

**European Children's  
Film Association**  
Association Européenne du Cinéma  
pour l'Enfance et la Jeunesse

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*interviews*

**My Extraordinary  
Summer with Tess**

**My Grandpa is an Alien**

**System Crasher**

**Bulbul Can Sing**

**+ Focus on Greece**

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# Journal

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*September*

*Photo: MY EXTRAORDINARY SUMMER WITH TESS*

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## From the inside out – From the outside in

Over the last few months, since the publication of the last ECFA Journal, the motto was obviously “*connect and exchange*”: A series of conferences and events took place that somehow all seem to relate to each other. A connectivity, which was partly made possible by the commitment of ECFA and its members.

The 2nd Fest of Fests Forum in Athens and the 3rd KIDS Regio Forum in Weimar both emphasised the importance of going from the inside out: Leave your office, your region, your country. Exchange your experiences, approaches and expectations. Decide what is needed on a European level and take the output with you to your own office. Read about both Forums’ results in the pages of this ECFA Journal. In addition we offer you a special “postcard”, collecting detailed information on the Greek children’s media landscape.

There have been more opportunities to go from the inside out (like the renewed Industry Programme at the Zlin Film Festival) and more are still to come: BUSTER Film Festival launches its first Industry Days, Film’on and

(of course) Cinekid will address industry professionals in various constellations. The next ECFA Seminar will take place within the framework of Schlingel’s Industry Forum, focusing on the significance of festivals for the industry and the marketing/distribution process.

This is not a one way street. Under this big industry umbrella, children’s films are sometimes still considered the “cute little outsider”. An intensified industry exchange will enable us to feed common aims from the outside into the political and funding circuit. A necessity to make more changes in favour of young audiences.

Could it be a coincidence? Through a series of interviews, this edition seems entirely populated by outsiders, through the names of Sam & Tess, Rocca, Benni, Bulbul, Una, Bas Jan, etc. In various ways they prove that change is desperately needed and fortunately often possible.

Let’s continue our walk together from the inside out & from the outside in.

–  
Margret Albers  
ECFA President

# Steven Wouterlood about MY EXTRAORDINARY SUMMER WITH TESS

## “The best stories are often with the outsiders”

Sam, who is often described by friends as “weird”, is spending the holidays on a coastal island in the north of The Netherlands. Even in the company of his brother, his parents and herds of tourists, Sam still has a gift for ‘feeling alone’. Until he meets Tess, an elusive girl carrying a big secret. Being friends with Tess is not just fun, it is also a challenge, as the girl’s wandering thoughts and impulsive decisions often put their relationship to the test. This summer, they will both learn about the importance of friendship, trust and also about families, that you should cherish instead of flee from.

Based on a book by Anna Woltz, MY EXTRAORDINARY SUMMER WITH TESS finds its own rhythm, that comes and goes with the tides. Like a sweet, confusing daydream on a hot summer’s day. Director Steven Wouterlood is no stranger to the Zlin festival. “Three years ago I came here as a member of the Zlin Dog jury. That was an amazing time. Ever since, the festival team almost feels like family

to me. Back then I decided: I want to come back here with my first feature film. So... this is the moment, and it feels great.”

**Is the youngest child in the family always the weird one?**

Steven Wouterlood: I wouldn’t put it that way. Everyone is entitled to have their own little peculiarities. My film says being a little weird is absolutely normal. Every person has their own oddities and that is a beautiful thing! When Sam meets Tess for the first time, you hear him thinking aloud: *“People often called me weird, but this girl is even worse.”* Which is meant as a compliment. It makes him to like her immediately. It is a positive and interesting thing to tell stories from the perspective of someone who is a bit of an outsider. That’s where you’ll often find the best stories. Many people can identify with them, because all of us have sometimes felt insecure, like not belonging to a group. There is little more reassuring than watching a movie that depicts your vision, as if it



Sonny Van Utteren & Steven Wouterlood

is portraying your personal life.

**Adapting MY EXTRAORDINARY SUMMER WITH TESS was not an obvious choice. The film is based on a book that is particularly verbal, containing all sorts of word games.**

Wouterlood: When reading the book for the first time, four years ago, I immediately fell in love with the story. Producer Joram Willink and I thought it could be suitable for a film. It was a challenge to translate it into a film

script, but partly thanks to the great work of scriptwriter Laura van Dijk, it worked out well. We took our time to develop the script and had a great cast and crew to rely upon. The verbalism of the book is indeed often reflected in the dialogues, but we have made all kinds of changes to enrich the story and make it suitable for a feature film. At the same time, we remained true to the soul and spirit of the book.



**Whenever Tess is not there to talk to, Sam often talks to himself. Such an inner dialogue is not easy for both actor or director. How did you get away with it?**

Wouterlood: At some moments you can hear Sam's thoughts aloud through a voice-over. But I didn't want to explain things too formally, I didn't want to fill in every detail for the audience. The story should be told through the images. Finding the right balance was crucial, both in the phases of writing and editing. We have been very precise about that, and I am glad that it worked.

**The film is set on an island. There's often something special about islands. Is there a certain "island feeling" to the film?**

Wouterlood: We shot last summer on the beautiful island of Terschelling and we were very lucky with the weather – the summer heat suited the atmosphere of the movie. I visited that place as a child and I remember it as an endless playground. It felt like a safe place, where parents usually felt at ease. Sam and Tess are getting the freedom to spend time by themselves and explore the surroundings. The film's strong "island feeling" is connected with the ferry, the tour-

ist spots, the vast dunes and sandy beaches. We received a lot of help from the locals – the cooperation was excellent. Almost all extras in the film were islanders or tourists.

Sonny Coops van Utteren (playing Sam): We grabbed them the moment they got off the boat.

**How demanding was it to work so intensively, a whole summer long?**

Wouterlood: The warm weather was sometimes very demanding for the actors. But we made them feel more relaxed by doing silly things: dancing, singing, acting crazy. All such things make life on the set more pleasant.

Coops van Utteren: I totally agree. The crew was great. We were hanging out together all the time, going places or taking a rest. In front of the camera, I felt like an actor, but as soon as I was off set, I felt like a tourist. It really is a special place.

**Did the many 'water scenes', often shot in the sea, cause any unforeseen problems?**

Wouterlood: Due to the beautiful weather, filming in the sea was fairly easy, even though the water was sometimes cold. The crew was waiting for the actors on the beach with bathrobes and hot water bottles. Filming



on the beach with 40 crew members was a challenge that asked for accurate preparation. We had carts and tractors to transport logistics, including the special equipment for underwater filming. Often by the end of a hard day's work, we quickly took a dive. That is one benefit of a summer shoot at the beach side.

**"I will be at your funeral" is not an obvious thing to say to someone you have just met. But from Tess' mouth it sounds rather sweet.**

Wouterlood: Tess is headstrong and resourceful, just like Sam. She is one of the few people who can understand him immediately, which makes

their bond so unique. Tess is not very extraverted in terms of emotions. For example, she learned from her mother never to say sorry *"because women say sorry already too often"*. *"I will be at your funeral"*, for her, is an indirect way to say she cares about Sam.

—  
Gert Hermans

# Drazen Zarkovic about MY GRANDPA IS AN ALIEN

## “We cherish a bit of eccentricity”

Ignored by her classmates, Una has grandpa as her best friend. But one night, when strange light beams are circling over the garden, grandpa disappears. Kidnapped by aliens! That’s a story nobody would believe. Until Una meets the small robot Dodo, who shares with her a family secret: your grandpa is an alien! When her mother suddenly gets sick, Una and her robotic friend have only 24 hours to find grandpa and save mum.

MY GRANDPA IS AN ALIEN is an original sci-fi adventure for kids, looking utterly elegant in its visual design, just as much in space as in its depiction of ordinary, everyday life. Co-director Drazen Zarkovic was delighted by the welcome his film received at the Zlin Festival: “In this big venue with hundreds of kids, I got really overwhelmed by the crowd’s enthusiasm.”

Drazen Zarkovic: From the very beginning we were aware of the fact that in the sci-fi genre we are “competing” with STAR WARS and Marvel superhe-

roes. Throughout the entire production process we were fanatically striving for that “visual elegance” that you mention. A large part of that credit goes to our experienced DoP Sven Pepeonik, who has shot hundreds of visually stunning commercials. He was our first and only choice for this movie.

**I’m sure a profound dose of DIY was included too, finding creative solutions for practical problems.**

Zarkovic: Of course! Like the scenes set in the basement where a spaceship crashed 30 years ago. I’ll tell you the secret of how those glittering space dust particles were created: we used a special detergent for cleaning carpets, containing a percentage of phosphor, which glows in the dark when shining an ultraviolet spotlight on it. Welcome to space!

**What were the most challenging aspects of the shooting?**

Zarkovic: The one week of night shoots was very demanding for the entire crew, although the atmosphere

on the set was great and very lively. Young actress Lana Hranjec was the bravest of them all. At five in the morning she was our ‘last man standing’, ready to do one more take. And then there was Una’s boat trip on the river. We took all the required safety precautions: life jackets, divers on standby, we had Una’s boat attached to a steel rope so we could navigate its movements...

**And that’s when Una starts singing! We’ve seen famous artists in concert as holograms, we’ve seen duets sang with people who died years ago, but have we ever seen a duet between a robot and a girl?**

Zarkovic: My co-director Marina Andree Škop is, among many other things, a director of music videos. This was totally her idea. She insisted on including some sort of musical sequence in the film. Initially I was a bit suspicious but it all turned out really beautiful. A professional beatboxer helped Lana to practice her performance.



**How exactly did you work with Dodo, the robot?**

Zarkovic: Dodo was originally designed by Croatian illustrator Zdenko Bašić and then brought to life by Czech professionals, specialising in working with puppetry and animatronics. Dodo’s movements were controlled by three puppeteers with remote controls: one for the wheels, one for the head and one for the arms. What you see on screen is what we saw on the set: a little robot that actually rides around and moves his arms and head. But what makes an animated character finally ‘real’ are the eyes. Those were added in post-production. In 350





shots the eye movements were animated, and that's when Dodo really got his 'soul'.

### How did you organise your tasks together with Marina?

Zarkovic: On a technical level this was a demanding movie to make. Therefore we split the directors' duties, and I'm very happy we did! The making of MY GRANDPA took us seven years, from the first idea till the final movie. Marina and I go way back, we attended film school together, she edited my first student film. We share the same energy and the same taste for movies, and we tend to agree easily on almost everything. On the set our tasks were clearly divided, so the crew knew exactly who was responsible for what. Being more experienced as a filmmaker

(MY GRANDPA is my fifth feature) I was dealing with technical issues, while Marina was working with the actors. But actually we were consulting each other on every single detail. It's very convenient to have someone with you all the time with whom you can check every idea. I truly recommend it.

### Your main actress Lana Hranjec doesn't look like any average kid.

Zarkovic: Lana is special. She actually is an accomplished dancer and therefore used to endless rehearsals and hard work. Acting out face to face with a dead object like a robot, with two directors feeding you dialogue lines from behind the camera, is a complicated procedure, even for more experienced actors than Lana –



Co-director Drazen Zarkovic (Zlin Film Festival)

she was only 10 when we made the film. But she pulled it off relatively easily, due to her experience as a dancer. Lana is not your typical 'cute little girl' character. Also as a person, she has strong opinions about almost everything. That is something that can't be taught or trained, she simply 'has it'.

### MY GRANDPA IS AN ALIEN depicts family relationships with a lot of quarrelling, and a lot of warm love shared with stolen kisses and kind words. That's how things should be in a loving family?

Zarkovic: That was absolutely our intention. Marina, producer Darija Kulenovic Gudan, scriptwriter Pavlica Bajsic and myself, we all have children of Una's age. Our own family experi-

ences marked the entire movie making process.

### Although mum asks her father to "try to act normal" at the same time this film makes a plea for everyone's right to be eccentric, to be an outsider from time to time.

Zarkovic: The Croatian song that Una's mother is listening to (and that you hear during the end credits) is titled "Totally different than anybody else". It was a huge radio-hit in the 80's in Croatia. Yes, we cherish a bit of eccentricity and everybody's right to be and feel different.

–  
Gert Hermans

## Co-director Marina Andree Škop about co-producing “We’ve made a small miracle happen”

At the KIDS Regio Forum in Weimar, Marina Andree Škop (Studio Dim) told participants about the benefits of co-production and the complex construction behind MY GRANDPA IS AN ALIEN. Škop: “Sci-fi by definition is expensive, because of the special effects. But as producers we’ve made a small miracle happen, making this film on a €1,2 million budget. The first version of our script didn’t score very well on the international co-production market. We asked two extra authors to give the story a more international appeal, and that seemed to work. First Bosnia came on board, followed later by other low capacity countries, like the Czech & Slovak Republic and Slovenia.”

“As our sci-fi movie can’t compete with the international blockbusters for the same target audience, we aimed for something special, something to make us stand out. More than money, what we were really after were the specific qualifications of the international partners that we teamed up with: studio Magiclub and

Martin Peč and his group of puppeteers and animatronic artists (Czech), Michal Struss and his team of animators (Slovak), promotion bureau Fabrika (Bosnian), director of photography Sven Pepeonik (Slovenia) etc.”

Then Norway signed up. “We met with Filmbin at Cinekid, where both of us were celebrating being granted MEDIA development funding. We kept on meeting each other in different markets, and finally decided to team up. We appreciate how Filmbin (with its long experience in children’s films) got involved with every single aspect of the movie. The music and sound post production were done in Lillehammer and Nils Ole Oftebro, the Norwegian actor playing grandpa, looks a bit ‘alien’ through Balkan eyes.”

Luxembourg was the last country to come on board. Then with all partners from seven countries, everything was discussed via Skype and via an online post production framework. “Modern technology allowed us to pull it off.

It was extremely important to have a production coordinator, spreading all information at the right moment. That role was crucial. Working with this melting pot of people, for me, was an eye-opener. I loved this construction and I loved our multidisciplinary crew. Maybe that could be the future production model for low capacity countries like us. The film had 30.000 admissions in Croatia, but just a few thousands in Slovakia. It still has to be theatrically released in Slovenia and Czech Republic in September and in Luxembourg and Norway in October.”

### Educating Aliens

The educative project ‘Movies are not aliens’ enables teachers and pupils to make best use of MY GRANDPA IS AN ALIEN’s educational potential. A series of materials and activities aimed at educators, parents and young people encourages them to discuss the film in a critical, analytical way and to get more familiar with the various aspects of filmmaking. ‘Movies are not aliens’ was created by production company Studio Dim in cooperation

with the Croatian Audio-visual Centre, Croatian Film Federation, KinoKino Festival, media literacy portal medijskapismenost.hr and launched by the Agency for Electronic Media and UNICEF Croatia.

The core of the project is a freely available [35 page publication](#) for educators, and a series of [‘making of’ clips](#) illustrating the filmmaking process through the eyes of the young main actress. Marina Andree Škop: “To make teachers more familiar with this methodical approach, we are organising special screenings in which our educators conduct a pilot discussion with the audience. Afterwards teachers have to fill out an online questionnaire via mobile phones. With this new format, the ‘Movies are not aliens’ pilot project sets the tone for the future of film literacy education in Croatian schools.”

More information: Studio Dim, Croatia, [dim@dim.hr](mailto:dim@dim.hr), +385 1 3906 277, [www.dim.hr](http://www.dim.hr).

# THE WEIMAR DECLARATION: Connecting the dots

In the elegant city of Weimar, 80 representatives from 24 countries attended the 3rd KIDS Regio Forum, to draw up a state of affairs of the children's film industry, an on-the-spot SWOT analysis of the sector, with particular attention to options and possibilities for the future.

This Forum was like a well-oiled processing machine: in an excellently organized conference, participants were kneaded, shaken and stirred, until at the end of the process the result inevitably rolled out: the Weimar Declaration, a summary of future strategies and steps to be taken.

There was a consensus among the 80 professionals that the support of children's films with a special focus on original live action features is a necessity. Therefore strategic actions should be instigated to give children's film more visibility and recognition, leading towards a situation in which making feature films for children is a natural and self-evident part of the

European film culture and industry.

Based on these principals, the participants of the Forum agreed on an agenda, summarizing in the five focus points of the Weimar Declaration. The full version of the Weimar Declaration can be consulted [here](#).

One particular outcome of the Forum was a strong demand for both networking platforms ECFA and KIDS Regio to work even closer together. With more than 20 ECFA members at present in Weimar, this incentive was warmly welcomed. ECFA feels not only honoured by such a sign of confidence, but with additional agendas, and a long tradition of warm cooperation and mutual concerns, this feels like an obvious and natural step forward.



Graphic recording: Christoph Kellner

A printed booklet with the outcome of the conference will be published during the Cinekid Festival, where KIDS Regio and the Netherlands Film Fund will host a table at the Industry Forum. Here a special focus will be put on facts and figures about children's film in Europe, through the presentation of three recent studies, one conducted on behalf of the Netherlands Film Fund, one by the Thessaloniki Film Festival and one by KIDS Regio.



## A Forum in quotes & pictures

*So many films are telling the same stories about the same subjects. And all the girls wear dresses, have long hair and girlish hobbies. What we like to watch are films about special friendships, about contemporary problems and about dreams coming true."*

(The kids in the 'Young Experts' panel)



*"The problem is not so much with the production: lots of excellent films are made. We don't need more production, but what we need is more visibility. There is a disconnection between the industry (that is still 20th century) and the audience (that is already 21st century)."*

(Conclusion from the Reflection Group)



*"For every game to play there are rules. But many people here are in a position in which they can set the rules. You can bend them, and finally you can change them. There has been an important evolution over the last 10 years: there is much more awareness, we're more active on a political level, and there have been new production initiatives in many countries, from which other countries can learn and benefit. It doesn't feel like rolling the stone up the hill all by yourself. The idea of sharing has evolved and proved itself useful."*

(ECFA President Margret Albers)

*"A cinema is a too good space to only watch films. Cinema is also an event place or a place for social gathering. That's why cinema owners are key people who need our strong support."*

(Jerzy Moszkowicz, AleKino Festival)



*"Well-made children's films are like literature. They can help children to deal with important life issues."*

(Tamara Bos)

*"Looking as an outsider, one would think Europe is rather privileged. There is money to invest in development. So there is no reason why you shouldn't be a bit more daring, you can afford to take risks. Also when it comes to children's films."*

(Keynote speaker Katriel Schory, Israel Film Fund)



*"There is a need for a floor to present our actions, so we better understand from each other what we're working on. ECFA and KIDS Regio are trying to do so, but a presentation platform would surely help us to get a better understanding."*

(Edita Bilaver Galinec)



## Katja Benrath about ROCCA CHANGES THE WORLD

### “We need people like Pippi!”

You might regularly meet a bunch of crazy characters in children’s films, but rarely will you meet one as unique as Rocca. She’s living her life to the fullest, not every day, but every moment, day after day. While her dad is watching over her as an astronaut in outer space, 11-year-old Rocca lives alone with her squirrel, for the first time in her life attending a normal school. Like the rightful granddaughter of Pippi Longstocking, Rocca is ready and willing to turn your whole world upside down.



**This movie introduces us from the very first minute to a character that seems like a ‘total nutcase’. Or is it in fact Rocca who makes everybody else look crazy?**

Katja Benrath: Every now and then we should shake the logics of our thinking upside-down. What is normality? How would we wish it to be? Wouldn’t it be nice if our gaze at every individual would be defined by pure interest and curiosity, without any prejudices?

**“Worrying doesn’t help anyone,” Rocca says. Is a smile a solution to**

**every possible problem?**

Benrath: It is definitely a good strategy. You should ask yourself if doubt and fear are your best advisors. Some problems look totally different once you approach them with a smile. We all want to be more happy and more courageous. Trying things out and making mistakes, being carefree. Wouldn’t we all wish for the spontaneity and lust for life that Rocca embodies?

**Everybody refers to Pippi Longstocking as Rocca’s ultimate role model. Was she really?**

Benrath: We need people like Pippi, who cheerfully question our perspectives and show us that we can shape our own lives. I’m very happy to be

compared with Pippi Longstocking because Rocca has exactly these qualities. I have always wished to create an independent and strong character that empowers children to take life into their own hands.

**She has a sort of natural cool.**

Benrath: Style and fashion don’t mean much to Rocca. When she wants to become an astronaut, she lives her vision by dressing like one. Even wearing a cut up wedding dress in school shouldn’t be embarrassing. On the contrary - Rocca would never wear anything just to be accepted. I think her cool is mainly in her self-confidence.

**Is it Rocca having difficulties to adapt to everyday school life, or is it the school having problems adapting to Rocca?**

Benrath: So far her learning was all based upon curiosity and pleasure. That joyful learning attitude makes you question the actual school system. People learn the most when finding pleasure in it.

**I once tried to save a wounded squir-**



*Director Katja Benrath*

**rel and it almost bit off my finger. Yours is behaving much better. Was it a real living specimen?**

Benrath: We had several squirrels on the set playing the role of Klitschko. They were relatively friendly and didn’t bite. But working with wild animals is always a challenge. The trainers always made sure that the animals could work without stress. This was most important: our squirrels should never feel frightened. They couldn’t perform many tricks, but it was a pleasure to observe and include things they did by themselves.

–  
Gert Hermans  
Festival contact: [Renate Zylla](#)

## THE LAST MALE ON EARTH

At Ol Pejeta Conservancy, Kenya, the Most Eligible Bachelor in the World has found his final resting place. After 42 years on this planet, the last male northern white rhinoceros, Sudan, has passed away. **THE LAST MALE ON EARTH** portrays the gentle giant's last months.

Once the rhinos' best means of defence, his horn has become its worst enemy. The high profit margins it brings to poachers have led to the decimation of the species. In an effort to protect Sudan from its persecutors, he was tended to by rangers and armed bodyguards. Facing the demise of even the last of the whole species, scientists are determined to find a way to reproduce them. Sudan's genetic material provides hope for future attempts, with the last remaining two females living on borrowed time.

Ever since Sudan was the only male northern white rhino still alive, he became a celebrity, a magnet of the masses. Director Floor van der Meulen: *"Tourists are queuing to pet the semi-tame colossus in his dying days*

*and take selfies with him. The notion that he is the very last one, is sort of appealing. It sounds horrible, but it somehow attracts us. That is the paradox of living in this modern era: if the caretakers didn't organise these 'endangered species tours', nobody would know about Sudan's story."*

Both an explicit call to action and a compelling eulogy, **THE LAST MALE ON EARTH** is a distressing countdown to extinction. The film demonstrates the issue of the endangered subspecies with subtle irony. Floor van der Meulen's approach to the topic celebrates the dignity of the northern white rhino and the determination of his caretakers to uphold it. However, while revelling in the beauty of the majestic animal, van der Meulen does not fail to weave the undeniable and harsh truth of the human disregard for nature into the fabric of her narration. In what she describes as "a reflective documentary", van der Meulen balances the many parallel narratives of Sudan's last days, encouraging the audience to think beyond the intriguing images onscreen.



*"The film explores how we as humans deal with the situation in all its different aspects. It is a film about a rhino indeed, but in its mirroring of the human behaviour, it says more about the human species and how we nowadays treat the earth, the animals and the environment."*

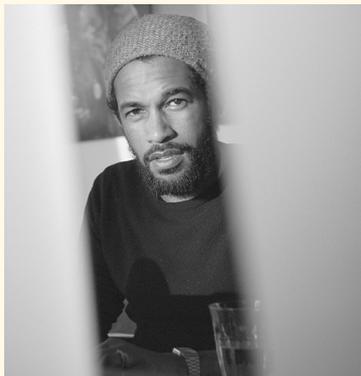
Director: Floor van der Meulen; producer: Hasse van Nunen, Renko Douze; co-produced by: Emmy Oost, Samuel Feller. World sales: CAT&Docs, contact: [www.eenvandejongens.com](http://www.eenvandejongens.com). The Netherlands, 72'.

The Doxspot column is published with the help of the [doxs! festival](http://www.doxs.de) for children & youth documentaries (Duisburg, Germany), [www.doxs.de](http://www.doxs.de).

The 18th doxs!-festival will take place from 4-10 November 2019 in Duisburg and other cities in the Ruhr Area. **THE LAST MALE ON EARTH** has been selected as the opening film of this year's festival edition.



# Martijn Blekendaal about THE MAN WHO LOOKED BEYOND THE HORIZON



Director Martijn Blekendaal (©Finbarr Wilbrink)

40 years ago, Dutch artist Bas Jan Ader decided to cross the Atlantic in a tiny sailing boat. Nine months later his boat was found off the coast of England. Without Bas Jan. Why did Ader venture into such a daring voyage and how did he overcome his fear?

Martijn Blekendaal describes himself as “a real chicken-shit”. In his doc-

umentary THE MAN WHO LOOKED BEYOND THE HORIZON he admires the courage and guts of Bas Jan Ader. The result is an exceptionally funny, inspiring and wildly associative rollercoaster. After the screening you might wonder: what the hell have I been watching? But at the JEF festival, where THE MAN WHO LOOKED BEHIND THE HORIZON received the Best Short Film Award from the children’s jury, the kids mainly wanted to know from Blekendaal whether he really is such a scaredy-cat.

Martijn Blekendaal: I am afraid of the dark, I am afraid whenever I cannot stand in a pool, I am afraid of heights and I particularly struggle with a fear of failure. You don’t just overcome such fears, but nowadays I know better how to handle them.

**If one man should be able to do it, you are the one, but still I don’t think you can: explain to us exactly what this film is about.**

Blekendaal: That question has been haunting me since the first time I

told people about my plan. I couldn’t answer it back then and I still can’t. I want to reveal the mystery behind the disappearance of Bas Jan Ader. But the film is about so much more: about making a film, about how to tell a story, it is also a whodunit, an ode to Ader’s work, an attempt to turn my destructive fear of failure into something more constructive, etc.

**In that case, just tell us what brought you in the footsteps of Bas Jan Ader.**

Blekendaal: I saw his films at an exhibition and realised how he is a source of inspiration for many artists. After his disappearance people went looking for him and that mystery is still being fed constantly. There are a lot of loose ends and tracks that lead nowhere. That is why the end of the film was not to be an end, but a new beginning. I started the project three years ago, but due to legal reasons it was put on hold for a year and a half.

**But all the time you kept thinking about it.**

Blekendaal: If you can’t work on a pro-

ject, you can still think about it. On holiday in England I took the opportunity to look into the Land’s End police archives. When I saw a lonely caravan standing on a deserted coastal strip, I went knocking. Normally I would just pass by, but now I thought: imagine Bas Jan might be living in that caravan. It makes no sense, but I did it anyway. This way I collected visual material and information. I haven’t solved Bas Jan’s mystery, but it kept me busy all the time.

**Nevertheless in the film you claim that “Bas Jan remains a stranger to me” after all.**

Blekendaal: I tried to get closer to him, but I never got to know him any better. I think that was Bas Jan’s conscious choice. I contacted his wife, Mary Sue Andersen-Ader, with whom he lived in Los Angeles. A few months later she invited me there where she showed me around the city, visiting places where they had lived together and we went looking for his notebooks in the garage. Mary Sue said things like: he was so funny, he had such beautiful eyes... and that is



all true, but that's not how you get to know anyone better. I don't even know his voice - he only gave an interview once. Even to Mary Sue, he had told her very little about his background.

**The film starts very categorically with an (unhappy) ending. While "The End" appears on the screen, you complete a story before you even started it.**

Blekendaal: This makes clear that I am not going to solve the mystery, I have no answers. I knew there would be no ending, so I decided to start with one. I have read many DaVinci Code-like books that teach you the narrative tricks to keep a story exciting, like ending scenes with a cliffhanger.

**You make a nice comparison in the film to describe your feeling of fear: like waking up from a nightmare with a fear that you only know about and that nobody else has seen.**

Blekendaal: As a child I woke up from nightmares that were extremely abstract. At night I told my mother what I had seen: red stripes and blue squares, and strangely enough all that was very frightening. How could she understand? By morning I had forgotten everything, the only thing I remembered was that I had been so

scared and that nobody understood me.

**Also the horizon frightens you.**

Blekendaal: Mary Sue had exactly the same. She drove me through Los Angeles, where many straight roads cross a hilltop, and you don't see what's behind it. Those cars disappearing, like on a ski jump, we both found that image extremely terrifying.

**Are you surprised that THE MAN WHO LOOKED BEYOND THE HORIZON goes down so well with children?**

Blekendaal: Once I had to watch 30 youth documentaries for a jury assignment and I noticed that all of them were about children. I wondered what a youth documentary would look like if it didn't have a child in it. That's what I'm trying out with THE MAN WHO LOOKED BEYOND THE HORIZON. The film is part of a TV research project on new kinds of youth documentaries.

**That is why you can deviate from the usual 15' format.**

Blekendaal: The consequence is that the broadcaster now has a problem finding a slot to programme a 26 minute film. It makes no sense to force



every maker into the same format; some stories just cannot be told that way. I am very grateful to my producer Willemijn Cerutti. She realised that this format was the right one, and never tried to squeeze me into the usual TV formats.

**I think you're a great storyteller: your voice-over sounds delightful.**

Blekendaal: I've been searching for the right tone for a long time, as that was very important to me. After all, what I do is explaining conceptual art to children! For the English voice-over I hired an actor. That adds a very different tone to the international

version. It sounds almost like a Hollywood movie.

**Do you already have another project in the pipeline?**

Blekendaal: I am planning a series of six documentaries about mysterious artists such as Banksy, aiming at a teenage audience. You know... the ones that are so hard to reach on television.

-  
Gert Hermans

# Nora Fingscheidt about SYSTEM CRASHER

## Wild, disturbing and dissonant

'System Crasher' - this unofficial term refers to a young person who pushes the youth welfare system to its limits, and finally to failure. In this case, we're not talking about a troubled teenager, but about Benni, a traumatised 9 year old girl, who has already been rejected from numerous foster families, community houses, special schools and she always ends up in children's psychiatry. Everyone is overstressed with this unpredictable, manipulative, violent little girl and her inexhaustible energy: her mother, who is afraid of her, the often well meaning social workers and the warm hearted Mrs. Bafané at the Youth Welfare Office. Finally there is Micha, the anti violence trainer for delinquent youths, Benni's final straw to cling onto. The girl finally sees him as a father, but Micha already has a family.

At the Berlinale 2019, Nora Fingscheidt's feature debut SYSTEM CRASHER (SYSTEM SPRENGER) not only received plenty of attention, but also a Silver Bear Award for cinematic innovation (Alfred Bauer Prize). More

awards followed at the Film Festival Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, and this is only the beginning. The extraordinary director (1983) was involved in several international youth film projects. She started out as a drama coach, worked as a director's trainee on the feature film GOETHE! before studying 'direction' at the Filmakademie Baden-Württemberg. Her graduation film WITHOUT THIS WORLD (OHNE DIESE WELT), a documentary about an isolated religious community in Argentina.

SYSTEM CRASHER tells the story of a strong girl full of anger and longing. This social drama takes you on a rollercoaster ride of emotions, always remaining close to Benni. And consciously, as Fingscheidt stated at the Berlinale press conference, in "a cinematic, sensual movie experience" rather than in a documentary because "reality is often even more complex, entangled and sometimes hopeless".

**For a long time you were looking for a story about a mad and angry girl.**

### Why?

Nora Fingscheidt: It partly has to do with me as a person. I was a very energetic kid, I clearly remember what it felt like to annoy the adults. From time to time I also had these rages, but not as physically aggressive as Benni. For years I've been concerned about girls in movies being too quiet for my liking, except maybe Pippi Longstocking and Ronja Robber's Daughter. Too often they were watching the world with big eyes instead of actively participating. It felt like something was missing.

### Why is Benni so angry and where does her energy come from?

Fingscheidt: She probably was born energetic. And her raging anger has to do with the fact that she can't be with her mother and time after time gets rejected. Her mother is afraid because of her anger, it is a vicious circle. Other children might react more introverted and depressed, while Benni's desperation is simply erupting.

**Through Benni's emotional ups and**



**downs, the film confronts us with a dilemma. It is so easy to lose your heart to Benni. On the other hand her violent potential is huge, she is a ticking time bomb. Is that a way to have different parts of our society represented?**

Fingscheidt: It was never my intention to capture society in metaphors. It's all about this unique character and her irrepressible, destructive energy. Of course, the social component unavoidably resonates throughout the story, and I am glad this might raise discussion. But that was not the pur-





pose of my film. We avoided all social bias: that's why Benni is not yet an adolescent, she does not live in a prefabricated slab, she has no background in migration. These causal patterns do not apply to her. Her behaviour, that's the naked truth we're dealing with.

#### Let's talk about your fantastic main actress.

Fingscheidt: Helena Zengel was among the first girls proposed by our casting agent. I never expected to find our protagonist so fast and easily. That's why I continued searching, but in my thoughts I always ended up with her again. In her acting Helena embodies both the energetic aggression, as well as the delicate vulnera-

bility. We met regularly to talk about Benni, we went to second-hand stores together to find Benni's clothes, and she attended some adult casting rounds to get more acquainted with Benni's universe.

During the filming Helena lived with us for several months, she went home for the weekends and spoke with her mum on the phone every day. In the evenings we developed a kind of script-diary together. She had to do some homework on the side, for which we hired a private teacher. Afterwards, she was even better at school than before.

#### There's also music and colours ...

Fingscheidt: We wanted to transmit Benni's energy into every aspect of



the film. That's why she is wearing strong, warm colours: red, pink, purple, yellow, and orange. Only when she's in the psychiatric centre, she loses her strength and her colour pallet changes into bright blue or turquoise. In terms of music, we wanted something wild, disturbing, and dissonant, but at the same time childlike and emotional. That was a challenge.

#### Why were you attracted to cinema? And since when?

Fingscheidt: Actually since 'forever'. Since I saw my first movie, which was *THE BEAR* by Jean-Jacques Annaud (1988). Mama bear passes away in an early stage of the story, time after time again I re-invented and retold

the story in my head. This has never pushed me in front of a camera, I was always the one who wanted to invent stories. Nobody in my family has anything to do with art, so I had to google to find out 'how to become a filmmaker?' Of course my parents were worried about me choosing this unusual, insecure path. Luckily, nowadays they are very proud of me.

#### Did you expect SYSTEM CRASHER to become so successful?

Fingscheidt: I couldn't expect anything like that! I felt very insecure at times, which is a natural and stimulating part of the filmmaking process. I believed in this project and I am happy about how it is now perceived.

#### After a six year preparation period filled with advice from academic experts, and the support of a trustworthy crew, how frightened are you about your next project?

Fingscheidt: Fear is a part of it – it has to be. The question is whether one can find a way to embrace that fear. I have already started preparing for my next project, about which I can't tell you anything. In any case, it will be a completely different experience!

–  
Uta Beth

## Adventures of Saint Nicholas

Feature, Ukraine, 2018

Director: Semen Gorov

Prod. & World Sales: Big Hand Films

Phone: ++38-067-548-24-04

[mail@bighandfilms.com](mailto:mail@bighandfilms.com)

[www.bighandfilms.com](http://www.bighandfilms.com)

World Sales: Pathé Int.

Phone: ++44-20-74-62-44-29

[internationalsales@pathe.co.uk](mailto:internationalsales@pathe.co.uk)

[www.patheinternational.com](http://www.patheinternational.com)



## Away

Animation, Latvia, 2019

Director: Gints Zilbalodis

Prod.: Bilibaba

World Sales: Cinema Management

Group

Phone: ++1-310-300-99-59

[info@CinemaManagementGroup.com](mailto:info@CinemaManagementGroup.com)

[www.cinemamanagementgroup.com](http://www.cinemamanagementgroup.com)

## Blinded by the Light

Feature, UK, 2019

Director: Gurinder Chadha

Prod.: A Bend It Films, Levantine

Films, Ingenious Media

World Sales: Cornerstone Films

Phone: +44-20-34-57-72-57

[office@cornerstonefilm.com](mailto:office@cornerstonefilm.com)

[www.cornerstonefilm.com](http://www.cornerstonefilm.com)



## Bayala – A Magical Adventure

Animation, Germany, 2019

Director: Aina Järvine

Prod.: Ulysses Filmprod., Fabrique d'Images

World Sales: Global Screen

Phone: ++49-89-24-41-29-55-00

[info@globalscreen.de](mailto:info@globalscreen.de)

[www.globalscreen.de](http://www.globalscreen.de)

## The Bears' Famous Invasion of Sicily

Animation, France, Italy, 2019

Directors: Lorenzo Mattotti

Prod.: Prima Linea Prod.

Phone: ++380-50-33-00-200

[contact@mentaldrivestudio.com](mailto:contact@mentaldrivestudio.com)

[www.mentaldrivestudio.com](http://www.mentaldrivestudio.com)

## Butterfly

Documentary, Italy 2018

Directors: Alessandro Cassigoli &

Casey Kauffman

Prod.: Indyca, Rai Cinema

World Sales: Cat&Docs

Phone: ++33-1-44-61-77-48

[info@catndocs.com](mailto:info@catndocs.com)

[www.catndocs.com](http://www.catndocs.com)

## Childhood Times

Feature, Russia, 2018

Director: Andrei Kim

Prod. & Sales: Master Studio

Phone: ++7-343-376-29-77

[studiomaster@mail.ru](mailto:studiomaster@mail.ru)

[www.studiomaster.pro](http://www.studiomaster.pro)



## Circus Noel

Feature, The Netherlands, 2019

Director: Dennis Bots

Prod.: Phanta Basta!

World Sales: Incredible Film

Phone: ++31-6-53-94-89-86

[danielle@incrediblefilm.nl](mailto:danielle@incrediblefilm.nl)

[www.incrediblefilm.nl](http://www.incrediblefilm.nl)

## The Footballist

Feature, Spain, 2019

Director: Miguel Angel Lamata

Prod.: Los Futbolísimos, AtresMedia

Cine, Wandermoon,

World Sales: Filmfactory Ent.

Phone: ++34-933-684-608

[info@filmfactory.es](mailto:info@filmfactory.es)

[www.filmfactoryentertainment.com](http://www.filmfactoryentertainment.com)



## Goliath

Feature, Sweden, 2018

Director: Peter Grönlund

Prod.: B-Reel Films, Sveriges TV

World Sales: Wild Bunch

Phone: ++33-1-43-13-22-54

[fbeauville@wildbunch.eu](mailto:fbeauville@wildbunch.eu)

[www.wildbunch.biz](http://www.wildbunch.biz)

## The Grand Hotel Ballet

Feature, France, 2018

Directors: Jacques Deschamps

Prod.: TS Productions



World Sales: Jour2Fête  
Phone: ++33-1-40-22-92-15  
[www.jour2fete.com](http://www.jour2fete.com)

## The Infernal Khorugy, The – Or Cossack Christmas

Feature, Ukraine, 2019

Directors: Mykhailo Kostrov  
Prod. & Sales: Ukrainian State Film Agency  
Phone: ++38-044-280-27-18  
[info@dergkino.gov.ua](mailto:info@dergkino.gov.ua)

## Love Cuts

Feature, Croatia, Serbia, 2019

Director: Kosta Djordjević  
Prod.: Kinematografska kuca, Platforma, Marinis Media  
World Sales: Soul Food Films  
Phone: ++381-11-26-72-004  
[info@soulfoodfilms.com](mailto:info@soulfoodfilms.com)  
[www.soulfoodfilms.com](http://www.soulfoodfilms.com)



## Marona's Fantastic Tale

Animation, Romania, France, Belgium, 2019

Director: Anca Damian

Prod.: Aparte Film, Sacrebleu Prod., Minds Meet  
World Sales: Charades Int. Sales  
Phone: ++33-629-874-504  
[sales@charades.eu](mailto:sales@charades.eu)  
[www.charades.eu](http://www.charades.eu)

## My Life as Lotta

Feature Film, Germany, 2019

Director: Neele Leana Vollmar  
Prod.: Lieblingsfilm, Dagstar Film, Senator Film  
World Sales: Wild Bunch  
Phone: ++49-89-444-55-66-44  
[office@wildbunch.eu](mailto:office@wildbunch.eu)  
[www.wildbunch-germany.de](http://www.wildbunch-germany.de)



## My Name is Sara

Feature, Poland, USA, 2019

Director: Steven Oritt  
Prod.: James Lucy Prod.  
World Sales: Media Luna New Films  
Phone: ++49-221-51-09-18-91  
[info@medialuna.biz](mailto:info@medialuna.biz)  
[www.medialuna.biz](http://www.medialuna.biz)

## The Prince's Voyage

Animation, France, Luxembourg, 2019

Director: Jean-François Laguionie  
Prod.: Blue Spirit & Mélusine  
World Sales: Urban Distribution Int.  
Phone: ++33-1-48-70-46-56  
[contact@urbandistrib.com](mailto:contact@urbandistrib.com)  
[www.urbandistrib.com](http://www.urbandistrib.com)

## Roads

Feature Film, Germany, 2019

Director: Sebastian Schipper  
Prod.: Missing Link Films  
World Sales: Hanway Films  
Phone: ++44-207-29-00-750  
[info@hanwayfilms.com](mailto:info@hanwayfilms.com)  
[www.hanwayfilms.com](http://www.hanwayfilms.com)

## Rock'n'Roll Eddie

Feature, Poland, 2018

Director: Tomasz Szafrański  
Prod.: Dogoda Media, Snowglobe ApS, New Wave Film,  
World Sales: Dogoda Media  
Phone: ++48-609-137-239  
[biuro@dogodamedia.pl](mailto:biuro@dogodamedia.pl)



## Scheme Birds

Documentary, Sweden, UK, 2019

Directors: Ellen Fiske & Ellinor Hallin  
Prod.: Sisyfos Film  
World Sales: Syndicado Film Sales  
Phone: ++1-917-651-25-89  
[sales@dutchfeatures.com](mailto:sales@dutchfeatures.com)  
[www.syndicado.com](http://www.syndicado.com)



## TKKG

Feature, Germany, 2019

Director: Robert Thalheim  
Prod.: Kundschafter Filmprod., Delta Film, Warner Bros.  
World Sales: Beta Cinema  
Phone: ++49-89-67-34-69-80  
[beta@betacinema.com](mailto:beta@betacinema.com)  
[www.betacinema.com](http://www.betacinema.com)  
Festivals: Renate Zylla, [RZylla@arcor.de](mailto:RZylla@arcor.de)

More information on all these films you will find on our website:

[www.ecfaweb.org/european-childrens-film-network/feature-films](http://www.ecfaweb.org/european-childrens-film-network/feature-films)

## Shut up and dance!

Dancing and cinema, it has been a never-ending romance since the first days of sound film. Sometimes a tasteless one, sometimes a great one, and definitely a long-lasting one.

Different from feature films, that have to combine a number of different dance scenes with plausible narrative content, short films don't have to fill in those gaps with sometimes absurd and sometimes great story elements. Conversely they can focus on the dance only. Like eating the cheese without taking the bread.

Of course there are numerous music videos that could be considered short dance films. But we would qualify only those films as dance films in which the dancing serves a bigger purpose than just to entertain or to support the music. The first two examples coming to our minds are showcasing two very different approaches to the genre, representing different aspects of technique, entertainment and emotional involvement that dance films have shown since their early days.

Narren Wilks' ONE MAN EIGHT CAM-

ERAS (2014) is one of our all-time favourites. In this short the filmmaker himself dances in front of the camera(s), multiplying his image until he forms his own little choir of eight mirror dancers.\* ONE MAN EIGHT CAMERAS is not only a simple but skilful example of the art of choreographing for the camera instead of for the stage, the film also proves to be extremely contagious for kids - they regularly burst out dancing in the cinema. It also stirs the conversation about technical issues, like multiple exposure and state-of-the-art computer editing, not even to mention the philosophical aspects of multiple identities, cloning, etc.

SISTERS by Daphne Lucker (The Netherlands, 2018) – winner of this year's Freestyle Award at the Mo&Frieese Children's Short Film Festival (among many other awards) – demonstrates a totally different approach. Three sisters are set in an artfully lighted stage-like bedroom, bantering with each other, taking different sides, forming different alliances. Not a single word is spoken, dancing is their only way to communicate. The ambig-



uous dynamics among siblings proof to be a perfect subject for a dance film, in which nearness, distance, rejection and intimacy can be expressed through motion and rhythm.

–  
\* *The film tells a sad story about abuse, through aesthetics that might even offend some viewers. At the same time it offers an unusual way to broach the issue. When there are no words to describe, dancing can be a good outlet.*

## MO & FRIESE

The Short Cut column is published with the help of the [Mo&Frieese KinderKurzFilmFestival](#) dedicated to short films. As a part of the Hamburg Short Film Agency the festival aims to present documentaries and experimental films in addition to animation and short films as well as to arouse the curiosity of children and to stimulate their imagination.

# ECFA Seminar at the Schlingel Industry Forum

## Questioning our significance

The Industry Forum, described by the Schlingel Festival as “the most comprehensive networking platform for the international children’s film industry” will run from 7–9th October, offering panel discussions and round tables with film experts. At this exquisite networking occasion for creative people from around the world, one particular event is stamped with the ECFA label.

The ECFA Seminar on 7th and 8th October will question the status of children’s and youth film festivals within the film industry. What are the most striking problems and opportunities? Festival director Michael Harbauer: *“Dialogue and cooperation between the international youth film festivals and industry representatives are becoming increasingly important in the cinema landscape of today. But what significance do these festivals have, for instance for the distribution and marketing process?”* Case studies and working groups will wrap their heads around this question during the seminar at the Hotel Chemnitzer Hof.

The traditional “ComingSoon” event on Tuesday 8th October offers an insight into upcoming children and youth films, currently in production. In this Work in Progress event, six new titles will be presented (20’ per film). Highlights among those six might be:

- BREAK THE BALLET by Stefan Westerwelle, produced by Philipp Budweg (Lieblingsfilm), a brand new title in the Outstanding Children’s Film series.
- SUNBURNED, a German-Dutch co-production presented by Nicole Gerhards (Nikofilm).

ComingSoon is organised in cooperation with Creative Europe Desk Berlin-Brandenburg.

That evening, Sebastian Grobler will present research results from his recent symposium on the topic “Child actor – a contested subject”.

The 9th October will be packed with project presentations from all over the world, in a development or pre-production stage. Projects from

various European countries (plus Canada and Russia) will be on the lookout for co-producers, financiers, pre-sales and for feedback from the expert audience. One project that surely will get extra attention is the “YoUCi” platform, recently launched by the Schlingel festival. This platform, reaching across Europe, brings young people in front of the camera to discuss and evaluate young audi-

ence productions, and offers trailers and background information. Michael Harbauer: *“YoUCi generates quite some international demand as it enables distributors, cinemas, directors and creative people to become aware of consumer trends.”*

A complete programme, names of all speakers and additional information will soon be published [here](#).



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# Jim Loach about MEASURE OF A MAN

## “We had to drag ourselves out of bed to catch the light”

The Zlin Festival has a special nose for youth cinema. Every year some seemingly obscure titles are picked up from the darker corners of the independent Anglo-Saxon market, emerging as true festival revelations. This year there were several, like *JELLYFISH* (UK), *INDIAN HORSE* and *GIANT LITTLE ONES* (Canada) and *METAL HEART* (Ireland). One title from the US that caught attention was *MEASURE OF A MAN* by Jim Loach.

Bobby (Blake Cooper), an under-confident, overweight 14 year old city boy spends a summer by the lake, where a local gang of youngsters finds him an easy victim for their bullying. Until he meets Mr. Kahn (Donald Sutherland), a Wall Street veteran who mentors him through difficult times. The warm sunlight, dimmed by the trees around the lake, can be misleading. The idyllic atmosphere contrasts brutally with commonplace small town cruelty.

Loach: I'm drawn to stories of outsiders. We can all relate to that feeling of seeming to be on the outside, look-



Director Jim Loach

ing in through a window at a party to which we aren't invited. Especially as a teenager you want to fit in, and that's what Bobby wants.

**The sunlight adds a particular tone to the film that makes summer almost physically tangible.**

Loach: We wanted to evoke the idea of summer in an atmospheric way, almost like fragments of a memory. We used a lot of very low light straight into the camera, flares and strong back light. When we shot the film, it was actually quite rainy most of the time, so we had to drag ourselves out of bed very early to catch the light!

**How did you measure the degree of**



**bullying so that it is still bearable to watch?**

Loach: My approach is just to be as truthful as you can - truthful to those characters, in that situation, in the context of that story.

**For parents, who are inevitably outsiders in such situations, it is difficult to lend a helping hand.**

Loach: Maybe there is some stuff you have to find out for yourself as you grow up. It is tempting to try and interfere, but it doesn't always work. Bobby has to figure out what he needs to do, but he isn't totally alone - Dr Kahn has a profound effect on him that maybe he wouldn't even recognise until much later in life.

**In one remarkable scene Bobby is imitating the cool dance moves he sees on TV – which is funny and tragic at the same time.**

Loach: Blake came with a video he recorded on his phone of him doing a dance in his hotel room. It was so funny and sweet and endearing. When we shot it, I was talking to Blake throughout - telling him what to do and where to go – but what made it work was that Blake committed to it. Emotionally and physically, he was prepared to expose himself. That's why people respond to that scene so much.

**Donald Sutherland was more or less born for this role. Did he realize that himself or did you have to convince him?**

Loach: We sent him the script, because we always knew we wanted him. He called me while I was on holiday in France, on the beach – I thought it was one of my friends trying to trick me. He felt a very strong, immediate connection with the character. He was just like “count me in”. It was a good day in the life of this movie.

–

Gert Hermans

## A POSTCARD FROM GREECE

If attending seminars is all about getting inspired, then the recent Fest of Fests Forum in Athens surely rose to the occasion with flying colours. There was an overwhelming urge with Greek participants to take action, to move forward, to fulfil a promise. ECFA wants to contribute to this mission by shining a modest spotlight on the Greek situation. 'Media and film literacy' are the key words we wrote on this year's postcard from Greece.

ECFA currently has seven Greek members. Most of them have recently joined our network. That feels like a clear incentive, a sign of the times.

But what is it that poked the fire? Where does this urge come from to focus on media education on a nationwide scale? Athina Rikaki, who is the leading lady behind the

Fest of Fests movement: *"At that moment when the Greek State was ready and the creators of the Greek children & youth film festivals could make it happen, the Fest of Fests network was created. The question we wanted to explore was: this vast international market of festivals, how could it further support the development of young 'screenwise' viewers?"*

That sounds like a mission to which ECFA would happily contribute. ECFA President Margret Albers: *"The networking approach behind the Fest of Fests initiative makes ECFA a natural partner – networking is a keyword in our mission (together with facilitating, informing and lobbying). This event was like a proof of concept: this is how inspirational it can be to share experiences, approaches, expectations and also obstacles in our work field. Through ECFA's communi-*

*tion - especially our regular publications and the ECFA Community - we hope to keep this valuable process in motion."*

One of the participants of the Fest of Fests Forum came with a warning: *"When something might seem like a recipe for success, like media literacy currently having its momentum, Greek initiatives will often be springing up like mushrooms... to disappear again soon."* *We don't want to let that happen, considering the potential that Greece has to become media literacy pioneer country.*

ECFA wants to prove its solidarity, helping to keep this wave of enthusiasm alive. That's why in this 'Greek chapter', you'll find a mapping of the current situation



for media literacy in Greece by EKOME and a report about the 2nd Fest of Fests Forum. Then we give the floor to our seven members, through a short questionnaire. And if there wasn't much news to collect in terms of children's film production, one ECFA member came with a surprising solution.

Read all about it in ECFA's Postcard from Greece.

## Screening Film Literacy in Greece

By and large, Media and Information Literacy (MIL) offers a new code for a media alphabetisation. It acts therefore as a catalyst for critical management of all media messages and images that citizens are challenged with. Through this new polysemantic language of the “reading and writing” of moving images, film literacy engages the critical narrative “gaze” as a counteract to the special effects craze (mostly Hollywood originated) for the most impressive, high-impact, viewers attraction result.

On this premise, the epicenter of the Fest of Fests Forum is the *screenwise* viewer: the viewer of the future is a media literate citizen who, equipped with knowledge and emotional intelligence, may reach a state of cultural maturity. Through watching and participating, the screenwise viewer is able to reflect on the inner self and on society, hence becoming more expressive and creative. After all, creativity does not entail only consumption and production of art but engages a special skill in terms of responding to the



demands of everyday life.

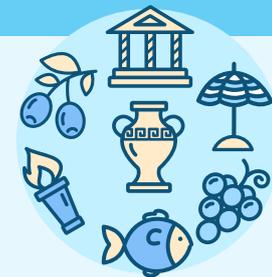
### Map of Greece

On a global scale we cannot find a unanimous film literacy policy. Different social and cultural variables apply to each country and region. In Greece, the map of film literacy used to be rather fragmented, but times have matured and currently all stakeholders seem to line up under the same basic principles. Reaching out to a young audience through schools (typical and non-typical education), festivals, policy makers and NGO initiatives is what defines the Greek scene. This is

strongly linked to the quest for more educational resources and audiovisual policies that would promote film literacy as a lifelong learning skill.

In terms of public policy, new actors are intermingling with old ones in order to offer a sustainable infrastructure for media literacy. The main challenge for all stakeholders lies in the question of how to support the development and systematisation of MIL tools on a national scale.

[The National Centre of Audiovisual Media & Communication - EKOME S.A.](#), the new public entity on audio-



visual media and the creative industry, coordinates public discourse on film literacy, inviting all stakeholders to work together towards the establishment of a sustainable policy. As the scientific partner of Fest of Fests, and according to its [White Paper](#), EKOME is at the forefront of the film literacy movement in Greece in a two-fold way:

a) through integrating film language and practice in schools by offering know-how and educational resources.  
b) through reaching students and young media professionals outside the formal environment (non-typical education), cultivating their vocational skills through synergies with the creative industry players.

In both cases, the main premise is based upon a “tripole” system that engages the producer, the content and the audience in a circular and interactive way.

## Film literacy goes to college

In the school curriculum, although there is no national film education strategy, film is established as a means of supporting other subjects. On that note, significant action was taken by the Educational Radiotelevision (Edu TV) department of the Hellenic Ministry of Education, with a series of projects targeting both students and educators, using film and audiovisual media as a tool for expression and creation. Through an open collaborative learning environment for youth creation, Edu TV supports experimentation, creativity, exchange, and content (video) for typical and non-typical education towards raising awareness about film culture. However, the Ministry of Education has been rather skeptical towards a holistic, long-term film education approach in the curriculum despite repeated proposals (such as the MELINA project) in that direction. In the National Dialogue for Education in 2016, eight proposals were submitted. However no further steps were taken.

Also **academia** can play an active role in implementing film education.

The [School of Film](#) Faculty of Thessaloniki Aristotle University, the two Faculties for communication & mass media in Athens ([Communication & Media Studies](#), [Communication, Media & Culture](#)) and the Primary School Education Faculties (Athens, Aegean) all offer courses on film education. In addition, the cross-university Master Course [ICT in Education](#) is a national postgraduate qualification with special focus on film education.

### Here come festivals

In any case, the will for cultivating film literacy skills among citizens is there, reinforced by the film industry and NGOs. Youth film festivals old ([Chania Film Festival](#), [Olympia Int. Film Festival](#)) and new ([Athens Int. Children's Film Festival](#)), film museums, archives and cinematheques ([Thessaloniki Film Museum](#)), cultural bodies and NGOs ([KARPOS](#)) all develop actions, resources and projects. In fact, it is the creative industry that is taking the most active role, offering school cinema screenings, festival programmes, learning resources, workshops, weekend film clubs and master classes. The Olympia Film Festival last year launched the 1st Olympia Creative Ideas Pitching Lab, trying to boost Greek young audience

film production, which according to a recent study by the Thessaloniki Film Festival is practically non-existent.

### Survey says: 86%

During the 2nd Fest of Fests Forum, the initial results of a global study were presented by EKOME. The study "Mapping Film Literacy Policies" is the starting point for accumulating information scattered all over the globe. The results of the survey, which is still [ongoing](#), may serve as a cultural indicator, crucial for the creation of a future global observatory on film literacy. Survey participants consist so far of public organisations, private companies and institutions, formal and non-formal education representatives, as well as members of the creative industry from Europe, Latin and Central America, Africa and North America. According to the findings, over 86% consider film education among the top priorities in their strategic planning. They suggest a two-fold approach for classroom implementation, both as a teaching method and as a separate school subject. Most film education activities apply to secondary education students. Finally, the results showed a need for an emphasis towards engaging more



film professionals in the film educational process.

–  
Irene Andriopoulou



Media analyst and Fest of Fests Film Literacy expert Irene Andriopoulou is responsible for Research, Studies & Educational Programs at EKOME SA – National Centre of Audiovisual Media & Communication.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Fest of Fests Forum: Unlock the Screen

The 2nd International Fest of Fests Forum (10-13th June 2019), hosted by the Michael Cacoyannis Foundation (MCF), has taken successful steps forward, following last year's kick-off.

"Fest of Fests" was a project based on a vision of Athina Rikaki, former CIFEJ president and founder of the Kids for Kids Festival in the early '00s. Rikaki came up with an idea about a youth cinema network with emphasis on film literacy and the development of critical viewers. Her idea was embraced by the Michael Cacoyannis Foundation and found active support and funding by the Region of Attica, partly because of a certain momentum for film education as part of educational and developmental strategies. Olympia Film Festival and Animasyros Festival have been partners from day one, while EKOME.S.A. placed the project under its scientific auspices.

The MCF hosted the Fest of Fests launching forum in 2018, bringing together experts from all over the world, resulting in a "Statement of

Common Understanding". This year the 2nd Forum of the Fest of Fests featured a European focus group, actively supported by ECFA, on the promotion of film literacy in primary and secondary education, and the prominent role of children & youth film festivals in this context.

Furthermore the Fest of Fests Forum included:

- a round table on the "Production of Films for Children" based on research conducted by the Thessaloniki Int. Film Festival.
- two film workshops for teachers, organised by EKOME S.A. based on teaching material delivered by the European Programme "Film - A Language Without Borders".
- numerous film screenings for children and youth, curated by the Olympia Festival.

Most importantly, this year the Fest of Fests teamed up with the Greek Educational Radiotelevision (department of the Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs), to organise a one day seminar on audio visual literacy in the Greek education-

al system. The seminar picked up the discussion where the European forum left off, in order to transfer the experience from the media literacy actors to the school communities.

In the closing panel were Pavlos Charamis (Vice-President of the Institute of Educational Policy), Sophia Papadimitriou (head of the Educational Radiotelevision), Irene Andriopoulou (EKOME S.A.) and Anastasia Dimitra (President of ASIFA Workshops Group). The need for integrated,

activity centered curricula was highlighted and further steps in cross-disciplinary integration of media literacy in Greek schools were discussed.

– Despoina Lambada



## ECFA MEMBERS HAVE A SAY

How do Greek ECFA members estimate the future of media education? And how do they see their own place in it? We asked them. Short answers to basic questions!

1. What specific 'young audience focus' is in your organisation's profile?
2. What young audience initiative have you organised that you are particularly proud about?
3. What conditions would be needed for your organisation to make a step forward in the field of children's film/education?
4. What would be your 'dream project' to realise?



### Thessaloniki International Film Festival

1. Our educational programme for students includes:
  - screenings during TIFF (session 'Youth Screen') & TDF (session 'DocsForKids').
  - programmes & workshops in the Thessaloniki Cinema Museum.
2. the Film Vault platform, containing a series of study guides and material about Greek cinema. Film Vault was created in the framework of the European film programme Euforia.
3. A film education programme funded by the main audio visual bodies - like Media - would be super!
4. Creating a mobile film education workshop: a toolkit with copyright-proof audio visual equipment (cameras, projection systems...) to carry out our projects in isolated regions.



### \* The Athens International Children's Film Festival

1. We're showcasing the most interesting and innovative titles on the market for children, youngsters and families.
2. In a live dubbing event we presented non-Greek language films to very young audiences. A Greek cast performed the dialogues live on stage.
3. Media literacy is not yet included in the public school curriculum. Therefore organisations like us must rely on private funds and personal efforts.
4. Expanding our scope, including extra weekends throughout the year and extra venues. We want to reach out to remote Greek areas, by inviting groups from those regions to Athens, or by visiting those areas on a tour. If you can't reach us, we can reach you.



### \* EKOME S.A.

1. This National Centre of Audio-visual Media & Communication invests in the audio visual industry, archives policy and media literacy.
2. In two years EKOME has left its footprint in the field of media literacy.
  - We have launched a relationship with the British Film Institute (BFI) producing educational material and designing joint actions.
3. A coherent and sustainable film literacy policy, under a specific media and cultural policy framework.
4. There are no "dream projects" for us, but reality-checks and milestones to achieve through systematic actions. We are open to coordinate the public discourse for integrating film literacy in the school curriculum, together with all stakeholders and especially through the UNESCO GAPMIL Mediterranean Group.





### \* Olympia International Film Festival for Children & Young People

1. Our focus is on school children and young adults, especially developing filmmakers, since our first edition back in 1997.
2. Camera Zizanio, our European Meeting of Young People's Audio-visual Creation, is not a classic competition of films made by children, but a platform for free expression and experimenting. It has been a catalyst for the blooming of the production of films made by children all over Greece.
3. The repurposing of the abandoned ASO raisin factory in Pyrgos, to become a European Centre of Youth Audio-visual Creation.
4. A four-layer organisation based in the ASO Factory, that would organise the festival, host year-round media education courses, and offer production facilities for children and other content in the region of Western Greece.



### \* The Michael Cacoyannis Foundation

1. We focus on the education of young people in the fields of cinema, theatre and performing arts.
2. The educational application THEACI, addressing youngsters aged 8-18. This app familiarises young audiences with the director's life and work, through a series of interactive games.
3. The need for a better established culture for synergies and cooperation becomes more prominent, in order for all stakeholders to play to their strengths towards common goals.
4. Given the legacy of our founder, Michael Cacoyannis: a project engaging pupils from the Tavros area in the vicinity of the Foundation, to rediscover their relationship with the ancient tragedy, through their own forms of artistic expression.



### \* The Chania Film Festival

1. For young audiences we present a programme of screenings and parallel events, with the desire to make a social impact.
2. The focal points of The Chania Film Festival Edu:
  - familiarisation with the methods and technology of filmmaking.
  - encouragement for critical thinking.
  - exploring personal abilities and artistic expression.
  - interconnection with photography, visual arts, music, creative writing etc.
  - film production inside school communities.
3. Steady cash flow, international collaboration, and the establishment of a permanent educational centre, to harbor and host activities.
4. A youth center for audiovisual creativity in Chania, providing training for young people. A meeting hub for all young creators!



### KinderDocs

1. This documentary festival for invites young people to a programme of award winning films. Each film tells a young person's story. A platform for constructive dialogue and events. In November, KinderDocs will feature at the Festival dei Popoli in Florence, Italy.
2. It is a great achievement to get young people to watch documentaries, and have them interacting in various ways.
3. Funding would allow KinderDocs to travel more often outside Athens.
  - - The decision from the Ministry of Culture to include docs (and art in general) in the curriculum.
4. A KinderDocs channel and some sort of KinderDocs School for kids and teachers.

## IN PRODUCTION

### GOOD MORNING MR FOTIS



We've been trying hard to find a Greek feature for a young audience currently in pre-production but couldn't find one. That somehow seems meaningful in itself, but even in this bare production landscape, there's individuals going against the storm. Dimitra Kou-

zi is not only running the Kinderdocs Festival (*see elsewhere on this page*), she's also a documentary filmmaker, who recently finished GOOD MORNING MR FOTIS.

A teacher at a central-Athens public elementary school for 30 years now, Mr Fotis has developed his own teach-

ing approach, fostering team spirit when facing his multicultural pupils, mostly refugee and immigrant children. The film follows Fotis in his day to day classwork, inspiring and challenging pupils towards their rite of passage, marked by their graduation performance. The school turns into an intriguing microcosm for future Europeans.

Dimitra Kouzi's scope is wider than just the classroom. "The film aims to foster dialogue on education, considering the dramatic shifts of populations in European schools. Its most particular topic is "drama" in its classic sense, with Mr Fotis using theatre to overcome the linguistic and cultural barriers in a multicultural environment."

What would be Dimitra Kouzi's perfect audience to watch a film about a grown-up and his relationship towards children? "The film could be used as a teacher training tool at universities and teachers' academies. But most of all I'd love to have it screened



in the Asian and Middle-Eastern countries where most of these kids originally come from."

The film is ready, but 'the project' is still in development. "We're planning a 52' TV-version, but haven't got it financed yet. To harness the film's full potential, we're looking for partners in politics, the academic world and NGOs and all possible support to employ the material that I collected during the shooting."

Director / Producer/ Scriptwriter:  
Dimitra Kouzi, 75' + 52' TV version.  
Contact: Kouzi Productions, [dimitrakouzi@gmail.com](mailto:dimitrakouzi@gmail.com), [www.kouziproductions.com](http://www.kouziproductions.com)

# Xu Geng about YOU'LL NEVER WALK ALONE

## How not to become a professional football player

In China football might seem to be the new religion, but there's kids in rural villages who have never even seen a football for real. They need a teacher like Xi Ge to explain them the rules of the game and infect them with a passion for playing. YOU'LL NEVER WALK ALONE stirs football mania on the high mountain plateaus of Sichuan. Until a disastrous earthquake brings an end to the game. The film that director Xu Cheng brought to the Zlin Festival, has an intriguing opening sentence: "Let me introduce myself. I am this ball."

Xu Geng: All happiness and sadness in this film are connected to this ball. From the very beginning we tried different perspectives from which to tell our story, but none of them felt fully satisfying. Finally we realised this old, worn-out football was like an eye perceiving all the things we see, and sometimes even more than we can see. It can understand the hearts and read the minds of the children. That is

how a ball became our main observer.

**The story is set in a beautiful, isolated part of China, described by the school principal as "a remote corner of the mountains where everybody wants to leave".**

Xu: With 9.6 million square kilometres and 1.4 billion inhabitants, China is a huge country. The eastern region has seen a better social and economic development, due to natural resources. The western part is a mountainous area, where living standards are relatively lagging behind. Many people want to escape from these remote areas and head for the city. Our story is situated more than 10 years ago, that region has evolved a lot since then. The place where the earthquake took place has been rebuilt, like the new elementary school that you see at the end of the movie.

**It is strange for us to realise that there are kids in this world who have never played football.**



Xu: In China, the popularity of football is increasing enormously, especially in the cities where football fields pop up everywhere for children and adults to play. But in some remote areas, even flat land is hard to find. Playing football is obviously impossible there, and some of those children might have never seen a real football. All their knowledge of football comes from pictures and television. These kids have their own games and toys, that most likely we have never seen before. The world is big, there are always things we don't understand.

**In one scene the kids are playing**

**football in the pouring rain. How was that scene recorded?**

Xu: As a director you're in control of many things, but not of nature. In order to actually shoot that scene, we had several fire trucks spraying water into the sky, creating a heavy rainfall. I'll tell you a secret: from the very beginning, I was scared to shoot that scene. Winters are extremely cold in Sichuan. My biggest concern was children getting sick from the icy rain. Although the film absolutely needed this scene, I didn't dare to record it until the end of the shooting period. We prepared everything as precisely as possible, we set up tents on the riv-





erside, we collected electric heaters and dry towels, the entire staff was standby...

#### And?

Xu: The rain was heavy, the wind was strong, the temperature was cold and everything was soaked. Each shot was difficult so we needed several takes. At first, some kids complained about the rain being too hard and painful. But as we continued, they got more and more excited. When we took a break, some kept playing in the water. Only one child couldn't help but cry... because it was in the script. None of my fears were finally realised. The next day, every child appeared on

set, no one fell sick. Maybe that was a gift they got from playing football: a healthy body.

#### The teacher in your film is more than just a teacher. What other important roles can a teacher play in the lives of young people?

Xu: Xi Ge (meaning 'happy brother' in Chinese) could have applied for better schools in wealthier regions, but he himself decided to apply for this remote mountain village. Chinese people believe that gaining knowledge is the most important thing in life. Because of his own childhood experience, Xi Ge understands other qualifications can be important too, such

as music or playing football. Things that make you happy and strong. Besides 'physical education' and math, Xi Ge takes on several other courses. This used to be common in rural China, due to a lack of qualified teachers. Probably Xi Ge never realised what important marks he left on the lives of those children.

#### Sports is often all about victory or loss. In YOU'LL NEVER WALK ALONE other things are equally important as winning or losing.

Xu: Winning is a good thing, but losing isn't bad either. What this film really cares about is not children overcoming their opponents, but overcoming themselves. People should check this one line at the end of the film: "So far, none of these children have become football players, but Xi Ge continues teaching children to play." He is not training professional athletes, but raising healthy and brave people, whom in their future lives will know how to remain optimistic.

#### Although the earthquake tragedy will mark them forever.

Xu: Our young actors are true survivors of that catastrophe, but they were babies when it happened, they have no vivid memories to the trage-

dy. Making this film didn't wake up any old traumas. For people in this region the psychological recovery has been a long term process on which they've been working for more than 10 years. We've screened YOU'LL NEVER WALK ALONE for the Sichuan community and that meant a lot to them.

#### The film introduces a girl as a true soccer hero.

Xu: Long time ago we were watching a kids' football game, with two strong teams, playing like adults. We noticed a frail goalkeeper fiercely defending his territory. Suddenly, his hair was hanging loose and we were surprised to find out it was a girl. We immediately understood our script was in need of a brave girl. She is a petite football hero and also just an ordinary girl-next-door. Sometimes she is more brave than the boys, sometimes she is spoiled like a naughty little princess. In a boys-only football team, that girl Sang Guo is like a ray of sunlight. The boys in the team don't see her as a girl, they see her as a football player and they grant her with a cool nickname.

-  
Gert Hermans  
Translation: Wang Chen

## Rima Das about BULBUL CAN SING

### “I can teach you how to dance in a car!”

Bulbul is a joyful teenager, living in a small Indian village. She can sing like a nightingale, although not in the presence of others. Her best friend Bonny has an even more beautiful voice. And then there's Suman. His classmates call him 'Ladies' but to two young girls exploring their identity, he is like the perfect friend. One day Bulbul finds out she has a secret admirer, who writes her poems full of affection. But strict moral codes are putting a permanent pressure upon the three teenagers.

Rima Das is a unique one-woman-band. There's nobody on the set but her and the actors. *“Just one camera, one lens and one woman... which is me.”* Shot in the rural province of Assam, in the villages where Das grew up, films like VILLAGE ROCKSTARS and BULBUL CAN SING are showcasing a splendid beauty and a breathtaking visual elegance.

#### How good are you at singing?

Rima Das: I'm singing really well and dancing like crazy. Maybe not in pub-

lic, but in the bathroom, in the open field or in a car, I'm excellent. Driving my young actors on those bad roads in my brother's big old car, we were singing and dancing all the time. I can teach you how to dance in a car!

**In the film, it seems like the singing and dancing mainly happens to channel other things, like physical energy and lust.**

Das: In the villages in Assam we have a rich musical tradition. My actors are from that region, singing and dancing runs in their genes. Teenagers are going through times of physical and psychological change, as hormones are going crazy. Through dancing, they will explore their bodies and might carefully explore love.

**They're so careful about all things physical, they should not kiss in public, but at the same time there's a lot of physicality there, in a brother and sister kind of way.**

Das: It is socially tolerable to get physical with a friend, until you cross a certain line. There is a constant friction.



Even boys and girls holding hands will not easily be accepted, let alone kissing in the open. The subtleties depend from one family to another, but in general any form of physical contact in public is not acceptable. Of course some young people do rebel against these customs.

**Does this moral code keeps youngsters safe from oversexualising, sexting, etc.?**

Das: Not at all. Such codes can ruin a person's life, like it happens to many young people. In my youth, this caused one of my best friends to take her own life. One thing I found out traveling: even if Indian women seem to be less liberated than others, the psychological and moral codes for

women around the world are about the same everywhere.

**In BULBUL CAN SING, one boy is wrestling with his sexuality more than all others.**

Das: Suman is confused, not even aware of what is going on with him. In the villages, people in general don't think homosexuality really exists. Nicknaming him 'Ladies' because of his feminine manners is just a way of making fun. Many boys like Suman will get married, and for the rest of their lives they'll struggle or have secret affairs. There is no open communication about it yet.

**When making VILLAGE ROCKSTARS, you were hanging out with the kids.**



**For BULBUL CAN SING, you were hanging out with the teenagers.**

Das: Which was much more complicated. Children are easy and transparent. I found those teenagers moody, and far from transparent. Still acting like children somehow, but with a different temper. I had to learn how to handle their difficult characters.

**Like for instance ... ?**

Das: Since I don't work with a crew and I use very basic lighting equipment, I always shoot during the 'magic hours' of the day, in the early morning. In the east of India, sun rises around 4.30 AM. Around 7 AM those magic hours are over already. My actors found that difficult to understand. They also had a kind of collective arrogance. So I included that in the film! Looking at Bulbul, you'll find her moody and arrogant. My main heroin is not a sweet teenage girl, but I love her the way she is.

**Who do these girls have as role models? Do they even know who is Justin Bieber?**

Das: Maybe in the city they do, but I wouldn't count on it in the villages. I don't even know if they have role models. Sometimes they might follow local artists or actresses.

**Maybe you could be their role model, through the way you've been developing your career.**

Das: I suppose I was for some of them. After VILLAGE ROCKSTARS, many girls and boys wrote to me about how I inspired them. There is this fixed idea that, if you want to make a movie, you need to go to Mumbai and you need a big budget. VILLAGE ROCKSTARS broke this mindset. Suddenly young people found confidence to do things in another way. You don't need to be a part of an industry, you can do it yourself. This I find very important.

**What is it like to be a man in those villages? What is expected from them?**

Das: The only expectation for a man is that he takes responsibilities: getting married, taking care of his family, bringing food to the table. Other moral or social complexities are mainly ignored. In the villages, 90% of the women are housewives. In Assam we don't have the dowry system – whereas a girl is getting married, the family has to bring in a large sum of money. This helps Assamese people to be so laidback.

**Is there a downside to that easy living?**

Das: I think throughout your entire



life, you shouldn't stop growing, evolving. People in the villages are not very ambitious. At a young age they'll get married, have children, and after a while life might feel like its slipping through your fingers. People are not going to restaurants with their family, they don't go out to the park or on a trip. Within a family, that companionship doesn't exist. Moreover earnings are very small, like 3 or 4 Euros per day. It's all about basic survival.

**What makes your films really stand out is their visual qualities, your unique eye for graphic beauty. Did you work in the same way for BULBUL CAN SING as with VILLAGE ROCKSTARS?**

Das: I made both films in the same

village. But the lives of teenagers are more complicated, which speaks from the framing and editing. Using the perspective of a teenager, my eyes, and therefore my camera work differently. This happens automatically if you're authentic to your characters.

**But how exactly, that seems difficult to explain.**

Das: It is like asking Da Vinci to explain why the Mona Lisa looks the way she does. It is about intuition. I just visualize things, and then they take their own shape.

–  
Gert Hermans



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ECFA's goal is to support cinema for children and youth in its cultural, economic, 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 (€ 250 per year):

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The European Children's Film Distribution Network:

[www.ecfaweb.org/european-childrens-film-network/network](http://www.ecfaweb.org/european-childrens-film-network/network)

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

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