their performance.

Jury representatives **Aida Folch** and **Sofia Exarchou** presented the Silver Spikes to the best performers, **Jan Gunnar Røise**, joint winner with **Thorbjørn Harr** for the film *Sex*, by Dag Johan Haugerud; and **Laura Weissmahr**, for *Salve María*, by Mar Coll, in her first leading role. ‘Thanks to the Festival for programming stories like this, which need to be told’, said the actress in the film, which deals with the darker side of motherhood.

Once again this year, **Gonzalo Miró** presented the Pilar Miró Award for Best New Director, which from this year onwards will go to a Spanish production. The award went to **Elena Manrique**, for *Fin de fiesta*. ‘I want to remind you that your enemy is the one who spreads hate, not the one who has come on a boat,’ she said.

Miguel Sanz, director of the D.O. Ribera del Duero, announced the award for best director to Guan Hu for *Black Dog*. Although, the Chinese director was unable to attend the ceremony, the winner of the young SEMINCI prize, awarded by the spectators to Jenifer de la Rosa, for *Hija del volcán*, took the stage and was presented with the award by the actress **Mona Martínez**. So did **Alberto Gracia**, winner of the grand prize in the Alchemies section for *La parra* (*The Vine*).

The Audience Award went to *Bob Trevino Likes It*, by **Tracie Laymon**, and was announced by **Ángel Ortiz**, director of El Norte de Castilla. The jury members of the Time of History section, **Nina Danino** and **Domingo Sánchez**, announced the Grand Prize and the Special Prize, respectively, for *Youth* (*Hard Times*) by **Wang Bing** and

Henry Fonda for President by Alexander Horwath. Also announced were the special Fundos award for Sara Friedland's *Familiar Touch* and Meeting Point for Louise Courvoisier's *Holy Cow*.

When accepting the DOC Spain Award for *Caja de resistencia* from Mercedes García, Director of Communications at Renault España, directors Concha Barquero and Alejandro Alvarado expressed their wishes aloud: that there be a network of cinemas where films can be shared outside the commercial circuit, and that dignity be restored to the families of those who disappeared and were murdered during Franco's dictatorship.

The winners of the awards for the best short films in the Official Section were also present to receive their prizes. Marthe Peters (*Baldilocks*) received the Golden Spike from director Michel Hazanavicius, who has presented his first animated film, *The Most Precious of Cargoes*, at SEMINCI. 'This award is a reminder that cinema doesn't need to be very expensive, just honest, and I hope it will be a place where the Palestinian people can express themselves,' said the Belgian filmmaker. Actress Nuria Gago announced the Silver Spikes to Jason Adam Maselle (*Punter*) and Mariona Martínez (*Lluna de sal*), as well as the La noche del corto español award to Àlex Sardà (*El príncep*).

After the awards ceremony, the American film director Greg Kwedar, considered one of the most interesting emerging voices in American independent cinema, presented the film that closes the 69th SEMINCI, *Sing Sing*, starring Colman Domingo. The moving chronicle of a group of prisoners (many of whom take part in the film) who find in theatre a means of escape and personal transformation; a reflection on the prison system and the role of art as a means of redemption.

'After eight and a half years of work producing this film about friendship and community, I have found that film is a common language that allows us to connect as human beings. I hope that when they see the film they leave the cinema with hope,' said Greg Kwedar.

The institutional representation was formed by the Mayor of Valladolid, **Jesús Julio Carnero**, the Councillor for Tourism, Events and City Brand, **Blanca Jiménez Cuadrillero** and the Councillor for Culture, **Irene Carvajal**; **Ana Redondo**, Minister for Equality of the Government of Spain; **María González Corral**, Councillor for Agriculture, Livestock and Rural Development, and **Raquel Alonso**, territorial delegate of the Government of Castilla y León in Valladolid.

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