

NORDIC COUNCIL FILM PRIZE 2019: JURY MOTIVATION (ALL CANDIDATES)

DENMARK

Original title: Dronningen
English title: Queen of Hearts
Director: May el-Toukhy
Screenwriter: May el-Toukhy, Maren Louise Käehne
Producer: Caroline Blanco, René Ezra

It's incredibly difficult to tell a story that leaves it up to the audience to find motives among the contributors, especially when the protagonist is involved in something as morally reprehensible as a sexual relationship with his stepson. But in *Queen of Hearts*, which in many respects breaks with our usual perception of film, such openness feels completely right. Director May el-Toukhy maintains this difficult balance, while Trine Dyrholm turns her protagonist into someone mysterious yet completely human. *Queen of Hearts* is a joyous shock to both the eyes and soul.

Jury: Per Juul Carlsen, Jacob Wendt Jensen, Eva Novrup Redvall

FINLAND

Original title: Aurora
English title: Aurora
Director: Miia Tervo
Screenwriter: Miia Tervo
Producer: Max Malka

Across Europe, the far right is cashing in on the fear of immigration. Within this climate, director and screenwriter Miia Tervo's first feature film – a heartfelt story of contemporary pain and joy – *Aurora* is a healthy antidote to intellectual atrophy. With humanity and compassion at eye level, but without moralism, it shows the equal humanity of flawed people struggling for survival in an urban environment in the far north.

Jury: Jaana Puskala, Harri Römpötti, Mikaela Westerlund

ICELAND

Original title: Hvítur, Hvítur Dagur
English title: A White, White Day
Director: Hlynur Pálmason
Screenwriter: Hlynur Pálmason
Producer: Anton Máni Svansson

In *A White, White Day*, director Hlynur Pálmason explores the crisis of a middle-aged policeman when his wife dies unexpectedly. Unable to succumb to his grief, Ingimar becomes a moody recluse with no meaningful relationships beyond a tender friendship with his granddaughter. Masculinity is a prominent theme in the film as Ingimar is imprisoned by his inability to communicate clearly with his co-workers or his

daughter and granddaughter, who try to reach out to him for compassion and support during a time of tremendous grief.

Ingimar's inner life is mirrored in the film's uncanny and poetic visual storytelling. The fog that is synonymous with the eastern region of Iceland rolls a long way down the mountains and clings to Ingimar's world like a ghost or a prison. The presence of the white fog also evokes a certain Icelandic artistic sensibility as its allusive nature has been the subject of many of Iceland's foremost artists.

The film revolves around the stunning performance of Ingvar E. Sigurðsson as the grief-stricken policeman. He exposes the angry Ingimar's silent and profound desperation in the slow and disciplined manner reserved for only the most experienced of actors.

Jury: Hilmar Oddsson, Börkur Gunnarsson, Helga Pórey Jónsdóttir

NORWAY

Original title:	Blindsone
English title:	Blind Spot
Director:	Tuva Novotny
Screenwriter:	Tuva Novotny
Producer:	Elisabeth Kvithyll

Blind Spot is a riveting drama that moves from the introduction of a realistic universe, through an unexpected situation that creates shock and despair, to the release of the main character's trauma and fear. Everything is told in one sweep, one long shot, creating the basis for impressive acting, photography, and sound design. Tuva Novotny's directing debut makes full use of cinematic techniques, all to the benefit of the story.

Jury: Inger Merete Hobbelstad, Kalle Løchen, Britt Sørensen

SWEDEN

Original title:	Rekonstruktion Utøya
English title:	Reconstructing Utøya
Director:	Carl Javér
Screenwriter:	Carl Javér, Fredrik Lange
Producer:	Fredrik Lange

Darkness and light, reality and fantasy. Despair and anticipation, weight and relief. *Reconstructing Utøya* has all these. With intelligence, acute sensitivity, and deep respect for the survivors, director Carl Javér has tackled this Nordic trauma head on. The result is something so gripping and engaging that it borders on the unbearable. Together with the young people in front of the camera, he has created a secure and permissive space where the interaction between the contributors and their respect for and trust in each other simply beams compassion out into the world.

Jury: Kristina Börjeson, Emma Gray Munthe, Gunnar Bergdahl (did not participate in 2019 because of a conflict of interest)