

Press Release



Berlinale 2004: Selling Democracy – Welcome Mr. Marshall

Organized in cooperation with the Zeughaus-Kino at the German Historical Museum and the Federal Film Archive, and with the amiable support of Volkswagen.

After World War II, western European countries received not only economic but also cultural and psychological aid from the USA. June 1947 marked the start of the Marshall Plan – officially entitled the “European Recovery Program“ – which gave 16 European states financial and economic support, including food, raw materials and machines. Yet ideals were also disseminated: by the time the Marshall Plan came to an end in 1952 over 200 films had been produced documenting American aid efforts, motivating self-help and promoting intercultural understanding, democracy and pluralism – not least to establish boundaries against communist Eastern Europe. The aim was to create a post-war European identity which would also be able to serve as a bastion against communism. At the same time the films offered very practical introductions to new technologies and forms of agriculture: the spectrum ranged from a European electricity network to the construction of chicken coops

The Berlinale will present some of the most impressive films produced under the Marshall Plan at the Zeughaus-Kino. The films, usually between 7 and 40 minutes in length, were made by European and American directors. They were shown to the general public as supporting films in regular cinema programs. They were also screened in schools and film clubs, or for other associations or specialist groups.

The retrospective and its films with their emphatic vision of a united Europe not only bring to light present-day parallels; these very ambitious works by talented directors are also still very compelling in their consciousness of form and occasionally light-hearted, imaginative tone. For instance, the Dutch production *Houen Zo* about the reconstruction of Rotterdam received an award at the Cannes Film Festival in 1952. One of the filmmakers, Georg Tressler, later became a very successful German feature film director (*Die Halbstarken* /*The Hooligans*): his film *Traudls neuer Gemüsegarten* (*Traudl's New Vegetable Garden*) elucidates new methods of cultivation and was one of the many films explicitly aimed at young people who constituted an important source of potential for rebuilding Europe.

**54. Internationale
Filmfestspiele
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The 42 films will be screened on ten consecutive days at the Zeughaus-Kino. Georg Tressler and others involved in the Marshall Plan film program will speak at accompanying events.

On the occasion of the series *Selling Democracy – Welcome Mr. Marshall*, a 28-page brochure will be published which will give a first overview of this unique corpus of historical film documents and introduce those who were behind the project to produce Marshall Plan films.

Sunday, February 8, 2004, 2:00 – 4:00 p.m., Filmmuseum Berlin, Potsdamer Straße 2, first floor, in English

Marshall Plan Films and its filmhistorical and political importance

Roundtable with Mike Meyers, Gilbert de Goldschmidt, Georg Tressler, Prof. Tom Mascaró, David Ellwood, Sandra Schulberg, Dr. Rainer Rother, Dr. Uwe Grieger

Press Office
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