

Press Release



A New Prize for the Best First Feature

In 2006 the *Berlinale* will introduce a new prize which will have its own three-member international jury: the Best First Feature Award. Endowed with 25,000 euros, the award will be donated by the Gesellschaft zur Wahrnehmung von Film- und Fernsehrechten (GWFF), a society for safeguarding film and television rights.

The GWFF has been affiliated with the *Berlinale* for years. Until 2005, the organisation to defend producers' copyrights AGICOA, of which the GWFF is the major shareholder, donated the Blue Angel Award, which is now being replaced by this new prize.

In 2006 there will be a total of 13 features competing for the award. The candidates are the directorial debuts screening in the *Competition* (3 films), *Panorama* (6 films) and *Kinderfilmfest/14plus* (4 films). The winner will be announced on February 18 at the official award ceremony in the Berlinale Palast. The director and producer of this outstanding debut film will share the prize money.

Debut films from the *Forum* programme will be competing for the Best First Feature Award as of 2007, since the similarly defined Wolfgang Staudte Prize for a debut film in the *Forum* is still in existence.

First Feature Award Jury

Valentina Cervi (actress, Italy)

Italian actress Valentina Cervi is one of the new talents of Italian cinema. She has worked with many international directors, including Jane Campion (*Portrait Of A Lady*), Mike Figgis (*Hotel*) and Peter Greenaway (*The Tulse Luper Suitcases*). During last year's *Berlinale Competition*, Valentina Cervi could be seen in *Provincia Meccanica (Smalltown, Italy)* by Stefano Mordini.

Goran Paskaljevic (director, Serbia)

Born in Belgrade, the director made 13 feature films, shown and acclaimed at the most prestigious international film festivals. In 1992 he left his country, returning in 1998 to make *The Power Keg* (aka *Cabaret Balkan* in the USA), which won several prizes, including the Critics' Prize at the Venice Film Festival. For *Midwinter Night's Dream*, which deals with post-war Serbia, Paskaljevic received the Special Prize of the Jury in San Sebastian in 2004. At this moment he is finishing the post-production of his new film *The Optimists*.

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Hans Weingartner (director, Germany)

Hans Weingartner, who was born in Austria and now lives in Berlin, studied physics and neurosurgery before becoming a filmmaker. His highly acclaimed feature film debut, *Das weiße Rauschen* (The White Sound), won several awards (including both the Max Ophüls Award and the First Steps Award in 2001). In 2004, his second feature, *Die fetten Jahre sind vorbei* (*The Edukators*), was the first German-language film to be invited to the competition at the Cannes Film Festival in eleven years.

Press Office
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