

'Freda' and 'You Can Always Come Home' Take Top Prizes at 39th Miami Dade College's Miami Film Festival

By [Malina Saval](#)



Courtesy Miami Film Festival

The feature film "[Freda](#)" and short film "[You Can Always Come Home](#)," both family dramas, earned top prizes at the 39th edition of [Miami Dade College's Miami Film Festival](#). Presented in a hybrid format this year, with both in-theater and virtual presentations, the 2022 Festival ran from March 4-13.

Making its U.S. premiere at this year's Festival, "Freda," directed by Gécica Génés, earned the top award for her first feature set in Haiti, the \$25,000 Knight MARIMBAS Award. The winning film was selected by jury members Damon D'Oliveria, April Dobbins and Rubén Peralta Rigaud. Of the film, the jury noted, "this film resonated with all of us for its strong, female-centered narrative, and its exceptional performances from emerging actors. We couldn't stop thinking about this world and these characters, and we appreciated being immersed in a place that we don't often see onscreen – portrayed in such a realistic, but tender way."

The jury also gave special recognition to actor Haztin Navarrete from "The Box" and actress Mari Oliveira from "Medusa," saying, "for two magnetic performances that we couldn't take our eyes off."

The \$55,000 Knight Made in MIA Film Award, supported by the Knight Foundation, is given to three films that have a substantial portion of their content in South Florida. They were evaluated by jury members Mollye Asher, Nicholas Griffin, Johann Zietsman, and Keisha Rae Witherspoon, who won the Knight Made in MIA Award for her 2020 short drama, "T."

"You Can Always Come Home," directed by Juan Luis Matos, won the \$30,000 first prize. The jury said, "this is a film that radiates with the joyous spirit of Miami in its embrace of family, community and place while also embodying the universal meaning of home." Second prize (\$15,000) went to "In Beauty It Is Unfinished," directed by Greko Sklavounos. The jury said, "this poetic offering is a gorgeous fever dream that captures longing, fragments of memory and a poetic gaze at a Miami that is both familiar but also made a new. Made personal."

Third prize (\$10,000) went to "Un Pequeño Corte," directed by Marianna Serrano.

The family drama "You Resemble Me," directed by Dina Amer, garnered the \$10,000 Jordan Ressler First Feature Award. Sponsored by the South Florida family of the late Jordan Ressler, the prize is presented to the best film made by a filmmaker making a feature narrative film debut. The selection committee, comprised of Estrella Araiza, Jonathan Cuartas and 2019 Jordan Ressler Award winner Alexandre Moratto, said in a statement, "we chose the film for its bold depiction of fragmented identity and social inequality through its masterful weaving of styles. Part intimate character study, part topical drama and part documentary, this fearless filmmaker, a former journalist who reported on the real life events that inspired the film, take a personal approach that is at once earnest and troubling, moving and provocative. The Jordan Ressler First Feature Award goes to Dina Amer for You Resemble Me."

The drama Carajita, co-produced by Wooden Boat Productions (Dominican Republic) and Pucará Cine (Argentina), took home the \$10,000 HBO Ibero-American Feature Film Award. The film, about class and racial issues in Latin America and the Caribbean, was selected by jury members Carlos Aguilar, Leslie Cohen and Brandon Harris. The annual prize is given to the best nominated U.S. Hispanic or Ibero-American narrative feature film, and is awarded to the lead producer or production company.

Set during the era of China's Cultural Revolution, the war drama "One Second" won the Rene Rodriguez Critics Award. The film is directed by Chinese filmmaker Zhang Yimou, a three-time Oscar nominee for best foreign language film.

Felipe Perez Santiago, composer of Amalgama, earned the Alacran Music in Film Award. The award highlights the power of music and film and celebrates the role of the film composer.

The short film category is topped by the \$10,000 WarnerMedia OneFifty Latino Short Film Award, judged by HBO and Miami Film Festival programmers, which bestows \$5,000 upon the winner and \$1,250 each to four runners-up. The top prize went to the dramatic short "Hector's Woman (La mujer de Héctor)" from NYC-based Puerto Rican filmmaker Ricardo Varona, with other prizes given to "Chilly & Milly," "It's Not Her (No Es Ella)," "For Some Horses (Por unos caballos)," and "The Year of the Radio (El Año del Radio)."

Pakistani filmmaker Ali Sohail Jaura earned the \$5,000 Miami International Short Film award, given by select members of Miami Film Festival's Program Committee, for his historical war drama "Murder Tongue."

The \$500 University of Miami Short Documentary Film Award was given to “The Originals,” directed by Cristina Costantini and Alfie Koetter.

The romantic comedy “Cariño,” directed by Fernanda Lamuño, won the Audience Short Film award.

This year’s Best Poster Award went to two outstanding images. Designed by Nate Biller of Jump Cut, the poster for the period drama “Parsley” evoked the style of Hollywood epics of the 1930s, according to the Festival’s selection panel, while it “subverts those traditions by foregrounding Black Latinx/Haitian characters” to create a timely statement at once “poignant and powerful.” Sander Brouwer’s work for the Chilean thriller “Immersion,” spotlighting a man unwilling to help a sinking boat, “moved” the judges “immensely.”

Returning in 2022 is the \$1,000 Florida Cinemaslam Student Film Award, with its cash prize going to the gay character study “The Truth of a Thousand Nights,” directed by Chris Molina. Other non-cash awards were given in five categories: “Offside,” directed by Emiliano Gioffre (Best Writing), “Offside,” directed by Emiliano Gioffre (Best Actor), “One Call Away,” directed by Camila Marciano (Best Actress), “Cut Short,” directed by Charlie Andelman (Best Cinematography) and “Symfaunic,” directed by Erin Bergin and Darby Kate Snyder (Best Technical Achievement).

The winners of the Audience Award Feature and Documentary Achievement Award, determined by a vote from members of the Festival’s public audience, will be announced after the end of the Festival.