

NEW TURKISH CINEMA IN EUROPE

Panel Discussion

5 December at Abney Hall, Stoke Newington, Church Street, N16

Organised by the London Turkish Film Festival, in collaboration with the Transcultural Research Unit, Goldsmiths College and the Rio Cinema

Programme: Starts at 10:00 a.m., ends at 16:00 p.m.

10:30- 13:00

Session I: Changing Turkey, Changing Cinema

Introduction: **Vedide Kaymak**, London Turkish Film Festival

Chair: Kevin Robins (Goldsmiths College)

Speakers:

Asu Aksoy (Goldsmiths College): *Situating New Turkish Cinema: New Confidence, New Markets and Cultural Transformation*

Turkey in the new millennium is different from the Turkey of a previous era. There is a new sense of confidence, a new found feeling of stability (though precarious) at home. Turkey seems to have settled for a compromise, and the tensions that once stopped it from being culturally innovative are now being used construct a more complex, culturally plural ,and maybe even tolerant, identity. The expansion of the economy, and the agenda concerning entry into the European Union, have both been central to this process. The economy and culture of cinema have been major beneficiaries of these developments.

Ömer Vargı (Film Director)

How are the conditions for film production changing in Turkey? What kinds of possibilities are opening up through co-productions? Do you think that Turkish cinema is internationalising, and, if so, how?

Fırat Yücel (Altyazı, Film Review Magazine):

Can we talk about a renaissance in Turkish cinema? How does the blockbuster phenomenon contribute to this rejuvenation? How are these big budget films financed? Who are these new popular film directors? How are these new blockbusters received by the public? How is cinema culture (from production to consumption and critical reflection) changing?

COFFEE BREAK

11: 30

Session II: New Turkish Cinema in Europe

Film Screening: 30 minutes

Chair: Erju Ackman (Editor of Turkish Cinema Newsletter)

Deniz Göktürk (University of California, Berkeley)

There is now quite a substantial body of Turkish-related filmmaking in Europe, especially in Germany. Why do you think cinema has become such an important medium for cultural expression in Europe among the so-called Turkish diaspora? How important is it for these new and young film directors in Europe to connect to Turkey and to Turkish culture? How are these new Euro-Turkish film directors articulating issues differently, with respect to both European and Turkish cultures and agendas?

Ed Fletcher (Soda Pictures)

As the UK distributor of Fatih Akin's acclaimed and hugely successful *Head On*, can you talk about the challenges lying ahead for the distribution of the film in this country?

Karen Alexander (British Film Institute)

Challenges lying ahead as the BFI is preparing to release Zeki Demirkubuz's new film *Fate*.

Dervis Zaim (Film Director)

How do you see the Turkish film scene in terms of the development and reception of a critical and reflective filmmaking? Is there an audience for these kinds of films (so-called art films) in Turkey? What have been the challenges for you to get your film to wider audiences? Is the international festival circuit the major forum for the visibility of your films?

13: 00 – 14:00 LUNCH BREAK

14:00 – 16:00

Session III: New Directions in Turkish Cinema

Chair: Kevin Robins (Goldsmiths College)

Ümit Ünal (Film Director):

What are the conditions for creative initiatives in cinema to take place in Turkey today? How do Turkish distributors and exhibitors react towards low-budget, but creative, projects? How about cinema education, training and funding institutions? Would you say that there is a growing interest in Turkey, especially among young people, to experiment with new technologies and risky film projects? What are the channels of getting these experimental, and innovative works of cinema to wider and international audiences? What are the major difficulties in this respect? Do you think experimental or innovative filmmakers in Turkey are connected into wider trends in the world?

Kerem Bayrak (Film Producer, Promoter)

What have been the challenges in promoting Turkish cinema to the US film industry? Do you think Turkish films are now investing more for international promotion?

Lale Mansur (Actress) You have been in the Turkish cinema scene for a long time - how do you think the Turkish cinema has changed over time? Is there a move towards professionalisation? What is the role of television in today's world of celebrity culture in Turkey? Do you consider undertaking international projects?

Ezel Akay (Film Producer and Film Director, IFR Istanbul):

What kinds of films do well in Turkey now? Can we still talk about the dominance of Hollywood films? What is the reason behind the popularity of such films as the *Vizontele* series? How is film making changing, in terms of finance, technical aspects, the proficiency of actors, and also in terms of the overall mindset regarding cinema? What makes a Turkish film successful today? What is your experience of producing and marketing your wonderfully ironic *Neredesin Firuze*?

Discussion

Rapporteur: Erju Ackman (Editor of Turkish Cinema Newsletter): A summary of the main points

end of the Panel.