

Press Release



Berlinale 2009 Comes to a Successful Close: A Fantastic Atmosphere and Enthusiastic Audiences

Today, on Saturday, February 14, the 59th Berlin International Film Festival comes to a close with the Award Ceremony. 1600 guests are expected at the glamorous gala in the Berlinale Palast, where from 7:30 pm onwards, the winners of the Golden Bear and the Silver Bears, the Alfred Bauer Prize, and the Best First Feature Award will be announced. Berlinale Director Dieter Kosslick and the International Jury with Jury President Tilda Swinton will present the awards; Katrin Bauerfeind will host the ceremony.

As the closing film of this year's Berlinale director Costa-Gavras will present the world premiere of his film *Eden Is West*.

Further illustrious guests of the evening include Michael Ballhaus, Meret Becker, Daniel Brühl, Detlev Buck, Hannelore Elsner, Inka Friedrich, Martina Gedeck, Vadim Glowna, Valeska Grisebach, Fritzi Haberlandt, Hannah Herzprung, Sandra Hüller, Burghart Klaußner, Sebastian Koch, Wolfgang Kohlhaase, David Kross, Dani Levy, Susanne Lothar, Matthias Luthardt, Walter Momper, Christian Petzold, Claudia Roth, Katrin Saß, Hans-Christian Schmid, Robert Stadlober, Christian Ulmen, Veruschka, Jürgen Vogel, Hans Weingartner, Wim Wenders, as well as the Governing Mayor of Berlin Klaus Wowereit and the President of the Berlin House of Representatives Walter Momper among others.

In total 383 films in 1238 screenings were shown. Interest in the Berlinale among visitors from both the film industry and the general public has been impressive: nearly 20.000 accredited visitors from 136 countries attended the festival and approximately 270.000 tickets were sold - an audience record.

Audiences enthusiastically embraced the Berlinale's new venues - the Friedrichstadtpalast and the Cinema Paris in the Institut Français. A number of splendid *Berlinale Special* premieres were celebrated at the sold-out Friedrichstadtpalast.

A special cinema experience was offered by this year's *Retrospective "70 mm - Bigger than Life"*: audiences had the unique opportunity to enjoy wide-gauge classics, such as William Wyler's *Ben-Hur* and David Lean's *Lawrence of Arabia*, in their impressive original format at the Kino International and Cinestar, both of which were specially equipped for the screenings.

**59. Internationale
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The Berlinale merchandising products - bags, mugs, teddy bears, t-shirts and caps, amongst others - were again extremely popular with the festival goers - roughly 4000 bags and more than 2000 t-shirts were sold.

The *European Film Market (EFM)* - the main event for the film industry at the Berlin International Film Festival - also had a fine year. Despite the difficult economic situation, business was good.

"Thanks to our new venues, we were able to give more moviegoers the chance to experience the diversity of our Festival programme. Indeed, the Berlinale proves that there are plenty of passionate movie-lovers out there", says Festival Director Dieter Kosslick.

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