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Asian American Film News

Shamelessly biased news reports about the latest Asian American film happenings

MICHAEL KANG'S THE MOTEL WINS JURY PRIZE AT VC FILMFEST 2006 - "ASIAN STORIES BOOK 3" WINS FAVE AUDIENCE AWARD AND "QUEEN FROM VIRGINIA" WINS DOCU PRIZE

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MICHAEL KANG'S "THE MOTEL" TAKES TOP JURY PRIZE AT VC FILMFEST 2006: THE LOS ANGELES ASIAN PACIFIC FILM FESTIVAL

"ASIAN STORIES (BOOK 3) CAPTURES AUDIENCE FAVE AWARD WHILE "THE QUEEN FROM VIRGINIA: THE JACKIE BONG WRIGHT STORY" WINS BEST DOCUMENTARY PRIZE AT SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA'S LARGEST SHOWCASE OF ASIAN PACIFIC FILMS

MAY 11, 2006 – LOS ANGELES Visual Communications (VC), the nation's premier Asian American media arts center providing resources, exhibition, preservation, education and networking for Asian American filmmakers, closed their 22nd annual VC FILMFEST: THE LA ASIAN PACIFIC FILM FESTIVAL tonight with the presentation of awards for best narrative feature, best documentary feature, best short film and audience favorite film from over 170 features, shorts and videos showcased at this year's eight-day festival.

The Grand Jury Prize Winner for Best Narrative feature went to "THE MOTEL – A FILM BY MICHAEL KANG." The film, about an 11 year old boy who lives and works in his family's roadside motel outside New York City was a hit at Sundance 2005 and was produced by indie filmmaker Miguel Arteta.

The jury, which consisted of Oscar® nominated producer Pia Clemente, INDIE IN founder Julie La' Bassiere, and producer Teddy Zee, also presented a "Special Jury Prize" to the film "COLMA – THE MUSICAL" by director Richard Wong which had audiences singing and dancing to musical numbers about three newly graduated high school seniors in a small town in

Northern California, where the number of graves outnumber the city's population.

"This year's films were truly inspiring, as they displayed a great array of styles and stories from our filmmakers," states David Magdael co-director of VC Filmfest 2006. "The features ranged from personal stories of immigration to romantic comedies and horror films to musicals and documentaries to coming of age tales. Each had a unique vision and perspective while maintaining high production values."

The Best Documentary Feature Award was presented to "THE QUEEN FROM VIRIGNIA: THE JACKIE BONG WRIGHT STORY" from director David Ngo. This charming and intriguing film follows the director's aunt - Jackie Bong Wright - as she enters the Ms. Senior Citizen pageant and becomes the very first Vietnamese contestant. A "Special Jury Prize" in the documentary category went to "JOHN & JANE TOLL – FREE" directed by Ashim Ahluwalia, which tells the stories of six overseas telemarketers who live and work in India and the impact that globalization is having on both the US and these countries.

The Audience Favorite Film Award went to first time filmmakers Kris Chin and Ron Oda for their rousing comedy "ASIAN STORIES (BOOK 3) which tells the tale of a young man who is left at the altar and decides he wants his professional hit-man best friend to put him out of his misery before Valentine's Day. Campy and humorous, the film won the hearts of the this year's festival audience.

"The festival this year showed tremendous growth both in attendance and in the number of feature films by Asian American artists," says Leslie Ito, VC's Executive Director. "What this tells us is that the Asian American independent film genre is growing at faster pace, and that our emerging artists are about to take flight and get noticed. Our audiences are also showing us how important these films and artists are, and how hungry (the audiences) are for these films."

The GOLDEN REEL prize for best short film was given to "MISSING" – from director Kit W. Hui, while the LINDA MABALOT NEW DIRECTIONS/NEW VISIONS AWARD went to beautifully filmed "NEW YEAR" directed by Susan Tuan.

"Our GOLDEN REEL shorts film prizes have long been a staple at VC Filmfest," exclaims Abe Ferrer, co-director of VC Filmfest 2006. "Many of this year's features came from past GOLDEN REEL winners and nominees who started their career at VC

Filmfest years ago, and now returned with their first feature. We are hopeful that this pattern will continue and that more emerging artists will showcase their first features with our festival."

COMPLETE LIST OF AWARD WINNERS – VC FILMFEST
2006

BEST NARRATIVE FEATURE

The Motel – directed by Michael Kang

SPECIAL JURY PRIZE NARRATIVE

Colma: The Musical – directed by Richard Wong

BEST DOCUMENTARY FEATURE

The Queen From Virginia: The Jackie Bong Wright Story –
directed by David Ngo

SPECIAL JURY PRIZE DOCUMENTARY

John & Jane Toll-Free - directed by Ashim Aluwalia

GOLDEN REEL – SHORT FILM

Missing – directed by KIT W. HUI

NEW DIRECTIONS/NEW FILMS

New Year – directed by Susan Tuan

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