

World Film Fair (New York) – filmmaking & distribution



The first World Film Fair was held in New York on 26th to 31st October, 2018. Joy House Film Festival was invited to attend this event and we submitted all our 10 finalists' work and one of our own feature films, *The Casting Game*, to be judged among thousands of entries from across the world.

The opening dinner was held at Trump Hotel, 1 Central Park West, New York, where many filmmakers and directors from other international festivals attended. Here media asked, "what makes a good film?" & "what makes your film festival different from all the other festivals in the world?" My answers were, "a great story and the right chemistry of

characters/ actors, especially the leads and the way the film was shot – cinematography.” (Key points I’ve learned from Australian distributors.) The answer to the second question was, “to spread joy through the many films selected and awareness in diversity – not only through the casting of the actors but through the story itself. My aim is for people to feel uplifted after attending my festival and hope for social change in thought, action and behaviour. To change people’s views – acceptance, forgiveness, kindness and paying it forward. These have been popular themes for Joy House Film Festival films and my own work.”



The films were shown at The Producer’s Club in uptown New York and Cinopolis in Chelsea. They were screened on rotation from 10am to midnight over four days. Here I was lucky to meet some wonderful filmmakers from New York, Los Angeles and Switzerland. Jillie Simon, Markus Otz, Emine Dursun, Phillip Walker. They were generous in sharing their thoughts about filmmaking. Many shared the importance of choosing people well, ones who are positive and enthusiastic throughout filming and who can actually deliver, in terms of cast and crew. And the importance of selecting great talent. I admire Jillie Simon’s tenacity in casting Eric Roberts in her film, “Hungry.” It took great persistence and it paid off in the end as her film has been selected in many festivals and won over a dozen awards. Well done Jillie!



On closing night, it was a great surprise that our 2018 Joy House Film Festival winner, “Joy and Heron” won best World Film Fair’s international animation award, and “Give me a minute” won best World Film Fair short film in Australia/N.Z/Asia & “The Casting Game” won best World Film Fair feature film in Australia/N.Z./Asia too.



I went to New York with no expectations as I was just happy that our films were selected for exhibition and came back extremely proud and chuffed that our films were well received and won awards. We look forward to World Film Fair 2019.

DISTRIBUTION

While over in New York I was fortunate to meet distributors outside from World Film Fair. I'd like to share some important food for thought & lessons I've learned, as I'd like filmmakers in my shoes to be prepared and receive contract deals too.

Firstly, always make contact before going there and show a press kit of your film, trailer and a private link to your film too. Some distributors may only have time to read your press kit and see your trailer, so carry a USB of the best parts of your film and your whole film too – they'll probably have time to just watch 10 mins of your film with you. Others do watch your film privately.

Secondly, they'll ask for the budget breakdown of your film. Who brought in what. Never give a budget based on in-kind work or evaluations, as I learned in Australia in my first ever distribution meeting, that the market value for some work is based on experience and to over value your work as first time filmmakers is perceived to be arrogant / narcissistic. So keep the figures real. Over here I was asked, "Were your E.P.'s on board in title/name only, where they bring in at least a fifth of the budget and finish their work when filming finishes or are your E.P.s on board fully-fledged, finishing after the festival circuit is complete and distribution, and have ownership of rights / profits etc?" Also distributors would like to see a copy of the chain of title – rights to the story and ask what each of you are currently doing.

During conversation, you'll be asked what made you want to tell your story and why you're the best person to tell that story. It's also great to find a connection with the person you're dealing with, like I did with one here. It's important to show humility – we talked about how life is too short to hold grudges and the power of forgiveness, and we connected when talking about our fathers.

Once you break down any fronts/barriers a person may have and just be in the moment, (don't go in with any preconceived ideas or perceptions or expectations, and if you have a good enough product that has won awards, and has been selected into festivals), you have a greater chance in securing a distribution deal. I hope this helps you in reaching your goals and dreams as filmmakers. Don't ever expect things in life as you'll be greatly disappointed, just enjoy the ride!

