

Women Feted at Eighth Annual Los Angeles Greek Film Festival

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Opening Night Gala Featured Nick Cassavetes' Hit Comedy "The Other Woman" Starring Power Trio – Cameron Diaz, Leslie Mann and Kate Upton

By Nicole Muj

The Eighth Annual Los Angeles Greek Film Festival (lagff.org) just wrapped after five days of screenings, red carpets and panels at the legendary Egyptian Theatre in Hollywood.



Opening Night Festivities in Egyptian Theatre Courtyard

The festival celebrated 29 features, documentaries and short films in a program that included two world, 14 US and 11 Los Angeles premieres. For the first time in the event's history, more than a third of all official selections were made by women filmmakers.

“As Greece is still grappling with the aftermath of an unprecedented crisis, the upheaval of Greek society is represented in much of the current Greek Cinema, leading its artists beyond the known and the safe. This year's films reflect the continued search for answers and solutions,” said festival director Aristotle Katopodis. “What makes this year even more special is the fact that we had a record number of submissions from female and first time filmmakers whose works we are proud to have represented in this year's program.”



Leslie Mann in “The Other Woman” (Photo: Barry Wetcher)

Nick Cassavetes’ romantic comedy “The Other Woman” starring Cameron Diaz, Leslie Mann, Kate Upton, Nikolaj Coster-Waldau, Nicki Minaj, Taylor Kinney and Don Johnson was screened at the opening night gala, followed by a special dinner reception and performance by Australian singer Vassy.



Academy Award-Winning Actor George Chakiris Attends Opening Night of LAGFF 2014

Female filmmakers were celebrated with several first feature bows, including the Los Angeles premiere of Elina Psikou’s drama “The Eternal Return of Antonis Paraskevas,” that also garnered her the first time director prize winner at the 2014 Hellenic Film Academy Awards; Greek filmmaker Christina Koutsospyrou and English-born Aran Hughes’ first feature documentary hybrid “To The Wolf,” that shadows the life of two impoverished shepherd families in western Greece and their struggle; as well as the US premiere of Alexandra Anthony’s emotionally charged documentary “Lost In the Bewilderness,” chronicling a 20-year journey following the abduction of her cousin at age five by his mother.

On the heels of his best director win at the 2014 Hellenic Film Academy Awards, Yorgos Tsemberopoulos’ thriller “The Enemy Within” closed the festival, followed by the presentation

of the Orpheus Awards. The 2014 award for Best Feature went to “Miss Violence” by Alexandros Avranas, while Spyros Teskos “Crossed Lives” received two nods, winning Best Documentary and Audience Choice, and Best Short was awarded to “Red Hulk” by Asimina Proedrou. A Special Jury Award was presented to “The Eternal Return of Antonis Paraskevas.” directed by Elina Psykou, with a Special Mention for Natassa Xydi’s “Travel Express.”



Natassa Xydi’s “Travel Express”

While we all hope to experience Greek culture through our travels, Greek film is certainly thriving around the world and in LA at such annual events as LAGFF and the South East European Film Festival (seefilmla.org), offering us a special glimpse into the lives of the wonderful people of Greece.

<http://lagff.org>