



## PRESS RELEASE | FIFOI 2026 AWARD WINNERS

Initiated by France Télévisions and led by the association Hors Champ Réunion, in partnership with the Réunion Region, the CNC, and the City of Saint-Paul, the 3rd edition of the International Indian Ocean Film Festival (FIFOI) took place in Réunion from April 14 to 19, closing at the Stella Matutina Museum.

This edition brought together more than 2,000 attendees across non-competitive screenings and two competition categories:

- Documentary: 8 films
- Short fiction film: 9 films

Through these competitions, FIFOI continues its mission: to support and promote Indian Ocean cinema from Réunion, this year showcasing filmmakers from 11 territories (Réunion, Mauritius, Madagascar, Mayotte, South Africa, Kenya, Mozambique, Comoros, Tanzania, Somalia, India), represented by 17 women directors and 15 men directors.

This third edition had the honor of welcoming Aïssa Maïga as President of the Jury, alongside committed professionals from the film and cultural sectors.

For the first time, the trophies awarded to winners were created by a local artist, Johanna Grégoire. These original works extend the festival's identity, affirm its local roots, and highlight local materials and artistic craftsmanship. Designed as unique pieces, they reflect the diversity of perspectives and stories presented at the festival.

This year, the FIFOI Film Market reached a new milestone by becoming **FIFOI: The Market**, with a visual identity complementing that of the festival. The Market brought together more than 220 professionals from the film and audiovisual industries in Réunion and the Indian Ocean region. A total of 16 projects were pitched this year, including 8 feature-length documentaries and 8 short films. These meetings help strengthen and expand the ecosystem of co-productions and collaborations in the Indian Ocean.

FIFOI: The Market also hosted the INDABA program in partnership with the Maison du Cinéma et des Jeux Vidéo and the Realness Institute, further reinforcing Réunion's role as a regional and international cinematic hub.

Thanks to this new momentum, FIFOI is establishing itself as a key player in the cinematic landscape of Réunion and the Indian Ocean. The Festival and the Market, united by a shared ambition, form a comprehensive project serving local works and talents. FIFOI thus stands as a true crossroads for meetings, experimentation, and collaboration on both local and international scales.

## **PALMARÈS**

Five prizes were awarded during the closing ceremony on April 19 at the Stella Matutina Museum:

- FIFOI / France Télévisions Feature Documentary Award – endowed with €3,500 by France Télévisions and broadcast on one of its channels:

*The Empty Grave* by Agnes Lisa Wegner & Cece Mlay

- Short Film Award – endowed with €1,500 by the Hors Champ Réunion Association:

*Aparthiba* by Sudipta Barai

Special mention: *Virundhu* by Rishi Chandna

- Domin Award – endowed with €3,000 by France Télévisions and broadcast on one of its channels. This award recognizes a film (all genres) addressing climate and environmental issues in overseas territories:

*Virundhu* by Rishi Chandna

- Audience Award – endowed with €1,000 by Corsair:

*Sulaimani* by Vinnie Ann Bose

- Youth Jury Award – endowed with €500 by Elite Tour:

*Sulaimani* by Vinnie Ann Bose

### **Award Winners & Opening Ceremony Photos:**

[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/118Kqm8FMgJ6vDtN8o60lp5JKDr8Wbfme?usp=drive\\_link](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/118Kqm8FMgJ6vDtN8o60lp5JKDr8Wbfme?usp=drive_link)

Amil Shivji, producer, was present to receive the Feature Documentary Award.

Vinnie Ann Bose, director of *Sulaimani*, attended to receive both the Audience Award and the Youth Jury Award.

Rishi Chandna, director of *Virundhu*, was present to receive the Domin Award.

## THE EMPTY GRAVE by Agnes Lisa Wegner & Cece Mlay

Synopsis:

Two Tanzanian families set out to find their stolen ancestors. Their quest leads them to Germany, where tens of thousands of skulls and bones from former German colonies are stored in museums.

97 minutes – 2024 – Fiction – Tanzania / Swahili and German

Produced by: Kurhaus Production and Kijiweni Productions

Film page: <https://fifoi.re/la-tombe-vide/>

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## APARTHIBA by Sudipta Barai

Synopsis:

Despite domestic violence, Pori, an NGO worker, visits her imprisoned husband and questions his past and identity.

25 minutes – 2024 – Fiction – India

Produced by: Satyajit Ray Film and Television Institute

Film page: <https://fifoi.re/aparthiba/>

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## VIRUNDHU by Rishi Chandna

Synopsis:

As pollution threatens her lake, a fisherwoman decides to challenge a powerful politician by preparing him an unforgettable feast centered around a secret dish.

25 minutes – 2025 – Fiction – India

Produced by: Rishi Chandna

Film page: <https://fifoi.re/virundhu/>

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## SULAIMANI by Vinnie Ann Bose

Synopsis:

One evening in Paris, two Indian women who do not know each other find themselves in an Indian restaurant, where smells, flavors, and language take them on a symbolic journey through bittersweet memories of displacement and emancipation.

19 minutes – 2025 – Fiction – India / French and Malayalam

Produced by: Girelle Production and Les Astronautes

Film page: <https://fifoi.re/sulaimani/>