

connecting cottbus 2021: AWARD WINNERS

While the East-West co-production market connecting cottbus (coco) is still in full swing, the award winners of this year's hybrid edition were just announced.

The traditional **coco Best Pitch Award** goes to the best pitch presentation of a project in development, voted for by all industry participants. The audience chose **SHE**, the story of an invisible woman who starts taking increasingly radical steps to be seen. The project from Poland was presented by director Agnieszka Zwiefka and producer Izabela Igel from Harine Films, who receives a cash prize of €1,500 as well as the **Producers Network Award**, a free accreditation to the Producers Network at the Marché du Film in Cannes 2022.

This year's cocoPITCH jury was comprised of Daniela Adomat (MDR - Mitteldeutscher Rundfunk), Anamaria Antoci (Tangaj Production) and Marie-Pierre Vallé (Wild Bunch), who deliberated on two awards:

The **Avanpost Pitch Packaging Award** was handed out to the period drama **ORTALAN** by director Nariman Aliev and producer Anna Sobolevska (ForeFilms) from Ukraine, "for a project daring to tell an untold part of history, making us reflect on contemporary dramatic events". Romanian post-production outfit Avanpost will provide the project with in-kind services up to €15,000, which may include strategy consulting, the project look-book as well as production/post-production for a proof of concept.

The Croatian Audiovisual Centre presented the **HAVC Project Development Award**, a €5,000 cash award towards the further development of one project. It went to **VIRGINS** by director Dora Šustić and producer Maja Pek-Brünjes (Antitalent) from Croatia, "for a story that portrays an uncommon friendship between two women coming from different worlds, having different challenges, ending up empowering each other to find their very own way of coping with life".

The **MIDPOINT Consulting Award** went to three cocoPITCH projects, each receiving an in-depth script consultancy in two online sessions. The winners, announced by MIDPOINT's programme coordinator Soňa Morgenthalová, are **SHE** (dir: Agnieszka Zwiefka, prod: Izabela Igel/Harine Films), **THE WAYS WE LOOK AT THE SUN** from Romania (dir: Ioana Țurcan, prod: Ana Maria Pîrvan/Studioset Production & Anchor Films) and **THE WHITE MARE** from Slovakia (dir: Teodor Kuhn, prod: Miroslav Gerbel/Filmaari).

Sponsored by German post-production studio D-Facto Motion, the **D-Facto Motion WIP Award** of €35,000 in-kind services plus €5,000 for additional expenses went to the work in progress **THE WORD** (Czech Republic/Poland/Slovakia). The historical drama about a couple whose life is turned upside down with the invasion of the Soviet Army in 1968 was presented by director Beata Parkanová and one of the producers Přemysl Martinek (love.FRAME). The project was selected by an expert jury consisting of Paolo Bertolin (Venice Film Festival), Daniela Cölle (Pluto Film) as well as Waheed Zamani and Robert Wunsch of D-Facto Motion.

Congratulations to all the winners!

CONTACT

for more info about coco and project eligibility: info@connecting-cottbus.de

press: presse@connecting-cottbus.de

connecting-cottbus.de

fb.com/connecting.cottbus

instagram.com/connectingcottbus

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