

PLUG UGLY FILMS



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CON ARTIST

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OFFICIAL SELECTION OF HAMPTONS, ROME, AUSTIN & DENVER FILM FESTIVALS

From Tribeca to Hamptons, Rome, Austin & Denver
Docu-Comedy About "Business Artist" Mark Kostabi Hits the Road

September, 2009 – Brooklyn, NY – After it's world debut at the 2009 Tribeca Film Festival premiering to four sold out screenings, critical acclaim and a Special Jury Mention, filmmaker **Michael Sládek**'s docu-comedy feature film **CON ARTIST** will play four renowned festivals this Fall. In October the film will screen at the Hamptons International Film Festival and, just days later, it will have its international premiere at the Rome International Film Festival. It has also just been invited to screen at the Austin Film Festival in late October followed by the STARZ Denver Film Festival in November.

A character-driven black comedy, **CON ARTIST** examines themes of art, money, celebrity and fakery through the controversial and contradictory persona of "business artist" **Mark Kostabi**. A successful art world pariah, Kostabi rocketed to international fame and fortune during the 1980s art / punk / hip hop boom with a gimmick: to mass-produce, sign, and sell thousands of paintings per year, conceived and executed not by himself, but by a revolving stable of hired hands. Eventually, his brazen greed, overt self-promotion and outrageous behavior caused a remarkable fall from grace. Today, Kostabi's staff still pumps out and sells approximately one thousand paintings per year out of his "Kostabi World" studio in New York City.

Over the course of this highly energetic comedy, Kostabi's indefatigable obsession with getting back on top manifests itself in bizarre attempts to regain prominence and becomes an obsession as he equates fame with finding true love. He tries to woo women, receives high profile commissions from the likes of **Pope Benedict XVI**, sells paintings on Italian TV, speaks at a "Master's Tea" at Yale, and stars in a self-financed public access TV game show wherein celebrities like **Michel Gondry**, **Gary Indiana**, **Suzanne Vega**, **Ornette Coleman**, **Randy Jones**, **Sylvia Miles** and many more compete to title "his" paintings. All the while we see Kostabi's self-conscious ego teeter on the edge of narcissism while raising fascinating and hilarious insights in to the art industry and American culture, even as he tries to gain control of the film itself.

Whether these ploys amount to a real comeback remains to be seen. The aim of **CON ARTIST**, rather, is to excavate the eternally convoluted relationship between ego, art, commerce, fame and fakery, while delving into the personal aspirations of a particularly contradictory character's search for love and acceptance.

"The idea for this film actually came after one of Kostabi's painters invited me to the game show. After visiting his studio, I realized Kostabi and his whole scene contained the potential for an hilarious peek into the art world," says director Michael Sládek. "After premiering at Tribeca to such a great response, we're very excited to be bringing the film to the Hamptons, and then to Rome. On top of that, bringing the film to great festivals like Austin and Denver will show the film's appeal to a broad audience in the middle of the country."

"From the beginning, The Group Entertainment has been excited to be a part of this compelling project and to watch its progression," says **Gill Holland** president of The Group Entertainment and sonaBLAST! Records. "It completely embodies our mission to deliver audiences thought-provoking and vibrant entertainment."

Shot primarily in NYC, Rome, and Southern California, **CON ARTIST** features appearances by art, film, music and media fixtures including **Michel Gondry** (filmmaker), **Glenn O'Brien** (Editorial Director of Brant Publications' *Interview Magazine*, *Art in America* and *20/Modern*), **Nick Zedd** (filmmaker), **Baird Jones** (gossip columnist and Warhol chronicler), **Daze** (graffiti artist), **Donald Kuspit** (critic/author), **Wichy Hassan** (Co-founder and Creative Director of Miss Sixty), and many more.

An integral part of the film's narrative and overall aesthetic, the **CON ARTIST** soundtrack is a kaleidoscope of punk, post-punk, world, indie rock, cabaret, experimental and circus music. Featured artists include **The Willowz**, **These Are Powers**, **Richie James Follin**, **The Movies**, **Peelander-Z**, **Phillip Roebuck**, **Two Star Symphony**, **This Ambitious Orchestra**, **The Battlecats**, **AntiMagic**, **Dana Boulé**, **Fur Cups For Teeth**, **nOthings**, **The Sobs** and more.

Michael Sládek (Director, Producer, Cinematographer, Co-Editor) makes long and short-form projects via his Brooklyn-based company Plug Ugly Films Inc. His first narrative feature film *Devils Are Dreaming* premiered at the Newport Beach Film Festival in 2004, won an award at Dances With Films and went on to screen in numerous festivals worldwide. His music videos have also screened at numerous festivals. Additionally, Sládek works freelance in film, video and live events and is the New York representative for SAGIndie. He is the former Personal Assistant to author Jamaica Kincaid and was MTV News Talent Coordinator and Floor Producer for *MTV News 1515*. Sládek grew up working in the live theatre as an actor and director in Denver, CO and Newport Beach, CA and is a proud dropout of many mediocre colleges. See www.PlugUglyFilms.com/plugs.cfm for more.

CON ARTIST Screening Schedule:

HAMPTONS INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL (8 – 12 October 2009)

Public / Press screening: Saturday 10 October 2009 at 2:00 PM - Southampton United Artists Theatre

Public / Press screening: Sunday 11 October 2009 at 8:30 PM - Easthampton United Artists Theatre

For information & tickets visit: www.HamptonsFilmFest.org

ROME INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL (15 – 23 October 2009)

Press Screening: 14 October 2009 – time and location TBA

Public Screening: Tuesday 20 October 2009 at 18:30 - Petrassi Hall at Auditorium Parco della Musica

Public Screening: Wednesday 21 October 2009 at 16:30 - Petrassi Hall at Auditorium Parco della Musica

For information & tickets visit: www.RomaCinemaFest.org

AUSTIN FILM FESTIVAL (22 – 29 October 2009)

Saturday 24 October 2009 at 7:00pm - Rollins Theater

For more information & tickets visit: www.AustinFilmFestival.com

STARZ DENVER FILM FESTIVAL (12 – 22 November 2009)

Dates and venues TBA

For information & tickets visit: www.DenverFilm.org

Trailer and more information at www.ConArtistTheMovie.com and at www.PlugUglyFilms.com/newsblog.cfm

CON ARTIST is produced by Plug Ugly Films, Inc. (*Devils Are Dreaming*) in association with The Group Entertainment (*Flow: For Love of Water*, *Loggerheads*, *Sweet Land*), and ACME Pictures (*American Cannibal*).

Plug Ugly Films, Inc. was founded in 2000 as a platform to produce feature films, music, web and industrial videos, commercials and art films. A "plug ugly," defined as "a tough guy, especially one using intimidation for political means" reflects the company's down-and-dirty, take-no-prisoners approach of getting things done. Over the years Plug Ugly Films has produced the narrative feature film *Devils Are Dreaming* as well as multiple music videos, web series, and industrials for clients such as Arista Records, Penguin / Viking, Clinton Foundation, Weber Shandwick, Interview Magazine, Maxim, Blender, Fashion Week Daily, Underground Online and many more. The company sets its sites on making provocative work in all genres and has multiple feature film projects in development. www.PlugUglyFilms.com.

The Group Entertainment, LLC is dedicated equally to producing inspiring films in a collaborative environment and to nurturing the long-term careers of the talent we manage. Featuring an energetic, creative, and experienced team of producers and managers, The Group seeks to develop socially and culturally relevant (and entertaining!) films and world-class talent, whether such talent is interested in the stage or the screen. www.TheGroupEntertainment.com

CON ARTIST

PLUG UGLY FILMS in association with THE GROUP ENTERTAINMENT
and ACME PICTURES present *CON ARTIST*
cinematography by MICHAEL SLÁDEK edited by JACOB BRICCA, MICHAEL SLÁDEK
co-produced by PERRY GREBIN, DENIS JENSEN, MICHAEL NIGRO
co-executive producer PERRY GREBIN executive producer GILL HOLLAND
directed & produced by MICHAEL SLÁDEK

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