

# INFO FIPA 4

News from the 20<sup>th</sup> International Festival of Audiovisual Programs in Biarritz, January 23 to 28, 2007

## MEET THE DIRECTORS

# Rafah: biography of a story

Two young French directors present: *Rafah — Chronique d'un village dans la bande de Gaza*. Their presence at the festival is testimony to their achievement.

**R**afah, Gaza strip, roughly 100,000 inhabitants. Alexis Monchovet's camera captures reality, that of a place little mentioned by the media. A war zone, a village torn apart, a capital of illegal arms smuggling. But also a place attached to democracy, and where despite appearances, Monchovet found, "free speech prevails."

### First forays into high-stakes reporting

For his report, this young journalist made three two-and-a-half month trips at three strategic flash-points: the Israeli disengagement, the elections for the Palestinian parliament and just after the kidnapping of Israeli Corporal Gilad Shalit. A camera, a tripod, a microphone, an on-site interpreter and a local contact allowed the journalist to be more than just an observer, but rather an active witness. He set out alone and "without certainty," to live with his contact. Monchovet wanted his docu-

mentary to be a total immersion, to be as close as possible to the inhabitants of Rafah.

The young 29-year-old journalist, a graduate of the Toulouse School of Journalism, made his journalistic debut with Lyon's regional press before joining France 3's writing

team and working for several British channels. Frustrated by the limited airtime in television news, Monchovet teamed up with Stéphane Marchetti, 27-year-old journalist, who edited *Rafah*. They created the production company Playprod in Lyon. *Rafah* marks their first large-scale produc-

tion. Seven people contributed to the film's success.

"It's a film by people who know each other" reports Monchovet. The two young directors wanted to "do things just so," didn't "follow conventions" and especially had faith. A story of opportunity, of anguished moments, of all-nighters, and of many doubts of achieving a promising result.

They plan to try to recontact the people in their film, to follow them again. "And why not make a trilogy over 5, 10, 15 years to push the concept to its limit" confided the directors.

"An intimate human adventure:" an account that is original, honest, true and unpretentious.

Translated by Joanna Freudenheim

Young directors Alexis Monchovet and Stéphane Marchetti hope their most recent film will be a winner.



### Film Facts: Rafah

**Directors:** Stéphane Marchetti and Alexis Monchovet

**Country:** France (2006)

**Length:** 52 mn

**Next Screening:** Friday Jan 26, Le Cinéma Royal at 09:30 a.m.

## GUEST OF HONOR

# Bernard Giraudeau pursues his dreams

This year's festival awards the EuroFipa prize to the actor-director for his impressive career.



Bernard Giraudeau presents *Un ami chilien* (2000).

Comedian, actor, director, writer and producer, the journey Bernard Girardeau has taken reflects his hunger for work. Having debuted with Gabin in *Two men in town*, he was recognized for his roles in *L'année des Méduses*, *Les spécialistes*, and *Waterdrops on burning rocks*.

After a rich acting career, he moved behind the camera in 1991, directing many dramas and documentaries. "It was Ettore Scola who encouraged me to start directing. On the set of his film I was a real troublemaker: I wanted to know everything about the camera and the sta-

ging," chuckles Giraudeau. He finds acting less satisfying: "there's a lot of stress, a kind of perfectionism that makes you lose track of the lightheartedness and the joy. I'm better suited to writing."

### Looking for the extra-ordinary

In homage to the body of his work, Fipa has included one of his documentaries, *Un ami chilien*, in the 2007 program. This was a project very close to his heart: "The idea was to follow one of my closest friends, to travel, to meet different people, to take notes. I wanted to follow in the footsteps of Pedro de Valdivia of the fifteenth century, but also to retrace a bit of Che's adventures. To tell about the country, the gold diggers, the saltpeter mines and to end back up at Valparaiso."

Giraudeau, who served in the Navy for five years, loves travelling and discovering new places. "I think that the subjectivity of the traveller helps to develop peoples' imaginations. The view of the ordinary is of little interest to me; I want the extra-ordinary. When I look at the horizon I want to go see what is far away." A desire for going elsewhere shared by the public and his filmmaking colleagues, who have decided to award him the EuroFipa of honor 2007.

Translated by Anna Cumbie

## SNOW DAY



A disturbing scene: even the palm trees have been covered with snow.

Flip to the Biarritz page of a guidebook on France and see the town basking in the sun, bathing suited vacationers lounging on its beaches. What isn't shown are the masses of students, film-buffs, and journalists slipping up and down Biarritz's slick, snow-covered streets, rushing to movie premieres or to meet their deadlines. As Fipa continues, the weather goes from bad to worse and this picturesque seaside town has been disguised by beautiful yet inconvenient snow. This weekend's forecast: colder. So buy another pair of socks while the sales are still on, make your way to the theaters, and escape the weather.

Kitt Squire

# A chink in the wall

**At a time when television floods our senses with images of violence in the Middle-East, *Knowledge is the beginning* is a breath of fresh air.**

A hint of music in a rough world. This is what Paul Smaczny aims for in his documentary, *Knowledge is the beginning*. One of the film's first dialogues gives clarity to its title; while Mustafa Barghouthi and his friend Daniel Barenboim drive through Ramallah, Barghouthi remarks, "I think that the most extreme kind of ignorance controls both sides of this conflict." Barenboim responds "It's awful, because knowledge is the key to everything." To know each other in order to better understand each other, to succeed in living side by side, to live in peace, these all seem to be utopian, idealistic goals. But not for as long as it may seem, when the key to this kind of essential knowledge lies in music. Because it has no face, this art form can take its shape in every human being, be they Palestinian, Israeli, or European. This idea, of sharing a common passion for music in order to encourage a common passion for peace, is Daniel Barenboim's ambitious goal

and the reason he founded the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra. In 1999, working alongside Palestinian philosopher Edouard Saïd, Barenboim brought together young Arab, Israeli, German and eventually Spanish musicians to take part in this project. Smaczny's film retraces the history of this unexpected collaboration from 1999 to 2004, the year of a concert that was highly symbolic

because it took place in Ramallah. *Knowledge is the beginning* is neither a musical nor a political film. It is instead a film in which these two concepts complement each other in order to make one notion heard: that of a possible harmony. Each sequence bears witness to this harmony: interviews with Palestinians and Israelis side by side, soccer games and rehearsals together, and above all,

Daniel Barenboim is the founder of the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra, a vision of peace.



concert scenes drive the film, evoking a profound emotional reaction at the breath-taking synthesis of image and sound.

Smaczny's film gives us a glimpse of a peaceful horizon during the concerts and rehearsals, reminding us all the while of the tragic existence of these populations. He relies on alternating editing in order to emphasize this point. While a young Palestinian tells the director, "we must break down the walls inside our heads and begin to understand one another," the interview is fragmented with shots of the construction of the wall between Israel and Palestine.

The initiative taken by Smaczny is, of course, only a drop of water in the ocean that is the political chaos governing this region. But it's a necessary drop of water, because it emphasizes the sense of the word "possible," and it's for this reason that Paul Smaczny's film is so necessary.

Translated by Kitt Squire

## YOUNG ARTISTS

### Journeys and Experimentation

This year, once again Fipa opens its doors to young artists and so reaffirms its commitment to exploring new horizons. China (Community University of China) and France (two recipients of the Louis Lumière grant) were honored Wednesday at the first meeting of the Young Artists.

At this pluralistic encounter, the young directors took the festival to Portugal, Mauritania and China. They offered not only geographic diversity but a diversity of content: music, film, memory, tourism and cats!

This screening celebrated artistic experimentation. Its richness and variety stem from the works themselves and the questions they raise. For example, in Aurélien Gerbault's film screened Wednesday, the young artist explores the process of cinematographic creation as he shadows director Pablo Costa in Lisbon. In answer to Gerbault, searching for words, Costa explains he resists preconceiving his films because he doesn't know the people yet. How to plan without limiting? And how to film the humanity of a demolished neighborhood in Lisbon? The title tells us everything can bloom again (*Tout refléurit*).

Among the students of the Chinese school, some paint a singular view of their society. The students denounce that tourism defiles cities while keeping their economies alive. A tour guide asked a native to sing for tourists: "it is more authentic," she said, "if you sing with your pack on your back." Welcome to the zoo modern society creates!

In this fast-moving world, creation is precious. The young directors appreciate all forms of support and recognition, notably help from the office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for documentaries.

Final meeting with the international young artists (Spain, Portugal, Poland, Norway, Hong-kong, France) today at 4:00pm at the Colisée.

Translated by  
Joanna Freudenheim

## LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION

### Short and sweet

**As one of the six categories presented at Fipa, the short program conquers the public.**

Experimental or narrative, the short film is undoubtedly a unique genre in the world of cinema. Normally, a one-reeler never exceeds 30 minutes. In this domain, however, there is more freedom to express oneself. "For a short, there's less pressure, the team is less crowded and financial matters are less of a burden than for longer films. As a result, we feel more comfortable in going with the flow," explains Yann Gozlan, director of "Echo" screened at Fipa. Although certain people may think of this genre as nothing but a "rite of passage" on the way to being able to work on more ambitious projects, "short films can demonstrate an unbelievable strength. The short is like when the fat is taken out so that there's nothing left but the meat," adds Yann Gozlan. This year at Fipa, thirty-nine short films compete.

#### The Golden Age of Shorts

The strong presence of the short film owes its status to its viewers' recognition. Thanks to airwaves, cable, and satellite, the short program has progressively assumed a significant role in French television. "For two years we have noticed an increasing demand from our audience, and today, we are at the golden age of short film," declares Pascale Faure, head of short pro-

grams of Canal +. The development of new technology has greatly contributed to this craze, as well as "the competitive dimension of the sector that has considerably boosted the market and encouraged production," adds Pascale Faure. The Arte channel, which has always gladly aired short films, created an innovative space for short films on its website. "We made this bet to see a community of short filmmakers surface on the Internet," explains Hélène Vayssieres, head of short film for Arte.

Translated by Heidi Kim

Lubna Azbal plays Carole in *Echo*



## SPOTLIGHT ON

**Aspects of French creation:** Art versus violence: two films: two ways to react to the problem. Vincent Froelhy's *De Terre, de ciel, de Rimbaud*, presents how the pen of a young genius fought against the absurdity of war.

Today at 2 :00 p.m., Auditorium (Le Bellevue).

In *René Char, nom de guerre: Alexandre*, Jérôme Prieur shows his interest for the author of "cahiers d'Hypnos" during the Nazi occupation in France and depicts how he gave up his art and took arms.

Today at 2 :55 p.m., Auditorium (Le Bellevue).

**Drama:** Mikhail Segal's *Franz + Polina* presents an enchanting detour that takes place during World War II, from the point of view of a love story in a Bielorussian village.

Tonight at 8 :00 p.m., Gare du midi.

**20 years:** A wind of political commitment blows through Fipa with the help of Philippe Dutilleul's bold gaze on North Korea. *Une délégation de très haut niveau* deserves to be seen again and again.

Saturday, 9 :30 p.m., Médiathèque

Then it is Latin America's turn with Richard Dindo's *Ernesto "Che" Guevara, le journal de Bolivie* that follows the trek of Che according to his famous Bolivian travel journal.

Tonight at 11 :30 p.m., Médiathèque

**Creative Documentaries:** *El ejido, la loi du profit* takes us to Andalusia among reclusive immigrant workers, between oasis and nightmare.

Today at 12 :00 p.m., Gare du Midi

Translated by  
Heidi Kim

## INFOPIPA JANUARY 2007 EDITORIAL STAFF

**Journalism Masters program, Sciences Po**

**Toulouse:** Déborah Antoinat, Angélique Garcia, Clarisse Guiraud, Véronique Le Guen.

**Layout :** Valentine Cachau et Lina Eidmark.

**Ecole Supérieure d'Audiovisuel (ESAV), Université**

**Toulouse Le Mirail:** Raphaëlle de Cacqueray, Florian Delafournière, Karine Morales.

**Dickinson College en France:** Anna Cumbie, Joanna Freudenheim, Heidi Kim, Kitt Squire.

**Editorial supervisors:** Christine Decognier and Sylvie Toux.

**Printing and technical supervision:** ILM éditions / contact@ilm-editions.com / 05.59.03.42.87