



SXSW FILM & TV FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES 2025 JURY AND SPECIAL AWARDS

Austin, Texas, Wednesday, March 12, 2025 – The South by Southwest® (SXSW®) Conference and Festivals announced the 2025 Jury and Special Award winners of the 32nd SXSW Film & TV Festival. Feature films receiving Jury Awards were selected from the Narrative Feature and Documentary Feature Competition categories, plus all other juried sections, including Shorts, Independent TV Pilots, Music Videos, Poster Design and XR Experience Awards. Special Awards announced included the SXSW Best of Texas Award, Redbreast Unhidden Award, Vimeo Staff Pick Award, Agog Immersive Impact Award, NEON Auteur Award, the Janet Pierson Champion Award presented by *Indiewire*, and the The Howl of Fame Award.

All 2025 film & TV festival projects will be eligible for category-specific Audience Awards that will be certified by the accounting firm of Maxwell Locke & Ritter. Audience Award Voting will conclude on Saturday, March 15. Winners will be announced via [sxsw.com](https://www.sxsw.com) that week.

"The energy at SXSW has been absolutely electric this week! Our theaters have been packed with passionate audiences embracing the incredible diversity of stories in our lineup," said Claudette Godfrey, VP, Film & TV. "I'm thrilled to celebrate our jury and special award winners — they truly represent what makes this festival so special!"

The SXSW 2025 Film & TV Festival Award Winners:

FEATURE FILM GRAND JURY AWARDS

NARRATIVE FEATURE COMPETITION

Thank you to our sponsor Kickstarter, the funding and launch platform for independent creators and innovators, for supporting the Narrative Feature Competition Film Screening section.

Winner: *Slanted* directed by Amy Wang

"This unflinching satirical thriller examines racial identity in a bold and skin-tingling new way. Featuring simmering performances by the cast, this film is both specific to the fractured identity

of Asian Americans and universally relatable in its theme of desperately needing to belong. The director's vulnerability in mining her personal experience combined with her delicate and daring filmmaking create a haunting piece that lingers long after the credits roll."

Special Jury Award for a Multi-Hyphenate: Annapurna Sriram, *Fucktoys*

"Annapurna Sriram is a visionary force, a rare artist whose work is as daring as it is singular. In this dynamic and revelatory comedic fantasy, she delivers an audacious cinematic experience that defies convention. As the film's director, writer, executive producer, and star, she masterfully wields the power of storytelling, immersing audiences in a world that feels both wildly original and deeply resonant."

Special Jury Award for Performance: Amanda Peet, *Fantasy Life*

"Ever an actor of unsparing comic canniness, Amanda Peet brilliantly portrays a flailing actress with a stalled-out career who gets a renewed joie de vivre thanks to a manny, played by writer/director Matthew Shear. Her frankness about the perils and pitfalls of the entertainment industry are on full display in a performance that boldly takes on a meta quality while reminding us of why Peet has been so great all along."

Narrative Feature Competition Jury: Clayton Davis, Senior Awards Editor, *Variety*; Rebecca Ford, Senior Awards Correspondent, *Vanity Fair*; Ryan Lattanzio, Deputy Editor of Film, *IndieWire*

DOCUMENTARY FEATURE COMPETITION

Winner: *Shuffle* directed by Benjamin Flaherty

"Wrought with measured style and humanity, this quietly searing exposé of exploitation and fraud in the addiction treatment industry is a deeply affecting work of cinematic memoir and alarm. The director illuminates the insidiousness of the profit-driven, billion-dollar recovery business even as he brings compassion and urgency to his subjects, whose candid revelations are as heartbreaking as they are hopeful."

Special Jury Award: *The Python Hunt* directed by Xander Robin

"*The Python Hunt* burrows deep into a fascinating pocket of American life. This gorgeously shot, surprisingly touching film constantly subverts expectations while revealing the soul of these colorful contestants. With humor and compassion, Robin pushes past clichés: We'll never think of the much-mocked media image of 'Florida Man' in the same way."

Special Jury Award: *Remaining Native* directed by Paige Bethmann

“Paige Bethmann magnetically examines North America’s abusive Indian boarding school programs through the eyes of her impassioned subject, Kutoven Stevens. The director’s vivid use of montage, searing archival imagery, and Stevens’s poetic narration builds a powerful narrative around him. Stevens’ love of running brings him closer to his great-grandfather’s legacy while allowing him to use his voice as a force for good in his community.”

Documentary Feature Competition Jury: Tim Grierson, Senior U.S. Critic, *Screen International*; Aisha Harris, culture critic and co-host of NPR’s “Pop Culture Happy Hour”; Jen Yamato, freelance journalist and film critic

SHORT FILM COMPETITION GRAND JURY AWARDS Presented by Vimeo

Thank you to our Short Film Jury Award sponsor, Vimeo: the world’s most innovative video experience platform for creators and enterprises.

NARRATIVE SHORT COMPETITION

Winner: *One Day This Kid* directed by Alexander Farah

“An intimate portrait that illustrates the desires and burdens we carry, offering an evocative glimpse into the life of an Afghan Canadian. It is both exquisite and soulful, effortlessly weaving in the cultural imprint of Islamic immigrant upbringing into the fabric of everyday queer experiences. The director is a timeless visionary who is reshaping the journey of what it means to claim and accept one’s own identity.”

Special Jury Award: *I’m The Most Racist Person I Know* directed by Leela Varghese

“Charming, contemporary, and polished. This film is a lyrical study of beauty and identity that balances the weight of internalized shame with the frivolity of a burgeoning romance. The Special Jury Award celebrates the director’s confidence in their examination of intersectional issues through the curious lens of two queer South Asian women.”

Narrative Shorts Competition Jury: Amy Beecroft, Verve Ventures; Jaycie Luo, MRC; Sara Rastogi, EVP, Development, HOORAE

DOCUMENTARY SHORT COMPETITION

Winner: *Looking for a Donkey* directed by Juan Vicente Manrique

“A subversive film that speaks to larger geopolitical realities. It tells a stranger-than-fiction story with staying power. The exceptional craft of this film – from the narrative approach to the cinematography – results in a brave and quiet film that speaks volumes.”

Special Jury Award: *Welcome Home Freckles* directed by Huiju Park

"The film creates a scripted narrative aesthetic through a deeply personal documentary. The director composes each shot with clear intention, so her vision seeps through every frame."

Documentary Shorts Competition Jury: Chloe Gbai, Original Documentary Films, Netflix; Corinne Gilliard Fisher, producer and development executive; Amanda Spain, Head of Documentary, EverWonder Studio

ANIMATED SHORTS COMPETITION

Winner: *Retirement Plan* directed by John Kelly

"A deeply resonant and well-crafted film, it is a masterful blend of charm, humor, and existential reflection. With remarkable storytelling finesse, the filmmaker succeeds in transforming a seemingly ordinary premise into a profound meditation on life, dreams, and the passage of time. It captures a universal longing for fulfillment and explores heavy themes with levity and warmth, making it both deeply personal and universally relatable."

Special Jury Award: *My Wonderful Life* directed by Calleen Koh

"A throw down, relentless festival jam sure to evoke laughter while packing an emotional punch. The central character's family dynamic provides firm grounding and relatability, freeing the filmmaker to make increasingly bold, and hilarious, choices demonstrating the absurd lengths they'll go to for just one. more. day away from it all. Skillful animation and complex textures masterfully support the work's central message."

Animated Shorts Competition Jury: Brandon Bui, Associate Creative Executive at Walt Disney Animation Studios; Silvia Olivas, two-time EMMY® AWARD Winning Writer; Adam Zehner, Funimation/Crunchyroll's Japanese partnerships manager

MIDNIGHT SHORTS COMPETITION

Winner: *Stomach Bug* directed by Matty Crawford

"A film as rich in character development and theme as it is in technical prowess and execution. It was a fresh take on a parent dealing with their child spreading their wings and flourishing. A brilliantly-gut-wrenching performance by its lead and a seamless blend of practical and visual effect results in a truly polished piece that everyone involved should be immensely proud to have birthed."

Special Jury Award: *Whitch* directed by Hoku Uchiyama

"Crafting an effective short is incredibly difficult; doing so in under 5 minutes is extraordinary. This film skillfully blends horror and humor and does so without wasting a second. The film's use of familiar motifs lulls the audience into a false sense of knowing what's to come before

effectively pulling the rug out from under them several times, while still delivering a complete story and evocative performances.”

Midnight Shorts Competition Jury: Alayna Glasthal, Creative Executive, Atomic Monster; Emily Gotto, SVP of Acquisitions and Productions at AMC Networks Shudder; David Lawson, Jr.’s features include *Resolution*, *Something In The Dirt*, *Synchronic*, *The Endless*, and *She Dies Tomorrow*.

TEXAS SHORTS COMPETITION

Winner: *Harvester* directed by Charlie Schwan

“This tightly focused horror film proves that great things come in small packages. Deftly commingling the tiniest, unheralded story details with big, “talk at the screen” levels of horror and well-judged creature work, this film absolutely delivers on the promise of the genre in which it lives, and goes that extra step further to become something truly special.”

Special Jury Award: *Newbies* directed by Kimiko Matsuda-Lawrence and Megan Trufant Tillman

“This is a film that shimmers with beauty, yet also delivers powerful feelings of heartbreak and sadness, creating an experience that so perfectly embodies visual storytelling that it virtually eradicates the need for words. The characters invite you into their inner landscapes, placing you at the center of their richly shot and beautifully performed emotional drama.”

Texas Shorts Competition Jury: Megan Creydt, *Texas Monthly* executive producer for TV, film, and podcasts; James Faust, Dallas Film Society Artistic Director; Michael Garcia, Producer and Executive involved in a number of highly-acclaimed, award-winning television series.

MUSIC VIDEO COMPETITION

Winner: BIJI - 'ZIGIDI' directed by Maceo Frost

“A high gear, zip-zooming piece of visual whiplash, this music video wowed us with its epic Kurdish setting and wholly unpredictable framework. The drifting and stunt work is very impressive, but it reaches next level heights with its narrative design and cultural reflections (not to mention the eagle cam). Simultaneously playful and resonant, it’s a testament to the grand potential of the music video medium.”

Special Jury Award: Sarah Klang - 'Other Girls' directed by Rose Bush and Kirsten Bode

“One of the most difficult accomplishments of short-form filmmaking is creating a convincing character arc. This video gives us an honest, dynamic, and ultimately surprising look at its central character, all in less than three and a half minutes. The impressive shorthand is marked by poignant direction and a pitch-perfect performance. Most feature films can’t pull off characters this rich.”

Music Video Competition Jury: Britt Daniel, co-founder of Spoon; Alexis Hodoyán-Gastélum, music editor, Remezcla; Bryan Younce, producer and Executive Vice President of Video & Content Production, Columbia Records

INDEPENDENT TV PILOT COMPETITION

Winner: *F*ckups Anonymous* from Showrunner Joe Tierney and director Kat Whalen

“Immediately pulls you in, building tension with care, while the teen leads deliver raw, compelling performances. Their struggles feel real and deal with hard hitting themes, but the show holds back just enough, drawing us into the quiet complexities of their characters. The filmmaker subtly reveals the deeper fractures within this therapeutic boarding school. This pilot keeps its audience hooked – leaving us unsettled, questioning, and eager to see what’s next.”

Special Jury Award: *Denim* from showrunner and director Tedra Wilson

“This pilot defies convention, offering a documentary experience that feels both intimate and avant-garde. A striking collage of stylized voices, each contributing to a larger narrative about identity, creativity, and cultural evolution. Curated with sharp taste and unwavering confidence, the filmmaker constructs a world where artistry isn’t just observed but felt — where every frame, soundbite, and visual texture is intentionally placed to challenge, inspire, and provoke.”

TV Pilot Competition Jury: Hannah Bang, filmmaker, with a love for stories about imperfect people; Claire Brooks, creative producer, writer, and advocate for emerging filmmakers; Channing Godfrey Peoples, filmmaker, *Miss Juneteenth*

POSTER DESIGN COMPETITION

Winner: *Resolution: A Cinephonic Rhapsody for the Soul*

Designers: the film’s director Scott Berman, Anthony Francisco Schepperd, and Micah Buzan

“This design caught our attention immediately. We love the high saturation of color, attention to detail, and print quality. It’s a must see in person to experience the multidimensional depth of color and texture. This piece takes you on a mesmerizing journey. A true work of art!”

Special Jury Award: *Glorious Summer*

Designer: Patryk Hardziej

“This poster art stood apart because of its bold design, use of negative space, and striking imagery. We love how you have two different experiences with the artwork, up close and at a distance. Provocative work.”

Poster Design Competition Jury: Phoebe Joynt (FEEBEE), artist, designer, and muralist; Yen Tan, graphic designer and filmmaker; Zuzu, visual artist and creative entrepreneur.

XR EXPERIENCE COMPETITION

Jury Award Winner: *Reflections of Little Red Dot* created by Chloé Lee

“Deceptively humble and delightful, this open-world documentary invites us to freely explore a country in transition. Guided by a daring new talent in XR storytelling, it confronts us with the vulnerability of everyday life, evoking a universal sense of place.”

Special Jury Award: *Proof As If Proof Were Needed* created by Ting Tong Chang, Matt Adams

“Spoiler Alert! The Special Jury Award Winner made us feel lost, frustrated and disconnected from each other. What started as a slow burn, turned into an unexpected connection and dance between space, story, technology and human behavior.”

Agog Immersive Impact Award

Thank you to our Sponsor: Designed to inspire creators and changemakers to use XR for good, the Agog Immersive Impact Award recognizes projects that help us all imagine and work toward a more just and sustainable world.

Agog Winner: *In the Current of Being* created by Cameron Kostopoulos

XR Experience Competition Jury: Christina Lee Storm, award-winning producer and senior entertainment executive; Caspar Sonnen, Head of New Media IDFA DocLab; Diana Williams, CEO & Co-founder of Kinetic Energy Entertainment

SXSW Special Awards

Redbreast Unhidden

Redbreast—the world’s most awarded single pot still Irish whiskey—is dedicated to celebrating the thrill of discovery, whether it’s an unforgettable film or that first smooth sip of Redbreast. In collaboration with BAFTA winner, Golden Globes and SAG nominee Andrew Scott, Redbreast Irish Whiskey is championing bold and original storytelling through the Redbreast Unhidden Award, an honour recognising an independent short filmmaker whose work brings fresh perspectives to the screen. Chosen by Andrew Scott, this award aims to celebrate the most exciting talent in short film at the SXSW Film & TV Festival.

Redbreast Unhidden Award

Winner: *Brief Somebodies* directed by Andy Reid, produced by Alessandra Sconza

"I am honoured to award Director Andy Reid for his film, *Brief Somebodies*. What I loved about this film is how, in a very short space of time, it drew a particular tone to a story that we don't often see explored on screen. It's incredibly personal but also confident, witty, with a beautiful aesthetic. The director managed to make a very particular experience very accessible and intriguing. But as somebody who's spent time on film sets, I thought it was very authentic. The director made it interesting and managed to capture the experience in a way that was true to life. I'm very excited to see what Andy does next." - Andrew Scott.

Vimeo Staff Pick Award

Thank you to our Jury Award sponsor, Vimeo: the world's most innovative video experience platform for creators and enterprises.

Vimeo Staff Pick Award

Winner: *Familiar* directed by Marco Novoa

"This captivating narrative weaves together themes of queerness, connection, and found family with a dash of blood-sucking drag queens. In a storytelling landscape where vampire tales often recycle familiar tropes, this striking film offers a fresh approach with equal parts darkness and heart."

SXSW Best of Texas Award

Presented to a feature film world premiering at SXSW that was shot primarily in Texas or directed by a current resident of Texas. This year's award goes to *The Hole Truth and Nothing Butt*, captures the chaotic genius and psychedelic legacy of Texas's most uncompromising musical outlaws with unflinching honesty and visual audacity.

SXSW Best of Texas Award

Winner: *Butthole Surfers: The Hole Truth and Nothing Butt* directed by Tom Stern

Janet Pierson Champion Award presented by IndieWire

To honor Janet Pierson, Director Emeritus of the SXSW Film & TV Festival after 15 years of leadership, a prize was created in 2023 called the Janet Pierson Champion Award. As part of IndieWire's dedication to elevating Film & TV creators, IndieWire is proud to present the Janet Pierson Champion Award to Lindsey Dryden.

Janet Pierson Champion Award

Winner: Lindsey Dryden

"This year's winner exemplifies the spirit of a true film champion through her impressive body of work spanning award-winning productions like *Unrest* and *Trans In America*, while simultaneously advocating for greater inclusion through her leadership with FWD-Doc and commitment to disability representation. Her multifaceted career as a director, producer, and advocate demonstrates exceptional creativity and resilience, making her a powerful voice for

marginalized communities and an influential catalyst for change within the broader independent film ecosystem worldwide.”

NEON Auteur Award for Uncompromising Visionary in the Visions Section

As an award-winning champion of not just films, but filmmakers and film festivals, NEON is a guiding force in independent cinema.

Winner: Grace Glowicki, director, writer, and Star, *Dead Lover*

“This year’s Auteur Award goes to a tremendously original film that could only come from this particular filmmaker’s curious, creative and exciting mind. We simply cannot imagine anyone else pulling it off -- or even being bold enough to try it in the first place.”

In 2022 SXSW presented Nicolas Cage with the 40 Years of Massive Talent Award. This year we created another special award, for an unforgettable method performance.

Howl of Fame Award

Winner: Indy from *Good Boy*, directed by Ben Leonberg and produced by Kari Fischer, his humans

“Through a uniquely authentic perspective in the horror genre, this goodest boy delivers a performance that is both natural and chilling. His responses to unseen phenomena transform everyday domestic spaces into realms of suspense and terror. Indy and his humans remind us even when darkness threatens to consume us, a faithful dog's love knows no bounds.”

SXSW is proud to be an official qualifying festival for the Academy Awards® Short Film competition. Winners of our Best Animated, Best Narrative and Best Documentary Short Film categories become eligible for Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences awards (Oscars). Any British Short Film or British Short Animation that screens at SXSW is eligible for BAFTA nomination. Films are also eligible for the Independent Spirit Awards, more information on eligibility [here](#).

Press Links:

- **Film Stills can be found at:** <https://filmmaker.sxsw.com/media>
- **Publicists for projects in the 2025 program can be found** [here](#).
- [Film & TV Festival Helpful Links](#)

About SXSW Film & TV Festival

Now in its 32nd year, SXSW Film & TV Festival brings together creatives of all stripes to experience a diverse lineup and access to the music and comedy festivals plus conference sessions with visionaries from all corners of the entertainment, media, and technology industries.

About SXSW

SXSW dedicates itself to helping creative people achieve their goals. Founded in 1987 in Austin, Texas, SXSW is best known for its conference and festivals that celebrate the convergence of tech, film and television, music, education, and culture. An essential destination for global professionals, the annual March event features sessions, music, and comedy showcases, film and television screenings, exhibitions, professional development, and a variety of opportunities to meet and connect with people. SXSW proves that the most unexpected discoveries happen when diverse topics and individuals come together. SXSW 2026 will take place March 12–18 in Austin. Learn more at sxsw.com. To register for the event, please visit sxsw.com/attend.

SXSW's expansion into the Asia Pacific region, with SXSW Sydney starting in 2023 and Europe with SXSW London in 2025, provides new possibilities at this iconic experience. These events, each with their own distinct flavor, make South By an indispensable three-stop tour for the global creative community.

SXSW 2025 Driven by Rivian. The SXSW 2025 Film & TV Festival is sponsored by Epidemic Sound, Redbreast, DIRECTV and *The Austin Chronicle*

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