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МЕЖДУНАРОДЕН СОФИЯ ФИЛМ ФЕСТИВАЛ

SOFIA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

СОФИЯ

5-15-22.03. SOFIA

2009

PRESS RELEASE – 28.01.2009

13th Sofia International Film Festival

For a 13th year Sofia International Film Festival will gather together in Sofia films, guests, stars, journalists and lovers of good filmmaking. Featured in Variety's Top 50 of cinema festivals, the largest in scale cinematographic event that represents Bulgaria proudly to the world will declare itself as one of the important festivals in South Eastern Europe and will take place March 5 - 15. What started as a thematic music film festival, went successfully through 12 previous editions to become the cinema marathon of the year in Bulgaria with its own serious claims for the most demanding audience, because it brings the current world cinema trends to the domestic viewers and the latest in Bulgarian and regional cinema to the world.

Since 1997 more than 1, 500 feature films and documentaries have been screened within the festival's framework. More than 1, 000 distinguished guests have attended, including established professionals such as Wim Wenders, Volker Schlöndorff, Katja Riemann and Karl Baumgartner (Germany), Alan Parker, Peter Greenaway, Terry Jones, Tony Palmer and David Mackenzie (United Kingdom), Nikita Mikhalkov, Andrei Konchalovsky, Karen Shakhnazarov and Bakhtyar Khudojnazarov (Russia), Jirí Menzel, Jan Sverák, Jan Hřebejk and Petr Zelenka (the Czech Republic), Emir Kusturica (Yugoslavia), Krzysztof Zanussi (Poland), Otar Iosseliani (Georgia), Jean-Claude Carrière, Agnès Varda, Siegfried and Jacques Dorfmann (France), Assumpta Serna (Spain), Bent Hamer and Unni Straume (Norway), Jafar Panahi and Babak Payami (Iran), Jerry Schatzberg, Michael Wadleigh and Lech Kowalski (USA), Jos Stelling (the Netherlands), Mika Kaurismäki (Finland), Friðrik Þór Friðriksson (Iceland), Lone Scherfig (Denmark), Kornél Mundruczó (Hungary), Goran Markovic, Goran Paskaljevic, Radivoje Andric, Dusan Milic, Srdjan Karanovic and Srdjan Dragovich (Serbia) and many others.

The festival is organized by Art Fest under the auspices of the Municipality of Sofia and in partnership with the Bulgarian Culture Ministry, the National Palace of Culture, the National Film Centre and the Bulgarian National Television with the support of the MEDIA programme of the European Commission, national and foreign cultural institutes and sponsors.

The 13th edition of Sofia International Film Festival will take place March 5-15 2009 in Sofia with an additional programme running March 16-22 in Sofia, Plovdiv and Burgas.

The festival bill will include nearly 100 feature, 30 documentary and 50 short films. They will be screened in one of the following categories that have become traditional for this festival:

International Competition (Grand Prix for first or second feature film)

Special Premieres

European Screen

New Bulgarian Feature Films (KODAK Award)

Bulgarian Short Films (JAMESON Short Film Award)

British Council Presents

Balkan Film Meetings

Focus: Turkey
World Screen
Retrospectives of directors Jim Jarmusch and Siegfried
Documentary Films

For the seventh time the festival will award the **Grand Prix** for best feature film in the International Competition (for First or Second Feature Film of directors from all over the world). Running in the heat will be 12 entries from Argentina, Spain, France, India, Iran, Russia, Israel, the United Kingdom, Germany, Romania, Mexico and Bulgaria. ***As of January 28 we have received confirmation for the following entries:***

- “Possible Lives” – Argentina, directed by Sandra Gugliotta**
- “The Firm Land” – France-India-Iran, directed by Chapour Haghight**
- “Zift” – Bulgaria, directed by Javor Gardev**
- “Chiko” – Germany, directed by Özgür Yildirim**
- “Cumbia Calera” – Mexico, directed by René Villareal**
- “Baksy” – Russia-Kazakhstan-France-Germany, directed by Gulshat Omarova**
- “Here and There” - directed by Darko Lungulov**
- “Autumn” – Turkey, directed by Özcan Alper**
- “Franklyn” – The United Kingdom, directed by Gerald McMorrow**
- “The Happiest Girl in the World” – Romania, directed by Radu Jude**

For the first time three of the competition entries – **Zift, Here and There and Baksy** – have been projects presented previously within the **Sofia Meetings** programme.

An international jury will confer the main prizes of the 13th International Sofia Film Festival.

The JAMESON AWARD for best Bulgarian short film will have its seventh edition. The prize includes a statuette and EUR 6 000. It is a joint initiative by **Sofia International Film Festival** and **Jameson Irish Whiskey**. Here are the members of the panel that will shortlist the 12 short films that will compete in this category: **Alexander Yanakiev**, chairman, and Igljka Trifonova – director, Yuri Dachev – playwright, Yanko Terziev (film critic, *Capital Light*) and Petar Vulchanov – director and winner of the JAMESON 2008 Award. The winner itself will be declared by the International jury (we shall give you details on that in our special press release and at the **special screening** of the **12 finalists** that will take place on **February 4** at the **House of Cinema in Sofia**).

The incredible actor, comedian, scriptwriter and famous TV host and traveller **Michael Palin** will be **special guest** to the 13th edition of Sofia International Film Festival. He will be awarded the Prize of Sofia by the Municipality of Sofia for his merits in cinema and television. A panorama of selected episodes from his best loved films and TV series will be screened including *Life of Brian*, *Monty Python's Flying Circus*, *Around the World in 80 Days*, *Sahara with Michael Palin*, *Hemingway Adventure*, *Himalaya with Michael Palin*, *Pole to Pole* and *New Europe*. Michael Palin's visit is organized in cooperation with the **British Council**, a traditional partner of Sofia International Film Festival and is part of the special festival category **British Council Presents**. The category will focus not only on Michael Palin's body of work, but also on contemporary British feature, documentary and short films.

The 13th edition of Sofia International Film Festival will open with a screening of the latest feature film of Bulgarian director Georgi Djulgerov “The Goat” at 7.30 p.m. at Number One Hall of the National Palace of Culture. “The Goat” is based on the novella of the same name by the late Bulgarian writer Yordan Radichkov. In this story animals have been bestowed with wisdom, insight and kindness. The he-goat from the title is the narrator and the protagonist of the story at the same time. He comes down from Heaven with a mission – to prevent the locals from digging out a treasure buried near an ancient Thracian shrine. A man and a woman coming from different national backgrounds launch a hunt for the treasure, which turns into a tragic and comic duel of cultural prejudices only to realize in the end

that what they feel for each other is their greatest treasure. Or as the writer put it, “Man is but one long sentence, written with great love and inspiration, but wrought with spelling mistakes”. We shall give additional information about the Bulgarian films at Sofia International Film Festival.

Svetoslav Ovtcharov’s film “**A Farewell to Hemingway**” will be presented at a special gala screening. The film has two awards at the “Golden Rose Film Festival” in Varna – special award of the jury and the award for directing. Young American actor Chris Heuisler played the role of young Hemingway and is expected as a guest of the 13th Sofia International Film Festival. In this movie young Hemingway is a war-correspondent on his way in “Orient Express” from Istanbul to Paris and he stops at one of the train-stations in Bulgarian province. There he meets the station master and his emancipated, educated rebellion daughter. These two are taking care of the young traveler and the “magical” cures bring back the nightmares from the war trenches and the pain from one lost unrequited love. The program with new Bulgarian films for the 13th Sofia International Film Festival will be published in February.

The long awaited film of director Gus Van Sant, “**Milk**”, starring Sean Penn will be screened at the exclusive Tolerance Gala. The provocative plot is based on the real life story of Harvey Milk, the first openly gay municipal councilor in California in the 1970s elected officially on the post, who had not only come out, and campaigner for rights of gays and lesbians. “**Milk**” was **nominated for 8 Academy Awards**: best picture, actor in a leading role (Sean Penn), actor in a supporting role (Josh Brolin), directing (Gus Van Sant), writing (original screenplay) (Dustin Lance Black), film editing (Elliot Graham), costume design (Danny Glicker) and music (score) (Danny Elfman) – additional information about the gala event will be disseminated separately.

A week prior to the start of the 13th Sofia International Film Festival **together with the US Embassy in Bulgaria** the audience will be able to watch a unique retrospective of all the films of iconic American independent filmmaker **Jim Jarmusch**. The screenings will take off on **February 28 at the House of Cinema in Sofia**. **Jim Stark**, producer of Jarmusch’s films, will attend as special guest.

A few foreign feature films with Bulgarian participation will be presented within Sofia International Film Festival’s framework, including the Austrian “**The Daughter**” by **Bernhard Kammell** featuring actresses **Sofia Kuzeva** and **Meglana Karalambova**, and the Indian “**Colours of Passion**” shot by the Bulgarian directors of photography **Rali Ralchev** and **Hristo Bakalov**.

French scriptwriter, director, cinematographer, photographer, film editor, composer and writer **Siegfried** will be coming again to Sofia International Film Festival. He will present five of his films to the Bulgarian audience – beginning with his **feature film debut “Louise: Take 2” (1998)**, and the adventurous “**Sansa**” (**2003**), the animated film “**Hell**”, and the film experiments **Kinogamma Part One: East (2008)** and **Kinogamma Part Two: Far East (2008)**. Siegfried is a French director and musician born in 1973. He is the composer of the original score of several European and Russian films, including the International Competition entry “**Baksy**”. His first short film “**La Faim**” (1996) was featured at Cannes International Film Festival, while “**Sansa**” snatched the Young Jury Prize of the Flanders Film Festival and took part in the Competition of the 2004 Sofia International Film Festival. The gifted French filmmaker will give a **concert** and will present his own **exhibition of auteur photographs** in partnership with the **French Cultural Institute in Sofia** and Sofia International Film Festival.

We expect to have as special guests to the film festival Australian director **Peter Weir** (“**Gallipoli**”, “**The Truman Show**”) and stars **Colin Farrell** (“**in Bruges**”) and **Ed Harris** (“**Copying Beethoven**”) who will be in Bulgaria in March for the filming of Weir’s latest production, “**The Way Back**”.

13th Sofia International Film Festival will present more than 20 films in its **Documentary program**. The selection of Documentary Films for the has been entrusted to two gifted Bulgarian documentary filmmakers, **Andrey Paounov** (“Georgi and the Butterflies”, “The Mosquito Problem and Other Stories”) and **Boris Despodov** (“Corridor No. 8”). The documentary Bulgaria-Austria co-production by **director Kostadin Bonev**, “**Europolis**”, will be one of several Bulgarian documentaries that will have their world premiere at Sofia International Film Festival. There will be news to announce about the films, guests and new initiatives around Documentary program of the Sofia International Film Fest.

More than 200 foreign guests are expected to arrive at the 13th edition of Sofia International Film Festival. Some of them will come for the **sixth** edition of the **Sofia Meetings** programme that will gather the elite of the European filmmaking industry. The projects for second feature films will be presented in public to fund managers, producers, distributors, institution representatives and journalists. The Bulgarian and Balkan films will be screened before an audience of festival directors and people in charge of film selection. The Military Club in Sofia will host once more the Sofia Meetings programme. The project is run jointly by the National Film Centre and is supported by the MEDIA programme of the European Commission, Nu Boyana Film and the Municipality of Sofia.

The film ‘Delta’ by Hungarian director **Kornél Mundruczó** that took part in the main competition of the 2008 Cannes Film Festival will have a **special screening** within the Sofia Meetings framework, where the project was first presented in the world.

The full programme of the 13th Sofia International Film Festival, detailed information about the guests, our partners and sponsors will be presented at the main press conference about the festival that will take place in end-February. Meanwhile, all the media will be fed up-to-date information about events and festival guests who have confirmed participation.

**For further information, please contact
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