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# Golden Apricot President Was Awarded in Cannes

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Golden Apricot Yerevan International Film Festival President Atom Egoyan was awarded the 34th Ecumenical Jury Prize for the humanistic values they discovered in *Adoration*, a film that explores cultural intolerance and misinformation.

"I am so overwhelmed by this prize because it places this film in another context," Egoyan said of his award. Egoyan won the same prize 11 years ago for his masterwork, *The Sweet Hereafter*.

"*Adoration* is an intimate film. It's very much rooted in this culture and I'm so proud to represent the country at this level," Egoyan said.

Annual International Film Festival GOLDEN APRICOT was established in 2004 in Yerevan, the capital of the Republic of Armenia, by the 'Golden Apricot' Fund for Cinema Development, the Armenian Association of Film Critics and Cinema Journalists, supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia, the Ministry of Culture of Republic of Armenia and Benevolent Fund for Cultural Development. The organizers of the Golden Apricot International Film Festival are: Harutyun Khachatryan, Film Director and Festival Director; Mikayel Stamboltsyan, Film Critic and Program Director; and Susanna Harutyunyan, Film Critic and Artistic Director. Internationally acclaimed Canadian-Armenian director Atom Egoyan was named President of the festival since 2005.

The Golden Apricot International Film Festival carries the theme Crossroads of Cultures and Civilizations. The title may well serve as our impassioned mantra for building cultural bridges and fostering dialogue. It also reflects the history of Armenia itself, which for millennia has existed as a flash point for competing geopolitical forces. Armenia's desirable geographic position has made it into a bone of contention for various empires, but has, on the other hand, resulted in a civilization replete with world influences and a dynamic arts heritage. We welcome films representing diverse ethnic groups, religions, and nations that depict the human experience, the daily lives of people, ordinary and extraordinary, their troubles and their joys, as they try to find meaning in a changing world; as they struggle to redefine themselves in a world that recognizes fewer and fewer boundaries.

Yerevan is an evolving testament to that heritage, and the Golden Apricot International Film Festival has fast become a premier destination for filmmakers of all genres, particularly those advancing universal values of peace, cultural harmony and cross-pollination, and mutual understanding. Accordingly, the Annual Golden Apricot International Film Festival features a multitude of films representing various nations, ethnicities, and religions, collectively depicting the full richness of the human experience.

The Golden Apricot festival is different from other such events in the sense that it is relatively smaller-scale and much cozier, but it continues to garner genuinely international attention and respect. The films are presented in two international competition sections: features and documentaries. One Grand Prize Golden Apricot and one Special Mention are awarded in each category. The festival has a special pan-Armenian competitive section - Armenian Panorama - for short, feature, documentary, and animation films produced by filmmakers of Armenian descent. The opening of the festival is always marked with a traditional blessing of apricots, for which Armenia is famous.

The First GOLDEN APRICOT Festival took place on June 30 to July 4, 2004. Festival attracted attention from all over the world including 148 films representing over 70 filmmakers from 20 countries. The Festival international jury was consisted of eminent world cinema and film criticism figures. Vahe Fattal did the Festival poster, logo and other design works. Grand Prizes of the first GOLDEN APRICOT festival went to Atom Egoyan (Feature Film Competition), Stephane Elmadjian (Short Film and Experimental), Armen Khachatryan (Documentary).

At the Second GOLDEN APRICOT Festival (12-17 July, 2005), entries were submitted from 45 countries- from Russia to Argentina, the Netherlands to Afghanistan, Malaysia to Chile, Turkey to Finland, India to Israel, Iran to Canada. Following the selection, 144 films from 37 countries were included into competition and non-competition programs. Among the guests and participants there were some of the most highly acclaimed figures of world cinema such as Abbas Kiarostami, Krzysztof Zanussi, and Nikita Mikhalkov who were given Lifetime Achievement Awards. The main prizewinners of the Second GOLDEN APRICOT Festival were Alexander Sokurov, Russia, with his film 'Sun' (Feature Film Competition), Pirjo Honkasalo, Finland, with 'Three Rooms of Melancholia' (Documentary Competition), and Arman Yeritsyan, Armenia, with 'Under the Open Sky' (Armenian Panorama Competition). The festival was covered by a number of Armenian and foreign media. Articles in such important cinema journals as CAHIER DU CINEMA (by Jean-Pier Rehm) and VARIETY (by Deborah Young) were published. Well-known directors and honored guests of the festival held master classes during the festival.

In 2005 GOLDEN APRICOT IFF initiated the establishment of a network of filmmakers of the region entitled Directors Across Borders (DAB). The founders of DAB share the common belief that film is one of those unique tools that can transform human relations without recognizing political, ideological, racial or religious borders. Taking into account the regional importance of the Program, the European Cultural Parliament decided to take the patronage of the Program.

The Third GOLDEN APRICOT Festival presented about 120 films from 43 countries. Participants included some of the most highly acclaimed figures of world cinema - such as Marco Bellocchio, Tonino Guerra, Mohsen Makhmalbaf, Godfrey Reggio, and Artavazd Peleshyan, who were honored with Lifetime Achievement Awards. More than 110 foreign guests attended the festival, which included filmmakers, actors, producers and distributors. The festival was covered by a numbers of international media, including EURONEWS, ARTE, KULTURA (Russia) TV channels. The international juries, headed by Moritz de Hadeln (Feature Competition), Godfrey Reggio (Documentary Competition) and Arsinee Khanjian (Armenian Panorama), awarded the following prizes: Golden Apricot 2006 for the Best Feature Film to Hou Hsiao-hsien for his film Three Times, Taiwan/China/ France; Golden Apricot 2006 for the Best Documentary Film to Working Man's Death by Michael Glawogger, Austria; and Golden Apricot 2006 for the Best Film in 'Armenian Panorama' to The Dwellers of Forgotten Islands by Hrant Hakobyan, Armenia.

The Forth GOLDEN APRICOT International Film Festival will be held from July 9 until July 14, 2007. The festival will showcase both mainstream and independent films from around the world, and will be attended by many of the most extraordinary talents working in cinema today.

Source: By Golden Apricot Film Festival Release

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