

Press Release



The World Cinema Fund celebrates a successful first year – New projects selected for funding

With a third round of funding The World Cinema Fund (WCF) concludes its successful first year. Since the fund was launched in October 2004, 367 projects have been submitted from 52 countries in the WCF's focus regions (Africa, Latin America, Middle East and Central Asia).

Twenty projects have received production or distribution funding, and so far three films have been completed (*Paradise Now*, *Saratan*, *Naoussé*), all of which have been screened successfully at international festivals.

The WCF was founded as a joint initiative of the German Federal Cultural Foundation and the Berlin International Film Festival. The Goethe Institut has participated as a cooperation partner since 2005.

Looking back at the first year, Hortensia Völckers, artistic director of the German Federal Cultural Foundation, commented, "The World Cinema Fund has had a fantastic start. Its jury has an excellent feel for high quality films. This is demonstrated by the many prizes the supported films have won at international festivals. Moreover, the Berlinale hit *Paradise Now* has achieved what I wish for all WCF films: to get into as many German cinemas as possible and to spark a public debate about the realities in their countries of origin."

On October 24, 2005 the WCF jury selected four projects from the current third round of funding for support in production, and one for distribution:

Production funding

Faro, la reine des eaux, Director: Salif Traoré (Mali), German co-producer: Bärbel Mauch Film, funding: €60,000

Feature / Dra, an engineer, comes from a small village on the Niger, but has long since established a life for himself in the city. Only after he is rejected by his fiancé's parents, because he is the son of a single mother, does he begin to confront his past. In the hope of finding his father, he returns to his childhood village. The journey reveals the enormous differences between rural and urban life and sheds light on the conflict between the modern world and superstitious customs.

Ghoussoun, Directors: Yaron Shani & Scandar Copti (Israel/Palestine), Inosan Productions (Israel), no German co-producer yet, funding: €65,000

Feature / This film is set in the cities of Jaffa and Tel Aviv, which belong to a single urban landscape, but are divided by an invisible wall. Most of Jaffa's residents are Arab Israeli citizens; the modern, fast-paced city of Tel Aviv, on the other hand, is predominantly populated by Israeli Jews. The film portrays the

56. Internationale
Filmfestspiele
Berlin
09. – 19.02.2006

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difficult daily lives of the people of the region, and the personal struggles arising from social conflicts. A Palestinian and an Israeli director worked together on this project.

The Feather Man, Director: Azza El Hassan (Palestine), German co-producer: Ma.ja.de, funding: €25,000

Documentary / Before the Israeli occupation of Beirut, the “Feather Man” was a bizarre, well-known character, who would direct traffic on his own accord, with a painted face and a feather headdress. He was especially liked by children. When the Israelis arrived, this eccentric man was revealed to be an Israeli army general, who had lived in Beirut as a spy for years, and now led Israeli units through the city. In her own very personal way, the director confronts both the character of the Feather Man and the Middle East conflict as a whole.

Songs from the Southern Seas, Director: Marat Saralu (Kyrgyzstan), German co-producer: Rohfilm, funding: €80,000

Feature / This film deals with the multi-ethnic reality of Kyrgyzstan. In various episodes, characters and plots are introduced which reveal much about the history and society of the country. In the centre is the conflict between two families: one Russian, blonde and European in appearance, and the other Kyrgyz, dark-haired with Asian features. In one impressive episode, the Russian Stephan converts to Islam out of love for a Kyrgyz woman, and changes his name to Suleiman. His children look European, but are raised according to Kyrgyz tradition. The director tackles the social upheaval of his country with humor and irony.

Distribution support

The Man Who Copied, Director: Jorge Furtado (Brazil), German distributor: Kool Film, funding: €7,500

Feature / André works in a copy shop, whiling away his time chatting with his colleague Marines, and drawing comics after work. He is secretly in love with his neighbour Sylvia, but is too shy to approach her. As he begins to counterfeit money, he meets Marines’ boyfriend Cardoso. To escape their drab lives, the four young people prepare to commit a bank robbery...

The members of the WCF jury are independent distributor Isabelle Dubar (France), curator Keith Shiri (Zimbabwe/England), the programme coordinator for Swiss television, Alberto Chollet (Switzerland) and Berlinale director Dieter Kosslick. The *World Cinema Fund* is designed to aid film projects from countries whose film industry is having difficulty evolving or is endangered due to political and economic crises.



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Next submission deadline: March 16, 2006. More information at www.berlinale.de

The *World Cinema Fund* is initiated by the **German Federal Cultural Foundation** (Kulturstiftung des Bundes) and the **Berlin International Film Festival** in cooperation with the **Goethe Institut**.



Press Office
November 2, 2005