

# GOLDEN BEGGAR NEWS

17<sup>TH</sup> INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF LOCAL TELEVISIONS IN KOŠICE

8 June 2011



The original Golden Beggar statue, atop his house on Hlavnà ulica, seems to welcome participants.

## Festival Opens Its 17th Edition

For a 17th time, the International Festival of Local Televisions has begun in Košice in Dom Techniky..

On Tuesday night, the first Festival ac-

tivity took place, the opening of an exhibit by the noted Serbian photographer Ivan Zdravković.

Activities concluded with a visit to the

City Park and activities grouped under the rubric "Košice's Imagination."

Some delegates from 20 countries have registered for this year's Festival.

### *Focus Is Again Placed on Role Of Young Authors*

The Festival has for several years been encouraging young authors, even setting a special Golden Beggar Award, along with a distinctive statue. That effort continues this year.

In many ways, the technological changes that have come to filmmaking and television are a blessing to young authors.

Equipment is now unbelievably inexpensive, compared to even 20 years ago. And there are now more outlets for their work, although some of them, like YouTube, are not paying.

Even though equipment is available, films still need financing, and young authors still have a hard time finding their way into the funding and recognition process. While the Festival is not in a position to finance films, the special competition for young producers is an effort to give them recognition.



Andrea Lodovichetti

This year among the participants in the Festival are several prominent young authors from several countries.

Among them is Andrea Lodovichetti of Italy, whose film "Under My Garden," screened at last year's Festival and praised by the jury. Lodovichetti has earned more than 50 awards since 2003. He will have time at the Festival to speak with other young authors.

Among the other young producers attending the Festival are Agnes Dimun, whose film "Long-Haired Men" is in this year's competition, and Katarína Kočálková, whose film "My Aunt Timrava" won the Golden Beggar in 2008.

By bringing these and other young authors together, the Festival hopes to contribute to their efforts.

### *Swiss Filmmaker Jacob Berger To Show Film*

The Swiss filmmaker Jacob Berger will present his film *One Day*. He was interviewed by the Festival's Miloslava Hriadeľová about another of his films, called *Allah's Revenge*. He talks about his methods of filmmaking.

**You filmed the *La Revanche d'Allah (Allah's Revenge)* in Algeria soon after the Islamic Salvation Front [FIS in its French abbreviation] won parliamentary elections and in the course of doing so**  
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Jacob Berger

opened the democratic regime.

Being Swiss and not French was obviously very helpful in such circumstances. My goal was to approach the Islamic Front with an open mind, trying to hold back Western stereotypes. The Islamic Front actually welcomed us in a friendly and relatively open way. Only the most extremist elements of FIS – the Afghan veterans and the jihadists around Ali Belhadj, the organization’s #2, showed signs of hostility towards us. Mind you, the FIS didn’t upend the democratic regime. First because there never was any democracy in Algeria, second because it was the military who took the decision to put a stop to the electoral process when they realized the FIS was going to win and take over. Did they do so because they wanted to protect their own private (and vastly corrupt) interests, or because they wanted to protect their people from an extremist religious regime? The question remains open to this date.

**What attracts you to political issues?**

I grew up in a very political family. My father is a well known English Marxist writer, my mother translated books by Georg Lukacz, Walter Benjamin, Ernst Fischer, Wilhelm Reich, etc. into English, so I was actually born into art and politics. I picked an “artistic” profession, but always remained politically involved, both as a filmmaker and as a citizen.

**What does it mean for a filmmaker to show these breaking situations?**

Well, I never shot *news* documentaries. I mean, my business was never breaking news itself, but the aftermath of breaking news. Fiction and breaking situations are of course very different job altogether, at least on the “set”. Making documentaries in a situation of extreme tension is a humbling experience. You are not the director. God is. Or the local commander is. But certainly not you. In the editing room, the filmmaker regains his powers and both professions become very much alike. Because even when your material is reality and your characters are real, you treat them, in the editing room, just as if they were fiction. You do your best not to betray reality, of

# THE FESTIVAL IN NUMBERS

## 8,184.98

Number of kilometers traveled to the festival by the delegate coming the greatest distance.

Erik Molberg, USA  
(and he has to go back)

## 8:04:30

How many hours it will take to watch the local television films entered into competition.

## 130

Number of delegates who have registered for this year’s festival.  
(The number will rise each day)

## 22

Number of countries sending participants.

course, but you are building a *film*, not a photocopy of reality. You’re building a story. And you treat it as such.

**How do you choose from a variety of information the information you can trust?**

It depends if you mean on the field and in the moment, or in general? In general I use the same tools as any journalist. I check sources, mainly. In the field, I try to trust my political intuition. And experience, of course.

But I’d say that even when a piece of information is not verifiable or even trustworthy, it can nevertheless be film-worthy. Because the myths, legends, or even plain lies people choose to believe in are just as important as reality is. That’s something I’ve learnt from psychoanalysis: once something has been said, uttered, it becomes true, or at least to a certain, subjective, degree, it becomes part of the truth. Even if the person is openly lying, his lie says as much about him as the truth would.

**To separate truth from propaganda in conflicts is obviously difficult. How was it to shoot in Moscow during the efforts to remove Gorbachev?**

I don’t find it that difficult. Propaganda is usually very clumsy and often sounds incredibly stupid. Manipulations can be

difficult to unravel, but propaganda is always recognizable. It’s the same when people are brought to lie in front of the camera because they are being terrorized or simply bribed. It shows in 90% of the cases!!

**To be able to deliver objective information, you need to get into enemy camps. This must be difficult, especially in extreme situations. What was it like for example when the film *Les Renards de Kaboul (The Foxes of Kabul)*, filmed in the capital of Afghanistan in the time during the Mujahideen civil war, before the Taliban seized power?**

That’s the part I love the most in war reporting. Changing camps. Going from one outpost to the other. It teaches you so much about human beings! Because very often, there is no difference between the people on one side or the other of the front line.

In Afghanistan, in Bosnia, whenever I had the opportunity to go from one side to another, I really understood that war is mostly about power, and power is mostly about economics, and economics is mostly about class and race. In certain occasions, it can be about religion and identity, but usually such issues are only used to hide the real interests at stake, which are, as I just said, about class and race. And money.