

Follow Your Heart FILM FESTIVAL

International Film Festival "Follow Your Heart"

Protocol for the Selection and Work of Jury Members

January 4, 2023 No. 014

I. General Provisions

1.1. This Protocol establishes the procedure, criteria, and conditions for the selection, appointment, and work of jury members of the International Film Festival "Follow Your Heart" (hereinafter, the "Festival").

1.2. The selection and work of jury members are conducted by the Organizing Committee, led by the Head of the Organizing Committee, to form a competent, independent, and authoritative body to evaluate submissions in categories including Best Film, Best Short Drama, Best Soundtrack, and others, with nominations assigned to jurors according to their expertise.

1.3. The jury operates as a collegial body. Decisions based on the Evaluation Criteria (Paragraph VI) are binding and final.

1.4. This Protocol shall enter into force on January 4, 2023 and shall govern the International Film Festival "Follow Your Heart" from January 4, 2023 onward, as well as all subsequent editions, ensuring compliance with U.S. laws regarding transparency, non-discrimination, intellectual property rights, and conflict-of-interest avoidance.

II. Eligibility Criteria for Jury Membership

2.1. Jury members must:

a) Possess an established professional reputation in film and screen arts, or in related fields – such as television and digital media; animation and visual effects (VFX); cinematography and photography; sound engineering and sound design (including film scoring); production design and art direction (sets, costume, makeup);

screenwriting and dramaturgy; theater (directing, acting); music (including vocal performance); or film studies, media criticism, or film journalism.;

b) Have at least ten (10) years of documented professional experience in one or more of the following areas: cinematography and photography, television and digital media, animation and visual effects (VFX), sound engineering and sound design (including film scoring), production design and art direction (sets, costume, makeup), screenwriting and dramaturgy, theater (directing, acting), music (including vocal performance), and film studies, media criticism, and film journalism;

c) Have national or international recognition, demonstrated through awards, festival participation, publications, or contributions, in one or more of the following areas: cinematography and photography; television and digital media; animation and visual effects (VFX); sound engineering and sound design (including film scoring); production design and art direction (sets, costume, makeup); screenwriting and dramaturgy; theater (directing, acting); music (including vocal performance); and film studies, media criticism, or film journalism;

d) Demonstrate expertise in critical, pedagogical, curatorial, or organizational work in one or more of the following areas: cinematography and photography, television and digital media, animation and visual effects (VFX), sound engineering and sound design (including film scoring), production design and art direction (sets, costume, makeup); screenwriting and dramaturgy; theater (directing, acting); music (including vocal performance); and film studies, media criticism, or film journalism.

2.2. Special consideration is given to candidates who:

a) Hold recommendations from recognized professional organizations;

b) Are members of national or international associations;

c) Are media personalities or bloggers with significant influence.

2.3. The jury may include professionals such as makeup artists, photographers, creative directors, fashion show producers, or marketing specialists, provided they meet the criteria in Section 2.1 and contribute to the Festival's artistic and promotional goals.

2.4. Individuals with actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest with competitors, sponsors, or organizers shall be excluded in accordance with the ethical standards of the Festival.

III. Candidates and Appointment Procedure

3.1. Candidates may be proposed by the Organizing Committee, partner organizations, accredited cultural institutions, or professional associations.

3.2. The documentation for candidates must include:

- a) Confirmation of ten (10) or more years of professional activity;
- b) Evidence of achievements (awards, publications, memberships);
- c) Letters of recommendation from recognized authorities.

3.3. Candidates are reviewed at the Organizing Committee meetings, with outcomes recorded in official documentation (such as a Decision of the Organizing Committee).

3.4. The final jury composition is approved by the Head of the Organizing Committee and published on the Festival's website.

IV. Rights and Obligations of Jury Members

4.1. Jury members are obliged to:

- a) Participate in evaluations in person or online, as facilitated by the Organizing Committee, ensuring compliance with Festival rules;
- b) Maintain objectivity, impartiality, and independence;
- c) Uphold the confidentiality of reviewed materials until results are announced;
- d) Refrain from public statements that could influence perceptions of participants or decisions.

4.2. Jury members are entitled to:

- a) Receive access to submissions via platforms such as FilmFreeway, YouTube, or other approved services;
- b) Express professional opinions during deliberations;
- c) Submit recommendations for improving the competition program;
- d) Access technical support ensuring that online evaluations are equivalent to in-person evaluations.

4.3. Each jury member, acting as part of the Jury Commission, shall:

- a) Review the submitted films in the nominations assigned to them;
- b) Participate in determining award recipients in the established categories;
- c) Complete and submit evaluation sheets in accordance with the Organizing Committee's notice to enable the counting of scores and the official recording of results.

V. Awards

5.1. Awards are conferred in official categories determined by the Jury Commission.

5.2. Awards include:

- a) Best Film – awarded a digital certificate and Bay Leaf;
- b) Special Jury Prize – awarded a digital certificate and Bay Leaf;
- c) Best Film According to the Audience (live voting) – awarded a digital certificate and Bay Leaf;
- d) Best Short Drama – awarded a digital certificate and Bay Leaf;
- e) Best Short Thriller – awarded a digital certificate and Bay Leaf;
- f) Best Short Comedy – awarded a digital certificate and Bay Leaf;
- g) Best Super Short Film – awarded a digital certificate and Bay Leaf;
- h) Best Animation – awarded a digital certificate and Bay Leaf;
- i) Best Student Film – awarded a digital certificate and Bay Leaf;
- j) Best Young Director (under 21) – awarded a digital certificate and Bay Leaf;
- k) Best Actor – awarded a digital certificate and Bay Leaf;
- l) Best Actress – awarded a digital certificate and Bay Leaf;
- m) Best Young Actor – awarded a digital certificate and Bay Leaf;
- n) Best Young Actress – awarded a digital certificate and Bay Leaf;
- o) Best Cinematographer – awarded a digital certificate and Bay Leaf;
- p) Best Soundtrack – awarded a digital certificate and Bay Leaf;
- q) Special Nominations – awarded a digital certificate and Bay Leaf;
- r) Best Video Blog – awarded a digital certificate and Bay Leaf;
- s) Best Show Host – awarded a digital certificate and Bay Leaf;
- t) Best Female Show Host – awarded a digital certificate and Bay Leaf;
- u) Best Show – awarded a digital certificate and Bay Leaf.

5.3. Recipients may use the Bay Leaf emblem for promotional purposes.

5.4. Additional honorary awards may be established by resolution of the Organizing Committee.

VI. Evaluation Process

6.1. The Jury Commission shall evaluate films based on four core criteria, applied across all nominations, with additional nomination-specific criteria as outlined below. The core criteria are Artistic Merit, Narrative Integration, Emotional Impact, and Originality, as defined in the Regulations approved on January 1, 2022, aligning with the Festival's mission to cultivate profound emotional resonance with global audiences. Each nomination shall include at least one of the core criteria as a mandatory element of evaluation.

6.2. Core Evaluation Criteria

- a) Artistic Merit: the overall aesthetic and creative excellence of the film;
- b) Narrative Integration: the coherence and effectiveness of the story's structure and flow;
- c) Emotional Impact: the film's ability to evoke universal human experiences;
- d) Originality: the uniqueness and creativity of the film's concept and execution.

6.3. Nomination-Specific Criteria. Each nomination category emphasizes seven specific criteria, tailored to the unique demands of the category, which may include repeats of the core criteria where relevant:

Best Film: a) Artistic Merit; b) Narrative Integration; c) Emotional Impact; d) Originality; e) Cinematic Vision: the director's ability to create a cohesive and impactful visual narrative; f) Audience Engagement: the film's capacity to captivate and sustain audience interest throughout its runtime; g) Thematic Consistency.

Special Jury Prize: a) Artistic Merit; b) Narrative Integration; c) Emotional Impact; d) Originality; e) Innovative Approach: the film's unique contribution to cinematic expression or storytelling; f) Cultural Impact: the film's ability to resonate with diverse audiences or spark meaningful dialogue; g) Thematic Consistency.

Best Film (Audience Choice): a) Emotional Impact; b) Narrative Integration; c) Audience Engagement: the film's ability to captivate and resonate with the Festival audience; d) Originality; e) Cultural Authenticity; f) Orchestration and Technical Quality; g) Thematic Consistency.

Best Short Drama: a) Narrative Integration; b) Emotional Impact; c) Originality; d) Concise Storytelling: the ability to deliver a complete and compelling narrative within a limited runtime (typically under 40 minutes); e) Emotional Intensity: the strength of emotional delivery within a condensed format; f) Pacing and Structure: effective use of time to maintain narrative momentum and impact; g) Thematic Consistency.

Best Short Thriller: a) Narrative Integration; b) Emotional Impact; c) Suspense and Tension: the ability to create gripping suspense and maintain audience anticipation; d) Originality; e) Pacing and Structure: effective use of timing to heighten tension and narrative flow; f) Orchestration and Technical Quality; g) Thematic Consistency.

Best Short Comedy: a) Narrative Integration; b) Emotional Impact; c) Humor Effectiveness: the quality and impact of comedic elements in engaging the audience; d) Originality; e) Timing and Delivery: the precision of comedic pacing and performance delivery; f) Cultural Authenticity; g) Thematic Consistency.

Best Super Short Film: a) Narrative Integration; b) Emotional Impact; c) Concise Storytelling: the ability to deliver a compelling narrative within a very limited runtime (typically under 10 minutes); d) Originality; e) Visual Efficiency: the effective use of visuals to convey the story succinctly; f) Orchestration and Technical Quality; g) Thematic Consistency.

Best Animation: a) Visual Creativity: innovation and artistry in animation style and technique; b) Character Design: the expressiveness and uniqueness of animated characters; c) Technical Execution: the quality of animation rendering, fluidity, and integration with sound; d) Narrative Integration; e) Emotional Impact; f) Originality; g) Thematic Consistency.

Best Student Film: a) Artistic Merit; b) Narrative Integration; c) Emotional Impact; d) Originality; e) Creative Potential: the demonstration of emerging talent and innovative ideas; f) Technical Execution: the effective use of available resources to achieve quality production; g) Thematic Consistency.

Best Young Director (Under 21): a) Visionary Leadership: the director's ability to unify creative elements into a cohesive whole; b) Narrative Integration; c) Emotional Impact; d) Originality; e) Stylistic Promise: the presence of a distinctive directorial style for a young filmmaker; f) Cast and Crew Direction: effective guidance of actors and technical teams; g) Thematic Consistency.

Best Actor: a) Performance Authenticity: the believability and depth of the actor's portrayal; b) Emotional Impact; c) Character Development: the ability to convey a character's arc and complexity; d) Narrative Integration; e) Artistic Merit; f) Cultural Authenticity; g) Thematic Consistency.

Best Actress: a) Performance Authenticity: the believability and depth of the actress's portrayal; b) Emotional Impact; c) Character Development: the ability to convey a character's arc and complexity; d) Narrative Integration; e) Artistic Merit; f) Cultural Authenticity; g) Thematic Consistency.

Best Young Actor (Under 21): a) Performance Authenticity: the believability and depth of the young actor's portrayal; b) Emotional Impact; c) Character Development; d) Narrative Integration; e) Emerging Talent: the demonstration of potential for future growth as an actor; f) Cultural Authenticity; g) Thematic Consistency.

Best Young Actress (Under 21): a) Performance Authenticity; b) Emotional Impact; c) Character Development; d) Narrative Integration; e) Emerging Talent: the

demonstration of potential for future growth as an actress; f) Cultural Authenticity; g) Thematic Consistency.

Best Cinematographer: a) Visual Composition: the artistry of framing, lighting, and camera movement; b) Atmospheric Impact: the contribution of cinematography to the film's mood and tone; c) Technical Precision: the clarity and quality of visual execution, including focus and color grading; d) Artistic Merit; e) Orchestration and Technical Quality; f) Emotional Impact; g) Thematic Consistency.

Best Soundtrack: a) Audio Clarity: the quality and intelligibility of sound, including dialogue, music, and effects; b) Atmospheric Contribution: the role of sound in enhancing the film's mood and immersion; c) Technical Innovation: creative use of sound design to support the narrative; d) Orchestration and Technical Quality; e) Emotional Impact; f) Narrative Integration; g) Thematic Consistency.

Special Nominations: a) Artistic Merit; b) Emotional Impact; c) Originality; d) Cultural Authenticity; e) Innovative Contribution: the unique impact of the work in its specific context; f) Audience Resonance: the ability to connect with and inspire the audience; g) Thematic Consistency.

Best Video Blog: a) Content Engagement: the ability to captivate and inform the audience through vlog content; b) Narrative Integration; c) Emotional Impact; d) Originality; e) Visual Presentation: the quality of visuals and editing in the vlog format; f) Cultural Authenticity; g) Thematic Consistency.

Best Show Host: a) Charisma and Presence: the host's ability to engage and captivate the audience; b) Content Delivery: the clarity and effectiveness of presenting the show's content; c) Audience Interaction: the ability to connect with and involve the audience; d) Narrative Integration; e) Emotional Impact; f) Originality; g) Thematic Consistency.

Best Female Show Host: a) Charisma and Presence; b) Content Delivery; c) Audience Interaction; d) Narrative Integration; e) Emotional Impact; f) Originality; g) Thematic Consistency.

Best Show: a) Content Quality: the overall excellence and coherence of the show's content; b) Audience Engagement: the ability to captivate and retain audience interest; c) Production Value: the quality of technical and creative elements in the show; d) Narrative Integration; e) Emotional Impact; f) Originality; g) Thematic Consistency.

6.4. Evaluation and Assignment Process. Each nomination (e.g., Best Film, Best Short Drama) shall be assigned to a specific jury member for primary evaluation.

Assignments shall be determined by the Organizing Committee in accordance with the Decision of the Organizing Committee, based on members' expertise. Jury members shall apply the core criteria and the nomination-specific criteria relevant to their assigned category.

6.5. Submission Compliance Review. The evaluation process begins with the Organizing Committee reviewing all submitted films to ensure compliance with the following requirements:

- a) Minimum HD 720p resolution;
- b) English subtitles for all non-English dialogue;
- c) Production date of 2020 or later.

Non-compliant entries will be disqualified prior to jury review. This initial review will be completed fifteen (15) working days before the official date of the Festival and documented in a compliance report submitted to the Organizing Committee. Appeals for disqualified films must be submitted within forty-eight (48) hours to fffyheart@gmail.com. The Organizing Committee shall review appeals within seventy-two (72) hours, assessing compliance with submission requirements and fair-process standards.

6.6. In-Person Voting Process:

- a) The Organizing Committee shall select no more than fifty (50) films for jury evaluation from the total pool of submitted entries, for which there is no upper limit on the number of participants. All submitted films shall be reviewed and approved by the Organizing Committee for competition consideration. Access to the selected films shall be provided no later than ten (10) working days before the official date of the Festival.
- b) **Viewing and Evaluation:** Jury members will assess films in batches of five short movies per session, with a twenty-minute break after each batch to allow discussion and rest, facilitated in person at a designated venue. The Organizing Committee will provide a pre-assigned viewing schedule to each juror.
- c) **Submission of Scores:** Jury members are required to complete evaluations of all films in accordance with the pre-assigned viewing schedule, with all results submitted no later than forty-eight (48) hours before the official date of the Festival. Each film must be scored in accordance with the Evaluation Process (described in Paragraph VI 6.2 Core Evaluation Criteria and 6.3 Nomination-Specific Criteria), using a 1-10 scale (including half-points, e.g., 7.5), with a maximum possible score of seventy (70) points per film. Qualitative feedback must be provided in the comments section to justify scores. For any questions or clarifications, jury members shall contact fffyheart@gmail.com with the subject line "Your Name + Nomination." All evaluation data shall be retained for five (5) years.

- d) **Collective Review:** A collective review session will be conducted in person one day before the official date of the Festival, to finalize rankings. The number of top-scoring films to be showcased during the Festival event on the official date of the Festival, at the designated venue, shall be determined by the jury, with four (4) films as the standard reference number but subject to adjustment at the jury's discretion.
- e) **Final Selection:** The final top film, determined by total scores across all nominations, will be confirmed by the Organizing Committee before the public announcement.

6.7. Online Voting Process:

- a) The Organizing Committee shall select no more than fifty (50) films for jury evaluation from the total pool of submitted entries, for which there is no upper limit on the number of participants. All submitted films shall be reviewed and approved by the Organizing Committee for competition consideration.
- b) **Viewing and Evaluation:** Access to the films shall be provided no later than ten (10) working days before the official date of the Festival, through password-protected or encrypted platforms to ensure compliance with intellectual-property protections and confidentiality requirements.
- c) **Submission of Scores:** Jury members must complete evaluations for all films and submit their scores forty-eight (48) hours before the official date of the Festival, via email to fffyheart@gmail.com, using the official evaluation forms provided by the Organizing Committee. The subject line should be formatted as: "Evaluation + Your Name + Nomination." Each film must be scored in accordance with the Evaluation Process (described in Paragraph VI 6.2 Core Evaluation Criteria and 6.3 Nomination-Specific Criteria), using a 1–10 scale (including half-points, e.g., 7.5), with a maximum possible score of seventy (70) points per film. Qualitative feedback must be provided in the comments section to justify scores. For any questions or clarifications, jury members shall contact fffyheart@gmail.com with the subject line "Your Name + Nomination." All evaluation data shall be retained for five (5) years.
- d) **Collective Review:** A collective review session shall be conducted online one day before the official date of the Festival, to finalize rankings. The number of top-scoring films to be showcased during the Festival event, at the designated venue, shall be determined by the jury, with four (4) films as the standard reference number but subject to adjustment at the jury's discretion.
- e) **Final Selection:** The final top film, determined by total scores across all nominations, will be confirmed by the Organizing Committee before the public announcement.

6.8. All online evaluations shall carry the same legal force and validity as in-person evaluations. Both online and in-person voting processes are governed by identical

criteria, confidentiality obligations, and audit requirements, ensuring equal weight in determining final results.

VII. Technical and Logistical Support

7.1. The Organizing Committee shall ensure technical facilities for filmmakers to present projects via multimedia, meeting HD 720p standards and providing English subtitles for non-English films, with setup completed no later than fifteen (15) working days before the official date of the Festival.

7.2. Online platforms (e.g., FilmFreeway) shall be tested and accessible to jury members no later than fifteen (15) working days before the official date of the Festival, to support remote evaluations as per the Decision.

7.3. The Organizing Committee shall provide a schedule of screenings and deliberation sessions, distributed to jury members no later than fifteen (15) working days before the official date of the Festival.

VIII. Final Provisions

8.1. This Protocol entered into force on January 4, 2023, and applies to the International Film Festival 'Follow Your Heart' and its subsequent editions.

8.2. Amendments require unanimous approval of the Organizing Committee and legal review.

8.3. The Protocol is published on the Festival's website for transparency.

IX. Oversight and Timeline

9.1. Oversight of the Protocol's implementation shall be entrusted to the Organizing Committee, with progress reviews conducted on June 14, 2023.

9.2. Any issues or proposed amendments must be reported to the Organizing Committee by June 4, 2023.

The Organizer of the Miami Film Festival "Follow Your Heart",
Head of the Organizing Committee,

Tatiana Germanovsky

