

## **Bold debut films in the TIFF 2013 competition**

### **Suspense and fantasy in Shadows Shorts**

12 young directors are competing for the trophy of the 12th edition of **Transilvania International Film Festival** (May 31– June 9, Cluj). It's an edition focused on first time directors – 10 of the competition titles belong to directors making their feature length directorial debut. The competitive section is traditionally focused on first and second time directors, and the 12 films come from countries such as Saudi Arabia, Uruguay, Poland, Sweden, SUA, Germany, Denmark, The Netherlands, India, Slovakia, and Japan.

Probably the boldest debut film in the competition is **Wadjda** (by Haifaa Al-Mansour), the first feature film entirely shot in Saudi Arabia and, as if it were not enough, it is made by a woman. In order to film the story of a young girl which takes part in a Quran memorization contest in order to buy herself a bicycle – a perfect occasion for the director to make an elaborate and touching portrait of the woman's status in the Muslim world based on her own adolescence – Haifaa Al-Mansour had to wait for years and subject herself to numerous restrictions. In 2012, the film received three awards in Venice and the Dubai International Film Festival trophy.

Also bold is the Polish director Tomasz Wasilewski who manages to avoid the stereotypes of genre-filmmaking in **In a Bedroom/ W Sypialni**, a psychological drama about a 40 year old prostitute who secures money and little pleasure after making her clients fall asleep. The film was screened in 2012 at Karlovy Vary. A complex and ambitious film brings us the famous Indian playwright Anand Gandhi – **Ship of Theseus**, a meditation on identity, justice, beauty, death, via three characters: an experimental photographer, a monk and a broker.

**Made in Ash/ Až do mesta Aš** (by Iveta Grófová), Slovakia's Oscar entry, talks forthrightly, in a documentary-like style, about women on the edge between life and death. The thriller **Call Girl** (by Mikael Marcimain) tackles an uncomfortable topic inspired by a 1970 political scandal which took place in Sweden – the Minister of Justice had sex with an underage prostitute. The film was nominated eleven times for the Sweden Film Industry Awards and received the FIPRESCI award in Toronto and the Audience Award in Stockholm.

***Breaking Horizons/ Am himmel der tag*** (by Pola Beck), winner of the Best Film award in Zurich, explores the life of a young pregnant woman who takes a radical decision for fear she might find herself all alone and without a purpose. Also about womanhood, but in a different stage of life – the adolescence – speaks, in a delicate, sincere and sometimes sarcastic manner Eliza Hitman's Sundance-selected ***It Felt like Love***. And ***Tanta agua/ So Much Water*** (by Ana Guevara & Leticia Jorge), screened in Berlin and San Sebastian, focuses on the useless attempts of a father at entertaining his children in a short vacation ruined by heavy rain. The film will be distributed in Romania by Transilvania Film.

***I Catch a Terrible Cat / Koppidoi neko*** (by Rikiya Imaizumi) is quite unusual for Japanese cinema: a romantic comedy about a 70 year old writer who, hit with writer's block, goes to various pubs and falls into trouble. A lot of humor, but of a different kind, is to be found in ***The Deflowering of Eva van End*** (by Michiel ten Horn), an absurdist satire about the "petite bourgeoisie".

The only second time directors in the TIFF competition are Tobias Lindholm (***A Hijacking / Kapringen***) and Michael Noer (***Northwest/ Nordvest***). Good friends (Lindholm is one of the regular collaborators of Thomas Vinterberg), they debut together with the prison drama ***R*** (2010) and went their separate ways with ***A Hijacking***, the story of the capturing of a Danish ship by Somalian pirates and ***Northwest***, a violent thriller focused on two adolescents from a Copenhagen suburb.

The jury consists of **Cristi Puiu**, the author of TIFF 2013 visual campaign, the Hungarian filmmaker **György Pálfi**, author of the celebrated ***Taxidermia*** (2006), the actress **Franziska Petri**, internationally acclaimed in Venice for her turn ***Betrayal/ Izmena*** (by Kirill Serebrennikov), which will be screened in the Supernova section, **Frederic Boyer**, artistic director of Tribeca Film Festival (New York), and the renowned British producer **Lynda Myles**, the head of the Fiction-Directing department of the National Film and Television School, former vice-president of Columbia Pictures and co-author of the book „The Movie Brats”.

Before each competition title, TIFF audiences will watch, as always, shorts from the **Shadows Shorts** competitive section curated by Mihai Mitrică. For the first time ever, the 12 short thriller, horror and SF films selection encompasses a Romanian film, ***The End*** (by Marius Roșu). The must-sees of the selection are the Oscar-nominated ***Death of a Shadow*** (r, Tom Van Avermaet), ***Haunting Charles Manson***, by Mick Davis, ***Zimmer 606*** (by Peter Volkart), winner of Melies d'Or for best short film in Sitges, the oldest festival focused on fantastic cinema in Europe.

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Also from Sitges come two other horror delicacies: ***Fist of Jesus*** (by Adrián Cardona, David Muñoz) and ***Hotel*** (by Jose Luis Aleman). Film aficionados will also enjoy ***The Captured Bird*** (by Jovanka Vuckovic), produced by Guillermo del Toro, who tells the story of a little girl who discovers five strange creatures ready to come out in the world.

The **Shadows Shorts** jury is formed of **Freddy Bozzo**, vice-president of Brussels International Fantastic Film Festival, **Tomi Malkki**, a Finish graphic artist, illustrator and animator, selected in Annecy International Animation Film Festival with ***Save the Rhinoceros*** (2010), and **Danny Lennon**, producer and distributor from PHI Group (Quebec, Canada), the company which produced ***Danse Macabre*** and ***Hope***, former winners of the **Shadows Shorts** section.

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