

Follow-Up to the 2015 Imago Film Festival

The Imago Film Festival is Judson University's film festival, designed to showcase independent films from around the world that deal with faith and ethics. The eleventh annual Imago Film Festival was held March 24 –March 28, 2015 at Thulin Performance Hall on the Judson University campus in Elgin, IL.

Beginning on March 24, the festival opened with screenings of the first block of films in competition for the \$1000 grand prize. This block of short films from around the world included “Nobody” (a coming-of-age story about Elvis) and “Through the Trees” (about a suicidal man who decides to make a positive impact on the world). Filmmakers introduced both films and the producer of “Through the Trees” explained how he was motivated by how one life can affect so many others.



On March 25, the festival continued with a sold-out screening of the feature film “Believe Me” about a group of college buddies who scam Christians by creating a fake charity. Director Will Bakke was in attendance and explained the satire was intended to encourage Christians to decide whether they really loved Christ or just loved Christian culture. And the conversation between Bakke and

new fans continued long after the end of the Q & A.

On March 26, the festival continued with screenings of the second block of films in competition. The block included “Juan and the Cloud” (an animated film about a boy, a friendly cloud, and environmental awareness), “Stela” (an effects-laden film about the connection between a mother's life and the fairy tales she tells her daughter), and “Love at First Sight” (a charming romantic comedy that defies conventional expectations).

On March 27, filmmaker Matt Bilen discussed his upcoming project with Wanderlust films; currently raising money for the project, Bilen described the ways that “HeavenQuest” adapts the literary classic “Pilgrim's Progress” as a dramatic fantasy. The evening continued with a screening of the third and final block of films in competition



(including “Through Our Eyes,” a documentary by Judson student Alyssa Huber).



On March 28, the festival came to a close with its elegant red carpet celebration, complete with food, live music, and a best-dressed contest. The party was a masquerade ball, the theme connected to the career of the guest of honor Doug Jones (well known for his masked roles as the Silver Surfer in “The Fantastic Four” and Abe Sapien in “Hellboy”).

Jones entertained the packed performance hall with humorous tales of his career, noting how his perspective on himself as awkward kid was transformed by the idea that God made him for a unique purpose. Many in the crowd remained during intermission and after the evening’s events to talk with Jones.

The evening continued with the announcement of the festival’s lifetime achievement award recipient as Denzel Washington and the evening ended with the film awards ceremony and the screening of the festival winners. The grand prize winner was “Lila,” a film from Spain by director Carlos Lascano. A combination of live action and animation, the film follows an artist and dreamer whose ideas have the power to shape the world around her.



Next year’s festival, the twelfth annual, is tentatively scheduled for March 29-April 2; more information can be found at www.imagofilmfestival.com and at Facebook and Twitter. For specific questions, contact Terrence Wandtke (the festival director) at filmfestival@judsonu.edu.

Thanks to our staff, judges, and speakers; thanks to those who submitted films; thanks to our financial supporters; thanks to those who attended the festival; thanks especially to those who helped with the simple belief that they were contributing to something special; and of course, thanks to God, the creator of all good things without whom none of this would be possible. We look forward to seeing you next year.