

„Personal Cinema“ and Wilhelm Hein win at the 18. European Media Art Festival in Osnabrück

The international artist collective „Personal Cinema“ and Berlin filmmaker Wilhelm Hein are the award winners of the 18th European Media Art Festivals (EMAF) which ended Sunday evening in Osnabrück. „Personal Cinema“ won €2.500 EMAF Award for a pioneering work in media art with ist project „Balkan Wars – The Game“. Wilhelm Hein was awarded the prize of the German film critic in the experimental film section for his film „You killed the Undergroundfilm or the Real Meaning of Kunst bleibt... bleibt...“. An honorary mention received Norman Richter, student at the HFF Potsdam for his film „Sun in an Empty Room“.

The three headed jury with Joke Ballentijn (Netherlands Media Art Institute/Montevideo, Amsterdam) Conny E. Voester (freie Kuratorin und Produzentin, Basel/Berlin) und Peter Zorn (Medienkünstler und Produzent, Werkleitz-Gesellschaft, Halle) was impressed by the diversity and quality of artistic positions and strategies that characterise the project **Balkan Wars - The Game**. With ist work the group **Personal Cinema** calls attention to burning political, social and cultural issues in a unique way beziehen (see also www.balkanwars.net and www.personalcinema.org). Analysing cultural stereotypes which form the basis for destructive aggressiveness between people and nations they contribute to it's comprehension through direct experience. The work comprises poetry, information, humour and respect for cultural identities.

With simple means and limited resources (based on Java and Lingo programming languages) Personal Cinema has managed to create a multi-user 3D game, that contains videos, sounds, images and texts on the Balkans, with contributions by more than 50 European artists, critics ad curators. The project centers around a computer game, which is a popular medium, and that is accessible to a wide audience and at the same time it is a platform for transnational exchange between different cultural groups and artistic disciplines. The rules of the game are simple: with the reception of 35 videos contained in the game and the interaction of the user's avatars the players learn to keep the balance between balkanisation and de-balkanisation.

"Balkan Wars" explores new ways of presentation and cooperation, while questioning media simplification of complex cultural and political phenomena. Balkan wars: the game is an ongoing project, and will be accessible on line in the near future. The jury hopes that the EMAF Award will help to further develop this pioneering work.

Prize of the German film critic

The Prize of German Film Critic in the category experimental film goes to **Wilhelm Hein**, a pioneer of experinmental cinema, for his film ***You killed the Undergroundfilm or the real Meaning of Kunst bleibt... bleibt...*** (Germany 2005, 16mm, 65 min.). The jury stated: „Hein uses an open anarchical form, that is not afraid to string together the trivial, the pornographic and the playful in seemingly unconcern. Nonetheless, the crystalline core that not only expresses the individual of the filmmaker remains unmistakable throughout.

By updating the aesthetics of undergroundfilm, the film reflects a self awareness formed by numerous refractions and contradictions. Besides all irony and harshness in tone and visual gesture, a basic mood of a defiant melancholy dominates, thus acknowledging the awareness that when confronted with reality painless lust and unflawed art are impossible“.

Norman Richter, film student at the university for Television and Film in Potsdam, received an honorary mention for his film ***Sun in an empty room*** (Germany 2004, 35mm, 12:50 min.). The statement of the jury with Günter Minas, Willi Karow und Claus Löser:

“Cult of the human body and youth craze rule. Irritations seem to be banned. But the idyll has flaws. A tiny incident is sufficient to disturb the balance. With a concise hand writing uncommon for a film student, Norman Richter achieves to seize abstract states of threat into memorable tableaux and clear images”.

More information on www.emaf.de.

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