

Press release No. 5

Wiesbaden, April 27th, 2004

The East opening up

Foretaste of the EU-expansion – goEast strikes a positive balance

The fourth goEast Festival of Central and European Film ended on Tuesday April 27 2004 with the awards for the Best Film, Best Director as well as the Documentary Award of the non-profit Hertie Foundation. During six days, 104 films were screened – accompanied by film-discussions, panels and a substantial program of special events.

“Especially now, with the expansion of the EU attracting controversy, it is important to rid oneself of insecurities and reservations through information and lively discussion,” says new festival-director Christine Kopf. “goEast has again given us a taste of the diverse impulses we can expect to emerge from the East. We are very happy to report that interest from both sides – our German and international guests – is greater than ever.”

The positive response shows that in its fourth year, goEast has certainly found its place in the international festival-scene – not only with filmmakers and producers, who submitted substantially more films than last year, but also with the audience. The festival had 6500 participants, among them 90 international guests and 180 professionals. The continuous rise in admissions – with 5700 admissions in 2003, 4800 in 2002 – persists and thereby validates the organisers’ concept: to facilitate a meeting between East and West that is complex as well as full of atmosphere.

On Tuesday evening, Hungarian director and head of the jury Ibolya Fekete handed out awards with a combined sum of € 27.500 in prize-money:

The **Award for Best Film** – along with € 10.000 provided by the Deutsches Filminstitut - went to KOKTELBEL (ROADS TO KOKTEBEL), Russia 2003, by Boris Chlebnikov and Aleksej Popogrebskij...“for its fresh and emotional approach recreating an artistic tradition of human story-telling.”

The **Documentary Award of the Hertie Foundation**, along with € 10.000, went to Stephan Komandarev for his film AZBUKA NA NADEŽDATA (ALPHABET DER HOFFNUNG), Bulgaria 2003. The “decent and warm-hearted portrayal of the silent courage of its heroes in overcoming social, ethnic and human challenges” won the jury over.

The **Award for Best Director**, endowed with € 7.500 by the city of Wiesbaden, went to Benedek Fliegauf for his film DEALER, Hungary 2004, “a precise and expressive artistic description of an extreme human experience in the modern world.”

Honourable mentions went to three films: the Polish documentary BAR NA VICTORII (EINE BAR AN DER VICTORIA STATION), Poland 2003 by Leszek David, “for the visual portrayal of a dramatic experience in contemporary Europe through two colourful characters”; to the black-and-white anti-war film POSLEDNIJ POEDZ (DER LETZTE ZUG) Russia 2003, Director: Aleksej German jr. “for outstanding visual qualities”; and finally to STARUCHI (ALTE FRAUEN) by Gennadij Sidorov, Russland 2003 “for creating a world of warmth, love and humour, where coexistence of different cultures becomes possible.”

For the second time, the FIPRESCI gave out the **Award of the International Film Critics** at the festival. DAS WETTER VON MORGEN (POGODA NA JUTRO) by Polish director Jerzy Stuhr impressed the jury by „successfully portraying the breakdown of family life as a metaphor on society, combining sympathy with satire and pointing towards an inevitable future.”

The best short films of the **Students’ Competition** had already been announced on Saturday, with the audience selecting the winners, who were awarded € 750. In the category for Documentaries and Experimental films, Gregor M. Schubert’s BALL OF FAME VON Gregor M. Schubert from the University for Design Offenbach took the honours. The Award for Short Feature went to KRAJ IGRE (ENDSPIEL) by Petar Oreškovic, from the Academy of Dramatic Art – ADU in Zagreb. XAEAHEPA (BADINERIE) by

Dragomir Sholev from the State Academy for Theatre and Cinematic Arts – NATFA in Sofia won the award for Best Animated Film.

Film-historian Dr. Hans-Joachim Schlegel, head of the academic-interdisciplinary symposium, was more than happy with the audience-turnout at his event. Under the title "Identity in times after the change" international speakers examined the current cinematics of the new member states Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Slovenia. The subject attracted around 250 participants into the cinemas and auditoriums – another sign of great interest in the cultural changes in Central and Eastern Europe. goEast will accompany these changes with films, discussions and meetings in the years to come. Christine Kopf is optimistic: "We are convinced that this exchange is an important contribution when it comes to reduce still-existent fears, ignorance and imaginary borders."

Press-materials and photos of all films can be downloaded at www.filmfestival-goeast.de.

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goEast 2004

THE JURY

Ibolya Fekete (Hungary)
Diana Dumbrava (Romania)
Marion Döring (Germany)
Stefan Kitanov (Bulgaria)
Andrej Plachov (Russia)

THE FIPRESCI JURY

Ivan Karl (Serbia)
Steven Yates (England)
Markus Hockenbrink (Germany)

THE AWARDS

Best Film Award

KOKTEBEL (ROADS TO KOKTEBEL)
Russia 2003, directed by Boris Chlebnikov and Aleksej Popogrebskij

Documentary Award of Hertie Foundation

AZBUKA NA NADEŽDATA (ALPHABET OF HOPE)
Bulgaria 2003, directed by Stephan Komandarev

Best Director Award

DEALER (DEALER)
Hungary 2004, directed by Benedik Fliegau

Special Mention

BAR NA VICTORII (A BAR AT VICTORIA STATION)
Poland 2003, directed by Leszek David

POSLEDNIJ POEDZ (THE LAST TRAIN)
Russia 2003, directed by Aleksej German jr.

STARUCHI (THE OLD WOMEN)
Russia 2003, directed by Gennadij Sidorov

FIPRESCI Award

POGODA NA JUTRO (DAS WETTER VON MORGEN)
Poland 2003, directed by Jerzy Stuhr

Audience Awards for Best Student Film

Category I – documentary and experimental film:

BALL OF FAME
directed by Gregor M. Schubert, University for Design
Offenbach

Category II – short feature film:

KRAJ IGRE (ENDSPIEL)
directed by Petar Oreškovic, Academy of Dramatic Art – ADU
Zagreb

Category III – animation:

XAEAHEPA (BADINERIE)
directed by Dragomir Sholev, State Academy for Theatre and
Cinematic Arts – NATFA Sofia