



The Best Short Films with Social Impact Reel Impact Film Festival 2017



Social impact organisations are exploring different methods of visual storytelling to effectively spread messages, using video to drive change and achieve commercial goals for social impact organizations. The best of these short films and promo reels were recognised at the second Reel Impact Film Festival ([RIFF](#)), which was held on Nov 16, 2017 at Boot Up in Menlo Park. Organized by Angelina Mertens and Paula Saslow of [One World Training and Investments](#), over 150 videos were submitted for judging at the second annual RIFF, and from these 22 finalists were selected.

The 2017 winners are:

- Best Overall Award
[Lava Mae: Mobile Hygiene for the Homeless](#), filmmaker: Natasha Deganello Giraudie, Micro Documentaries.
- Most Innovative Storytelling Award
[Stasher - the Year 2050](#), Stasherbag, filmmakers: Nurture Digital
- Most Effective Messaging Award
[African Men, Hollywood Stereotypes](#), Mama Hope, produced by Joe Sabia
- Most Moving Video Award
[Marching Forward](#), Partnered with the Representation Project, filmmakers: GlobalGirl Media.
- Most Creative Cinematography Award
[SAFA](#), filmmaker: Shadow Puppet Creations.



Guest speaker and Director of Strategic Partnerships at the Skoll Foundation Sandy Herz emphasised the importance of bringing people together through storytelling and making sure authentic voices are heard: “Storytelling couldn’t be more important in this era of fake news and news siloes...we’re in a moment of disaggregation, and we’re going to need to come back together.” Sandy’s advice to entrepreneurs was that there was a tendency in Silicon Valley to emphasise pitching and having a slick deck: “You don’t have to be slick, but you do have to be authentic to build a connection”.

Truth Be Told’s Founder and Creative Director Ken Fisher stressed the need for a truly collaborative process with clients. “You have to approach storytelling through video with curiosity and compassion, so that the end result is compelling narrative and doesn’t feel like a promotional piece”.

Attendees at RIFF also got the opportunity to participate in workshops with creative directors, filmmakers and storytelling experts and tackle some of the challenges of video, such as the critical nature of the first three to ten seconds, how to shift to highlighting connection and vision rather than suffering and pity, and learning what it takes to get their video to a bigger audience. Workshops were hosted by industry experts including [Amie Williams](#) from [GlobalGirl Media](#) and [Hunter Holcombe](#) from AJ+, [Benjamin Packard](#) from Retainer Media, [Katie Carey](#) and [Katrina Boratko](#) from [Mama Hope](#), and [Natasha Deganello Giraudie](#) from [Micro-Documentaries](#).

Awards ceremony hosts [Niema Jordan](#) from Open ‘hood and [Jared Karol](#) from [Storytelling for Good](#) wrapped up RIFF 2017 by reminding attendees that “the stories that humanize are the most powerful”.

