

For Immediate Release

**SEE FEST, South East European Film Festival**

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Romanian, Macedonian-Swiss, Italian, Greek and Bulgarian films  
win awards at the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual  
South East European Film Festival

(*Los Angeles, May 3, 2011*) ~ South East European Film Festival, SEE Fest 2011 concluded Monday night in Los Angeles with the screening of the Austrian documentary that explores the roots of the famed Balkan Gypsy music, "**GYPSY SPIRIT: HARRI STOJKA, A JOURNEY**" directed by Klaus Hundsbichler.

The big winner of this year's festival was Romanian **MEDAL OF HONOR**, directed by Calin Peter Netzer, a lyrical and deeply humanistic film about an aging man who is suddenly thrust into the neighborhood spotlight when he receives a medal for WWII bravery which he cannot recall; the film won Cinema Without Borders award for Best Feature Film. Jury members Bijan Tehrani, editor in chief, James Ulmer, international editor, and Turkish director Atil Inac who won this award last year, gave the overall top score to the Romanian film. Consul General of Romania the Hon. Catalin Ghenea accepted the award on behalf of the filmmaker.

At the ceremony held at the UCLA Bridges Theatre the same jury awarded an Honorable Mention to the Macedonian-Swiss co-production **THE WAR IS OVER**, directed by Mitko Panov, about the Kosovo war of 1999 as seen by an Albanian refugee in Switzerland whose longing for the ancestral lands and heritage informs the film. Line producer Hans-Martin Liebing accepted the award on behalf of director Panov.

***Best Documentary Film Award for young Italian filmmaker of Bosnian-Romani origin, Laura Halilovic and ME MY GYPSY FAMILY AND WOODY ALLEN***

Three members of the documentary jury, Oscar-winning filmmaker (for "Genocide", in 1981) Arnold Schwartzman; renowned Hungarian filmmaker and professor at UCLA Film School, artistic director of the Sundance Filmmakers Lab Gyula Gazdag; and long time head of programming at the Goethe-Institut Los Angeles Margit Kleinman unanimously awarded Laura Halilovic for her inspired, well-rounded, charming documentary. She was only 19 when she made **ME, MY GYPSY FAMILY AND WOODY ALLEN** two years ago, and the jury noted that she is a major talent to watch.

Director of the Italian Cultural Institute in Los Angeles, Alberto di Mauro accepted the award on behalf of the filmmaker.

Audience vote was a tie and two films were awarded: the Romanian feature “*Medal of Honor*”, a lyrical and deeply humanistic film about an aging man who is suddenly thrust into the neighborhood spotlight when he receives a medal for WWII bravery which he cannot recall; and Greek bittersweet drama of two young people drawn apart by their incompatible commitments, “*Apnea*” by Ari Bafalouka, about a competitive swimmer and an environmental activist.

Oscar-winning producer Ron Yerxa ("Little Miss Sunshine"), who was the Honorary Chair of the SEE FEST business conference earlier in the day, presented Audience Awards to Romanian Consul General Ghenea, and Greek director Bafalouka.

SEE Fest Filmmakers Circle’s five jury members, Elizabeth Henderson, Jelena Erceg, Valentina Ganeva, Aldo Shllaku and Rich Sturdevant gave the Award for Best First Feature Film to Bulgarian “*SHELTER*” directed by Dragomir Sholev. Winner of Grand Prix at the Sofia International Film Festival in March of this year, SHELTER is a powerful story of a boy on the verge of adolescence who single-handedly brings down the last vestiges of his parents’ old world in this slice of life gem from Bulgaria.

About SEE FEST:

SEE Fest, the South East European Film Festival in Los Angeles has pioneered the concept of regional, cross-border programming with issue-driven films that tell a larger story about the Balkans and South East Europe and unlock the delicate doors into human existence and concerns of our time. The festival is active on a year-round basis and also serves as a resource center for scholars and researchers. Please visit [www.seefilmla.org](http://www.seefilmla.org) for further information, or email [info@seefilmla.org](mailto:info@seefilmla.org) .

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