

Winners Announced At 7th Annual Gary International Black Film Festival

Gary, IN - Audiences voted on over 33 films leading to seven awards for independent filmmakers in a packed weekend of Black film at the 7th Annual Gary International Black Film Festival (GIBFF) held at Indiana University Northwest, 3400 Broadway, Gary, IN. The festival brings emerging and established filmmakers together with audiences to engage in a dynamic exchange through film.

Eleven filmmakers from across the country attended the fest, that launched with a special kick off celebration of the life of artist Kelechukwu Brnfre featuring Anisia Uzeyman's DREAMSTATES film followed by a performance by the legendary Saul Williams. The festival film and arts mix brought diverse audiences from around the Gary metro region.

Film entries from five countries and three continents are selected for competition by a panel of judges who review and select films in a variety of categories. Audiences rate each film and those ratings are compiled and delivered to the final selection committee.

Along with screenings and filmmaker talkbacks, the fest was pleased to host Will Miller, Vice President of the Gary Chapter of the NAACP, who presented Jennia Frederique Aponte with its prestigious NAACP Image Award. The festival also issued two special awards – the GIBFF Impact Award, acknowledging excellence in community service in the Arts, which was awarded to Melvin T. Blakely, Jr. The festival's annual Kelechukwu Brnfre Award, given in recognition to individuals who love and believe in Gary, have a commitment and passion for the arts, and work in creative endeavors was given to Brandon Bowens.

Below is the list of winners in one of the most competitive submission offerings since GIBFF began award distribution.

- Best Documentary Feature** – [“Word is Bond”](#), Dir. Sacha Jenkins
- Best Documentary Short** – [“The Chicago Boyz”](#), Dir. Tiara Epps
- Audience Award, Best Narrative Feature** – [“Never Came Back”](#), Dir. Jeremiah Jahi
- Best Narrative Short (Tie)** – [“90 Days”](#), Dirs. Jennia Aponte and Nathan Hale Williams
- [“Burning Angel Dust”](#), Dir. Jackie J. Stone
- Best Animated Film** – [“Light and Sound”](#), Dir. Nefertiti Abdulmalik
- Best Student Film** – [“Drive Slow”](#), Dir. Terrence Thompson
- Best Art Direction** – [“Night Shift”](#), Dir. Marshall Tyler
- Best Cinematography** – [“Intercept”](#), Dir. Ms Jackie J. Stone

About the GIBFF

The [Gary International Black Film Festival](#) (GIBFF) is Gary's hometown cultural event that supports community building by bringing audiences and artists together through film. This annual, 3-day event presents films from independent filmmakers, panel discussions, matinee screenings for middle and high school youth and in-depth chats with filmmakers, industry professionals and local community leaders. The GIBFF uses film as a catalyst for vibrant cultural activity to enhance the 'cultural capital' of our hometown of Gary, IN by celebrating black culture through independent film and discussion. It is our goal to bring films of the highest quality that reflect the depth and transcendence of black people.

Festival sponsors and partners include Urban League of Northwest Indiana, Legacy Foundation, Indiana University Northwest, Knight Foundation, Indiana Arts Commission, South Shore Arts Alliance, ArtHouse: A Social Kitchen and the Indiana University Office of Equity, Diversity and Multicultural Affairs and DSH Entertainment, Inc.

Attachments : [Filmmaker Bios](#), [Film Images](#)