

## Films with passion take Ecofilms prizes

Entries at festival on the island of Rhodes explore the personal and global effects of change

**Big issues tackled** with passion figured large among the winning entries at this year's Ecofilms Festival. Directors explored the close-up, personal effects and the broader consequences of social, political and environmental change. India was a recurrent theme, reflecting the festival's energetic scouting for quality films. Humor won plaudits, as did tenderness.

The lineup of contestants was so strong that the award juries admitted it was hard to single out the best. But choose they did, and the results were announced on June 26, in a scene that would have pleased Fellini. By the light of the full moon, the young musicians of Rhodes Philharmonic Brass Orchestra of Kalithea Municipality blew up a storm of oompahs in the atmospheric old outdoor Rodon cinema.

Mai Iskander won the award for a feature-length film award with her documentary of Cairo's trash collectors, "Garbage Dreams" (Egypt), which the jury praised for its "unpretentious combination of the personal with the universal, ecological and social, simplicity and depth." Joint second came Fredrik Gertten's "Bananas!" (Sweden) and Argentinian film "The Peddler," directed by Eduardo de la Serna, Lucas Marchegiano and Adriana Yurcovich.

The jury liked Gertten's brilliant story of "killer capitalism" plus courtroom drama, and the "mixture of fiction and documentary" in "The Peddler" to depict an itinerant maker of "handmade films."

Special mention went to "U-Turn" (Spain) by Sergio Garcia de Leaniz and Vicente Perez, which skewers our automobile addiction.

Russian Evgeny Solomin used the new ID photos required of former Soviet citizens in the transition to the new political system to paint a stark, striking picture of life in a small Siberian town for "Countryside 35x45," which won first prize for a medium-length film.

Second came Krishnendu Bose's "The Latent City" (India), which tracks a project where artists respond



**Suzanne Raes** tracks down the inspirational Greenpeace pioneers in 'The Rainbow Warriors of Waiheke Island' (Netherlands), which the Ecofilms team chose as the best feature.

### Encompassing Winning feature 'Garbage Dreams' (Egypt) combined the personal with the universal, ecological and social, simplicity and depth'

to Delhi's changing layers.

Katherine Knight won a special mention for "Pretend Not to See Me" (Canada), which follows artist Colette Urban as she creates performance art in and inspired by her remote Newfoundland farm.

"Bringing Life to Space - One Year Locked in a Container" (Denmark) by Jakob Gottschau and Ojvind

Hesselager won first prize for a short film. The jury was impressed by the use of rare archival material that confirmed the human need for contact with nature.

"Underground Inferno" (India), a documentary short by Sanjeev Sivan and Umesh Aggarwal about the immense damage done by fires in coal mines, won second prize for its "amalgam of documentary, fantasy and animation."

Greek director Vasilis Tanos earned a special mention for his animated short, "Love at First Sight," which, said the jury, "shows that innocence, irony and emotion are secrets of the ecology of the mind."

Shared first prize in the audience

award category, administered by the Rhodes Cinema Club, went to the deeply ironic "Goodbye, How are You?" by Serb director Boris Mitic, who juxtaposes cynical aphorisms against unexpected images, and to Gonzalo Arjon's feature "Eyes Wide Open: Exploring Today's South America" (Uruguay), which tracks the changes that new Latin American leaders have espoused.

"Xemeina," a film made on Rhodes about foreign visitors who have ended up staying on the island, won a special mention.

Last year saw the first awards from the Ecofilms team. Their 2010 choices reflect the festival's dedication to the environment and to the art of filmmaking. They awarded Suzanne Raes's feature "The Rainbow Warriors of Waiheke Island" (Netherlands), which blends archival and new film of the inspirational Greenpeace pioneers who still fight for their beliefs. Israeli director Regev Contes won the award for a medium-length film with "The Worst Company in the World" about his father's wildly incompetent insurance company, where friendship matters more than efficiency.

And Leung Man Ki's animated "Winter Rest" (Hong Kong) won the award for a short.



**The young musicians** of the Rhodes Philharmonic blow up a storm of oompahs at the 2010 Ecofilms awards ceremony on June 26.