

BERGAMO FILM MEETING

International Film Festival

44th edition, March 7 – 15, 2026

44th EDITION – THE WINNERS

Porte Bagage by Abdelkarim El-Fassi (The Netherlands, 2025) is the winner of the **Exhibition Competition** of the 44th edition of Bergamo Film Meeting. Chosen by the audience, the film will receive the **First Bergamo Film Meeting Prize**, worth 5,000 €. The international jury, composed of Gabriella Manfrè (producer), Patrice Toye (director) and Miguel Valverde (IndieLisboa – International Film Festival director) decided to confer the **Jury Award for Best Director**, worth 2,000 € to ***Der Frosch und das Wasser/The Frog and the Water di*** by Thomas Stuber (Germany, 2025).

The audience has also given the **Best Documentary CGIL Bergamo Audience Award** of the **Close up section** (2,000 €) to the documentary ***To Close Your Eyes and See Fire*** by Nicola von Leffern, Jakob Carl Sauer (Austria, 2024). The **CGIL Jury Prize - La Sortie de l'Usine**, decided by the union delegates of CGIL Bergamo (1,000 €), goes to ***Azza*** by Stefanie Brockhaus (Germany, 2025).

The 45th edition of Bergamo Film Meeting will take place from March 6 to 14, 2027.

EXHIBITION COMPETITION

FIRST PRIZE BERGAMO FILM MEETING

Porte Bagage by Abdelkarim El-Fassi (The Netherlands, 2025, 104')

After the death of their mother, the Idrissi family risks falling apart. Noor, the daughter who has always taken care of everyone, receives an important job offer as a chef in Paris, while her father Musa, in the early stages of dementia, longs to return to Morocco. After initial doubts, Noor postpones her move to Paris and persuades her siblings to put Musa in a minivan and take him back to his homeland, embarking on a long journey across Europe.

SECOND PRIZE BERGAMO FILM MEETING

Skriti Ljudje/Hidden People by Miha Hočevar (Slovenia, Serbia, Iceland, 2025, 98')

Inexplicably, Guti and Sig wake up on a riverbank near Ljubljana, battered, hungover and handcuffed. With his Viking look, Sig is clearly a tourist, but he has lost his memory: he has no documents, cannot remember his name and is convinced he is in Slovakia. Guti decides to help him, even though his own life is hardly in better shape, after a difficult divorce, failed investments and some very unpleasant neighbours. Brought together by chance and an unexpected friendship, the two try to put their lives back together.

THIRD PRIZE BERGAMO FILM MEETING

L'Étrangère/Pieces of a Foreign Life by Gaya Jiji (Belgium, France, 2025, 101')

Selma flees war-torn Syria, leaving behind her six-year-old son and her husband, who has disappeared into the regime's prisons. After a long and dangerous journey, she arrives in Bordeaux, where she survives through undeclared work while fighting to obtain asylum and reunite with her son Rami. Her encounter with Jérôme, a lawyer who takes her case to heart, opens an unexpected glimmer of hope. A love story begins between them, one that could call everything into question.

JURY AWARD FOR BEST DIRECTOR

Der Frosch und das Wasser/The Frog and the Water by Thomas Stuber (Germany, 2025, 113')

Buschi, a young man with Down syndrome, lives in a care centre. His daily routine leaves little room for surprises. During a group outing, he seizes the chance to slip away and joins a group of Japanese tourists travelling between Germany and Switzerland. Having spent his whole life without speaking, he quickly bonds with Hideo, the quietest and most enigmatic member of the group. Meanwhile, his caretaker is desperately searching for him.

«With a poetic, funny and subtle point of view, this film takes us on a journey where we can affirm "Loneliness doesn't exist", you wait until you find your kindred soul. When a Japanese man meets in Germany a young man with Down's Syndrome, they bond and develop a very strong connection even without words. Revealing originality and maturity in directing, the jury decides to award Thomas Stuber for *The Frog and the Water*».

CLOSE UP

BEST DOCUMENTARY CGIL BERGAMO AUDIENCE AWARD

To Close Your Eyes and See Fire by Nicola von Leffern, Jakob Carl Sauer (Austria, 2024, 98')

Beirut lies in ruins. After the explosion in the city's port, collective trauma rises to the surface. The film carefully observes the following three years and zooms in on the lives of Aya, a Syrian refugee girl, Selim, an activist and painter, the Aladdin family, mourning a tragic loss, Yasmin, picking up calls at a suicide prevention hotline, and Andrea – who still believes in the city's spark for change. Meanwhile, a smoldering fire lingers in the port's silos like a cautionary tale.

CGIL BERGAMO - LA STORTIE DE L'USINE

Azza by Stefanie Brockhaus (Germany, 2025, 90')

Azza was forced from a young age to sacrifice herself: married at sixteen, deprived of her education and trapped in a violent marriage, she eventually manages to obtain a divorce, only to be cast out by her family and separated from her children. Marked by trauma, she struggles every day to survive, working as a driving instructor. She is determined to build a better future for herself and her children. At all costs, she does not want her teenage daughters to go through what she endured.

«The CGIL Bergamo jury of Bergamo Film Meeting decided, with strong conviction, to award the prize for the Visti da Vicino/Close up section to *Azza*, directed by Stefanie Brockhaus. The documentary, with great sensitivity and rigour, tells the struggle of women still trapped in a patriarchal society. Learning to drive, and teaching other women to do the same, becomes for Azza a means of individual and collective emancipation and freedom. The film portrays with attention, care, and intensity the point of view of a young woman who is denied the chance to choose and build her own future. *Azza* emerges as a powerful and moving work, capable of transforming an intimate story into a universal and timely narrative, giving voice to many women fighting to achieve their autonomy. Through a strong yet respectful authorial gaze, the documentary manages to interweave personal and social dimensions, offering the audience a space for reflection on identity, freedom, and the right to self-determination. For the quality of the director's vision and the sensitivity with which she accompanies the protagonist in her journey of growth, the jury awards the prize to *Azza*».

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