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Looking back on *sehsüchte* – 8.000 Festival Visitors at the biggest Student Film Festival in Europe

The 38th International Student Film Festival came to a fitting close with the audience day. 8.000 visitors and over 80 invited filmmakers from 13 countries experienced six festival days, saw 157 films from 30 countries, celebrated three raging parties, acclaimed 15 prizewinners and enjoyed having so many celebrities around.

The 38th edition of the International Student Film Festival, *sehsüchte*, closed on a highlight. **Andreas Dresen**, winner of the 2009 German Film Prize, presented a retrospective on his student films and went on to discuss their student days at the “Konrad Wolf” University of Film and Television with the screenplay writer, **Laila Stieler**, and the camera operator, **Andreas Höfer**. That rounded off a furiously busy festival week in the Potsdam Thalia cinema.

The *sehsüchte* film programme lured audiences en masse into the festival cinema. The high quality of the entries met with much praise, “I’ve been at a couple of filmfestivals, but I think the quality of the filmblocks and the other films here were very impressive”, said Bradford Schmidt, filmmaker from the USA.

250 accredited experts, journalists and filmmakers turned the festival into a platform for exchanges between the new generation of filmmakers and media experts. “the large number of people accredited shows that *sehsüchte* has established itself as a meeting place in the international media landscape for representatives from the film branch and the new international generation. The resonance with experts, the media and the cinema audiences was never greater.” says the director of the festival, Philipp Lang.

Children’s Film, Music Video Prize, Cineastes’ Quintet and the **Retrospective** have been able to establish themselves as particular festival highlights and featured many celebrities. **Dieter Kosslick**, director of the Berlinale, discussed “Distance and Proximity in the Documentary Film” and subsequently joined the festival audience. **Andreas Dresen** talked enthusiastically about his time at the predecessor to *sehsüchte*, the student film days, and gave the film students the tip not to forget the parties.

Over **2.000 party-goers** then turned night into day. Filmmakers and guests celebrated into the early hours on three occasions. “The charm of a film festival organized by students with international guests shows up above all in the easygoing festival atmosphere with everyone celebrating party nights together. The contact between the audience and the new international generation of filmmakers is nowhere as close as at *sehsüchte*, says the festival director, Anna Jurzik.

Once again in this year, students at the **Hochschule für Film und Fernsehen “Konrad Wolf” / The Film & Television Academy “Konrad Wolf”** in Potsdam-Babelsberg have total control of the festival’s concept and organisation.

For further enquiries, please contact us personally on:

Donika Deneva (Press and PR– TV/Radio)

tel: +49.177.4667930

donika.deneva@sehsuechte.de

Andy Räder (Press and PR – Print/Online)

tel: +49.162.4881083

andy.raeder@sehsuechte.de

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Hochschule für Film und Fernsehen „Konrad Wolf“

Marlene-Dietrich-Allee 11

14482 Potsdam-Babelsberg

Germany

Fon: +49.331.6202780

Fax: +49.331.6202781

www.sehsuechte.de

Festival Cinema:

Thalia-Kinos

Rudolf-Breitscheid-Str. 50

14482 Potsdam-Babelsberg

Germany

www.thalia-potsdam.de

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