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"Rooster's Breakfast" wins CWB Critics Award at the 4th Annual South East European Film Festival

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South East European Film Festival, SEE Fest 2009 concluded Monday night in Los Angeles with the screening of two Romanian films, Marian Crisan's Palme d'Or winner *Megatron* (short), and feature *Elevator* by George Dorobantu, at UCLA's James Bridges Theatre.

Hosted by radio personality Hettie Lynne Hurtes, the evening's guests included directors George Dorobantu (*Elevator*) and Adela Peeva (*Divorce Albanian Style*) from South East Europe, and from Los Angeles directors Jennifer Rawlings (*Forgotten Voices*) and Italian video artist Luigia Martelloni (*Journey into Sex Slavery*), as well as Gail Kligman, director of UCLA's Center for European and Eurasian Studies, Bernd Desinger, director of the Goethe Institut, Gary McVey, executive director of the American Cinema Foundation and Bijan Tehrani, editor-in-chief of the **Cinema Without Borders** film magazine.

Director of the SEE Fest **Vera Mijojlic** and Cinema Without Border's **Bijan Tehrani** (also a faculty member of the Art Institute of California, Los Angeles) announced the awards at the after party:

The Critics Award for Best Film, presented by Cinema Without Borders, went to Slovenian feature *Rooster's Breakfast* directed by **Marko Nabersnik**, a poignant love story between a young apprentice and the wife of a local criminal, enriched by well-crafted characters and wonderful portrayal of life in a provincial town. The film was Slovenia's official entry for Best Foreign Language Film in 2009, and top grossing film of the year in that country.

Audience vote went to two films, tied with the highest voting score to-date: highly anticipated and already winner of multiple international awards, *Divorce Albanian Style* by the prominent Bulgarian director Adela Peeva, an emotionally powerful drama about personal lives destroyed by a dictatorship, and Romanian *Elevator* by George Dorobantu, a groundbreaking debut film about two teenagers stuck in an elevator whose entire lives unfold in a span of a few days leading to a masterful final sequence of rare beauty.

Divorce and *Elevator* each received one additional award: *Divorce* won **Best Documentary**, and *Elevator* **Special Commendation**, a prize given for best first



film. Another Special Commendation went to *Tunnel's End*, an extraordinary debut documentary film about Bosnia-Herzegovina's troubled past and unstable present by talented Spanish filmmaker Monica Lleo. Her film had its acclaimed premiere at the Sarajevo Human Rights Festival in 2008.



The South East European Film Festival, SEE Fest is the only festival in the United States devoted exclusively to this part of the world. It presents films from 15 countries and educates about the South East Europe's region, its troubled history, and cultural diversity.

Fourth annual SEE Fest ran from Thursday, April 30 through Monday, May 4, 2009. Screenings were held at the Goethe Institute, 5750 Wilshire Blvd. Suite 100, Los Angeles, Ca. 90036. The closing night of the festival was held on Monday, May 4th at 6:30pm the James Bridges Theatre on UCLA campus in Westwood. Business conference BRIDGING THE DIVIDE: UNLOCKING THE BYZANTINE FILM MODEL took place on Monday, May 4 at UCLA's Faculty Center. For further information go to www.seefilmla.org.

Photos by Maya Hooshivar