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Quiet Tales of the Everyday, Grand Cinema

goEast Competition presents a colourful array of feature films / Documentaries competing for new "Remembrance and Future" prize / Prominent jurors include Eberhard Junkersdorf and Stipe Erceg / Incentive and encouragement for young filmmakers in East and West: new project market, promotional prizes of Robert Bosch Stiftung / Over 300 filmmakers questing at goEast

goEast – Festival of Central and Eastern European Film ceremonially opens at 19.00 on Wednesday, 9 April in the presence of Prof. Dr. Ralph Alexander Lorz, Secretary of State in the Hessen Ministry of Higher Education, Research and the Arts, and Rita Thies, Head of the Wiesbaden Department of Education and Cultural Affairs at the Caligari FilmBühne in Wiesbaden.

Almost twenty years after the collapse of the Communist regimes, the eventful and varied developments in Eastern European countries inside and outside the borders of the European union are matched by the colourful diversity displayed by the 2008 goEast **Feature Film Competition**. Recurrent themes in the competing films are the transgression of borders and the quest for individual happiness in radically altered societies. In Macedonian director Teona Strugar Mitevska's *I AM FROM TITOV VELES*, three sisters try in very different ways to escape from the bleak future offered by their Macedonian hometown. Similarly, in *LOVE AND OTHER CRIMES* by Stefan Arsenijević the determination to escape the everyday reality of corruption and crime is what unites the inhabitants of a bleak housing estate on the fringes of New Belgrade. The search for the meaning of life forces the main character of *MAGNUS*, the debut film of young Estonian director Kadri Kõusaar, to confront his own borders, and the Polish film *ALL WILL BE WELL* (dir: Tomasz Wiszniewski) likewise addresses the yearning for stability and an individual moral codex. Cinematic landscapes largely unknown in the West are presented in Wiesbaden by the Ukrainian work *BY THE RIVER* (dir: Eva Nejman) and the Kazakh film *PATCHWORK* (dir: Rustem Abdrašov). The breadth of contemporary Russian filmmaking is demonstrated by two competition films: Aleksei Popogrebski's feature *SIMPLE THINGS*, a subdued, almost tender everyday tale from contemporary St. Petersburg, and Aleksei Balabanov's *CARGO 200*, a disturbing retrospective exploration of the crumbling moral fabric of the imploding Soviet system in the early 1980s. Further insights are conveyed by the festival opening film *12*, the current masterpiece from Nikita Michalkov, as well as, in the Signature section, *NIRVANA* by talented young filmmaker Igor Vološin.

The programme of the 2008 **Documentary Competition** is equally outstanding. Six current productions are competing for the new "Remembrance and Future" documentary award (value: 10,000 euros) awarded by the Foundation "Remembrance, Responsibility and Future". The impressive documentaries competing for the prize describe small tales of the everyday and weighty historical events, in either case playing both in the heart of Europe but also on its fringes. Here again, boundaries and transgressions play a key role. The Hungarian documentary *THE LAST BUS STOP* (dir: Zsuzsa Böszörményi) shows a village divided by the Slovak-Ukrainian border; even when politicians stage a high-publicity opening, locals find the situation has improved very little. *THE FLOWER BRIDGE* is Romanian director Thomas Ciulei's sensitive portrayal of the day-to-day life of a rural family in the Republic of Moldova: a father raises three children on his own, his wife has gone to Italy to earn money for the children's schooling. *GDANSKI RAILWAY STATION* by Maria Zmarz-Koczanowicz describes the involuntary exile of many Jewish intellectuals from Poland in the aftermath of the student unrest of 1968. The wave of post-war anti-Semitism roused little attention in the West.

The competition prizes, among them the Škoda-prize for Best Film (Euro 10,000) and the Prize for Best director of the City of Wiesbaden (Euro 7,500) will be presented at 19.00 on 15 April in the Caligari FilmBühne, Wiesbaden. goEast is proud to announce that **Eberhard Junkersdorf**, one of the foremost German film producers, will preside over the international jury. Junkersdorf achieved world fame as the producer of THE TIN DRUM, and also produced films by directors including Margarethe von Trotta as well as Reinhard Hauff's STAMMHEIM, which won the Golden Bear at Berlin in 1986. The jury president is joined by four more personalities from the world of international film: The actor **Stipe Erceg** came to prominence in German film after his lead role in Hans Weingartner's Cannes success with THE EDUKATORS (2004). **Elena Giuffrida** is responsible for various sections of the Trieste Film Festival and serves on the selection committee of that festival's international competition. The Belgrade theatre and radio director **Melina Pota Koljević** wrote the screenplay for KLOPKA, goEast prizewinner in 2007. **Bojdar Manov** is an influential film critic in Bulgaria.

Thanks to the committed support from the Robert Bosch Stiftung, **young filmmakers** will receive even more encouragement at this year's goEast. A new project market brings young filmmakers from East and West together in Wiesbaden to work on the development of collaborative projects. The new-found teams will subsequently be able to submit their projects for the 2009 Co-Production Prize for Young German and Eastern/South Eastern European Filmmakers of the Robert Bosch Stiftung. The prizes are being awarded in the framework of goEast for the second year running, and this year the jury will convene in Wiesbaden likewise. 15 teams have been invited to pitch their projects to the five-strong jury. The anxiously awaited decisions will be taken by ARTE coordinator Heiko Holefleisch, festival director Stefan Kitanov from Sofia, and Mirsad Purivatra from Sarajevo, the producer Roland Pellegrino, and Nikolaj Nikitin, foreign delegate of the Berlin International Film Festival and member of the goEast selection committee. The foundation Robert Bosch Stiftung annually awards funding of up to 70,000 euros to three different teams working in the respective areas of animated film, documentary, and short film, thus enabling the winners to realize their film. The products of the award-winning joint film projects from the two previous years will be on view at the Prizewinners' Presentation at 18.00 on 13 April in Caligari FilmBühne.

Exciting films may be expected once again from the **Students' Competition**. Presentations will be delivered by the Film and TV School of the Academy of Performing Arts (FAMU), Prague, the Andrzej Wajda Master School of Film Directing, Warsaw, the Film & Television Academy (HFF), Potsdam-Babelsberg, as well as five film schools from the Rhine-Main region. All of the film students will be competing for prizes donated by the BHF-BANK Foundation and awarded by audience vote.

The **film programme of the 2008 goEast Symposium** "Iconography and Nation (Re-)Building. Documentaries from the ex-Yugoslav Region" offers deeper insight into states of mind in the republics of former Yugoslavia. Historical and contemporary documentaries trace the path from a multi-ethnic state to traumatic armed conflict followed by the social and personal challenges of coping with the aftermath of war. By frankly addressing the otherwise taboo subjects of war crimes and organized crime, production companies like B92 and FACTUM created important documents of oppositional filmmaking in the region. Many films programmed by the Symposium also inspire cautious optimism, for instance DOES ANYONE HAVE A PLAN, UNDER CONSTRUCTION or VUKOVAR all show attempts among former foes to view war from a shared perspective.

goEast looks forward to welcoming to Wiesbaden 300 invited guests from the world of film, and anticipates a lively cinematic week in which directors, producers and actors present their films in the Caligari FilmBühne, and subsequently participate in the daily film discussions in Bellevue-Saal. With panel discussions, public debates and any number of public receptions, an interesting forum for the exchange of ideas and film expertise is guaranteed.

The goEast Film Festival is funded primarily by the Hessen State Ministry of Science and Art, the Hessen state capital of Wiesbaden, the Robert Bosch Stiftung, the Foundation "Remembrance, Responsibility and Future", and Škoda Auto Deutschland. The BHF-BANK Foundation donates the Students' Competition prizes, the Federal Foreign Office awards a prize for intercultural understanding and covers the international travel expenses. The festival also receives important funding from the Media Programme of the European Union.

For the duration of the festival, eight **viewing terminals** are available to journalists and accredited visitors in the Projektbüro of Stadtmuseum Wiesbaden (location: Friedrichstrasse 7). All of the films showing at goEast 2008 will be viewable. The viewing facilities are open from 11.00 to 16.00 on 9 April, and from 10.00 to 20.00 on the remaining days of the festival. Reservations can be made on site. Two workstations with internet access are likewise available to journalists during the hours of opening.

The festival **Catalogue** is available at the price of 4 euros from the cinema box offices and the goEast information counter in Nassauischer Kunstverein. The new **goEast edition**, published jointly with absolut MEDIEN publishing house and the Frankfurter Rundschau newspaper, presents on DVD outstanding festival films from recent years, and is available at a special festival price from all festival venues. The complete programme of films and accompanying events can be retrieved from www.filmfestival-goeast.de. Festival-related press material and photographs can likewise be downloaded from the press section; we will gladly provide **broadcast-ready** material on request.

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