

CROSSING EUROPE Film Festival Linz // 22 – 27 April 2008 // www.crossingEurope.at

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CROSSING EUROPE 2008: OPENING and first PROGRAMME PREVIEW

CROSSING EUROPE Film Festival Linz opens on 22 April with the Oscar-winning film **ONCE** from Ireland and the French film **LA GRAINE ET LE MULET/THE SECRET OF GRAIN**, distinguished with four Césars, launches the new programme track **Night Sight** on European genre cinema with **[REC]**, and presents **Lida Abdul** as **OK Artist in Residence**.

A first overview of this year's festival programme reveals several highlights of **the fifth edition of CROSSING EUROPE // 22 – 27 April 2008**.

THE OPENING

The anniversary edition of CROSSING EUROPE starts on Tuesday, 22 April, with two prominent award-winning films:

ONCE (Ireland, 2007 – Austrian premiere) by **John Carney** is the story of an enchanting, but ultimately impossible love between an Irish musician and an immigrant Czech musician. The streets of Dublin are a stage for the hopeful songwriter, who turns passers-by into his audience with vibrant ballads. In the pedestrian zone he becomes acquainted with a young Czech woman, who lives out her passion for music on the pianos of a music shop, as she has no instrument of her own. As the two grow closer making music together, entanglements in past relationships get in the way.

Glen Hansard, mastermind and singer of the Irish rock band *The Frames* (director John Carney is their former bass player), and singer-songwriter Markéta Irglová not only embody the protagonists of the film, but as composers and performers they are also the creators of the songs that convincingly propel **ONCE**. In February 2008 the film was awarded the Oscar for "Best Original Song" for the touching *FALLING SLOWLY*; before that it also garnered the audience awards of the Sundance Film Festival and the Dublin International Film Festival.

Distribution in Austria: Filmladen, cinema start: 25 April 2008

LA GRAINE ET LE MULET/THE SECRET OF GRAIN (France, 2007 – Austrian premiere) by **Abdellatif Kechiche** was distinguished four times in Paris with the film award César 2008 – including for best French film and best director. Like John Carney in **ONCE**, the film and theatre director Kechiche, who was born in Tunisia and grew up in France, also tells of immigration and the difficulties of establishing a life in a foreign country. In **LA GRAINE ET LE MULET** it is the dock worker Monsieur Beiji from the Maghreb, who seeks a place for himself in the French economic and social network. Ongoing financial straits and the oppressiveness of feeling useless are exacerbated by family problems: Beiji is separated from his wife, but wants to be close to his family. He counters worries and conflicts with the grand dream of having his own restaurant. Couscous with fish – as the film is called in German – is to be the specialty of the house. Despite all obstacles, this dream as the hope for a better life unites the whole family and begins to take shape – although not exactly as planned.

Distribution in Austria: polyfilm, cinema start: Autumn 2008

Later on the opening evening CROSSING EUROPE launches the new festival track **Night Sight** with social horror from Spain – *[REC]* (Spain, 2007 – Austrian premiere) by the **director duo Jaime Balagueró** and **Paco Plaza**. This programme track celebrates the twilight, in which monsters, murderers and ghosts lurk. Late at night the curator Markus Keuschnigg brings together five current positions on European genre film.

Distribution in Austria: 3L Filmverleih, cinema start: 9 May 2008

The **Opening Nightline** features live guest Didi Bruckmayr with his new project *Bruckmayr* and **DJ Andryx**.

FIRST PROGRAMME PREVIEW – CROSSING EUROPE 2008

Throughout six days CROSSING EUROPE presents to international guests from the film branch and the press and to the local cinema audience roughly **150 hand-picked feature films and documentaries from all over Europe**.

EUROPEAN COMPETITION

The European Competition with 10 films includes several familiar young faces: **Teona S. Mitevska** (CROSSING EUROPE AWARD European Competition 2004) presents her most recent work *JAS SUM OD TITOV VELES/I AM FROM TITOV VELES* (MAC/F/BE/SLO, 2007), **Isild Le Besco** (CROSSING EUROPE AWARD European Competition 2005) her second film *CHARLY* (F, 2007). And **Stefan Arsenijevic** is no stranger to Linz either. His feature film debut *LJUBAVI DRUGI ZLOCINI/LOVE AND OTHER CRIMES* (SER/GER/A/SLO, 2008) is the first Austrian co-production in the five-year history of the competition.

EUROPEAN PANORAMA

In the European Panorama CROSSING EUROPE presents several examples of an artistic treatment of current political themes. One is the feature film *DOL* (KUR/F/D, 2007) by Hiner Saleem, another the documentary *CLOSE-UP KURDISTAN* (D, 2007) by Yüksel Yavuz, which both deal with the Kurdish conflict.

The shadow side of Russia – the Chechen war, corruption, state arbitrariness – is explored by renowned directors such as Alexander Sokurov with *ALEXANDRA* (RUS, 2007) and Alexej Balabanov with *GRUZ 200/CARGO 200* (RUS, 2007). A smaller focal point is devoted to the Serbian director **Želimir Žilnik** with his KENEDI Trilogy.

TRIBUTE LITHUANIAN DOCUMENTS // OK ARTIST IN RESIDENCE LIDA ABDUL

Under the title **LITHUANIAN DOCUMENTS** this year's Tribute presents three outstanding and award-winning authors of Lithuanian cinema: **Audrius Stonys** (*1966), **Arunas Matelis** (*1961) and **Sharunas Bartas** (*1964). At the invitation of the OK, the Afghani video and performance artist **Lida Abdul** (*1973) is welcomed by CROSSING EUROPE in 2008 as the **OK Artist in Residence**. She has created a new work during her residency, which will be premiered during the festival.

MUSIC AND YOUTH CULTURE

As ever, films with a music and/or youth culture focus are especially important for CROSSING EUROPE. Films shown during the fifth edition of the festival include Grant Gee's documentary *JOY DIVISION* (UK, 2007), the skinhead film *THIS IS ENGLAND* (UK, 2006) by Shane Meadows, awarded the BAFTA for Best British Film 2007,

and Peter Ott's *ÜBRIGGEBLIEBENE AUSGEREIFTE HALTUNGEN* (D, 2007) dealing with the 25-year history of the band Goldene Zitronen.

SPECIAL Dokufest Prižren/KOSOVO

Dokufest Prižren – International Documentary and Short Film Festival (founded 2002) is the first film festival in the history of Kosovo, for which CROSSING EUROPE put together a documentary film programme last summer. In Linz the **festival director Veton Nurkollari** presents three highlights from last year's festival programme.

WORKING WORLDS

The established series with films from working worlds around the globe centres in 2008 around **Thomas Heise**, who is represented with three films – including his new documentary film *KINDER. WIE DIE ZEIT VERGEHT*. (D, 2007), which was awarded the Silver Dove at DOK Leipzig.

LOCAL ARTISTS

This year the figurehead of the programme track **LOCAL ARTISTS** – in which the festival shows film and video works with a tie to Upper Austria – is **Dietmar Brehm**. CROSSING EUROPE devotes two programmes to the renowned Linz film artist, painter, photographer and professor at the Art University Linz, who also created the **festival trailer 2008 FLIEGE**. In addition, the Lentos Art Museum Linz and the Gallery of the Federal Province of Upper Austria also present exhibitions in the Brehm context.

FESTIVAL AWARDS

The **CROSSING EUROPE Award European Competition** powered by Linz 2009 European Capital of Culture is endowed with 10.000,- Euro. One competition film will be selected by the festival visitors for the **RAY Audience Award** with a value of 5.000,- Euro. The **CROSSING EUROPE Award Local Artist** with a value of 6.000,- goes to an outstanding work with a tie to Upper Austria.

PROGRAMME PRESS CONFERENCES 2008

Linz – 10 April: 10 am, OK Offenes Kulturhaus Upper Austria (Mediendeck)

Vienna – 10 April: 4 pm, Film Museum Vienna

STARTING 11 APRIL 2008

Festival newspaper and website www.crossingEurope.at with the complete festival programme // Start of advance ticket sales through the A1-Freeline 0800-664 060

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