

6th

A N N U A L
BOSNIAN-HERZEGOVINIAN
FILM FESTIVAL AT TRIBECA
CINEMAS, 54 VARICK
STREET, NEW YORK CITY
MAY 15 - 16, 2009.
WWW.BHFFNYC.ORG



SIXTH ANNUAL

BOSNIAN-HERZEGOVINIAN FILM FESTIVAL

NEW YORK CITY, MAY 15 - MAY 16, 2009

Dear friends:

Welcome to the sixth annual Bosnian-Herzegovinian Film Festival (BHFF), taking place May 15-16, 2009 at Tribeca Cinemas.

We hope you'll enjoy our line up, comprising 13 short, animated, feature, and documentary films. They showcase the diversity of the Bosnian diaspora and its filmmakers, whose submissions come from many corners of the world: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slovenia, Croatia, Switzerland, Australia and the United States.

We are particularly excited about the fact that eight of the films will have their U.S. premieres at BHFF. Beyond that, a number of films have been praised at other film festivals around the globe.

The festival continues to be a true community effort and would have been impossible without the support of participating filmmakers, volunteers, sponsors and individual donors, media partners, distributors, production companies, Tribeca Cinemas and others.

Enjoy the films and don't forget to cast your vote for the best short or feature film and the best documentary film, check out our Web site for news and updates and sign up for our mailing list. We also hope you will join us for the closing party at Tribeca Cinemas lounge starting around midnight on Saturday, May 16.

Thank you for your support – past, present and future!

BHFF Team,
New York

Bosnian-Herzegovinian Film Festival™ (BHFF™) Story

Since its founding in 2003, BHFF has gained a reputation as an important showcase of contemporary Bosnian-Herzegovinian cinematography. The festival provides a platform for the exposure of both emerging and internationally-renowned filmmakers and also features films that focus on the theme of Bosnia and Herzegovina, thus contributing to a greater understanding of this country, its diverse culture, complex history and challenges it faces. To date, BHFF has screened more than 60 feature-length, short, documentary and animated films viewed by approximately 1,800 people.

History

The idea for organizing BHFF was first born in 2002 among film enthusiasts from the Bosnian-Herzegovinian diaspora in San Francisco and New York City, who were inspired by late Benjamin Filipović, award-winning film director, and at the time, professor at the Academy of Performing Arts in Sarajevo and president of the Association of Filmmakers of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The first annual BHFF was produced in October 2003. In 2005 BHFF became a co-production between the Voice of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Academy of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Location

The first BHFF was held at the Two Boots Pioneer Theatre in East Village. The following year, while still maintaining its presence in East Village, BHFF moved to larger premises at the Anthology Film Archives, known as an international center for the preservation, study, and exhibition of film and video. In 2007, BHFF was relocated to and remained in a more visible venue – Tribeca Cinemas.

Guests

Honorary BHFF guests have included acclaimed members of the U.S. and Bosnian-Herzegovinian cultural community, such as Sarajevo Film Festival leaders Mirsad Purivatra and Emina Ganić; actors Snežana Bogdanović and Uliks Fehmiu; filmmakers Benjamin Filipović, Ozren Milharčić and Nino Raspudić, Džemal Šabić, Sabina Vajrača, Alison Hanson and Gates Gooding; and artists Aida Šehović, Nebojša Šerić Shoba and Sara Terry. Among notable guests were also Dr. Mirza Kušljugić and Mirsada Čolaković, affiliated with the Embassy and Permanent Mission of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the United Nations.

Audience and constituency

The Bosnian-Herzegovinian community has had a presence in the United States for the past hundred years and the most recent wave of émigrés arrived during the nineties. Although official figures do not exist, there are an estimated 250,000 people of Bosnian-Herzegovinian origin living in the United States. Today, the community finds itself in need of artistic and cultural content, as well as activities that will bring it together and provide links to its native and adopted country. The BHFF fulfills this unmet need and is appreciated and praised for the quality of films and cultural exposure it provides. BHFF helps bring together not only the Bosnian-American and other Balkan communities, but also the broader New York audiences and film enthusiasts from around the world. BHFF also attracts filmmakers with ties with Bosnia and Herzegovina who come from all over the globe.

Audience Awards

Each year, BHFF audience members vote for films they consider outstanding. There are two “Golden Apple” awards presented at the closing of each annual festival: Audience Award for the Best Short or Feature Film and Audience Award for the Best Documentary Film. Films eligible for the audience awards are those screened at BHFF produced in the past two years.

Organizers

The festival is organized by two not-for-profit organizations: Voice of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Inc. and the Academy of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Voice of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Inc. is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to preserving and raising awareness of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian culture in the Tri-State area and beyond. The Voice of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Inc. broadcasts a weekly radio program in Bosnian language and organizes events for the Bosnian-Herzegovinian community. For more information, visit <http://www.voiceofbh.org>.

The Academy of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Inc. is a not-for-profit cultural and advocacy organization, which serves as a platform for various cultural, arts, and professional exchange programs led by its members, that are intended to benefit the Bosnians and Herzegovinians in New York City and United States. For more information, visit <http://www.academybh.org>.





Tolerance (Tolerantia)

Ivan Ramadan | 2008 | 6 min. | Animated

After a long sleep at the end of the last ice age, the hero of this story awakens from the ice and starts building a pyramid. Tolerantia is the first independent short film from Bosnia and Herzegovina made using 3D animation. It explores conflict and intolerance as essential components of human nature. The film received accolades at Huesca Film Festival and Sarajevo Film Festival, and was also nominated for the best short film at European Film Academy and screened at numerous film festivals in Sweden, Croatia, Slovakia, Poland, South Africa, Greece, Ireland, Japan, Italy and Turkey.



U.S. PREMIERE

Tractor, Love and Rock 'n' Roll (Traktor, ljubav i rock 'n' roll)

Branko Đurić | 2008 | 105 min. | Feature

Under pressure from her father, Sylvia leaves Switzerland to go back to her village in Slovenia, in order to find herself a husband. The only record player in the village, and probably the only electric guitar in rural Slovenia of the 1960's belongs to Breza. He persuades a local folk band to accompany him while playing rock 'n' roll for Sylvia, trying to win her heart. The film is the winner of awards Taormina Film Festival and Jecheon International Music and Film Festival.



U.S. PREMIERE

I Don't Dream in German (Ne sanjam na njemačkom)

Ivana Lalović | 2008 | 15min. | Short Fiction

Seventeen year old Lejla works in a hotel restaurant in Sarajevo where she meets Miloš, a 43-year old businessman who spent his student years in Sarajevo before moving to Switzerland. At nightfall, they get closer to each other without anticipating what the next morning will bring. The film won awards at festivals in Macedonia, Australia and Switzerland and was also screened in Italy, Ukraine, Slovenia, Germany, Bulgaria, Croatia, Belgium, Turkey, Russia, France, Indonesia, Serbia and the United States.



U.S. PREMIERE

Razor

Al Mehičević | 2008 | 12.5 min. | Short Fiction

During the global financial crisis Richard Dick Stevenson is running his private detention center in Australia. His only prisoner, an Afghani asylum seeker Jusuf, becomes his best companion. A sudden government decision to cut the funding for the center ends this unusual, unfolding relationship. In their surreal world, Richard's dream becomes Jusuf's nightmare, until reality takes them apart. The film will be screened at Short Film Corner organized by Cannes Film Festival, as well as St. Kilda Film Festival.



Turn Back South

Igor Borovac | 2007 | 11 min. | Documentary

The film tells the stories of people from Mexico who are attempting to cross the border into the United States illegally and the border patrol agents whose task it is to stop them. It exposes the struggles and the humanity on both sides and includes an interview with Enrique Morones, founder of Border Angels. This documentary won the Third Place Documentary Prize at the CSU Media Arts Festival and was also screened at the South East European Film Festival, International Latino Festival, New York City Short Film Festival and others.



U.S. PREMIERE

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Slobodan Maksimović | 2007 | 23 min. | Short Fiction

½ of a bathtub, ½ of a shutter, ½ of a balcony... this is where Nikša lives. Only a thin wall separates him from his neighbors. Clara's everyday life starts at 4:30 in the morning when she opens the shutter, turns the radio on and starts vacuuming the apartment. All this is driving Nikša out of his mind. The film won awards at film festivals in Bosnia and Herzegovina and has also been screened at festivals in France, Macedonia, Kosovo, Greece, Italy, Morocco, Croatia, Poland, Slovenia and Chile.



U.S. PREMIERE

AgapE

Slobodan Maksimović | 2007 | 19.5 min. | Short Fiction

In a remote convent, nuns decide to install broadband Internet access. A young nun meets a somewhat clumsy Internet installer and forbidden love finds its way into their lives. In addition to winning awards at Mediterranean Short Film Festival of Tangier, International Film and Video Festival of Beijing Film Academy, AgapE was also screened at film festivals in Croatia, Slovenia, Portugal, Turkey, Czech Republic and Macedonia.



It's Hard To Be Nice (Teško je biti fin)

Srđan Vuletić | 2007 | 102 min. | Feature

Fudo is a forty year-old taxi driver who wants to be good. He just happens to be in the wrong place at the wrong time: contemporary Sarajevo. Though he has elaborate plans to rise above his petty-criminal past, Fudo's old friends have their own plans— to bring him back for one last job. Described by *Variety* as “an engaging, urban fairy tale,” this feature was Bosnia and Herzegovina's official submission to the Best Foreign Language Film Category of the Annual Academy Awards in 2008 and a winner of prizes at the Miami Film Festival, Sarajevo Film Festival and MedFilm Festival.

BOSNIAN-HERZEGOVINIAN FILM FESTIVAL



U.S. PREMIERE

Believers (Vjernici)

Namik Kabil | 2008 | 22 min. | Documentary

The story of multiethnic Sarajevo today sounds like an ironic and sad stereotype because it refers to the life in Sarajevo before the war, which is largely gone. Still, there are people who go against the flow, such as members of the "Pontanima" choir who gather in a Franciscan church in a suburb of Sarajevo. The film was screened at ZagrebDox.



U.S. PREMIERE

If You Are Watching This, Mum (Ako ovo gledaš, mama)

Musafa Mustafić and Dario Novalić | 2008 | 27 min. | Documentary

In 1992, in an agreement with the Italian government, 45 children from the "Ljubica Ivezić" orphanage left the besieged Sarajevo. The idea was to take them away from the war and return them home afterwards. Fifteen years later, five of them tell their stories and reveal that they never returned, that they no longer speak their mother tongue, that they feel nostalgic, have new friends and new families, and a new homeland. The film was screened at Sarajevo Film Festival, ZagrebDox and Global Investigative Journalism Conference.



Diagnosis S.B.H. (Dijagnoza S.B.H.)

Enes Zlatar | 2008 | 42 min. | Documentary

On the backdrop of the contemporary music scene in Bosnia Herzegovina and interviews with musicians, Enes Zlatar asks: Which language is 'our language'? Do Serbian, Bosnian and Croatian really differ? Is language identity? He explores these issues, leaving us to contemplate the political legacy of nationalism. Among others, the film was screened at the Sarajevo Film Festival, ZagrebDox and South European Film Festival.



U.S. PREMIERE

Man Still Goes To The Moon (Ljudi još uvijek idu na mjesec)

Dragan Rokvić | 2008 | 12 min. | Animated

A science fiction story about returning to Sarajevo after a war. It is 2096 and the War for the Moon has just ended. When a Moon Traveler returns to Sarajevo, ghosts of his friends killed in the war will be there to meet him. A wrong look at the wrong time will make the gap between those who stayed and those who left unbridgeable. The film was screened at the Sarajevo Film Festival.



U.S. PREMIERE

The Nightguards (Čuvari noći)

Namik Kabil | 2008 | 87 min. | Feature

Full of dark humor, Kabil's first dramatic feature reflects on postwar Sarajevo through the microcosm of two watchmen discussing their worries as they work through the night. Geraldina and Mahir have been married for three years and they have no children. One night, Mahir becomes convinced that he is pregnant and starts throwing up. His best friend Brizla suspects something is wrong with Mahir. The resolution comes with the morning coffee. In addition to the Venice Film Festival and International Film Festival Bratislava, the film was screened at other film festivals in Sweden, Turkey, Macedonia and Serbia.

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