

Press Release



Berlinale 2004: An Honorary Golden Bear for Fernando Solanas

This year the 54th Berlin International Film Festival will award the world-renown Argentinean filmmaker Fernando Solanas an Honorary Golden Bear for his lifetime achievement. In celebration of this occasion, his powerful documentary film *Memoria del saqueo (A Social Genocide)* will be screened after the award presentation on February 10, 2004 at the Kino International.

“We are delighted to be able to pay tribute to this outstanding and courageous director with an Honorary Golden Bear”, Berlinale Director Dieter Kosslick stated upon the announcement.

Fernando Solanas has observed his native land of Argentina, and its political and social conditions, by means of cinema for more than 30 years. He has focused on these themes ever since his sensational documentary film debut *La Hora de los hornos (The Hour of the Furnaces)* (1967) – in the meantime a classic of political documentary cinema. His feature film *Los Hijos de Fierro (Sons of Fierro)* (1972) was banned in his own country.

The repressive measures of the military dictatorship in Argentina forced the director into exile in Paris in the mid 1970s. During this period he made *Le Regard des autres* (1980) and *Tangos, el exilio de Gardel (Tangos, The Exile of Gardel)* (1985). In the mid 1980s Fernando Solanas returned to Argentina; he continued to examine the country as well as South America in *El Sur (The South)* (1988), *El Viaje (The Journey)* (1992) and *La Nube (The Cloud)* (1998). However, Solanas' films are not the only testimony of his political commitment: from 1993 to 1997 he was also a member of the Argentinean parliament – although as soon as his term was over, he returned to filmmaking.

In his latest documentary *Memoria del saqueo*, he addresses recent Argentinean crises as well as the impact of neoliberal politics and globalization. The film uses interviews and archive material to shed light on topics like corruption and the squandering of public funds. “With its vivid coverage”, director Solanas explains, “my film aims at contributing to the urgent and indispensable discussion under way in my country, in Latin America, in the entire world, on the inhumanity of globalization. At the same time it aspires to prove that another world is possible.”

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