

INFO FIPA 3

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

TODAY'S REVIEW

Flowers don't bloom in the dark

Rithy Panh is not finished excavating the painful memories from the history of his country. His recent film finds new depths of Cambodian misery.

Paper Cannot Wrap Up Embers: a sweet-sounding title belies a more somber content. It embodies the tone of the film setting it on a path of constant paradox. The inspired cinematography delivers elegant scenes of poetic beauty, but they are of an intolerable reality which profoundly affects the viewer.

Rithy Panh does not merely show the day-to-day life of a Cambodian prostitute and her sisters. He films the body. When it's battered, black and blue. When it's sick, lacerated, scorned, wasted... The bodies are on the edge of breaking down and as such are almost resigned to giving up their souls. In condemned buildings where prostitutes squat, one gets the sensation of returning to *The Land of the Wandering Souls*.

The director films these cursed bodies and souls with a compassion, a fundamental humanity, that permits each of the women to stand out. It does not document "prostitution" but rather the women it affects. The viewer is intima-

tely connected with each character to better understand the economic conditions and political climate that trapped each of them in this existence. They are the products of years of war that bled the country dry, leaving it destitute and unable to recover. Fighting for the least dollar is essential for survival. Money

becomes a life-sentence and a potential for deliverance: "When I get some money, I'll be able to pay back the madam. I can return to my village." The weight of each story, the composition of each frame, can only inspire admiration. The director's trusting relationship with these women is pal-

pable. They confide in him as if the words to describe the burden of their suffering could no longer be held back. But one is often struck by the euphemistic poetic phrase-turning in their exchanges: "How to believe in Buddha when the fish eats its young?"

Rithy Panh wrote: "In good conscience, I hold a grudge against those who see them as whores or are indifferent to their misery. So this film collects the shattered bits of rage, as cutting as the remnants of a dream." The film keeps its promises, exceeding expectation.

Translated by Joanna Freudenheim

Rithy Panh lets pictures speak for themselves.



Film Facts:

Paper Cannot Wrap Up Embers

Director: Rithy Pahn

Country: Cambodia

Length: 1h30

Year: 2006

Next screenings: Thursday Jan 25,

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

Friday Jan 26, Atalaya (Gare du Midi) at 6:15 p.m.

A LOOK AT THE JURY

Young Europeans debut as Fipa judges

The special prize chosen by a Young Europeans Jury this year is in the category of Reportages and Current Affairs.



Valérie and Zivile are two of the 13 Young European jurors.

Valérie, Austrian, is 16. Zivile, Lithuanian, is 17. These girls did not know each other a few days ago, but they are about to embark on a common adventure during this week's festival.

They were chosen to represent their countries as members of the Young Europeans Jury, created by Fipa in 2002. Between 15 and 17 years of age, the young representatives hail from thirteen European Union member states. "My teacher selected me for participation, because of my level of French," says Zivile. Nomination for this program implies an excellent knowledge of the French language, as

the young jurors must view many films and then debate amongst themselves for the selection of a winner. They are all enrolled in bilingual or total-immersion French courses and are used to reading and viewing films in the language of Molière. "Our teachers suggest films to us, and we also have access to French television shows on the TV5 channel," Valérie explains.

Lively debates and important decisions

Their main concern is for their responsibilities as jurors and the debates that will take place in making a final decision. "What I am most afraid of is the discussion, and having to choose between the documentaries," Zivile says with a tinge of apprehension.

In addition to the award decided in the Reportages and Current Affairs category, these young people will award a special prize. As for the category in which they hold the deciding power, it represents yet another obstacle. "I watched documentaries when I was little, but I don't often watch Current Affairs films," emphasizes Valérie.

But these young jurors are motivated by the challenge, and hope to find inspiration: "I like movies that make me think about what's going on, that tackle different issues and avoid clichés," comments the young Austrian. A call, then, for the upholding of the festival's image, under the banner of pluralism and insolence.

Translated by Anna Cumbie

VIEWPOINT

An American in Biarritz

When I think of Biarritz, what immediately comes to mind? The sunny beach, the lapping waves on the shore, vacationers on their speedboats and overly-tanned muscular surfers. Visiting this seaside dream of a town for an independent film festival in freezing rain and hail was the last thing I would have imagined. Tuesday night, the red velvet curtains opened the festival with a highly controversial film that has been banned in several metropolitan cities in the States: *Death of a President*. An amusing way to further manifest the French feelings towards Americans, I thought to myself.

Upon entering the majestically renovated train station converted into a theater, neatly crowned with a row of European flags standing upright like toothpicks, I noticed a slightly older crowd of spectators than previously expected. A group of men with receding hairlines, in black from head to toe, flicking their cigarettes, followed by a granny clad in fur and bauble earrings, arm-in-arm with her bespectacled husband topped with a beret (of course) walked slowly through the doors. An interesting change from the young film buffs, disheveled and splatter-painted in all of their hipster glory regularly spotted at the Los Angeles Film Festival.

Seeing as the week has just begun to kick off, I'll be keeping my eyes open for new surprises to come.

By Heidi Kim

Murder sells: from news to drama

Yesterday, the journalist Olivier Milot presented Raoul Peck's last film: *The Villemain Case*. This film reveals a love affair with a new trend in French television: fiction based on a true story.

Sordid yet borderline passionate, the public's demand for murder stories can't be denied. Previously, French television had long avoided entering this territory.

That time is now at an end. Tremendously popular in recent years, this style of sensationalized news has become an attractive and valuable resource for TV channels. *Dans la tête d'un tueur* by Claude-Michel Rome pioneered the genre. Retracing Francis Heaulme's story, this film won over more than 10 million television viewers at its first airing in 2005 on TF1.

Major channels crazy for more

Following its surprise success, most of the major French channels launched themselves into the pursuit of similar projects. According to Olivier Milot, Canal+ was the first of the major networks to jump on the bandwagon. Three years ago, the exclusive cable channel was still focusing primarily on sports and cinema, but recently the channel

decided to change its image. In 2005 they inaugurated a program of films dealing with events closer to current events. *Nuit Noire* showed the police breaking up the FLN demonstration in Paris in October 1961, *The Rainbow Warrior*, or *Engrenages* revealed the dysfunction of the French justice system.

Raoul Peck's murder drama *The Villemain Case* joins the thrilling fun.



Regular channels quickly followed suit. Each one chose its own murder story. In 2006 and 2007, the fad spun out of control. TF1 added one project to another: *The Seznec Case*, *The Dominici Case*, *Landru*, and finally *A Mother* (based on the mother of Christian Ranucci, executed for the assassination of the

young Maria-Dolorès) that will be shown in the upcoming days.

Is fiction based on murder stories living a golden age? Today, the genre seems to stumble over certain legal questions. Pierre Rambla, the father of Maria-Dolorès, filed a complaint against the producer of *A Mother*. He obtained the right to read the script and to see the film before its screening.

The project of a made-for-TV movie on the case of young Gregory Villemain on France 3 once again illustrates the influence of the judiciary process on French films. The lawyer of the family of the accused Bernard Laroche, assassinated by Villemain's father, sued the production, fearing that the dismissal granted to Laroche might be reversed.

Between the copyright image laws and the freedom of production, these stories suffer for the ambiguity between law and the creative license that makes them original.

Translated by Heidi Kim

TAKE ONE

IESA.TV goes www



Young IESA.TV filmmakers in action.

This year, over a dozen students from the IESA, the Institute of Advanced Arts Studies (L'Institut d'Etudes Supérieures des Arts) launched a new project: webcast television. For their first collaboration, they chose Fipa. The show is divided into four segments: interviews, the ins-and-outs of festival events, "périf", a window on tourism in Biarritz, and also an open-choice category. These directors-in-training broadcast each night at 8.

Producing on-location is filled with unforeseen technical difficulties, so far always resolved on time. "This project is a real challenge: not only are we responsible for getting and editing footage, but also for a website and a graphic interface. It is exhilarating to see a finished product, and to always be on our guard," explains Yoann, a 22-year-old in the last year of his studies.

This webcast will be the ideal venue for the curious to gain access to a wide variety of cultural events.

Check out Fipa happenings on their website: <http://www.iesa.fr>.

Translated by
Joanna Freudenheim

REVIEW

Rock's Lone Wolf

Under Brejnev's repressive reign, a sound engineer creates eastern rock with the subversive energy of the disobedient.

In 1984, Vladimir Kozlov contributed to Elem Klimov's "Come and See," thought to be the biggest war film ever made. This simple fact is enough to stir up interest in the film Kozlov presents this year in the Performing Arts category: *Le Rock clandestin de Youri Morozov*. In this, Morozov's fight to preserve his identity and to live as freely as possible under an oppressive regime, war is evoked yet again.

Beginning by showing a rock artist who puts a tape into a VCR, and ending with the tape being taken out, the film covers thirty years of Russian history through the eyes and, more importantly, the ears of Youri Morozov. Morozov's history is rock music, considered in 1970s Russia as an evil intended to pervert its "young communists." The remaining rockers who weren't sent to psychiatric clinics or labor camps by the KGB relate his story, reflecting on how excited they were by the recordings that circulated the country in secret, which gave a feeling of hope to Russia's youth.

Striking a chord

Images from institutional archives are interspersed throughout these testimonies, with Morozov's music in the background. These images are rendered either pathetic, ironic, or desperate by the harmonizing melodies of Morozov's guitar.

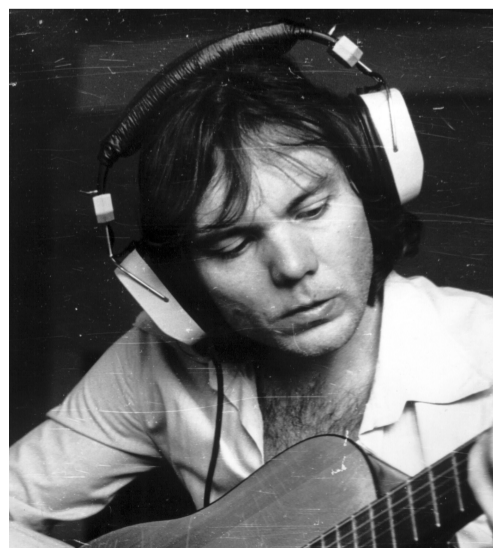
Here the real innovation of the film is

evident as it makes a mockery of communist officials or drops the Iron Curtain on the "devil's music." The relationship between image and sound created in the film effectively demands the title of which audiovisual productions are so often deprived. Its construction functions similarly to a musical composition, with the soundtrack complementing the veritable melody created by the images.

One could say that the director is a little too indulgent with his protagonist, but Morozov's charisma and his eager quest for freedom sweep away and kind of reluctance the audience might have, just like anything worthy of the title of "Rock."

Translated by Kitt Squire

Morozov self-produced nearly 50 albums over 30 years.



SPOTLIGHT ON

Creative Documentaries: The United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War, Africa, Cuba under Fidel Castro seem, at first, to be completely separate ideas. Nevertheless, Jihan El-Tahri, journalist and producer for the BBC and CAPA, uses *Cuba, the African Epic* to link the history of these countries at the time.

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

Reportages and Current Affairs: In *Delta, Oil's Dirty Business*, Greek director Yorgos Averopoulos presents a film on the oil situation in the Niger delta. He emphasizes the effects on human and ecological life in the area, pointing the finger at the big oil companies.

Cinema le Royal at 10:00 p.m.

In "Baghdad: a doctor's story," an Iraqi doctor with a hand-held camera films everyday life in his hospital. An insightful inside look at human reality. Concept by producer Ben Summer, edited by Michael Peatfield.

Cinema Le Royal at 9:15 p.m.

Series and Serials: Suzanne Fenn and Ivan Strasburg's *Reporters* is a French series that raises multiple questions regarding the job of a journalist and the media world in general.

Casino Municipal at 4:15 p.m.

Reportages: *Judah and Mohammed* shows the adolescence of two students, one Israeli, one Palestinian, in the context of an armed conflict and an occupation. In making this documentary, Gary Cohen was the first ever to be allowed to visit and film Israeli and Palestinian schools.

Cinema le Royal at 5:55 p.m.

Translated by Kitt Squire

INFOFIPA JANUARY 2007 EDITORIAL STAFF

Journalism Masters program, Sciences Po Toulouse: Deborah 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 Delafoumière, 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