

Jury report - Camera Justitia Jury 2020

Jury members: Kelly Matheson (Chair), Christophe Paulussen and Alex Szalat.

Since time immemorial, stories have had the power to bind people and build solidarity. Stories that connect us matter even more in times like these when we find ourselves having to physically separate from each other.

The selection of films for the *Camera Justitia* competition 2020 do just that. The films share emblematic stories from around the world of grave human rights violations. They remind us that just because the world has slowed down and our current focus is, understandably, on a global pandemic, that every day, without pause, tens of thousands of illegal acts result in human rights violations.

As the 2020 *Camera Justitia* jury, we would like to underscore the importance of every film in this competition and, with this new-found space to read, watch films and reflect, we would encourage viewing each of them in the quiet of your own home with family and friends or through online 'watch parties' which are now a viable way to get together, share a common experience and discuss the issues raised in the films with the people whose opinions you value most.

This year's *Camera Justitia* films remind us that once global health concerns stabilize and life returns to normal, we must not only continue our focused work to secure systemic human rights change, we will likely have to dig in harder as oppressive regimes, states, armed groups and individual perpetrators will take advantage of a destabilized world to ravage human rights further.

Here, in alphabetical order, are our top reasons why each film is an important contribution to the fields of human rights and law.

Antigone is a beautiful, captivating film about contemporary issues of police violence, migration and citizenship. Of all the films in the competition, this one will leave audiences inspired by the profound sacrifices we will make for the ones we love and the solidarity that can arise from a single spark.

Collective takes audiences on an unexpected journey guided by a team of unstoppable investigative journalists. The story starts with a tragic fire in a concert hall and then takes us to hospital rooms, corporate offices and backrooms in government ministries. Along the way, the film exposes cracks in Romania's health care system, corporate cover-ups and corruption in national Ministries all while also introducing us to a tenacious government official who tries to change the system.

Corpus Christi sheds light on complex, big themes such as truth telling and forgiveness through a micro-story about a small city and a former detainee who is mistaken for a priest. With its strong main character and excellent storytelling, the film sends out a clear message to all of us: don't judge people too quickly, don't jump to conclusions, ask hard questions and think for yourself.

The Guardian of Memory is a beautifully shot documentary that stages very strong, personal and touching testimonies about the incredibly important and timely issue of migration and authorized

crime. The director poetically represents what is lost, and the traces of what is left behind, by showing it with beauty instead of violence.

La Causa is an impressive, shocking and raw portrait of a prison in Venezuela. We admire the courage of the filmmaker and the amazing access that he grants the viewer to this extraordinary place. A place that is hell on earth for some and on the other hand, comparable to life outside the walls for others. The different ways in which the many characters in the film respond to the situation powerfully shows humanity in all its diversity.

nîpawistamâsowin: We Will Stand Up follows the developments in the murder case of a young Cree-man with a promising future, Coulten Boushie. As the film unfolds, Coulten's family, friends and broader community take us deeper and deeper into the ongoing structural racism that is present in Canada and Canada's legal system today. The film also succinctly summarizes the backstory so we understand where this racism came from.

Nuestras Madres courageously, yet delicately, addresses deeply-embedded generational human rights impacts over 35 years after the genocide in Guatemala. This film stands out for its cinematography, story and touching narrative about the aftermath of the violent dictatorship. It holds your attention from the beginning to the end.

The Scarecrows opens our eyes to extremely prevalent issues in today's Tunisian society – the threat of terrorism, discrimination against women, the plight of the LGBT community and the obstacles faced by the lost generation of youth. Through the story of two women, their families, and their advocates, this film visualizes a story of human rights issues that all too often goes untold.

Recognizing the important message each film brings to a global conversation, as a jury, we could only select one winner. For 2020, the *Camera Justitia* Award goes to ***Collective* by Alexander Nanau**.

As a jury, we felt ***Collective*** embodied what this award represents. *Collective* exposes Romania's failing health care system – a system with a mandate to care for its patients, not kill them. It reveals the partnership between corporate interests and State agents to cover up mass corruption. It emphasizes the role free press plays in the fight to secure basic human rights, reminding us that, "When the press bows down to authorities, the authorities will mistreat the citizens." It underscores the critical role of whistleblowers and the courage it takes to come forward for the larger good. And finally, it introduces us to visionary human rights defenders embedded in the press, in the health care system and in the government that give us hope and show us that there is a path forward that is rooted in human rights if we choose to take it.

Filmed and edited like a feature film, this documentary is full of suspense and could not be more timely. As healthcare systems around the world are overwhelmed and incapable of delivering proper care to patients, this film gives us a blueprint of how things should and could be done.

We would also like to express our profound appreciation to **Andres Figueredo** along with a **Special Mention** for his film ***La Causa***. In this film, Figueredo appears to take extraordinary risks that, in turn, gives us access in to a world we would otherwise never see, never know.

Thank you from the 2020 *Camera Justitia* Jury to all the filmmakers, their crews, their funders and all the people in the films who courageously shared these stories that matter.