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INTERNATIONAL
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FILM

REPORT OF THE SELECTION COMMITTEE OF THE 28TH INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF ETHNOLOGICAL FILM

This year, the 28th International Festival of Ethnological Film has received submissions for 138 international films, 19 student films, and 22 domestic films, which amounts to a total of 179 submitted films. Aside from the fact that the quantity of submitted films was high (120 films were submitted last year), their quality was high as well. This fact tells us that the festival became more visible for the authors, but for the production houses as well, which are usually the ones who do the submitting, as many as several films per year.

There is still a low turnout of domestic films, and their number seems even smaller owing to the fact that the majority of these submissions are TV programs and promotional films. However, there is a rising number of films supported by the Film Center of Serbia, concerned with topics relevant to ethnology with a strong personal expression by the author. Such films bring hope that domestic ethnographically-themed films are gaining in quality. Perhaps the Festival might establish a co-operation with the Film Center of Serbia and thus support a number of films of ethnographic significance, with some of these films having their premiere screening at the Festival. It is interesting that despite the ever-rising availability of visual media technology and know-how, as well as the possibility of cooperation between film authors, there are still no films produced as result of fieldwork of domestic anthropologists, whether institutionally affiliated ones, or independent researchers.

What seems evident upon first sight is a return, so to speak, to old roots of ethnographic films, meaning: exoticism, exotic man, exotic ways of living, and exotic landscapes. This time, it is no longer just the author who comes from the countries we are used to expecting, such as “Western European” countries, but also authors from Slovakia and Hungary, who bring a different perception of “exotic man”. The encounter of a “European white man” and members of “exotic peoples” is the subject of most films, but unlike their predecessors who, in the 20th century, were more focused on commenting upon a “different world”, here the “foreigner/author” is a participant who interacts with the community and often refers to the members of these communities as “friends”. In domestic film, exoticism turns again towards inexhaustible topics such as the customs and beliefs of Vlach and Roma. Nonetheless, some of these films have

entirely different ways of bringing these subjects and present an entirely different point of view as well as space to re-examine them.

Another topic present in the international category is the re-examination of the role of women in traditional culture, from women taking over roles which were until now the sole purview of men, to re-examining femininity in contemporary western society. One's need to abandon "civilization" and move to a more natural environment with which one interacts better than with other humans is another topic which imposed itself this year. Rebel, outcast, or simply someone who finds an unexpected solution in the contemporary world, more and more oppressive toward the individual, this person opts for self-isolation. While this individual strives for self-isolation, at the same time the motif of mother abandoned by her children who migrate from smaller places is increasingly present in films. Although this is not a dominant narrative of given films, the situation is so prevalent that it points to new familial relations.

An observational approach to issues is a dominant form of authors' method. This means long-term and holistic observation and tracing of relationships between characters which refract usually through relationships of family members and deal with topics such as: post-mortem rites, shamanic rituals, diviners, traditional song and many others. With this approach, film authors conduct long-term and thorough investigations and provide ethnology with material for further studies.

Motion is a dominant topic this year as well, from quests for identity or parts of personal history, to migrations and border-crossing refugees, with some of them attempting to start a new life. Wars, landfills, refugee camps, borders still compose the most common image of the world we receive from submitted films. What is noticeable is that the urban human is almost nonexistent, as are some cultural topics that are related to the phenomenon. Absence thereof suggests that the authors seek themselves in distant landscapes and communities than their own environment. Much like the aforementioned hermit who goes to live in nature as a better alternative to the existing life, so do the contemporary film authors leave their default context and use ethnology to see the "Other" and their community and culture.

Finally, we have to emphasize that there are a large number of submitted films which were not selected due to strong competition, but still deserve attention, perhaps as part of a special Museum program. Some of the films worth mentioning are: *Atto di Fede*, *Safe Passage*, *Rota 'n' Roll*, *Anuktatop: the Metamorphosis*, *Century of Smoke*, *Sun Dance*, *Oedeor Drom We Came from Afar*, *Dijalog*, *Hora*, *In Another Life*, *Courage*, *My Homeland Tales*, *Yukiko*, *Loving Out Loud*, *Zaniki*, *Wedding of Zinat's Son*, *At Jolie coiffure* and *Sun Dance*.

Based on the aforementioned, we deem that the presence of domestic ethnologists and anthropologists as co-authors and collaborators on films is something for the Festival to direct its attention to through numerous programs. In that way, they their current researches and projects would generate initial ideas, as well as the questions of what should be studied and in what way, which would cover contemporary issues in ethnology and anthropology. At the same time, the

topics of contemporary man and contemporary culture phenomena are something which is all but absent from this year's offer, with the exception of a few films: *Scars*, *We Were All to Be Queens* and *Tooth for tooth, word for word*. As if the man/researcher/author rarely directs the camera at oneself and one's environment.

During the reviewing process, Iranian and Russian productions have proven to be dominant, not just in terms of quantity of films submitted, but also in the way they treat ethnographic subjects, as well as the artistic approach to said subjects. One can primarily single out films: *A Girl from Parsian*, *Sing*, *The Molokans*, *Beloved*, *The Wind*, *Terra*, and *Camp on the Wind's Road*. Beside aforementioned films, the selection committee would like to highlight the following films: *Spirit of Jaguar*, *Red Earth White Snow*, *David and the Kingdom*, and *Humans on Display*, distinguished by their strong authorial expression, while at the same time presenting rich ethnographic material.

Competition programme:

- A Girl from Parsian (Iran)
- Spirit of Jaguar (Slovakia)
- Red Earth White Snow (Austria)
- Colonos de la Flor (Argentina)
- The Albanian Code (Israel)
- And what is the Summer Saying (India)
- Sakreštan (Croatia)
- Doći će žuti ljudi sa istoka i piće vodu sa Morave (Serbia)
- Common Ground (Belgium)
- Scars (France)
- David and the Kingdom (USA)
- Igranka za pokojnog Emilijana (Serbia)
- Simfonija (Serbia)

- We Were All to Be Queens (Germany/Spain)
- Papirnati život (Serbia)
- Sing (Russia/Poland)
- The Molokans (Azerbaijan/Russia)
- Humans on Display (China)
- Tako mi na istoku (Serbia)

Informative programme:

- Chidra (Israel)
- Zvuk lampaša (Serbia)
- Beteewen Islam and the Sacred Forest (Germany/USA)
- Gilyaka (Russia)
- Bagpipers (Slovakia)
- Niški romski Nišvil (Serbia)
- Vladimir Arsenyev's Far Eastern Odyssey (Russia)
- Story of Vasilka (Canada)
- The White Reindeer (Hungary)
- Vasa Vasa (Italy)
- Marrimarrigun (Australia)
- A Ramadan in Lisbon (Portugal)
- Sounds Portraits (Italy)
- Scaramucce (Italy)

- The Traditional Brazilian Family KATU (Brazil)
- Beloved (Iran)
- Honey Bee (Iran)
- The Wind (Iran)
- Braća iz Banata (Serbia)
- Spravljanje idrijskih žlikrofa (Slovenia)
- Terra (Russia)
- Da mi Uskrs dođe (Croatia)
- Tooth for tooth, word for word (Turkey)
- Maasai Remix (USA)
- Camp on the Wind's Road (Russia)