



Armenia Susanna Harutyunyan

Armenia applied for entry to EURIMAGES, which should offer new opportunities for European co-productions. Armenian producers have waited some time for this step, which should make a difference considering the limited state subsidies for film production. In 2010, subsidies for the national film industry will remain the same in the previous two years, at USD\$1.6 million. The amount set aside for film production is USD\$771,000, with USD\$295,000 for animated films and USD\$130,000 for documentaries.

At the same time, the state subsidies for the participation of Armenian films in festivals and the presentation of national product at leading film markets has increased as a result of the participation of Armenian films at the Cannes film market over the last two years, supported by the Armenian National Cinema Centre. Documentaries, feature films, short films and projects in post-production were all represented. The Armenian stand attracted festival programmers, distributors and a range of other industry professionals. We hope this is one more step towards the integration of Armenian cinema within the global cinematic landscape.

The catalyst for this process has been the circulation of Armenian films at international film festivals. Harutyun Khachatryan's **Border**, an Armenian and Netherlands co-production with Hubert Bals Fund participation, has become the most visible Armenian festival participant throughout 2009. This docu-drama, which surveys the landscape following the country's war with Azerbaijan in the late 1990s from the perspective of a 'she-buffalo', was presented at major film festivals, picking up



Harutyun Khachatryan's **Border**

numerous prizes, including the Platinum Remy at the Houston International Film Festival and the first prize at Antalya's Golden Orange film festival and Spain's Gijón film festival.

Among the new Armenian films that were premiered at the end of 2009, Suren Babayan's **Don't Look In The Mirror** (Mi Najir Hajelun) tells the story of an artist-turned-model who has hit hard times and is faced with no choice but to sell his possessions. When he looks into a mirror, he does not see himself but the faces of strangers, who turn out to be the various facets of his own ego. The experience forces him to seek forgiveness at his parents' graveside, begging for mercy, help and, ultimately, the restoration of faith.

The main character of Vigen Chaldryan's **Maestro** is a famous musician, living in his fragile world of music and art. Any intrusion from reality into this world, or the political crises reflected in the open struggle between the ruling party and opposition, breaks his internal harmony, threatening profound tragedy or even self-destruction. The film explores the troubles that vex artists who have to balance their life and the life around them with the demands of art and intellect.



Aram Shahbazyan's **Chnchik**

Several local features are in production and will be completed in early 2010. One of them is Mikayel Vatinyan's **Joan and Voices** (Jannan ev Dzajner), the study of a woman who travels throughout Armenia, interviewing people about their lives in an attempt to find meaning in her own existence. Aram Shahbazyan's **Chnchik** promises to be a unique drama. It looks at a small village's everyday life as seen through the drama of a family and a village girl who is distanced from this world.



The main venue of the 2009 Golden Apricot Film Festival

The year's best films

Border (Harutyun Khachatryan)

Don't Look In The Mirror (Suren Babayan)

Maestro (Vigen Chaldryan)

Quote of the year

'I have just finished watching *Border*. It was an overwhelming experience for me. So much depth and search! So many amazing visual ideas, one after another, carrying me into places I didn't know cinema could reach!' American director **ROB NILSSON**, commenting on Harutyun Khachatryan's **Border**.



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