

**FESTIVALS** Switzerland

## The Saas-Fee Filmfest wraps its inaugural edition

by BOYD VAN HOEIJ

24/03/2014 - The first edition of the Saas-Fee Filmfest, which showcases films from Switzerland and the four surrounding nations, came to a close this weekend



*Soldier Jane* by Daniel Hoestl

A new, high-altitude film event was born last Wednesday when the first edition of the [Saas-Fee Filmfest](#), in the eponymous Swiss ski resort, kicked off with its out-of-competition opening film, [Viva la Libertà](#) [+], by Italian director **Roberto Andò**.

The competition of the new festival is made up of nine films, with the new organisation, headed by festival manager **Gabriel Zurbriggen** and artistic director **Stefan Fichtner**, only proposing recent films from its home country and the four that surround it, each with strong cinematic traditions: Germany, Austria, Italy and France. All films are also from relatively new directors, rather than veteran filmmakers.

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The Italian competition titles were the Sicily-set comedy-drama [The Mafia Only Kills in Summer](#) [+], by actor-director **Pif**, and the rugby-themed drama [The Third Half](#) [+], by director **Enrico Maria Artale**. From France came the zany throwback to the New Wave, [The Rendez-Vous of Déjà Vu](#) [+], by **Antonin Peretjako**, and actress-director **Marilyne Canto**'s family drama [Sense of Humor](#) [+], which, as the title suggests, is not without some laughs.

Austria was represented by the rather radical [Soldier Jane](#) [+] by director **Daniel Hoestl**, a former assistant director of **Ulrich Seidl**'s, while Germany was featured twice with films that featured forms of experimentation or radical ideas: [Finsterworld](#) [+] by **Frauke Finsterwalder** and director **Jakob Lass**'s [Love Steaks](#) [+].

Last but not least, Switzerland was represented by the teenage drama [Sitting Next to Zoe](#) [+], by **Ivana Lalovic**, and [Tempo Girl](#) [+], a drama that also has a young female protagonist and that was directed by **Dominik Locher**.

Over the course of the festival, which ran from 19-23 March, all films were screened at the historic Rex Cinema in Saas-Fee in the evenings, while a programme of complementary titles, including kids' screenings of two Miyazaki titles and films by the members of the main jury, were shown during the day.

The main jury, comprising Italian actress **Sandra Ceccarelli**, Swiss filmmaker **Urs Odermat** and German director **Jessica Krummacher**, finally awarded two films the top prize: *Soldier Jane* and *Love Steaks*. Meanwhile, the Critics Jury (of which this journalist was a member) gave its award to *Finsterworld*. The Audience Award went to local title *Sitting Next to Zoe*.

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