

## Review of the first Festival of Ethnographic and Anthropological Film, Sofia, Bulgaria 2010

*By Atanaska Stancheva*

From 25th to 28th November in Sofia took place *the first edition of the Festival of Ethnographic and Anthropological Film (FEAF)* with accent to the films of *prof. Asen Balikci and Jean Rouch*.

The idea is not a new one. In the year of 1998 *the visual anthropologist prof. Asen Balikci organizes Festival of the Ethnographic Movie* at the Dom na kinoto (Home of cinema), with the French anthropologist and a movie filmmaker Jean Rouch (one of the founders of cinéma Vérité) as a special guest. *Nowadays Association for Cultural Initiatives continues this tradition* by organizing FEAF- Sofia 2010.

*Special guest to the Festival was professor Balikci*. He has been living in Istanbul, Sofia, Genève, Ottawa and New York, which towns is connected to different moments of his personal and professional life. At the end of the 50 years of last century Balikci begins his researches among Eskimo people and this work lasts more than a decade.



Product of his researches is not only numerous science publications, but also the documentary series of movies "*Netsilik Eskimo Series*" (1967).

They are used in the American educational system under the title *"Man: A Course of Study"* (MACOS) and were shown in different festivals for the ethnographic films all over the world. The ethnographic work of Balikci leads him to the desert in Ethiopia, in north-east Afghanistan, to the Eskimo people Sireniki in East Siberia, to the exkingdom Sikim in the Himalayas and naturally – to the Balkans. Results of these expeditions are the movies: "The Sons of Haji Omar" (1978), Chronicle of Sereniki in Siberia (1989), "Pomak portraits" (1997-98), "Muslim labyrinths" (2003), "A Month In The Life of Ephtim D." (2003), the last three of them shot in Bulgaria. *Part of the movies will be shown in the programme of FEAf.*

*Other accent in the festival was the movies of Jean Rouch (1917 – 2004).* He was working more than 60 years in the field of visual anthropology and most of them in Africa. Jean Rouch's films are qualified as ethno fiction – at the border of the cinema, influenced by the encounter of the surrealism of the 20 years of 20th century and the pure documentary movie. In the year of 1941 Rouch works as a hydro engineer in the African colonies. Meanwhile, in one of the construction depot, which he supervised ten people was stricken by lightning and died. The grandmother of Damur Zika, a friend of Rouch, from the Sorko tribe, performs a ritual for purifying the dead. That is the moment when Jean Rouch decides to make ethnographic movies. Zika is on the focus of many of Rouch's films where he performs the traditions and culture of the people from the valley of the river Niger. During the period 1967 – 1974 Jean Rouch and Germaine Dieterlen shot a ceremony Sigui of the Dogon in several movies. This ceremony takes place once in a period of 60 years and coincides with a definite moment from the orbit of Sirius.

Programme of FEAf except presented eight films of prof. Balikci and six of Jean Rouch showed work of several Bulgarian museums in shooting of ethnographic films. Viewers can see part of the masquerade games in Europe in the movie *"Carnival – a king of Europe"*, *the secret rituals of the nestinari in Strandzha mountain and Greek village Agia Eleni*, *the contemporary life of the Egyptian people through the eyes of one ethnologist*. Ruse museum participated with the last representatives of the blacksmiths and preserved tradition among the gypsy community in Ruse area. The colleagues from the Architectural – Ethnographic Complex Gabrovo represented a ritual of traditional Bulgarian harvesting, etc.

*The four days of the FEAf included 25 productions, and with the exception of the French movies, all of them were presented by their authors.*

The Festival for Ethnographic and Anthropological film took place in the Conference hall at the University of Sofia "St.Kliment Ohridski". The main part of *the public was the academy and students auditoria, with specialized interests in the area of the visual anthropology*. Speaking of the educational character of the event there were many parents with children. *Over 400 people attended to FEAf, like the biggest interest was focused of prof. Balikci movies.*



FEAF Sofia 2010 was organized by *Association for Cultural Initiatives and the Ethnologic Academic Association*, with the partnership of the French Institute in Sofia and the Ethnology Department in The University of Sofia. Media partner was the magazine "Obekti".

*The entrance was free for all festive days.* The next edition coming up this fall and will put accent on the Balkan reality and the Balkans in transition.