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Contact: info@seefilmla.org

South East European Film Festival Closes on a High Note with Jury Awards May 5 at Ahrya Fine Arts in Beverly Hills

**Filmmakers from Serbia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Italy, Bosnia in the lead,
followed by audience favorite from Turkey**

Legacy Award for Serbian Actress Mirjana Karanovic

Beverly Hills, 6 May 2016 – The 11th annual South East European Film Festival (SEEFest) (seefilmla.org) celebrated last night its successful 8-day run with a gala event and jury awards presentation at Ahrya Fine Arts theater in Beverly Hills.

“We had an exceptionally rich line up of films that kept up the interest of Los Angeles audiences night after night,” said Vera Mijojlic, founder and director of SEEFest. “We gained quite a few new followers, several films were picked up for international sales and will next go to Cannes Marché du Film, and new projects from our inaugural Accelerator met with interest from the Hollywood industry people. It’s been a great year for South East European films!”

At a signature event of the festival earlier in the week the **2016 SEEFest Legacy Award** was presented to the great Serbian actress Mirjana Karanovic for her entire body of work in cinema, in support of human rights, and her work with students and young actors.

SEEFest 2016 Jury Awards:

Best Feature Film, Grand Jury Prize - Bridging the Borders Award went to the Serbian-Croatian-Bosnian co-production *A Good Wife*, directorial debut by veteran Serbian actress Mirjana Karanovic, who also bagged an award for Best First Film. Dealing with a sensitive subject of war crimes, the film tells the story of an everyday woman confronting the truth about her husband’s war time secrets. The film had its world premiere at Sundance in January 2016.

Special Jury Mention in this category was given to Bulgarian charmer *Losers* about a group of irresistibly funny adolescents in a provincial town, by another veteran actor-turned director, Ivaylo Hristov. The film notably won Golden St. George Prize for best film at the Moscow International Film Festival last year, as well as critics award.

Additional awards included:

Best Documentary Film: *Logbook_Serbistan*, by veteran Serbian director Želimir Žilnik, a clear-eye view of everyday life of migrants from North Africa and the Middle East adapting to their new, temporary sojourn in Serbia. The film also won audience vote for Best Documentary.

Best Cinematography, Feature Film: *Babai*, Kosovo-Germany co-production, Cinematographer: Matteo Cocco, Italy, whose lens beautifully captured the turbulent world of a boy from Kosovo setting on a trek across perilous borders to reunite with his emotionally distant father in Germany.

Best Cinematography, Documentary Film: *The Fog of Srebrenica* (Bosnia/UK), by Scotland-based director/cinematographer Samir Mehanovic for the powerful visual treatment of a difficult subject.

Three Special Jury Mentions, for First Feature, Documentary Film, and Best Cinematography in a Documentary Film: *Holy Cow* from Azerbaijan, a unique hybrid in the 2016 festival line up, a humorous and gently satirical tale by director Imam Hasanov about a villager in Azerbaijan determined to import a cow from the EU against the wishes of his wife, family and the entire village.

Best Short Fiction: *Shok* (Kosovo/UK), Director: Jamie Donoghue, nominated for 2016 Academy Award®.

Best Short Documentary: *The Unidentified* (Serbia), Directors: Nemanja Babic and Marija Ristic. Both films are unflinching, tour de force examinations of war crimes committed by Serbian forces in Kosovo in 1999.

Audience Award for Best Feature Film: *The Half* (Turkey), from first-time director Cagil Nurhak Aydogdu, handily won the audience hearts with a touching and humorous, unusual and surprising romance.

Inaugural SEEfest Project Accelerator judges awarded three projects: Best Proposal Overall went to *Twice Upon a Time* animated short by Serbian-Canadian director Vojin Vasovic; Bosnian director Ines Tanovic won Best Feature Film Project award for *The Son*, and Croatian filmmaker Jure Pavlovic bagged Best Documentary Project award for *The Lost Dream Team*.

#SEEme YouTube Video Contest for Young Filmmakers:

Winner: Vasileios Sofikitis, from Greece, for the short video “Just Sea It”

SEEfest 2016 presented 12 features, 13 documentaries and 19 short films over 8 days, most of them North American and West Coast premieres to an audience of filmmakers and international art house aficionados, industry professionals and cultural dignitaries from Los Angeles and South East Europe.

About the South East European Film Festival (SEEfest)

SEEfest presents cinematic and cultural diversity of South East Europe to American audiences and creates cultural connections through films, artistic and social events. It was founded in 2006 by Vera Mijojlic, long-time film critic and cultural entrepreneur.

SEEfest 2016 took place from April 28 – May 5, at Ahrya Fine Arts and Music Hall in Beverly Hills, the Goethe-Institut Los Angeles and West Hollywood Council Chambers @ Library campus.

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