

Film Reviews - CIFF
Cleveland International Film Festival
Cleveland, Ohio, USA
Received Via Email: May 14, 2019

My Name Was January

Directors: Elina Gress and Lenee Son
Producers: Alex Sangha and Ash Brar
25 minutes 45 seconds
Canada

The Cleveland International Film Festival (CIFF) is one of the most prestigious film festivals in the world.

Unfortunately, My Name Was January was not an official selection for 2019, however, we were fortunate and did receive feedback from the Selection Committee.

Please note there are two reviews below.

Dear Alex,

Thank you for responding to our Call For Entries for the 43rd Cleveland International Film Festival. The programming team considered over 5,000 films and projects this year. Needless to say, the competition was intense.

Here are your Selection Committee comments.

1. My Name Was January is a touching tribute and a film that shines a light on prominent issues of our times. I thought the film had a good message it was conveying with everyone that was interviewed. I thought the narrative of the documentary was a timely topic and tackled with originality. I enjoyed watching it unfold and thought that it had good direction. I thought the cinematography was great and enjoyed the way it made you feel like you the viewer was there talking to these people. You could feel the care that was brought to the project with each frame. I thought the people selected for the documentary were well chosen and brought a lot of good elements to the film. I thought the pacing and the structure of the film were good. Overall, I thought it was a great film and it was a job well done.

2. The stand out feature of your film "My Name Was January" is the honest love and respect the people you brought to the screen clearly show to January Marie Lapuz. These people make it clear that January was a very special person. I must express some surprise that no mention of who or why in her awful murder ever comes up. I suppose it is the filmmakers wish to celebrate her life and not focus on her death. I can understand this. Your camera work is good. You present a consistent appearance across a wide range of filming circumstances. Your focus is sharp and the scenes are well framed. The sound is good and clear also. The filmmakers show respect for the lifestyle January lived and bring her good friends to the screen to testify on her behalf. I hope you get many showings on the festival circuit. This film projects love and acceptance of diversity, this is so important in our troubled times. If your film is shown here I will recommend it to my friends.

Kindly,
Special Programs Director