

# Press Release

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## Council of Europe and Art for The World join forces to produce human rights short films under the banner **THEN AND NOW: Beyond Borders and Differences**

Strasbourg, 29.04.2010 – The Council of Europe has joined forces with the Geneva and Milan-based non government organisation Art for the World to screen five short films at the 3<sup>rd</sup> United Nations Forum on the Alliance of Civilizations in Rio de Janeiro, Brasil on 27 May 2010 as part of a larger project to promote human rights through art.

Following the worldwide success of the film *Stories on Human Rights*, produced on the occasion of the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Art for The World – under the auspices of the Council of Europe and the UN Alliance of Civilizations – is producing its second collective film project, entitled **THEN AND NOW: Beyond Borders and Differences**.

The film project will count 15 short-movies by outstanding independent filmmakers, produced by Art for The World, an NGO associated to the United Nations Department of Public Information, in collaboration with SESC-Sao Paulo, Brasil, and in partnership with the European cultural channel ARTE, Dorjefilm and Filmmaster.

Inspired by Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights ("Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion"), Art for the World has invited filmmakers to highlight awareness of the complexity of cultures and promote social inclusiveness and tolerance. The film aims to build a strong intercultural and inter-religious dialogue.

The long feature film will be launched in 2011 and will include 6-minute short films by Tata Amaral (Brasil), Fanny Ardant (France), Faouzi Bensaidi (Morocco), Sergei Bodrov (Russia), Isabel Coixet (Spain), Mahamat-Saleh Haroun (Tchad), Hüseyin Karabey (Turkey), Masbedo (Italy), Murali Nair (India), Guka Omarova (Kazakhstan), Idrissa Ouédraogo (Burkina Faso), Jafar Panahi (Iran), Abderrahmane Sissako (Mauritania/Ethiopia) and Robert Wilson (USA).

So far, the first series of five short-movies by "Masbedo", Idrissa Ouédraogo, Tata Amaral, Robert Wilson and Fanny Ardant, will be screened at a world "avant-première" in Brasil: in Sao Paulo, on May 24 2010 at Cinesesc, and in Rio de Janeiro, on May 27, at the Museum of Modern Art, on the occasion of the opening of 3<sup>o</sup> Forum of UN Alliance of Civilizations.

This avant-première includes **Chimères Absentes** (*Absent Dreams*), by internationally acclaimed actor and film director **Fanny Ardant**. The short-movie tells the story of Sonietcka, a Roma child who is not allowed to eat at the school refectory, because of her family's condition of poverty. Fanny Ardant, who plays a role in the short, has been filming her short movie in the historical centre of Formello, a village close to Rome, with professional actors and Roma people.

The short is associated to *Dosta!* Campaign of the Council of Europe seeking to overcome the prejudice and stereotypes regarding Roma people and Mrs Ardant recently became an official supporter of *Dosta!* Campaign for Europe's Roma minority.

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## Notes on the other films

***Distante un padre*** (*A Far Away Father*) by "**Masbedo**" (Jacopo Bedogni and Nicolò Massazza, well known Italian artists) turn an intimate tragedy like the death of a child into a universal drama the focus on the delicate relationship among life, death and after.

***La longue marche du caméléon*** (*The Long March of a Chamaleon*) by award-winning Burkinabe film maker **Idrissa Ouédraogo**, examines the role of traditions and superstitions of animistic practices in Africa. According to tradition, the chamaleon anticipates a bad luck premonition. If someone offends a chamaleon, his gesture will be punished.

***Carneval dos Deuses*** (*Gods Carnival*) by the Brazilian best young filmmaker **Tata Amaral** deals with the syncretism of beliefs. While making costumes for Carnival, a group of Brazilian children speak about the rituals they practice within their family: Christmas, Hanukkah, Twelfth Night, Umbanda rituals, Buddhism. The starting-point of the conversation is Leon's description of Brit Milah, the Jewish ceremony of circumcision.

**GAO** by internationally recognised artist and director **Robert Wilson**, focuses on the spirit of non-violence. After a close-up of the face of Nobel prize-writer Gao Xingjian, a phrase starts writing by itself: "Solitude is a necessary condition of freedom". According to Wilson, solitude can be the reign of one's own universal liberty.

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