

AWARD WINNERS 2023

While the 25th anniversary edition of connecting cottbus (8-10 Nov 2023), the East-West co-production market at FilmFestival Cottbus, is still underway, the award winners out of the 13 cocoPITCH and 6 cocoWIP projects were already announced during tonight's ceremony:

The **cocoPITCH Audience Award** went to the best pitch presentation of a project in development, voted for by all industry participants. The audience chose **EXCAVATORS**, presented by director Argyro Nicolaou and producer Constantinos Nikiforou (Caretta Films, Cyprus), who receive a cash prize of €1,500.

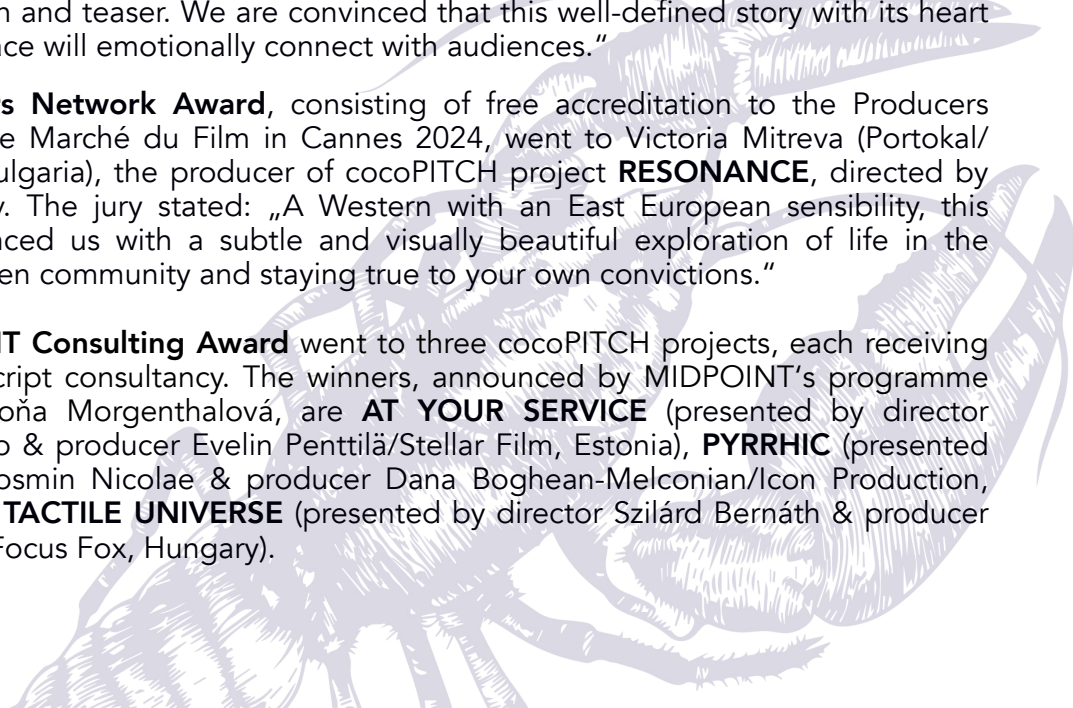
This year's **cocoPITCH jury** was comprised of Laurin Dietrich (WOLF Consultants), Paul Thiltges (Paul Thiltges Distributions) and Olena Yershova (Tato Film), who deliberated on three awards:

The **Avanpost Pitch Packaging Award** was handed out to **EXCAVATORS**, presented by director Argyro Nicolaou and producer Constantinos Nikiforou (Caretta Films) from Cyprus. 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 jury decided „to give the award to a team who touched us with a personal, strong pitch that at the same time made clear how relevant and universal their film will be. A story of intergenerational trauma and how to find your own position to tell it.“

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 **MY WORLD UPSIDE DOWN** by director/producer Daniel Rihák and producer Martina Saková (WHAT IF Films, Slovakia & Projector23, Germany). The jury chose „a project that touched us with its courageous handling of a delicate topic, in a humorous and engaging pitch and teaser. We are convinced that this well-defined story with its heart in the right place will emotionally connect with audiences.“

The **Producers Network Award**, consisting of free accreditation to the Producers Network at the Marché du Film in Cannes 2024, went to Victoria Mitreva (Portokal/Garti Films, Bulgaria), the producer of cocoPITCH project **RESONANCE**, directed by Yordan Petkov. The jury stated: „A Western with an East European sensibility, this project convinced us with a subtle and visually beautiful exploration of life in the tension between community and staying true to your own convictions.“

The **MIDPOINT Consulting Award** went to three cocoPITCH projects, each receiving an in-depth script consultancy. The winners, announced by MIDPOINT's programme coordinator Soňa Morgenthalová, are **AT YOUR SERVICE** (presented by director German Golub & producer Evelin Penttilä/Stellar Film, Estonia), **PYRRHIC** (presented by director Cosmin Nicolae & producer Dana Boghean-Melconian/Icon Production, Romania) and **TACTILE UNIVERSE** (presented by director Szilárd Bernáth & producer András Muhi/Focus Fox, Hungary).



The 2023 **cocoWIP jury** was comprised of Kathrin Kohlstedde (FilmFest Hamburg), Lorena Morín (MECAS Market/Splitscreen), Lukáš Moudrý (Studio Beep) as well as Waheed Zamani and Robert Wunsch of D-Facto Motion. They deliberated on two awards:

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 **BORDERWALL**, presented by director Ignas Jonynas and producer Ruta Adelė Jekentaitė (Baltic Productions, Lithuania).

BORDERWALL also received the **Studio Beep Sound Post-Production Award**, consisting of €6.000 in-kind services sponsored by the high-end studios based in the centre of Prague. The jury „are happy to award one movie with powerful cinematography, a mysterious character and a cage of birds. A gripping story that intrigued us in such way that we want to see it finished immediately.“

Congratulations to all the winners!

CONTACT

info@connecting-cottbus.de | press: presse@connecting-cottbus.de

connecting-cottbus.de | fb.com/connecting.cottbus | instagram.com/connectingcottbus

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