

2012 LOS ANGELES GREEK FILM FESTIVAL LINEUP REFLECTS GREECE'S STRUGGLES

May 04, 2012



2012 Los Angeles Greek Film Festival Official Poster

Twenty-two feature and short narrative and documentary films, a screenwriting master class, and a tribute to the late director Theo Angelopoulos – as well as gala opening and closing nights and the annual Orpheus Awards ceremony – aimed at “Defeating the Crisis Through The Viewfinder” May 31 – June 3rd, 2012

(May 4, 2012 – Hollywood, California) “There is no more timely reflection of Greece’s struggles than the one offered by its burgeoning cinema,” stated Ersi Danou, Co-Founder/Artistic Director, when announcing the theme for this the 2012 event: “Defeating the Crisis Through the Viewfinder.” “A new generation of filmmakers has begun to question the current state of things as well as to express an urge to evolve as artists and human beings. These filmmakers make films out of nothing, powered by their passion to make their stories – however small – known.”

Opening Night, May 31st, Egyptian Theatre, Hollywood

LAGFF will kick-off May 31st at Hollywood’s historic Egyptian Theatre with the gala red carpet world premiere of *A Green Story*, the triumphant true tale of Van Vlahakis – a Greek immigrant who arrived in America with only \$22 in his pocket but eventually founded the multimillion dollar Green company, Earth Friendly Products. After the screening, filmgoers will party with the stars under the stars as they look forward to three more action packed days and nights. *A Green Story* stars Ed O’Ross, Shannon Elizabeth, Annabella Sciorra, George Finn, Malcolm McDowell, Billy Zane, Louis Mandylor, Debbie Matenopoulos and Alessandra Toressani.

“It is truly an honor that Los Angeles Greek Film Festival has chosen our movie for their gala red carpet opening night,” said *A Green Story* writer/director Nika Agiashvili. “We felt that if we were going to tell the story of Van Vlahakis, we needed to tell it in the most authentic way possible. When we started in pre-production, we were committed to not only shooting in Greece, but also casting Greek actors. To be able to shoot in such an historic location like Athens is a dream for me as a filmmaker, and provides authenticity about the beginnings of Mr. Vlahakis’s amazing and inspirational life, a life that is truly having a transformational effect on the planet.”

Friday, June 1st, Linwood Dunn Theater, Hollywood

Friday, June 1st, LAGFF moves to its main venue, the Linwood Dunn Theater (with free off-street parking) on the campus of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences’ Pickford Center for Motion Picture Study, also in the heart of Hollywood. From 1:00 until 5:00 p.m. Professor Michael Economou will present an intense, structured overview geared towards screenwriters of the advanced level course he teaches at the USC School of Cinema. This class is specifically designed for writers who have basic knowledge of screenwriting who have written or in the process of writing at least one screenplay.

At 5:45 p.m., two short films will precede the documentary *Raw Material (Proti Yli)* from director Hristos Karakepelis, which examines a group of illegal gypsy immigrants who don’t live by the norms or speak the Greek language, and gather garbage and recycle Athens’ material in an attempt to improve their lives. In the U.S. premiere of *Dad, Lenin and Freddy (O Babas mou, o Lenin, and Freddy)* (set in the 1980’s) from director Rinio Dragasaki, a nine-year-old girl in Athens gradually loses touch with her workaholic communist father. In Yorgos Zois’s *Casus Belli*, urban life is seen through the lonesome journey of a loaded shopping cart.

At 8:30 p.m. on June 1st, writer/director Anthony Maras takes us to 1974 Cyprus in his short film *The Palace*, in which a conscript soldier comes face to face with a family in hiding and must confront the brutal reality of war and his role in it. Next, the feature film *Tungsten* from writer/director Giorgos Georgopoulos tells the stories of three men living in crisis-ridden Athens within a single day, revealing a world in havoc where victims become villains and vice versa.

Saturday, June 2nd, Linwood Dunn Theater, Hollywood

On Saturday, June 2nd, industry insiders will convene a panel discussion entitled *Representation in Hollywood* for want-to-be insiders. As in past years, the panel discussion should prove to be most popular. The event will be followed by a networking opportunity over light brunch.

The afternoon screenings begin at 12:00 p.m. with the Los Angeles premiere of the short film from writer/director/producer Yorgos Fourtounis, entitled *Face Down (Pistoma)*, in which we learn that in a dog-eat-dog world, there is no place for affection; paired with director/producer Ruggero Dipaola’s feature *Apartment in Athens (Appartamento ad Atene)*. Set against a backdrop of the German occupation of Greece in 1943, this drama introduces us to an Athenian family who undergoes a profound change when their apartment is commandeered by an exacting German officer with an inscrutable attitude.

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The U.S. premiere of director Evris Papanikolas's short film *Just a Perfect Day* – in which the world goes awry on a serene day – will kick off the 2:45 p.m. program. Next, the U.S. premiere of the drama *Wasted Youth* from co-directors Argyris Papadimitropoulos and Jan Vogel takes us to Athens on a blazing hot day on which a teenage skateboarder sets out for an aimless day with his friends; a middle-aged policeman struggles to make ends meet; and a simple twist of fate disrupts the course of their actions.

The 5:15 p.m. program lightens up a bit with *Abariza*, the short film from director Elena Dimitrakopoulou, in which an elderly couple plans their grand escape from a senior home. This is followed by the U.S. premiere of director Georgios Papaionnou's comedy *Super Demetrios*. Posing as a journalist for the Golden Jerusalem magazine, Thessaloniki's very own superhero, Super Demetrios, is the only person who can save the city from its worst nightmare, Captain F. ROM.

*F**k*, R.E. Rodgers's short film starring Sam Rockwell, Christopher Meloni, Bob Balaban, Mariska Hargitay and Bobby Cannavale opens the 8:30 p.m. program. In the film, characters will do anything to find "the location." Next, the L.A. premiere of director Filippos Tsitos feature *Unfair World*, which begins with a disenchanting policeman's decision to follow his own sense of justice. A series of unlike events, fluctuating from tragedy to comedy, culminate in an equally surprising outcome.

Saturday, June 2nd, Egyptian Theatre, Spielberg

Providing an option for festival goers, the 5:30 p.m. program kicks off with the world premiere of director Yeessum Lo and writer/producer Dorothea Paschalidou's short film *Intersection*, in which a father and son walk different paths, but life brings them back together. The U.S. premiere of writer/producer/director Dimitri Athanitis' *Three Days of Happiness (Tris Meres Eftihias)* follows, in which a Russian immigrant sells her body hoping to earn money to leave Greece, a university student struggles to overcome personal tragedy, and a woman doubting her decision to get married, cross paths while pursuing happiness.

Kicking off the 7:30 p.m. program, the world premiere of writer/director Constantinos Isaias's short film *Sacred Whispers*, in which, suppressed by his religious mother, a young man strives for salvation from his demons in a 1940's – 1960's racist society. Next, the U.S. premiere of *Riders of Pylos (Ippes tis Pylou)* from writer/director Nikos Kalogeropoulos, in which a middle-aged, poverty stricken actor flees Athens to escape his creditors and travels to the heart of historic Messinia, finding refuge in Polypylon, a decrepit castle. While exploring the wild countryside, he meets Democracy, and becomes desperate to win the heart.

Sunday, June 3rd, Linwood Dunn Theater

The final day, Sunday, June 3rd kicks off at 10:00 a.m. with a tribute to the late, great, Greek film director Theo Angelopoulos featuring a panel discussion moderated by Fred Linch, Arizona State University film professor, who will present a variety of film clips to demonstrate the famed filmmakers unique visual and musical style. At 11:30 a.m., there will be a retrospective screening of Angelopoulos's classic film, *Ulysses' Gaze*.

Writer/director Pete Stamatelatos and director Scott Ackerlund's award-winning short film *Sun Don't Shine for Us* will launch the 3:30 p.m. program with its Los Angeles premiere in which a Greek immigrant mother's hopes and dreams for her family collapse when her son enters the world of drug addiction. The moving, bitter-sweet documentary feature from director Tony Asimakopoulos comes after the short. The only son of Greek-Canadian immigrants who faces his complicated relationship with his overbearing mother and ailing father, and the patterns of dysfunction they share, in *Fortunate Son*.

Closing night festivities launch with a VIP reception at 5:30 p.m., during which film buffs will undoubtedly be buzzing about the festival lineup. Kicking off the closing night program with a very strong Japanese connection, at 6:30 p.m., is the U.S. premiere of the animated short film from director Panagiotis Rappas, *Fountain of Youth*, a tale of an elderly woodcutter who stumbles upon the fountain of youth in a mountain forest of Japan. Next, the L.A. premiere of Nikos Dayandas's powerful documentary, *Sayome*. After 35 years of living in Crete, happily married to a Greek sailor and raising her two sons, Sayome hears news of her mother's death and returns to her native Japan to reunite with her estranged family.

For the grand finale of the 2012 Los Angeles Greek Film Festival, Consul General of Greece Elisabeth Fotiadou is opening her home exclusively for LAGFF Gold Pass holders for the presentation of the prestigious Orpheus Awards, and gala closing night party. Guests will enjoy a pleasant atmosphere under the stars while tasting Greek delicacies.

"As every year, I am looking forward to those wonderful days in the beginning of summer when we all take our seats in front of the big screen and we get transported to the Greece we love and care about," expressed Consul General Fotiadou. "As our country is going through one of the most difficult times of its recent history, the new Greek films are more intriguing and inspirational. We look forward to welcoming you to opening night on May 31st."

The 2012 LAGFF Gold Pass includes tickets and advance entrance to all films, panels and programs; the opening gala red carpet premiere of *A Green Story*, with after party; closing night champagne receptions; a deluxe program book; free parking at the Linwood Dunn Theater; and, of course, the must-have ticket to the exclusive Orpheus Awards party at the Consul General's home. In the face of the global economic crisis hitting Greece, the cost of the 2012 LAGFF Gold Pass has been reduced by \$100 (33%) to only \$200, but must be purchased online in advance. To purchase a Gold Pass or individual tickets, and for more information, visit www.lagff.org.

Friends and fans worldwide are encouraged to follow the Los Angeles Greek Film Festival at www.facebook.com/lagff, www.twitter.com/lagff and at www.youtube.com/LAGreekFilmFestival.

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