



**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, 01 September, 2007 - **Babelgum**, the free to view global Internet television network, will hold the **Babelgum Online Film Festival**, a major online event celebrating and rewarding the very best in international independent short filmmaking. The announcement was made today by **Valerio Zingarelli**, Chief Executive Officer of Babelgum, during a press conference at the Venice Film Festival.

Critically-acclaimed and award-winning filmmaker **Spike Lee** has been named as Honorary Judge of the Babelgum Online Film Festival jury of industry experts drawn from around the world. The general public also will play a role in the selection of award finalists in 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 (under 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.

Mr. Lee joins Jury members **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.).

Regarding the announcement, Mr. Lee, stated, "Now more than ever before, independent filmmakers need every bit of help to showcase their work. The Babelgum Online Film Festival will accomplish this, as it combines the value of a film festival with the openness of the Internet for those seeking to advance their careers."

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

Open to films 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. There will be no entrance fee to submit films, which must be 45 minutes or less in length and be in English or have English-language subtitles. Films can be uploaded at [www.babelgum.com](http://www.babelgum.com) or DVDs of films can be submitted directly to Babelgum via mail. Babelgum will hold exclusive online rights to all accepted films from March 2008 to March 2009.

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 of each category will then be presented to Mr. Lee for personal review and final award selection. Winners in each category will be announced in April 2008. For further information, "Terms and Conditions" can be found at [www.babelgum.com](http://www.babelgum.com).

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 the commercial brand for the 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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