KAUWBOY wins 1st EFA Young Audience Award

10th of June wasn’t an ordinary Sunday. On the Young Audience Film Day, it was KAUWBOY who won the first European Film Academy Young Audience Award. Boudewijn Koole’s story about a boy, the troubled relationship with his dad and his friendship with a young jackdew was chosen by an international jury of 10 – 13 year old youngsters, simultaneously gathering in 6 European cities.

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This doesn’t sound like the biggest story ever told, and the apotheosis might even look a bit dooltish through the eyes of a grown up. But it has been a long time since a live action film could be understood so easily and totally by even the youngest audience. We spoke with director Fintan Connolly and his family: “After playing a spooky kid in the Hammer horror WAKE WOOD. Ella wanted to be in a film she could watch. First we thought about ELIOT & ME as a short film but then it grew out till what it has become now. Compared to a horror movie, involving prosthetic’s and special effects, this was relatively straightforward. Ella dug deep to give this little girl a vulnerability and strength in keeping with the story. She was a joy to work with, and I’m not just saying that because I’m her dad.”

Who else was involved in this project? Connolly: “It was a bit of a family affair. Ella’s mother, Fiona Bergin produced the film and co-wrote the story and our friend Owen McPolin was DOP. We shot at weekends and school holidays, casting actors we had worked with before. It was a real labour of love. We filmed all over the city, but mainly in Kilmainham where we live.”

Even Elliot, the dog, was a member of the family. How was it to have him on the set?
Ella Connolly: “He’s completely untrained, he hasn’t got a clue, he didn’t do anything he was asked. I thought that was hilarious. But he is the best thing in the film.”

Did he enjoy himself on the set?
Ella: “He enjoyed the sausage treats! Afterwards, we noticed he likes to watch himself in the film. He goes wild barking at all the other dogs in the scene at the animal shelter but he goes quiet when he sees himself on screen.”

Over the last year did the entire family have time for anything else than the film project? Or was everyone captured by it completely?
Connolly: “We did other things but this was the most fun. We continued work on our company’s film and television projects, Ella was busy at school and Elliot was doing pretty much what he does in the film – eating, sleeping and walking”

How did you succeed to make the film so understandable by even the youngest audience?
Bergin: “We decided to try to tell the story from the point of view of a 10 year old girl and chose a deliberately ordinary, everyday series of themes – parental separation, most kids’ desire for a pet, bullying at school. Many kids can relate to these issues as they experience them in their own lives. With Ella carrying the picture, her desire for a dog and her relationship with him are entirely believable.”

Was Ella already involved in the script writing process?
Connolly: “Ella wasn’t directly involved in the writing but she inspired a fair bit of it. We built a couple of things into the story, like the Tae Kwon Do, that Ella does in real life but the rest is just simple storytelling. Ella interpreted what we wrote in her own, unique way. She knew her character inside out.”

Lucy insists on solving all problems herself without the help of a grown-up. Bergin: “Following her parents separation Lucy doesn’t really trust ‘adults’ much at all. Her relationship with her mother is strained by their shared loss of the father and her father is now completely absent from her life. Her response to the sudden change in her domestic circumstances is to rely on herself to solve her own problems and this is what she does.”

There is a small but alarming extra storyline about a gloomy character chatting with Lucy on the internet. Connolly: “It’s a plotline that is never resolved, but we felt it added to the story. Kids are on the internet a lot in a way you couldn’t even conceive of ten years ago. This character of ‘Mike’ who Lucy begins chatting with on the internet is exactly that: a deliberate attempt to make children think about who they are in fact chatting to when they are online. We didn’t extend the storyline to involve any actual meeting of the characters (although that is what ‘Mike’ suggests) as we thought that would be too frightening for a very young audience. We do want kids to be aware about the dangers and this is why it is Lucy’s friend Ben, and not an adult, who warns her of ‘breaks’ on the net.”

How does it feel as a father to hear all the time the – well deserved – compliments for your daughters acting?
Connolly: “It feels good. She is a wonderfully natural actor and we enjoyed doing this film together. She likes acting but she likes other things too – drawing, reading, sport…” (GH)


DIGITAL DIARY
Summer is a great time for getting together your festival diary and discovering films, ideas and new experiences. This is also true for developing your digital media and video game experiences as Autumn holds some of the best events across Europe and further afield.

Events
Berwick Film & Media Arts Festival
Berwick upon Tweed (UK), 19-23rd September
www.berwickfilm-artsfest.com
This media arts focused festival brings to the north of England a theme to explore the relationship between photography and film using some of the most innovative locations throughout the historic town.

Tokyo Games Show
Tokyo (Japan), 20-23rd September
http://tgs.cesa.or.jp/english
The biggest games expo in Japan returns for its 21st year! Last year 222,668 people attended CESA, which features seven public areas covering every aspect of the modern international games industry, from conception to sales. There is no better reason to book that trip to Japan!

Euro Gamer
London (UK), 27-30th September
http://expo.eurogamer.net
The fifth annual Eurogamer Expo returns with speaker sessions and game demo. The event includes a career fair offering students and graduates the chance to meet face-to-face with development and publishing companies.

Cinekid
Amsterdam (The Netherlands), 13-26th October
www.cinekid.nl
One of the most established festivals on the circuit for professionals and young film fans alike, Cinekid’s medialab grows year on year with an education, film professionals and public programme. This is a great festival for discovery and business networking.

Smartphone & Tablet Games Summit
London (UK), 15th November
www.mediatro.com/smartphonegames-summitlondon
A single day conference. With the continued rise of the iPhone, iPad, and Android, 2012 will be a defining year for the world of smartphone and tablet games. Could this be a format of digital interaction you could incorporate into your programmes?
MEDIA EDUCATION in Argentina

Roxana Morduchowicz: “Argentine adolescents discover the secret of cinema”

The Argentine national Media Literacy program wants to strengthen young people’s relationship with media. Originally developed by Roxana Morduchowicz for the city of Buenos Aires, the program was picked up in 1995 by the national Ministry of Education who installed it in all primary and secondary schools in the 24 Argentine provinces and still coordinates it. It’s the Ministry’s priority to offer every student, particularly the ones in a difficult financial situation, a chance of a well-filled cultural backpack.

Project manager Roxana Morduchowicz speaks with great dedication about her mission: “We develop all our initiatives in close partnership with the media industry: filmmakers, producers, scriptwriters and especially the cinemas. We’re strongly supported by the CAEM (the Chamber of Argentine multiplex owners). For instance in September and October all secondary school students can go to the movies for half the price (which is also a way to battle with school drop outs), 50 % of their ticket is compensated by the private cinema companies.”

Roxana is a strong persuader, that also shows in a project like the ‘School, Camera, Action’ Festival. “We invite teenagers from 5,000 public grammar schools to write a short story on a chosen subject. The best three stories are produced as short films by well known filmmakers and screened for a whole month in all Argentine cinemas before the regular blockbuster program. Those filmmakers are willing to work for free. This project reinforces teenagers’ connection with cinema from the producer’s perspective.” In all these activities the Ministry of Education takes the initiative but can’t invest financially. “That’s why private sponsors are so important, like the CAEM, offering us their cinemas for free. Luckily Argentines give a great importance to ‘social responsibility’.


The book was sent to all secondary schools. “If when reading the book, adolescents decide to see one of the 20 films mentioned, we have achieved our initial goal: to widen young people’s choices. But more important: by reading the filmmakers’ testimonies, adolescents might understand to which extent a movie can affect one’s life and they might discover the magic of the big screen... In other words, they might discover the secret of cinema.”

The book (in Spanish) can be found on www.me.gov.ar/escuelaymedios. Clicking on ‘Materiales de Capacitación’ you’ll find training materials going alongside the book.

What other ways is Roxana Morduchowicz considering to get her message through? “The Ministry organised a national survey to explore young people’s relationship with film in general and with Argentine films in particular. And for the Argentine Cinema Academy (under the presidency of Oscar winning director Juan Campyana) I’m working on new actions promoting youth and cinema. Therefore, it is important to exchange information as sometimes we feel as if we’re far away, isolated from the outside world, but we have an enormous eagerness to learn and share experiences.”

If you’re interested in cooperating with the Ministry of Education or the Argentine Cinema Academy, please contact Roxana Morduchowicz on roxana.morduchowicz@gmail.com.

The News Section:

Films, Festivals, Awards

Cannes Cinema: Ecrans Juniors; France
www.cannes-cinema.com

Int. Festival for Children & Youth; Zlin, Czech Republic
Int. Expert Jury: Best Feature for Children: „Famous Five“ by Mike Marzuk, Germany, 2011; Best Feature for Youth: „Death of a Superhero“.
Audience Awards: Best Feature: „Death of a Superhero“; Best Animated Film: „Habor Tale“.
Ecumenical Jury’s Award: „Punch“ by Han Lee, South Korea, 2011.
www.zilinfest.cz

Int. Festival of Short Films for Children „Mo&Friese“; Hamburg, Germany
Frie Award for children -8: „Julian“ by Matthew Moore, Australia, 2011; Mo Award for children 9+: „Missing“ by Cristian Wiesenfeld, Chile / Germany, 2011.
www.moundfriese.de

Animafest; Zagreb, Croatia
Best Film: „Second Hand“ by Isaac King, Canada, 2011; www.animafest.hr

Prix Jeunesse Int. – Children’s TV Festival; Munich, Germany
www.prixjeunesse.de

ECFA Journal No. 3 - 2012
**PRODUCTION**

**MY MOMMY IS IN AMERICA AND SHE MET BUFFALO BILL**

Jean is a 6 year old little boy, ready to go into his first grade. Soon he’ll be able to read and write… so he might be able to read the postcards that his mom sends him from all over the world. Mom is never there, Jean knows very little about her. But the postcards he receives, which are read to him in secret by his neighbour Michelle, come from far away countries: America, Switzerland, Spain, even from Africa… In his mind Jean makes up the wildest stories to fill in the absence gap.

MY MOMMY IS IN AMERICA AND SHE MET BUFFALO BILL, based on the comic book by Jean Regnaud & Emile Bravo and directed by Marc Boréal and Thibaut Chatel, tells a delicate and moving story about the need for parental tenderness in a beautiful graphic style and gives a poetic approach to the traditional western myth. Producer of the 75’ animated film is independent French studio Label Anim. MY MOMMY IS IN AMERICA… targets a 6 - 10 year old audience with an intended release in October 2013.

Contact at Label-Anim: Guillaume Galliot, guillaume.galliot@label-anim.com; www.label-anim.com.

**FIDGETY BRAM**

Six-year-old Bram is always puzzling about the ways of the world. Now a new era will start: in the classroom of Mr. Fish, Bram will learn to read and write. But Bram simply can’t sit still; always fidgeting and unfocussed, never capable of fitting in with the others. His mind is going all directions and the stiff school system isn’t prepared for Bram’s battering approach. When even his parents might give up on him, Bram becomes terribly unhappy.

This non plot-driven BosBros production by Anna van der Heide (after a scenario by Tamara Bos) truthfully depicts the evolution in the life of a fussy and curious child. Unable to connect with his old-fashioned teacher, Bram becomes school-weary, and even life-weary. Feeling responsible for all things going wrong, only a drastic change might help him getting back on track.

FIDGETY BRAM can be seen by a very young audience – by every child familiar with the demands of tuition. Even when illustrating all aspects of ADHD, the disorder is never called by name. No psychiatrist appears in this movie that focuses instead on the thoughts raging through the Bram’s head. The film adequately shows how it feels when ‘all those thoughts make your head feel so tired’. Yet FIDGETY BRAM carries a positive message (how hard you might try, in the end you are who you are), has a strong visual comic sense (with Bram at the table whatever can be spilled will be spilled) and is freshened up by funny animated scenes dragging us into Bram’s wonderful world of thoughts (as it was done in TAKING CHANCES).


Already next month we’re awaiting the next BosBros film, the prestigious NONO, THE ZIGZAG KID by Vincent –MINOES– Bal, after a novel by David Grossman.
PRODUCTION

LOST CHRISTMAS

Those of you will remembering John Hay’s festival winner THERE’S ONLY ONE JIMMY GRIMBLE might have wondered when he would return to directing something suitable for families once again. I’m pleased to say that his latest film LOST CHRISTMAS is a bittersweet tale that has a taste of the best of ’A Christmas Carol’ blended with a hint of IT’S A WONDERFUL LIFE to produce a wonderfully original Christmas story dealing with loss, self-sacrifice and destiny. After losing his parents at an early age and blaming himself for their demise, young Goose turns to a life of petty crime. He meets Anthony, a mysterious, enigmatic character who appears out of nowhere. Anthony reveals an ability to uncover lost truths that will have an impact on Goose, his family and everything that he believes in. LOST CHRISTMAS is a magical and ultimately uplifting story with a fine cast and a welcome return to the family circuit for John Hay. (Justin Johnson, British Film Institute)

Contact: producer Elliot Jenkins (Impact Film & Television Ltd) at elliotjenkins2004@hotmail.com.

THE SOUND OF MY FOOT

Mehrdad Khoshbakht: “Reach out to a bigger world out there”

Danial is the fastest runner in his village. One day he loses his foot to an exploding landmine. His dad provides him with an artificial foot… that starts talking! The boy and his foot close pact on running a race in the regional Youth Olympics. During the 52nd Zlin Festival, we confessed to Iranian director Mehrdad Khoshbakht that a talking foot is definitely one of the most bizarre characters we ever saw on screen. Khoshbakht: “I found inspiration in Pinocchio, a lifeless puppet turning into a living creature. The legacy of the Iran-Iraq Wars was another motive to tell this story. It was in a minefield in my country that the first idea for this movie occurred to me. It took me 2 years to develop it into a film.”

What was the major challenge?

Khoshbakht: “Finding the right balance in the story. To make a happy film out of a rather sad story, we added many positive elements and fantasy scenes. Combining harsh realism with dreams and imagination, it wasn’t easy to make the audience understand where reality ends and where fantasy begins. I included small natural elements, adding to the movie’s universal tone. Also the animated shots of the moon reach out and make a connection to a bigger world out there, outside the small village. The film stands close to nature, with a concert of singing birds and environmental noise on the soundtrack.”

Danial’s parents are no distant authorities but honestly concerned people.

Khoshbakht: “Iranian family life is very warm, especially in the countryside. The film was shot in a small village near Hamadan, where families still live close together. The family atmosphere in the cities, that you might know from other films, is sometimes a bit different, but considering the rural setting of our film this type of family life was very realistic.”

THE SOUND OF MY FOOT, as many Iranian films, is all about being first, being the champion. Being second best isn’t good enough. Is the Iranian society so competitive?

Khoshbakht: “Isn’t it so that whoever takes part in a competition dreams of becoming the winner? Everyone wants to be the top student since some facilities are only for the best… The challenge to achieve these limited positions is hard and competitive.”

How was the film received so far by the festival audiences?

Khoshbakht: “In Isfahan the audience got so excited by the final race, which is the apotheosis of the film, that during the last 20 minutes children stood up from their chairs, chanting and applauding. It was fantastic. In the Italian Sport Film Festival in Rassegna THE SOUND OF MY FOOT was nominated for 4 awards.”

Has this film encouraged you to keep on working with children?

Khoshbakht: “I’m really impressed by the films I’ve seen in Zlin. Me too, I want to make films with a universal impact, not strictly bound to one place or country. I consider this a challenge for my future work.” (GH)
FESTIVALS

LUCAS INSTALLS ECFA AWARD

For its 35th edition, the longest running German children's film festival will proudly bring film highlights from all over the world to Frankfurt. Next to the LUCAS Awards for Best Short Film, Best Short Animated Film, Best Feature Film and the Audience Award, this year - as a novelty - the festival will launch its own ECFA Award. Combined with sections for the youngest and the newly established Youth Film Prize, LUCAS 2012 guarantees cinematic pleasure from 4 - 18 and beyond.

The International Producers Meeting, a Location Tour and the screening club attract actors, directors and producers. More than a meeting place, the LUCAS festival centre in the recently renovated German Museum of Film / Deutsches Filmmuseum offers interesting insights for the audience. Daily film talks, in depth mentoring of film education for teachers, interactive offerings and workshops will add lots of fun to the regular curriculum and promote sustainable comprehension of film culture and media literacy. LUCAS 2012 invites its guests to celebrate children’s films at its best! More info: www.lucasfilmfestival.de.

JUNIOR FILMFEST

Since 1998 the unique historical Czech chateau Horšovský Týn is the location of the Int. Film Festival for Children & Youth Juniorfest. Although year by year more visitors attend the event, Juniorfest so far is still a non-competitive festival. According to festival director Judita Soukopová this might change from next year on.

This year’s edition (3-7th November 2012) will stretch out its wings from Horšovský Týn to the nearby city of Pilsen, European Cultural Capital in 2015. Therefore the festival will soon be properly introduced to the European authorities in Brussels. “A first visible success after many years of work,” says Judita Soukopová.

Juniorfest offers a selection of European films in two age categories: 5-11 and 12-18. There's a profound interest from teachers and students in high quality productions and in the services offered by the festival (like free transportation). Furthermore Juniorfest offers retrospectives on Czech filmmakers, workshops and international star guests (like Pierre –Winnetou– Brice in 2009 and Inger –Pippi Longstocking– Nilsson in 2010). From this year on the ‘Festival reporters in action’ will provide the guests with a daily festival newspaper and film report. As well the beautiful environment as the friendly atmosphere for many guests is a stimulus to return to the Juniorfest every year.

Please note the early November dates of the next festival or consult www.juniorfest.cz for further information. Filmmakers wanting to present their film at the festival can contact festival programmer Markéta Okkez on MarketaOkkez@seznam.cz.

CINEMAGIC BELFAST

Belfast will be busy! This autumn Cinemagic will present not one but even two festivals for a younger age group, split up consequently in two age categories.

* 4–11 year olds: the Cinemagic Int. Film and Television Festival (5-19th October)

The festival runs in venues across the city and is themed on fantasy, myths and legends. Young people can enjoy a feast of classic and new world cinema, film and television workshops for schools, Q&A’s and competitions.

* 12–25 year olds: the Coca-Cola Cinemagic Int. Film and Television Festival (19-29th November)

The program contains new and old titles, masterclasses with industry professionals, young filmmaker competitions, and education programmes for students.

More info: www.cinemagic.org.uk. Contact: Claire Shaw (Press & Marketing Officer) at Cinemagic, +44-28-90-311-900, claire@cinemagic.org.uk.
FILMS ON THE HORIZON

New European films for children or young people which are ready to be discovered for your programmes. More information and more films can be found at www.ecfaweb.org. Producers, distributors and sales agents are kindly invited to inform us of their new releases.

Bright Flight
Feature Film, Italy, 2012
Original Title: Il Sole Dentro
Director: Paolo Bianchini
Production & World Sales: Alveare Cinema
Via Guido D’Arezzo 5, 00186 Roma, Italy
E-Mail: info@alvearecinema.com
www.alvearecinema.com,
www.isoledentro.eu

Come on, let’s find a Treasure
Animation, Germany, 2012
Original Title: Komm, wir finden einen Schatz.
Director: Inna Probst
Production: Papa Löwe Filmproduktion
World Sales: Beta Cinema, Gruenwalder Weg 29 d, 82041 Oberhaching, Germany
Phone: ++49-89-67-34-69-80
E-Mail: beta@betacinema.com
www.betacinema.com

Ernest & Celestine

Animation, Belgium / France / Luxembourg, 2012.
Directors: Benjamin Renner, Vincent Patar, Stéphane Aubier
Production: Les Armateurs
World Sales: Studio Canal, 1, Place du Spectacle, 92130 Issy-les Moulineaux
Phone: +33-1-71-35-35-35
E-Mail: reea@canal-plus.com
www.studio canal.com,
www.lesarmateurs.com

The Foster Boy
Feature Film, Switzerland & Germany, 2011.
Original Title: Der Verdingbub
Director: Markus Imboden
Production: C-Films AG
World Sales: Global Screen, Sonnenstraße 21, 80331 München, Germany
Phone: ++49-89-24-41-295-500
E-Mail: info@globalscreen.de

The Horse on the Balcony
Feature Film, Austria, 2012
Original title: Das Pferd auf dem Balkon
Director: Hüseyin Tabak
Production & World Sales: Mini Film
Kochgasse 12, 1080 Vienna, Austria
Phone: ++43-1-503-42-20
E-Mail: office@minifilm.at
www.minifilm.at,
www.dasplerdaufdembalkon.com

Milo
Feature Film, The Netherlands, 2012
Directors: Berend & Roel Boorsma
Production: Fu Works. World Sales: BFD – Benelux Film Distributors, De Poort 40, 3991 DV Houten, The Netherlands
Phone: +31-30 634 0660
E-Mail: nederlands@bfdfilm.com
www.bfdfilm.com

Nono, the Zigzag Kid
Feature Film, The Netherlands, 2012
Director: Vincent Bal
Production & World Sales: Bos Bros. Frederiksplein 43, 1017 XL Amsterdam
Phone: ++31-20-52-44-030
E-Mail: info@bosbros.com
www.bosbros.com

The Orheim Company
Feature Film, Norway, 2012
Original title: Kompani Orheim
Directors: Arild Andreassen
Production: Motlys
World Sales: NonStop Sales Osthamsargatan 68, 11528 Stockholm, Sweden
Phone: ++46-8-400-100-00
E-Mail: info@nonstopsales.net
www.nonstopsales.net

The Secret
Feature Film, Denmark, 2012
Original title: Hemmelighederne
Directors: Morten Kohler
Production: Cacafilm
World Sales: LevelK Film & TV Distribution, Gammel Kongevej 137 B 1850 Frederiksberg C, Denmark
Phone: ++45-36-34-09-10
E-Mail: natja@levelk.dk,
www.levelk.dk

Tom and Hacke
Feature Film, Germany, 2012
Director: Norbert Lechner
Production & World Sales: Kevin Lee Filmgesellschaft mbH
Kirchenstr. 32, 81675 Munich
Phone: ++49-89-448-15-35
E-Mail: info@kevinlee.de
www.kevinlee.de

Wild Bill
Feature Film, UK, 2011
Director: Dexter Fletcher
Production & World Sales: 20ten Media, Pinewood Studios, Pinewood Road, Iver Heath, Buckinghamshire SLO 0NH, UK
Phone: ++44-17-525-064-826

Just Film – Children & Youth Film Festival; Tallinn, Estonia
November 15 - 25th 2012
www.justfilm.ee

Int. Audiovisual Festival (FIAB); Barcelona, Spain
November 12 - 16th 2012
www.oeti.org

Castellinaria Festival int. del cinema giovane; Bellinzona, Switzerland
November 17 - 24th 2012
www.castellinaria.ch

Int. Children’s Film Festival; Vienna, Austria
November 17 - 25th 2012
www.kinderfilmfestival.at

El Meu Primer Festival; Barcelona, Spain
November 17 - 25th 2012
www.elmeuprimerfestival.com

IDFA – Int. Documentary Filmfestival, Section „Kids & Docs“; Amsterdam, The Netherlands
November 17 - 26th 2012
www.idfa.nl

Festival int. de Cinéma du grain à démoudre ; Gonfreville l’Orcher, France
November 18 - 25th 2012
www.dugrainademoudre.net

Int. Children’s & Youth Film Festival; Oulu, Finland
November 19 - 25th 2012
www.ouulunelokuvakeskus.fi/lef

Cinemagic – Int. Film & TV Festival for Young People; Belfast, Northern Ireland
Programme for young people from 12 - 25 years: November 19 - 29th 2012
www.cinemagic.org.uk

Int. Children’s Film Festival Steinemark; Graz, Liezen, Kapfenberg, Elbisdorf, Austria
November 28 - December 4th 2012
www.kinderfilmfestival.at/steinemark

Olympia Int. Film Festival for Children & Young People; Pyrgos, Greece
December 1 - 8th 2012
www.olympiafestival.wordpress.com

Int. Young Audience Film Festival Ale Kino!; Poznan, Poland
December 2 - 9th 2012
www.alekino.com

Animateka Int. Animation Film Festival; Ljubljana & Maribor, Slovenia
December 3 - 9th 2012
www.animateka.si

More information on all these festivals you will find on our website: www.ecfaweb.org/ecfnet/festivals.php

www.castellinaria.ch

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EUROPE’S MOST PROMISING

For the upcoming festival-season 2 titles in particular are often forecast-ed as true revelations: one German animation and one Danish live action for a teenage audience.

- MOON MAN: Stephan Schesch, producer of THE THREE ROBBERS, has made his directing debut with yet another Tomi Ungerer adaptation. The animated movie MOON MAN explores the magical spell the moon has on us earthing. The Man in the Moon, bored and lonesome, grabs a comet’s tail to descend. On earth, the pale and inno-cent creature finds friendship but is also confronted with mankind’s lust for power and world domination.

Tomi Ungerer’s voice guides us through the story, while Schesch keeps alive his painterly style: the simple charm of nature and the comic details, with an Edward Hopper-ish allure in the urban landscape. With its surprising soundtrack and magnificent visual tableaux, some call MOON MAN “the most beautiful animation for children in years”.

- YOU & ME FOREVER: The secrets of teenage life revealed by Kaspar Munk (HOLD ME TIGHT), who placed his trust in the improvisational skills of his young cast. “Working with teens, I think it’s important to give them a chance to use words they can identify with.” Laura and Christine are 16-year-old best friends forever. The coming of Maria brings a new dynamic to their relationship. Their plunging head first into all sorts of ex-periments makes the film burst with life.

Young, unschooled actors were central to the unconventional production process. No dialogue was written. The lines were created in a dialogue between Kaspar Munk and the actors before shooting each scene. For the intimate scenes it was crucial to create an atmo-sphere of confidence on the set. The shooting took 10 weeks in all, on and off over six months.

YOU & ME FOREVER premieres in Denmark on September 13th. Leading Danish film magazine Ekko already called it “the best Danish youth film in decades”. (Info: Danish Film Institute).

International sales: LevelK (www.levelk.dk); Contact person: Natja Rosner, natja@levelk.dk.

* Please note that the film announced in the last ECFA Journal under its work-ing title THE TWITCHERS (by Christian Dyekjaer) from now on is also available at LevelK as THE GREAT BIRD RACE.

MARTIN DUFFY WRITES

Celebrating the 52nd Zlin Festival as a jury member might have been Martin Duffy’s last feat of arms in the children’s film circuit. The Berlin based Irish direc-tor of THE BOY FROM MERCURY, SUMMER OF THE FLYING SAUCER, THE BUMBLEBEE FLIES ANYWAY and TALIESIN JONES decided from now on to focus on his activities as a writer aside from a bio-pic he is developing with support from Northern Irish Screen. Duffy has already published several books, often based on his scenarios or experiences in the world of children’s film (‘The Road to Mercury’). His labour history book ‘The Trade Union Pint’ is being launched in July in Dublin. Most of his books can be sampled or purchased through his Amazon page: https://www.amazon.com/author/www.duffyberlin.com.
ECFA NEWS

NEW MEMBERS
Creative Film Studio Vanima
Creative Film Studio Vanima in Varaždin, Croatia, has been dealing for 26 years with the creation of animated movies by children. During that period more than 400 children worked on more than 150 films in the Vanima studios. Once started as a school activity, Vanima now has 50 members: young people working on their own animated films during a whole school year. Vanima focuses on classical animation and maintains an individual approach.

Besides workshops, Vanima’s managers Sandra Malenica and Hrvoje Selec since 2010 also organize VAFI – the International Children & Youth Animation Film Festival (www.vafi.hr). Sandra Malenica: “We noticed that in other festivals, films made by children were a part of the regular program or weren’t screened at all. That’s why VAFI decided to specialize in films animated by children in 3 categories: MINI (-10 years), MIDI (11-14) and MAXI (15-18). For this concept VAFI received the award for ‘most innovative and creative Croatian project’ in 2010. The main idea behind the festival was to have a centre for children’s animation in this part of the world where all young animators, their mentors and grown-up professionals can learn, have fun and see the best animations made by children from all over the world.” The 4th VAFI will be held from 25-28th April 2013.

Last month Vanima received another great recognition: they were made managers of the closed down, old (and only) cinema in Varaždin. Not only VAFI now has a home, but Vanima can also play a crucial role in the programming and promoting of European movies, films for children and educational projects involving children and cinema.

Being member of ECFA for Vanima means being a part of the international children’s film movement. It might open ways of collaboration with organisations working in a similar field.

You can contact the Creative Film Studio Vanima by Sandra Malenica: sandra@vanima.hr.

Universal Kids Film Festival, Istanbul
The Universal Kids Film Festival was launched on May 22nd with the support of three Istanbul District Governments: Beşiktaş, Kadikoy and Maltepe. From September 22-29th this non-competitive festival will attempt to bring some of the best films for children from over the globe to Istanbul. On its first run the festival has enlisted the support of the diplomatic missions in Turkey for the film entries while UNICEF fosters a screening of the top ten cartoons on Children’s Rights and ‘One Minute Junior’ videos. Collateral activities include workshops on filmmaking and the screening of films made in those ateliers. Considering Turkey being a country of wide diversity, the majority of films chosen focuses on tolerance and sustainable peace. Festival chairperson Rowena Martinez Ulayan, a filmmaker herself, believes that cinema is a powerful tool in changing values and influences in society, especially when targeting a young audience. “In order to achieve peace, we must start with children and what better medium could we offer than the magic of the silver screen? Therefore it’s imperative to hold the Universal Kids Film Festival within this spirit.”

Although Turkey might appear like a blind spot on the children’s film makers’ map of the world, the festival organisers – Children Film & Art Association CODE – hope that this initial offering will set the momentum for more and better entries in the years to come. The association looks forward to a greater visibility in the world centers of children’s films through its ECFA membership.

The Universal Kids Film Festival, Istanbul: September 22 – 29th 2012.
Contact: Rowena Martinez Ulayan, unikids@film-fest.net, tel. +90-535-820-0733, +90-216-395-9640.

RAINBOW SHORT FILM COMPETITION
The European Rainbow project ‘Rights Against INtolerance Building an Open-minded World’ in which ECFA actively participates, included a short film competition for young filmmakers. Participants aged 15 – 30 years old were invited to send in movies about LGBT or gender related issues. A selection was screened during the MIX Festival in Milan, Italy on June 24th. Amongst the selected films (that will be included in the project’s educational toolkit) were titles from Spain (‘Love’), Italy (‘Ti Sposero’), the UK (‘Sticks and Stones’, ‘UK LGBT Creative Day & Concert’, ‘We can change that’ and ‘Sport is Gay’) and Albania (‘I am myself’).

Winners of the Rainbow Short Film Competition were:
- LOVE (by Mikel Cenecorta Godoy, Spain)
- SPORT IS GAY (by GYRO Liverpool, LGBT Youth North West network, UK) – to be watched on http://youtu.be/UHfdXrc0r1w.

The winners were offered a European city trip for two.

ECFA appreciates the efforts of all participating youngsters and wants to congratulate the award winning filmmakers.

ECFA AWARDS
A new title recently listed for the ECFA Award 2012:
The International Film Festival for Children and Youth (Zlin, Czech Republic): DEATH OF A SUPER-HERO (Ian Fitzgibbon, Germany / Ireland).
FILM IN FOCUS

Froukje Tan’s MY ADVENTURES BY V. SWCHWRM

“A childlike ambition to make things happen”

Froukje Tan’s MY ADVENTURES BY V. SWCHWRM is different from any other children’s film you recently saw. Actually it is different from any other movie that you ever saw... An absurd, poetic tale about a boy and his biggest dream: writing a book that could change the world... if only he could come up with a striking opening sentence.

Is a little craziness required to make this film? An audience will always search for a certain narrative logic... which they will not get from you. Froukje Tan: “Not in a classical way, I agree. But the story has a logical structure: a boy wants to become a writer but doesn’t succeed, until he finds the courage to write about the things he never dared to write about before: the death of his granddad. The film shows what happens inside your head when fantasising.”

Was that vision also imposing the film’s design? Tan: “Trying to think as a child, I put myself in Swchwrm’s position and wondered how to visualize his imagination, using elements from his own environment. When visiting the Queen, how would he imagine the palace? Not like a real palace, more like a drawing from a storybook. That’s why it looks like a mosque on the outside and like a church on the inside.”

Swchwrm wants to write a book that saves lives. Is that also a filmmaker’s ambition? Tan: “In my own humble way I want to make the world a better place. From the mouth of a grown-up it sounds rather pompous. But to the more than 100 children coming to the auditions, we all asked what was their wish for the world. All of them were ‘thinking big’: saving the environment, no more war,… The child-like ambition to make things happen, I want to keep it alive in myself. That’s why I make movies.”

Actor Dennis Reinsma isn’t just an ordinary kid. He looks a bit brooding. Tan: “But he isn’t! I casted him totally against his character. In schools I went looking for Swchwrm-ish boys; there are a few of them in every class. Usually they’re silent, introvert but with a vivid fantasy. It didn’t work out; their image on screen didn’t communicate sufficiently with the audience. That’s why I chose Dennis, who also had a strong imagination but was very extravert. “Talking is my hobby,” he introduced himself. Dennis has ADHD and an endless amount of energy. If such a child enjoys acting, it can hold on to an ultra-concentration that no other child can keep up.”

Something really beautiful is going on between him and his granddad. Tan: “Swchwrm and his granddad are very much alike each other. Maybe he is the ‘ideal granddad’ that Swchwrm brought to live through his writing: one who is always there for him. When coming from a stable family, your parents by nature are too dull to write about… unless perhaps if they win a camel.”

You had indeed a camel on the set! Tan: “His name was Rocky and he was huge! There was a camel trainer - not exactly a ‘camel-whisperer’ - with an old-fashioned approach: ‘Down Rocky, down!’”

Who exactly is the queen? What is her precise role in the story? Tan: “Imagine Swchwrm standing in the middle, then granddad stands on his left hand side to give him confidence, and the Queen is on the right to challenge and urge on him. As if he carries out things just for her. His classmate Mad-eleine is a small version of the Queen. She too forces him into action. I didn’t want any traditional royalty. I wanted a Queen as in Swchwrm’s fantasy: like a posh film-diva, modeled after a movie-star from the sixties. Elisabeth Taylor with a bathing suit and cap.”

You must have invested a lot of time and energy in the optic game-playing. Tan: “I didn’t want any complex effects but preferred a DIY-like approach, in an Ed Wood-kind-of-way. I wanted to stay true to Swchwrm’s imagination. That’s why we built a real starry sky. The huge construction was set out on the beach while filming by wind-force 5. Exciting!”

On the film’s website people could post their wishes for the world. Did you post one? Tan: “Yes. That everyone will keep on believing that fantasy and imagination can make the world a nicer place.” (GH)

The full version of this interview can be found on http://www.ecfaweb.org/projects/filmmaking.