

"FOCUS ON LITHUANIA" AT THE 55TH KRAKOW FILM FESTIVAL

Lithuanian cinema is the guest of this year's series "Focus on..."

At the 55th Krakow Film Festival, the latest documentary and short films by Poland's eastern neighbours will be shown, and Polish and Lithuanian film-makers will meet at a special industry conference. So far, the festival acquainted the audience with the cinemas of Israel, the Netherlands, Italy, Switzerland and Great Britain.

After Great Britain, one of the film industry giants, there is time for Lithuania, whose cinema has just begun to revive.

It is a small cinema, but a very strong one, visible also in the programme of the annual festival in Kraków, says Krzysztof Gierat, the director of Krakow Film Festival. Two years ago, the Silver Horn went to the film by Marat Sargsyan, "The Father," whose protagonist devotes all his energy to his family, and his aim is to beget more children. Because he spent 20 years in prison, and now he is in his seventies, he tries to make up for the lost time. Lithuanian cinema is in a similar situation, it starts to use its own voice, the films are very close to life, delving into the areas of the underclass, and reaching to the recent history of Soviet occupation.

Krakow Festival will be a perfect opportunity to look closer at the issues which currently interest Lithuanian film-makers. Both documentary and short films will be shown, including "**The Father**" by Sargsyan.

We will watch the famous "**Ramin**," a warm-hearted story about an elderly sportsman, who sets out on a journey of his life to find his beloved from 50 years ago. The film's director, Audrius Stonys, the winner of European Film Award, will be a member of the festival jury.

In the programme we will see, among others, "**Dinner**" by Linas Mikutys about the crowd of people that gathers every day in front of the building on the Liepkalnis Street in Vilnius. Most of the people gathered here are the underclass, without regular income and rejected by the rest of the society. They come here every day to get some food, but by waiting half an hour in the queue, they get something more than merely a warm meal. In turn, the debut film by Mantas Kvedaravičius, "**Barzakh**," shown at over 40 film festivals around the world and awarded, among others, at the Berlinale festival, is a shocking portrait of Chechnya, where the policy of violence and torture continues relentlessly, and people disappear suddenly in unexplained circumstances. The director looks at the families who try to discover the truth about mysterious disappearances of their loved ones.

Another attempt at portraying the society is undertaken by "**The field of magic**" by Mindaugas Survila, telling the story of people who have been living on the closed dumping

ground Kariotiškės in the Buda forest for over two decades. Four years of observation constitute the image of disappearing community, its peculiar and unique way of life, everyday activities, joys and worries.

The film screenings will be complemented by industry conference, in which filmmakers, producers and representatives of Lithuanian film institutes will take part and meet with Polish representatives.