



No. 4 / 2015

NOVEMBER

EDITORIAL

100 AROUND ONE TABLE

ECFA is reaching an historical landmark. The 100th member has signed their subscription form, as we speak. We're truly happy about this spectacular growth. But with such an expansion, it's getting more and more difficult to reach out to each individual member. Particularly for an organisation ran by volunteers – which is what we are. That's why ECFA needs a more elaborate communication strategy and that's where ECFA wants to invest in the near future.

These actions can be seen from ECFA's new Creative Europe application. After the Children's Film First Conference, our new project proposal will be all about professionalisation and communication. ECFA's website will soon be the subject of a drastic upgrade and discussions are held about the ECFA Journal's further development, possibly supplemented with regular contacts through newsletters. And with this overwhelming amount of new members, we're planning an extra Journal's edition to introduce you to all the new faces around the table.

But the most important form of communication, and the one that is keeping ECFA alive, is communication in the flesh. In various festivals and meetings, in ECFA juries but evidently also at the annual AGM. You'll read everything about this year's AGM's new formula on page 9. Until then, all your advice and suggestions for ECFA's new communication policy are more than welcome at ecfa@jekino.be.

Gert Hermans



Iris Verhoeven (JEFF Festival, Belgium): "The festival's group of young volunteers is our cultural connection to local youngsters."

ECFA'S CHILDREN'S FILM FIRST CONFERENCE SEPTEMBER 2015 BRUSSELS

On September 24th more than 100 experts gathered in Brussels. The Children's Film First Conference was inspired by the desire to improve the practice and status of those working in film education and children's film and as a result turned out to be 'a groundbreaking success'.



ECFA saw the need to build on this confidence by kick-starting a new era for professionals in film literacy for children. The CFF project was the first step in this process. The project concluded in a seminar in the beautiful decorum of the Royal Flemish Theatre. The program fulfilled everyone's needs, with a menu ranging from presentations to hands-on workshops, from an utterly enthused keynote speech to a manual on youngster's festival participation, and media education's latest most inspiring tools and models. Here you can find a short selection of appealing quotes:



Julie Ward (Member of Parliament): "People have faced torture and prison for using media to communicate, therefore teaching youngsters how to use media is of primary importance!"



Boudewijn Koole: "In the anthill, 92% of the colony has no concern other than building, working and foraging. While 8% of the ants appear to do nothing. Could it be that they are artists?"



Marta Nieto Postigo (Drac Magic, Spain – on the right): “Since schools don’t have the money to go to the cinema, we take activity into the schools.”



The MashUp Table: a portable on-the-spot editing device, playfully introducing an audience to the essential building blocks of cinema.



The audience was talked through the process of using the Green Screen app. Delegates tried their hand at movie-making in a lively end to the day.

ECFA insists on expressing its thankfulness towards Creative Europe for their support. Kathy Loizou (Director of the CFF Conference): “This is only the beginning of our collective journey in developing our skills and practice so that we can continue to inspire young people in their creativity. ECFA is prepared to take a strategic role onwards!”

The content of the CFF Conference is outlined in detail in a report, to be downloaded on: <http://www.childrensfilmmfirst.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/CFF-6.11.2015.pdf>.

DOXS 2015



What is a documentary? “A film about people having problems” was the not so irrational answer from a young boy in the audience during the recent doxs! festival (3 – 8 November) in Duisburg, Germany. This forces the festival’s qualified selection team to continuously search for the right balance between situations to be recognised by every young audience, or problems situated ‘far from home’.

Even more than through the excellent film selection, the doxs! festival stands out for its debate culture. Every session compiles several short documentaries for one target age, and after every film a lively discussion unfolds between moderator and audience. Moderators always seem to find the right tone, and the commitment of the young people is overwhelming. Often they feel personally affected by movies and they are willing to share this sentiment with the other students present, sometimes concluding in a collective statement.

The perfect example came at the screenings of ‘My Dearest F#cking Phone’ by Eef Hilgers (Netherlands). In her short film she outlined multiple aspects of mobile phone use: addiction, changing social patterns, a diminished self-confidence etc. Hilgers: “*Instead of tackling the world’s bigger issues, I wanted to make a movie about things that affect us all. I found my main character through asking numerous students to write a letter to their phone. In her letter Claudia expressed precisely the core of the problem.*” Which was recognised by the audience, considered the frank enthusiasm with which debaters took a stand or testified about their own addiction. Once again, the debate proved to be an enormous enrichment to the screening.

In Doxspot the doxs! team presents another remarkable film in their selection.

DOXSPOT



I AM KUBA (JEG ER KUBA)

Kuba and his little brother are home alone. Since the collapse of the family business their parents work abroad, as decent jobs are hard to find in Poland. This situation is exemplary for the financial development in many Eastern European countries after the cessation of the EU job barrier. Because of similar reasons approximately 100,000 Polish children are on their own or supervised by different people. Twelve-year old Kuba feels left alone and overburdened by taking care of his brother. He loves his parents’ short visits but even more he hates the goodbyes. He starts to revolt. To riot. The school gets involved. Urgently a decision needs to be made, if not, the family will fall apart.

Grosse Klappe 2015

JEG ER KUBA was awarded with the European film prize for political youth documentaries, ‘Grosse Klappe’ at the doxs! festival 2015. The ten adolescent jury members were impressed by the stirring atmosphere and the visual imagery. Their jury statement explained: “The film succeeds at telling a story about a childhood that is marked by the parents’ absence with very clear and at the same time unobtrusive images.” Director Åse Svenheim Drivenes accomplished “a highly personal, deeply emotional and detailed portrait and gives the audience an understanding of a widely unknown subject in a very moving way.”

Director: Åse Svenheim Drivenes
NO / PL / DE, 2014, 58’
Camera: Michal Jarosinski, Jacek Gruszka
Music: Erik Myhr
Production: Sant & Usant
Screen Copy: MDR, programme section



I am Kuba

Kultur/Wissenschaft.
Tel. +49 -341-300-72-73

doxs! festival for children & youth documentaries is dedicated to children & youth documentaries, doxs! supports a unique mission: presenting contemporary European documentaries with the aim to create a profound dialogue between filmmakers and young audiences. Doxs! is embedded in the Duisburger Filmwoche. www.do-xs.de. Contact: Gudrun Sommer & Julia Niessen.

EKREM ERGÜN ABOUT HÖRDUR “Helplessly lost between two worlds”

Aylin is equally furious as desperate. Bullied at school by her stuck-up classmates, while at home she has to take care of her little brother. One day, Aylin strikes back... literally. As a result she is sent to a horse stable to do community service. She doesn't feel at ease at the farm, until she looks into the eyes of a horse named Hördur, and the world turns around, not with the approval of her father. Ekrem Ergün, a German director with Turkish roots, has made an entertaining film about girls and horses which is already booked for numerous upcoming festivals.

The ‘teenage girls and horses’ genre has always been popular. What did you think you could add to it?

Ekrem Ergün: Most of the heroines in ‘horse films’ are middle-class, well educated. Besides that I have never seen a Turkish girl horse riding in Germany. Reasons for that are mainly economical but maybe also cultural. What would happen if I placed a real girl, a girl facing severe problems, into this often romanticised horse world? Would she find the strength and self-confidence to solve her problems? How would her family react to that? I think in the long history of horse films that story has never been told in Germany before.



Do you understand what exactly could be this magical bond between girls and horses? In HÖRDUR it's an almost physical sensation.

Ergün: I grew up among sisters. Being the youngest in the family made me kind of a secret-keeper for them. I had to buy them cigarettes or deliver love-letters. I witnessed how they dealt with emotions and with the journey of growing up. I for myself discovered that women have the advantage of showing their feelings, sharing them with others. Men often aren't raised that way, which is a pity. The magical bond between girls and horses is about sharing love and trust, even in public. It's like looking someone deeply into the eyes and then the world stops turning.

The picture you paint from the Turkish community is not 100% positive: a lack of willingness to work, kids growing up in front of the television...

Ergün: This picture is just the description of the situation Aylin is living in. All characters are all helplessly lost between two worlds: on one hand the conservative working class Turkish immigrant workers, on the other hand a western world full of both opportunities and failures. I'm the son of a very poor Turkish family and for me the only way out of that predicament was going to school and not doing what my parents wanted me to do. Which you could call ‘emancipation’.

You show the Turkish community as rather isolated. Is there more segregation than integration?

Ergün: I don't think integration is a good word for the process of starting a new life in a foreign society. Integration implicates that the new ones have to get rid of their identity. If we could find a way not to scare people off, but to educate them and their children well, there is a good chance for a bright and peaceful future. In the end that is what every parent wants.

I found the tragedy of the barbecue scene really moving.

Ergün: If there is one thing that Turkish people love to do, it's barbecuing. That scene shows how the father Hasan doesn't even succeed in the simplest thing in life: to create a moment of happiness with his family.

Hasan's relationship with his daughter also includes warm moments.

Ergün: They have a silent agreement that works as long as both partners do their share. After Aylin is punished for fighting in school, Hasan feels betrayed. While things don't work out too well for him, Aylin has the time of her life with Hördur. It foreshadows the conflict in this family: things have to change! When Hasan decides on going back to Turkey he crosses a line: Aylin no longer accepts his decisions, which will lead to the grand finale. Almila Bagriacik (Aylin) is a great actress with an ability to observe people. Like she found inspiration for Aylin by observing her young sister. She did a great job!



Were the horses fun to work with?

Ergün: For a horse film our budget was rather limited so we had to work fast. But still the horses gave us many wonderful moments. One Head of Department came to me one day and said that working with horses was the best thing he did over the past 8 years, because it made him happy. Which is a compliment for the horses, I presume. (GH)

Festival contact: Renate Zylla,
rzylla@arcor.de.

The News Section: Films, Awards, Festivals and other events

Kineko Int. Children's Film Festival; Tokyo, Japan

Best Feature Film: „Birds of Passage“ by Olivier Ringer, Belgium, 2015. Best Short: „Home Sweet Home“ by Romain Mazevet & Pierre Clenet, France, 2013.
www.kinder.co.jp

Fantoche Int. Animation Film Festival; Baden, Switzerland

Children's Jury Award: „Lila“ by Carlos Lascano, Spain, 2014. Children's Audience Award: „Johnny Express“ by Kyungmin Woo, South Korea, 2014.
www.fantoche.ch

Buster – Int. Film Festival for Children & Youth; Copenhagen, Denmark

Int. Jury: Best Film for Children: „My Skinny Sister“, by Sanna Lenken, Sweden, 2014, also receiving Best Script Award. Young People's Jury: Best Film: „Young Tiger“ by Cyprien Vial, France, 2015. Best Young Actress: Abby Hoes for „Nena“ by Saskia Diesing, Netherlands & Germany, 2014. Best Short: „The Cut“ by Geneviève Dulude-Decelles, Canada, 2014. Children Jury: Best Film: „Operation Arctic“ by Grethe Bøe-Waal, Norway, 2014. Best Child Actress: Helena Pieske for „The Spiderwebhouse“ by Mara Eibl-Eibesfeldt, Germany, 2014. Audience award: „Captain Sabertooth and the Lama Rama Treasure“ by Lisa Marie Gamlem & John Andreas Andersen, Norway, 2014.
www.buster.dk

AniFest Rozafa Int. Film Festival; Shkoder, Albania

Children's Jury: Best Film: „Lune“ by Thomas Leroux & Patrick Delage, France, 2014. Int. Jury: Best Film for Teenagers: „Homebreakers“ by Marko Pekkanen, Finland, 2014, also receiving the award of all juries for Best Film of the Festival. Award for ‚Rights of Children‘: „Stela“ by Ainhoa Menendez, Spain, 2014.
www.anifestrozafa.org

Lucas Int. Children's Film Festival; Frankfurt, Germany

Lucas Jury (4 children & 4 professionals) Awards: Best Feature: „The Singing Pond“ by Indika Ferdinando, Sri Lanka, 2014. Best Live Action Short: „Johnny Bakru“ by Ineke Houtman, Netherlands, 2014. Best Animated Short: „About a Mother“ by Dina Velikovskaya, Russia, 2015. Young People Jury: Sir Peter Ustinov Award: „Bahavior“ by Ernesto Daranas, Cuba, 2014. Sir Peter Ustinov Award for Best Young Actor: Gijs Blom for „Painkillers“ by Tessa Schram, Netherlands, 2014. ECFA Award: „About a Girl“ by Mark Monheim, Germany, 2014. Audience Award: „Mister Twister on Stage“ by Barbara Bredero, Netherlands, 2014.
www.lucas-filmfestival.de

Filmfest - Children's & Youth Film Festival „Michel“; Hamburg, Germany

Children's Jury Award: „Little Gangsters“ by Arne Toonen, Netherlands, 2015.

www.michel-kinderfilmfest.de

Schlingel – Int. Film Festival for Children & Young Audience; Chemnitz, Germany

Int. Children Jury's Awards: Best Film: „Paw“ by Robert-Adrian Pejó, Hungary, 2015; Best Child Actor: Félix Bossuet for „Belle and Sébastien, The Adventure Continues“ by Christian Duguay (France, 2015). Professionals' Jury: Best Film for Children: „Birds of Passage“ by Olivier Ringer, Belgium & France, 2015; Best Junior Film (11-13): „Enclave“ by Goran Radovanovic, Serbia & Germany, 2015.

Junior Jury: „Labyrinthus“ by Douglas Boswell, Belgium, 2014.

Young People Jury: „Young Tiger“ by Cyprian Vial, France, 2014.

DEFA Prize: „We are Young. We are Strong“ by Burhan Qurbani, Germany, 2014.

Goethe Institute Award: „Sanctuary“ by Marc Brummund, Germany, 2014. „Sanctuary“ also received a „Fair Play“ Award.

ECFA Award: „Enclave“; also receiving the award of the int. film critics' Fipresci Jury.

Professionals' Jury for Short & Animated Films: Best Animation: „The Little Man“ by Radek Beran, Czech Republic & Slovakia; Best Short: „My Stuffed Granny“ by Effie Pappa, UK & Greece, 2014.

Audience Award: „The Secret Society of Souptown“ by Margus Paju, Estonia, 2014. Lifetime Achievement Award: Gert K. Muntefering (children & family programmer for WDR in Cologne, one of the biggest public TV stations in Germany).

www.ff-schlingel.de

Youth Film Festival „Giffoni Macedonia“; Skopje, Macedonia

Best Film 10+: „I Give You My Word 2“ by Aleksandar Karpilovsky, Russia, 2015.

Best Film 12+: „Sanctuary“ by Marc Brummund, Germany, 2015.

Best Film 16+: „Sixteen“ by Rob Brown, USA, 2013.

www.giffoni.mk

Kinderfilmfest; Münster, Germany

Audience Award: „The Contest“ by Martin Miehe-Renard, Denmark 2013.

www.kinderfilmfest-muenster.de

Cinekid – Int. Film, TV & New Media Festival for Children & Young People; Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Int. Jury's Awards: Best Film for Children: „The New Kid“ by Rudi Rosenberg, France, 2015. Best Domestic Film for Children: „Little Gangsters“ by Arne Toonen, Netherlands, 2015. Best Short: „Two Friends“ by Natalia Chernysheva, France, 2015.

Audience Award: „The Invisible Boy“ by Gabriele Salvatore, Italy, 2014.

Young People's MovieZone Award: „The New Kid“.

Burny Bos Talent Award for Upcoming Scriptwriter: Jean Koolen for „Over het water“.

www.cinekid.nl

PETTY PRODUCTION FACTS

ELLA BELLA BINGO & THE BICYCLE THIEF

Due to a popular animated TV-series, the name 'Ella Bella Bingo' excites every Norwegian pre-schooler. But with an animated feature in the making, soon Ella's charisma will infect a much more international audience. Henry turns five and gets a brand new bicycle for his birthday. His best friend Ella is excited, now they can go biking together. The next morning, Henry's bike is stolen and Ella feels guilty, as she was the one who told him not to have it locked. Together the two kids start a detective agency, and their work will affect everyone at the Sunshine Garden village.



The film, directed by Atle Blakseth after a script by Endre Lund Eriksen, further explores the evolving friendship between Ella and Henry throughout their search for the bicycle. The producer is Frank Mosvold (for Kool Produktion), whom you might remember as one of the leading personalities behind the Kristiansand Children's Film Festival. Even if "We make children laugh" is Kool Production's mission statement, the film might equally make his audience burst out singing, as ELLA BELLA BINGO & THE BICYCLE THIEF will be presented in the form of a musical. The animated feature is to be completed in March 2017.

Contact: Frank Mosvold, fmosvold@online.no; www.mosvoldstudios.com.

Watch the trailer here: www.youtube.com/watch?v=d49k1kPoabA.

STORM AIN'T OVER

The Danish toddler documentary I'M THAI (STORM) was already called "a shiny little diamond" in the ECFA Journal. In the film by Kaspar Astrup Schröder, three-year-old Storm moved to Thailand and explored its new world with an open mind. Recently the second part of the documentary was completed, in which Storm returns to his native country Denmark. For Danish television Storm's adventures were treated to a series, which got re-edited for the international market (in consultation with Belgian distributor Jekino) into one 45' film, combining the most relevant episodes of the two series. Jekino paid much attention to the dubbing: a documentary for pre-schoolers is not a common format, so the youngest audience needs a voice that raises confidence and that is able to bring across 'everyday reality' as a remarkable adventure. While I'M THAI focused on 'change', part two shows recognisable scenes from life at home and at school. STORM is irresistibly beautiful in its daily banality.



Alongside the film, Jekino developed a workshop to introduce pre-schoolers to the idea of "looking at reality", which eventually can be done by making them operate the camera.

Contact info: Sara Stockmann, sara@sonntagpictures.com, www.sonntagpictures.com.

MR. FROG: CROWD-FUNDED DISTRIBUTION

Using crowd-funding to support film distribution... this innovative concept was put in use for the Dutch distribution of WIPLALA, and will be used again for MR. FROG. The idea comes from Fabienne van Dillen and In The Air, a small scale distribution company working for Dutch producer Bos Bros. Fabienne van Dillen: "The concept with single investors supporting our marketing and distribution campaign seems to work. The estimated budget for MR. FROG was € 450,000, and this is what we've collected. Investors usually are not random speculators but have a certain commitment: they have a heart for children's films and sympathy for the work that we do."

Can this formula be copied blindly by every distributor, for every children's film? Van Dillen: "The credibility of Bos Bros is an important asset. Based on the other successful films that Bos Bros already produced, the investors trust in MR. FROG's potential. Just like WIPLALA, MR. FROG is based on a book by a successful author, whose earlier adaptations like ALFIE THE LITTLE WEREWOLF and THE HORROR BUS were instant box office hits." Does the concept have other advantages? "All the many small investors feel somehow connected to the film. Therefore, they'll help promoting it through the social media. In that way we combine funding with the building of a new and broad marketing platform."

MR. FROG (director: Anna van der Heide, script: Mieke de Jong) will be released in July 2016 and tells about a rather peculiar teacher. "Sometimes I'm a frog. That's my big secret nobody knows." The kids all think the teacher is trying to be funny. Until one day he arrives at school with duckweed in his hair, his clothes all wet and torn. The teacher has been attacked by a stork... More info: Fabienne van Dillen, fabienne@ita-rights.com.

FESTIVALS & EVENTS

KINOKINO IN ZAGREB

The organisational and creative team of the Zagreb Film Festival (www.zff.hr) recently launched 'KinoKino' - an International Film Festival for Children'.

Inspiration for this project came from 'cinema' as a multi-use space that can be used for learning, hangouts, discussions and entertainment, thus making the cinema an important cultural and social meeting point. By creating this experience, we wish to make a difference in raising new generations of cinema goers.

KinoKino's premiere edition is scheduled for March 2016 in Zagreb, at Cinema Europa, which is this year celebrating its 90th anniversary and represents one of the most important cultural venues in the city of Zagreb. The "shiny little diamond" program will comprise of approximately 30 international fiction films for children (<14), including recent features and shorts, and special programs including film classics. One young and one professional jury will be deciding on the best entries. Apart from films, KinoKino will host a number of themed workshops for children, mentored by experts in various fields (film, music, theatre, architecture, sociology, philosophy etc.). The idea is to give children a chance to spend time at the cinema before and after the screenings, filled with learning and fun.

In September we chose the visual identity for KinoKino through a public call. The simple visual identity designed by Draga Komparak perfectly conveys the festival's message: within the logo each letter has a space. Together they make a coherent and harmonious unity. The letters seemingly 'jumping around' symbolise the ever vibrant medium of film, as well as the infinite blooming imagination of children.



In December the KinoKino website (www.kinokino.hr) will be activated. In the meantime please follow all the news about the festival on our Facebook page / KinoKino – Int. Film Festival for Children. (Selma Mehadžić, project manager).

Info: Selma Mehadžić (selma@kinokino.hr) & Katarina Crnčić (katarina@kinokino.hr).

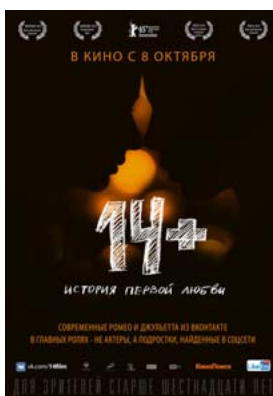
JUST FILM CELEBRATES 15TH ANNIVERSARY IN TALLINN

The Tallinn Black Nights Film Festival (PÖFF) offers its audience a selection of recent films from various countries. The mission of 'Black Nights' is the promotion of film culture in Estonia and fostering communication among cinema professionals. PÖFF combines four simultaneous festivals: the main festival (giving its name to the whole event), and the sub-festivals Animated Dreams (animation), Sleepwalkers (student & short films) and... the children & youth film section Just Film.

In its 15th festival edition ECFA member Just Film comprises a competition and special film programmes, aimed at young people. The Just Film Festival is held every November, simultaneously with PÖFF, showcasing around 50 titles. "Some will make you cry, some will make you laugh, and some might just change your life. In terms of audience numbers the festival has become one of the most popular children and youth events in Estonia, with around 15,000 movie lovers attending screenings every year," says festival co-operator Kairi Valling.

And indeed, most screenings are well attended by an experienced audience who seems not to be surprised by a rather extreme selection policy. "Just Film walks on boundaries, just like the youth," says Just Film manager Mikk Granström. "Testing the limits means discovering and trying out new and exciting things, while taking care not to accidentally fall on the wrong side of the line. It is not necessarily bad to discover the world on one's own – it can also be interesting, beautiful and bittersweet." That explains the density of the festival selection that contains films testifying about teenage pregnancy in KEEPER (Guillaume Senez, Belgium / Suisse), the appalling conditions of life for Ukrainian street children in the documentary CROCODILE GENNADIY (Teve Hoover, USA / Ukraine), harsh social realism in THE VIOLATORS (Helen Walsh, UK), or sexual excesses and a moral wasteland in AMATEUR TEENS (Niklaus Hilber, Suisse) or THE HEROES OF EVIL (Zoe Berriatua, Spain), titles that so far were seldom picked up for the youth festival circuit.

Nevertheless the jury decided to award a film that emphatically celebrates the sincerity of youth: 14+ (Andrei Zaitsev) combines a subtle, critical approach towards the world of young people in Russia today, with a story about two innocent teenagers, and the bond with their parents. (GH) www.poff.ee, www.justfilm.ee.



Short Film Festival; Uppsala, Sweden

Children Jury Award: „How Ky Turned Into Niels“ by Els van Driel, Netherlands, 2014. www.shortfilmfestival.com

Int. Children's Film Festival; Chicago, USA

Best of the Fest Award & Liv Ullmann Peace Prize: „Adama“, by Simon Rouby & Julien Lilti, France, 2015. Programmer's Choice: „The Boy and the World“ by Ale Abreu, Brazil, 2013. Best Film by Emerging Director: „The Little Blond Boy with a White Sheep“ by Eloi Henriod, France, 2013. Teachers' Choice: „Natural Sciences“ by Matias Lucchesi, Argentina, 2014. Best Film for Young Children (2-5): „Rita and Crocodile“ by Siri Melchior, Denmark, 2014.

Children Jury: Best Live Action Feature, 1st: „Labyrinthus“ by Douglas Boswell, Belgium, 2014; 2nd: „Code M“ by Dennis Bots, Netherlands, 2015. Best Live Action Short, 1st: „Dreaming of Peggy Lee“ by James Everett, UK, 2014; 2nd: „Myna and Asterix“ by Kenny Basumatery, India, 2014. Best Documentary Short, 1st: „A Place in the Middle“ by Dean Hamer, USA, 2014; 2nd: „Mo's Bows“ by Jennifer Treuting & Kristen McGregor, USA, 2015. Best Animated Feature, 1st: „When Marnie Was There“ by Hiromasa Yonebayashi, Japan, 2015; 2nd: „Zarafa“ by Rémi Bezançon & Jean-Christophe Lie, France & Belgium, 2015. Best Animated Short, 1st: „One, Two, Three“ by Yulia Aronova, France & Switzerland, 2015; 2nd: „The Crow and the Fox“ by Pascal Adant, France & Belgium, 2014.

Youth Jury: Best Live Action Short: 1st: „Kacey Mottet Klein, Birth of an Actor“ by Ursula Meier, Switzerland, 2015; 2nd: „Yussef Is Complicated“ by Vaughn Stein, UK, 2014. Best Animated Short: 1st: „Mythopolis“ by Alexandra Hetmerová, Czech Republic, 2013; 2nd: „Amelia & Duarte“ by Alice Guimaraes & Monica Santos, Portugal, 2015. Adult Jury: Best Live Action Feature: 1st: „Birds of Passage“ by Olivier Ringer, Belgium, 2015; 2nd: „Labyrinthus“. Best Live Action Short: 1st: „Way of the Danube“ by Sabin Dorohoi, Romania, 2013; 2nd: „Picnic“ by Jure Pavlovic, Croatia, 2015. Best Documentary Short, 1st: „Andrew with Great Fanfare“ by André Hörmann, Germany, 2014; 2nd: „Sisi and Wanwan“ by Annelies Kruk, Netherlands, 2015. Best Animated Feature, 1st: „Adama“; 2nd: „The Boy and the World“. Best Animated Short: 1st: „My Home“ by Phuong Mai Nguyen, France, 2014; 2nd: „Amelia & Duarte“.

www.cicff.org

Kinderfilmtage im Ruhrgebiet; Essen, Mülheim & Oberhausen, Germany

Best Young Actress: Hanna Binke for „Windstorm 2“ by Katja von Garnier, Germany, 2015.

Best Film: „Ghosthunters – On Icy Trails“ by Tobias Baumann, Germany, 2015.

www.kinderfilmtage-ruhr.de

Filem'on Children's Film Festival; Brussels, Belgium

Best Feature for Children: „The Shamer's

Daughter“ by Kenneth Kainz, Denmark, Norway, Czech Republic, 2015. Best Short for Children: „The Present“ by Jacob Frey, Germany, 2014. Best TV-Short: „Kalle Kran“ by Johan Hagelbäck, Denmark, 2014. Best Belgium Short for Children: „The Tie“ by An Vrombaut, Belgium, 2014. Best Feature for Teenagers: „Spartacus & Cassandra“ by Ioanis Nuguet, France, 2015. Best Short for Teenagers: „The Sense of Touch“ by Jean-Charles Mbotti Malolo, France, 2015.

www.filemon.be

Doxs! – Documentaries for Children & Young People; Duisburg, Germany
Young People's Jury: „I am Kuba“ by Åse Svenheim Drivenes, Norway, Poland, 2014.

www.do-xs.de

Nordic Filmdays / Films for Children & Young People; Lübeck, Germany
Children Jury Award: „Operation Arctic“ by Grethe Bøe-Waal, Norway, 2014.
Young People's Jury Award: „Other Girls“ by Esa Illi, Finland, 2015.

www.filmtage.luebeck.de

Forthcoming festivals & events

El Meu Primer Festival; Barcelona, Spain

November 14 - 29th 2015

www.elmeuprimerfestival.com/?lg=2

Int. Documentary Film Festival IDFA; Amsterdam, Netherlands

November 18 - 29th 2015

www.idfa.nl

Int. Film Festival, Children's Section "Enfant Terribles"; Gijon, Spain

November 20 - 28th 2015

www.gijonfilmfestival.com

Kodomo Int. Film Festival; Okinawa, Japan

November 21 - 23rd 2015

www.kiffo.kukuruvision.com

Festival Int. de Cinéma du grain à dé-moudre; Gonfreville l'Orcher, France

November 21 - 29th 2015

www.dugrainademoudre.net

Int. Children's Film Fest; Graz, Liezen, Kapfenberg, Eibiswald, Austria

November 22 - 28th 2015

www.kinderfilmfestival.at/steiermark

Olympia Int. Film Festival for Children & Young People; Pyrgos, Greece

November 28 - December 5th 2015

www.olympiafestival.gr

Int. Young Audience Film Festival Ale Kino!; Poznan, Poland

November 29 - December 6th 2015

www.alekino.com

Children's Film Festival; Kraków, Poland

December 6 - 8th 2015

www.ffdd.pl/aktualnosci/?lang=en

CHILDREN'S SECTION WINS HEARTS AND MINDS AT MUMBAI FILM FESTIVAL

Beyond the glamour of the 17th Jio MAMI Mumbai Film Festival, hidden from the limelight was a small movement that heralded something unique for the world of young audiences in the city. Thousands of children were introduced to world cinema through 'Half Ticket' – the festival's new children's film section.

The specially curated package including SONG OF THE SEA, ADAMA, BIRDS OF PASSAGE, CELESTIAL CAMEL, among others and the yet little seen home-grown production OTTAL, offered the widest variety of films that are artistically distinct and yet also speak to each other.

The children's jury awarded the 'Golden Gateway for the Best Children's Feature' to OTTAL from India, a beautiful lyrical tale of a young boy who herds ducks in the backwaters of Kerala with his aged grandfather. The second Best Feature went to the thrilling OPERATION ARCTIC. The votes of the Children's Jury for Shorts went to two exquisite Russian animations: 'My Grandfather was a Cherry Tree' and 'About a Mother'.

The significance of this section can be gauged by a simple fact: almost half of all Indians are 18 years or younger. Monica Wahi, Curator of 'Half Ticket' and Director of the South Asian Children's Cinema Forum: "By identifying this half as an important segment, the festival hopes to create visibility and value for stories that speak directly to them, and particularly for films that can help counter the alarming rise of intolerance and violence in our society."

PACK MAGIC, SLOW CINEMA FOR CHILDREN

Pack Magic is a Drac Magic-connected Catalan distributor of films for children, focusing on the dissemination of titles that stimulate aesthetic sensitivity, emotional education and the transmitting of social and cultural values. The Pack Magic films are intended for a 2-9 years audience. In the catalogue, you will find recent films alongside classics that were popular amongst generations.

Pack Magic puts care and rigor in selecting films appropriate to the skills and sensibilities of young children. Their promotional material is designed to stimulate curiosity and to foster the fancy for movie going from a very young age. Inspired by the 'slow movement', the films are permeated by a harmonious, natural rhythm in the characters, spaces and landscapes, and a varied artistic approach in drawings or art direction.

Pack Magic promotes the normalisation of the Catalan language. Therefore all films are dubbed into Catalan, although in the future there will be Spanish versions too. For the visually or hearing impaired,



Its early morning and sleepy guards at the multiplex are taken aback by the energy of a thousand cheering, boisterous kids from the aged 5–15 years who are happy merely to be out of the classroom. Inside, after watching the film, education experts discuss its subject and form, they ask questions and the engaged kids respond with a keen awareness. Besides watching and discussing films, children also participated in a screen writing workshop led by creative giants of the Indian film industry – Zoya Akhtar, Imtiaz Ali and Avinash Arun. A team of child reporters covered the event.

In the post screening discussion after the Brazilian animated feature THE BOY AND THE WORLD, a 14 year old boy says before watching the film he thought 2D animation was passé, but now he realises that each film requires its own unique form and that sometimes 2D can be even more compelling than the famed Pixar 3D animations. The discussion also had children in tears while likening the displacement of poor people in Brazil to displacement of slums in Mumbai.

Regular festival patrons were amazed to see so many uniformed students in their midst. A few years down the line, they will be back, to stand in line as adults demanding to see the best of cinema from around the world. (Satyen K. Bordoloi)



the films are available with audio-description (through ArtAccès app, a system for mobile devices that can reproduce synchronously the audio-description of the film from an acoustic fingerprint) and subtitles.

This new distribution offer by Drac Magic builds further upon a project that flourished from 1977–2005. Pack Magic includes a partnership with two more entities: Associació Cultural Cavall Fort and Rialles, with whom a catalogue was put together of 41 films for children, representing the best of international cinema, from LITTLE ANNA, CIRKELINE and THE JOURNEY TO MELONIA to EMIL & IDA and PHANTOM BOY.

Contact: info@packmagic.cat;
www.packmagic.cat.

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/ecfnet/films.php. Producers, distributors and sales agents are kindly invited to inform us of their new releases.

Adama

Animated Film, France, 2015
Directors: Simon Rouby & Julien Lilti
Prod.: Naïa Prod., Pipangaï, France 3
Cinéma, Albatros Prod.
World Sales: Picture Tree Int., Zur Börse
12, 10247 Berlin, Germany
Phone: ++49 -30-4208-248-14
E-Mail: ti@picturetree-international.com
www.picturetree-international.com

April and the Twisted World



Animated Film, France, Belgium, 2015
Directors: Christian Desmares & Franck Ekinci
Prod.: Je Suis Bien Content, Kaibou Prod.
World Sales: Studiocanal Int. Sales, 1,
Place du spectacle, 92130 Issy-les Moulin-
eaux, France
Phone: ++33-1-71-35-35-35
www.studiocanal.com/de/international-sales/line-up

Jack's Birthday Wish

Feature Film, Netherlands, 2015
Director: Anne de Clercq
Prod. & World Sales: 2CFILM
Danzigerkade 5, 1013 AP Amsterdam,
Netherlands
www.2cfilm.nl

The Little Man

Animated Film, Czech Rep. & Slovakia,
2015
Director: Radek Beran
Prod.: Bedna Films, Fantomas Prod.
World Sales: Czech Television, Telexport
Programme Sales, Kavci Hory, 14070
Praha 4, Czech Republic
Phone: ++42-2-61-13-70-47
E-Mail: telexport@czech-tv.cz
www.czech-tv.cz/sales

Long Way North

Animated Film, France, 2015
Director: Rémi Chayé
Prod.: Sacrebleu Prod., Maybe Movies-
World Sales: Urban Distribution Int.
14, Rue du 18 Août, 93100 Montreuil,
France
Phone: ++33-1-48-70-46-56
E-Mail: contact@urbandistrib.com
www.urbandistrib.com

Microbe and Gasoline

Feature Film, France, 2015
Director: Michel Gondry
Prod.: Partizan Films, Studiocanal
World Sales: Studiocanal Int. Sales
(address see above)
www.studiocanal.fr/cid34691/microbe-et-gasoil.html#

Monkey Business from A to Z

Feature Film, Netherlands, 2015
Director: Johan Nijenhuis
Prod.: Farmhouse Tv & Film BV
World Sales: Mountain Road Entertain-
ment, Bergweg 12, 1217 SC Hilversum,
Netherlands
Phone: ++31 -35-623-55-59
E-Mail: danielle@mountainroad.nl
www.mountainroad.nl

The New Kid

Feature Film, France, 2015
Director: Rudi Rosenberg
Prod.: Récifilms, CinéFrance, D8 Films
World Sales: Indie Sales, 32, Rue Wash-
ington 75008 Paris, France
Phone: ++33-1-44-83-02-27
E-Mail: info@indiesales.eu
www.indiesales.eu

Phantom Boy

Animated Film, Belgium & France, 2015
Directors: Jean-L. Felicioli & Alain Gagnol
Prod.: Folimage.
World Sales: Lumiere, Hof Ter Mere 28,
9000 Gent, Belgium
Phone: ++32-9-277-05-20
E-Mail: info@lumiere.be
www.folimage.fr/fr/production/en-cours/phantom-boy-117.htm

Secret Society of Souptown

Feature Film, Estonia & Finland, 2015
Director: Margus Paju
Prod. & World Sales: Nafta Films
Soo 4, Tallinn, Estonia
Phone: ++372-683-66-60
E-Mail: info@nafta.ee
www.nafta.ee

Social Suicide

Feature Film, UK, 2015
Director: Bruce Webb
Prod. & World Sales: Quarry Island Films
22 Holmbush Road, Putney, London
SW15 3LE, UK
Phone: ++44-077-63-908-066
E-Mail: janet@quarryislandfilms.com
www.socialsuicidethefilm.com

Who Killed Nelson Nutmeg?

Feature Film, UK, 2015
Directors: Tim Clague & Danny Stack
Prod. & World Sales: Nelson Nutmeg
Pictures Ltd
E-Mail: tim@nelsonnutmegpictures.com
www.nelsonnutmegpictures.com

Grotto

Feature Film, Italy, 2015
Director: Micol Pallucca
Prod. & World Sales: Thalia Film
E-Mail: thaliafilm@gmail.com
www.thaliafilm.it

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

Lola Kenya Screen - Audiovisual Media
Festival for Children & Youth; Nairobi,
Kenya

December 7 - 12th 2015
www.lolakenyascreen.org

Children's Film Festival; Seattle, USA

January 21 - 31st 2016
www.childrensfilmfestivalseattle.org

Int. Children's Film Festival; Dhaka,
Bangladesh

January 23 - 29th 2016
www.cfs-bangladesh.com

JEFF Europees Jeugdiefilmfestival; Ant-
werp & Brugge, Belgium

January 31 - February 14th 2016
www.jeugdiefilmfestival.be

Children Film Festival - Cine Junior; Val
de Marne, France

February 3 - 16th 2016
www.cinemapublic.org

Anima - Int. Animation Film Festival;
Brussels, Belgium

February 5 - 14th 2016
www.animafestival.be

Int. Filmfestival, Generation; Berlin,
Germany

February 11 - 21th 2016
www.berlinale.de

Youth Film Festival; Glasgow, Scotland

February 12 - 15th 2016
www.glasgowfilm.org/gyff

SehPferdchen - Kinderfilmfest; Han-
nover, Germany

February 21 - March 2nd 2016
www.filmfest-sehperdchen.de

Luxembourg City Film Festival; Luxem-
bourg

February 25 - March 6th 2016
www.luxfilmfest.lu

Int. Children's Film Festival; New York,
USA

February 26 - March 20th 2016
www.gkids.com

FIFEM Int. Children's Film Festival;
Montreal, Canada

February 27 - March 6th 2016
www.fifem.com

Cartoon Movie; Lyon, France

March 2 - 4th 2016
www.cartoon-media.eu

Youngabout - Int. Film Festival for
Young People; Bologna, Italy

March 5 - 12th 2016
www.youngabout.com

BUFF Film Festival; Malmö, Sweden

March 14 - 19th 2016
www.facebook.com/buff.festival

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

THE PHANTOM BOY UNIVERSE

Leo is 11 years old, lives in New York, wears a cap on his bald head and is seriously ill. But what is very special about Leo? Leo is able to leave his body and fly around, passing through walls just like a phantom. Together with Alex, a police officer in a wheelchair, he chases a mysterious gangster, 'The Man with the Broken Face' as co-director Alain Gagnol calls him. When a journalist investigating a story falls in to the hands of the villain, Phantom Boy is called to arms: he has 24 hours to save New York City from total destruction. During the Ciné-Jeune de l'Aisne Festival in Saint-Quentin Gagnol spoke about the artistic inspirations of PHANTOM BOY.



Gagnol made the film together with Jean-Loup Felicioli, who followed a classic art education and was once a restorer of paintings. Thus he was undeniably influenced by the great masters. But his graphic inspiration for PHANTOM BOY came mainly from American superhero comics, with their distinct metropolitan character and their vision on urbanisation. Director Alain Gagnol shows illustrations in which buildings completely overshadow the characters (Batman, Spider-Man). "Naive illustrations, but their framing is phenomenal and they strove for a unique form of photorealism. This style has influenced numerous films, and not just in the obvious superhero genre." Gagnol shows drawings from Batman comics that look like TAXI DRIVER stills, with characters in tight jeans, strolling through the streets of New York.

In A CAT IN PARIS the duo Gagnol–Felicioli already brought to life the architecture of Paris. The contrast with New York is enormous; graceful cast-iron balconies versus tight windows and angular skyscrapers. "When the going gets tough for Phantom Boy, New York turns into a ghost town, abandoned and desolate." Inspiration came not only for countless photos but also from Woody Allen's MANHATTAN. From Edward

Hopper they learned how characters in brightly lit decors retreat into the shadows.

The character design goes back to the same comic strip examples. The fact that Phantom Boy is actually sick, grants him an extra strong graphic presence that directly refers to the drawings of Stan Lee. "In the sixties Lee gave superheroes a human dimension: his characters were often tortured or depressed." Gagnol shows images of Daredevil's mental decline, emaciated and delirious in a room full of rubbish. Or Iron Man in a sweaty alcohol delirium. The Man with the Broken Face, the most notable pictorial appearance in the film, refers directly to THE INVISIBLE MAN (James Whale, 1933) with his glasses and bandaged head, while his cloak and hat could have been stolen from The Joker's wardrobe.

The voice cast (including Audrey Tatou) was an important element in the character design. Immediately after finishing the script, the voices were recorded. Later the lip-sync graphics were put onto those dialogues. Alain Gagnol's son Gaspard did the voice of Phantom Boy. "We used his voice for the test versions, but the result was so good that we decided to keep him on for the movie. He was 13 years old, right before his crystal-clear voice irrevocably broke."

The set designs were created with chalk on paper and then were scanned, to preserve a bit of the original 'grain'. In these sets characters and movements were

added in each version of the animatic with ever greater precision. A very important step was the application of the shadows, for which PHANTOM BOY used the classic film noir models. Over the bare character sketches were dragged transparencies with shadow patterns - if the characters move, so do the shadows. Only in the last phase, computer effects (e.g. rain) were added. On the computer, the filmmakers lowered the number of frames per second from 24 to 12, in order to preserve an artisan feel, deliberately reducing the fluency so as not to contrast with the hand-drawn sequences.



The choice to work with 3D computer animation was not mandatory; it was not a goal in itself. 3D in this film is a tool, for example to make a pile-up look credible or to simply increase the number of cars and pedestrians on the streets. In total a team of 60 people worked on the film, two years to complete the script and about three years for the animation. All animation was done digitally, hand drawn on tablets, so that throughout the making something barely got preserved on paper. Regrettably, as everybody agrees, despite the film's beautiful design, the rare original chalk and pencil drawings have a timeless charm. (GH)

'ENCLAVE' WINS SCHLINGEL ECFA AWARD

This year's Schlingel award ceremony turned into a surprising triumph for the Serbian-German coproduction ENCLAVE. Within grim scenery the film pictures a Serbian family living in an enclave in Albanian Kosovo. Every day Nenad has to endure the nerve-racking ride to school in an armoured car, attacked with stones thrown by Albanian villagers. The hostile climate carries on at home, where his gruff father swears by alcohol, gloomy silence and harsh corporal punishment. Then, with the arrival of a new clock in the belfry of the Serbian church, things take a dramatic turn for Nenad...

In the Schlingel Festival, Serbian director Goran Radovanovic told about his motivation to make this beautifully balanced, slow paced film: "After my generation destroyed everything, this film should give hope to new



generations." Radovanovic explained about the current situation in Kosovo, where a minority of Christian Serbs live alongside a Muslim Albanian population. "In 2004, after Kosovo's independence, there were revenge attacks and arsons against the Serbs. NATO took a side and looked the other way. Even if nowadays the situation has become quieter, still there are conflicts. The hatred is still there. With the Serbs living in enclaves, Muslim fundamentalism gaining power, Serbian police being corrupted and Eu-

rope's gaze manipulated by western media, the problems are getting worse. How do we evolve towards a civil society, like the international forces tried to establish?"

ENCLAVE doesn't make a political statement. "I'm an artist. What I care about is love, hope and creating things of beauty." But did politics somehow interfere in the film making process? "We didn't get the permission to film in Kosovo. We shot in central Serbia, recreating a small Albanian border village.

The input of the actors was crucial. Meto Jovanovski (playing Nenad's grandfather) is Albanian, the other actors were mainly Kosovar Serbs. Like Denis Muric (playing shepherd boy Bashkim), who has a Muslim father and a Serbian mother. Their ancestry might have helped the children to better understand their roles." Contact: Sein+Hain Film, mail@seinundhain.de.

NEW CONCEPT FOR ECFA's AGM



ECFA's AGM 2015

Since ECFA wants to facilitate its members with the best possible circumstances for networking, from 2016 on we'll invest in optimising the concept of the Annual General Meeting. Again this year, we're hoping to meet as many members as possible in Berlin, on Saturday 13 February, at 16.00 in a new location: the Vertretung des Freistaates Sachsen beim Bund, a 15 minute walk from Potsdamer Platz. The AGM will immediately be followed by a networking diner and an evening party at the same location, hosting the ECFA Award ceremony and a bar, handled by ECFA member Copenhagen Bombay. There is no possible reason to miss such 'ein Abend in Berlin'! More info in the next ECFA Journal.

THANK YOU, CECILIA!



Cecilia Grubb has finished working as a festival producer at BUFF, the international film festival for children and young people in Malmö, Sweden. As a consequence of this she has also left her position in the ECFA board. Her tasks at BUFF are temporarily taken care of by festival director Julia Jarl and head of programming Daniel Lundquist. ECFA's next AGM will decide about Cecilia's vacant seat in the board. We thank Cecilia for her years of devotion to ECFA and children's films in general, and wish her all the very best from now on.

THE CHILDREN'S FILM FIRST DATABASES

As another substantial result of the Children Film First project, ECFA proudly presents you: three new databases created in the last year and made available through ECFA's website www.ecfaweb.org. Those new databases include:

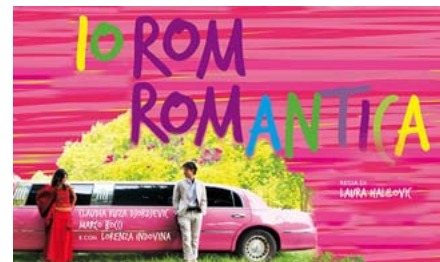
1. Children's Literacy Professionals – information about the roles of, and contact details for, people in a range of disciplines connected to film literacy for young people in Europe.
2. Feature Film Study Guides – lists study guides (in their original language) available for a range of European films (currently 107 titles). Where permissions are available the guides are embedded in the database.
3. Short Films.

ECFA CLIP



ECFA has its own trailer. This beautiful piece of animation was made by young participants of the animation workshop in the Pula Film Festival and offered to us by Tanja Milicic. In bright colours, the trailer reflects the childlike fantasy and the love for film, that ECFA aims to foster. This 'sign board' of our organisation will soon be available in different formats on the ECFA website.

ROMA IN ITALY



A new European project applying for an associate partnership with ECFA: "Together against discrimination and for the promotion of the rights to education" is a project based in Italy, focusing on Roma children and teens living in Milan, Rome and Bari. The project is cofounded by the European Union's programme on Justice. Partners are the associations BIR, UPRE and Spirit Romanesc. Roma and Italian children together will be involved for 18 months in cinema and theatre workshops to create an awareness campaign against racism and stereotyping of Roma people. ECFA member Nuovo Fantarca will be responsible for the creation of a series of short films with the young participants.

More info: Rosa Fero, nuovofantarca@libero.it.

JOURNAL'S EXTRA EDITION

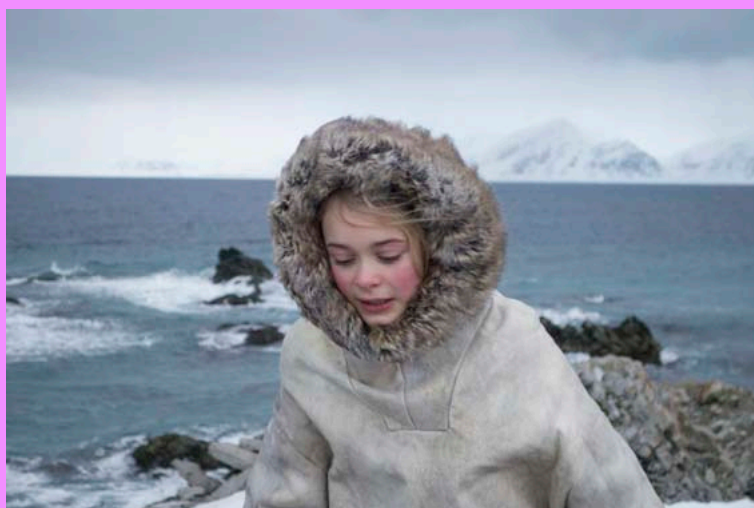
Never before has ECFA attracted so many new members in one year. Too many to individually present them in the pages of the ECFA Journal. Therefore, later this year, we will publish an extra newsletter to introduce you to all those new faces around the ECFA table. 2015's new members will soon receive an invitation to make themselves known to all our readers.

ECFA Awards

Titles recently listed for the ECFA Award 2015:

- Lucas Int. Children's Film Festival (Frankfurt am Main, Germany): ABOUT A GIRL (Mark Monheim, Germany).
- Schlingel – Int. Film Festival for Children & Young Audience (Chemnitz, Germany): ENCLAVE (Goran Radovanovic, Serbia / Germany).
- Int. Children's & Youth Film Festival (Oulu, Finland): OPERATION ARCTIC (Grethe Bøe-Waal, Norway).
- KINOdiseea - Int. Children's Film Festival (Bucharest, Romania): BIRDS OF PASSAGE (Olivier & Yves Ringer, Belgium)

Soon all ECFA members will be contacted regarding the voting for the final ECFA Award 2015.



Operation Arctic



ECFA Journal

Published by ECFA
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ECFA's goal is to support cinema for children and youth in its cultural, economical, aesthetic, social, political and educational aspects. Since 1988 ECFA brings together a wide range of European film professionals and associations, producers, directors, distributors. ECFA aims 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 information and memberships (€ 200 per year):
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www.ecfaweb.org

The European Children's Film Distribution Network:

www.ecfaweb.org/network.htm

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

FILM IN FOCUS

YOSEF BARAKI ABOUT MINA WALKING

MINA WALKING might just be one of the strongest feminine testimonies you've ever seen. Twelve-year-old Mina from Kabul has her hands full: keeping house and earning money for her father and grandfather. She has long since become accustomed to not expecting any praise for her sacrifice. She rarely finds time to play with friends. Things get even worse when it slowly dawns on her what kind of arrangements her father makes and where he has suddenly got money from... Director Yosef Baraki, living in Canada, was at the Schlingel Festival.



Yosef Baraki: After I finished school I had to decide whether I was going to work as an assistant, or doing what I wanted to do. I decided to make my first film instead. I went to Afghanistan, my home country. Having been disconnected from my country while living abroad, I tried to find a way back into the culture by learning from people. The most accessible way to do that was through the street children. They were always there on the street corner, selling their toys or whatever they could get. They have developed very good English by selling to foreigners. I started spending time with them, observing them.

What did you see? Baraki: I noticed there was a group of two boys in their twenties and two young girls, ten or eleven years old. One girl was making more money, she found ways to hustle, to be a better saleswoman. I started asking myself: what happens to her when she goes home at night? Does she have someone to take care of her? Does she have a house or is she homeless? I wanted to tell a simple story about this girl, showing what would happen to her in seven days.

Is Mina representative for all street children in Afghanistan? Baraki: I found out that street children often are orphaned or their parents are disabled, sometimes because of the war. Mina, a girl on the lower end of the Afghan class system, has to take care of a parent who is addicted to opium, which is unfortunately a common thing to happen. It shows how this country is relying on its youth to guide it into the modern age, but the youth can't move on, they're stuck helping their parents who are ill-starred by the war.

Is Mina's assertiveness representative for young Afghani girls? Baraki: Her character is a product of her environment. She spends all the time outside around older boys, which is dangerous. Mina has to develop this attitude. Her aggression comes out of her survival instinct. If she had a middle class upbringing with a family, it wouldn't be common for an Afghan girl to be this driven by aggression.

Is that why you casted Farzana Nawabi as Mina? Baraki: Before I arrived in Afghanistan I spoke to 3 or 4 girls through Skype and immediately noticed they were very shy, looking to their parents and trying to be nice. I understood that was the way for an Afghan girl to behave. When Farzana came in, immediately something changed. She was assertive, loud, talkative, making jokes. I had only 19 days to shoot the film. If I casted someone with maybe a better look but a different attitude, I probably wouldn't be able to bring out Mina's character in 19 days. But Farzana stands very close to Mina. Moreover the background of her parents, who are theatre actors, made our work easier, because in general it's not common for an Afghan girl to act with a group of men in public.

With Afghan people not exactly living in luxury, I would expect to find a great solidarity among them. But on the streets there's hardly any solidarity to find. Baraki: Solidarity is hard to find when everybody is fighting for himself and his family to survive. During my days in Afghanistan, I witnessed an incredible solidarity and niceness in people. But on the street, among the less fortunate, life is different. Those people have been damaged for over 40 years and have nothing to rely on.

In the ending scene, the balance between optimism and pessimism is very peculiar. Baraki: Mina makes her own decision. Up until this point she was always living for her father and grandfather, but now she starts living for herself. I didn't want to create a happy ending that was not representative for how people feel in Afghanistan today. It had to be one step in the right direction.

When filming on the streets, did reality sometimes interfere with your story?

Baraki: All the time, but that's what I wanted. I invited reality. I didn't have a script, but I had a treatment, an outline. Every day we drove to a location. I gave my actors a structure: this is the scene, this is where it should begin and end, but everything in between is up to us now. We improvised and then filmed. Thus a lot of reality oozed in. For instance when filming the procession for grandfather's funeral, we needed 5 men and a kart. We ran around Kabul, looking for an old man with a donkey, asking him to be in our film. We offered him money for two hours work, but when making a movie, two hours easily turns into eight. All this we incorporated in the film. Most of what you see are just people on the street whom we asked to be in the film. (GH)

Read the full version of this interview on <http://www.ecfaweb.org/projects/filmmaking>.