



Berlinale 2007: Support for Debut Films increased further

The Berlinale has been even more committed to supporting the next generation of film makers since 2006, when it introduced the Best First Feature Award. This year, a dedicated, three-person international jury will decide on the best debut film. The award is endowed with 50,000 Euros, donated by the GWFF (Gesellschaft zur Wahrnehmung von Film- und Fernsehrecht), a society dedicated to safeguarding film and television rights. With this award, the GWFF has doubled its financial support for young producers and directors this year.

15 films in total will vie for the prize, the small First Feature Bear. Feature films from various sections will compete for the award: **Panorama** (4 films), **Generation Kplus** (2 films), and **14 plus** (3 films) as well as, for the first time, debut films from the **Forum** section (6). The winners will be announced at the official award ceremony in the Berlinale-Palast on February 17. The prize money is to be split between the producer and the director of the chosen First Feature.

Jury for the Best First Feature

Niki Karimi (Actress/Director, Iran)

Teheran born, Niki Karimi is one of the best known Iranian actresses today. She has received numerous prizes at festivals at home and abroad, including Best Actress in San Sebastián, Taormina and Cairo (**Hidden Half, 2001**). Her directorial debut came in 2001 with the documentary **To Have or not to Have**, which dealt with the difficulties experienced by childless couples.

Judy Counihan (Producer, UK)

Judy Counihan's film and television producer career has so far spanned 18 successful years. Two of her films, **Antonia** (1995) and **No Man's Land** (2001), have been awarded the Oscar for Best Foreign Language Film. She also produced the war drama **Before the Rain** (1994) which won, amongst other awards, the Golden Lion at the Venice Film Festival.

Gerhard Meixner (Producer, Germany)

Gerhard Meixner is a graduate of the University of Television and Film in Munich. In 2002 he founded the production company Razor Film, together with Roman Paul. He registered his first success as a producer with Hany Abu-Assad's drama **Paradise Now**, which picked up an award at the Berlinale as well as being nominated for an Oscar. Following this, he has been involved in **Der Lebensversicherer** (**Running on Empty** - winner of the "Dialogue en perspective" Award at the Berlinale 2006) and the MTV co-production, **Die Aufschneider**.

**57. Internationale
Filmfestspiele
Berlin
08. – 18.02.2007**

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Press Release

The following films will be competing for the Best First Feature Award

Away From Her by Sarah Polley, Canada (***Panorama***)
Blöde Mützel! (Silly's Sweet Summer) by Johannes Schmid, Germany (***Kplus***)
Boldog új élet (Happy New Life) by Árpád Bogdán, Hungary (***Panorama***)
Elvis Pelvis by Kevin Aduaka, Great Britain/France, (***Forum***)
Eye in the Sky (Gen Zong) by Yau Nai Hoi, Hong Kong, China (***Forum***)
Faro, la reine des eaux by Salif Traoré, Mali/France/Canada/Germany (***Forum***)
Huhwaehaji Anah (No Regret) by Leesong Hee-il, Republic of Korea (***Panorama***)
Ichijiku no kao (Faces of a Fig Tree) by Momoi Kaori, Japan (***Forum***)
Ice Keh-Ki (Ice Bar) by Yeo In-gwang, Republic of Korea (***Kplus***)
Jagdhunde by Ann-Kristin Reyels, Germany (***Forum***)
Shotgun Stories by Jeff Nichols, USA (***Forum***)
Teeth by Mitchell Lichtenstein, USA (***Panorama***)
TEKKONKINKREET by Michael Arias, Japan (***14plus***)
Vanaja by Rajnesh Domalpalli, India/USA (***14plus***)
West by Daniel Krige, Australia (***14plus***)

Press Office
January 26, 2007