

→ **PRESS RELEASE**



Cottbus, October 15, 2008

PROGRAMME INFORMATION NO. 1

1. PROGRAMME - Focus, Retrospective, Russian Day, Children's and Young People's Programme

2. VENUES

In less than four weeks it will be "curtain up" again for East European cinematic art at its finest. The FilmFestival Cottbus will be having its 18th edition from November 11 to 16. The leading festival for films from the Central and East European region will be "coming of age" and is again promising both a varied and exciting programme with outstanding cinematic pearls and prominent international guests.

1. PROGRAMME - THE HIGHLIGHTS FOR 2008

Apart from the competitions for feature films and short features (you will be receiving further information on this soon) the FilmFestival Cottbus - Festival of East European Cinema will again be offering further cineaste discoveries this year in the thematically curated sidebars of the Focus, Retrospective and the Children's and Youth Films. For the first time this year, the festival will be staging a "Russian Day" to recognise the rapid development which has seen Russia advance again to become the most important film nation in the East European region.

Focus: „New Cinema from the Baltics“

Aptly for the festival's 18th birthday, the motto of this year's Focus is "Being young, being light?" The joys and discoveries, vagaries and problems of becoming an adult are the central motifs in a large number of new productions from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. In these films, the chances and risks are addressed of young adolescents who are looking for their place in the world and are often faced in the process by difficult decisions. No less than three films are focused on the special situation of young women: in MONOTONIJA (Latvia, 2007), the directorial debut of Juris Poskus, a young Latvian girl flees to Riga to change her life. Kristina Buozyte speaks in KOLEKCIONIERE (Lithuania, 2008) about a young woman who explores her own limits through extreme situations, while KUHU PÖGENEVAD HINGED (Rainer Sarnet, Estonia 2007) highlights the hidden fears of two girls.

The other countries on the Baltic Sea - Poland, Russia, Germany as well as the Scandinavian countries of Denmark, Finland and Sweden - are each contributing one film to the programme. The subject here also revolves around the lives and loves of young adults and their search for orientation in an increasingly confused world. Poland is sending the alluring love triangle TRZECI (2004) which had its German premiere in Cottbus back in 2005 and makes an intelligent allusion to Roman Polanski's early work NÓZ W WODZIE (KNIFE IN THE WATER, 1962). Russia is represented by the romantic fairytale MNJE NJE BOLNO (2006), the most recent film by the cult director Alexei Balabanov. Denmark will be here with the moving drug drama NORDKRAFT (Ole Christian Madsen, 2005) which is also a successful literary adaptation. The 50th Nordic Film Days of Lübeck will present itself in Cottbus with this film and others from Scandinavia.

This year's Focus: „New Cinema from the Baltics“ is curated by Kornel Miglus, responsible for film at the Polish Institute in Berlin. The film programme was made possible thanks to support from the Federal Agency for Political Education (bpb).

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Retrospective: "1968 – the Prague Spring and the Aftermath"

This year's retrospective under the heading of "1968 – the Prague Spring and the Aftermath" is dedicated to the historically significant caesura of 40 years ago. In the commentaries currently circulating in the media, these major political events in the Eastern part of Europe are often just perceived as a footnote to the dawn of pop culture. However, this film programme intends to portray the effects those events had to this day from a specifically Eastern perspective. The feature films of the former CSSR are placed here in the context of newsreel reports and other news programmes from that time.

The spectrum of selected films ranges from works by the Czechoslovak "New Wave", which was strongly influenced by Neorealism and formal experimentation, through to explicitly political productions. Examples for both of these cultural approaches are provided by the omnibus film PERLICKY NA DNE (Jiri Menzel, CSSR, 1965) or the tragicomedy by Jan Nemeč O SLAVNOSTI A HOSTECH (CSSR 1966). In later film treatments, the events are then subjected with a gap of thirty to forty years to a re-evaluation: with more of a conciliatory tone in the comedy PELISKY (Czech Republic 1999) or a consistently pessimistic view in ... A BUDE HUR (Petr Nikolaev, Czech Republic 2007).

Filmmakers and contemporary witnesses will attend Q&As on the programme to provide deeper insights into the events of four decades ago.

The retrospective is being staged with support from the DEFA Foundation; the sidebar was curated by the Berlin film journalist Bernd Buder.

Russian Day - The Highlights of the year

A new festival section is being established for the first time this year with the "Russian Day" with the "Weltspiegel" cinema being given over for the whole day to Russian cinema. As a celebration of "100 Years of Russian Cinema", the public and festival guests will have the chance on November 12 to see a representative cross-section of Russia's current production output. There is a real excitement about the international premiere of ODNASCHDY W PROWINZII (ONCE UPON A TIME IN THE PROVINCES, Russia 2008) which won the young director Katja Shagalova an award at the Moscow Film Festival. Also being shown in Germany for the first time are the anti-war drama RIORITA (Petr Todorovsky, Russia 2008) and SCHARA (Reso Giginejshvili, Russia 2007), one of the biggest successes with the Russian audience. There will also be a screening of the lyrical poem PESN JUZHNIKH MOREJ (SONGS FROM THE SOUTHERN SEAS, Marat Sarulu, Russia, Kazakhstan, France, Germany 2008) which is an international co-production with German involvement.

Children's and youth programme

The motto of this year's children's programme is "I am strong". Whether it is in the DEFA classic PHILIPP DER KLEINE (Hermann Zschoche, GDR 1976), the animation film about a girl dog from Tallinn (LOTTE FROM GADGETVILLE, Heiki Ernits, Janno Põldma, Estonia 2006) or in the timeless stories of HARE & WOLF (Vyacheslav Kotyonochkin, USSR 1978-1985), main characters can be seen which inspire one's faith in inner powers and strength.

The youth programme, on the other hand, is reflecting this year's retrospective by dealing with the youth rebellion at the end of the 1960s and its effects in East and West. The programme includes ABSCHIED (Egon Günther, GDR 1968), ICH BIN EIN ELEFANT, MADAME (Peter Zadek, Germany 1968), ALS GROSSVATER RITA HAYWORTH LIEBTE (Iva Svarcová, Germany, Switzerland, Czech Republic 2000) and BUONGIORNO, NOTTE (Marco Bellochio, Italy 2003).

The youth programme is supported by the Heinrich Böll Foundation in Brandenburg.

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i 2. VENUES

The opening on November 11 will see the festival being a guest in the Grosses Haus of the Staatstheater Cottbus which recently celebrated its 100th birthday. Keeping up the tradition, the Stadthalle Cottbus, the "Weltspiegel" cinema, the Kammerbühne and the Oben kino in Glad-House will serve once again as the screening venues during the festival week.

The press and festival centre will be located as previous years in the Stadthalle Cottbus.

We would be very pleased if you would publish this information and we are available any time to answer questions.

A complete list of the individual sections (Focus, Retrospective, Russian Day, Children's and Youth Programme) and their film titles can be found in an extra document.

The **Accreditation request** can be downloaded at www.filmfestivalcottbus.de (deadline: October 24, 2008)

Press conferences

in Cottbus on October 23, 11 a.m. in the Esscobar, Schlosskirchplatz 1, 03048 Cottbus, Germany
in Berlin on October 29, 11 a.m. in the Polish Institute, Burgstrasse 27, 10178 Berlin, Germany

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Main Supporters of the FilmFestival Cottbus are the Land Brandenburg – Ministry of Economics, Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg GmbH, and the City of Cottbus.

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Organizer of the FilmFestival Cottbus is pool production GmbH.
