



12th International Film Festival Bratislava

5. – 11. November 2010

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IFF Bratislava's Feature Competition, at the intersection of nature and family

The Feature Competition, composed of ten first and second features, will be dominated by the thematic of nature and family, revealing the common concerns of new generation of filmmakers over the world. Several films even combine the two themes in their storytelling, such as Julie Bertucelli's *The Tree* - starring Charlotte Gainsbourg.

2010, following a trend observed in recent years, has seen an increasing number of film protagonists 'going back' to nature in order to learn about themselves and their relation to the world. It's to be noted that this year's two main awarded films in Cannes (Palme d'Or winner Weerasethakul's *Uncle Boonmee* and Grand Prix winner Beauvois' *Of Gods and Men* – both screened at IFF Bratislava as part of 'Golden' section) focus on men deciding to experience the presence of nature; in one case the Thai jungle, in the other the Algerian desert.

Similarly young filmmakers' urge to talk about the anguished contemporary urban man passes by a return to nature. In Matyas Meyer's *El Calambre*, the lonely travel of a young Frenchman in the stunning natural scenery of Mexico's Pacific coast undoubtedly resembles a spiritual research. For the thirty something New York-based friends of Lee Isaac Chung's *Lucky Life*, the traditional trip to a North Carolina beach house is synonymous of rest and relaxation. For two of them, it's also a decisive moment towards the building up of a family. In Hirofumi Kawaguchi's *Torocco*, the verdant Taiwan's countryside serves for two Japanese kids both as an adventurous playground and as a cocoon to bear the loss of their father.

The death of the family's head is also at the centre of *The Tree*. In Julie Bertucelli's second feature (which was the Closing Film of Cannes festival), 8-year-old Simone is convinced that her dad came back in the shape of a magnificent tree to protect her family. The revolving cycle of life and nature – and the possible reincarnations of souls - are also at the core of Michelangelo Frammartino's poetic *Le Quattro Volte*. The fact that this uncompromising and demanding film already met a lot of success (including Wroclaw Festival's Audience Award) proves the strong need of such timeless issues to be tackled nowadays.

Nature however is not only a spiritual place. In Constantin Popescu's ***Portrait of the Fighter as a Young Man***, the mountains of Romania are a refuge for young armed men who try to resist the new Communist power in place after WW2. This epic, reminiscent of Ken Loach's *Land and Freedom*, is truly a daringly ambitious debut. History and politics also serve as a background of Niles Atallah's first feature. However, if ***Lucia*** clearly explores the long-term consequences of Pinochet's dictatorship on Chileans, this sensitive chronicle primarily portrays a father/daughter relationship.

A traditional favourite topic of first feature films, family does not lack potential for drama. This year is no difference with three films dealing with the confrontational relationships between parents and children. Nikolay and Yelena Renard's ***Mama*** tells in a very realistic style the story of an overbearing mother and her obese, forty-year-old son who still lives at home. In ***Shelter***, Rado also still lives at home... but he's only 12 years. This is still a problem, as he aims at being a punk! More of a black comedy, *Shelter* looks at the impossible communication between parents and children. Having its international premiere at IFF Bratislava, ***10 ½*** also focuses on a young boy, Tomi, rebelling against authority. But if Tomi is not a punk, he's far more violent than Rado to the extent he has to be sent to a closed youth centre. Daniel Grou's second feature is a formidably intense, moving and energetic portrait of a wild child.

Directors Niles Atallah, Nikolay and Yelena Renard, Dragomir Sholev, Constantin Popescu, Hirofumi Kawaguchi, actor Julien Cottreau and producer Alexandre Perrier, have already confirmed their presence in Bratislava to introduce their films.

More information available at www.iffbratislava.sk

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12th International Film Festival Bratislava, 5. - 11. November 2010
PALACE CINEMAS, Aupark; Kino Mladost', FK 35mm, Slovak National Gallery, DPOH City Theatre

Festival days

KOŠICE 12. – 14.11.2010
BANSKÁ BYSTRICA 15. – 16.11.2010
ŽILINA 17. – 18.11.2010

Main organisers

Občianske združenie Ars Nova
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