

Dear friends:

Welcome to the ninth annual Bosnian-Herzegovinian Film Festival (BHFF™). This year's program was compiled from more than 30 films received from Austria, Australia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Croatia, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Slovenia and the United States.

We will screen 16 short, feature and documentary films that reflect the diversity of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian experience. The selection includes the world premieres of "**Gold Diggers**," "**Framed**," "**Searching for the Devil**" and "**If I Don't**"; U.S. premieres of "**A Short Story**," "**85 Seconds**," "**Short for Vernesa B.**," "**The West in the East**," "**Neverending Story**," and New York premiere of "**The Fuse: or How I Burned Simon Bolivar**." We will also showcase feature films: "**Jasmina**," "**Circus Columbia**" and "**In the Land of Blood and Honey**," as well as documentaries "**A Cell Phone Movie**," "**The Witness**" and "**I Came to Testify**."

We hope you will find this year's program compelling, entertaining and educational. It is a rich and powerful body of work and we are extremely excited to showcase it! Filmmaker Q&A after select screenings will help provide more context. All films are either in English or have English subtitles.

A big shout out to the official BHFF 2012 Jury, an expert panel of judges comprising award-winning filmmakers Refik Hodžić and Steve Nemsick, as well as an accomplished Bosnian-American fiction writer, Aleksandar Hemon.

We also want to thank our volunteers, members of the BHFF Executive Team, participating filmmakers, distributors, production companies, media partners, Burek The Waffle & Wolf, Graphic Executions, Tribeca Cinemas, Mehanata Bulgarian Bar, Stone Creek Bar, Storks and Forks, Columbia University and individual donors. Without them – and all of you -- the festival would not be possible! Thank you! Don't forget to visit www.bhffnyc.org regularly for updates and if you haven't done this already, please sign up for our mailing list. Also, follow us on Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com/groups/bhffnyc/>) and Twitter (<http://twitter.com/#!/BHFFNYC>).

We also hope to see you at the awards ceremony following the film festival conclusion on Saturday, May 5, starting at 10 p.m at Tribeca Cinemas Lounge.

Enjoy the films and don't forget to cast your vote for the BHFF™ 2012 Audience Award for Best Picture.

BHFF Executive Team

Bosnian-Herzegovinian Film Festival (BHFF™) Story

Although Bosnia and Herzegovina, a country in Southeastern Europe slightly smaller than West Virginia, generates only several feature films per year, its filmmakers have gained worldwide recognition, producing award-winning movies on very low budgets. The Bosnian-Herzegovinian Film Festival (BHFF) is an annual event, which features contemporary Bosnian-Herzegovinian cinematography and films with Bosnia and Herzegovina as their theme. Since its founding in 2003, BHFF has gained a reputation as an important showcase that provides a platform for the exposure of up-and-coming and internationally-renowned filmmakers, thus contributing to a greater understanding of this country, its diverse culture and complex history.

This vibrant cultural event, taking place in New York City, brings together a wide spectrum of audiences. To date, BHFF has screened close to 100 feature length, short, documentary and animated films viewed by several thousand people.

History

The idea for organizing the Bosnian-Herzegovinian Film Festival was first conceived in 2002 among film enthusiasts from the Bosnian-Herzegovinian diaspora in San Francisco and New York City. Benjamin Filipović, award-winning film director, professor at the Academy of Performing Arts in Sarajevo and President of the Association of Filmmakers of Bosnia and Herzegovina, provided the inspiration for the first film festival.

In 2003, Dr. Džemaludin Harba invited representatives of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian community in New York to a brainstorming meeting regarding a potential festival of Bosnian and Herzegovinian film. This group of volunteers and the Radio Voice of Bosnia and Herzegovina produced the first annual Bosnian-Herzegovinian Film Festival (BHFF) that same year. Following its debut, in 2005 the BHFF became a co-production between Radio Voice of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Academy of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which incorporated some of the initial organizers of the first annual BHFF.

Location

In 2003, BHFF was held at the Two Boots Pioneer Theatre. The following year, BHFF moved to the Anthology Film Archives. In 2007, BHFF relocated to and remained in a more visible venue – Tribeca Cinemas.

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/>.

BHFF Team

Since its founding, the organization of BHFF has been supported solely by the tireless efforts of its volunteers. The BHFF Executive Team consists of seven individuals who are responsible for the overall organization and strategic direction of the film festival. They are supported by other volunteers.

Audience and Constituency

The Bosnian-Herzegovinian community has had a presence in the United States for more than hundred years. Although official figures do not exist, there are an estimated 250,000 people of Bosnian-Herzegovinian origin living in the United States. The community finds itself in need of artistic and cultural content, as well as activities that will provide links to its native and adopted country. The Bosnian-Herzegovinian Film Festival fulfills this unmet need and is 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 film and Balkan culture enthusiasts from around the world.

Notable Guests

Honorary guests have included acclaimed members of the U.S. and Bosnian-Herzegovinian cultural community, such as Sarajevo Film Festival representatives Emina Ganić and Mirsad Purivatra; actors Snežana Bogdanović, Senad Bašić, Daniela Dakich and Uliks Fehmiu; filmmakers Igor Borovac, Gates Gooding, Chris Ernst, Alison Hanson, Refik Hodžić, Amir Husak, Namik Kabil, Rešad Kulenović, Ozren Milharčić, Steve Nemsick, Nino Raspudić, Geoffrey Alan Rhodes, Džemal Šabić, Sabina Vajrača, Claire Wasserman and late Benjamin Filipović.

Others have included artists Aida Šehović, Nebojša Šerić Shoba and Sara Terry; author of the international bestseller Zlata's Diary Zlata Filipović; poet Sasha Skenderija; singer-songwriter Jess King and DJ Tomo.

Awards

Three prestigious awards will be given to the most outstanding films screened at this year's BHFF. These films will be selected by the official BHFF 2012 Jury, an expert panel of judges comprising award-winning filmmakers Refik Hodžić and Steve Nemsick, as well as an accomplished Bosnian-American fiction writer, Aleksandar Hemon. BHFF 2012 jury will honor the most outstanding films with BHFF™ 2012 Jury Award for the Best Documentary Film, BHFF™ 2012 Jury Award for Best Short or Animated Film and BHFF™ 2012 Jury Award for the Best Feature Film. Additionally, the BHFF™ 2012 Audience Award for Best Picture will be presented to a film in any category deemed outstanding by an audience vote. Films eligible for the Jury Awards and Audience Award in 2012 are those screened at this year's BHFF produced during 2012, 2011 or 2010. All winning films will be presented with the BHFF awards at the awards ceremony following the film festival conclusion on Saturday, May 5, starting at 10 p.m at Tribeca Cinemas Lounge.

Bosnian-Herzegovinian Film Festival 2012 Jury

Refik Hodžić has worked as a journalist, filmmaker and communications specialist in the field of transitional justice. Currently, he serves as the director of communications for the International Center for Transitional Justice. Hodžić worked in various capacities at the Special Tribunal for Lebanon and the International Criminal Tribunal for Yugoslavia. He also headed the public information and outreach section of the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In 2004, Hodžić co-founded XY Films, an independent film and television production company producing documentary films dealing with the legacy of war crimes committed during the 1990s. His work includes "Statement 710399" and "Justice Unseen," award-winning documentaries.

Steve Nemsick is an award-winning filmmaker with more than a decade of experience making documentaries and editing television shows. His "Pray For Me, The Jason Jessee Film," won numerous awards, including Best Emerging Filmmaker at X-Dance. In 2011, Nemsick's "Much Ado In Mostar" won Best Documentary audience award at the Bosnian-Herzegovinian Film Festival. A wide variety of projects has led to Steve filming from the back of a chopper in Tokyo at 125 miles per hour, to a community that lives in a Mexican garbage dump, to a white power BBQ in Australia. Nemsick is currently making a series of short films about quintessential New Yorkers.

Aleksandar Hemon is a Bosnian-American fiction writer who has been awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship and a "Genius Grant" from the MacArthur Foundation. He is the editor of several Best European Fiction anthologies (Dalkey Archives) and the author of The Question of Bruno, Nowhere Man, The Lazarus Project, and Love and Obstacles. Hemon's collection of auto-biographical essays, The Book of My Lives, is forthcoming in the fall of 2012.

For more information about BHFF, please visit <http://www.bhffnyc.org/>.



Circus Columbia

Danis Tanović | 2010 | 113 min. | Feature

Divko Buntić returns to his former home after a 20-year exile in Germany. Returning with an attractive young girlfriend, a flashy new Mercedes, a pocketful of cash, and a lucky black cat, things are looking good for Divko. When his cat goes missing things begin to fall apart: trouble with his girlfriend and the fledgling relationship with his estranged son are strained as the entire town scrambles to find the cat and collect the cash reward being offered. Divko's personal tumult mirrors the country's situation at large with signs appearing that the Bosnian War is coming. "Circus Columbia" won the Audience Award at the 16th Sarajevo Film Festival.

Nominations:

- BHFF Jury Award for the Best Feature Film
- BHFF Audience Award for the Best Picture



The Witness (Svjedok)

Haris Bilajbegović | 2012 | 42 min. | Documentary

"The Witness" is a visually powerful reinterpretation and dramatization of Raif Begić's experiences during the war in Bosnia. It is a film about bravery of a survivor who is not afraid to tell his story as a key witness at the Hague Tribunal as well as at the Superior Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina against soldiers of the Army of Republika Srpska, later found guilty of war crimes. Screening at the 2012 BHFF will be the World Premiere for "The Witness."

WORLD PREMIERE

Nominations:

- BHFF Jury Award for the Best Documentary Film
- BHFF Audience Award for the Best Picture



I Came to Testify

Pamela Hogan | 2011 | 52 min. | Documentary

Narrated by Matt Damon, "I Came to Testify" is a moving story of how a group of 16 women who had been imprisoned and raped by Serb-led forces in the Bosnian town of Foca broke history's great silence and stepped forward to take the witness stand in an international court of law. Their remarkable courage resulted in a triumphant verdict that led to new international laws about sexual violence in war. This gripping documentary has won the 2012 Gracie Award for Outstanding Series.

Nominations:

- BHFF Audience Award for the Best Picture



85 Seconds (85 sekundi)

Ada Sokolović | 2011 | 2 min. | Short Fiction

A short film based on author's actual experience during the Siege of Sarajevo in 1993. The film is a minimalist approach to storytelling about moments that can change one's life. "85 seconds" shows the power of one of those moments. Screening at the 2012 BHFF will be the U.S. Premiere for "85 Seconds."

U.S. PREMIERE

Nominations:

- BHFF Jury Award for the Best Short or Animated Film
- BHFF Audience Award for the Best Picture



U.S. PREMIERE

Nominations:

- BHFF Jury Award for the Best Short or Animated Film
- BHFF Audience Award for the Best Picture

Neverending Story (Priča bez kraja)

Elvir Muminović | 2011 | 15 min. | Short Fiction

After Emir and Kirsten lose their child in late pregnancy, they decide to adopt a child from Bosnia. At the moment when they arrive to take the child for a trial period, Emir finds out that the child is of the Bosnian Serb nationality. The film addresses the issue of the post-war traumas and how the new generation of Bosnians are affected by it. Screening at the 2012 BHFF will be the U.S. Premiere for "Neverending Story."



Jasmina

Nedžad Begović | 2010 | 89 min. | Feature

An asthmatic grandmother (Safa) and her six-month-old granddaughter have arrived with a humanitarian convoy from the war-torn Sarajevo to a peaceful town on the Adriatic. Their neighbor, Stipe, is an alcoholic bum, and bent on making their life hell. During one of her asthma attacks, having no other choice, Safa knocks at Stipe's door and hands the baby over to him. After she passes away, Stipe clumsily begins to take care of the baby girl. Over time, the girl becomes his reason for living. He no longer tries to get rid of her.

Nominations:

- BHFF Jury Award for the Best Feature Film
- BHFF Audience Award for the Best Picture



Framed

Davor Marnuzić | 2011 | 2 min. | Short Fiction

Arriving home after hard day at work, an exhausted man gets a rare glimpse of the future with the magical frame that appears at his doorstep. Screening at the 2012 BHFF will be the World Premiere of this intriguing short film.

WORLD PREMIERE

Nominations:

- BHFF Jury Award for the Best Short or Animated Film
- BHFF Audience Award for the Best Picture



If I Don't

Zinka Bejtić | 2012 | 8 min. | Short Fiction

"If I Don't" is a fashion film in narrative form. It reflects on the idea that clothes represent a choice by which we feel, either trapped or liberated. It explores the idea to leave the box we all feel that we are inside and search for and face our fears. It also leads to realization that our fears are imaginary. Screening at the 2012 BHFF will be the World Premiere for "If I Don't."

WORLD PREMIERE

Nominations:

- BHFF Jury Award for the Best Short or Animated Film
- BHFF Audience Award for the Best Picture



The Fuse: or How I Burned Simon Bolivar (Kako sam zapalio Simona Bolivara)

Igor Drljača | 2011 | 9 min. | Documentary

Using personal home video footage, this documentary portrays how a young boy's attempts to avoid a poor grade on a school assignment in 1990s Sarajevo may have contributed to the start of the war. This short documentary has been awarded Canada's Top Ten Short Films of 2011. It has also been screened at the Sarajevo Film Festival, Toronto and Vancouver International Film Festivals, and at the Cinema du Reel International Documentary Film Festival in Europe. It premiered in the U.S. at the SXSW festival.

Nominations:

- BHFF Jury Award for the Best Documentary Film
- BHFF Audience Award for the Best Picture



Short for Vernesa B.

Jons Vukorep | 2011 | 11 min. | Short Fiction

Bosnian actress, Vernesa Berbo, leaves war-torn Bosnia and settles in Germany where, as an illegal immigrant, she tries to continue her acting career. The only roles she is able to get are roles depicting Eastern European women as, for example, a Polish cleaning lady, Romanian asylum seeker, Russian prostitute, or a Bosnian refugee, roles which take her back to her own personal nightmare. The film has screened at the 17th Sarajevo Film Festival as well as Courtmetrage, Brussels Short Film Festival. Screening at the 2012 BHFF will be the U.S. Premiere for "Short for Vernesa B."

U.S. PREMIERE

Nominations:

- BHFF Jury Award for the Best Short or Animated Film
- BHFF Audience Award for the Best Picture



A Cell Phone Movie (Film mobitelom)

Nedžad Begović | 2011 | 62 min. | Documentary

A doctor orders the filmmaker to walk regularly to get over an angina. In three years, he covers thousands of kilometers. Taking his mobile phone, he films and records the things going on around him. We hear him talking with his family and friends. We share in his view of modern-day Sarajevo: a polyphonic kaleidoscope, strange and entertaining...This intriguing documentary won the Best Documentary Award at the 17th Sarajevo Film Festival.

Nominations:

- BHFF Jury Award for the Best Documentary Film
- BHFF Audience Award for the Best Picture



Gold Diggers

Al Mehičević | 2012 | 9 min. | Short Fiction

Three miners trapped underground have captivated audiences around the world. Their devout wives have now become celebrities. A young lady turns up to the site uninvited. The wives want her gone but she has a story to tell - she is having an affair with one of the miners and she wants her share of the fame. One by one, the mistresses turn up to the site as the whole world watches the cat fight unfold. The miners are trapped in more ways than one. Screening at the 2012 BHFF will be the World Premiere for "Gold Diggers."

WORLD PREMIERE

Nominations:

- BHFF Jury Award for the Best Short or Animated Film
- BHFF Audience Award for the Best Picture



U.S. PREMIERE

Nominations:

- BHFF Jury Award for the Best Short or Animated Film
- BHFF Audience Award for the Best Picture

A Short Story (Kratka priča)

Ibro Hasanović | 2011 | 10 min. | Short Fiction

An enigmatic character tells the story (a prophecy originating from Eastern Bosnia) that has been transmitted orally for over half a century. The story relates to a prophecy that was given to the people of a village in 1941 by a local imam, based on the mystical book "Kasida." The book has predicted the main tragedies that happened during the second part of the 20th century in former Yugoslavia and predicts more to come in the 21st. Screening at the 2012 BHFF will be the U.S. Premiere for "A Short Story."



WORLD PREMIERE

Nominations:

- BHFF Jury Award for the Best Documentary Film
- BHFF Audience Award for the Best Picture

Searching for the Devil (U potrazi za šejtanom)

Samir Bajrić | 2011 | 31 min. | Documentary

Shot as a part documentary and part documentary, "Searching for the Devil" uses humor and real interviews to address one of the biggest enigmas in human history. Mostly filmed in the area around the town of Ključ, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the project is a debut of the director, Samir Bajrić. The plot explores the possibility of the true existence, presence and influence of the Devil on mankind. Screening at the 2012 BHFF will be the World Premiere for "Searching for the Devil."



U.S. PREMIERE

Nominations:

- BHFF Jury Award for the Best Documentary Film
- BHFF Audience Award for the Best Picture

The West in the East (Zapad na istoku)

Nisvet Hrustić | 2010 | 24 min. | Documentary

A lover of nature is trying to build a weekend house on his own and bring water to it from its source in the forest ¾ of a mile away. Combining Eastern resourcefulness and Western ideas, he uses lumber waste as building material, preserving the environment while facing incomprehension and derision by local community. This captivating documentary was screened at the 16th Sarajevo Film Festival. It has been awarded the Main Prize in the category "People and Earth/Ecological Success Stories" at the 37th International Festival of Sustainable Development Films in Bratislava, Slovakia.



Nominations:

- BHFF Jury Award for the Best Feature Film
- BHFF Audience Award for the Best Picture

In the Land of Blood and Honey

Angelina Jolie | 2011 | 127 min. | Feature

Set against the backdrop of the Bosnian War that tore the Balkan region apart in the 1990s, "In the Land of Blood and Honey" tells the story of Danijel and Ajla, two people from different sides of a brutal ethnic conflict. Danijel, a soldier fighting for the Serbs, and Ajla, a Bosnian held captive in the camp he oversees, knew each other before the war, and could have found love with each other. "In the Land of Blood and Honey" portrays the incredible emotional, moral and physical toll that the war exerts both on individuals and people as a whole, and the terrible consequences that stem from the lack of political will to intervene in a society stricken with conflict. This is a Bosnian-language version of the film with English subtitles.

BHFF™ Contributing Sponsors:

The Harriman Institute

Special Thanks:



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Almir Lucević
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Amra Turalić
Damir Pozderac
Dr. Džemaludin Harba
Leila Rachidi
Selma Avdičević

BHFF™ Graphic Design:

Damir Pozderac

Special Thanks To:

Amina Mehmedagić
Amir Husak
Anela Pašović
Belma Mirvić
Iskra Sagi
Illhan Ramić
Jerry Ruotolo
Matt Sunbulli

Storks and Forks
Burek The

and many more ...