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## **CON ARTIST TO PREMIERE AT TRIBECA FILM FESTIVAL**

### Film About "Business Artist" Mark Kostabi is Festival's Sole Art Doc This Year

March, 2009 – Brooklyn, NY - In its most selective pool of feature films in five years (85 total), Tribeca Film Festival has chosen *Con Artist*, a punk-fueled docu-comedy about "business artist" **Mark Kostabi** directed by **Michael Sládek** out of over 2,200 submissions to make its world premiere on April 25, 2009.

Following a strong tradition of presenting provocative works that examine and dissolve the glossy veneers of the art world, *Con Artist* is the only art documentary selected this year.

Part probing documentary, part character-driven black comedy, *Con Artist* examines themes of art, money, celebrity and fakery through the career of Mark Kostabi. A successful art world pariah, Kostabi rocketed to fame and fortune in the 1980s with a gimmick: to mass-produce and sell thousands of paintings per year, conceived and executed not by himself, but by a revolving stable of hired hands. However, his brazen greed, self-promotion and outrageous lampooning of the art industry eventually caused a remarkable fall from grace.

Today Kostabi still creates "his" paintings at Kostabi World headquarters in New York City. His indefatigable obsession with getting back on top manifests itself in bizarre attempts to regain prominence with high profile commissions from the likes of **Pope Benedict XVI** and by starring in, and self-financing *Title This*, a game show on NYC public access television.

Whether these ploys amount to a comeback remains to be seen. The aim of *Con Artist*, rather, is to excavate the eternally convoluted relationship between 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 a fascinating and farcical peek into the art world," says director Michael Sladek. "We're thrilled to premiere *Con Artist* at the Tribeca Film Festival, especially since the film is so deeply rooted in the culture of New York City."

"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, this documentary features art luminaries and East Village fixtures including **Michel Gondry** (filmmaker), **Glenn O'Brien** (Editorial Director of Brant Publications, which includes *Interview Magazine*, *Art in America* and *20/Modern*), **Nick Zedd** (filmmaker),

**Baird Jones** (gossip columnist), **Daze** (graffiti artist), **Donald Kuspit** (critic/author) and **Wichy Hassan** (Co-founder and Creative Director of Miss Sixty).

An integral part of the film's narrative and overall aesthetic, the *Con Artist* soundtrack is a kaleidoscopic soundscape of punk, post-punk, world, indie rock, cabaret, experimental and circus music. Original scoring by **Dana Boulé** is interspersed with acclaimed underground artists including **The Willowz**, **Richie Follin**, **These Are Powers**, **Peelander-Z**, **Two Star Orchestra**, **Fur Cups For Teeth**, **Phillip Roebuck**, **This Ambitious Orchestra**, **The Battlecats**, **Robbie D**, **NoThings**, **The Sobs** and more.

Director of the acclaimed narrative feature *Devils Are Dreaming*, Michael Sládek heads up Plug Ugly Films, Inc. and is the current New York representative for SAGIndie. Michael grew up in Denver, CO and Newport Beach, CA and is a proud dropout of many mediocre colleges.

Con Artist Screening Schedule:

AMC Village VII, 66 Third Avenue (@ 11th Street), NYC

Saturday, April 25, 8:30 pm, (Theater 3)

Tuesday, April 28, 4:45 pm, (Theater 1)

Saturday, May 2, 9:00 pm, (Theater 1)

Press screening, TBD

Trailer and more information at [www.ConArtistTheMovie.com](http://www.ConArtistTheMovie.com). *Con Artist* is produced by Plug Ugly Films, Inc. in association with The Group Entertainment (*Flow: For Love of Water*, *Loggerheads*, *Sweet Land*), and ACME Pictures (*American Cannibal*).

The Tribeca Film Festival runs from April 22 – May 3, 2009. Tickets go on sale April 20, 2009.

Plug Ugly Films, Inc.

Plug Ugly Films, Inc. was founded in 2000 as a platform to produce feature films, music, web and industrial videos, and live theatre. 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, InterviewMagazine.com, Maxim.com, Blender.com, FashionWeekDaily.com, 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. For more information go to [www.PlugUglyFilms.com](http://www.PlugUglyFilms.com)

The Group Entertainment

The Group Entertainment, LLC is a colorful hybrid entertainment company in a world of monochrome. The Group 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.

ACME Pictures

ACME Pictures was founded in 1998 and has experience writing, producing and directing a wide range of film and video productions, including hit TV shows and award-winning films. The company's mandate is to generate independent film and television that is both artistically rewarding and financially viable. In other words, to flourish creatively with integrity and economy in an industry not commonly known for either. Acme's broadcast pedigree spans award-winning landmark shows from *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire* to *Pop-Up Video*, to the MTV hit *Boiling Points*, as well as network news and sports at CNN, ABC and CBS and original programming for NBC, Comedy Central, Trio, VH1 and TNT, among others.

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