



58. Festival internazionale del film Locarno.

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PRESS RELEASE
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RETROSPECTIVE ORSON WELLES

"Every time he says, Action!" – as François Truffaut put it – "he turns everyday reality into poetry".

Orson Welles, the child prodigy, the staggering genius who at only 28 presented film history with one of its milestones, the diehard independent who got himself into Hollywood's black book by the age of 30, the wandering minstrel who put together his visual mosaics using pieces shot in locations worlds apart from each other, the eloquent mouthpiece of Shakespeare. But also the fleeting conjuror, first creating a perfect illusion then slyly pretending to reveal the trick, leaving us holding our breath and uncertain whether we have seen how it was done or merely glimpsed another mirror in his endless gallery of the possible.

The mysterious Orson Welles, the most European of Americans, the most ancient and modern of Europeans, still today, more than two decades after his death, in part undiscovered, unyielding of his final secrets to critics and historians that review his oeuvre. It is to this Orson Welles, the man revealed only grudgingly, in fragments, frames and sequences, like a Renaissance artist made legendary even more by his lost work than by his actual heritage, that the Locarno Festival will pay special homage, in this 90th anniversary year of his birth. For the first time ever, possible versions and sequences will be presented for films that the great director left unfinished. These screening events will be discussed by international panels featuring both colleagues and companions of Welles and some of the major critics who have studied his work. In addition to the legendary "unfinished masterpieces", his acting performances and spectacular appearances on television will also be featured. The completed titles directed by Welles will be screened using top quality prints, restored where necessary. The retrospective is curated by Stefan Drössler with assistance from Bernard Uhlmann, produced by the Locarno Film Festival in cooperation with the Munich Filmmuseum and the Swiss National Film Archive in Lausanne.

OPEN DOORS 2005: Maghreb

Once again this year, thanks to the support of the Swiss Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), the Locarno International Film Festival will continue its efforts to study and promote the viability of film movements that deserve to be “discovered” and assisted internationally. Following previous programs on Cuba and the Mekong region, in 2005 the Festival will be opening its doors to the three nations in Arab North Africa which are jointly referred to as the Maghreb: Tunisia, Morocco and Algeria. This year the focal point of Open Doors will again be the workshop day, when Maghrebi filmmakers will have an opportunity to network with invitees from the European film industry, presenting and discussing their planned productions. Plus the general public will have a daily chance to get acquainted with films from the Maghreb, a particularly vital and important part of today’s African and Arab cinema. Despite the many differences in civil society, culture and politics between the three countries, there is still a trend to unity in the common features of their film industries, all committed to social, political and cultural renewal.

LEOPARDS OF TOMORROW 2005

At last year’s festival the *Leopards of Tomorrow* took a fresh, broader-based approach to its presentation of international short subjects, with a wide-ranging overview dedicated to films from French-speaking countries. The success of that program has encouraged the “young leopards” to continue their exploration of the African continent in 2005: in parallel with an in-depth look at productions from black Africa and Arab North Africa (in synergy with this year’s “Open Doors” program), the sidebar will also be featuring two other major regions, via a sample program of shorts by young filmmakers from Egypt and southern Africa.

As always, the 2005 program will be subdivided into two distinct sections – competition and retrospective – paying tribute to a continental film movement that is complex and multi-faceted thanks not only to its tremendous linguistic and cultural variety, but also to its multitude of different subjects and approaches. The program will cover both the better-known national film industries and those that are still young and developing – operating often in conditions of extreme urgency that require special outside support – without forgetting the enormous range of films made by African directors who have moved outside their home continent.

Once again the *Leopards of Tomorrow* will be performing their mission: to raise awareness of film production in other countries through the short subject, attempting an analysis of the terrain on which the new creative generation is moving, picking up signs of new trends and pathways. Alongside the dedicated African program, the sidebar will as ever be highlighting young Swiss cinema through its well-established competition for home-grown novice directors, “Young Swiss Talents”.

TRIBUTE TO VITTORIO STORARO

The Film Festival and the whole town of Locarno, thanks to a project inaugurated last year and supported by SES, Società Elettrica Sopracenerina, will be paying homage this year to the great director of photography Vittorio Storaro. Locarno itself will be lit up in full color to an illumination scheme designed by Storaro, while the Casa Rusca center will host an exhibition of texts, pictures and objects tracing the highpoints of his thirty-year career in the cinema. To mark the occasion, the Festival will be screening some of the finest films with cinematography “signed” by Storaro: from *Giovinezza Giovinezza* (*Youth March*) by Franco Rossi to *Dick Tracy* by Warren Beatty, from *Addio Fratello Crudele* (*'Tis Pity She's a Whore*) by Giuseppe Patroni Griffi to *Giordano Bruno* (*Revolt of the City*) by Giuliano Montaldo, from *Tango* by Carlos Saura to *Strategia del Ragno* (*The Spider's Stratagem*) by Bernardo Bertolucci and *One from the Heart* by Francis Ford Coppola.

Festivalgoers will also be able to attend a master class held by Vittorio Storaro on lighting, such a vital element in film form and practice. The Locarno public will thus have an extended opportunity to become acquainted with the life, work and background of a master cinematographer who is also an important theorist on light itself, with chances to compare the approaches and models for his films. His sources of inspiration have often included earlier “masters of lighting” such as Caravaggio, Vermeer and Lucas Cranach for *Youth March*, or Magritte for *The Spider's Stratagem*, to name just two instances.