

**PRESS RELEASE**

Berlin, February 12, 2004

**AWARDS NIGHT 2004**

***BerlinBeirut* by Myrna Maakaron wins first BERLIN TODAY AWARD**

***Goat Walker* by Bartek Konopka & Piotr Rosolowski lucky winner of PLANET DOCUMENTARY AWARD**

The hosts of the AWARDS NIGHT 2004 – the Berlinale Talent Campus, Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg GmbH and PLANET TV – had every reason to be more than content: when moderator Gesa Ufer (Radio Eins) officially opened the evening at 8:30pm more than 1,200 guests had found their way to the Kulturbrauerei's Kesselhaus for the twin ceremony of the PLANET DOCUMENTARY AWARD and the BERLIN TODAY AWARD. Dieter Kosslick, who was unable to attend in person, insisted on greeting the talents, nominees and winners with a video message directly from the red carpet.

The award ceremony began with the presentation of the PLANET DOCUMENTARY AWARD. James W. Wells, general manager of PLANET, and Matthias Pfeffer, editor-in-chief of FOCUS TV and media partner of the PLANET DOCUMENTARY AWARD, pointed out that the past years had seen a growing trend towards documentaries which they wanted to seize and promote with the PLANET DOCUMENTARY AWARD. The advantage of winning the award was not just the complete funding of a documentary production but also the possibility of prime-time screening of the film on the documentary channel PLANET TV in all German-speaking countries. Bartek Konopka and Piotr Rosolowski were the lucky winners of this year's award. They were rewarded for their film project *Goat Walker* which tells the story of an unusual aid project in Poland. The citizens of a small village are given goats instead of financial assistance. As the chairperson of the jury, Barbara Rudnik, emphasized in her laudation: „*Goat Walker* convinced the jury with both its humorous and hopeful treatment of Polish reality from the point of view of a goat.“

Gesa Ufer then led over to the second part of the ceremony – the first presentation of the BERLIN TODAY AWARD. Prof. Keil, director of Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg GmbH and also initiator and sponsor of the BERLIN TODAY AWARD, was happy that the idea, which had been developed in cooperation with the film industry in Berlin-Brandenburg, to invite young filmmakers to start a dialogue about Berlin and the region had already succeeded in its first year by producing three different, personal and inspiring views of the city. Michael Verhoeven, jury member of the BERLIN TODAY AWARD and together with Hans-Christian Schmid and Maria Köpf one of the three new mentors of the award, announced the winner: *BerlinBeirut* by Myrna Maakaron from Lebanon. With its smart parallel montages, *BerlinBeirut* combined both the differences but also the similarities between the two cities. The result was a very personal film, an essayistic collage which reveals structures that go deep and that combine the two cities: two formerly divided cities where both past and present are present, the jury found in its reasoning. The award itself was a surprise: Prof. Keil presented Myrna Maakaron an ice sculpture shaped like a butterfly and made by the Danish artist Jeppe Hein. At the end of the awards ceremony, Gesa Ufer thanked all of the sponsors again and opened the buffet.

The highlight of the subsequent party was the show by the Berlin-based band *Puppetmastaz* that rocked the Kesselhaus. Berlin's own VJ team *Vidiots* and DJ *Mark van der Ree* (Klangspiel) provided the right backdrop of sounds and images to keep the talents and guests on the dance floor until early in the morning.

The PLANET DOCUMENTARY AWARD is an initiative by PLANET – the documentary channel and its media partner FOCUS TV. The PLANET DOCUMENTARY AWARD 2004 is supported by Kabel Deutschland.

The BERLIN TODAY AWARD is a joint award by the film industry in Berlin-Brandenburg, initiated and sponsored by Filmboard/Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg GmbH (coordination: Frank Stehling) and organized by boxfish films - Büro für Film + Kommunikation. Media partner of the BERLIN TODAY AWARD is Deutsche Welle, DW-TV.