

A Short Film Has to be Seen

Born 1965 in Kaiserslautern, Germany, Lars Henrik Gass has been director of International Short Film Festival, since 1997. He studied literature and drama literature as well as philosophy, and wrote his thesis over the French authoress Marguerite Duras (the localless Cinema). From 1996 to 1997, he was managing director of European institute for documentary film in Muelheim at the Ruhr. He also has written numerous articles and essays about photography and documentary films. In addition, Henrik Gass is a jury member of German short film (animation and documentary film). He is in Iran to attend Tehran Film Festival, and to meet Iranian filmmakers, as well as producers.

As one of the most important short film festivals, what is the aim of Oberhausen Film Festival?

The first and important thing for us is to provide a platform for creative filmmakers. Every year, thousands short films produce in the world. What we have liked to do in International Short Film Festival Oberhausen is to give the chance to creative individuals to be recognized.

Since Short Film Festival Oberhausen has launched, we have seen many changes in short film category. Some believe that short film served as a launch pad for them to do feature film, and some say that it is independent. What is your perception about these changes?

I would say for sure that many great filmmakers would like to do short film, because it is inexpensive, and it is also lets the filmmaker to be independent. I know directors who have only made short films in whole life and approaches to it as an artistic work.

Is the return of investment is possible for a short film?

There is a little chance for a short film to return the money, because there are a few distributors who work in this category. I think there are two options. A filmmaker makes a film, only just because wants to do a film, or makes a film with aim of showing it in film festivals. In either situation, the



filmmaker should not care so much about earnings.

Short films usually screen in places like museums or cinema theque, which is a common problem. Do you think we must consider the specific theatres to screen short films?

It is a good idea, but in this case, you should not think commercially. You should admit that a short film is a way to communicate with others and it is a new language. A short film has to be seen. It does not make any difference, where it takes place.

Do you think that governments and social foundations should support short film financially?

It is better for governments to support short filmmakers, because, they are the nation's representative.

How do you fund Oberhausen Film Festival?

The government finance about 90 percent, and the rest is financed by ticket selling and advertising.

What has Oberhausen Film Festival done to become a prominent film festival?

It goes back to 50s, 60s, and Cold War era. At that time, screening films, which were producing in socialist countries, was prohibited in European countries. Meanwhile, the Oberhausen Film Festival was the only place, which shown these films. The member of board of the directors at the festival were so open-minded.

What do you do for festival to keep it updated and vital?

We kept that policy. We are still the only film festival in the world, which shows films in any formats. Our policy is to let all films entering the festival.

Who are the primary policy-makers of the festival? Could the government, journalists, filmmakers, or distributors interfere in organizing the festival?

Generally, no specific group has a role in

policy-making of the festival. A group of 12, which most are directors, selects the films. Have all the films submitted to festival, or you might present films that you have already selected from film markets or film festivals?

We do both ways. Because we believe that, short filmmakers change constantly, so we have to go and find the good short films. Short film advertising is not what has done for feature films. Therefore, we should find good films ourselves. One of our problems is most filmmakers are not familiar with other languages. Although the entry form of our festival in four languages, most filmmakers cannot fill out the forms.

It seems that are many films which submitted to your festival, what do you answer to the directors whose films have not been selected?

I know a short film is backed up by a crew, which is waiting eagerly to see if its film selects to screen in the festival. Sometimes we cannot do this because of our limitations. In this situation, we have launched a film market in which all submitted films would be present. Through film market, all the films get the chance to be invited to other film festivals or to be bought by T.V. channels. You know, the film selection is sensory. It is not right to say a, which not selected at Oberhausen Film Festival, is a bad films.

Do you mean there is no standard for selecting the films? Is it a matter of taste?

Yes, it is. There are about 1500 short film festivals all over the world, so there are various points of view.

Is there any competition between Oberhausen Film Festival and other festivals in Germany like Berlin Film Festival?

You cannot compare these two festivals together, because Berlin Film Festival



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screen feature films, and short film is only one of sections of the festival. In last edition, we screened 400 short films, among them 100 were presented in competition, while in Berlin Film Festival only seven films were screened in competition.

What is important for you, technology, or thought? Do you think that technology development could be act as a obstacle for idea?

When digital camera released into the market, everyone rushed into, because it was low-priced. As the result, some bad films were made. In the meanwhile, some there were some good ideas. Therefore, you could not say for sure that technology sets a hurdle against the idea.

Do you pursue any specific goal like human rights, dialogue among civilizations, cultural capital city and competition with the Hollywood films in Oberhausen Film Festival?

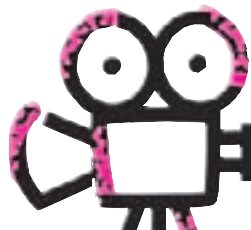
According to a European Film Festivals law, 70 percent of films participating in a film festival should be European, which in my opinion is a wrong policy. Because we have not accepted this law, we could not expect anything from European union, so we try hard to accept films from all over the world.

Do you think it is a good idea to recommend a filmmaker to make a films based on a certain subject?

We have no recommended film in competition section. Because we believe this is against a filmmaker's creative power.

Is there any relation between Oberhausen Film Festival and Tehran Film Festival? What is your idea about this festival?

There is a live and dynamic relation between us. Maybe it is because of Mr. Dezvareh, Head of international relations of Iranian Young Cinema Society), who is very well-known in Oberhausen Film Festival. It is my first trip to Iran, so it is too early to judge, but we have screened many Iranian films in our festival.



**Ali Reza Mir Alinaghi
the Music Scholar**

Composing Music for a Short Film Does Not Follow a Certain Formula

One of most prominent researchers of Iranian music, Ali Reza Mir Alinaghi has written numerous essays and articles about film music. He believes that music cannot be an independent factor in short films. "A short film has its limitations, so composing music for a short film does not follow a certain formula", Said Mir Alinaghi, in an interview with daily bulletin of the festival. "It seems many short films do not need music, and the using natural sounds are enough for them. Nevertheless, if we want to act more subtle and wiser, we could do minor changes in oriental sounds. For instance, in a scene when a character is walking through a street, we could bring down all background sounds to emphasis on its walking sound". Referring to a scene of "Damage" directed by Louis Malle, Mir Alinaghi added, "When Juliette Binoche leaves the apartment which final tragedy have happened in it, we only hear the tap sound of her shoes, and this sound conveys her sense of sin, anxiety and loneliness. Music has an abstract concept within, and if the filmmaker distinguishes this abstract concept, he or she could properly use it. Mir Alinaghi who is also editor in chief for "Magham" monthly, said: "Short film is still one of unknown territories of cinema, because you are not supposed to see constantly short films on

T.V. or get its CDs from video clubs. In fact, you could only see short films in rare occasions. In other word, if you want to see short films, you have to be a serious fan."

Mir Alinaghi believes that laconic writing and précis writing in literature and cinema are characteristics of these two arts. "You see, People could easily read pocket books.

Years ago when I was in Paris, I saw a basket containing the pocket books in a subway station. People were picking up these books, and in the next stations were putting them in another basket. Now the government could do something like this for short films. For instance, the government could distribute short films on CDs for free or with low prices. For Mir Alinaghi, cinema is the sum of all arts." Most interesting parts of cinema for me are documentary and short film. Let me give you an example, years ago in many magazines or newspapers, the articles were printed with small fonts, but now if a magazine wants to inter the press world with such a view, it would be unsuccessful. What the current society needs is the rich and significant conceptions witch present briefly.

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Two other foreign guest in Tehran Short Film Festival

Yesterday afternoon, there were crowded in front of the theater No: 2 in Felestin Cinema. Meanwhile two foreign ladies were interested in watching the films at the National Competition section.

They introduced themselves as follow: Anke Looke, from Berlin Film Festival who wants to see the Iranian short films for selection and Nikoo Domus, editor in chief of cinema section of "Die Zeit", one of the most popular magazines in Germany.

The influence of the football fans on Tehran Short Film Festival

The film "I am a leader" by Mohsen Khanjahani screened at the national competition section of Tehran 22nd National and 10th International Short Film Festival. This documentary film is about "Hossein Asgari" who known as Hossein Beethoven, earns his living by blowing bugle at he football soccer.

The filmmaker invited not only head of the

coach of Piroozi Team "Ali Parvin", Branco, the coach but also the football players and fans to Felestin Cinema.

When screening of the film is announced, the journalists and audiences rushed to the theater. It is important to say that gathering the football fans in the middle of the Taleghani street in front of the Felestin Cinema is not repeatable for the film festival.