

NEFTi USA SHORT FILM COMPETITION ANNOUNCES WINNERS AT GALA EVENT IN BEVERLY HILLS

Competition Grand Prize of \$5,000 and Audience Choice of \$2,000 Awards Presented By NEFTi Competition Founder and Administrator Paul Robinson

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Presented By [NEFTi Competition](#) Founder and
Administrator Paul Robinson

NEFTi is a groundbreaking competition established to discover, develop and showcase up-and-coming filmmakers from emerging economies around the world. Dedicated to providing opportunities to film talent who might otherwise go unknown due to geographical, financial and logistical limitations, NEFTi selects contestants from a multitude of economically emerging and/or underrepresented regions.

Grand Prize Winner – Adrian J Martin for his film EIGHT DAYS
Audience Choice Award Winner – Fabiola Andrade for her film ZELEST

Adrian J Martin was presented with Grand Prize Award of \$5,000 by competition judge Ted Gagliano, President of Postproduction at 21st Century Fox/Disney, and NEFTi Competition Founder and Administrator Paul Robinson.

Adrian's film, EIGHT DAYS is an intense drama based on true events about a case of mistaken identity. A young African American man is pulled over for a broken taillight and taken to jail for a



Adrian J Martin, NEFTi USA
Competition Winning Filmmaker

hit and run. He is remanded for eight days before they admit they have the wrong guy.

Adrian J. Martin is a self-taught filmmaker from a minority person of color community in LA who didn't have the resources to create or the educational opportunities to learn to create and who pulls from real experiences of growing up and living in an underrepresented community.

The two also presented the \$2,000 Audience Choice Award to Fabiola Andrade, a US-based queer Central American filmmaker of Honduran/ New Orleans background, for her film ZELEST. The third finalist was a low income, female filmmaker who migrated to LA from Mexico, Rocio Romero for her film UNMATCHED. The awards were presented at a Gala Event at the Crescent Theater in Beverly Hills on December 10th, 2025. The three finalists' 6-minute films were screened before the winning announcement.



Fabiola Andrade, NEFTi USA Competition Audience Choice Award Filmmaker

“In the US, independent voices still exist, probably now more than ever,” states Competition juror Ted Gagliano, Producer and President of Postproduction at 21st Century Fox/Disney. “It’s more important today than it ever has been for these new stories, new voices to be heard by all audiences.”

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Juror Ted Gagliano, President Postproduction, 21st Century Fox/Disney

“I was very excited to bring NEFTI to the US after so many years abroad,” stated Paul Robinson, competition founder and administrator. “Even though the US is not an emerging market or economy, talented filmmakers exist here who are in similar situations to those who are in the challenging regions that NEFTI has focused on in the past.”

The NEFTi competition was created to find and inspire talented emerging filmmakers internationally and give them an opportunity to spotlight their visions and

creativity, expand the filmmaker's reach into regions that may otherwise not have been available to them and to showcase the diverse creative process of filmmakers from a variety of backgrounds and environments.

While the United States is the largest film economy in the world, filmmaking has historically been dominated by those from certain backgrounds and experiences. The NEFTi USA Competition will focus on giving a platform to filmmakers from within the United States (such as indigenous filmmakers, immigrant filmmakers, LGBTQ+ filmmakers, etc.). Up until the current competition, the NEFTi focus has been on filmmakers from the Global South – Africa, Middle East, Southeast Asia, Caribbean, as well as from the International Emerging Film Talent Association (IEFTA), the Berlinale/European Film Mart and Durban Film Mart network of filmmakers.

Prospective competitors from around the US applied to take place in NEFTi USA. From the pool of entrants, NEFTi selected ten (10) filmmakers as Semi-Finalists. Each Semi-Finalist pitched their short film idea to the panel of NEFTi judges - Acclaimed Actress Vivica A Fox, Academy and Tony Award Winning Producer Bruce Cohen, President of Postproduction at 21st Century Fox/Disney Ted Gagliano – and based on those film pitches, NEFTi selected three (3) NEFTi USA Finalists. Each Finalist receive \$3,000 to fund the making of their 6-minute film, which must be completed within 30 days. There are no storyline requirements.

For more Information about the NEFTi Competitions, please visit:

<https://www.nefticompetition.com>

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