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Berlin Today Award 2009: Short film projects from Alaska, India, Lebanon, Berlin and Brandenburg make it to the finals

The Berlin Today Award, supported by Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg as the short film competition of the *Berlinale Talent Campus* since 2003, has nominated five short film projects as finalists in the upcoming round. 176 young filmmakers from 72 countries responded to the call for project ideas related to the theme "My Wall", conceived to mark the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin wall. For the first time not only *Campus Talents* but also producers from all over Germany could apply to participate in the realization of a short film project. A pre-selected pool of 15 Talents and 10 production companies was invited to attend a "Producers' Meeting" during the *Berlinale Talent Campus* where Talents were able to present their projects. The meeting ended with a vote by both Talents and producers on the projects that would be considered by the jury, composed of representatives from Medienboard, the *Berlinale Talent Campus*, event organizers boxfish events and the Berlin Today Award e.V. Five talent-producer combos were selected to continue to the final round:

Gina Abatemarco from the USA, together with **Anna Wendt Filmproduktion** from Berlin, will realize *My Super Sea Wall*. The documentary is a portrait of the Alaskan island Kivalina, which for the time being has been saved from sinking away completely by a giant wall of sand built by its inhabitants. *Teleportation* by **Markus Dietrich** from Germany is a project in collaboration with **Schiwago Film** in Berlin that offers the 'real' truth behind the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989. In *Promenade*, **Sabine El Chamaa** from Lebanon tells the story of an elderly woman who builds herself a new shelter using the walls and rubble from her former house that was destroyed in the war. The partially animated project will be realized with **NEOS Film** from Geiseltal near Munich. The Hamburg-based **DETAiLFILM** will produce *Wagah* by **Supriyo Sen** from India, a documentary about a strange ritual that takes place at a frontier post along the 1000 km long border between India and Pakistan. Finally, there is **Paul Cotter** from the UK and his project *Werner and the Wall*, produced with **Kaminski.Stiehm.Film** from Berlin. Werner Schlömerkemper is 75 years old when one day he decides to rebuild the Berlin wall. Before long he is not alone: other enthusiastic helpers join in, although no one knows the true motives behind his actions.

The five short films will be realized with support from Medienboard and in-kind contributions from the film industry. An additional and new component of the Berlin Today Award is a one-month residency supported by the Federal Foreign Office. The residency offers Talents an opportunity to further develop their projects with their respective producers. Shooting will take place until the end of the year in Alaska, Beirut, Berlin, Brandenburg and India. The short films will celebrate their world premiere during the opening of the *Berlinale Talent Campus 2009* (February 7 - 12, 2009). The winner will receive the Berlin Today Award. The films are also planned to be screened worldwide in collaboration with the Goethe-Institut.

The Berlin Today Award 2009 is supported by Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg and the Federal Foreign Office. The competition this year will take place under the patronage of Federal Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier, with Wim Wenders as this round's mentor. For more information please visit www.berlintoday.de.