Cinema Verde 2019 Award Winning Films

For Immediate Release
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CONGRATULATIONS to the winners of our Tenth Annual Cinema Verde International Environmental Film & Arts Festival 2019:

● **Audience Choice: The Butterfly Trees** (United States, 1 hr 22 min). Directed by Kay Milam. The Butterfly Trees is a documentary feature film that captures the transcontinental journey of the eastern monarch butterflies on their epic migration from the forested shores of Southern Canada to the rare and ancient oyamel fir trees of Central Mexico. Part science, part adventure, and part love story, the film is a captivating reflection on the profound mysteries of the natural world and the ties that irrevocably connect us all. The story weaves together a wondrous tapestry of stunning visuals, passion for discovery, and the eclectic mix of the people for whom these butterflies have become a magnificent obsession. Filled with allegory and poetic contemplations, The Butterfly Trees brings to the screen a universal story of life and the search for legacy and meaning by using the monarch migration as a poignant metaphor that embodies love, hope, transformation and connections that transcend borders. The monarch butterfly is emblematic of our fragile and complex ecology. But the monarch is also a potent symbol for our individual life’s journey, intergenerational connection, and the quest for mutual belonging and finding our place in this world. [http://www.butterflytrees.com](http://www.butterflytrees.com)

● **Best in Show: Enough White Teacups** (United States, 59 min). Directed by Michelle Bauer Carpenter. This film highlights the Danish non-profit, INDEX: Design to Improve Life ® (INDEX) and the film explores its history as an international design competition and highlights the most innovative INDEX award winners. Showcased is how design can be used to plan and build affordable housing, to prevent of blindness, to destroy landmines, to deliver vaccines and blood in remote areas, to clean up the oceans and to help prevent infant and mother mortality, among others. Sustainable designs/inventions that embrace the
principles of social, economic, and ecological sustainability are examined.  
https://vimeo.com/236947332

- **Best Solution:** *Aktivisti -- Activist* (Finland - subtitled, 57 min). Directed by Petteri Saario. A touching and encouraging story about a miner’s young daughter and her battle against one of the world’s largest mining companies. The film depicts the destiny of an invaluable protected mine in Finnish Lapland. Is everything for sale when the bid is high enough? A film about exceptional determination, courage and love for one’s own roots and home village.

- **Best Music:** *My Golden Rule* (United States, 4 min). Directed by Sally Sherwood – Animated, Experimental, Music Video by Melissa Gail Klein. This film was made as a tribute to the wonders of our earth and the importance of protecting them. Follow a young woman, armed with her banjo and her spirit, as she enters a portal from a post-apocalyptic world into a realm of rhinoceroses, gorillas and ancient trees to recover magical seeds and make the world wild again!  
https://magicinthemud.wixsite.com/artandfilm

- **Climate Award:** *Sustainable Living with Patrick Lang* (United States, 5 min). Directed by Paige De Ponte and Sacha Riviere. A day in the life of Patrick Lang living a sustainable life in Malibu… filmed before his home and community were consumed by fire in the fall of 2018.

- **Nature Award:** *Confluir* (United States, 40 min). Directed by Henry Worobec. In Peru, the headwaters of the Amazon River cut through the Andes Mountains and help sustain resident communities as well as the most diverse ecosystem on Earth. As the energy demands of Peru increase, the currently free flowing Marañón River faces over 20 proposed dam projects, two of which have already been approved. Our international team of scientists and river experts spent 28 days rafting the Marañón while documenting the natural and cultural resources that would be eminently impacted by proposed dam projects.  
https://vimeo.com/120984124

- **Compassion Award:** *A Prayer for Compassion* (United States, 97 min) Thomas Jackson Special Pre-Release Screening of the feature-length documentary, "A Prayer for Compassion" follows Thomas Jackson on a quest that crisscrosses America and takes him to Morocco for the UN Climate Conference and throughout the Indian subcontinent to ask the question, “Can compassion grow to include all beings? Can people who identify as religious or spiritual
come to embrace the call to include all human and nonhuman beings in our circle of respect and caring and love?” https://mainstreetvegan.net/a-prayer-for-compassion/

- **Peace Award: Are You Volleyball?!** (Iran- Islamic Republic of, 15 min). Directed by Mohammad Bakhshi. A group of Arabian spoken asylum seekers arrive to an English spoken country border and can't keep going. They conflict with border soldiers everyday till a deaf-mute baby becomes a catalyst for better communication between two groups.

- **Water Award: Daaham-Thirst** (India-subtitled, 4 min). Directed by Siva Nageswara Rao – Water is a precious resource which humanity should use responsibly. Our relationship with Nature should always be guided by reciprocity. Nature protects us all and we in turn should protect natural resources and be sympathetic to the needs of fellow human beings. Daaham short film emphasizes in a heart touching way the fact that, before taking we should always...

- **Eco-tourism Award: Unaccountable** (United States, 11 min) Directed by Stacey Stone, “Executive Producer, Diane Mellen found a recent article about three-eyed fish and two-headed turtles in the New River which flows from the U.S. Mexico border into the Salton Sea. Runoff sewage is causing DNA mutations in the animals. As filmmakers, we found it alarming that the California Department of Parks and Recreation is advising parents it is permissible to swim and fish in the Salton Sea. We wanted to make a documentary with vivid imagery, as no words can encompass the sadness of the area.” https://vimeo.com/268650507

- **Education Award: GSLV Mark3** (India-subtitled, 6 min). Directed by Dinesh Kuma, International College Student submission – GSLV Mark3 is a two point of view narration told from a girl and the ISRO team who wants to launch a satellite into space. There is a beautiful connection between girl and rocket.

- **Energy Award: Thirst for Power** (United States, 61 min.) Directed by Mat Hames. Filmed across France, California, and Texas, the film traces the history of civilization's quest to procure abundant water and energy — from ancient Roman aqueducts in Europe to modern America's vast hydroelectric infrastructure. In the modern world, water and energy are the two fundamental components of a society, and they are interconnected. The film explores our dependence on water for energy as well as the huge vulnerabilities in our current systems, exacerbated by climate change. The documentary is adapted from Dr. Michael E. Webber's book Thirst for Power: Energy, Water, and Human Survival.
**Food Award: Rescuing Abundance** (United States, 16 min)
Directed by Pat Sehn. Rescuing Abundance is a food sustainability film starring heroes from the Pittsburgh food community. The film tells the story of how business, government, farmers, nonprofits, and college students can work together to reverse the current trend of 31% of the food produced in the United States ending up in landfills, despite millions of people going hungry every day. The ultimate purpose of the film is to develop the foundation for community-focused solutions. Business and the community can work together and drive social innovation in the food space.

**National/International College Film Competition Award Winner: Pulling Teeth from a Polar Bear** (United States, 19 min).
Directed by Jackie Allegra Curnick, Student – In this short documentary, the community of St. Lawrence Island shares their struggle with environmental contamination. The Alaskan island, located 30 miles off the coast of Siberia, has faced contamination associated with the military site, used during the cold war. One group, Alaska Community Action on Toxics, has been working with the community for 20 years to achieve environmental justice for the land, animals, and people in the area.

**Most Revealing: Bahía** (Colombia-subtitled, 8 min). Directed by Santiago Ramirez. No longer than 60 years ago, Cartagena Bay harboured more than two hundred hectares of coral reefs, a thousand of seagrass beds and eight hundred of mangroves. It was home to a countless number of marine species that coexisted in harmony with local communities that lived off that richness. Then the so called progress came with its engineering projects and the balance was broken. Life was snatched away from the bay and local communities were left without means of survival.

**Local Award: Mining Phosphorus** (United States, 19 min)
Directed by Alan Toth. Local, a Finalist for the 2018 Student Academy Awards. Phosphorus, the most critical element in modern agriculture, has been acquired through phosphate mining in Florida for over a century, but Florida’s phosphate is quickly running out. When it is gone, the United States will be dependent on phosphate imports. A new source of phosphate is discovered in North Florida that could extend America’s phosphate supply. Local landowners are determined to mine it, but environmentalists vow to stop them before they can begin. The environmentalists point to Central Florida, where strip mining for phosphate has polluted water and air for decades. A county permit is all that stands in the way of the strip mining project. The fight between mineral security and a healthy environment embroils two rural counties in North Florida, where the future of American phosphate mining will be determined by a few public servants.
https://vimeo.com/274745626
• **Whistleblower Award: Sharkwater Extinction** (United States). Directed by Rob Stewart, who sent a personal video message to our VIP Opening Night audience in 2015, when his film Revolution won the Cinema Verde Water Award. Sadly, Rob died on a dive in the Florida Keys in 2017. His work was monumental and his passion continues. This film dives into remote underwater locations to reveal the catastrophic effects humanity has had on the oceans. Illegal overfishing of sharks across the planet has deeper consequences that puts the Earth’s most important ecosystem in danger of collapsing, which threatens all life in, and above, the ocean. Stewart taught the world to love the oceans and their creatures and not fear sharks through his iconic images of hugging and free diving with sharks and mantas. [https://www.sharkwater.com/videos/sharkwater-extinction-official-trailer/](https://www.sharkwater.com/videos/sharkwater-extinction-official-trailer/)

• **Animal Award: The Angel's Secrets** (Canada, 27 min). Directed by Elodie Turpin. Many know its name; few have seen it. Once present throughout Europe, the angel shark is now critically endangered. As unique as extraordinary, it reveals to us several secrets... little by little, and to those who take the time to listen. [https://vimeo.com/265880510](https://vimeo.com/265880510)

• **Earth Award: Caught in Quicksand** (United States, 4 min) Directed by Marty Novitsky and Uladzimir Taukachou. A short, beautiful film about a man caught in quicksand in the Dead Sea in Israel, where, visiting for years, he has watched its decline. The Dead Sea is shrinking rapidly, which is also causing sink holes to appear daily – there are currently more than 6000. More information about the issue at this link: [https://www.queensjewishlink.com/style-and-living/dead-sea-critical-condition-waters-recede-diplomatic-tensions-rise-2/](https://www.queensjewishlink.com/style-and-living/dead-sea-critical-condition-waters-recede-diplomatic-tensions-rise-2/)

• **Best Animation: Blue Tomorrow - Mavi Yarın** (Turkey, 15 min). Directed by Numan Ayaz. Animated. A man who lives alone on his island goes on an unknown journey caused by rising ocean. After witnessing a catastrophe on the way, he finds hope again with other people. But when the ocean rises again, this time he makes an unexpected decision to another unknown. [https://youtu.be/BRvlJBwMNNI](https://youtu.be/BRvlJBwMNNI)

• **Most Engaging: Confluence** (United States, 55 min). Directed by Amy Marquis, Dana Romanoff. The Colorado River has carved a deep imprint both on the physical landscape and on the people who live near its waters. Confluence follows an up-and-coming indie folk band as they traverse this endangered river system and document the people who rely on it through original music. [https://vimeo.com/290581547](https://vimeo.com/290581547)
• Health Award: **Facing Navassa** (USA, 10 min) Milo Kim, Student. A documentary short that examines the dark history of environmental injustice around a creosote plant in southeastern North Carolina.

• Cinema Verité: **Dominion** (United States, 120 min) Dominion uses drones, hidden and handheld cameras to expose the dark underbelly of modern animal agriculture, questioning the morality and validity of humankind’s dominion over the animal kingdom. While mainly focusing on animals used for food, it also explores other ways animals are exploited and abused by humans, including clothing, entertainment and research. Narrated by Joaquin Phoenix, Rooney Mara, Sia, Sadie Sink and Kat Von D, and co-produced by Earthlings creator Shaun Monson. Filmed in Australia, with a global message.

• Sustainable Business Award: **The Man of the Trees and the Green Beans – L’homme Des Arbres** (Italy, French - subtitled, 19 min). Directed by Andrea Trivero. Daniel Balima is a senior horticulturist from Tenkodogo, a small Sub-Saharan African town in Burkina Faso. Daniel as a child fell ill with polio and, although growing without the use of his legs, he was able to follow his father in the family nursery, walking on his hands. He works with great passion and talent so much that his disability, which for many in Africa means a marked destiny, is for Daniel an opportunity: "I could take two paths: begging or taking my life in hand and devoting myself to work with dignity." Daniel has won this great challenge and every day he sows and cultivates with great effort and gratitude many vegetables and plants. In over fifty years of activity he has given life to more than a million trees and he dreams of planting another million.

• Enemy R Us Award: **Carbon Weevils** (United Kingdom, 7 min) Directed by Tim Britton. A film about our love affair with carbon. Animated, short.

• Gaia Award: **El Río** (United States - Spanish subtitled, 58 min). Directed by Juan Carlos Galeano. El Río is a feature-length documentary where the daily life and stories of Amazonian peoples become cautionary tales in our Anthropocene era. El Río contributes to intersecting fields of anthropology and environmental humanities for our understanding of the perspectives of indigenous cultures and the life of water ecosystems under threat. It gives credence to the importance of ecological knowledge and belief systems for the entangled natural and human histories of Amazonia.

*Submissions for 2020 are now OPEN!* www.CinemaVerde.org/submission