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**FIRST+MAIN FILMS ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF THE
2023 BETTER CITIES FILM FESTIVAL**

***They Came From All Over* and *The Engine Inside* win top honors.**

OCTOBER 23, 2023, DETROIT, MI - Today First+Main Films announced the winning films from the *2023 Better Cities Film Festival*. The Grand Prize Best Film and Best Short Film award goes to *They Came From All Over*. The documentary by Oscar-winning director Rayka Zehtabchi is a love letter to family-run small businesses everywhere, capturing the important role they play within local communities. The Best Feature Film award goes to *The Engine Inside*. Directed by filmmaker Darcy Wittenburg and narrated by broadcast cycling legend, Phil Liggett, the epic global documentary explores the power of the bicycle to change lives and build a better world. The Hero Award goes to *The Place Man*, directed by Guillermo Bernal, who also wins the Director Debut Award. The Place Man profiles Fred Kent, founder and icon of the global placemaking movement. The Spirit of the Fest Award goes to *Arbitrary Lines: The Free Spirit of Caroline* co-produced by author, zoning expert, and YIMBY activist M. Nolan Grey, and directed by Tran Hoang Calvin.

The *Better Cities Film Festival* is an annual film festival screening the world's most inspiring stories about making cities, towns and neighborhoods better. The 2023 edition was a joint 10 year anniversary celebration with PlacemakingX whose leadership helped launch the global placemaking movement in 2013 from Detroit. The film festival ran from October 5-8th in Detroit, Michigan with a special opening night at Campus Martius, America's #1 public square, featuring the award-winning film

The Place Man. The screening was followed by a panel discussion about the history and design of Campus Martius that included the star of the film, Fred Kent. The remaining film screenings occurred at Wayne State University and other venues around Detroit.

Additional awards were given to the following best in category films: Better Environment *Seagrass for Sea Change*; Better Planning & Design – *Thoughts on Reimagining Urban Sites: An Architect's Reflections*; Better Transportation – *A New Path: The Journey Towards A Connected Sarnia*; Better Communities – *Ralph & Bug*; Better Economies For All – *Building Opportunities/Bridging Communities*; Better Technology & Innovation – *Jack's Solar Garden*.

Special film festival awards were given to the following films: Spirit of the Fest Award - *Arbitrary Lines: The Free Spirit of Caroline*; Best Civic Story Award – *Pheasants of Detroit*; Best Student Film Award – *Ralph & Bug*; Human Story Award– *I Am Kanaka*; Director Debut Award – *The Place Man*; Best Bicycle Film Award – *The Engine Inside*; Emerging Ideas Award – *Tiny Victories 2.0: A Tale of Empathy*; Audience Favorite Film Award – *Rodney and the River*; Best Architecture Film Award: *Betances Residence*; Historic Preservation Film Award: *Overtown Living Legacy*; Urbanism 101 Film Award: *This Town Did the Impossible*; Tactical Urbanism Film Award: *Neighborhoods Now*; Urban Art Film Award: *Mosaics: Seeds of Change*; Animation Film Award: *Love Letters for the Subway*; Best Urban Journalism Film Award: *proTract Pittsburgh*, Best Online Video Series Award: *We Are Shellharbour*

“We congratulate all the filmmakers, the award-winners and those that received official selection honors,” said Josh Paget, director of the festival. “We launched the *Better Cities Film Festival* because we believe in the power of storytelling to inspire and empower cities and communities. We’re very proud, therefore, to give these stories a platform, and share them with audiences and civic leaders.”

Beyond films, the 2023 festival included tours, talks and events co-created by numerous national and Detroit-based organizations, including CNU Michigan, Siren Hotel, Downtown Detroit Partnership, PlacemakingX, California YIMBY, Emerging New Urbanists, PlacemakingUS, Congress for the New Urbanism, Jubilee Impact Fund, Windsor Region Society of Architects, Place Initiative, The Congregation, Woodward Original, and Pontiac Holonomy Incubator.

The festival has been hosted in Detroit since 2021, and will return in October 2024. “The story of Detroit, and its resilience and revitalization, is emblematic of our film festival’s purpose and theme, so it’s the perfect home for the *Better Cities Film Festival*,” said Dr. Chris Elisara, co-founder of First+Main Films which produces the festival.

In addition to its flagship four-day festival, throughout the remainder of the year the *Better Cities Film Festival* travels to smaller cities and towns throughout America and the world, screening a 75-minute Best of Fest reel. “*Better Cities Film Festival* works with local governments, organizations and groups to enable communities everywhere to screen these stories and inspire conversation and change in their hometowns,” said John Paget, co-founding partner of First+Main Films.

Attachments: list of award winners.

Better Cities Film Festival

Better Cities Film Festival curates the best films from around the world on the theme of making cities and towns better places to work, live and play. It was originally founded in Los Angeles in 2013 by Joshua Paget, currently the festival director.

More info at: www.bettercitiesfilmfestival.com

First+Main Films

Founded by John Paget and Chris Elisara in 2010, *First+Main Films* is a creative studio specializing in storytelling for cities, towns, and neighborhoods through films that foster civic pride, build community and spark imagination. In 2020, *First+Main Films* began producing the *Better Cities Film Festival*.

More info at: www.firstmainfilms.com

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2023 BETTER CITIES FILM FESTIVAL
OFFICIAL AWARDS LIST

Grand Prize Best Film
Best Feature Film

They Came From All Over
The Engine Inside

Best Short Film	<i>They Came From All Over</i>
Hero Award	<i>The Place Man</i>
Spirit of the Fest Award	<i>Arbitrary Lines: The Free Spirit of Caroline</i>
Emerging Idea Award	<i>Tiny Victories 2.0: A Tale of Empathy</i>
Better Communities	<i>Ralph & Bug</i>
Better Environment	<i>Seagrass for Sea Change</i>
Better Economies for All	<i>Building Opportunities/Bridging Communities</i>
Better Planning & Design	<i>Thoughts on Reimagining Urban Sites: An Architect's Reflections</i>
Better Technology & Innovation	<i>Jack's Solar Garden</i>
Better Transportation	<i>A New Path: The Journey Towards A Connected Sarnia</i>
Best Bicycle Film	<i>The Engine Inside</i>
Best Civic Story	<i>Pheasants of Detroit</i>
Best Human Story	<i>I Am Kanaka</i>
Best Student Film	<i>Ralph & Bug</i>
Director Debut Award	<i>The Place Man</i>
Audience Favorite	<i>Rodney and the River</i>
Best Architecture Film	<i>Betances Residence</i>
Best Historic Preservation Film	<i>Overtown Living Legacy</i>
Best Tactical Urbanism Film	<i>Neighborhoods Now</i>
Best Online Video Series	<i>We Are Shellharbour</i>
Best New Urbanism 101 Film	<i>This Town Did The Impossible</i>
Best Urban Art Film	<i>Mosaics: Seeds Of Change</i>
Best Animation	<i>Love Letters For The Subway</i>
Best Urban Journalism Film	<i>proTract Pittsburgh</i>