

Press Release



***Kinderfilmfest / 14plus 2005:* Somewhere between a case of the butterflies and fourteen sucks**

In its second year, the Berlinale's youth film competition *14plus* is again heading for a great start with a fantastic programme. "The success of the new competition was awesome", section head Thomas Hailer exclaimed, "and we're eager to put all our energies into making this one even better."

After the Children's Jury and the Youth Jury, the 28th *Kinderfilmfest's* International Jury has also been appointed: Sayoko Kinoshita (director of the Hiroshima International Animation Festival, Japan), Gunvor Bjerre (director of BUSTER Copenhagen International Children's Film Festival, project manager at New Nordic Children's Film, Denmark), Dieter Bongartz (children's book and film author, Germany), Dominique Standaert (director, whose film *Hop* was screened at the *Kinderfilmfest 2004*, Belgium) and Ntshavheni Wa Luruli (director, winner of a Crystal Bear in 2004 for *The Wooden Camera*, South Africa).

The international programme is now being put together from the several hundred works which have been submitted to the short and feature film competitions of the *Kinderfilmfest* and *14plus*. Productions from over 40 countries are up for selection. Thomas Hailer: "Today, more than ever, young moviegoers want to understand what is going on in their world and how people their age are dealing with it. Which means for us it is important to have a balanced assortment of the best films worldwide. This will also guarantee our attracting the attention we are accustomed to."

14plus explores the experiences of teenagers from very diverse angles. And in this context, the title of the world premiere from the directors' collective Dansk Skalle, *Fjorton Suger (Fourteen Sucks)*, seems made to fit. This film is a sensitive portrait of the present generation in Sweden, caught up between partying and party-excess. In *Populärmusik från Vittula (Popular Music)* Reza Bagher portrays the wild 1960s in northernmost Sweden. When – between sauna contests and elk hunts – young people try to find their own way in the world, then rock 'n' roll comes into its own at the back of beyond. At this stage, the competition already includes a wide range of films, from *Hana & Alice*, an intriguing Japanese film by Shunji Iwai, to *Lakposhtha hâ m parvaz mikonand (Turtles Can Fly)*, an Iranian-Iraqi film by Bahman Ghobadi. The latter is a highly topical encounter with the life of Kurdish refugees caught between Saddam Hussein's reign of terror and the latest American invasion. The suffering of these adolescents and their will to survive are depicted with such urgency that

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Press Office

Potsdamer Straße 5
10785 Berlin

Tel. +49 • 30 • 259 20 • 707
Fax +49 • 30 • 259 20 • 799

press@berlinale.de
www.berlinale.de

Ein Geschäftsbereich der
Kulturveranstaltungen des
Bundes in Berlin (KBB) GmbH

Management:

Dieter Kosslick
(Intendant Internationale
Filmfestspiele Berlin),
Dr. Thomas Köstlin
(Kaufmännischer Geschäftsführer),
Dr. Hans-Georg Knopp,
Dr. Joachim Sartorius

Vorsitzende des Aufsichtsrats:
Dr. Christina Weiss

Handelsregister: Amtsgericht
Charlottenburg Nr. 96 HRB 29357
USt ID DE 136 78 27 46



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audiences of all ages will find it impossible to look away.

Norwegian director Torun Lian has entered *Ikke Naken (The Color of Milk)* in the *Kinderfilmfest's* competition for a Crystal Bear. In it the main characters discover the ups and downs of first love – it's a case of the butterflies. Though not only humans have a talent for love, as *Pelikaanimies (Pelicanman)* demonstrates. Finnish director Liisa Helminen puts a pelican, which is passionate about music, into the body of a friendly young man: a marvellous hour-and-a-half voyage between the ocean and the opera house. Entirely different dimensions evolve in Iranian director Gholamreza Ramezani's intimate story *Bazi (The Play)*, whereby a small girl longs for companionship. And Mijke de Jong's Dutch film *Bluebird* is fascinating in how it very sensitively attempts to capture the emotions of a girl who is being bullied and ostracized by her schoolmates.

The *Kinderfilmfest* is extending its coverage in media targeting young people. The firmly established website www.kinderfilmfest.net will once again be active with a new generation of 'Young Journalists' who will report daily about festival activities. Thanks to a collaboration with the 'Junge Presse Berlin', the Berlinale's presence in the city's youth media, e.g. school and university newspapers, will be felt even more strongly. The Deutsche Kinderhilfswerk, the *Kinderfilmfest's* partner, will also focus in the future on promoting the involvement of young people in the festival.

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