

Rza, Misty Copeland, Yvonne Orji & More At Urbanworld Film Festival 2023 (Photos)



NEW YORK, NEW YORK – NOVEMBER 03: (L-R) RZA, Karen McMullen and Gerald Barclay attend the 2023 Urbanworld Film Festival – Day 3 at AMC 34th Street on November 03, 2023 in New York City. (Photo by Dominik Bindl/Getty Images)

Rza, Misty Copeland, Yvonne Orji, and more appeared at the 2023 Urbanworld Film Festival. The Wu-Tang Clan member was the ambassador for the festival and the co-director of *A Wu-Tang Experience: Live From Red Rocks Amphitheatre* with Gerald Barclay. The event is on day three of the five-day event. Various industry people have attended, including Nelson George, Misty Copeland, and Leyla Fayyaz, the producers of the film *Flower*. Benny Boom, who directed *A Love Letter To Hip-Hop*, also attended the festival in New York City. Orji made her debut as a director with the feature *JAMAAL*. dream hampton's *Freshwater* and the experimental film *Paradise* from

Terrace Martin & Alex Isley will also be presented at the festival. *American Fiction* director Cord Jefferson received the Visionary Award on opening night. Gina Prince-Bythewood and Reggie Rock Bythewood attended the screening and Q&A for *Genius: MLK/X*, which they executive-produced. The festival is in its 27th year and is the nation's largest multicultural competitive film festival. This year, the festival screened 73 official selections, 7 spotlight screenings, 3 spotlight conversations, and featured 5 Urbanworld Innovation sessions and 4 original screenplay finalists. The winners have been announced.



American Fiction director Cord Jefferson accepts the Visionary Award



American Fiction Opening Night



Urbanworld Founder Stacy Spikes (left) joins Gano Grills, The RZA, Thembisa Mshaka, and Gerald Barclay for a quick photo opp

following the 'Wu-Tang Experience' Q&A



Leyla Fayyaz, Nelson George, and Misty Copeland



Benny Boom and Rza



NEW YORK, NEW YORK – NOVEMBER 03: (L-R) Marija Juliette Abney, Derrick A. King, and Yvonne Orji attend the 2023 Urbanworld Film Festival – Day 3 at AMC 34th Street on November 03, 2023, in New York City. (Photo by Dominik Bindl/Getty Images)



Screening Of A Love Letter To Hip Hop



The team from Maxine's Baby, Erick Sasso (producer), Asante White (producer), Gelila Bekele (director), Jasmine K. White (producer), Armani Ortiz (director), and Karen McMullen (Urbanworld Festival Director)



Retired Astronaut Leland Melvin (Executive Producer, 'The Space Race')



NEW YORK, NEW YORK – NOVEMBER 04: (L-R) Raphael Jackson Jr., Gina Prince-Bythewood, Reggie Rock Bythewood, and Damione Macedon attend day 4 of the 2023 Urbanworld Film Festival at AMC 34th Street on November 04, 2023 in New York City. (Photo by John Nacion/Getty Images)

2023 Winners

BEST NARRATIVE FEATURE (U.S.) – Frybread Face and Me –
Directed by Billy Luther

THE JURY:

Darcy Heusel – VP of Audience Engagement and Impact, NEON

Efuru Flowers – Founder and CEO, Flourishing Films

Sue Ellen Chitnuya – Filmmaker and Academy Member

BEST NARRATIVE FEATURE (WORLD) – Sira – Directed by Apolline Traoré

Honorable Mention: Inky Pinky Ponky – Directed by Damon

Fepulea'i and Ramon TeWake

THE JURY:

Darcy Heusel – VP of Audience Engagement and Impact, NEON

Efuru Flowers – Founder and CEO, Flourishing Films

Sue Ellen Chitnuya – Filmmaker and Academy Member

BEST DOCUMENTARY FEATURE – Brief Tender Light – Directed by Arthur Musah; Presented by ESPN Films

THE JURY:

Jackie Glover – Emmy-Winning Executive Producer

Leslie Fields-Cruz – Executive Director, Black Public Media

Sarah Eshaghian – Coordinator, HBO

BEST DOCUMENTARY SHORT – Slice – Directed by Zaire Love

Honorable Mention – Things Long Left Unsaid – Directed by Antonia Thornton

THE JURY:

Jackie Glover – Executive Producer

Leslie Fields-Cruz – Executive Director, Black Public Media

Sarah Eshaghian – Coordinator, HBO

BEST YOUNG CREATOR – The Old Young Crow – Directed by Liam LoPinto

Honorable Mention – Shallots and Garlic – Directed by Andrea Nirmala Widjajanto

Presented by The Walt Disney Studios

THE JURY:

Ramona Wright – Founder and CEO, WrightOne Media Group

Phillip Domfeh – Senior Manager, Disney+ Launchpad

Julian Newman – Founder and CEO, Culture Creative

Will Schnable – Programs Manager Equity and Inclusion, Warner Bros. Discovery

BEST NARRATIVE SHORT (U.S.) – Spaceship – Directed by Jorge G. Camarena

Honorable Mention – Jerome – Directed by Gianfranco Fernández-Ruiz; Death and Ramen – Directed by Tiger Ji

THE JURY:

Amanda Ross – Director, TV Programming DEI, NBCUniversal

Kecia Cole – Director, Fiction, BRIC

Kierna Mayo – Writer, Editor, and Media Executive

Marquis Daisy – Producer, ESPN Films

BEST NARRATIVE SHORT (WORLD) – Yellow – Directed by Elham Ehsas

THE JURY:

Tamara McCaw – Chief Civic Program Officer, The Shed

Ivonne Cotorruelo – Film Programmer

Amy Andrieux – Executive Director, Chief Curator, Mocada

BEST ANIMATION SHORT – Tomato Kitchen – Directory by Junyi Xiao

Honorable Mention – Lil Ruby – Directed by Bartek Kik

THE JURY:

Ramona Wright – Founder and CEO, WrightOne Media Group

Phillip Domfeh – Senior Manager, Disney+ Launchpad

Julian Newman – Founder and CEO, Culture Creative

Will Schnable – Programs Manager Equity and Inclusion, Warner Bros. Discovery

BEST EXPERIMENTAL FILM – Quiet As It's Kept – Directed by Ja'Tovia M. Gary

THE JURY:

Tamara McCaw – Chief Civic Program Officer, The Shed

Ivonne Cotorruelo – Film Programmer

Amy Andrieux – Executive Director, Chief Curator, Mocada

BEST SCREENPLAY – Long Live AJ – Written by Marvin Van Buren

Honorable Mention – The Washroom – Written by Elie El Choufany and Omar Al Dakheel

THE JURY:

Tracey Moore – EP, The Spirited Actor Podcast (iHeart Radio); Celebrity Acting Coach

Sonja Perryman – Writer, Producer, Actress

Joshua Sanchez – Screenwriter + Member of Writers Guild of America, East

Jenny Mayer – Screenwriter, Playwright + Member of Writers Guild of America, East

URBANWORLD AUDIENCE AWARD BEST SHORT – Homing – Directed by Ricardo Varona

URBANWORLD AUDIENCE AWARD BEST FEATURE – Brief Tender Light

– Directed by Arthur Musah

NYWIFT AWARD for BEST FEMALE DIRECTOR, US NARRATIVE FEATURE

Sira – Directed by Apolline Traoré

Presented by New York Women In Film & Television

NYWIFT AWARD for BEST FEMALE DIRECTOR, US NARRATIVE SHORT

Lunch Box – Directed by Anne Hu

Reunion – Directed by Zainab Jah

Presented by New York Women In Film & Television