



## BABELGUM TO LAUNCH MAJOR ONLINE FILM FESTIVAL

### Spike Lee Named Honorary Judge of Jury

### Public to View Films Free Online and Be Involved in Selection of Award Finalists

VENICE, ITALY, 04 September, 2007 - **Babelgum**, the free to view global Internet television network, is hosting the **Babelgum Online Film Festival**, a major online event celebrating and rewarding the very best in international independent short filmmaking. The announcement was made on Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> September during its press conference at the Venice Film Festival, by **Valerio Zingarelli**, Chief Executive Officer of Babelgum, and critically-acclaimed and award-winning filmmaker **Spike Lee**, Honorary Judge of the festival jury.

The general public will also play a role in selecting award finalists in each of the six specific competitive categories:

- **The Babelgum Looking for Genius Award** -- Awarded to new or emerging talent who display clear and outstanding achievement through direction, animation, writing and/or camera work.
- **The Babelgum Short Film Award** -- Awarded to the best short film (approximately 20 minutes) that presents a clear, concise and original vision using the short film genre.
- **The Babelgum Documentary Award** - Awarded to the documentary that best presents its subject in a truthful and fair manner while being original and thought provoking.
- **The Babelgum Animation Award** - Awarded to the film that best displays story and the craft of animation.
- **The Babelgum Social/Environment Award** - Awarded to the best film that effectively addresses an issue impacting the world today.
- **The Babelgum Spot/Advertising Award** - Awarded to the most creative advertising spot highlighting a certain product.

Spike Lee chairs a jury of industry experts drawn from around the world. Other jurors include **Joe Bateman**, Festival Director of the Rushes Soho Shorts Festival (U.K.); **Ally Derks**, Director of the International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam (The Netherlands); **Bhuvan Lall**, Founder of the Indian Independent Filmmakers Worldwide Association (India); **Tiziana Loschi**, Managing Director of the Annecy International Animated Film Festival and Citia (City of Moving Images) (France); **Joe Neulight**, Co-Founder and President of Withoutabox (U.S.); **Sandra Ruch**, Executive Director of the



International Documentary Association (U.S.); **Teri Schwartz**, Dean of the Loyola Marymount University School of Film and Television (U.S.); **Jess Search**, Co-Founder of Shooting People (U.K.); and **Carl Spence**, Artistic Director of the Seattle International Film Festival and Director of Programming of the Palm Springs International Film Festival (U.S.).

Speaking of the announcement, Mr. Lee, commented, "Now more than ever before, independent filmmakers need every bit of help to showcase their work. The Babelgum Online Film Festival will accomplish this by combining the value of a film festival with the openness and global reach of the Internet for those seeking to showcase their work and advance their film careers."

Mr. Zingarelli noted, "We are honored to have Spike Lee leading a talented jury for our festival. The Babelgum Online Film Festival is an exciting project that will heighten awareness of Babelgum, attract quality films to the competition and give the public an important voice in identifying the next great filmmakers of our time."

Open to all professionally produced short and medium-form content including that screened at international film festivals between January 2007 and February 2008, submissions from rights owners only, will be accepted from 15 September 2007 to 15 February, 2008.

At Spike Lee's specific request, film school students will be invited to participate in the competition under equal conditions. A prize of €20,000 will be awarded to winners in each of the six categories. In addition to that, filmmakers and content owners will also benefit from a share of any advertising revenue.

There will be no entrance fee to submit films, which must be 45 minutes or less in length and be in English or include English subtitles if in another language. Films can be uploaded at [www.babelgum.com](http://www.babelgum.com) from September 15<sup>th</sup>. Babelgum will hold online rights to all accepted films for a year (March 2008-March 2009) on a NON-exclusive basis, with the sole exception of content appearing on similar 'peer to peer' streaming web TV services.

Beginning 15 February 2008, submitted films will be showcased on the Babelgum Online Film Festival Channel on Babelgum, where the public will be able to rate each film. The ten highest rated films of each category will then be screened by the members of the Jury for review and rating. Based on the Jury's ratings, the top three films in each category will then be presented to Mr. Lee for personal review and final award



selection. Winners in each category will be announced in May 2008, at a ceremony currently scheduled to coincide the Cannes Film festival. Full terms and conditions will be published on the Babelgum web site ([www.babelgum.com](http://www.babelgum.com)) on 15th September.

The Babelgum Online Film Festival marks the second project the company has partnered on with Mr. Lee. Currently, his film "Jesus Children of America" is available on Babelgum. The short film, which was produced to benefit UNICEF, the World Food Programme and the Italian Development Cooperation, chronicles the life of a Brooklyn teenager with drug-addicted parents who discovers she is HIV-positive.

#### **About Babelgum**

Babelgum is a next generation global Internet TV network. Babelgum uses peer-to-peer technology to provide the immersive viewing and high resolution of traditional TV with the interactive and personalisation capabilities of the Internet.

Babelgum allows users to enjoy free, on demand and personalised channels, using niche to mainstream content to satisfy their passionate need for tailored entertainment. Instead of user-generated clips, it features only professional video material spanning film, news, sports, documentaries, music videos, concerts, lifestyle and trends, animation and scripted programs.

Babelgum provides independent content owners with a protected platform on which to gain global visibility for their work and a unique model to monetize their content online. Babelgum has content deals with such suppliers as 3DD, the Associated Press, Shine Limited, BBC Motion Gallery, Reuters, Entertainment Rights, Gong Anime, IMG, ITN, Ministry of Sound TV, Zed and Off the Fence, among others.

Founded in 2005, Babelgum is a privately held company, with headquarters in Ireland and offices in the U.K., France, Italy and soon the U.S. [www.babelgum.com](http://www.babelgum.com)

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