

PLUG UGLY FILMS



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CON ARTIST

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TRIBECA & HAMPTONS FAVORITE CONTINUES ON TO ROME, AUSTIN, BOLOGNA, SALT LAKE CITY & DENVER

Tribeca Film Festival Award Winner About
"Business Artist" Mark Kostabi and the Dark Side of the American Dream Hits the Road

October, 2009 – Brooklyn, NY – After it's world debut and Special Jury Mention at the 2009 Tribeca Film Festival, followed by a successful run at the Hamptons International Film Festival, filmmaker **Michael Sládek**'s docu-comedy feature film **CON ARTIST** will play four renowned festivals this Fall and two coveted screening series. In late October the film will have its international premiere at the Rome International Film Festival, followed by official screenings at the Austin Film Festival. Then it will continue on to special screenings at the prestigious Cineteca di Bologna in Italy and the SLC Film Center / SLC Art Center in Salt Lake City, followed by an official run at the STARZ Denver Film Festival in November.

A character-driven dark comedy, **CON ARTIST** examines themes of art, celebrity, fortune, fakery and the dark side of American culture through the controversial and contradictory persona of "business artist" **Mark Kostabi**. The son of Estonian immigrants, Kostabi was initially seen as an exceptional talent and, upon his move to New York City, soon became a successful art star, rocketing to international fame and fortune during the 1980s art / punk / hip hop boom. He accomplished this with a gimmick: to mass-produce, sign, and sell thousands of paintings per year, conceived of and executed not by himself, but by a revolving stable of hired hands supported by an energetic PR team. Eventually, his brazen Capitalistic greed, overt self-promotion and outrageous behavior caused a remarkable fall from grace during the 1990's recession.

Today, having built back his business but not his fame, Kostabi oversees a staff which 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 find happiness, equating fame with finding true love. Now approaching fifty, still single, and an art world pariah, Kostabi tries to woo women, receives a high profile commission from the Vatican, sells paintings on Italian TV, speaks embarrassingly at a "Master's Tea" at Yale, and stars in a self-financed public access TV game show wherein celebrities compete to title "his" paintings. Finally, as he tries to gain control of the film itself, Kostabi's self-conscious mechinations strip bare his essential narcissism, illuminating darkly comic insights not only in to his own ego but in to America's celebrity and money obsessed culture.

"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 not just into the art world, but in to American culture overall." says director Michael Sládek.

"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 interviews with art, film, music and media fixtures including **Michel Gondry** (filmmaker), **Glenn O'Brien** (Editorial Director of *Interview Magazine* and *Art in America*), **Nick Zedd** (filmmaker), **Baird Jones** (gossip columnist, Warhol chronicler), **Daze** (graffiti artist), **Donald Kuspit** (critic/author), **Wichy Hassan** (Co-Founder/Creative Director of Miss Sixty), and many more. The film also features special appearances by **Bill Clinton**, **Jeff Koons**, **Dennis Miller**, **Robin Byrd**, **Gary Indiana**, **Pope Benedict XVI** and many more.

An integral part of the **CON ARTIST**'s narrative and overall aesthetic, the 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**, **Guignol**, **999999999**, **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 and won awards at numerous festivals. He directs, produces, shoots and edits web and industrial videos for various clients while working freelance in film, video and live events. He is the New York representative for SAGIndie, is a designer and animator. The former Personal Assistant to author Jamaica Kincaid, Sládek was also MTV News Talent Coordinator and Floor Producer for *MTV News 1515*. Sládek grew up working in the live theatre as an actor and director and is a member of the Screen Actor's Guild. He grew up in Denver, CO and Newport Beach, CA and is a proud dropout of many mediocre colleges. He is currently developing original fiction narratives and plans to be in production on his third feature in 2010. Visit www.PlugUglyFilms.com for more.

CON ARTIST Screening Schedule:

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 17:30 - Teatro Studio 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

CINETECA DI BOLOGNA

Wednesday 11 November 2009 (time TBA) - Bologna, Italy

For more information visit: www.CinetecaDiBologna.it

SLC FILM CENTER / SLC ART CENTER

Friday 13 November 2009 at 7pm - Salt Lake City, UT

For more information visit: www.slcfilmcenter.org

STARZ DENVER FILM FESTIVAL (12 – 22 November 2009)

Saturday 14 November 2009 at 9:45pm – STARZ Film Center

Sunday 15 November 2009 at 2pm – STARZ Film Center

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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