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# SEX TAPE SATIRE WINS BERLINALE

The 71st Berlin film festival awarded its Golden Bear top prize Friday to "Bad Luck Banging or Loony Porn" by Romania's Radu Jude, a satire skewering pandemic-era social hypocrisy with the story of a teacher whose sex tape winds up on the internet. This year's Berlinale was held entirely online for critics and industry buyers but judged by a jury made up of previous winners, who watched the 15 contenders in a specially

Maren Eggert for her performance in the sci-fi comedy "I'm Your Man". In the film by "Unorthodox" director Maria Schrader, Eggert plays an antiquities researcher who signs up to test a humanoid robot, played by British actor Dan Stevens from "Downton Abbey" using his fluent German, as a romantic partner. The runner-up best film gong went to Japanese director Ryusuke Hamaguchi whose "Wheel of Fortune and Fantasy" is made

Prolific South Korean film-maker Hong Sang-soo, who won the Berlinale's best director prize last year, was awarded best screenplay for couples drama "Introduction", set partly in Berlin. Mexican director Alonso Ruizpalacios's Netflix feature "A Cop Movie", which mixes documentary and narrative techniques to look at the struggles of police work in the country's capital, won a Silver Bear for artistic contribution. Last year's winner, dissident

## List of winners at 71st Berlin film festival

Here are the winners of the main prizes announced on Friday at the 71st Berlin film festival, the first major European cinema showcase of the year.

- Golden Bear for Best Film: Babardeala cu bucluc sau porno balamuc ("Bad Luck Banging or Loony Porn"), Radu Jude, Romania/Luxembourg/Croatia/Czech Republic
- Silver Bear Grand Jury Prize: Guzen to sozo ("Wheel of Fortune and Fantasy"), Ryusuke Hamaguchi, Japan
- Silver Bear Jury Prize: Herr Bachmann und seine Klasse ("Mr Bachmann and His Class"), Maria Speth, Germany
- Silver Bear for Best Director: Denes Nagy for Termeszetes feny ("Natural Light"), Hungary/Latvia/France/Germany
- Silver Bear for Best Leading Performance: Maren Eggert in Ich bin dein Mensch ("I'm Your Man") by Maria Schrader, Germany
- Silver Bear for Best Supporting Performance: Lilla Kizlinger in Rengeteg-mindenhol la?tlak ("Forest-I See You Everywhere") by Bence Fliegauf, Hungary
- Silver Bear for Best Screenplay: Hong Sang-soo for Inteuodeoksyeon ("Introduction"), South Korea
- Silver Bear for Outstanding Artistic Contribution: Yibrán Asuad for the editing of Una película de policías ("A Cop Movie") by Alonso Ruizpalacios, Mexico. — AFP



This file photo shows Romanian director and screenwriter Radu Jude speaking after accepting the Silver Bear for Best Director for his film "Aferim" during the closing ceremony of the 65th International Film Festival Berlinale in Berlin. — AFP photos



This file photo shows Japanese director Ryusuke Hamaguchi posing during a photocall for the film "Asako I & II (Netemo Sametemo)" at the 71st edition of the Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, southern France.



This file photo shows German actress Maren Eggert posing on the red carpet before the awards ceremony of the 69th Berlinale film festival on February in Berlin.

reserved cinema. Israeli director Nadav Lapid announced the award for Jude, one of Eastern Europe's most acclaimed filmmakers, saying his movie succeeded in "provoking the spirit of our time... by slapping it, by challenging it to a duel". Jude later told reporters that as pleased as he was about the award, "I'm more happy that nobody got sick" while filming during the coronavirus outbreak. "We proved that we could do it respecting the people and putting their health above art."

up of three stories of women looking for connection in modern-day Tokyo.

### Summer gala ceremony?

Maria Speth's German documentary "Mr Bachmann and His Class", about an empathetic teacher on the cusp of retirement who takes pupils from a range of immigrant backgrounds under his wing, claimed the third-place jury prize. Hungary's Denes Nagy clinched best director for "Natural Light", a harrowing drama about an atrocity committed by Hungarian soldiers in the Soviet Union during World War II.

Iranian director Mohammad Rasoulof, took part in the current jury, watching the films from Tehran under house arrest. The festival's organizers hope to hold a gala awards ceremony in June if pandemic conditions permit.

### 'Vintage John Waters'

"Bad Luck Banging or Loony Porn", part of Romanian cinema's vaunted new wave, makes the case that corruption, pettiness and discrimination are more obscene than graphic sex. Opening with an extremely real-looking hardcore porn video, it was perhaps the most daring of this year's films in competition. The clip is

taken from a home movie the teacher, Emi, shot with her husband that makes its way from PornHub to the mobile phones of her colleagues, students and their parents.

With disputes over social distancing and mask wearing already jacking up tensions and exposing social divisions, Emi fights to save her job and her reputation. The showdown reaches a farcical climax. The Hollywood Reporter called "worthy of vintage John Waters". "Many of the things that Emi's accused of are things that I was accused of in online comments regarding my previous films," Jude told AFP during the festival. He revamped the premise to incorporate coronavirus, which he said had created more "aggressiveness" in Romanian society.

take was to do it as soon as possible and adapt to what is around", including casting anti-vaxxers in minor roles and choosing novelty coronavirus masks like "costumes". "I wanted it to feel contemporary and if there's this pandemic going now why not include it in the film," he said. Asked about its explicit scenes, producer Ada Solomon told reporters that Jude was working on creating a "censored version" that "stays consistent with the vision of the film". Beyond the competition, the Berlinale also saw the premiere of a two-hour documentary about Tina Turner, with the music legend telling in her own words her story of triumph over poverty and abuse. — AFP

Rather than push back production, "my

## California relaxes COVID reopening rules for Disneyland, stadiums from April

California on Friday paved the way for Disneyland, other theme parks and outdoor stadiums to welcome guests back sooner than expected as it relaxed reopening criteria following a sharp decline in Covid-19 cases and pressure from operators. The move announced by the state health department will permit ballparks, stadiums and mega-attractions including Disneyland, Magic Mountain and Universal Studios to admit visitors from April 1, according to conditions in their county, and at reduced capacities. With these improvements, "California can begin gradually and safely bringing back more activities, especially those that occur outdoors and where consistent masking is possible," state health secretary Mark Ghaly said in a statement. Only outdoor activities are affected by the changes, which come as California's

governor Gavin Newsom faces mounting pressure and a bid to recall him from office over his handling of the pandemic. Theme parks will only be allowed to reopen if their county drops below the state's most-restrictive coronavirus "tier," and then initially at 15 percent capacity and for California residents only. Orange County—where Disneyland is located—currently remains in the strictest purple tier, as does neighboring Los Angeles county, where several other major tourist attractions are based.

But criteria for the tiers—including infection and positivity rates—have themselves been relaxed in recent days as the Golden State's brutal winter COVID spike rapidly recedes, and as vaccinations ramp up. Outdoor sports and live performances with fans will be allowed across the state from April 1, though capacity will again be determined by conditions in the state. Capacity will be limited to 100 California residents in the worst-hit areas. Theme parks in particular had bristled at restrictions they considered too strict, which would have seen them placed among the last to reopen. While other Disney resorts around the world and in Florida reopened last summer, the California site—the world's second-most-visited theme park—never did. —AFP



In this file photo three men pose during the Mullet haircut festival in Boussu.—AFP photos



In this file photo a man poses during the Mullet haircut festival in Boussu.

## The unstoppable revenge of the mullet

"Business in front, party in the back": a hairstyle considered so obnoxious that for years it verged on being an arrestable offence, the mullet has made the unlikely comeback of the century. From pop stars like Rihanna and Miley Cyrus to a surprisingly high proportion of the England rugby team, the short-front-long-back style has reinvaded the world's TV screens and high streets. "My idols have always been David Bowie and Princess Diana, so the initial idea was to look like their lovechild," said Sharon Daniels, 26, an Australian living in Brighton, England. "Shaz" was well ahead of the game, and when she first arrived in Brighton two years ago, only one other person around town was sporting her do. She knew because people kept sending her pictures of him. Now, the mullet is everywhere. "I don't necessarily appreciate that, since now it looks like I'm trying to fit in," Daniels laughed. "I don't mind. I know how long I've been rocking it."



A man poses during the Mullet haircut festival in Boussu. "He takes a philosophical view of his flowing locks: 'It's about having enough confidence in yourself to not take yourself too seriously, and to totally own your look.'"



A man poses during the Mullet haircut festival in Boussu.

He takes a philosophical view of his flowing locks: "It's about having enough confidence in yourself to not take yourself too seriously, and to totally own your look."

### Skullet, anyone?

Istin also points out that the mullet dates back much further than the shoulder pads and rolled-up jacket sleeves of the 1980s. "If you look at ancient frescoes, Roman mosaics, you'll see people with them because they're much simpler than other styles," he said. Indeed, the History Channel says mullets made their first appearance in literature in Homer's The Iliad, in which a group of spearmen are described as having "their forelocks cropped, hair grown long at the backs".

It also credits Benjamin Franklin's "skullet" (bald on top, long at the back) with helping to charm the French into supporting the nascent United States of America when he was ambassador in the 18th century. His daring, wigless hairstyle was part of a successful PR effort depicting him as a man of "simplicity and innocence". Amazingly, however, the mullet went for millennia without its own name. It was not christened until 1994, and by an unlikely source. "You're coming off like you're Van Damme, you've got Kenny G in your Trans Am," the Beastie Boys rapped on their 1994 single "Mullethead"—the first recorded use of the word according to the Oxford English Dictionary.

### Offensive

By that point, the mullet was well on its way to disrepute, moving out of magazine pages and into the truck stops of deep south America, often to be seen near an



In this file photo a man has his hair cut during the Mullet haircut festival in Boussu.



Members of the public pause to take photographs of an artwork bearing the hallmarks of street artist Banksy on the side of Reading Prison in Reading, west of London. — AFP

## Banksy takes credit for work at Oscar Wilde jail

Street artist Banksy on Thursday claimed responsibility for a painting on the wall of a former British prison that once held playwright Oscar Wilde. The artwork shows a prisoner escaping on a rope made of bedsheets tied to a type-writer. The elusive artist confirmed he was responsible in a video posted on his Instagram account. The footage shows the artist carrying out the painting, and

parodies the cult instructional videos of late US artist Bob Ross. It opens with a clip of Ross saying: "Hello, I'm Bob Ross. I'd like to welcome you to The Joy Of Painting."

"Got all your materials out, ready to do a fantastic painting with me? Good." The action then switches to Banksy as he executes his work, while a soundtrack of friendly advice from Ross plays over the top. Reading Prison closed to prisoners in 2013 and is best known for housing Wilde during his two-year sentence of hard labor for "gross indecency". His final work "The Ballad of Reading Gaol" made the case for prison reform. The Ministry of Justice, the listed building's owner, is set to decide this month whether to turn into an arts venue. — AFP

### Totally own it

Fashion cycles are as inevitable as the turning of the planets, but this is one style that many thought buried for good. "It's back from the dead," said Tony Copeland of the British Master Barbers Alliance, theorizing that a few months of lockdown growth helped propel the resurrection. "We're going to see more and more this year. Guys are just fed up with all the skin fades." That could mean fierce competition at the next Festival de la Coupe Mulet, Europe's biggest mullet festival, last held in Belgium in 2019. Current titleholder Gauthier Istin, a farmer from Brittany in northern France, isn't worried about defending his crown. For him, the mullet is a passport to good times, and he intends to travel by foot to the next festival in central France in June, like a sort of slower, hairier Forrest Gump. "I hope people will walk with me along the way, ideally with a mullet but no problem if not," he

angry dog on a chain. "It really became offensive in the nineties," said Deirdre Novella, of Badlands salon in Brooklyn. "It was for people stuck out in the woods with no idea what was happening." Its survival in these outposts may have been as much about practicalities as aesthetics, saving necks from getting red and requiring minimal maintenance. "It's true that I don't get sunburnt, and I don't need to tie my hair up when I'm using a circular saw," said Daniels.

These are not the driving concerns for most mullet-requesters at Novella's Brooklyn salon, who tend to be LGBT or "hardcore art" scenesters. "You have to have some really radical style: the sort of people who wear clothes that don't look good, but they're so fashionable they can pull it off," she said. —AFP