

Press release

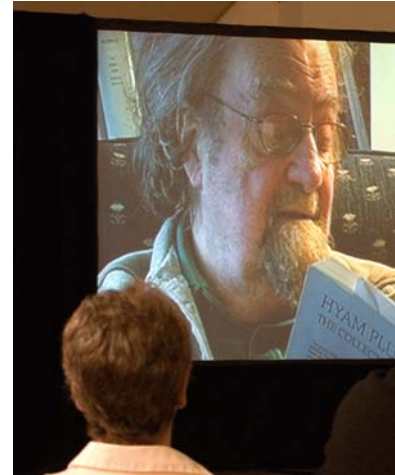
Thursday, 25th September 2008

European premiere of 'Hyam Plutzik: American Poet' at the 4th ZEBRA Poetry Film Festival

'Hyam Plutzik: American Poet', a documentary by Oscar nominee Christine Choy and Ku-ling Siegel, will have its European premiere at 4 pm on Saturday 11th October at the 4th ZEBRA Poetry Film Festival. A question and answer session with the audience will immediately follow, and there will be a full panel discussion at 6:15 pm.

The European premiere of the documentary 'Hyam Plutzik: American Poet' by Oscar nominee Christine Choy and Ku-ling Siegel will open the 'American Perspectives' segment of the 4th ZEBRA Poetry Film Festival on 11th October 2008.

The screening will be followed by a panel discussion, chaired by Shelly Kupferberg, a Berlin-based TV and radio journalist who specialises in cultural issues. Writer Edward Moran, literary researcher for the film, will also participate along with writer and journalist Esther Dischereit, a major intellectual voice of Berlin's Jewish community, writer and filmmaker Michael Roes and filmmaker Ram Devineni. They will be talking about the form and aesthetics of documentary films on writers and about the possibilities and risks involved in introducing to a European public a poet who is largely unknown in Europe via the medium of film.



Donald Hall reading Plutzik
©Ann Sanfedele

'Hyam Plutzik: American Poet' tells the story of the critically acclaimed US literary figure who was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize for poetry shortly before his untimely death at age 50 in 1962. The film traces Hyam Plutzik's growth as a poet from his youthful days on a Connecticut farm as the son of Russian emigrants, through his education at Trinity College and Yale, and finally as the first Jewish professor at the University of Rochester.

Plutzik's Pulitzer Prize nomination was for 'Horatio', a long narrative poem that explores the elusive quality of memory by searching for the true identity of Shakespeare's Hamlet. In similar fashion, the film juxtaposes memory, interviews, literature, and home movies to lead viewers on a journey through the life and legacy of a great poet whose work has sadly been neglected.

In the film, Hyam Plutzik's widow, Tanya, appears as a guide to her husband's life and legacy. She is joined by family members, university colleagues, and notable poets who reminisce about Plutzik's life, discuss the importance of his poetry, and read many of his works. Among the poets who appear are Donald Hall and the late Stanley Kunitz (both former US Poets Laureate), and Hayden Carruth, Galway Kinnell, Jarold Ramsey, and Grace Schulman.

"American Perspectives" will be showing films by 22 American filmmakers including Ram Devineni of Rattapallax in New York and Francesco Levato of the Poetry Center of Chicago and presenting some of the best political and social poetry films from the USA.

The ZEBRA Poetry Film Festival has become established as the largest international forum for poetry films, offering film-makers from all over the world the opportunity to exchange ideas and consolidate a basis for future work. It offers a platform for short films which deal with poems from an aesthetic or formal point of view or in terms of their content.

A project of the Literaturwerkstatt Berlin in cooperation with interfilm Berlin and with the financial support, for which we are grateful, of the Hauptstadtkulturfonds and the Goethe Institute. The ZEBRA Poetry Film Festival takes place as part of the poesiefestival berlin.

4th ZEBRA Poetry Film Festival
9 -12 October 2008

In the Babylon berlin:mitte cinema
Rosa-Luxemburg-Str. 30
10178 Berlin

Saturday, 11th October 2008, 4.15 pm

American Perspectives. Hyam Plutzik: American Poet
European premiere

Saturday, 11th October 2008, 6.15 pm

American Perspectives. Hyam Plutzik: American Poet
Panel Discussion

Saturday, 11th October 2008, 8.15 pm

American Perspectives. Rattapallax & The Poetry Center of Chicago

Saturday, 11th October 2008, 10.30 pm

American Perspectives. Focus USA

Enquiries and information please contact:

Boris Nietzsche

Press / Publicity

Literaturwerkstatt Berlin

Tel 030. 48 52 45 - 25

www.literaturwerkstatt.org