

PRESS RELEASE

Colombian filmmaker Mariana Saffon receives the ninth Baumi Script Development Award from the jury and guest juror Pan Nalin for her treatment "Mar de Lava"

Düsseldorf/Cannes, 15 May 2024. The ninth year of the **Baumi Script Development Award** sees the €20,000 award being presented to the Colombian filmmaker **Mariana Saffon** for her treatment "**Mar de Lava**".

"It was a great pleasure for me to take part in the Baumi Award this year. A prize that passes on Baumi's passion for independent world cinema, and his quest for finding new cinematic voices," says **this year's guest juror Pan Nalin**.

Jury statement:

Mariana Saffon's treatment sees the protagonist Elena having to face her greatest fear: becoming a mother. It is the portrait of a woman in crisis who is confronted with a guilt that is not her own, but has its origins in her deepest fears. At the same time, the story is an accurate portrayal of social prejudices about motherhood, the burden of the patriarchal legacy and the complex social context of class differences in Colombia. The precise narrative with Hitchcockian elements convinced us and we are looking forward to this new voice of Latin American cinema.

About the film:

During a visit to the seaside, Elena (37) comes across a three-year-old boy clinging to her leg in the sea, very close to the high waves. Suddenly, the boy disappears. Elena tries to get on with her life. But the memory of how she looked for her own parents on the beach as a child brings to light the pain and the source of her fear of becoming a mother herself.

About the award winner:

Mariana Saffon is a Colombian author and director who lives in Mexico City. Her short film 'Entre tú y Milagros' ('Between You and Milagros') took part in over 80 festivals and won among others the Orizzonti Best Short Film Award at the 77th Venice International Film Festival in 2020, the Best Short Film Award at the Hamptons Film Festival and the DGA Jury Award.. Mariana is a graduate of Columbia University in New York City, a Milos Forman Directing Fellow and is currently writing her first feature film 'Mar de Lava' which will be shot in Medellín, Colombia.

About the award:

The Baumi Script Development Award was presented in February 2016 for the first time in memory of the film producer and distributor Karl "Baumi" Baumgartner. The prize is endowed with €20,000 in prize-money and was established by the donors **Martina** and **Sandra Baumgartner**, **Pandora Film**, the company 'Baumi' had co-founded, and the **Film- und Medienstiftung NRW**. Screenwriters can apply for the award with an English-language treatment. A jury consisting of the founders and one annually changing international guest juror selects a story idea from the submissions.

The winner of the first Baumi Award was the Egyptian **Omar El Zohairy** (guest juror **Fatih Akin**), whose award-winning project "Feathers of a Father" premiered at Cannes' Semaine de la Critique in 2021. The Syrian director **Soudade Kaadan** (guest juror **Martina Gedeck**) received two prizes at the 2022 Venice International Film Festival for her award-winning project „Nezou“, including the Audience Award for the best film in the Orizzonti sidebar.

This was followed by the Polish filmmaker **Kuba Czekaj** (guest juror **Aki Kaurismäki**), the German author **Martin Rehbock** (guest juror **Bent Hamer**), the South African **Amy Jephta** (guest juror **Małgorzata Szumowska**), and the Afghan filmmaker **Shahrbanoo Sadat** (guest juror **Maren Ade**), in equal parts to the Georgian filmmaker **Dea Kulumbegashvili** and the German-Kosovar director **Visar Morina (Ildikó Enyedi)**. Last year, the Hungarian filmmaker **Dénes Nagy** was the winner of the Baumi Award which he received from the guest juror **Andreas Dresen**.

The Award's founders would like to express their special thanks to **Katja Clos** for the graphics and logo, **Friederike Zeit** for designing and making the prize sculpture, and to **Fritz Erler** for programming the website.