

The 16th ReA International Animation and Comics Art Festival of Yerevan was held

YEREVAN, ARMENIA, November 25, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Autumn in Yerevan was infused with the spirit of animation, since the largest regional animation event, the 16th ReA International Animation and Comics Art Festival of Yerevan was back in October 20-26. With world renown directors, animation experts, educational programs, new opportunities and accomplishments, the festival once again brought some of the best of animation to Armenia.

Founded in 2009 by Armenian political cartoonist, painter, and animator Kassouny, ReA Fest symbolized the “rejuvenation” of Armenian animation on both local and international levels. With its 3 key components – the films screened, MarAni Market of Animation, and ReA Comics Art– the 16th ReA Festival in 2024 offered an even more diverse program.

Over 250 films were screened during ReA 2024, including those featured at prestigious animation festivals like Cannes, San Sebastián, Annecy, and Berlin. For the first time in Armenia, ReA Fest also brought the magic of Disney directly to Armenian audiences through exclusive screenings of three iconic films: The Hunchback of Notre Dame, Atlantis: The Lost Empire, and the Oscar-nominated Beauty and the Beast, directed by Kirk Wise. In addition to these screenings, the festival welcomed legendary Disney animators and directors Kirk Wise and Aaron



ReA Team



Kirk Wise receiving the Rob Sahakyants Prize from Kassouny

Blaise, who engaged in special festival events, sharing their expertise in animation and discussing innovative approaches in the industry.

Beyond the films, another key component of ReA Fest is MarAni Market of Animation, which consists of the forum, workshops and masterclasses, and the CoReAct co-production platform. MarAni hosted more than 30 high-level professionals from the U.S and European countries like France, Spain, Germany and Belgium to share their experience, to discuss the use of AI, VR, and other cutting-edge technologies in animation, and to recognize the talent of Armenian animators and young creatives. In turn, the CoReAct platform within MarAni provided an exceptional opportunity for local creatives to present their work to international producers. This year, it hosted 17 Armenian projects.

Together, these components make MarAni an invaluable opportunity for film professionals, creators, and industry specialists to advance toward the creation and production of animated works. "As a leading regional festival in the animation industry, ReA highly values international partnerships. We serve as a platform to bridge animation sectors across countries, facilitating knowledge exchange and creating new, unique opportunities for professionals on both sides," states Vrej Kassouny, Founding Director of ReA Fest.

For the second consecutive year, the ReA Comics Art program also took place, launching on October 23 at the Union of Artists with the opening of a comics exhibition. It featured the book *The Boxer: The True Story of Holocaust Survivor Harry Haft* by German artist Reinhard Kleist, translated for the festival, as well as the Armenian premiere of the French comics *Armine's Three Lives* by Aurel. In addition to the comics art exhibition, the ReA Comics Art program included a book-signing event and the "National Comics Project Competition." From 25 entries submitted this year, 14 were selected.

This year, the ReA festival included 48 graduation, 59 short, and 8 feature competition films. Their winners, along with CoReAct and Comics Art program winners, were announced on October 26 at the Cinema House, during the closing ceremony of the Fest.

The "Best Feature Film" award went to *Memoir of a Snail* by Adam Elliot, while the "Jury Special Mention" was awarded to *Sultana's Dream* by Isabel Herguera. For Best Feature Animation Film Concept, the Valentin Podpomogov Award went to *Flow* by Gints Zilbalodis.

The 1st place award for short films went to *Butterfly* by Florence Mialhe (France), while the "Jury Special Mention" was awarded to *Margarethe 89* by Lucas Malbrun (France).

At the closing ceremony, famous feature animation director Kirk Wise, who received the Rob Sahakyants Prize from Kassouny, stated, "It's been so great to be a part of the ReA festival. This was my first experience at an international animation festival, and I want to thank everyone who participated in it."

As in the past 15 years, this year's closing of the festival marked the beginning of the upcoming 17th ReA Animation and Comics Art Festival of Yerevan. Set to take place from October 19-25, 2025, the festival promises new surprises and an even greater scale, also with a special focus on Canadian animation!

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