



## **NORD and WELCOME win Berlin Europa Cinemas Label ex aequo**

February 13 2009 : **WELCOME** (Philippe Lioret, France) and **NORD** (Rune Denstad Langlo, Norway) have been awarded the Europa Cinemas Label ex aequo as Best European Films in the Panorama section of the Berlin Film Festival, it was announced today by a jury of four Europa Cinemas exhibitors – the fifth year the Label has been awarded in the section.

Both **NORD** and **WELCOME** will now receive the support of the Europa Cinemas exhibitors who commit themselves to extend the length of its run on screen and additional promotion across the network.

The Europa Cinemas jury for this year's Berlinale consisted of: Christin Berg : Exhibitor/Oslo Kino (Norway); Krisztina Paldy : Distributor/Budapest Film (Hungary); Robert Rider: Exhibitor/Barbican Centre (UK); Dagmar Wagenknecht : Exhibitor/Kinoklub am Hirschlachufer/Erfurt (Germany).

The Jury issued the following statement: 'We found it impossible to choose between two very strong but contrasting candidates, hence our decision to award the Label ex aequo to both of these excellent films with a strong humanistic context. **WELCOME** is a robust and moving drama driven by powerful performances, tackling big issues which are all too relevant today. By contrast **NORD** is a warm, visually exciting and original road movie set in the snowy North of Norway. We are confident that both films have every chance of finding a wide audience around Europe, aided by the award of the Label.'

Sold internationally by Memento Films, **NORD** is Rune Denstad Langlo's debut feature and stars Anders Baasmo Christiansen, Marte Aunemo, Lars Olsen, Mads Sjogard Pettersen, Astrid Solhaug, and Kyrre Hellum. A Motlys A/S production, the screenplay is by Erlend Loe, with Brede Hovland and Sigve Endresen as producers.

Following a nervous breakdown, former skiing ace Jomar Henriksen finds a job as a piste patroller. He begins to overlook his duties as an attendant, spending most of his time smoking, drinking and lazing. Then one day an old friend turns up and all of a sudden he sees a fresh opportunity to put this life behind him and start afresh. The friend tells Jomar that he is the father of a child living in the north of the country. On his long journey north Jomar comes across tanks, dangerous tunnels, a mysteriously tethered Sami, full fridges in empty houses and unusual ways of getting drunk ... and, in the end, maybe even his own child.

**WELCOME** is sold internationally by Films Distribution. Directed by Philippe Lioret, the film stars Vincent Lindon, Firat Ayverdi, and Audrey Dana. The producer for Nord-Ouest Films is Eve Machuel, and the screenplay is by Philippe Lioret, Emmanuel Courcol and Olivier Adam.

Bilal, 17, left his native Iraq shortly after his girlfriend emigrated to England and is now in the midst of an adventurous journey across Europe in order to see her again. However, his trek has now come to an abrupt end on the northern coast of France and he can go no further. Between him and his girlfriend Mina lies the wintry English Channel, the busiest waterway in the world. Could Bilal join the number of bold swimmers who have attempted the crossing? The boy decides to head for the local swimming pool to begin training. There he meets lifeguard Simon, to whom he eventually confides his grand plan. Simon takes Bilal under his wing and secretly teaches the young Kurd how to do the crawl.

The success of recent winning films is eloquent testament to the impact that the Label has on a film's profile and its circulation around Europe. Last year's Berlin winner, Götz Spielmann's Academy Award nominated *REVANCHE* has had successful releases in ten territories. The Cannes winner from 2008, Bouli Lanners' *ELDORADO* enjoyed great success in Belgium, France and Italy with Germany and the Netherlands to follow this year. Venice 2008 winner Uberto Pasolini's *MACHAN* had a solid opening in Italy, with releases set for France, Switzerland, Austria and Germany. Looking further back, Anton Corbijn's *CONTROL*, the Cannes winner from 2007, has been released in 20 countries around Europe, and Andrzej Jakimowski's *TRICKS* (Venice 2007) has won prizes at 6 international Festivals and has been sold in more than 20 countries.

Founded in 1992, the Europa Cinemas network now consists of a remarkable 1945 screens in 758 cinemas in 439 cities in 43 countries. Europa Cinemas' aim is to support the programming and visibility of European films outside their country of origin, and to foster initiatives aimed at encouraging younger audiences to develop their interest in European films and cultural diversity. Since 2004, Europa Cinemas has been extending its film theatre network outside Europe, particularly in Asia, South America and around the Mediterranean.

The Europa Cinemas Label awarded at Berlin complements the Labels awarded at the Quinzaine des Réalisateurs in Cannes, the Giornate degli Autori section in Venice, and the Karlovy Vary selection.

Previous winners of the Europa Cinemas Label are:

#### Cannes/Directors' Fortnight

- 2003: The Mother (Roger Michell, UK)  
Kitchen Stories (Bent Hamer, Norway/Sweden)
- 2004: In the Battlefields / Dans les champs de bataille (Danielle Arbid, France / Belgium / Lebanon)
- 2005: La Moustache (Emmanuel Carrère, France)
- 2006: 12:08 East of Bucharest/A Fost sau n-a fost ? (Corneliu Porumboiu, Romania)
- 2007: Control (Anton Corbijn, UK)
- 2008: Eldorado (Bouli Lanners, Belgium)

#### Berlin/Panorama

- 2005: Live and Become / Radu Mihaileanu, France/Belgium/Israel)  
Cockles and Muscles / Crustacés et Coquillages  
(Olivier Ducastel, Jacques Martineau, France)
- 2006: Tough Enough / Knallhart (Detlev Buck, Germany)

2007: El Camino de los Ingleses / Summer Rain (Antonio Banderas, Spain)  
2008: Revanche (Götz Spielmann, Austria)

Venice/Venice Days

2004: Darwin's Nightmare / Le Cauchemar de Darwin (Hubert Sauper, Austria/France/Belgium)  
2005: Le Petit Lieutenant (Xavier Beauvois, France)  
2006: Dark Blue Almost Black / Azul Oscuro Casi Negro (Daniel Sánchez Arévalo, Spain)  
2007: Tricks / Sztuczki (Andrzej Jakimowski, Poland)  
2008: Machan / Uberto Pasolini, UK/Germany/Italy)

Karlovy Vary (Main Competition and East of the West section)

2006: Frozen City / Valkoinen kaupunki (Aku Louhimies, Finland)  
2007: The Class / Klass (Ilmar Raag, Estonia)  
2008: Bahrtalo! Good Luck! (Róbert Lakatos, Hungary)

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Further Information: Charles McDonald

[charles@charlesmcdonald.co.uk](mailto:charles@charlesmcdonald.co.uk)

in Berlin until Feb 15:

+ 49 176 1017 0298

Then +44 207 736 3445

[www.europa-cinemas.org](http://www.europa-cinemas.org)

**Europa Cinemas**

Fatima Djoumer, Head of International Relations, [fatim@djoumer.de](mailto:fatim@djoumer.de)

Label: Stéphanie Dufour, [sdufour@europa-cinemas.org](mailto:sdufour@europa-cinemas.org)

Info: Jean-Baptiste Selliez, [info@europa-cinemas.org](mailto:info@europa-cinemas.org)

+ 33 (0)1 42 71 53 70 [www.europa-cinemas.org](http://www.europa-cinemas.org)