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Entertainment

'Haida Gwaii' film wins top prize at Hot Docs

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Haana Edenshaw tosses feathers during the blessing of the Gwaii Haanas legacy totem pole before being raised in Windy Bay, B.C., in Haida Gwaii, on Thursday, Aug. 15, 2013. (THE CANADIAN PRESS/Darryl Dyck)



TORONTO -- A film about the aboriginal rights activists, ecologists and locals who have worked together to rejuvenate British Columbia's Haida Gwaii has won the best Canadian feature documentary award from the Hot Docs Festival.

Director Charles Wilkinson's "Haida Gwaii: On the Edge of the World" claimed the \$10,000 prize as the jury praised its "stunning cinematography."

A \$5,000 special jury prize went to Sophie Deraspe's "The Amina Profile."

And the emerging Canadian filmmaker award went to director Ryan Mullins, whose "Chameleon" concerns a Ghanaian journalist famous for his unique methods.

Meanwhile, the first-ever Hot Docs short film pitch contest awarded a first place prize of \$30,000 to "Cree Code Talker," pitched by Alexandra Lazarowich and Cowboy Smithx of Edmonton. It's about Second World War code talker Charles (Checker) Tomkins, who used the Cree language to help Allied forces.

Second place winner "Sinkhole," pitched by Toronto's Nicolina Lanni and John Choi, got \$25,000 for plans to "parallel the lighthearted stories of sinkhole survivors with the harrowing reality of the war for water that is in our near future."

A third-place prize of \$20,000 went to "Heart of Darkness," pitched by Edmonton's Frederick Kroetsch and Kurt Spenrath. It centres on a pair of young TV producers, an eccentric pro wrestler and "42 Persian show cats, a swinger wife, and a hot girlfriend."

The short film pitch event took place Thursday. Hot Docs concludes Sunday.



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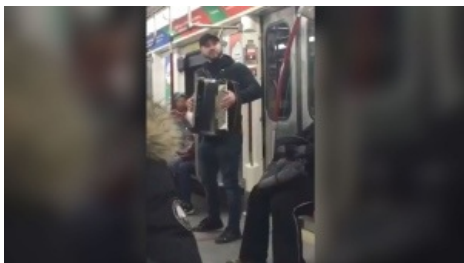
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