

Press Release



Kinderfilmfest 2004:

A powerful start for *14plus* – the Berlinale’s new youth film competition

Retrospective of films from the Sam Spiegel Film & Television School, Jerusalem

The *Kinderfilmfest* 2004 will open with two innovations. Alongside the new competition of youth films, a retrospective of productions from a single film school will be presented for the first time.

Five movies have already been selected for the competition entitled *14plus – films for the young generation*. As Thomas Hailer, director of the *Kinderfilmfest* and *14plus* announced: “We have been able to draw on a rich range of outstanding international productions for this target group. At last we are able to offer these films a proper platform at the festival. This makes us really happy and is long overdue.”

14plus will open at the Atelier am Zoo on February 7, 2004 with a world premiere. In *Bagland (Scratch)* by Danish director Anders Gustafsson, viewers are thrust right into the life of seventeen-year-old Mille. Her turbulent day-to-day existence gives rise to a longing for independence and an ordered normality. Yet her biggest obstacle turns out to be precisely those she believes to love – they provoke the young woman to make a far-reaching decision of great consequence.

The German entry *Jargo* by Icelandic director Maria Solrun is set in what is known as the “Märkische Viertel”, one of the huge high-rise housing estates in the north of Berlin. In this world premiere, Solrun drafts an unusually sharp portrait of young people caught between cultures: a blond Arab boy encounters a Turkish Berliner – performed in an intense and entertaining manner by a convincing young cast.

That self-realization for teenagers can involve entirely other kinds of issues can be seen in the Iranian entry *Behesht jaye digari Asti (Paradise is somewhere else)*. Director Abdolrasoul Golbon’s feature film debut has already won high acclaim at international festivals. In forceful images, it accompanies a young man, who in trying to escape the ancient custom of retribution killing, sets off on a journey to find himself.

Puberty is not always a question of age. In the Norwegian film *United*, Magnus Martens brings this home in an unpretentious romantic comedy. Indeed, Kåre is already 26 years old, but is still lost in youthful dreams of ever-lasting love and a professional career with Manchester United. His path is roundabout but he

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gradually faces up to reality and begins to tackle his life without betraying his innermost desires.

The USA will be represented by an independent film: *Quality of Life*. After years of social work in the graffiti scene in San Francisco's Mission District, newcomer Benjamin Morgan transforms the life stories of two young men into a disturbingly realistic tale. The film makes a powerful plea for the acknowledgment of graffiti as an artform. The presentation of this work in *14plus* is also a world premiere.

For 2004 the *Kinderfilmfest* has also organized a retrospective on works from a single film school. Seven short films from the famous Israeli Sam Spiegel Film & Television School in Jerusalem depict some problems of growing up in a society torn apart by daily violence. The programme includes *Susei yam (Sea Horses)* by Nir Bergman (who received a *Panorama* award in 2003 for *Knafayim Shvurot/Broken Wings*). In Nadav Gol's *Milhama a'heret (A Different War)*, the retrospective deals directly with the present: the wall recently erected between residential Palestinian and Israeli districts in Jerusalem becomes the site of a boy's disarming appeal for compassion amongst his fellow beings. Produced in 2003, this film is also running in the *Kinderfilmfest's* short film competition.

The entire programme of the 27th *Kinderfilmfest* will be announced in January 2004.

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