

DOCPPOINT

HELSINKI DOCUMENTARY FILM FESTIVAL

Newsletter, February 12th 2009

Bigger than ever, record-breaking DocPoint Film Festival conquered Helsinki

DocPoint – Helsinki Documentary Film Festival continued to grow at a remarkable rate. The festival aims to bring excellent documentaries onto the silver screens of Helsinki city centre. Taking place in the mid-winter, January 20th–25th, the festival brought in **23,000 cinemagoers**. This shows over a **30% increase in audience numbers** from last year. Including additional events, the festival, now in its eighth year, attracted **28,000 visitors**.

The festival's opening and closing screenings both sold out the 700-seat Bio Rex. The festival opened with Jukka Kärkkäinen's *The Living Room of the Nation*. The closing film, *Burma VJ – Reporting from a Closed country*, moved the audience with its account of the situation in Burma, as reported by local video journalists. The Oscar-nominated animated documentary, *Waltz with Bashir* had its Finnish premiere at DocPoint with two sold-out screenings. **Altogether there were 17 sold-out screenings**. Finnish documentaries also attracted a record audience at the festival. Sunday's re-runs were taken up by Oskari Pastila's controversial *Basket Case* and *Strange Events* by Kanerva Cederström. *Suomi Post Mortem*, in which Finnish contributors process Finland's school shootings through cinema, was also sold out.

DocPoint's focus on social issues was further emphasized by presenting the Apollo Award to the production company Epidem. DocPoint seminars attracted sizeable audience; there were no empty seats at Peter von Bagh's lecture on the history of documentary film and AnimaDoc attracted audience interested in documentary's new mode of expression. The theme of change continued with the Change 09 seminar, a collaboration with the environmental organisation Dodo. The traditional silent film concert featured *Battle of the Somme (1916)* accompanied by Jori Hulkkonen, DJ-persona, remixer, producer and the living legend of electronic composition.

DOKKINO, the documentary film event for children and youth maintained its popularity. DOKKINO: *The Everyday through Our Eyes* attracted over 2000 viewers from 42 different schools in the Helsinki metropolitan area. DOKKINO films start touring the country in February.

The festival's honored guests, British documentary filmmakers Nick Broomfield and Richard Leacock, enjoyed their stay in Finland and praised Finnish audiences and festival atmosphere. Photo reportage on behind-the-scenes activities at DocPoint, produced by students of HEO overseen by photographer Heidi Uutela, will soon be available on the festival webpage.

DocPoint will bring new documentaries onto the silver screens of downtown Helsinki again in January 2010.

For further information and press material:

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