

# Nine Filmmakers Win BronzeLens Awards during 8th Annual Film Festival

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Categories include Feature, Documentary, International, Short, Student Film, Music Video and Webisode



**BRONZELENS**  
• Film Festival of Atlanta, Georgia •

**NEWS RELEASE**

## For Immediate Release:

**ATLANTA---September 7, 2017** --- During the course of five days, 68 films, including the Atlanta premieres of Bill Duke's *Created Equal*, Tommy and Cody Oliver's OWN Network Series "*Black Love*", Carl Payne and Avery O Williams' *Misguided Behavior* and Eduard Erne's *The Speech* were screened at the 8th annual BronzeLens Film Festival. Over 6000 attendees from across the United States, the Caribbean and Africa participated in the Festival that celebrates people of color in film and television.

Juried films in their perspective categories, other noteworthy industry leaders and festival supporters were honored during the **BronzeLens Awards** at the **Woodruff Arts Center's Rich Auditorium**. Categories included the best in Feature, Documentary, International Documentary and Shorts, Shorts, Student Film, Music Video and Web Series as well as Best Actress and Best Actor. A total of nine films and two actors received prestigious **2017 BronzeLens Awards**. Other BronzeLens Award recipients were **BronzeLens Founder's Award** honoree Brenda Mills, Florida State University Festivals Coordinator and Industry Liaison, **BronzeLens Chairmen's Award** honoree Heritage Cadillac and **BronzeLens Spirit Award** honoree writer, director, producer Crystal Emery.

**Spilled Milk** (USA) directed by Jaqai Mickelsen was selected for the **BronzeLens 2017 Audience Award**. **Spilled Milk** is the story of two lifelong friends. One suffers from Sickle Cell an often stigmatized and excruciatingly painful disorder that mostly affects African Americans. The voting was cast by audience members after each screening via cell phone technology, BronzeLens Viewer Analytics (BVA) designed by Gary Vause of Vause Computer Systems.

## 2017 BronzeLens Award Winner Highlights

### Best Short

**Burning Angel Dust**, (USA) directed by Jackie J. Stone won for **Best Short** film.

Synopsis: A Nigérienne immigrant struggles to adapt to American life while preserving cultural customs for her westernized children. Mimi's 10-year-old daughter Violet is excited about her coming of age celebration, but it turns out to be far more life-altering than she could ever imagine. There's a price to keep traditions alive. Due to the BronzeLens designation this film is eligible to apply as an Academy Award Qualifying Short.

Cast: Anna Sophia Hester, Carla Marie, Patricia Newman

### Best Documentary

**Little Music Manchild** (USA) directed by Malena Cunningham Anderson won for **Best Documentary**. Cunningham Anderson will receive a Movie Magic package for the win provided by Entertainment Partners.

Synopsis: Malik Kofi is a budding child prodigy whose talents touch the lives of everyone who meets him. This 11-year-old African American prodigy has astounding gifts and the world is taking notice.

Cast: Malik Kofi

### Best Documentary Short

#### Ashley Ashley

(USA) directed by Ted Sananman won for **Best Documentary Short**.

Synopsis: **Ashley Ashley** is a documentary short about siblings, competitive spirit, drive and the ability to succeed in America. Motivated by an unorthodox and accomplished father, Maurice and Alicia Ashley channel their passion, talent and competitive fire into a path out of the drug violence of 1980s Brownsville, Brooklyn. The documentary explores their paths to remarkable success in professional boxing and chess.

Cast: Maurice and Alicia Ashley

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### **Best Student Film**

#### **The Homecoming**

Director Paulina Bugembe won in the **Best Student Film** category for **The Homecoming (USA)**.

Synopsis: Andy heads home to Milwaukee to plan a homecoming party for her estranged brother who is getting out of prison. As the day of his release arrives, she struggles to bring the family together to welcome him home and repair what was broken when he was sent away

Cast: Kira Powell, Henderson Wade

### **Best Feature**

**Created Equal (USA)**, directed by Bill Duke won for **Best Feature**. Duke will receive a Movie Magic package for the win provided by Entertainment Partners.

Synopsis: Desperate to become a priest in the Catholic Church, Alejandra Batista turns to Thomas Reilly, a successful lawyer who files suit against the Archdiocese of New Orleans for sex discrimination without justifiable cause. As the trial unfolds, an extremist concocts a plot to stop the heresy against the church by attacking Alejandra and threatening to kill her if she doesn't back off.

Cast: Aaron Tveit, Edy Ganem, Lou Diamond Phillips, Greg Alan Williams and Yohance Myles

### **Best International Documentary**

**Journey of a Soca King, (Trinidad & Tobago, USA)** directed by Bart Phillips won for **Best International Documentary** film.

Synopsis: With a lifelong mission to put soca music on the international map, Machel Montano has pioneered the evolution of the genre throughout his 34-year career. Journey of a Soca King chronicles his rise from a child star competing on Star Search, to his reign as a Soca Monarch collaborating with Grammy Award winning songwriters and producers such as Angela Hunte and Diplo.

Cast: Machel Montano

### **Best Music Video**

**Broken Pieces, (USA)** directed by Lem Collins won for **Best Music Video** film.

Synopsis: Broken Pieces is written and performed by major recording artist [Lil Zane](#). It touches on the issues of police brutality and other broken pieces of our society.

Cast: [Lil Zane](#)

### **Best Webisode**

**Brooklyn.Blue.Sky, (USA)** directed by Rhavynn Drummer and Dui Jarrod

Synopsis: "Brooklyn. Blue. Sky." is an 8-episode web series about two distant exes, Skylar and Blue, who reluctantly decide to come together to create a script for a 'Netflix and Chill' TV Pilot competition. Before they submit, they have to untie the binds that held them captive to their youthful love.

Cast: Michael Oloyede, Nicolette Ellis, Jenelle Valle

### **Best of Festival**

**The Suit, (SOUTH AFRICA)** directed by Jarryd Coetsee also won for **Best International Short** film.

Synopsis: In 1950s Sophiatown, South Africa, shortly before the apartheid regime forcibly removed the township's Black residents to make way for White resettlement, Philemon discovers his wife Matilda in bed with a young man. The young man flees, leaving behind his suit. Philemon devises a cruel punishment by forcing his wife to treat her lover's suit as if it were a person. She must serve it meals, take it for walks around the neighborhood, even to church. Despite Matilda's attempts to please her husband, she faces a dwindling number of choices and Philemon's unrelenting punishment will ultimately have tragic consequences for both of them.

Cast: Atandwa Kani, Phuthi Nakene, John Kani

### **Best Actress**

**Elle Jae Stewart** for **JUNIOR (USA)** directed by Pearl Gluck

Synopsis: A mother struggles with a new normal after her son is shot by an off-duty police officer.

Cast: Elle Jae Stewart, Juliandra Durkin, Wilna Taylor

### **Best Actor-**

**Kendre Berry** for **Trouble Man** directed by Jackson Young

Synopsis: A high school senior living in a Dallas suburb falls into a downward spiral that may prevent him from reaching his dreams of getting into college.

Cast: Armani Barrett, Kendre Berry, Donald Wayne Brown Jr.

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### **About BronzeLens Film Festival**

Over the course of eight days (August 20-27, 2017), film lovers, actors, and filmmakers gathered to share a creative platform of education, entertainment, empowerment related to film, television, and the production of both.

The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences has approved BronzeLens as a qualifying festival for the Short Film Awards category. The short film that receives the BronzeLens Best Short Award is now eligible to enter the Academy's Short Subject competition for the concurrent season. BronzeLens is a charter member of ARRAY, a film distribution network founded by Ava DuVernay to screen independent film by people of color and women. BronzeLens Film Festival of Atlanta, Georgia, is a non-profit organization, founded in 2009, that is dedicated to bringing national and worldwide attention to Atlanta as a center for film and film production for people of color. Its mission is two-fold: to promote Atlanta as the new film mecca for people of color; and to showcase films and provide networking opportunities that will develop the next generation of filmmakers.

### **2017 BronzeLens Sponsors**

Global entertainment and news company, Turner is the Premier Sponsor of the 2017 BronzeLens Film Festival. Additional sponsors include AIDS Healthcare Foundation (AHF) and Black Leadership AIDS Crisis Coalition (BLACC), Atlanta Convention and Visitors Bureau, Atlanta Mayor's Office of Film & Entertainment, BET Networks, Delta Air Lines, DeKalb Film, Music and Digital Entertainment Commission, Georgia-Pacific. Partial funding is provided by the City Atlanta Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs and Fulton County Arts and Culture.

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