



Best Documentary Awards Announced by Film Festival

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by Pat Rogers

[Hamptons Take 2 Documentary Film Festival](#) announced the 2015 Audience Awards from its 8th annual documentary film festival, held at [Bay Street Theater](#) from December 3 – 6, 2015. Winning Best Feature Documentary was [Merchants of Doubt](#) by Robert Kenner. Winning Best Short was [Nefertiti's Daughters](#) by Mark Nickolas.

The film festival itself honored filmmaker Stanley Nelson Jr. with its 2015 Career Achievement Award. The film festival featured his film [The Black Panthers: Vanguard of the Revolution](#). The Filmmakers Choice Award went to Liz Garbus who screened her film [What Happened, Miss Simone?](#) as part of the Hamptons Take 2 Documentary Film Festival.

Continue scrolling to discover details of the award-winning films.

Merchants of Doubt (2014)

Merchants of Doubt (2014) takes a satirical comedic look into American spin. Inspired by the [book written by Naomi Oreskes and Erik Conway](#), the documentary reveals a secretive group of highly charismatic, silver-tongued pundits-for-hire who present themselves in the media as scientific authorities. Their real agenda is otherwise: spreading maximum confusion about well studied public threats ranging from toxic chemicals to pharmaceuticals to climate change.

The 96-minute film was directed by Robert Kenner with cinematography by Barry Berona, Don Lenzer and Jay Redmond.

Robert Kenner is an award-winning filmmaker. [Food, Inc.](#) was nominated for an Academy Award and won two Emmys; and [Two Days in October](#) received Peabody, Emmy and Grierson Awards.

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Still from “Merchants of Doubt.”

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Nefertiti's Daughters (2015)

Nefertiti's Daughters is the story of women, art and revolution. Portraying the critical role

revolutionary street art played during the Egyptian uprisings. Told by prominent Egyptian artists, the short document revealed the role of women artists in the struggle for social and political change. It also spotlights how the iconic graffiti of Queen Nefertiti brought her to the forefront in the ongoing fight for women's rights and freedoms in Egypt.

The 39-minute film was directed by Mark Nickolas and Racha Najdi with cinematography by Oscar Frasser.

Mark Nickolas is a long-time veteran of U.S. Democratic politics, most notably as an aide to then Vice President Al Gore. His first film, [*My Life in the Canyon of Heroes*](#), was screened at the 2013 HT2FF. He is in post-production on a third short documentary and in pre-production on his first feature length documentary.



Still from "Nefertiti's Daughters."

What Happened, Miss Simone?

What Happened, Miss Simone? reveals a towering figure who transcended her era and easy categorization. The documentary chronicles Nina Simone's journey from piano prodigy in segregated 1940s North Carolina as Eunice Waymon to her rise as a celebrity torch singer in Atlantic City, taking the name Nina Simone, and her move into revolutionary politics which included joining the Selma March and befriending Martin Luther King and Malcolm X.

The 101 minute film was directed by Liz Garbus with cinematography by Igor Martinovic.

Liz Garbus is co-founder of Moxie Firecracker Films and has produced more than 15 films. Her film [*The Farm: Angola USA*](#) won the Grand Jury Prize at the 1998 Sundance Film Festival, two Primetime Emmy Awards and was nominated for an Oscar.



Still from "What Happened, Miss Simone?"

A Ballerina's Tale (2015)

Few dancers make it to the highest levels of classical ballet. Of that small number, only a fraction of them are black women. *A Ballerina's Tale* follows the inspiration journey of Misty Copeland who beat the odds twice. First, by moving up the ranks and becoming a soloist at American Ballet

Theater and then her dramatic return to dancing after corrective surgery needed for injuries sustained while dancing a premiere role as a soloist in Igor Stravinsky's *Firebird*.

The 85 minutes film is directed by Nelson George with cinematography by Cliff Charles, Oskar Landi, Nelson George, Malika Weeden, Nicolas Waterman, Jon Dunham.

Nelson George is an author, filmmaker, television producer and critic with a long career in analyzing and presenting the diverse elements of African-American culture. Nelson's documentaries include VH1 Rock Docs' [Finding the Funk](#); Showtime's [Brooklyn Boheme](#); ESPN's [The Announcement](#); and the short [All Hail the Beat](#), for the Focus Forward campaign.



"A Ballerina's Tale" on Misty Copeland. Photo by Oskar Landi.

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