



SAT-7 TÜRK SHORT FILM SHOWERED WITH PRAISE

The Way Back Home has won five awards at the Christian Film Festival (CFF) in Virginia, USA. Though produced in Turkish, and a film of complex metaphors, the short film made an international impression.

“*The Way Back Home* is a film that will awaken many emotions in every person who has faith, love, and hope in their hearts,” says Director Ali Kerem Gülerman. Adapted from the book *Dialogue With God On The Way Back Home* by Ismail Serinken, the 20-minute film tells a story of a man’s journey, finding the love of existence through visions.

“The story proceeds with in-depth metaphors and monologues. It is magnificent in terms of literature but adapting it into a film? That was the tricky part,” explains Gülerman. He describes the book as being quite abstract, and he thought the adaptation would not be possible until he reached the very end of the story.

“The missing pieces were connected in my mind. Matthew 7:7-8 is one of my favourite verses – after having finished the book, I realised that this had to be the theme of the film.”

A LARGER AUDIENCE

The Way Back Home initially premiered on 21 September 2017 at a small

gala in Istanbul. Hosted by the SAT-7 TÜRK team, around 100 people attended the event. When asked how the short film had gone from an intimate premier to being nominated by an American film festival, Gülerman replied: “We use a system called Film-Freeway. It allows you to do everything online and it’s very practical – you can send many films to many festivals. You compete with a minimum of 800–1000 films, and if your short film is only 20 minutes long like ours, your chances of winning are even slimmer.”

RECOGNISED INTERNATIONALLY

The film has been an ‘official selection’ at various festivals. *The Way Back Home* was a semi-finalist at both film festivals in Israel and Poland. The ICFF is the largest Christian film festival and is considered the ‘Christian Oscars.’ Here the film has been nominated for Most Inspirational Short Film and Best Short Film – a great achievement in itself after being selected from hundreds of submissions. At the CFF, it won Best Foreign Film, Best Short Film, Best

Director, Best Actor, and Best Child Actor. Gülerman said he was surprised that it had resonated with such an international audience.

“The film highlights more visual aspects of the story and flows around three characters with intricate dialogue. I thought that non-Turkish speakers would have issues following the subtitles. However, we are proud to see our film being watched on an international platform.”

A UNIQUE EXPERIENCE

“We travelled a lot to find the place where the story would be told most effectively. We used high tech equipment and worked with the best film colourist in Turkey. *The Way Back Home* has more than five scores that were specially composed for the film!” Among the many congratulations, the CFF commented:

“Congratulations Mr Gülerman and everyone who was in and helped make this awesome movie. It was very well done and had great acting!” ■

FINDING TRUTH ON THE BIG SCREEN

As an alternative to the Hollywood film industry, SAT-7 recently began screening a series that introduces viewers to some of the best Arab-language films that offer valuable and truthful insights into human experience.

Cinema Style is presented by Fr Botros Daniel, the head of the Egyptian Catholic Centre Cinema Festival (ECCCF). While western and international blockbusters are popular in Egypt, what distinguishes *Cinema Style* and the films screened at ECCCF, is that the movies are all selected for their moral values.

“We want to award work that helps us to connect on a human level with others and make them feel considered and loved and appreciated,” Fr Daniel says.

The festival looks to honour the films, actors, and filmmakers who promote humanitarian values, both in their on-screen and off-screen lives.

Where the ECCCF is concerned, productions that centre on violence or sex are excluded; stories that affirm the dignity of the characters and relate their struggles and successes with honesty and respect are celebrated. It is for this reason that SAT-7 screens the festival’s annual awards.

POSITIVE AND CHALLENGING

In each of the 13 episodes of *Cinema Style*, film directors and movie critics give their analysis of the story, the picture, the music, and the actors.

Towards the end of the episode, Fr Daniel unfolds the positive values he sees in the film.

Among this season’s selection are a number of films that address challenging issues. *Cairo 678* follows three women who try to find relief from daily sexual harassment. In *Asmaa*, a woman with HIV Aids refuses to surrender to her condition and gives her all to offer glimmers of hope to others suffering in the same way. *Sleepless Nights*, on the other hand, is a successful comedy-drama. Critics acclaimed its realistic depiction of the issues faced by its four young couples in the first years of marriage – experiences Egyptian films rarely explored in an honest way.

HUMAN VALUES

“In every episode we emphasise the human values of the film through art,” says series producer Sherif Wahba. “Fr Daniel uses the same method when choosing the films that participate in the annual Egyptian Catholic Film Festival.”

Wahba said one aim of the series was to promote a greater appreciation of films that uphold “values of respect, social duty, honesty, commitment and others”. He also hoped that groups who tend to shun cinema as taboo would have their

eyes opened to the positive contribution good films make to our understanding of others.

These goals sit comfortably alongside SAT-7’s own broadcasting schedules. Besides its teaching, worship, and talk shows, all its channels include a variety of Christian and family-friendly films. These range from biblical and factual biographical films to those that portray individuals, like ourselves, faced with difficult moral choices.

Fr Daniel comments: **“We admire SAT-7 a lot. SAT-7 covers events genuinely and honestly and allows others to share their message through it, which is very rare in the world of media. I commend it and every person who works in it.”** ■



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