

Laudatio for Hana Makhmalbaf

**on Ocasio of the Bestowal of the Honorary Award by
TERRE DES FEMMES Film Festival „Women's Worlds“ for
„Courageous Commitment to the Defense of Human Rights of Women“**

on November 21st 2009 in Tuebingen, Germany

The Laudatio is given by TERRE DES FEMMES Filmfest Director Irene Jung

Hana Makhmalbaf was born in 1988 in Tehran, Iran as the youngest daughter of famous film-maker Mohsen Makhmalbaf. At the age of seven she had her first role as an actress in „A Moment of Innocence“, a movie made by her father. In the same year she left school to study with her elder sister at „Makhmalbaf Film School“, founded by her father for his family and acquaintances. As part of her training she worked as director's assistant, camerawoman, director, script supervisor and photographer for the „Makhmalbaf Film House“. At the age of eight she made her first film „The Day My Aunt Was Ill“ (1997) with hand camera, causing an international sensation as the youngest filmmaker of all times at the Locarno Film Festival.

At the age of 14 she documented the shooting of Samira's film „At Five in the Afternoon“. The result was her debut film „Joy of Madness“ (2003). It shows the deep fear women still have of the Taliban in post-war Afghanistan and premiered at the film festival in Venice, where it received international awards. The same year she published her poetry book „Visa for One Moment“. At the age of 18 she made her first feature film „Buddha Collapsed Out Of Shame“ in Afghanistan, which we screened at Women's Worlds 2008. In it she impressively criticises the devastating marks left on children by war and the violence that women have to face from their childhood on. At the same time she urgently calls to attention that adults have to be aware of their responsibility to create and leave a peaceful world to the children. The film was well received world-wide, and won many international awards including the Christal Bear and Peace Film Award at Berlinale 2008.

Today Hana is involved with the democratic movement in Iran, knowing that the enforcement of women's rights needs a democratic society. Her latest, highly explosive film "Green Days", which we will watch afterwards, was made in the streets of Teheran during the riots accompanying the elections in June of this year. In it she gives a convincing account of the peoples' strong wish for democracy and freedom and of how far women are ready to take action. The secretly shot film forced Hana to go into exile because of the threat of being arrested. The film was shown as a surprise at the Venice Film Festival in September 2009 and was awarded the "Bravery Award".

Dear Hana, today we present you with the Award for "Courageous Commitment for Human Rights of Women" because as a filmmaker you repeatedly denounced violence against women even if it meant a high risk for you. We especially recognize you as a representative of the young generation that wants to accept the responsibility to create a peaceful and humane world. For women and girls you are a great role model and we hope that you will have the chance to keep making your impressive films that defend the dignity of women, children, and of all human beings. Also we wish that you will be able to return to your home country one day.

Hana Makhmalaf expressed in her acceptance speech: "I'm 21 years old. In four years I will be 25. Why am I talking about the number 25? It's the 25th International award I receive, but for other people it will remind them of 25 years of prison in the Islamic Republic of the dictatorship of Iran. I want to dedicate this award with all my respect and love to Mr. Amir Entezam, who has been prisoner of that dictatorship without having committed any sin. And if these days I and my generation can even think of freedom, it is because of the 25 years of resistance in prison (it means, more than my age) of people like Mr. Amir Entezam."