

PRESS RELEASE

10th Dortmund International Film Festival

12 – 17 April 2005

Heads or tails? MONEY is the big resounding theme at Dortmund's 10th International Film Festival

For the tenth time in twenty years, the femme totale team and their Dortmund International Film Festival will be taking a cinemascopic look at film productions by women — from all over the world. Ninety films from twenty countries are up for screening with the focus this time round on the theme of MONEY. Where does it come from? Who earns it and who doesn't? And who foots the bill in both a real and metaphoric sense? Apart from this zoom-in on a socially relevant theme – a concept which has been the Dortmund Festival's trademark since 1987 – femme totale are pleased to announce an openly lucrative innovation: the International Film Competition for Women Directors. Eight new films will compete for a 25,000 Euro prize sponsored by utility company RWE Westfalen-Weser-Ems AG. Although the rules of entry did not provide for any thematic restrictions, the films still show just how actual and relevant the festival topic is. The women directors will be presenting their films in person. For example, the Dortmund Festival audience will have a rare opportunity to discuss the internationally acclaimed Australian film **SOMERSAULT** with its director Cate Shortland.

Where does a woman film-maker get the money from to produce a film? A good question and a series of workshops especially aimed at next-generation women film-makers will be given over to this very issue.

Also, for the third time, femme totale will be running its own development programme in the shape of its Camera Award courtesy of the e-m-s new media AG. Endowed with 5,000 Euro, this particular competition is aimed at encouraging young camerawomen to continue their career in the film industry. The competition is organized with the kind support of the German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth.

The organisers of the 10th Dortmund International Film Festival thus extend a cordial invitation to film aficionados everywhere to come and find out more about money and the movies — and then, generously and beneficially, share the add-on knowledge gained with others and not hoard it up for themselves!

1 The Thematic Focus: MONEY

Heads or tails? Money determines our lives. When it comes to money, anyone can put two or two together or make a telling joke: "Money's better than poverty", Woody Allen once said, "if only for financial reasons". Money stinks; you can't eat it; but you can store it without problem. Either way, life with money is easier than life without it. And aren't there any utopias left?

femme totale will be showing how women film-makers have tackled a theme which at once governs everyday life and world politics, as well as being the stuff which myths are made of. From works of the silent movie era that expose the links between love and money with astonishing sharpness through to more recent films that point to the dangers of the globalised economy for individuals, entire social classes and countries alike. Feature films, documentaries

and experimentals ... all the genres are represented, thus providing the directors with a specific approach to make money and its ambivalent effects both visible and tangible. Indeed, the different film programmes into which the thematic fields are divided are an expression of that intriguing diversity.

Big Business – No Business

With a few good ideas and some personal commitment, you can become rich. With **TUPPERWARE**, for example, as the eponymous film from Laurie Kahn-Leavitt (USA 2004) reveals. But the really big money, the money that moves about virtually, the money that you can launder, the money that lets entire countries prosper - that remains invisible. Daniella Marxer thus hit on the idea of visiting the tax paradise of Liechtenstein to interview trust managers, tax accountants and tax inspectors about their own relationship to money — and elicits incredibly candid replies. Her film – **DIE KINDER DES GELDES** ["The Children of Money"] – is an essay which unmasks the perversions of global capitalism with mordant humour. In conjunction, the Festival will be staging Barbara Bühler's photo-exhibition entitled **SITZUNGSZIMMER IN LIECHTENSTEIN** ["Meeting Rooms in Liechtenstein"]. Here Barbara Bühler photographs the rooms where the big money negotiations take place on a before and after basis. What lingers are the banal remnants of everyday routine. The true expanse of the decisions so taken remains obscure.

What happens when a family falls through all of society's safety-nets, when all individual commitment fails and when only resignation and frustration are left? That's what the documentary **KELLY AND HER SISTERS** (GB 2001) sets out to show, hauntingly, from the perspective of ten-year-old Kelly confiding in the camera of Marilyn Gaunt. After all, more often than not, it is the children who "pick up the tab" for their parents' lifestyles as they disintegrate under the weight of their own inadequacies and those of an unknowing society.

They Work Hard for Their Money ... in a Globalised World

Over the last few years, the globalisation of capital and world markets has only worsened the delicate health of the system and economic dependency. The collapse of Argentina's finances in 2001 is still in many people's minds. In **THE TAKE** (Canada 2003), Naomi Klein and Avi Lewis document how, after years of resignation, workers take over the vacant factories and restart production and how they represent to the state their right to work and the need to feed their families. A gripping introduction to the topic of "globalisation and new visions".

A remarkable variation on the theme of the "free market" comes under the spotlight in Irit Sharit and Merav Nahoum's film **TOKYO DREAM** (Israel 2004). The narrative: young women from Europe are groomed as modern-day geishas. They meet Japanese businessmen, play the girlfriend or mistress role for the interim and are paid by various clubs and restaurants to eat and drink on the premises with their customers. There appears to be no real imperative for this way of earning money. The women are sort of passing through on a journey to another – not yet tangible – future.

Back on the Screen Again

In this film retrospective, femme totale goes on a voyage through the various decades of film to illuminate selected works with women remarkable for their pragmatism and their different visions where money is concerned. Two highlights, standing in for so many, may be singled out here. The restored silent movie of **FRÄULEIN ELSE** (D 1928/29) by Paul Czinner is the showcase for a superb acting performance from the great **Elisabeth Bergner**. To save her family after the bankruptcy of her father's firm, Else agrees to use her body as "service in return" for the demands made by one creditor. This dramatic adaptation of a novella by Arthur Schnitzler was

one of the highly acclaimed rediscoveries at the Bologna Archive Film Festival in 2004. Similarly, **LA BANQUE NEMO** ["Nemo Bank", F 1934] is a tale of the body used to achieve career goals. As deployed by a man. The charlatan Labrèche sleeps his way up from being a mere nobody to being a bank director in no time at all. Shot by Marguerite Viel, this film is a gem that has not been seen in Germany before.

Also on the programme is femme totale's traditional **Film All-Nighter** screening an array of short films with the focus (but not only) on the topic of money. With a golden opportunity to hit the jackpot with a round of Bingo! Plus, the **Music Clips Special MONEY CAN'T BUY IT** will have us dancing in our seats at the representation of money in pop culture. This will incorporate the White Stripes and **I JUST DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH MYSELF** as directed by Sofia Coppola in 2003. And where would any Film Festival dedicated to the subject of money be without advertising? On view here are adverts of a special kind — i.e. savings banks commercials from the 1920s and 1940s.

2 The Competitions

1st International Feature Film Competition for Women Directors by RWE Westfalen-Weser-Ems AG

Without (a lot of) money, there can be no feature film production. Even today, you seldom come across women in charge of a feature film production on a big budget. Reason enough for femme totale to inaugurate an international competition for women directors — with the films entered, just for once, independent of the festival theme. Put another way, this is a unique opportunity to see eight new feature films from the women movie directors of this world. Including two films that will use the Festival as their premier launching-pad in Germany i.e. the opening film **DEAR FRANKIE** (GB 2004) and **SOMERSAULT** (AUS 2004). Shona Auerbach's debut feature **DEAR FRANKIE** is a stylistically confident, unpretentious and yet emotionally charged film about a mother who attempts to shield her son from the truth about his violent father. Meanwhile, Cate Shortland's impressive coming-of-age-story **SOMERSAULT** (Australian Film Award 2004) has been celebrated in Australia like no other. The new woman director's prize will be awarded during the Festival itself by a jury made up of international members. The award money of 25,000 Euro is donated by RWE Westfalen-Weser-Ems AG.

The femme totale Camera Award of the e-m-s new media AG

Film is art, inspiration, technical skill and teamwork, and that applies more or less to all those involved in film production. But it also applies in special measure to camerawomen, the women responsible for casting the events before the camera on to film or video. In addition to those technical skills and their powers of visualisation, teamworkability is also important — i.e. communication with the sound technicians, the electricians, the make-up section, the art departments, the directors and the actors. Work that requires both self-assertion and sticking power. Since 1999, then, femme totale has been awarding its own next-generation prize expressly for young camerawomen with the prize money of 5,000 Euro donated by e-m-s new media AG. The competition is organized with the kind support of the German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth. The internationally successful director of cinematographer **Sophie Maintigneux** — whose works include **DAMEN UND HERREN AB 65** ["Ladies and Gentlemen Over 65" and **HEIDI M.**] — is a jury member once again.

Special Screening: IRON JAWED ANGELS

Katja von Garnier is one of the few German women directors to work in the USA. In 2004, for instance, she made **IRON JAWED ANGELS** for HBO TV. A feature film with a star cast, it is the

story of the struggle for women's voting rights in the USA: The "angels with the iron jaws" of the title, i.e. the women who achieve their aims by a hunger strike and their resistance to force-feeding, are played by **Hilary Swank**, **Frances O'Connor** and **Molly Parker** with impressive modernity. **IRON JAWED ANGELS** has just been nominated for the Golden Globes 2005 in three categories.

3 Workshops

Know How — The Secure Investment in the Future / Workshops for Women Film-Makers

The directors taking part in this year's inaugural competition have made it. They were able to find a producer, get their budget together and – hopefully – conclude satisfactory contracts. For those women film-makers who still have all of this in front of them, the 10th Dortmund International Film Festival will be holding vier practice-oriented workshops from 13 – 15 April 2005.

- Production conditions: alone or in a team?
- Grant-aid possibilities: who will finance my film and how and where do I submit it?
- Film copyright: to whom does my film belong?
- Creative work with the camera: films submitted for the Camera Award will be analysed in detail by an experienced camerawoman.

All the workshop convenors have wide practical experience in the film & television industry. Further information and details of registration, please contact femme totale at:
Tel: +40 231 502 5162 or info@femmetotale.de

4 Supporting Programme

Erika Stucky – Mrs Bubble & Bones

The concerts at the Dortmund International Film Festival are now legendary in their own right. Following in the footlights of Meret Becker and Sainkho, Swiss vocalist Erika Stucky will be taking the audience on her brand-new **PRINCESS TOUR**. "Everywhere you go, you find these princesses. Whether they are genuine, like those in Monaco, or whether the ones in the fairy-tales. Then there are those who drive around in trams and sit at supermarket check-outs and those who sashay around retirement homes. Once a princess, always a princess!" Erika is accompanied by Jon Sass on the tuba, Bertl Mütter on the trumpet and by Erika herself on Super-8 film.

For more information, please contact Stefanie Görtz at:
T: ++49 (0) 231-502 5480
E: goertz@femmetotale.de
www.femmetotale.de