

Press Release



Berlinale Jury for the *World Cinema Fund*

Selection can begin – a four-member jury will choose which projects are to be supported by the *World Cinema Fund* which has been set up by the German Federal Cultural Foundation (Kulturstiftung des Bundes) and the Berlinale. Alongside festival director Dieter Kosslick, the jury is to include three other international film personalities: curator Keith Shiri (Zimbabwe/England), Austrian's Film Museum director Alexander Horwath and independent distributor Isabelle Dubar (France).

It is the *World Cinema Fund's* intention to finance film projects from countries whose film industries are endangered by political and economic crises. Up through 2007, the *Fund* will focus on promoting the production and distribution of films from Latin America, the Middle East, Central Asia and Africa.

The jury will begin meeting in November 2004 and select the projects to be supported in its term which comes to a close at the end of 2005.

“The *World Cinema Fund* initiative has opened up possibilities which I sincerely hope will bring about new connections between German and world cinema. It is an important step forward coming at a crucial moment, when the tectonic plates which hold our world together appear to be desperately precarious,” jury member Keith M. Shiri remarked about the initiative.

Curator and film specialist Keith M. Shiri, originally from Zimbabwe, now lives in England. In his homeland he organized in 1993 the *Southern African Film Festival* in Harare. In 1991, he launched the film festival *Africa at the Pictures* in London and by doing so established African film in the world of Anglo-Saxon culture. In diverse ways, Shiri has applied himself to increasing public awareness of African film and developing distribution strategies. At present, Shiri is also active as a program consultant for the Venice Film Festival, the London Film Festival and the Cinema Africa Festival in Milan.

Austrian curator, film critic and journalist Alexander Horwath directed Vienna's international film festival, the *Viennale*, from 1992 to 1996. He was appointed director of the Austrian Film Museum in 2002. In addition to his curatorial activities for exhibitions and film series, Horwath has also been a consultant for film festivals in Venice, Rotterdam and Torino, as well as a member of international film juries in Cannes, Rotterdam, Oberhausen, Hong Kong and Mannheim. He has, moreover, published a large number of books on film.

French distributor Isabelle Dubar is committed to the distribution of independent films from a wide variety of film regions. In 1997, the marketing

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expert founded the company *ID Distribution* so as to create a forum for world cinema and promote the awareness of such films within a larger context. Aside from films from Europe, the USA and Asia, *ID Distribution* has presented some of the most interesting works of young filmmakers from Latin America.

The jury of the *World Cinema Fund* will announce its decisions for its first period of funding at the beginning of January 2005.

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