**U.S. DIRECTOR, JOE DANTE TO RECEIVE THE "ESTRELLA DEL FANTÁSTICO" AWARD THIS EVENING AT THE FANT BILBAO OPENING CEREMONY IN RECOGNITION** **OF** **HIS EXTENSIVE CAREER IN THE GENRE**

* **The director of cult classics such as "Gremlins" or "Inner Space" will collect this honorary award at Bilbao's fantasy festival this evening, at the opening event which takes place at 8:00 p.m., at the Campos Theatre.**
* **Also, as part of the FANT2FUN strand, festivalgoers will get to enjoy the cult classics "Gremlins" (1984) and "The Howling" (1981) as they both receive the big screen treatment at 22:15 tomorrow.**

*Bilbao, May 4, 2018.*The Bilbao Fantasy Film Festival - FANT, organized by the City Council of Bilbao, this year celebrating its 24th edition, takes place from today through until May 12, and this evening will play host to American filmmaker **Joe Dante** who will be in attendance to receive the ESTRELLA DEL FANTÁSTICO, an honorary award in recognition of his extensive career in the fantasy genre.

The director of classics such as "Gremlins" or "Inner Space"**,** who appeared before the press this morning in Bilbao, together with the Councilor for Culture, Nekane Alonso, will accept the award at the festival's opening ceremony, which takes place at 8:00 p.m. on the main stage at the Campos Theatre.

The FANTROBIA award, which recognises an emerging figure will also be presented this evening. And this year, Joe Dante will do the honours, handing over the award to the Gasteiz-based filmmaker Paul Urkijo, who's debut feature, "*Errementari"* (2018) was recently released across the nation. The ceremony will then proceed with the national premiere of "The Strangers: Prey at Night", from director Johannes Roberts, followed by the eleven short Basque films up for competition.

Born in 1946 in the city of Morristown, New Jersey, Dante cut his teeth working as an editor for legendary producer Roger Corman until he made the leap to direction, co-directing alongside Allan Arkush for “Hollywood Boulevard” (1976).In 1978, he jumped into the deep end, pun intended, helming “Piranha”, penned by first-timer John Sayles, with whom he collaborated again on “The Howling” (1981).

In 1983 he forged a successful collaboration relationship with Steven Spielberg (as a producer) when he directed one of the segments of the film adaptation of the legendary series “The Twilight Zone”. ".This collaboration didn’t stop there and spawned the more than successful “Gremlins” (1984), its sequel “Gremlins 2” (1990) and “Inner Space” (1987). Other well-known Dante titles include “Explorers” (1985), “The Burbs” (1989), “Matinee” (1993), “Small Soldiers” (1998) or “Burying the Ex” (2014), his last feature film to date.

AN AUDIENCE WITH DANTE

From 1:00 pm tomorrow, the book "Joe Dante: En el límite de la realidad" ("Joe Dante: In the Twilight Zone"), will be presented at the Azkuna Zentroa Bastida Room. This isan extensive commentary on the director that started out as a doctoral thesis but turned into a personal challenge for the author, film critic, writer, filmmaker and musician from A Coruña, **Álvaro Pita**, who set out to write the best book possible about Joe Dante. Admission will be free subject to available seating.

Also, in honour of Dante's presence, the FANT2FUN strand will provide festivalgoers with the chance to enjoy a big screen double-bill of two of Dante’s all-time classics: “Gremlins” (1984) and “The Howling” (1981); a session which will be presented by Dante himself starting at 22:15.

FANT Bilbao (www.fantbilbao.eus) presented its first ever ESTRELLA DEL FANTASTICO award just last year, to the acclaimed actress Barbara Crampton (New York, 1958), star of Stuart Gordon’s classic “Re-Animator” (1985), who attended last year’s festival and presented one of her most recent films “Beyond the Gates” together with a special screening of “Re-Animator.”