

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
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