

Press Release

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The Panorama presents its program

The Panorama's original mission is to inspire and discover films for the coming arthouse season in Europe. This year's selection presents a torrent of films that cannot be avoided. The festival's function as a measure for contemporary film art manifests itself in the singularity of the stories told, the intensity of the imagery - especially at a time of digital consolidation -, and the ability to deal with societal developments.

Films from 32 countries - or rather "cultural regions" - have been selected for the program from a grand sum of 1600 new works. As in previous years, the Panorama consists of the main program (21 titles), the Panorama Special (22 titles) and Panorama Dokumente (11 titles). Moreover, 21 short films will be shown as openers.

All Panorama films will be presented in the CinemaxX and CineStar cinemas at Potsdamer Platz. Panorama Special premieres are to be screened in the Zoo-Palast ("Großes Haus"). Panorama Dokumente now has its own venue: CineStar 7 in the Sony complex. A selection of films will be screened again and others previewed at the International cinema on Karl Marx Allee.

The Panorama is also a reflection of the age of digital film production. Six digitally produced feature films constitute fifteen percent of the program. This corresponds approximately to the proportion of digital films submitted for selection. Typical for the films selected is an extremely brutal proximity to the characters that often leaves hardly any breathing space. Such a quality can be found in: Daniel Minahan's *Series 7*, which literally unmasks the dead-end to which the American obsession with self-image has led; Bernard Rose's *ivansxtc.* (To Live and Die in Hollywood); and Maximilian Moll's documentary *The Dark Side of Daren*. Using similar means, Stavros Ioannou from Greece describes the catastrophic situation of Kurdish refugees in Europe in *Klisti Dromi* (Roadblocks), while Sang-Soo Im from Korea reveals the radical energy of a group of uprooted adolescents in *Nunmul* (Tears). *Zoom*, a German production by Otto Alexander Jahrreiss, has made use of digital postproduction to create the particular visual aesthetics of this modern love story.

There is an increasing tendency to give women more scope, especially qualitatively. This is true for films from Hungary and Italy as well as from Spain, France, the USA and Canada. Girlhood is a particular focus, as exemplified by the Canadian film *Lost and Delirious* by Léa Pool, *Domenica* by Italian director Wilma Labate, or *Gaea Girls*, a documentary for the screen by Kim Longinotto and Jano Williams from Great Britain.

Young people also grow older - which raises awkward questions about responsibility and its consequences. Such topics are tackled in *Late Night Shopping* by Saul Metzstein (Great Britain); *Las Razones De Mis Amigos* (Friends Have Reasons) by Gerardo Herrero (Spain); *Solo Por Hoy* (Only for



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Today) by Ariel Rotter (Argentina); and the US independent film *Don's Plum* by RD Robb, in which Leonardo DiCaprio brilliantly portrays a disturbed and loathsome teenage macho alongside Tobey Maguire. The film was shot in 1996 but completed just recently, so this will be its world premiere.

North America is back in stronger form: with nine feature films, two documentaries and five short contributions. Apart from digital productions displaying that new savage closeness described earlier, these are films in which actors are pivotal: *Julie Johnson* with Lili Taylor and Courtney Love; *Maelström* with the imaginative exploration of inner life by Canadian director Denis Villeneuve; or fresh voices from the underground like *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*, a screen adaptation of John Cameron Mitchell's off-Broadway hit - the wild story of a youth who immigrates from East Berlin to Kansas in 1988.

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Europe's strength lies in its unpredictability. The lion's share of the 23 features doesn't follow a leitmotif, with such differences in filmic language, themes and styles. Just the same, it is a powerful year for Europe, with utterly black humor from Jean-Jacques Beineix (*Mortel Transfert* /Mortal transfer), dazzling sets and costumes from Gérard Corbiau (*Le Roi Danse*/The King Is Dancing), a dark and sensitive youthful spirit from Irish first time director Kirsten Sheridan (*Disco Pigs*) or realistic narrative cinema from Hannes Stöhr (*Berlin Is in Germany*) and from Hungarian filmmaker Péter Gothár (*Paszport*/Passport). The Swiss company Yello Film is participating with a fantastic work: Dieter Meier's *Lightmaker* takes you to a subterranean realm teeming with the unexpected. Margherita Buy stars in Peter Del Monte's *Controvento* (Against the Wind); Sylvie Testud and Julie-Marie Parmentier play the Papin sisters in Jean-Pierre Denis' *Les Blessures Assassines* (Murderous Maids), the murder story from the 1930s that inspired Jean Genet to write "The Maids". Complementary the documentary *En Quête Des Soeurs Papin* (The Search for the Papin Sisters) by Claude Ventura is shown. The world premiere of Kira Muratova's Ukrainian Production *Vtorostepennye Ljudi* (Second Class Citizens) depicts the world of the nouveau riche and the desperate in a "horror film parody with song and dance".

Asia will be present with six striking productions: Japanese cult author and composer Junsei Tsuji paints a landscape of strong-willed characters in *Hotoke*. Kei Kumai, a Berlinale Bear winner, deals with the poisonous gas attack in Matsumoto and on the Tokyo subway in *Nippon No Kuroi Natsu - Enzai* (Darkness in the Light). Hongkong-Chinese filmmaker Herman Yau addresses the events surrounding the transition of power from Great Britain to China, and reopens a long forgotten criminal case in *From the Queen to the Chief Executive*.

A complete list of the film titles will be available on our website www.berlinale.de on January 30 or via e-mail panorama@berlinale.de

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