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The 24th FOYLE FILM FESTIVAL IS A WRAP

The curtain came down last night on one of the most successful Foyle Film Festivals to date. Brendan Gleeson was the highlight of the 2011 festival which recorded some of its highest audience figures in recent years.

The 24th International Foyle Festival themed on 'Events that Shook the World' showcased film screenings, workshops and exhibitions from international and Irish filmmakers in a programme that proved popular with local audiences whilst welcoming visitors from Ireland, Europe and the UK for the five day festival. Opening film *The Artist* received an unprecedented response from viewers with local filmmaker Alessandro Negrini praising it as an "unbeatable masterpiece".

Brendan Gleeson was presented with the inaugural Foyle Film Festival "Legenderry" Award for Lifetime Achievement in Film at the screening and panel discussion of *The Guard*. Despite having one of the most recognised faces in film and an A Lister CV, Brendan proved he is still very much connected to developing the Irish film industry and had a short film *Noreen* in competition for the LIM Awards. Speaking at the festival, Brendan Gleeson said:

"I'm delighted to be here at the festival in Derry and to receive this award. I have a special affection for Derry as my agent and friend is a Derry woman and she's responsible for my career taking off the way it did. I've spent a lot of good times up here in the North West and I'm delighted to see the City of Culture accolade awarded to the city for 2013. It's sure to be a great thing".

The LIM Awards were announced on Sunday night just before the final screening of *Shame* which marked its Irish premiere at the Omniplex cinema. The winners of the LIM Awards for Best International Short, Irish Short and Animation will now qualify for consideration in the short films category if the Annual Academy Awards without the standard theatrical run.

The winner of the Best Irish Short is Claire Dix for her short film *Downpour*. *Downpour* at four minutes was praised for its creative interpretation of a short film narrative. The winner of Best International Short is Japanese filmmaker Mitsuyo Miyazaki for her short film *Tsuyako*. *Tsuyako* is a passionate short film about duty, love, freedom and family. Miyazaki, a recent film school graduate, makes her first festival win in 2011 at Foyle. The winner of Best Animation is *A Morning Stroll*, a UK Animation directed by Grant Orchard. The Best Documentary LIM Award went to 'A People Uncounted', director Aaron Yeger's powerful account of the racial discrimination faced by the Roma – from past to the present day.

The Foyle Film Festival also hosted Belfast filmmaker Terry George for a special screening of his masterpiece *Hotel Rwanda*. George, who has written *In the Name of the Father* and *Some Mother's Son*. Other highlight events of

the Festival included documentaries on local subjects such as Bernadette Notes on a Political Journey directed by Lelia Doolan which attracted a large crowd to its screening and Q&A session hosted by Margo Harkin. Another local story The Carrowmeenagh Evictions written by local historian John A. McLaughlin attracted a large audience to the screening. The film commemorated the tragic events at Carrowmeengah village in Donegal in 1881 when 13 tenant families were evicted over three days. Workshop events in scriptwriting, costume making, casting direction and short film marketing were well attended and the children's weekend Christmas screenings and Harry Potter events enjoyed a great response.

The Foyle Film Festival club hosted two very special events for the Festival including Freakscene on Friday night which saw the legendary Turtle Assassins and Cuckoo take to the stage. Dublin rockers The Coronas took to the Stage on Saturday night to prove why they are one of the biggest bands to come out of Ireland in recent years and The Movie Quiz hosted an epic competition of film trivia which was not for the faint hearted.

Speaking at the closing festival event Shame at the Omniplex, festival director Bernie McLaughlin paid tribute to all who took part in the festival saying: "I am really delighted with how well this year's festival has gone and for the great support and response from the people of Derry and to the visitors who came from all over to see our programme. Congratulations to our LIM Award winners and special thanks to our guests Terry George, Brendan Gleeson and all our filmmakers, photographers, artists and facilitators who exhibited and took part in Foyle Film Festival. Thanks also to Northern Ireland Screen, Derry City Council, our associates in the Strand Omniplex, Derry Crystal, the Tower Hotel, Desmond Motors, The British Council and BBC Radio Foyle for all their support. To our great festival team here at the Nerve Centre also, thank you, and now we begin planning for number 25."

www.foylefilmfestival.org