



'Paper Birds,' 'Born' top Montreal fest nods

Films share audience award; 'Oxygen' receives top jury prize

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TORONTO -- The audience award at the Montreal World Film Festival was shared by Spanish director Emilio Aragon's "Paper Birds" and "The Day I Was Not Born," by German director Florian Cossen.

Cossen's debut feature about a young German woman who comes upon a painful family secret while passing through Argentina also earned the FIPRESCI critics prize and shared the Ecumenical Prize with the juried Grand Prix of the Americas winner, Hans Van Nuffel's "Oxygen."

It's been a busy 10 days for Van Nuffel. The Belgian director was in Montreal last week to debut his first-feature in Montreal, before jumping a plane to open the Film Festival of Ostend back home on Sept. 3 with "Oxygen."

Then Monday night, Van Nuffel was expected back in Montreal to receive the festival's top jury prize ahead of a Belgian theatrical release on Sept. 8 for his drama about two men whose love for the women in their lives conquers their fear of an early death from cystic fibrosis.

"Oxygen" beat out a 20-film world competition lineup that included "From the Waist On," which earned Italian director Gianfrancesco Lazotti the special grand prix of the jury. And the Montreal jury, this year led by Danish director Bille August, gave the best director prize to two competition entrants, Maria Sodahl for "Limbo" and Pascal Elbe for "Tete de turc."

Elsewhere, Eri Fukatsu took home the best actress trophy for her star turn in "Akunin" (Villain), by Japanese director Lee Sang-Il, while the best actor prize went to Quebec's Francois Papineau for his role in Canadian director Louis Belanger's "Route 132," which opened the Montreal festival on Aug. 26.

Shut out of the jury awards were two Americans films in competition in Montreal: Jeff Lipsky's "Twelve Thirty" and Carl Colpaert's "The Land of the Astronauts."

The sole U.S. award winner in Montreal was Neil Labute's "Sexting," which earned the jury award in the short film competition, being beat out for the top prize by Spanish director Cote Soler's "Salesman of the Year."

Other Montreal award winners: best screenplay to Silvia Pasternac for the Mexican film "From Childhood," best artistic contribution to Poland's Jan Jakub Kolski for "Venice" and the Innovation Award and the most popular Canadian feature prize, voted on by fest-goers, going to Canadian director Julie Hivon for "Silence Lies."