

2020 FILM COMPETITION WINNERS

Grand Prize



Sponsored by MEC | \$4000

Then Comes the Evening

(Serbia, 2019, 27 mins)

Director: Maja Novaković

Producers: Milan Milosavljević, Maja Novaković

Then Comes the Evening depicts the bittersweet life of two grannies living in isolation in the hills of Eastern Bosnia. Nature is the medium through which grannies speak, listen, and show respect. Chants and taming rituals for adverse weather, hail, and storms only emphasize their intangible cultural heritage. The slow pace of this film reflects the simplicity and purity of their way of life and documents their painstaking work.

“Transforming experiences and visuals from her childhood into a meditative experience, Maja Novaković’s debut film *Then Comes the Evening* is a thoughtful and artistic tribute to a way of life that is fast disappearing. Filmed in the village in Eastern Bosnia where she grew up, Maja is careful to not romanticize or glamourize or valorize the unceasing toil and mundane events in the daily lives of two aging women on a farm. In painterly images, we are invited to contemplate seasons and their colours, the time of day, and the eventual decay of human existence.”

— Reena Mohan, jury member

Best Film: Exploration and Adventure



Sponsored by Devold | \$2,000

Lost at Sea

(United Kingdom, 2019, 47 mins)

Director: Johnny Burke

Producer: Louis Bird

An epic tale of the sea, told through one young man's personal journey to understand his father, who died while rowing the Pacific.

“Growing up as the kid of a committed seafaring fisherman, this film brought up an at times overwhelmingly emotional look at a life without answers and the importance of simply sitting with the questions. Determined to better understand the “why” of some of the world’s greatest firsts in solo open ocean exploration, this film dives deeply into the interpersonal relationships between both a father and son, and the mother and son bond forged over time in the wake of discovery and loss. Built on the backbone of truly incredible archival footage, and an unswerving commitment to craft, this film beautifully captures the emotion and the inspiration for deeper understanding and the unshakable drive in pursuit of the unknown.”

— *Bryan Cole, jury member*

Best Film: Mountain Culture



Sponsored by Helly Hansen | \$2,000

Cholitas

(Spain, 2019, 80 mins)

Director: Pablo Iraburu, Jaime Murciego

Producer: Itziar García Zubiri

Five Indigenous Bolivian women embark on a unique expedition as a symbol of liberation and empowerment. Their goal? The highest peak in the Americas, Aconcagua.

"Cholitas is a celebration of the beauty and the resilience of Indigenous Bolivian women. The film draws you into the lives of six Indigenous women, and we follow them in their dream to climb Mt. Aconcagua. As they journey from Bolivia to Argentina and up the Aconcagua in their beautiful clothes and bowler hats, their friendships blossom. The mountain opens up unexpected possibilities and reveals their internal strength. This is a film about identity, womanhood, and the incredible power of nature."

- Subina Shrestha, jury member

Best Film: Climbing



Sponsored by CLIF Bar & Co. | \$2,000

The Wall of Shadows

(Poland, 2020, 94 mins)

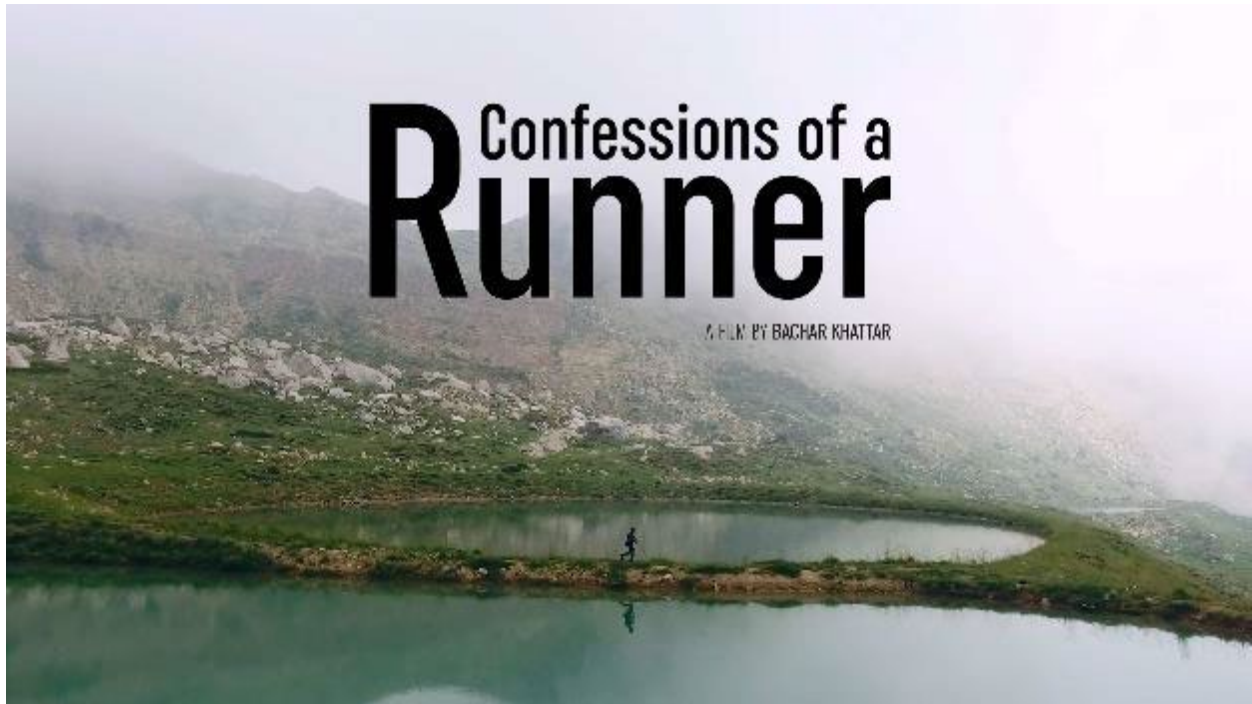
Director: Eliza Kubarska

Producer: Monika Braid

A Sherpa family breaks a taboo and climbs the most holy of mountains to earn money for their son's education. They accompany a western expedition on the East Wall of Khumbakarna Mountain, a wall that has never been climbed before. *Wall of Shadows* tells the story of an encounter between a young Sherpa boy and an experienced western mountaineer at the foot of the sacred mountain. Will they face the wrath of mountain Gods?

"In a genre where we are often seduced by the sport itself, this film uses the sport of climbing to take us on a deeper journey into the lives and landscapes that support climbing in the Himalayas. While the superlative of the first ascent of East Wall of Khumbakarna could root this film, the careful attention to a Sherpa family conflicted by supporting the expedition to help put their son through school becomes the arch instead. The way the camera moves, the delicate attention to detail and score all combine to take us on a journey to a place we have never seen before" — *Bryan Smith, jury member*

Mountain Sports



Sponsored by Storyblocks | \$2,000

Confessions of a Runner

(United States, 2020, 28 mins)

Director: Bachar Khattar

Producers: Jerome Gary, Denise Jabbour, Tim Rockwood, Bachar Khattar, Patrick Vaughan

Ultra-running evokes notions of insanity, dedication, and the pursuit of mind over the body. A blend of eye-popping scenery, extreme human achievement, and revealing personal stories, *Confessions of a Runner* features Patrick Vaughan, an accomplished trail runner as he shares his story of healing and redemption while pursuing the record for completing the 470-kilometre Lebanon Mountain Trail, traversing from Syria to the Israeli border

“Marked by a rare truthfulness and an authenticity of emotion, Bachar Khattar's film *Confessions of a Runner* tells the inspiring story of a broken man who rises to a challenge he sets for himself. Daunted by lingering undertones of both crippling physical impairment and emotional disturbances, Patrick Vaughan redefines himself on the way to breaking the record for completing the 470 km Lebanon Mountain Trail in less than eight days. Archival material, local music, and brilliant candid camera add to the film, making for an inspiring and compelling experience.”

— Reena Mohan, jury member

Best Film: Snow Sports



Sponsored by Park Distillery | \$2,000

Metanoia

(Germany, 2020, 23 mins)

Director: Paul Schweller, Flo Gassner

Producers: Flo Gassner, Vali Werner-Tutschku

It was supposed to be just a regular ski touring adventure in the Ötztal Alps before this crew came under pressure from the pandemic wave in Austria in March 2020. After long discussions shortly before the trip began, they decide to ascend to a tiny old hut on the Timmelsjoch High Alpine Road. It seemed like there was nothing standing in the way of the project anymore ... or was there?

"Metanoia portrayed an unfolding moment with impressive authenticity. The jury was placed carefully at the centre of the character's experience, and the film drew out the discomfort and difficulty of making decisions in the mountains, under the completely unexpected pressure of an exploding pandemic. Metanoia took a brave direction to remind us of the sincere ways this situation has affected a generation who might be expecting to push their limits, rather than mitigating risk. We applaud these upcoming riders and filmmakers for their commitment to candour and their creation of a succinct but resonant story."

— *Claire Carter, jury member*

Best Film: Mountain Environment & Natural History



Sponsored by Kupilka | \$2,000

The Cull - Scotland's Deer Dilemma

(United Kingdom, 2020, 58 mins)

Director: Ted Simpson

Producer: Finbar O'Sullivan

There are over 350,000 red deer in Scotland - and they have a massive impact on the landscapes of the Highlands. Deer are culled each year in an attempt to manage their impact, but over the last sixty years, a debate has raged regarding the size, nature, and purpose of the deer cull. Should deer be protected? Or should the glens and mountains be returned to the wild? And if so, what happens to the people that call these places home?

"The Cull is a multidimensional debate that forces the audience to reflect on the complexity of wildlife management. Set in the Scottish highlands where the red deer population has to be controlled, The Cull explores the various approaches to conservation - from concepts of rewilding to human management and pastoralism. Drawing from experiences from landowners to sheep farmers, from environmental activists to entrepreneurs, who all live with the land, filmmakers Ted Simpson and Finbar O'Sullivan take us through Scotland's stunning landscape and make you reflect on how humans make nature as much as nature makes humans." — Subina Shrestha, jury member

Best Short Mountain Film



Sponsored by Backcountry Lodges of BC Association | \$2,000

Voice Above Water

(United States, 2020, 11 mins)

Director: Dana Frankoff

Producer: Eric Ebner

Voice Above Water is the story of Wayan, a 90-year-old fisherman who can no longer fish because of the amount of plastic piling up in the ocean. Instead, he uses his fishing boat and net to pull trash from the water in hopes of being able to fish again.

"Highlighting what has become a global issue of devastating proportion, this film remarkably captures the growing issue of plastic pollution as told through the lens of an inspired, yet heartbroken, fisherman and the otherworldly sea that has been his home for more than 90 years. In perfect alignment with the desire to motivate environmental action through film making, and absolutely stunning below and above water cinematography, this directorial debut offers a sense of hope and restores faith in the interconnectedness of life and the importance of small and personal actions adding up to big differences."

— *Bryan Cole, jury member*

Best Feature-Length Mountain Film



Sponsored by Oboz Footwear | \$2,000

Godspeed, Los Polacos!

(United States, 2020, 90 mins)

Director: Adam Nawrot

Producer: Sonia Szczesna

Five university students risk it all to fight for democracy in the Eastern Bloc after claiming the first descent of the world's deepest canyon

"Too often we forget that we stand on the shoulders of the giants that have come before us. This film immerses us in the humour, challenge, and never-ending drama of the first descent of the deepest canyon in the world while masterfully using archival footage, animation, and characters to situate the moment with historical context. It reminds us that iconic stories from the past are still every bit as relevant today."

— *Bryan Smith, jury member*

Audience Choice Award



Sponsored by BUFF® | \$2,000

Running the Roof

(United Kingdom, 2019, 51 minutes)

Director: Ben Crocker, Alexis Tymon

Producer: Jody Bragger, Ben Crocker, Alexis Tymon

Like all good stories, this one begins with a drunken bet. Three friends, bonded by a love of running, were desperate to ditch their desks and go on an adventure. One night, after a few too many drinks, they placed a bet, spun a globe and their finger landed on Tajikistan. Tajikistan! This is a story without finish lines or medals but rather a story about what happens when you trust in nothing but your own two feet to carry you across one of the last truly wild landscapes on earth.

Special Jury Mention



24 Leeches

(Canada, 2020, 10 mins)

Director and Producer: Aaron Peterson

24 Leeches documents a family canoe adventure to the Slate Islands of Ontario, Canada, and more importantly a way of life. One part family adventure, one part environmental film, 24 Leeches is a tribute to a father's best friend and adventure partner, his 10-year-old son

“Rarely do we see a film that captures the early onset of adventure in such a real and raw way. It reminds us that adventure is in all of us and that the next generation of adventures are just as important as those with the accolades. Director Aaron Peterson made a bold choice to make the film his son Josiah wanted to make versus his own personal story of the loss of his son.”

— *Bryan Smith, jury member*

Special Jury Mention



Bear-Like (Der Bär in Mir)

(Switzerland, 2019, 91 mins)

Director and Producer: Roman Droux

Two adventurers engage in close contact with grizzly bears in Alaska experiencing first-hand the struggle for survival and dramatic fighting scenes. Driven by a desire to explore the unknown, the film tells a personal story of wilderness, framed through breathtaking footage of these amazing creatures.

“When a film can fully immerse you in an environment so well that you can almost smell it, credit is due. The footage that is captured in this film is clearly the result of passion, dedication, and an uncanny ability to spend a summer amongst an often misunderstood predator.”

— *Bryan Cole, jury member*