

11th Thessaloniki Documentary Festival

The Thessaloniki Documentary Festival, under the artistic direction of Dimitri Eipides, celebrates, for the eleventh continuous year, the constantly vigilant, questioning and transforming art of the documentary. It ceaselessly seeks those images of social, historical, political and most of all human reality of the new century which function as a springboard to adventurous film journeys. What must be stressed is that about 50 youths members of the interventional organization "Sfina" surprised the viewers during the closing ceremony of the festival when they appeared wearing eye, mouths and ears in their faces and holding placards with the signals "I hear but I do not hear", "I talk but I do not talk", "I see but I do not see", satirizing that way the indifference and the isolation of modern people in everything that happens around them and stressing the important role of the documentary in the briefing of the citizens for the events taking place in our country and the world in general. The Hellenic Red Cross Audience Award for a film over 45 minutes in the International Selection with a prize of 4,000 euros went to Anders Ostergaard's *Burma VJ, Reporting From a Closed Country* from Denmark.

The Hellenic Red Cross Audience Award for a film under 45 minutes in the International Selection with a prize of 2,000 euros went to *Flowers of Rwanda* by David Munoz from Spain.

The Hellenic Red Cross Audience Award for a Greek film over 45 minutes with a prize of 30,000 euros went to *National Garden (Ethnikos Kipos)* by Apostolos Karakasis. The Amnesty International Award for the best film in the Human Rights section went to *Burma VJ*.

The Hellenic Red Cross Audience Award for a Greek film under 45 minutes with a prize of 20,000 euros went to *The World Naked Bike Ride Project* in Thessaloniki (*Vgikame Apo Ta Rouha Mas*) by Elli Zerbin. As for the FIPRESCI Awards (International Federation of Film Critics):

The Greek selection was *Eva Stefani's Bathers (Louomeni)* and the International selection recognition went to US filmmaker Kimberly Reed's *Prodigal Sons*.

ERT state channel inaugurated the Doc on Air Award this year, given to the best Pitching Forum project by the tutors who participated in the '09 forum called Docs in Thessaloniki, run collaboratively with the EDN. The award for 7,000 euros went to director Kate McNaughton's *Rush for Life* (Takas Films, UK).

Greek Passengers of Emirates Flight in Danger



According to officials, an Airbus jetliner, flight number EK407 registered to the Emirates airline struck its tail upon the runway as it took off from Melbourne Airport in Melbourne, Australia Saturday. About 225 people, including dozens of Greeks were on board. After the tail hit the runway, the cabin was filled with smoke.

Some passengers stated they had seen flames coming out from the engine of the aircraft, which while taking off it knocked out some of the runway lights and an antenna.

Then, after flying over Port Philip Gulf it emptied its fuel and returned to Melbourne international airport, where it had an emergency landing. The passengers were transferred to a hotel until they could use alternative flights. Emirates confirmed the incident, without referring to any more details, promising a thorough investigation.

The aircraft remains landed at Melbourne airport.

Napoleon knocks back offers to go it alone

IT'S been a big week for the cosmetics king Napoleon Perdis.

Aided by a cosmetics SWAT team, he has toured malls and stores the length and breadth of the country to transform nearly 150 suburban housewives, secretaries and Aussie girls into "goddesses".

Sales of his new mass market brand NP Set have taken off in the US. He is due to fly back to the US, where he will embark on yet another punishing roadshow.

It's all part of the personal touch that has helped transform a family business into a growing global brand.

Indeed, at store appearances in Australia he is mobbed like a rock star. Punters pay \$499 a go to be made over by the maestro, who with his team can turn around 20 in an hour.

It's good business but it is also good marketing. In an age when the billion-dollar cosmetics industry is increasingly relying on models and actresses to be their "face", a Greek boy from Parramatta is beating them



The cosmetics mogul Napoleon Perdis. Photo: Peter Rae

at their own game.

Since moving to the US in 2007 Perdis, his wife and his brother have steadily built up the distribution of its 400 lines to 2500 stores. Rather than pay middlemen 50 per cent of the wholesale margin to distribute his products, Perdis invested in a distribution centre in Los Angeles, a move that allows him to keep prices keen at retail.

Clearly he is doing something right. Retail sales this year will be \$138 million. Venture capitalists as well as the big cosmetics compa-

nies - he won't say which ones - have come knocking at his door.

"We had two very large offers last year, including a trade sale of which I would have 30 per cent equity for five years. But why would I?" He values his independence too much to sell, his bank is happy with his covenants and he has a good line of credit that is serviced by the business's cash flow.

"He's not just a make-up artist; he has the [personal] brand that appeals to the public," says Launa Inman, the managing director of Target Australia, which recently listed his NP Set range.

She approached Perdis to develop a range as part of Target's own makeover to become more fashionable. "We recognised that ... [our] customers were actively seeking out [cosmetic] brands but we didn't really have one."

Inman says Perdis's ability to balance mass market appeal with glamour has worked. Perdis started in Parramatta the same time he opened in Oxford Street. Unlike many fashion and cosmetics brands, his is imbued with authenticity. "It was never something of the

wealthy and elite but accessible to everyone - [women] all had access to glamour," he says of the early days.

"I did not start as a trend machine ... I started in the heart," says the "chubby wog boy" (his words), who regularly peppers conversation with the phrase "democratising beauty". Opening a beauty academy (now the largest in the world) also helped drive the message home that his products are professional; staff in his stores and concessions are acknowledged as being the best in helping customers with their make-up.

Perdis recently expanded into body and bath lines and is experimenting in skin care. But his next and perhaps boldest move is to go into hotels that also house beauty spas, where, with the help of colour, cosmetics and "maybe some injectables" - that's Botox - customers will leave looking and perhaps feeling five years younger.

Yet he does not allow his attention to be diverted away from his core business: beating the competition. His visit to Australia coincided with news that his arch rival, Estee Lauder, was withdrawing its Beauty Bank diffusion range for sale outside of the US, a move that Perdis believes he played some role in.

Target in America, which lists his NP Set range, has just confirmed that in the key Christmas trading period NP Set will be occupy the prized real estate of two gondolas - the display case at the ends of aisles - in its 1900 stores. Each one needs to sell 80,000 units for the period. "They are a machine and I love them for it. I am ecstatic and I don't know when to stop."

Lemnos now the big cheese

LEMNOS Foods was a small operation in Lang Lang before it became a leading food manufacturer based in Dandenong.

It was founded by two Greek immigrant brothers in 1969, employed only eight people at its peak and sold feta and haloumi cheese in Victoria.

Financial adviser Terry Paule bought Lemnos Food in the late '90s and moved the operation to Dandenong South.

He, his brother and the company's accountant formed a partnership and turned a small specialty cheese producer into a much larger food manufacturer.

In just a decade the business expanded its range to a variety of cheeses and other dairy products and it now distributes its products to Coles and Safeway supermarkets across the nation and supplies about 25 per cent of all the Feta sold in Australia each year.

Lemnos Foods now has 60 employees, exports to more than 30 countries and turns over more than \$50 million a year.