

Press Release



Berlinale 2006: First *Competition* Titles Include One Debut and Six World Premieres

The first entries in the *Competition* of the 56th Berlin International Film Festival have now been confirmed.

Six of the nine films selected so far will have their world premieres in Berlin.

To date two world premieres by German directors will compete for Bears: Oskar Roehler (*No Place to Go*) will present his adaptation of Michel Houellebecq's successful novel *Atomized*. In it two very different brothers set out to uncover the meaning of life; on their quest they are confronted with both their sexual obsessions and loneliness. The film is star-studded and features, among others, Moritz Bleibtreu, Christian Ulmen, Martina Gedeck, Franka Potente, Nina Hoss, Jasmin Tabatabai, Uwe Ochsenknecht and Corinna Harfouch.

In the German production *Requiem* Hans-Christian Schmid (*Distant Lights*) tells a story of exorcism in the Federal Republic of Germany in the 1970s. He condenses it into a psychological study of people who seek refuge in mysticism when encountering the bounds of rational human knowledge. In her first major film role, Sandra Hüller – accompanied by Burghart Klaußner, Imogen Kogge and Walter Schmidinger – plays a young woman who believes she is possessed by demons.

Bosnian director Jasmila Žbanić depicts in *Grbavica*, her first feature film, the fate of a rape victim in the turmoil following the war in the Balkans. Mirjana Karnovic and Luna Mijovic are cast as mother and daughter. This world premiere is a co-production from Austria, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Germany and Croatia.

Among other works, the USA will be represented by Terrence Malick's long awaited new film *The New World*, which will be running out of competition. Colin Farrell plays the main role, explorer John Smith who left England in the 17th century for America and fell in love there with Pocahontas, the daughter of an Indian chief. – Also screening out of competition will be *Syriana*, a political thriller featuring producer and leading man George Clooney, as well as Christopher Plummer and Matt Damon. Director Stephen Gaghan, who until now has mainly been known for screenplays like *Traffic* and *The Alamo*, takes a look at the back rooms of the global oil industry.

Australia is entering Neil Armfield's *Candy* in the race for Golden and Silver Bears. In this world premiere, based on the best-selling novel, Heath Ledger

. Internationale
Filmfestspiele
Berlin
09. – 19.02.2006

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(*Brokeback Mountain*) and Abbie Cornish (*Somersault*) are two young lovers abandoned to the wild beauty of love and to an addiction that nearly destroys them. – An unusual love story will be presented by a British-Canadian co-production: *Snow Cake*. Director Marc Evans recounts the story of a friendship between a man (Alan Rickman) who has been seriously traumatized by a car crash and an autistic woman (Sigourney Weaver). *Snow Cake* will also have its world premiere in Berlin.

So far two films from Asia have been selected for the programme. In the psychological thriller *Invisible Waves*, Thai director Pen-ek Ratanaruang (*Last Life in the Universe*) portrays a contract killer. This international co-production (Netherlands/Thailand/Hong Kong/Korea) will also be screening as a world premiere. – Chen Kaige's vibrant martial arts adventure *Wu ji / The Promise*, a love story of a princess between three men will be shown out of competition. The 35-million-dollar production is said to be the most expensive Chinese movie ever made.

“We are extremely pleased”, Festival director Dieter Kosslick states, “to be able to present new films by famous directors as well as productions by young filmmakers.”

The selection for the *Competition* of the 56th Berlin International Film Festival will be completed by mid January 2006. There will be a total of 26 films – including those running out of competition – in the *Competition* programme.

Press Office
December 20, 2005