

Press Release

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Page: 1 of 1

From the Caucasus to Moscow

In New Russian Cinema the Berlinale is presenting a number of newcomers in Eastern European filmmaking.

For many years now, taking a closer look at Eastern European filmmaking has been a traditional part of the Berlinale. After the collapse of Communism and the social upheavals throughout Eastern Europe, filmmakers now face a wide choice of themes that draw on changed experiences of reality and promise interesting impulses in contemporary cinema.

The programme New Russian Cinema, which is part of this year's *Berlinale Talent Campus*, is designed to attract attention this year to newcomers in Russian filmmaking. Particularly in the works of young directors. The works of young directors in particular, reflect the questions and conflicts currently concerning a society. The works of the young Russian filmmakers display a great diversity of approaches – both in the selection of narrative form as well as in the type of chosen themes.

New Russian Cinema is opening with *The Suit (Shik)*, the latest film by Bakhtijar Khudojnazarov. Well-known from his last film *Luna Papa*, he is one of Russia's most renowned young directors. Like *Luna Papa*, his current film was co-produced with German producer Karl Baumgartner (*Pandora*). Khudojnazarov's films are specifically Eastern European in character but accessible to a western public at the same time. *The Suit* tells the story of three friends hunting for a good suit. The real adventure about love and friendship begins when they manage to get hold of a single, very expensive designer suit.

A second feature film is concerned with the after-effects of the war in Chechnya. In his studio-theatre-style debut *Kavkazskaja Rouletka (Caucasian Roulette)*, Fjodor Popov tells the story of a former front-line female fighter and a mother whose son is a prisoner of war in Chechen captivity.

Finally, the programme is also presenting a number of short films. Four of the five films are from Moscow's legendary VGIK academy, which has produced a great many renowned directors. The film presentations include documentations, animation and short feature films. Among others, they include a video documentation about Chechen children travelling around Moscow, and the short film *Fabula*, a story about an almost fatal love of the cinema.

Television will also be represented with a selection of productions. Two episodes of the successful series *Brigade*, a kind of Russian equivalent of *Sopranos*, recount the rise and fall of a quartet seeking its fortune through dubious transactions. *Spisok Vlublennih RF (List of Russian Federation Lovers)* will also be shown. This new TV format invites young filmmakers to create a fictional episode on the theme of love.

As a tribute to the young Russian actor and director Sergei Bodrov junior, the

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Page: 2 of 2

Berlinale is showing a film that brought him world fame: *Kavkazskij Plennik (Prisoner of the Mountains)*. Bodrov, a protagonist of new Russian cinema, died in an accident during filming last autumn. All of the films in New Russian Cinema will be showing from 9 to 13 February each evening at 8 p.m. in the House of World Cultures, with repeat screenings the following day at CinemaxX 6.

Press Office
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