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2025 TRIBECA FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES WINNERS “CHARLIEBIRD,” “HAPPY BIRTHDAY,” AND “NATCHEZ” IN U.S NARRATIVE, INTERNATIONAL NARRATIVE AND DOCUMENTARY COMPETITIONS

Andrea Riseborough and Brenda Blethyn Earn Performance Awards as Women Take Home Top Honors Across the Majority of Categories

First-Time Directors and Latin American Cinema Deliver Strong Showing in Competition

Tribeca Award Winner Tickets Available at tribecafilm.com/awardwinners2025



NEW YORK – (June 12, 2025) — The 24th annual Tribeca Festival, presented by OKX, today announced competition winners with *Charliebird*, *Happy Birthday*, and *Natchez* taking top honors in the U.S. Narrative, International Narrative, and Documentary competitions, respectively. Andrea Riseborough and Brenda Blethyn shared the Performance Award for *Dragonfly*, leading a strong showing by women who claimed top honors across the majority of categories at the ceremony held at Racket NYC. The awards also highlighted breakthrough achievements by first-time feature directors and a notable presence of Latin American cinema throughout the competition. The Competition categories represent the breadth of Tribeca’s programming with awards for U.S. Narrative, International Narrative, Documentary, Viewpoints, Nora Ephron, Short Film, Best New Directors, Audio Storytelling, Games, AT&T Untold Stories, and Tribeca X. The Festival concludes on June 15 in New York City.

“Every year at Tribeca we set out to spotlight the most exciting new voices from around the world,” said **Tribeca Festival Director and SVP of Programming Cara Cusumano**. “We are thrilled our jury honored this mission with winners that brilliantly represent the vibrancy and diversity of global independent storytelling today.”

All winning films in the U.S. Narrative category are first-time directors, including Libby Ewing for *Charliebird*, Cristian Carretero and Lorraine Jones Molina for *Esta Isla (This Island)*, who also won the Best New Narrative

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Director Award, and Isabel Hagen for *On a String*. Other first-time filmmakers include The Albert Maysles Award for Best New Documentary Director honorees Augusto Zagarra for *Runa Simi* and Rowan Haber for *We Are Pat*, and Walter Thompson-Hernandez who took home the Viewpoints Award for *Kites*.

Sarah Goher, also a first-time filmmaker, earned three awards on behalf of her film *Happy Birthday*, including Best International Narrative Feature, Best Screenplay in an International Narrative Feature and the prestigious Nora Ephron Award, which honors exceptional female filmmakers who represent the spirit and vision of the legendary filmmaker and writer. Meanwhile, Latin American cinema made its mark with award winners *A Bright Future*, *Cuerpo Celeste*, *Runa Simi*, and *Kites*.

Select categories receive the unique Tribeca Festival Art Award from a selection of artists led by curator Zoe Lukov. Supported by CHANEL, the world-class artists donated work to honored filmmakers.

Winners of the Audience Award, which are determined by audience votes throughout the Festival, will be announced at a later date.

2025 Winners and Special Jury Mentions, as selected by the [2025 Festival Jury](#), are as follows:

U.S. NARRATIVE COMPETITION

Founders Award for Best U.S. Narrative Feature: *Charliebird*, director Libby Ewing (United States) – World Premiere. Jury Statement: “A deeply affecting portrait featuring grounded and complex performances, this film is an assured and well-crafted debut.” **This award is presented by OKX.**

Special Jury Mention for Best U.S. Narrative Feature: *Esta Isla (This Island)*, directors Cristian Carretero and Lorraine Jones Molina (Puerto Rico) – World Premiere. Jury statement: “A compelling depiction of a place, this film is a lush and stunningly realized reckoning with class, love and history.”

Best Performance in a U.S. Narrative Feature: Gabriela Ochoa Perez for *Charliebird* (United States) – World Premiere. Jury statement: “This actor delivers a fresh performance that is at once ferocious and vulnerable. She grounds a young woman’s painful journey in humanity and truth.”

Best Screenplay in a U.S. Narrative Feature: Isabel Hagen for *On a String* (United States) – World Premiere. Jury statement: “A nimble, witty and accomplished story that chronicles the ups and downs of a young woman who has to face the music.”

Best Cinematography in a U.S. Narrative Feature: Cedric Cheung-Lau for *Esta Isla (This Island)* (Puerto Rico) – World Premiere. Jury statement: “Beautifully lensed, this film is full of unforgettable and evocative imagery. Lovingly rendered, it is equally adept at capturing the intimate details and grandest vistas.”

INTERNATIONAL NARRATIVE COMPETITION

Best International Narrative Feature: *Happy Birthday*, director Sarah Goher (Egypt) – World Premiere. Jury statement: “For its authentic and complex portrayal of class, motherhood, and loss of innocence, along with outstanding performances - especially by its young star - and its brilliant nuanced writing.”

Special Jury Mention for International Narrative Feature: *Cuerpo Celeste*, director Nayra Ilic García (Chile, Italy) – World Premiere. Jury statement: “For its fantastic central performance, arresting visuals, and subtle storytelling that touches on both a changing political landscape and the aftermath of grief.”

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Best Performance in an International Narrative Feature: Andrea Riseborough and Brenda Blethyn for *Dragonfly* (United Kingdom) – World Premiere. “For an audience, there is nothing as exciting as watching actors bravely and fully immerse themselves in characters who leave us filled with both empathy and dread - and so for their daring and electrifying turns, we are thrilled to present Best Performance in an International Film to Andrea Riseborough and Brenda Blethyn.”

Best Screenplay in an International Narrative Feature: Mohamed Diab and Sarah Goher for *Happy Birthday* (Egypt) – World Premiere. Jury statement: “For its profound and yet economical storytelling, compelling characters, and wonderfully crafted dialogue.”

Best Cinematography in an International Narrative Feature: Lev Predan Kowarski for *Little Trouble Girls* (Slovenia, Italy, Croatia, Serbia) – North American Premiere. Jury statement: “For its evocative tone and rich sensual texture, which conjured the fragility of a singular summer.”

DOCUMENTARY COMPETITION

Best Documentary Feature: *Natchez*, director Suzannah Herbert (United States) – World Premiere. Jury statement: “Who tells America’s story? In a country where the rewriting and abject erasure of African American history threatens a truthful understanding of who we are, the jury applauds this film’s focus on a southern town, once one of America’s largest slave markets, whose economic mainstay is now historic tours. The film’s incisive, razor-sharp craft, its deft navigation of myriad participants without ever losing clarity, its timeliness, its humor, its confrontation of naked racism, yet its refusal to flatten its Mississippian storytellers—however flawed—into easy villains, for being artful, honest, and deeply compassionate, the jury—unanimously and unequivocally—awards a film that brings us hope not for an America that can agree, but one that might understand each other.”

Special Jury Mention for Documentary Feature: *An Eye for an Eye*, directors Tanaz Eshaghian and Farzad Jafari (Denmark, Iran, United States) – World Premiere. Jury statement: “At a time when women’s rights are eroding globally, the jury would be remiss if we did not recognize the courageous, unflinching, gut wrenching, verité virtuosity of a film set in a society that severely limits women’s rights, even those of victims of extreme domestic violence. The story unfolds in real time with life and death hanging in the balance, leaving the audience breathlessly invested in the outcome.”

Best Cinematography in a Documentary Feature: Chance Falkner and Johnny Friday for *The Last Dive* (United States) – World Premiere. Jury statement: “After a passionate debate, we award a film which immersed us in a natural world where the meeting between man and animal literally changes the course of preservation history, and the redemption of a broken soul. For its sweeping aerial and underwater footage, shocking archival witness, and intimate portrait of a person confronting morality.”

Special Jury Mention for Cinematography in a Documentary Feature: Noah Collier for *Natchez* (United States) – World Premiere. Jury statement: “For its idiosyncratic visual storytelling, masterfully timed and restrained camerawork, and photography as close, wide and open as the film’s curious heart.”

Best Editing in a Documentary Feature: Soren B. Ebbe and Hayedeh Safiyari for *An Eye for an Eye* (Denmark, Iran, United States) – World Premiere. “For its narrative precision, for locking us inside a moral crucible without relief, and for weaving a multigenerational, deeply personal story that gives equal weight to all participants with searing emotional impact, and for the clarity and courage of its storytelling. Not one frame feels gratuitous as the film barrels relentlessly towards its conclusion.”

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Special Jury Mention for Editing in a Documentary Feature: Pablo Proenza for *Natchez* (United States) – World Premiere. Jury statement: “The editing seamlessly balances all the elements of an extremely complicated story, and delivers a powerful impact that resonates long after the film concludes.”

VIEWPOINTS AWARD

***A Bright Future*, director Lucia Garibaldi** (Uruguay, Argentina, Germany) – World Premiere. Jury statement: “This year’s Viewpoints award goes to a film driven by an original, inventive voice. The filmmaker creates a seamless world that is captivating, thought-provoking, fresh and increasingly relevant. Weaving themes of the fetishization of youth, the timeless pursuit of dreams, and what makes us human, and anchored by a pitch perfect performance from their lead actress, we are pleased to award this year’s Viewpoint prize to *A Bright Future*. We believe Lucia Garibaldi has a very bright future.”

Special Jury Mention for Viewpoints: *Kites*, director Walter Thompson-Hernandez (Brazil) – World Premiere. Jury statement: “Special Jury Prize goes to a film with astounding cinematography that balances verite with magical realism and upends conventional story structure. The love the filmmaker has for his characters and their community writ large was infectious. We all think we have time but the angels let us know we have to hurry and become the people who want to be.”

BEST NEW NARRATIVE DIRECTOR AWARD

Lorraine Jones Molina and Cristian Carretero for *Esta Isla (This Island)* – World Premiere. Jury statement: “The award for Best New Narrative Director goes to a film that straddles crime fiction and ethnography; it balances poetic imagery, lush landscapes, and cinematic tension; it takes audiences deep into the crisis of survival of a young man on an island that’s both a paradise and a prison.” **This award is presented by Canva.**

ALBERT MAYSLES AWARD FOR BEST NEW DOCUMENTARY DIRECTOR

Augusto Zagarra for *Runa Simi* (Peru) – World Premiere. Jury statement: “This award goes to a film that takes us on a seemingly lighthearted journey while tackling an essential question: why storytelling matters. From the casting, to the frame, to the editorial pacing, this director creates the total cinematic package, revealing one man’s fight to preserve his people’s culture.”

Special Jury Mention for New Documentary Director: Rowan Haber for *We Are Pat* (United States) – World Premiere. Jury statement: “This award goes to a film that tackles a morally urgent issue with a fresh and unique directorial vision that made us think, cry, and most unexpectedly laugh. For powerfully centering the voices of the community it represents, inventive visual approach, and for helping us see a complex pop cultural figure in a new way.”

NORA EPHRON AWARD

The Nora Ephron Award will honor an exceptional female filmmaker who represents the spirit and vision of the legendary filmmaker and writer.

Sara Goher for *Happy Birthday* (Egypt) – World Premiere. Jury statement: “This film was not only compelling as an audience experience, but like all great works of art, it did not confine itself to the story, and was resonant on a larger canvas. It explored the intersection of innocence and class from the eyes of a child longing for a birthday party and reluctantly understanding her place in society, being on the outside, and longing to be invited to the inside.”

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SHORTS COMPETITION

Best Narrative Short: *Beyond Silence*, director **Marnie Blok** (Netherlands) – International Premiere. Jury statement: “Covering an enormous subject with beautiful minimalism, brilliant performances combine with a skillful script to give new meaning to ‘finding your voice.’ Raw and devastating. Impressive and emotional.”

Special Jury Mention for Narrative Short: *Chasing the Party*, director **Jessie Komitor** (United States) – World Premiere. Jury statement: “With a compelling combination of character and world, this nostalgic look at young hope on a wild night is filled with surprises of fantasy and nightmare. We’ll be thinking of this fresh, provocative film for a long time and cannot wait to see what this director does next.”

Best Documentary Short: *I hope this email finds you well*, director **Asia Zughaier** (Palestine) – World Premiere. Jury Statement: “Our choice for the Best Short Documentary Award poses the question: what even is a documentary? A documentary can be anything that allows the viewer to connect with what the filmmaker has experienced. We believe this film helps us not only see, but feel.”

Special Jury Mention for Documentary Short: *Natasha*, directors **Mark Franchetti and Andrew Meier** (Italy, Russia) – World Premiere. Jury Statement: “In times like these, it’s important to honor those who came before us, those who fought to make the world a more just and livable place. Our Special Jury choice reflects on one such hidden figure, whose legacy left an outsized impact on the world we live in today.”

Best Animated Short: *Playing God*, director **Matteo Burani** (Italy, France) – New York Premiere. Jury statement: “Visceral and experimental, using the form to its greatest abilities — this beautiful exploration of existential turmoil is at the heart of cinema — why are we here, how did we get here, what would it be like to have the thumb of god in your hand, and what is the price when one yearns to be free?”

Special Jury Mention for Animated Short: *Petra and the Sun*, directors **Malu Furche and Stefania Malacchini**(Chile) – North American Premiere. Jury statement: “The attention to detail, the specificity of longing and loneliness, and the immersive quality of this stop-motion character study created a moving experience. The texture and visible traces of the human hand brought a delicate realism in this story about an unusual and unforgettable chance encounter.”

Best Music Video: *"Rock The Bells" - LL COOL J*, director **Gregory Brunkalla** (United Stated). Jury statement: “To honor our first-ever Music Video Jury Competition winner, we found it only fitting to celebrate the great city of New York—with a music video that captures the style, swag, and sound of Tribeca’s hometown.”

Student Visionary Award: *Manya Glassman for How I Learned to Die* (United States) – World Premiere. Jury statement: “Our choice for the Student Visionary Award manages to make a capital-M Movie out of a short student film. We, the jury, believe this film is filled with ambition, hope, and personality—paired with complex, emotional subject matter that touches on something we will all experience: death.

Special Jury Mention for Student Visionary: *Jiayi Li for āyí* (United States) – World Premiere. Jury statement: “Sometimes, the people who are the fabric of our lives are the ones most often forgotten. With this film, we catch a glimpse of what it feels like to be overlooked—but not erased. We would like to give a Special Jury Mention.”

TRIBECA GAMES AWARD

Cairn (France) – New York Premiere. Jury Statement: “All the nominated games represent a wide, healthy range of what games can aspire to be, and how games can tell stories through both traditional elements but more

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importantly through gameplay interactions. The chosen winner among this amazing group of nominees was compelling, immersive, and reminds us that every choice we make is meaningful. The jury loved the dedication to simulation, the cohesion of the project, and the ambition. This game is bigger than climbing done right; it is imbued with substance beyond the physical act.”

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TRIBECA X AWARD COMPETITION

Best Feature: *Abnormal Beauty Company* from The Ordinary, directed by Aref Mahabadi

Best Short: *First Speech* by Reporters without Borders, directed by Giordano Maestrelli

Best Commercial: *Century of Cravings* from Uber Eats, directed by Jim Jenkins

Best Episodic: *A New York Minute* from Mejuri, directed by Gia Coppola

Best Content Creator/Influencer: *A Robot's Guide to Happiness* from Brilliant Labs, directed by Lucas Rizzotto

Best Games/Immersive: *WICKED RP: The Official Experience on Roblox* from Wicked & NBCU, creative directed by Ben Caro

Best Audio/Podcast: *Dragon Age: Vows & Vengeance* from Electronic Arts, BioWare, directed by Matt Sav

Social Impact Award: *Daniel Really Suits You* from Human Rights Campaign, directed by Karimah Zakia Issa

Environmental Impact Award: *A Vital Sun* from Fordham University, directed by Alison Bartlett

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About Tribeca Festival

The Tribeca Festival, presented by OKX, brings artists and diverse audiences together to celebrate storytelling in all its forms, including film, TV, music, audio storytelling, games, and immersive. With strong roots in independent film, Tribeca is synonymous with creative expression and entertainment. Tribeca champions emerging and established voices, discovers award-winning talent, curates innovative experiences, and introduces new ideas through exclusive premieres, exhibitions, conversations, and live performances.

The Festival was founded by Robert De Niro, Jane Rosenthal, and Craig Hatkoff in 2001 to spur the economic and cultural revitalization of lower Manhattan following the attacks on the World Trade Center. The annual Tribeca Festival will celebrate its 24th year from June 4–15, 2025 in New York City.

In 2019, James Murdoch's Lupa Systems bought a majority stake in Tribeca Enterprises, bringing together Rosenthal, De Niro, and Murdoch to grow the enterprise.

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ABOUT THE 2025 TRIBECA FESTIVAL PARTNERS

The 2025 Tribeca Festival is presented by OKX and with the support of our partners: AT&T, Audible, Bulleit Frontier Whiskey, Canva, CHANEL, City National Bank, DIRECTV, Don Julio Tequila, FIJI Water, Indeed, iQIYI, KLM Royal Dutch Airlines, NBC4 and Telemundo 47, NYC Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment, National CineMedia, New York Magazine, Purina, Spring Studios New York, The Wall Street Journal, Variety, Vulture, and Whalar.

PRESS CONTACTS

Annie Davis | adavis@tribecafilm.com

Nicole Elice | nelice@tribecafilm.com

Rogers & Cowan PMK | tribecafestival2025@rcpmk.com