

Press release

**FOCUS ON GREAT BRITAIN
AT THE 54TH KRAKOW FILM FESTIVAL**

Krakow, 28th April 2014 - The British cinema will be the special guest at the 54th Krakow Film Festival. Within the frames of the section "Focus on Great Britain" the latest documentary films will be shown, and Polish and British filmmakers will meet at an industry conference.

It is the fifth time when the organisers of Krakow Film Festival invite a selected country to participate in the non-competing section "Focus on..." and show its latest achievements in the field of documentary film. After Israel, the Netherlands, Italy and Switzerland, the time has come for Great Britain.

Great Britain is one of the leading European producers of documentary and short films. We always get a lot of submissions from the British Isles, this year there were almost 250 of them, says Krzysztof Gierat, the director of Krakow Film Festival. In the case of Great Britain, the quantity definitely translates into quality, so we decided to take a closer look at the films from this country.

The screenings of the section "Focus on Great Britain" will start with **"London - The Modern Babylon"** by Julien Temple, in which the controversial and very current issue of immigration in Great Britain is discussed. On the basis of history of London, one of the most cosmopolitan cities of the world, the director documents social and cultural changes from the beginning of the 20th century to modern times, making use of archival materials, wonderfully put together.

The remaining four films of the cycle concentrate on bringing closer some extraordinary, but very diverse people. Tragicomic **"Coach Zoran and his African tigers"** observes the efforts of a charismatic Serbian coach Zoran Vlastimir Djordjevic, whose aim is to organise the football national team of the youngest and one of the poorest countries in the world, South Sudan. The film **"The Condemned"** takes the viewers into the heart of Russia, to a specially guarded penal colony only for murderers. The director Nick Read and the producer Mark Franchetti spent a lot of time, trying to get permission to shoot the film in the prison, whose inmates killed a total of almost 800 people. The protagonists of the documentary, in brutally frank and uncensored interviews talk about their past crimes, contrition or lack of it, pangs of conscience, about freedom, family, hope and madness. **"I Am Breathing"** in turn is an intimate story which tells how a disease changes one's life perspective. Neil and his family have to face the disease which devastates Neil's organism, namely, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, incurable genetic disease that leads to paralysis. Before he passes away, Neil wants to settle all matters in his life, and leave a trace of himself, most of all for his little son. The directors Emma Davie and Morag McKinnon accompany him with the camera. Dick Fontaine, the director of documentary film department in National Film and Television School, will bring to Krakow a film about the most eminent living jazz saxophone player of America. The documentary film **"Sonny Rollins Beyond the Notes"** is a record of a concert in Beacon Theatre, organised on the occasion of the artist's 80th birthday. The concert

becomes a pretext to review the works of the artist and tell the story of Sonny's unceasing wandering in search of the sense of life.

A large representation of British films will also be in the short competition, and during the Night of Student Etudes the achievements of the young directors from National Film and Television School will be shown.

The film screenings will be complemented by industry conference, in which filmmakers, producers and representatives of British film institutes will take part. The event organised within the frames of Industry Zone is aimed at understanding the specifics of the local film market and exploration of Polish-British co-production opportunities.

The series "Focus on Great Britain" was organized with the support of British Council, institution representing the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, which runs many cultural, educational and social programmes in Poland, whose aim is to share creative ideas and achievements of the United Kingdom.

The opening ceremony of the programme "Focus on Great Britain" will be held on 26th May on 8 p.m. in the cinema Kijów.Centrum. Industry conference will be held on 28th May from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. in Małopolski Ogród Sztuki.

The series "Focus on Great Britain" includes:

- London - The Modern Babylon, dir. Julien Temple, 2012, 125 min., United Kingdom
- Coach Zoran and His African Tigers, dir. Sam Benstead, 2013, 75 min., United Kingdom
- Sonny Rollins Beyond the Notes, dir. Dick Fontaine, 2012, 78 min., United Kingdom, USA
- The Condemned, dir. Nick Read, 2013, 80 min., United Kingdom, Russia
- I Am Breathing, dir. Emma Davie, Morag McKinnon, 2012, 72 min., United Kingdom, Denmark

The detailed programme of the screenings will be available soon on www.krakowfilmfestival.pl

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