



journal

**Informations
on Films for
Children in
Europe!**

www.ecfaweb.org

ASSOCIATION EUROPÉENNE DU CINÉMA POUR L'ENFANTS ET LA JEUNESSE

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Documentary Films
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**ECFA in Persons
Rose-Marie Strand,
Stockholm**

European Symposium at Cologne, September 21st - 23rd:

Focus on Documentary Films for Children

The organizers of the European Symposium „Documentary Films for Children“ want to draw attention to this genre that many of us already have buried in the past, overrun by all the cheap industrial cartoon series on our TV-programmes for children. But documentary films for children still exist – with good reasons.

In their keynote Klaus Rummler and Clemens Lambrecht (University of Kassel) take a look at the TV-programmes for children and work out, what do children need to see. Of course children will have something to say about it as well. Best practice examples from Scandinavia, the Netherlands and Germany will demonstrate the current aesthetic situation of the genre and its themes. These range from documentary soaps about young girls growing up, to documentaries about being caught up in wars.

TV-editors from private and public stations in the Netherlands and Germany will present their projects, distributors will talk about the possibilities of bringing documentaries for children onto the screen.

Organizers of children's film festivals will report about their experiences of documentaries and film funders will present their ideas on how they want to preserve some reality in the children's more and

more virtual media world.

The symposium is organized by the Northrhine-Westfalian Ministry for Culture, Dokumentarfilminitiative at Filmoffice Northrhine-Westfalia, ECFA, the „Golden Sparrow“-Foundation and the German Federation of film clubs for children and young people, Bundesverband Jugend und Film.

On the pages of this issue of ECFA-Journal you will find detailed information on the symposium and some interesting approaches to its subject.

To attend the symposium please contact as soon as possible:

**dfi - Dokumentarfilminitiative
Petra L. Schmitz / Annette Braatz
Postbox 100 534
D-45405 Mülheim/Ruhr
phone: ++49 - 208 - 47 19 34
fax: ++49 - 208 - 47 41 13
E-Mail: dfi@filmbuero-nw.de
Internet: www.filmbuero-nw.de/dfi**

Documentaries for Children: Interview with Director Lizzi Weischenfeldt, Denmark:

Let Children tell Children about their Sorrows and Wishes

Lizzi Weischenfeldt is a film director from Denmark. Her documentaries „Like Birds in a Cage“ (1994), „War is not for Children“ (1996) and „Free as a Bird“ complete a trilogy about Ivana, a girl who she met in a refugee camp in Croatia. Lizzi Weischenfeldt has edited more than 100 feature- and documentary films. Periodically she is teaching editing at the National Film School of Denmark.

How did you get to know Ivana and why did you choose her as your protagonist?

In 1993 when the war was going on in Ex-Yugoslavia I went to see different refugee camps in Croatia and interviewed many children. Among them I found Ivana and Dalibor, two orphans from Bosnia with different fates. Ivana made a strong impression on me. Even though she was only eight years of age she was very

mature and determined to survive and her story touched me deeply. Dalibor was a little lonesome boy who lived in his own world with nobody to take care of him. Coming back from researching I thought of the many tragic lives of children, but Ivana and Dalibor were the two I couldn't forget. Therefore I decided to follow their stories in the film „Like Birds in a Cage“.

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What's new on www.ecfaweb.org?

As we already announced in the last issue of ECFA-Journal our new website **www.ecfaweb.org** is online now. Your link-exchanges are welcome!

The website offers the complete documentation of ECFA's conferences on children's film festivals, children's film distribution and some contributions on film education. For most of you the probably most important section

on the website of course is the European Children's Film distribution Network. Until now there are connections to 100 film festivals with programmes for children, information on approximately 120 European films for children (including their distributors in several countries) and addresses of almost 250 distributors, sales agents and TV-stations dealing with films for children.

At the moment we are completing the linkpage to European film institutions and to the film institutes from the different European countries.

By the way: Since this issue ECFA-Journal circulates among more than 400 professionals in children's film production, television, distribution, exhibition, festival organization and film education.

The News Section:

Films, Festivals, Prizes

Giffoni International Film Festival

Golden Gryphon for the best film:

„There's only one Jimmy Grimble“ by

John Hay (Great Britain 2000)

Silver Gryphon for the best short film:

„The Color White“ („O branco“) by

Ângela Pires & Liliana Sulzbach (Brazil)

Bronze Gryphons: „Jurij“ by Stefano

Gabrini (Italy) and „Desert and Wilder-

ness“ („W pustyni i w puszczy“) by

Gavin Hood (Poland 2001)

European Parliament Award: „The

Bloody Nuisance“ by Andrea Katzen-

berger (Germany 2000)

Italian President's Award: „alaska.de“

by Esther Gronenborn (Germany 2000)

Internet: www.giffoniff.it

International Filmfest Emden

The audience awarded two films for

children : „Mariken“ by Andre van

Duren, Netherlands/Belgium 2000 (2nd

prize) and „The Testimony of Taliesin

Jones“ by Martin Duffy (GB/USA 2000).

Internet: www.filmfest-empden.de

International Filmfestival Haugesund

„Billy Elliot - I will dance“ by Stephen

Daldry (GB 2000) was awarded the best

foreign film in the festival.

Internet: www.filmfestivalen.no

Forthcoming Festivals

Leeds Children's Film Festival

September 27th to October 12th 2001

Contact: Leeds Children's Film Festival

Charlotte Fergusson

Town Hall/The Headrow

GB - Leeds LS1 3AD

Phone: ++44-113-247 8308

Fax: ++44-113-247 8397

E-Mail: filmfestival@leeds.gov.uk

Internet: www.leedsfilm.com

Buster - The Copenhagen International

Children's Film Festival

October 1st to 7th 2001

Contact: Buster Festival, Ane Skak

Vognmagergade 10, 3rd floor

DK - 1120 Copenhagen K

Phone: ++45-3374 3545

Fax: ++45-3374 3565

E-Mail: info@busterfilm.dk

Internet: www.busterfilm.dk

6. Chemnitzer Kinderfilmschau

October 12th to 14th 2001

An up and coming international children's film festival in East Germany. The organizers succeeded in selecting a programme with nine brand new films for children plus five for teenagers that have not or hardly been seen before. Three world premieres have been announced. The whole event lasts from Oct. 1st to 14th, during the last weekend professionals have the chance to

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Interview with Director Lizzi Weischenfeldt:

Let Children tell Children ...

Did your work change a lot as they were getting older?

After finishing the film I kept in touch with both Ivana and Dalibor. Ivana and her adopted family became very close friends of mine. After they were given asylum in England I visited them in their new home several times. As Ivana along the way learned English we both found it rewarding and opened up a new world with possibility for all kinds of small talk which made the work between us much easier. As Ivana was getting older she still was the same kind of girl with a strong will to survive. And when in 1999 I talked to her about making a film on her new life in England she agreed without any objections - she only wanted to read the script before shooting and to be the first one to see the final cut of „Free as a Bird“. Dalibor's and his sister Daliborka's story I followed up in 1996 with the film „War is not for Children“.

How long was the shooting altogether? What were the circumstances of the shooting and the pre-production like?

For preproduction we spent about 10 days visiting different refugee camps. Together with my camera man I decided which refugee camp I would use in the film and made the necessary agreements with the authorities in the camp in order to come back. From my research experience I wrote a script, which was the basis for financing the project. In April 1994 we went back to the refugee camp. Before we started working with Ivana and Dalibor, we spent time together getting to know each other. Ivana specially, is not the kind of girl who opens up to everyone. She is very controlled. Opposite to Dalibor who followed me everywhere from the very first moment.

Anyway you can't just come down and say "Tell me your story!" You have to get their confidence, and I was very happy that they showed me their trust and believed I wouldn't let them down. Of course it was difficult because they didn't speak English but in spite of an interpreter we communicated fantastically. The actual shooting lasted about three weeks in the refugee camp. It was a terrible place to stay, very dirty and with a lot of desperation. Children without their parents helping each other, old people who had lost everything, but also a place with hope and dreams for a better future. The hospitality we experienced in the camp among the refugees was unbelievable. The family Ivana lived with invited the whole filmcrew for dinner in their little hut, although they didn't have much themselves.

Was it difficult for you to keep up the documentary survey of Ivana, that you had been involved in for such a long time? How was it for you to keep on working for many years on a very personal level? It wasn't difficult to keep my eye on Ivana - on the contrary - it was difficult

not to. You can't just stop thinking of a girl who has let you into her life. Ivana and her family have been in my thoughts since the very first day I met them. When I made „Like Birds in a Cage“ it was not my intention to make a trilogy, but once you have encountered such destinies like these you can't just forget them and leave them behind.

It seems that one essential aspect of your work was to stay with the camera on the level of the protagonists' eyes to show their perspective. Can you talk about this?

I wanted to describe to children in the more peaceful part of the world, what it means to be a refugee and to help them understand how heavy a load some of their foreign friends are carrying. Their childhood is very different from what we regard as "normal" but it has many similarities as well. My intention was to let children tell children about their sorrows, misery, wishes for the future and for a better world to live in. Showing the consequences of war through the eyes of the children hopefully gives a better understanding and identification, if the children themselves tell their story instead of an adult person.

What were the reactions from the children who watched „Like Birds in a Cage“?

Reactions from children have been overwhelming - even at ages 6 to 7. It can be difficult to pay attention for 45 minutes, but I have met children audiences being intensely concerned, and after the screening they have asked so many clever questions and expressed their wishes to help Ivana and Dalibor. Although none of the children in the audience has ever been involved with war, they showed a great understanding for the children in the camp, who never had the same possibility for a save childhood as they have had.

The two following films in the trilogy „War is not for Children“ and „Free as a Bird“ have experienced the same interest. From a school class of young children, I received 20 drawings, showing situations from the film with their own comments. I was surprised to learn how much they remembered and their observations on situations exceeding the bounds of reason. „Like Bird in a Cage“ won the 1st Prize at a Children's Festival in Copenhagen selected by a childrens jury, among much more enjoyable films - cartoons etc. As they said „Like Bird in a Cage“ affected them most, and made them understand the sorrow and absurdity of war. They said that everybody should see the film.

Interview: Stefanie Görtz

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European Symposium at IFS (International Film school) Cologne: Documentary Films for Children - The Programme

Friday, September 21st

2.00 - 2.30 p.m. **Words of welcome**
from Michael Schmid-Ospach, Secretary
of the International Film School, Cologne
Theda Kluth, Head of film department,
North-Rhine Westphalia Government
Ministry of Urban Development and
Housing, Culture and Sport

2.30 - 3.30 p.m. Key-talk with discus-
sion: **Fiction or reality – what do children
need to see on television?**

Klaus Rummel & Clemens Lambrecht,
University of Kassel
Taking stock of children's television

3.45 - 4.00 p.m. **Film screening:**
„Anton“ by Chris Foss, N 1998, 15 Min.

4.00 - 5.00 p.m. **Kids & Docs**
Children's discussion on documentary
films, presented by: Andree Pfitzner

Saturday, September 22nd

9.00 - 9.30 a.m. **Film screening:**
„Fabulous Creatures - Der Vampir von Tri-
nidad“ by Uwe Kersken, D 1998, 30 Min.

9.30 - 11.00 a.m. Workshop 2:
**How do children's documentary films
reach the audience?** Panel discussion
(incl. film clips) presented by Sabine
Scholt, WDR-TV, Cologne, with:
- Annette Eberle, Matthias-Film,
Stuttgart
- Reinhold T. Schöffel, Bundesverband
Jugend und Film (German Federation of
Filmclubs for children and young peo-
ple, Frankfurt/Main)
- Holger Stern, Kinowelt Lizenzverwer-
tungs GmbH, Munich
- Rose-Marie Strand, Folkets Bio,
Stockholm
- Antje Starost, director, Berlin
- Felix Vanginderhuysen, Jekino Film, &
ECFA, Brussels

11.30 a.m. - 1.30 p.m.: Workshop 3:
**How are Children's documentary films
financially supported? - Models and opti-
ons.** Presentations with specimen films
presented by: Sabine Scholt, WDR-TV,
Cologne, with
- Ulla Hjorth Nielsen, until 2001 adviser
short- & documentary films for child-
ren, Danish Film Institute, Copenhagen
- Jenny Booms, Stimuleringsfonds,
Amsterdam

**What can be applied to the German situa-
tion?** Panel discussion with:
- Thomas Hailer, Kuratorium junger
deutscher Film, Berlin
- Elke Ried, Zieglerfilm Köln

Sunday, September 23rd

10.00 a.m. - 12.00, Kölner Filmhaus:
Film screenings and discussions:
„Letters from Belfast“ by Boudewijn
Koole, NL 2001, 54 Min.
„Ghetto Princess“ by Cathrine Asmussen,
DK 1999, 41 Min.

5.30 - 7.30 p.m. Workshop 1:
**Documentary films in children's program-
mes of television channels**, presented by:
Tilmann Gangloff, Journalist, Allensbach.
Presentations of children's programmes
with examples and discussions:

- Petra Seeger, director, Docu-Soap
„Schiller-Gang“, WDR 2001, Cologne
- Machteld van Gelder, MGTV Amster-
dam, executive producer, EBU docu-
mentary film series
- Verena Ebringhoff, children's and youth
department at ZDF-TV/EBU-series,
Mainz
- Boudewijn Koole, director VPRO-Jeugd,
Hilversum
- Carsten Göttel, head of programme
planning at Super-RTL-TV, Cologne

8.00 p.m. **Get-together: RTL-reception**

- Michael Wiedemann, Filmbüro NW,
Mülheim/Ruhr
- Gabriele Röthemeyer, MFG Filmför-
derung Baden-Württemberg, Stuttgart.
- Uwe Kersken, Gruppe 5, Köln

2.30 - 3.15 p.m. **Film screening:**
„Like birds in a cage“ by Lizzi Weischen-
feldt, DK 1998, 44 Min.

3.30 - 5.00 p.m. Workshop 4:
What do the festivals show?
Panel discussion with statements and
specimen films presented by
Margaret von Schiller, International
Filmfestival Berlin (Panorama) with:
- Signe Zeilich-Jensen, Cinekid, Amsterdam
- Margret Albers, Goldener Spatz, German
Children's Film & TV-Festival, Gera
- Otto Alder, Leipzig Festival for Docu-
mentary and Animated Film
- Günther Kinstler, Ökmedia-Festival,
Freiburg
- Lizzi Weischenfeldt, director, Copenhagen

5.30 - 7.00 p.m. Workshop 5:
What does the next generation learn?
Discussion with specimen films presen-
ted by Petra L. Schmitz, Dokumentarfilm-
initiative, Mülheim:
- Prof. Dr. Dieter Wiedemann, President
of HFF-Filmacademy „Konrad Wolff“,
Potsdam-Babelsberg
- Bernd Sahling, director, Bosdorf
- Calle Overweg, director, Berlin
- Knut Beulich, professor, Filmacademy
Baden-Württemberg, Ludwigsburg

8.00 p.m. **Get-together: WDR-reception**

12.30 - 2.30 p.m. **Tours of Cologne:**
Guided tour of Cologne cathedral (1 hour)
Guided tour of Ludwig Museum (1 hour)

The News Section: Forthcoming Festivals

see most of the programme.

Contact: Sächsischer Kinder- und
Jugendfilmdienst e.V.
Michael Harbauer
Zwickauer Str. 157
D - 09116 Chemnitz

Phone: ++49-371-30 77 04

Fax: ++49-371-36 50 16

E-Mail: info@kinderfilmdienst.de

Internet: www.kinderfilmdienst.de

Ulisses International Children's Film and Television Festival

October 16th to 20th 2001

Contact: Ulisses Children's Film
Festival, Leslie K. Sullivan
Tva. da Saúde n° 2A
P - 1449-022 Lisboa

Phone: ++351-21 302 0330

Fax: ++351-21 302 0576

E-Mail: ulisses@ulissesfest.com

Internet: www.ulissesfest.com

Cinekid - International Film, Television and New Media Festival for Children and Young People, Amsterdam

October 21st to 28th 2001

Contact: Cinekid, Sannette Naeyé
Korte Leidsewarstraat 12
NL - 1017 RC Amsterdam

Phone: ++31-20-5317890

Fax: ++31-20-5317899

E-Mail: info@cinekid.nl

Internet: www.cinekid.nl

Internat. KinderFilmFestival Vienna November 11th to 18th 2001

Contact: Int. KinderFilmFestival
Elisabeth Lichtkoppler
c/o Institut Pitanga
Steggasse 1/22
A - 1071 Wien

Phone: ++43-1-5868963

Fax: ++43-1-5868963

E-Mail: kinderfilmfestival@pitanga.at

Internet: www.pitanga.at

FABU - Family, Children and Youth Film Festival, Sandnes

November 12th to 17th 2001

Contact: FABU, Eli Stangeland
Postbox 14, N - 4301 Sandnes

Phone: ++4751-683734

Fax: ++4751-683720

E-Mail: buff@netpower.no

Internet: www.fabu-filmfestival.no/

KinderKinoFest Düsseldorf

November 12th to 18th 2001

Contact: Klaus Dieter Schneider
Medienzentrum Rheinland
Bertha-von-Suttner-Platz 3
D - 40227 Düsseldorf

Phone: ++49-211-8 99 81 05

Fax: ++49-211-8 92 92 64

E-Mail: d.schneider@lvr.de

Internet: www.kinderfilmfeste-nrw.de

The News Section: Forthcoming Festivals

Torino Film Festival

November 15th to 23rd 2001

Contact: Torino Film Festival
Stefano Della Casa
Via Monte di Pietà, 1
I - 10121 Torino

Phone: ++39-011-562 33 09
Fax: ++39-011-562 97 96
E-Mail: info@torinofilmfest.org
Internet: www.torinofilmfest.org

Castellinaria Festival internazionale del cinema giovane Bellinzona

November 17th to 24th 2001

Contact: Castellinaria Festival
Giancarlo Zappoli
c/o Espo Centro
Via Cattori 3 - P.O.Box 1239
CH - 6502 Bellinzona-2

Phone: ++41-91-825 28 93
Fax: ++41-91-825 36 11
E-Mail: info@castellinaria.ch
Internet: www.castellinaria.ch

Oulu Internat. Children's Film Festival

November 19th to 25th 2001

Contact: Oulu Film Center
Eszter Voujala, Petti Kejonen
Torikatu 8, SF - 90100 Oulu

Phone: ++358-881 12 93
Fax: ++358-881 12 90
E-Mail: oeek@oufilmcenter.inet.fi
Internet: www.ouka.fi/oeek

IDFA - International Documentary Filmfestival Amsterdam

November 22nd to December 2nd 2001

Contact: IDFA
Kleine-Gartmanplantsoen 10
NL - 1017 RR Amsterdam

Phone: ++31-20-627 33 29
Fax: ++31-20-638 53 88
E-Mail: info@idfa.nl
Internet: www.idfa.nl

"Cinemagic" - Northern Ireland Int. Film Festival for Young People

November 29th to December 9th 2001

Contact: "Cinemagic", Frances Cassidy
Fountain House
17-21 Donegall Place
GB - Belfast BT1 SAB

Phone: ++44-2890-311 900
Fax: ++44-2890-319 709
E-Mail: info@cinemagic.org.uk
Internet: www.cinemagic.org.uk

Olympia Filmfestival for Children and Young People

December 1st to 8th 2001

Contact: Neaniko Plano, Mr. D. Spyrou
18, Rodos, Str.
GR - 11252 Athen

Phone: ++30-1-866 44 70
Fax: ++30-1-866 23 44
E-Mail: olyffest@otenet.gr

European Symposium: Documentary Films for Children

The Film Programme

During the event the organizers present a selection of documentary films for children:

Friday, September 21st:

9.00 a.m.

One Moment

Klaus Kjeldsen, DK 1999, 5 Min.
One moment lasts five minutes, Nathalie says. Also this film only lasts five minutes. A very poetic documentary for children on time and moments.

Aligermå's Adventure

Andra Lasmanis, DK 1998, 64 Min.,
from 8 years upwards
Nine year old Aligermå lives in the stepes of Mongolia. She is excellent in horse-riding and this summer she is allowed for the first time to take part in the horse-races during the Naadam-celebration. Afterwards: Discussion on the film with Peter G. Dirmeier (Tabaluga-TV)

Saturday, September 22nd:

3.00 p.m.

When Live departs

Karsten Kiilerich, DK 1996, 10 Min.
What happens when a person dies? Children talk about their images of death and dying, about their hopes and expectations. - Nomination for Oscar as best animated short film in 1999.

Alles ist möglich

Marcel Lozinski, PL/BRD, 38 Min.,
from 8 years upwards
A six year old boy drives through the park on his scooter and he asks the older people passing by frankly about their lives. They talk about themselves. Some things the boy can understand, sometimes he is left behind without a clue. - Awarded at the Oberhausen-festival in 1995.

Sunday, September 23rd:

10.00 a.m.

Letters from Belfast

Boudewijn Koole, NL 2001, 50 Min.,
from 10 years upwards
Dokumentary on the life of some catholic and protestant children and young people in Belfast - five years ago and nowadays. Afterwards discussions with the director.

The films are screened at: Kölner Filmhaus, Maybachstreet 111, Cologne (Media Park)
Phone: ++49-221-222 710 15, Internet: www.koelner-filmhaus.de; Ticket: 5,- DM

11.15 a.m.

Slivers

Svetlana Stasenکو, SU 2000, 13 Min.
Svetlana Stasenکو observes children living in the Streets of Moscow. They live on leftovers from hamburgers and Coke they find at McDonalds, they fly kites and have a bath in the fountain. Cheerfully and impartially they fight for survival every day...

Holiday Love

Françoise Davisse/François Landesman, F 1998, 52 Min, from 10 years upwards
Observations in a holiday camp. What are 12- to 14 year old girls interested in? What are the boys in the same age talking about? And what happens, when they meet each other?

4.15 p.m.

Anton

Chris Foss, N 1998, 15 Min.
Anton is 12 years old and a stutterer. He hates it when the others finish his sentences. Stuttering is a problem, but how should we behave? Should we wait, help or give comfort? Anyway: Anton is convinced he is able to overcome his handicap and make his dream come true: He wants to become the pilot of a jet-fighter.

The Vampire of Trinidad

Uwe Kersken, D 1998, 30 Min.
Everywhere in the world there are stories about magic creatures like unicorns, dragons and giant octopusses. The documentary-series „Fabulous Creatures“ presents those creatures, that give the people quite an uneasy feeling. This episode deals with vampires. Those that we know from stories and films, and those with flesh and blood, like bats, whose desire for blood lets our phantasy fly.

Ghetto Princess

Cathrine Asmussen, DK 1999, 41 Min.,
from 10 years upwards; Original version, English subtitles
Yagmur's family is Turkish, Vivi's is Danish. Both girls are ten years old, live in Denmark and are close friends of each other. But Yagmur is afraid of the future, when their friendship might break up.

Participation for ECFA-members in the Symposium Documentaries for Children:

ECFA-members have the chance to participate in the Symposium on special conditions. Just send a few lines about your reasons for wanting to attend the symposium and maybe a suggestion for your contribution to:

ECFA, Felix Vanginderhuysen,
Rue des Palais 112,
B-1030 Bruxelles,
Fax ++32 - 2 - 242 54 09,
E-Mail: Felix@online.be

Docs for Children – Interview with Director Uwe Kersken, Group 5:

„I don't want to make films that only a few people like to see“

Gruppe 5 (Group 5) was founded in Cologne in 1990 to produce ambitious TV-documentaries. Their TV-series „Fabulous Creatures“ (13 episodes) was broadcasted worldwide with great success. Uwe Kersken is one of the founders of Gruppe 5.

The series „Fabulous Creatures“ has a lot of easily recognizable elements: the music score, the trailer, the total structure of the product is well composed...

If you produce a series for international TV it has to be well composed. The stories must be told in similar ways, the same is for the re-enactments and the special effects. Start and end titles have to have the same treatment. That is the international standard. But the chance to produce a series with 13 episodes is very rare, especially in Germany. On the international TV-market mostly big packages are sold.

Also in the field of documentary films?

Yes! There are big productions like „The Valley of Kings“, seven episodes on vulcans or 13 episodes on the world's best cases of espionage etc. Most TV stations do not spend their time watching one off film on the market. They prefer to buy packages.

Your project was made in co-production with WDR, KiKa, Explore International, National Geographic TV and was supported by the Northrhine-Westfalia Film Foundation. What about your experiences with this type of international financing?

Maybe we should look at it even closer: DocStar is a sales agency in connection with Canal+. Their partner Explore International belongs to National Geographic

and Canal+ and sells their productions worldwide. If you want to sell them a series they check carefully before, if the production is useful for the whole network or not. Films that have been bought on a basis like that, or are produced on a pre-sales basis, have their world distribution already guaranteed before even one meter of film has been shot.

Do the prospects for an international distribution have an influence on the subjects you develop?

For me everything is of interest that might interest a worldwide audience. There is a common need for nice stories. Our target group are not intellectual bourgeois, but common people. We produce for television. There we have to ask ourselves, for whom do we make our films? It is well known meanwhile all over the world that you must promise some sweets in the beginning, if you want to sell your series. We have to capture the audience, with music, by the structure of our stories, and we must create overwhelming pictures!

Documentaries for children mostly have been reduced to short contributions in some magazines. Who lost interest in the children's documentaries, the children or the TV-programmers?

I do not want to believe the children have lost their taste for it. I believe that films

about the world and how children and youngsters live there do have a big chance, if they are made with suspense. It was a mistake that these productions have been abolished, I think. Even some TV-editors share this opinion but they do not stand by it in public. Decisions like that are made in an hierarchic system, by people who think they have to buy even more cartoon series. In former times we produced two documentaries, „Left and Right of Equator“. You could see the everyday life of a child in an other country, for example of an orphan child in Bolivia. These were wonderful, touching stories and I really believe children want to see them.

Your series „Fabulous Creatures“ works for children and for adults as well. Is the family approach necessary for success?

If you need a high budget for your production then it is necessary. Otherwise you will not be able to convince National Geographic to co-operate. I do not want to make films that only a few people like to see.

What makes a documentary interesting for children?

As a psychologist I have the idea of certain structures that attract quite a lot of people, especially when we are talking about myths and legends. My TV-editors often were upset when there was hard stuff in my films. For example the dolphins: they are hunted, killed and eaten. That is pretty hard. Of course we did not show the worst pictures, but all the complaints came from adults, never from children. Nowadays children are very much more interested in the conservation of the world, in its ecology and in its future development. They want to know the truth! Interview: Stefanie Görtz

Docs for Children – Interview with Documentary-Filmmaker Boudewijn Koole from the Netherlands:

„Quality must be provided for Children“

Boudewijn Koole mainly produces films for children and young people. His films won prizes at international film festivals and were successfully broadcasted on TV. Many of his films were made for Netherlands Youth TV VPRO.

For whom do you produce your films?

Most of the films I make are for children, some for young adults and adults.

Do you work in a different way when you address children or adults?

I only see one main difference between making films for adults and children: Children have less experience of life. For the rest I do treat them like an adult audience. For example concerning film-language I think adults and children are the same. It is important to remember that we do not think about children as one homogenous group. Children differ from each other like adults do. Some children like fast videoclips, others like documentaries. I think most of my films are being watched by adults and children together.

Within the genre of documentaries do you have the impression that some subjects or formal aspects are of special high interest for the children?

Films are suitable for children when the

subject is of interest to them, I think.

This can be school, plays and music. But children are also interested in war, photography, TV-news, art, other children's lives in different circumstances etc.

What makes a documentary film suitable for children?

Some people are able to communicate with children on their level without making themselves small. That is the way I try to make my films. I try to approach children with the same respect as any other individual. I try to find out what is their perspective on issues, and most of the time I find out that it is not so different from my own. I think children do not want to be approached like babies by adults. I am an adult so they don't think it is strange when I behave like one, and they think it is very normal that my film is not childish.

Do you think that it is significant to maintain the genre documentary for children?

I think it is important that children do have the right to see quality films if they want to. Like adults they can choose between rubbish and quality. So quality must be provided.

Could you describe the film/TV-market in NL regarding documentaries for children?

In the Netherlands the VPRO-TV has a history of many years of producing and broadcasting documentaries for children. Until some years ago VPRO was the only one. In the last three years the International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam (IDFA) and the Dutch Fund for Cultural TV Productions (Stifo) made great efforts to stimulate the production of children's documentaries. So you could say that children documentaries are coming up. Ten famous Dutch documentary directors were recently invited to produce each a 20 minutes children's film. They all agreed.

Interview: Stefanie Görtz

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ECFA - The EUROPEAN CHILDREN'S FILM ASSOCIATION

The goal of ECFA is to support cinema for children in its cultural, economical, esthetic, social, political and educational aspects.

ECFA was founded in 1988 in Mons (Belgium) after the Conference of Troja (Portugal) and it brought together a wide range of European film professionals and associations, producers, directors, distributors. ECFA's aim is to set up a working structure in every European country for films for children and young people, a structure adapted to Europe's multicultural interests.

For more informations and membership (membership-fee 200 Euros per year) contact:

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The European Children's Film Distribution Network:

www.ecfaweb.org/english/ecfnet/index.htm

Databases on children's film festivals, sales agents, distributors and TV-programmers interested in European films for children.

ECFA in Persons: Rose-Marie Strand, Stockholm



Rose-Marie Strand works for the Stockholm-based film distribution company Folkets Bio and since February 2001 she is an ECFA-board-member.

Rose-Marie Strand, 40, is responsible for the films for children and young people to be distributed at Folkets Bio. In February 2001 she has been elected as an ECFA-board-member.

Rose-Marie contacted ECFA because she found it necessary to have a lot of more

exchange with people working in the same field: „Children's film is in the margin of the total film scene and media education even more. Therefore we are in an area where you have to invent the wheel all the time. Some times it might happen that the specific wheel that might help me in my work already has been invented for example in Belgium. Then I can steal that wheel or I might borrow it.“

As a distributor of high-quality films for children Rose-Marie Strands task and aim is to rise a maximum of attention for these films. „ECFA offers me the possibilities to see what kind of wheels the other ones have invented, or how different distributors work with their films, what kind of films they choose and what the outcome is.“ And she also believes that organizations are stronger in lobbying national and european institutions.

Recently Rose-Marie Strand started to use ECFWEB to find producers and distributors of a specific film. „It helped me with my problems but I realized that we have to put more information from the different countries there. At the moment our webpage is ECFA's mirror to the public and we have a lot of information there which is useful to a lot of people.“

An Interview with Rose-Marie Strand on Documentaries for Children: Children are interested in artistic Documentaries!

The Swedish Arthouse-Distribution company Folkets Bio was founded by film directors and students in 1973. Folkets Bio distributes Swedish and international feature films, but also shorts and documentaries in cinemas, for non-theatrical screenings for schools and on its own videolabel „Cinemagi“. Furthermore Folkets Bio runs 14 arthouse-cinemas in Sweden.

What is your function at Folkets Bio?

In addition to other distributors of films for children and young people I also prepare the non-theatrical releases. These screenings for schools are a very important part of the total admissions and box office. But it is the teachers and cinema owners who organize these screenings. My job is to find interesting, good and funny films and to supply the teachers with pedagogical and methodical ideas on how they can work with the films. That includes both thematical aspects as well as to teach the children the language of the moving images: What do you see? How do you see? What is the sub-text?“

Do teachers and schools use your offers in substantial numbers?

Yes, I think so. Of course it depends on the titles. Among our recent films, „Kirikou and the Sorceress“, „Only Clouds move the Stars“ and „Aligermå's Adventure“ were much more booked than others.

How high is the percentage of documentaries among your distribution repertoire?

We release 24 to 28 films per year. Among them there are at least five or six documentaries that we screen in cinemas. Unfortunately there are hardly any documentaries for children. The positive example is „Aligermå's Adventure“ which was somewhat successful theatrically but an absolute success in non-theatrical screenings for children during the schooldays.

Do you think that documentaries are received differently by children than fiction features?

There is a very great interest among children to see and to 'learn' about other people, other countries and cultures. But it has to be told in an interesting way.

Do you believe that if there is an offer of documentaries for children on an high artistic level, this might also develop a request for this genre?

Yes, absolutely. „Aligermå's Adventure“ proved that children are interested in quality documentaries. They can have their audience both in theatres and later on video. But the producers and directors have to dare to make more artistic documentaries and also to aim for cinemas.

What makes a documentary film suitable for children?

It has to have humorous touch and the characters in the film must be 'living people'. And children like to see strong children that are capable and courageous. But they need some fun as well, it should not end in a tragedy.