

Grand Prize

Sponsored by MEC | \$4,000

THE GREAT ALONE

(USA, 2014, 84 min)

Director/Producer: Greg Kohs



© Arctic Film Camp

The Iditarod may be the hardest race in the world. *The Great Alone* captures the inspiring comeback story of champion sled dog racer, Lance Mackey. From his sunniest days as a boy to his darkest hours trapped in the arms of substance abuse, dog sledding just may be his road to salvation.

“Good films are hard to make” but great films are nearly impossible” and often times they sneak up on you without warning. Our grand prize winner this year subtly weaves threads of family, unexpected friendship, raw vulnerability and extreme perseverance. The tapestry created is a powerful and deeply emotional human portrait, illuminating our innate shortcomings and vulnerabilities” and our ultimate drive to connect with ourselves and the wilderness” and overcome.+

· Cory Richards, jury member.

Creative Excellence Award

Sponsored by Mountain Life Media | \$2,000

CAILLEACH

(UK, 2014, 147 min)

Director: Rosie Reed Hillman

Producer: Carole Cooke

Production Company: Scrumptious Productions Ltd.



© Rosie Reed Hillman

Morag, 86, lives alone on the Isle of Harris with her three cats and twelve sheep. She was born in this house and has lived here her whole life. *Cailleach* is a portrait of Morag as she contemplates her next chapter and shares her unique love of life.

%Creativity is as broad as our imagination. This year we would like to celebrate the imagination it takes to have a simple idea and turn it into a film both humble and profound. We would like to award a film that told a tale so charming and honest that . without the need for big budgets and multiple cameras . it fell from the screen and stood on its own.+

· Dina Mufti, jury member

Best Film — Exploration and Adventure

Sponsored MSR | \$2,000

THE GREAT ALONE

(USA, 2014, 84 min)

Director/Producer: Greg Kohs



© Arctic Film Camp

The Iditarod may be the hardest race in the world. *The Great Alone* captures the inspiring comeback story of champion sled dog racer, Lance Mackey. From his sunniest days as a boy to his darkest hours trapped in the arms of substance abuse, dog sledding just may be his road to salvation.

This category was STACKED with bold, innovative, and all-consuming adventures that pushed adventure and exploration to futuristic levels. Hardship is one of many prices that all great adventurers need to embrace. Sometimes the tests of life itself become the perfect fuel to achieve the greatest feats. This film embodies that very spirit and reminds us that a difficult life is very much a life worth living.+

· Sarah Hueniken, jury member.

Best Film — Mountain Culture

Sponsored by Helly Hansen | \$2,000

SHERPA

(Australia, 2015, 96 min)

Director: Jennifer Peedom



From the film *Sherpa*

Sherpa, a new film from director Jennifer Peedom and high altitude cinematographer Renan Ozturk, reveals the 2014 Everest climbing season from the Sherpa point of view, including the tragic avalanche and its aftermath.

We can all exoticise the story of another culture in some far flung place from the security of our own homes. As filmmakers, we have a duty to step into those places, reflect the truth and bring it home. In April 2014, a film team set out to tell the story from the point of view of one of these cultures. That team could not have envisaged the devastation that followed when 16 families lost their men to an unthinkable disaster. The story that exploded on to our screens depicted a cross-cultural clash on the biggest stage on earth, throwing into sharp relief our views on the value of life and calling into question how we see the world. As we continue to move through mountain cultures around the world to live our dreams there can be no more an important spotlight than this.

· Dina Mufti, jury member.

Best Film — Climbing

Sponsored by the Alpine Club of Canada | \$2,000

A LINE ACROSS THE SKY

(USA, 2015, 40 min)

Director: Josh Lowell and Peter Mortimer

Producer: Nick Rosen and Zachary Barr

Production Company: Sender Films and Big UP Productions



© Austin Siadak

Long considered impossible, coveted by many and attempted by a few, the Fitz Traverse has fueled the imaginations of climbers in Patagonia for decades. Tracing the iconic skyline of Fitz Roy and its six satellite peaks, it spans seven kilometres across snow and ice-covered rock, with epic route finding and endless rapelling. Tommy Caldwell and Alex Honnold went big, seizing their chance during a rare extended weather window.

Judging the climbing category is as difficult as climbing itself. The art of the filmmaker then is to sculpt a story out of spontaneous and directed footage. Breaking down barriers to discover new horizons demands a creative and curious mind and starts with dreams and desires. Established people sometimes call it crazy, irresponsible or even insane. The author Richard Bach wrote it so well: "You're never given a dream without also being given the power to make it true. But there are two conditions: you have to accept to suffer and you have to accept all of the possible consequences." This concept is demonstrated so well in *A Line Across the Sky*.

• Peter Popall, jury member.

Best Film — Mountain Sports

Sponsored by Sea & Summit | \$2,000

CHASING NIAGARA

(USA, 2015, 76 min)

Director: Rush Sturges

Producer: Red Bull Media House GmbH



From the film *Chasing Niagara* © Matt Baker

When pro kayaker Rafa Ortiz decides to paddle over Niagara Falls, he sets in motion a series of events leading his team on a remarkable two-year journey from Mexican rainforest rivers to the waterfalls of the U.S. Northwest before coming to a heart-stopping climax at the iconic falls.

When choosing the winner of this category we were asked to confront what we are willing to endure as athletes to accomplish our goals. How far can we push ourselves in a pursuit? What are we willing to risk? Why? We are taken on a deeply devoted journey and faced with the realities of consequence. Ultimately, we were offered the idea that failure is relative and perhaps walking away can be seen as one of the highest achievements of any athlete.

- Cory Richards, jury member.

Best Film — Snow Sports

Sponsored by Bergans of Norway | \$2,000

ECLIPSE

(Canada, 2015, 31 min)

Director: Anthony Bonello

Producer: Anthony Bonello, Mike Douglas

Production Company: Switchback Entertainment



© Reuben Krabbe

The odds are low, the risks are high . photographer Reuben Krabbe is determined to capture a photo of a skier in front of the 2015 solar eclipse in Svalbard. But the weather is bad, the guide is sketchy, the pressure is massive, and the skiers just want to ski.

%see skiing as the joy of playing with gravity by gliding on nature's artwork of snow. We all live it differently; we all have different motors which drive us to go out there. Filmmakers and photographers are challenged to catch the right moment. Certain filmmakers will attempt to achieve things that are deemed by most to be too difficult and inaccessible, like capturing a full solar eclipse that can only happen once or twice in their lifetime. This film demonstrates this concept perfectly; that a dream connected to believing, to self-will and to engagement may move weather and clouds in the right moment.+

• Peter Popall, jury member.

Best Film — Mountain Environment and Natural History

Sponsored by Vasque | \$2,000

HADWIN'S JUDGEMENT

(Canada, 2015, 88 min)

Director: Sasha Snow

Producer: Elizabeth Yake, David Allen, David Christensen, Yves Ma

Production Company: True West Films, Passion Pictures and The National Film Board of Canada



© The National Film Board of Canada

A spellbinding account of environmentalism, obsession and myth, *Hadwin's Judgement* chronicles logging engineer and survivalist Grant Hadwin's resolute struggle to reconcile what he regarded as an intolerable and conspiratorial affront . not just to the land, but to humanity as well.

The transformative nature of film and its ability to articulate an idea in a way no other medium can is just one of many reasons why we chose this film. It is a celebration of ideals and activism, and of oppositional forces that alter the face of our last wild places. It is an examination of the duplicitous nature of human kind, our insatiable consumption of natural resources, our agonizing struggle with the resulting impact, and the realization that only through an act so violent and brazen, can we awaken to the social changes we need to make. This is a great film.+

· Cory Richards, jury member.

Best Short Mountain Film

Sponsored by The North Face | \$2,000

THE IMPORTANT PLACES

(USA, 2015, 9 min)

Director and Producer: Gnarly Bay, Forest Woodward



© Forest Woodward

Using a mix of old 16mm footage and new visuals, a son rediscovers the necessity of returning to and protecting the important places in our lives.

The joy found in nature has no age limit. No matter our stage in life, we search for those special moments that can only be found through our connection to nature. In this film we learn about ourselves, our sense of place and how despite our age or life experiences, we all have more to learn and to live.

• Sarah Hueniken, jury member.

Best Feature-length Mountain Film

Sponsored by Town of Banff | \$2,000

K2: TOUCHING THE SKY

(Poland, 2015, 72 min)

Director: Eliza Kubarska

Producer: Katarzyna Slesicka, Monika Braid



© David Kaszlikowski

In the summer of 1986, several dozen alpinists from around the world met to climb K2. In the blink of an eye, the season transformed into a series of tragic events leaving 13 climbers dead and a black mark on the history of K2. Almost 30 years later the children of the acclaimed alpinists who died undertake an expedition to answer a simple question: what is the price of passion?

The films this week took us on incredible adventures around the world. This particular film took us down a journey of a different kind. This film led us down a provocative and honest path to the uncomfortable road of questioning the price of mountain motivation, love, and ultimately the fine balance of life and death. If you've ever been lured into the beauty and intrigue of the mountains, you will relate to this film. If you have ever loved and lost someone, you will also be captivated by its message. It asks the impossible question that really has no answer but compels the audience to keep looking within their own lives.+

• Sarah Hueniken, jury member.

People's Choice Award

Sponsored by Osprey | \$2,000

UNBRANDED

(USA, 2015, 105 min)

Director: Phillip Baribeau

Producer: Dennis Aig



© Fin and Fur Films

Four men and 16 wild mustangs set off on a 5,000-kilometre journey across the American West from Mexico to Canada. In the spirit of true adventure, whiskey is drunk, tempers fly, tragedy strikes, and the bonds of friendship hold fast. But can the journey help save the plight of the wild horses roaming on public lands? Only time will tell

This film was selected by the Festival audience.

BANFF MOUNTAIN FILM COMPETITION – 2015 AWARD WINNERS

People's Choice Award — Radical Reels

Sponsored by Oboz Footwear | \$2,000

SHOWDOWN AT HORSESHOE HELL

(USA, 2015 20 min)

Director: Zachary Barr, Peter Mortimer, Nick Rosen

Producer: Zachary Barr

Production Company: Sender Films, Big UP Productions



© Josh Beecher

How hard can it be? 24 Hours of Horseshoe Hell is a climbing competition that has you climbing day and night and racking up points for your climbs as you go. You just have to beat Alex Honnold.

This film was selected by the audience at Radical Reels via the applause-o-metre.

Special Jury Mention

OPERATION MOFFAT

(UK, 2015, 20 min)

Director: Jen Randall, Claire Carter

Producer: Alex Messenger



© Jen Randall

Operation Moffat takes inspiration and wit from the colorful climbing life of Britain's first female mountain guide Gwen Moffat. Writer Claire Carter and filmmaker Jen Randall scramble, swim, and barefoot climb through Gwen's landscapes, grappling with her preference for mountains over people, adventure over security, and wilderness over tick-lists.

The search for joy in nature doesn't change over generations; neither do the challenges in climbing. When you are asked after an entire life in the mountains, if you have regrets, you might want to say as the main character in the film says: "I have no regret. I would have liked to do certain things where I retreated from, but no regret at all. I had my moments and I don't miss them because they are there a part of me." This film beautifully shows the fusion between the young and old generations and their passion for the mountains.

• Peter Popall, jury member.

Special Jury Mention

OVERBURDEN

(USA, 2015, 65 min)

Director: Chad A. Stevens

Producer: Elena Rue, Catherine Orr

Production Company: milesfrommaybe Productions



© Chad A Stevens

After a coal mine disaster kills her brother, a pro-coal activist joins forces with a tree-hugging environmentalist to take on the most dangerous coal company in America. As the coal industry faces extinction, will our two heroines be able to heal their wounded community?

As filmmakers it is often our task to portray the difficult and unglamorous. When a community goes into battle to defend their rights for their environment, their families, and their lives, the job of the camera is to bare witness with such expertise that it's impossible for the audience to turn away. One film stood out for its transparency and dedication to the filmmaking process.+

• Dina Mufti, jury member.