



## **Activist Documentary Award 2022 – speech of the jury**

[Laura:]

Good evening, my name is Laura Wennekes, board member at Amnesty International the Netherlands.

The activist programme at Movies that Matter festival presents films that center around the work of inspiring individuals from all around the world. The work of activists fighting for human rights remains extremely relevant in our current societies. The situation in Ukraine reminds us that we may never take for granted our freedoms and safety. As a jury, we have watched films on, among other things, the freedom of religion, the freedom of the press, indigenous rights and marriage equality. This shows the wide variety of issues that, unfortunately, still need addressing.

Before getting into our decision-making process, and on behalf of the entire Activist Jury, I would like to thank the organization of the Movies that Matter festival for their incredible work in putting together an inspiring programme and for their support and facilitation of our jury activities. In addition, as a jury, we want to compliment all filmmakers that were nominated under the activist programme with the generally high standards of cinematography and storytelling.

The jury has taken the following five elements into consideration when ranking the 8 nominated films:

- Impact:** what impact can be suspected from this film for activism in the future?
- Innovative activism:** are new and creative ways of activism shown in this film?
- Cinematography:** what is the technical quality of this film?
- Activist fight:** does the storytelling of this film really center around the fight of the activist?
- And finally, the **goosebump effect:** does this film incite an emotional reaction in the viewer? Does it give us goosebumps?

[Celina:]

Good evening, I'm Celina Escher, the director of Fly so Far and winner of the Activist Award last year.

Before moving on to announcing the winner of the Activist Award, the Jury felt the need to give a **Special Mention** to a film that scored very high in all these five elements. **Writing with fire** a documentary film by Rintu Thomas and Sushmit Ghosh, tells the story of a group of women in India, running their own on- and offline newspaper and thereby breaking through different levels of tradition while empowering themselves and their communities. Writing with fire has moved the activist jury deeply, and we would highly recommend to go and see it if you still get the chance.

And now, the Jury has unanimously decided that the **winner of the Activist Award 2022** is: **The Territory** directed by Alex Pritz.

A film which inspires and wakes up the **urgency of a global matter**, the environmental crisis we are living in, and gives hope that people can fight back in innovative ways.

A **cinematic experience**, with impressive and poetic **cinematography**, an excellent **sound design** of the Amazonia forest which allows us to fully immerse in the storytelling following protagonist Bitaté, the young indigenous Uru-Eu-Wau-Wau leader.

Bitaté carries a 6 thousand year indigenous legacy and culture and has the task to fight for the survival of his people and the Amazonian forest. The Uru-eu-wau-wau are the **guardians of the Amazonian forest**, they protect the lungs of the Earth and have survived 500 years of colonization. Local farmers and land grabbers are destroying and burning the Amazon in the name of development and religion. Bitaté - with help of Neidhia, an environmental activist supporting the indigenous community - fights relentlessly to protect the forest. The invaders' perspective that is included in the film adds another layer of complexity to this film that the jury could really appreciate.

It is admirable how the Uru-eu-wau-wau bravely defended their territory using the **camera as a weapon of resistance**, by forming patrols and using drones to track the burning of the Amazon. The use of the camera to **denounce** the violence, but also as an **educational tool** for preserving their language and culture, empowers the indigenous community.

In a context of the rise of fascist populism in the world and the **climate crisis** we face, the film resonated with the jury, created a **deep impact** and it made us reflect about the role of human beings on this planet: how our survival depends on the survival of the ecosystem of the Earth. This film is a **wake-up call to take action and stop this environmental crisis**. The survival of the Uru-Eu-Wau-Wau is essential for the survival of the Amazon Forest, and therefore the survival of the planet and us all.