



Paris – October 16

A Shaded View On Fashion Film, the world's first fashion film festival, comes to its teens: ASVOFF celebrated its tenth anniversary over the weekend, with a programme of screenings, masterclasses, music and special events packed full of highlights, a stone's throw away from the Arc de Triomphe.

The three-day line-up counted 77 short films in competition, featuring the likes of Dita Von Teese and Yung Lean, Elijah Wood, Donatella Versace and Michael Fassbender – while world-renowned names such as Ellen von Unwerth, Autumn de Wilde, Steve McQueen and John Malkovich looked in from behind the cameras. Still it's the discovery of a new generations of filmmakers, not yet on everyone's lips but just about to be, that should perhaps be seen as ASVOFF's greatest contribution to the industry, this year as much as the years that came before. The student competition welcomed submissions from Brazil to Australia, and the winner, *Stuck Inside* by Alec Davis, took home both the Student Prize and the Best Emerging Talent Award.

Jordan Blady, who won the festival's Grand Prix with his travel-guide film *Grisha's Guide to Kiev* had also never made a fashion film before. He has, however, already shot a new one since, that he plans to submit to next year's festival. "I have so much respect for this jury and the festival, I think it's so cool. I've wanted to be in it for a long time" he said, "it is so humbling to be here".

The jury he speaks of was presided for this all-important birthday edition by Rossy de Palma, ASVOFF aficionada from the very early years, who gave it an outstanding introduction on Friday night – after the screening of a short film on the evolution of the festival by Juan Enrique Vilz, and before an intimate live performance by LOANE. The following night, jury member Eric Daman, costume designer, TV personality and author, hosted the Awards Ceremony on stage, at the mansion in rue Saint Martin of President of Honour Jean Paul Gaultier. Next up was a concert of Gotan Project's Philippe Cohen Solal leading a group of musicians to explore "the legacy of the 19th century psychedelic poetry society", Baudelaire and Théophile Gautier's 'Club des Hachichins' – and after that a dj set by Cosmo Gonik, Chilean-born artist of many hats. Stephan Rabimov, director of Fashion Journalism and the Social Media Center at the Academy of Art University in San Francisco, film critic Élisabeth Quin and ORLAN, artist and ASVOFF veteran, were in the jury too – as well as film director, screenwriter and producer Roger Avary, film producer and CEO of *Première Heure* Patrice Haddad, and Pamela Golbin, chief curator of the Musée de la Mode et du Textile. Their job was not easy. "There were a lot of good movies, a number of very good emerging talents as well, and a number of movies with a good sense of humour" Avary observed, "which is really important because it's so easy if you avoid the humour to just become distant from it, but humour, or comedy, tends to be tragedy or pain plus time. Good comedy comes from truth".

In 2018, perspective matters: more fashion films forgot the drama in favour of wit. "People always have the idea that fashion takes itself so seriously, so I think humour is a great big step towards accessibility" film director Elisha Smith-Leverock concurred. "Maybe previously, fashion by definition has always been quite exclusive, but I like the new demographic of voices that are coming through now".

Smith-Leverock, who won the ASVOFF Grand Prix in 2011 with I Want Muscle, a portrait of female bodybuilder Kizzy Vaines, went on this year to be awarded the Best Documentary prize for Miss Black Germany, which follows four of the pageant's contestants and questions western beauty ideals. "I love the fact that the festival has a documentary category" she noted. "I love how Diane looks at things from a different angle and has always been so broad with what 'fashion film' means, because I think there's so much more depth to the subject than people give it credit for, and that's what I like about it".

"ASVOFF is a strong organisation, really generous, high-level, with good eye. Diane did a great work by putting the festival together. Just to see everything at the same time, all her work of the year, all the artists working in the fashion industry through the image, she really did something incredible and from that you can see some tendencies, the evolution of the market. She's now a barometer of fashion" said Patrice Haddad, whose masterclass on Saturday afternoon charted the history of Première Heure's movie ads all the way onwards from Jean Baptiste Mondino's Jazz, shot for Yves Saint Laurent in 1992. "Now knowledge of the image is not enough" he added later, after the jury's deliberation "we're looking for narratives, we're looking for ways to see things differently. Maybe the brands need something a bit deeper now. We are bored of beautiful images". "There's now a culture of images that didn't exist before" fellow juror Pamela Golbin agreed, "so the idea of pushing that culture of just images into something that has a variation, or a deeper storyline, is exciting and that definitely came out in some of the movies that we saw".

After Haddad's, on Saturday came the masterclass of Michèle Lamy and her daughter Scarlett Rouge, with the screening of their recent film Beyond the Walls of Eden, in which, among other things, Lamy in Comme des Garçons recites a poem on the benefits of dying in spring. Their session was also a retrospective of Michèle Lamy's eponymous 1980s streetwear brand in Los Angeles, and the films, rather than catwalks, that were made to promote it back then. Along with out-of-competition screenings and special projections, more masterclasses were held on Sunday: Chicks on Speed's Alex Murray Leslie's chronicled the uses and abuses of wearable technologies, from Steve Mann's pioneering experiments at MIT in the early 80's to today's cyborg artists like Moon Ribas, as well as her own research work with computer enhanced footwear. Lastly, Fisherspooner's Casey Spooner, who stars alongside Violet Chachki in the film Myth(o)maniac Episode: I Won the Court Battle, which was screened on the festival's opening night, spoke earnestly and at length in his masterclass on the tribulations of money and sex, and self-leaking one's own music videos online.

This all took place at Club de L'Etoile, a velveteen cinema in rue Troyon. In the age of Netflix, in Roger Avary's words, "the theatre experience is really important to us, culturally, because it is the most modern equivalent to coming around the camp fire and telling stories, which is something culture desperately needs". Around ASVOFF's camp fire, stories have been told for ten years now – and many more are bound to be in the decade to come. Starting next weekend, when the festival travels to Rome.

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