



April, 10. -16.2008 in Berlin

Press Kit 2008

Questions to the new Director of britspotting, the British and Irish film festival in Berlin, Alex Thiele.

Can you summarise the idea behind britspotting in twenty words or less?

Britspotting is a truly independent film festival that sets the British and Irish film cultural agenda in Berlin for the rest of the year!

Why do we need a British-Irish film festival in Germany?

The range of British and Irish cinema that gets made throughout the year – whether the films get a theatrical release or stay tucked within a film festival circuit – is tremendous. Britspotting is exactly placed to showcase this variety, in all shapes and sizes. We have our audience and aim to please.

What attracts you personally to British and Irish culture and film?

For me, as an ex-pat German – British and Irish culture epitomises everything “cool”. It is the biggest exporter of the best in popular culture – film, fashion and music. I’ve lived in London for the last 15 years – I should know!

What can the average festival punter expect from the britspotting experience?

We have great dramas and love stories, edgy thrillers, hard hitting docs and curious experimental work. You even can catch previews at britspotting. There really is something for everyone, old, young, gay and straight, serious and funny. Just come and see for yourself!

Why is britspotting 2008 going to be more cracking than ever before?

Because we’re heading into our 9th year – and we’re better and stronger than ever. The britspotting team are working day and night to pull together an incredibly strong and diverse programme of films and events. I can’t tell you anything about the films – it’s top secret of course – but what I can tell you is that the festival is going to be fantastic.

britspotting 08

Britspotting is seeking to prove for the 9th year running that the UK and Ireland are capable of producing films other than just those featuring extraordinarily-gifted teenagers and indestructible government agents.

From 10th to 16th April over 15 feature films and documentaries and more than 40 short films will be shown in two of Berlin's arthouse film theatres, Hackesche Höfe and fsk-Kino.

A **complimentary programme** based at two assembly points near the cineams will provide an opportunity for discussion and debate. In the Festival-Bar at Hackesche Höfe you will be able to mingle with industry people and film enthusiasts before and after the screenings in order to reflect on the festival's offerings. In

Kreuzberg, not far from fsk, you will find the bar "Tante Horst", the hub of Berlin's cineastes, in which a britspotting 08 exhibition will also be taking place.

Taking part in the **Feature Film Competition** this year will be, amongst others:

- the thriller "Jetsam" from Simon Welsford, which has already been enthusiastically received at multiple festivals in the UK and the USA;
- Joanna Hogg's drama "Unrelated", which won the FIPRESCI prize at the London Film Festival;
- the comedy "Special People", an insightfully-ironic low-budget film which is bound to scare the competition, conjured out of his original

short film by director Justin Edgar,

- "Kings", in which director Tom Collins takes up the personal dimensions of Irish migrant labour in England and places the topic in a social context;
- and a documentary about neurosurgeon Henry Marsh- "The English Surgeon"- which features music from Warren Ellis and Nick Cave and which also ran in competition at the London Film Festival.

In addition, there will be again this year **four short film programmes**. A special section will look at queer-feminist performance practices and will be guest-curated by Club de Femmes from the London queer-feminist Film Festival. The films from the three other shorts programmes will be competing for

the **short film prize**. One of these will be dedicated to new British and Irish experimental short films. The thematic focus of the remaining two programmes is dependent on the choice of submitted entries and is yet to be determined.

The festival's winners will be **voted for exclusively by the public**. The feature film prize is sponsored by post-production company Das Werk. The short film prize will be donated by the company 25p cine support.

Britspotting-Tour

After the festival in Berlin britspotting will be taking it's films on tour. From 24th to 27th April they can be seen in the Kölner Filmhaus in Cologne. And from 1st to 7th May the Corso Kino in Stuttgart will be hosting them. A

selection of the films will also be shown in the section "School of Life" during a schools film week end of April 2008 in Potsdam in partnership with the Filmmuseum Potsdam.

History...

Britspotting was founded in 2000 as the British Independent Film Festival and has since then developed into Germany's most important festival for English, Welsh, Scottish and Northern Irish productions. In 2004 the festival's focus was widened to include Irish productions and henceforth britspotting has stood for "British and Irish Film Festival".

...and the Future

Britspotting considers itself to be a yearly showcase of film production in the UK and Ireland and aims to present the German public with fresh and often

unknown film talents. Selected productions from renowned directors such as Ken Loach, Danny Boyle, Michael Winterbottom and Shane Meadows also feature.

Britspotting is a registered society, whose team consists of around thirty film-enthusiast volunteers, ranging from people who work in the industry to students. Tickets for the festival are available in the hosting cinemas or in the form of a Festival-Pass. There is also the possibility of receiving accreditation for those working in the industry and students.

First Highlights 2008 - Feature Film

Unrelated

Winner of the FIPRESCI Prize
2007 at London Film Festival

Drama, UK 100 min

Director/Screenwriter: Joanna
Hogg

Cast: Anna Kathryn Worth
(Anna), Tom Hiddleston (Oakley),
Mary Roscoe (Verena), David
Rintoul (George)

Producer: Barbara Stone

Director of photography: oliver
curtis bsc

Childless and in a deteriorating marriage, Anna fears she is condemned to a life on the periphery of events. Everything she is discovering now, she has arrived at too late. A summer holiday, with the family of an old school friend, becomes a reminder of a life she has not lived. Sexual tensions simmer and Anna believes she has found a second chance. But as events slowly unravel, and the

strains within this affluent bourgeois clique are revealed, she has to finally confront her inner turmoil and sadness.



First Highlights 2008 - Feature Film

Jetsam

Thriller, UK 2007, 84 min

Director/-screenwriter: Simon Welsford

Cast: Alex Reid (Grace), Shauna Macdonals (Rachel), Jamie Draven (Kemp), Cal Macaninch (Jack), Adam Shaw (Bevan)

Production company: Skyman Films

When the ice cold North Sea spits out a young woman onto a desolate beach we are drawn into the atmospheric world of this thriller. It follows her story as she tries to find out the how and why of her life. Along with a lost memory, to further complicate her situation a man washed up on the same beach attacks her. Fighting to stay alive she goes on the run from the stranger and desperately tries to piece her memory back together. Criss-crossing through the savage

coastline and a claustrophobic London setting she finds her answers in an unrelenting world where spies, betrayal and obsession are the daily currency and identity is as shifting as the tides.



First Highlights 2008 - Feature Film

Kings

Directors Finders Award 2007,
Ireland

Drama, UK/Ireland 88 min

Director/writer: Tom Collins

Cast: Colm Meaney (Joe), Donal
O'Kelly (Jap), Brendan Conroy
(Git), Donncha Crowley (Shay)

Producer: Newgrange Pictures

This is a film about separation and bereavement, about failure and being rejected by loved ones, conveyed through the personal stories of Irish immigrants living in London, whose lives are placed in the historical context of their generation.

Special People

Drama, UK, 78 min

Director/Writer: Justin Edgar

Cast: Dominic Coleman (Jasper),
Robyn Frampton (Jess), Jason
Maza (Dave); David Proud (Scott
Swadkins)

Producer: Alex Usborne

Cinematographer: Zac
Nicolson

In affectionate contrast to its characters, Special People is not afraid of subverting expectations and poking fun at itself in an unsentimental and ironic way. A film director works with a group of

disabled teenagers who travel together with him to the countryside to film their own small masterpiece.



First Highlights 2008 - Documentary

The English Surgeon

Competing in the 51. London Film Festival 2007

Documentary, UK 2007

Director/Producer:
Geoffrey Smith

Soundtrack composed and performed by
Nick Cave and Warren Ellis

Editor: Kathy O'Sheal

Production: Eycline Films,
Bungalow Towns Production

Henry is one of London's foremost brain surgeons, but despite being a pioneer in his field he stills rides an old pushbike to work and worries himself sick about the damage he can inflict on his patients.

Driven by the need to help others, Henry has been going out to Kiev for over 15 years to help improve upon the medieval brain surgery he witnessed there during his first visit in 1992.

Today the patients see him as the great saviour from the West, desperate parents want him to save their child,

and his Ukrainian colleague sees him as a guru. But for all the direct satisfaction he gets, Henry also sees grossly misdiagnosed patients, children he can't save, and a lack of equipment and trained supporting staff.



First Highlights 2008 - Short Film

In relation to our two as yet undisclosed short film programmes, we can reveal that 80% of submissions come from the UK and 20% from Ireland. Amongst these are both animations and documentaries, as well as fictional tales, whose contents vary from comical to tragic and creepy. We will be presenting approximately twenty of these films to the britspotting audience.

An old friend of britspotting numbers among those films which have already been chosen. Director Daniel Mulloy has featured in the festival's shorts programme in previous years with his films "Dad" (2007) and "Antonio's Breakfast" (2006). He will be returning in 2008 with his

latest film "Son"(17mins30), in which he presents another novel view of family relationships and draws the audience into a bewildering and somewhat unsettling world, where fiction and reality are indistinguishable from each other.

Other films which confirmed for the shorts section of the festival include "Illusion Dwellers" (8mins42), a partially-animated documentary from Robb Ellender, student of the Royal College of Art, about the many inhabitants of the hidden world of homelessness. "Sound of People" (7mins) from Ireland's Simon Fitzmaurice tells the story of a moment in the life of an 18-year-old who is teetering on the brink between life and death.

Silvia Aguirre Zegarra from the National Film and Television School offers "Ela" (13mins), a film about the 8-year-old title character, who is experiencing the first big bereavement of her life.

Experimental Shorts

As always there will be a showcase for experimental short films in the 2008 festival.

„Club de Femmes” Short Films

This collection of shorts will be hand-picked by our guest curator from the Queer and Feminist Film Festival in London. They will be shown on the 14th April and the audience will be invited to join us afterwards for a "Club de Femmes" party for women in Möbel Olfe, Kreuzberg.

Additional Events

Q&A with filmmakers

Filmmakers will be invited to the respective screenings of their films. In each case the possibility of a discussion after the showing will be offered- either in the film theatre itself or in the Festivalbar in Filmtheater Hackeshe Höfe or Festival-Cafe Tante Horst.

Dancing, not sitting

On 29th March 2008 a warming-up party with BritMusic from the Karrera-Club DJs will take place.

The festival team also extends an invitation to the Opening-Night Party in Schokoladen Mitte on 10th April after the opening film in order to celebrate the commencement of this year's festival.

On 12th April 2008 britspotting is participating in the Langen Buchnacht in Kreuzberg with a reading in Festival-Cafe Tante Horst.

Club de Femmes will be celebrating its short film line-up in the festival on 14th April 2008 with a women's party in Möbel Olfe.

Contact

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Festival locations

Berlin

10.-16. April 2008

Hackesche Höfe Filmtheater

Rosenthaler Straße 40/41
10178 Berlin
www.hackesche-hoefe-filmtheater-berlin.kino-zeit.de

Fsk – Kino am Oranienplatz

Segitzdamm 2
10969 Berlin
www.home.snafu.de/fsk-kino

School of Life

23.-29. April 2008
Filmmuseum Potsdam
Marshall/Breite Straße 1A
14467 Potsdam

Britspotting Tour

Köln
24.-27. April 2008
Kölner Filmhaus
www.koelner-filmhaus.de

Stuttgart
1.-7. Mai 2008
Corso Kino Stuttgart
www.corso-kino.de