

Thessaloniki International Film Festival presents

immigration in Greek Cinema

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MGSA Symposium @ 20

Yale University, New Haven



THESSALONIKI INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL



"IMMIGRATION IN GREEK CINEMA (1956-2006)"
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 19, 11:00 AM-6:00 PM, WHALLEY ROOM

The retrospective, "Immigration in Greek cinema (1956-2006)" is the first ever thematic analysis presented at the Greek Section of the Thessaloniki International Film Festival and the first one to travel outside of Greece. Showcased are a wide range of short & feature-length films and documentaries. The retrospective aims to provide a representative picture of the way Greek film-makers have approached the subject of immigration over the years. To date, these approaches have ranged from the so-called "old Greek" tales of rich Greek immigrants returning from America, immigrants' attempts to integrate into contemporary Greek society, the condition of Greek immigrants in Europe, and the various Greek diasporas.

This shift in narrative reflects the historical changes that have shaped the socio-political scene in Greece over the last half-century, both visible and hidden. At the same time, the selected works represent the way in which cinematic narratives centering on immigration have altered parallel to more general changes in Greek cinema such as: the cinema of genres, the signature style of the *auteurs*, documentaries and fiction, and finally the mixing of genres and techniques. Immigration is a subject that permits, indeed, demands we look at the Other (the "alien" in terms of the Self). Which is to say that immigration, an endless subject, requires each new era to create the cinematic narratives that express it best.

Despina Mouzaki
Director, Thessaloniki International Film Festival

THE IMMIGRANT

1965, b/w, 74 min.

(Greek Title: *O metanastis*)

Direction-Screenplay: Nestoras Matsas Cinematography: Vassilis Konstandinidis
Editing: Yorgos Tsaoulis Music: Yannis Markopoulos Sound: Tassos Venieris Make-up
Artist: Ilias Psaradakis Production: Klearchos Konitsiotis, Skouras Film
Cast: Alekos Alexandrakis, Antigone Valakou, Tasso Kavvadia, Miranda Myrat, Eleni Zafiriou, Marika Krevvata, Christophoros Nezer, Giorgos Velentzas, Panagiotis Karavoussanos, Manos Katrakis

The film is based on Alexandros Papadiamandis' short story "The American" (1891). The inhabitants of an island prepare to welcome back one of their countrymen who had immigrated to America. Thinking that he is immensely wealthy they dream of the charitable contributions that he can make to his island. Their disappointment is great when they realize that he arrives there sick and poor to spend the rest of the time he has left.

Nestoras Matsas

Writer, director and one of the first directors of Greek cultural films, he was born in Athens in 1935. He pursued studies in theater and film in Paris and early on in his life

appeared on the literary scene with novels and short stories published in the Nea Estia magazine. At the same time he turned to film and especially to the preservation of Greek folklore. His credits include over 70 documentaries with Greek ethnographic content. He has won many literary and film awards both in Greece and abroad.

Selected filmography

1977 Alexander The Great: Between History And Legend; 1975 The Roots Of Our Land; 1972 The Beauty Of Death; 1970 The Other Silence; 1967 If All The Women Of The World 1965 Hard Roads; 1965 The Revolutionary; 1965 The Immigrant; 1964 Road Without Borders; 1964 Sunday's Girl; 1963 Innocent Or Guilty/The Wages Of Pain/Everything And Even My Life/The Rascals; 1962 The Footsteps Of Life

YORGOS FROM SOTIRIANIKA

1978, Documentary, colour, 45min
(Greek Title: O Yorgos apo ta Sotirianika)

Direction-Screenplay-Editing: Lefteris Xanthopoulos

The personal story of a young Greek who abandoned his village and found himself in Heidelberg. Years later Giorgos from the village of Sotirianika in Mani, now a successful restaurant owner, talks about his early years when he arrived as an immigrant and the difficulties of adjusting to a foreign country. The film attempts to determine and record the differing views that comprise and preserve the myth of Greekness.

Lefteris Xanthopoulos

Poet and filmmaker. Born in Athens in 1945. He studied law at Athens University and cinema at the London Film School. He published articles on theory and wrote film criticism between 1978-1982. He has made documentaries that have been acclaimed both at home and abroad, best known his trilogy on emigration: *The Greek Community in Heidelberg* (1976), *Jorgos from Sotirianika* (1978) and *In Athens Today* (1982). His first feature film *Happy Homecoming, Comrade* (1986) won a Special Mention at the 1986 Locarno Film Festival.

Selected filmography

2006 Blessed hands (Christos Kapralos) (documentary); 2005 The garden with the countless windows (Nikos Engonopoulos) (documentary); 2004 An inheritor of birds (Miltos Sachtouris) (documentary); 1998 Dark conspirator; 1992 Who's the mad hatter? (Miltos Sachtouris); 1991 Master of the Shadows, feature; 1986 Happy Homecoming Comrade, feature; 1982 In Athens Today, documentary; 1978 Yorgos from Sotirianika, documentary; 1976 The Greek Community in Heidelberg, documentary

GEORGE FROM HEIDELBERG

Documentary, 52 minutes

(Greek Title: O Yorgos apo ti Haidelvergi)

Direction-Screenplay: Costas Maheras Cinematography: Dimitris Bakalbassis
Editing: Spyros Kokkas Music: Vangelis Fambas Producer: Dimitris Bakalbassis

This documentary attempts a reverse journey from the one described by Lefteris Xanthopoulos in his documentary "Yorgos from Sotirianika" in the '70s. Now settled in Athens Yorgos Kozombolis returns to Heidelberg in Germany and tries to recognize the people and the city he left behind 16 years ago and to answer the question he asks himself - whether returning to Greece was the right decision. The journey from Greece to Germany awakens the memories of a lifetime. His homesickness for Greece has been replaced by the dream of returning to Germany. "We were uprooted from here and over there we never managed to put down roots . Suspended between Heidelberg and Sotirianika he confesses that all his life he has found himself "on the border".

Costas Maheras

Born in Athens, he studied Physics at the University of Athens and Film Directing at the Academy of Film and Television (HFI) in Munich.

Selected Filmography

2005 Tonia Marketaki-Yorgos Bouzianis-If We Live We'll Have Stories To Tell; 2004 «42195»; 2002 Katina Paxinou; 2001 George From Heidelberg; 1999 Chips; 1999 The Neighbors; 1997 About Time; 1995 Short Days

A BRIGHT SHINING SUN

2000, color 36 min, Optical Dolby SR

(Greek Title: Enas Lamberos ilios)

Direction-Screenplay: Vassilis Loules Cinematography: Yorgos Argyroiliopoulos,
Editing: Yorgos Triandafyllou Sound: Dinos Kittou Music: Nikos Kypourgos Sets-
Costumes: Ioulia Stavridou Production: Hellenic Broadcasting Corp, ERT S.A., GFC,
S.M.ART-Art Media, Vassilis Loules, Cast: Victoria Haralambidou, Irina Boiko

Natasha, a Russian refugee, seeks a place in the Greek sun.

Vassilis Loules

Born in Trikala, Greece. Studied Electrical Engineering at the National Polytechnic University, and Cinema in Athens, Greece.

He cooperated with the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs Film Archive, in compiling the Ministry's "news reels" Archive.

His short fiction films (*A Bright Shining Sun, The American, Absent*) were awarded in Greek festivals and were shown in many festivals all over the world.

Filmography

2005 Lela Karayanni, *The Fragrance Of A Heroine* (Doc); 2000 *A Bright Shining Sun* (Short); 1999 *Elefsis Stories, From Machines Echoing* (Doc); 1996 *Meteora And Pindos Mountain* (Doc); 1993 *The American* (Short); 1990 *Absent* (Short)

ARE THERE ANY LIONS IN GREECE?

2003, color, 56min

(Greek Title: *Iparhoun liondaria stin ellada*)

Direction-Screenplay-Production: Irina Boiko Cinematography: Vangelis Vlahakis
Editing: Dinos Vamvakousis, Sound: Anastassios Anastasopoulos Music: Marios Strofalis

"Are there any lions in Greece?" asks the protagonist of Anton Chekhov's "The Wedding", and the answer he receives has become a maxim in Russia: "In Greece you can find anything!" In recent years, thousands of people from the former Soviet Union decided to discover whether the maxim is true. In search of their "lions", they went through a lot. Will they ever find them?

Irina Boiko

Born in the Ukraine, she has been living in Greece for the past 11 years. She studied theater in Kiev and film in Athens. She has won awards and distinctions for most of the films she has directed most recently a Special Mention by the Jury of the Berlin Film Festival (2006) for her film *The thief*.

Filmography

2006 *Besides The Blue-Blue Seaside* (Short); 2005 *The Thief* (Short); 2004 *Sunday From Nine To Nine* (Short); 2003 *Arc There Any Lions In Greece?* (Doc); 2002 *The Crabs* (Doc)

THE MARBLES

1989, 16mm, Colour, 14'

(Greek Title: *Ta marmara*)

Direction-Screenplay: Alexis Bisticas Cinematography: Ian Dodds Sound: Brendan Taylor Editing: Robert Headgreaves, Alexis Bisticas Sets: Dimitris Papaioannou
Production: Greek Film Centre, Goldsmiths' College

Cast: Stavros Zalmas, Rosamond Freeman-Attwood, Reina James

Christos is a young Greek in London, well-integrated, successful, more English than the English. Esther is his landlady and lover. Suddenly, Melina Merkouri arrives in London to take the Parthenon Marbles back to Greece.

Christos is stirred. He washes the dishes, breaks them in the manner of rebetiko fans when the music of the bouzouki stirs the blood, and returns to Athens... with Melina and the famed Parthenon Marbles.

Alexis Bisticas

Born in Athens in 1964. He obtained a B.Sc. in Political Science from the London School of Economics in 1986 and a post-graduate diploma in Telecommunications from Goldsmith's College, University of London in 1989. In 1993 he received an M.A. in film and television directing from the Royal College of Art. He died in 1995.

Filmography

1994 Dawn; 1993 The Clearing (short); 1992 The Breast (short); 1991 The Tie (short); 1990 The Kiss (short); 1990 Potson-potson (short); 1989 The Marbles (short); 1987 Eviction Day (short); 1987 Steps (short)