

KET & DOC - Flanders

Presenting five new young audience documentaries



Q&A with the directors at the JEF festival

Five young audience documentary projects were selected for the first Ket & Doc edition. Before going into production, filmmakers and producers went through a series of workshops, organised by the Flemish Film Fund (VAF). For the emerging filmmakers, this was a unique opportunity to get acquainted with a genre that is relatively new to the Belgian market.

After their premiere at the JEF festival in February, all the short documentaries (15' each) were broadcasted on national public TV. We present them one by one through short extracts from the directors' Q&A with the young audience at the JEF festival, where BERTHA AND THE WOLF-RAM already won its first documentary award.

CIRCUS WITHOUT A TENT

Romy will spend her summer in a French amusement park, performing with her circus family. Romy and her brother Quentin are having fun, strolling through the park after closing time or paddling on the pond. The desolate park unleashes big dreams about owning a circus tent of their own someday.



after closing time, without queuing.

Are you a circus fanatic?

Nina Landau: One of my favourite books as a child was "Martine goes to the circus." It made me dream away about being a contortionist or an acrobat in a marvellous costume. When making a film for kids I thought why not about the circus? I always had such a big circus tent in mind, so I was disappointed to find out this family didn't have its own tent. Until I realised that this tent could become the common thread throughout the story.

What was it like filming in an empty amusement park?

Landau: A bit creepy. In the evening the park is empty and there is no lighting. We needed a flashlight to find the exit. But for Romy and Quentin it's fun to try out the attractions

What if your child one day wants to join the circus?

Landau: I would show him the movie to make him understand that there are likes and dislikes to the circus life. You have to work hard, practice constantly and miss your friends for a long time. It should really be your passion to make it your profession.

Why is Romy always chewing gum?

Landau: I want to show things as they really are. Asking her to spit out her gum, would be like showing a cleaned-up version of reality. I allowed her to chew on, eventually with an open mouth.

Director: Nina Landau, film contact: info@adirector.be



RADIO FELIX



Felix is like a radio station in itself. The news reports he is reading out are a representation of his daily reality: noisy classmates, chaos in the classroom, frictions with fellow students. For children with an autism spectrum disorder, school is a challenge. But if Felix manages to get a grip on himself, Radio Felix might soon be broadcasting more positive news.

How did you experience Felix as a person?

Laura Van den Heede: Felix is obsessed with the news, watching news shows on BBC and CNN. He wants to know everything about politics and economy. He knows so many things, like the dates on which cyclists won races long before he was even born. Felix is also funny, we laughed a lot. And he can't stop talking.

Was it difficult to make the movie?

Van den Heede: It was important to convince Felix that I should film him while he was making radio. No one, except his parents, had ever witnessed that. It made him feel a little embarrassed. It was only when I gained his full trust that I dared ask him. He had to think about it, then he said, okay, I'm doing it. He thought it was important that the film was made so that other children could understand how people with autism think.

Are there any special things to consider when working with a person with autism?

Van den Heede: We had a very good relationship from the start. Felix has let me in on everything he thought and felt. He enjoyed talking our heads off about world politics. You have to be honest with him, and tell him exactly when you will show up and what you will film.

Director: Lauranne Van den Heede, film contact: info@adirector.be

FIEN, JIP & FIEN



11 year old Jip is in love for the first time. His little sister Fien wants to know everything about it. She is curious and a little jealous. Will love break their inseparable bond? And isn't it stupid that Jip's sweetheart is also named Fien? A summer campsite is the ideal scenery for a story about first love.

Why did you think it was important to make a film about love between children?

Pollard: As a child we didn't know what love was about, but we were very curious how it would feel. Kissing looked weird, but somehow interesting. We wanted to make a movie that perhaps was a bit naughty, but that raised a topic that children often don't dare to talk about. Therefore we used a few tools: a book, Siri the

computer voice, mobile messages etc.

How will Jip feel when watching this film again in 10 years?

De Hert: We talked about that with Jip and his parents. Jip thinks he will enjoy remembering how he was as a child and he will not feel ashamed.

We see but one Fien in the movie, but in fact there are two.

De Hert: We focus on the brother and sister story, the other Fien is only present through the messages they sent all the time by phone.

Where are their parents?

Pollard: They were at home while we stayed at the campsite with Jip and Fien. We thought there was no place for parents in a story about first love. There are hardly any other people in the picture. We were lucky: the weather was bad so there were few children at the campsite. And when they were visible somewhere in the background, we erased them with the computer.

Directors: Marie De Hert & Ellen Pollard, film contact: maarten@story-housefilm.com

DADMAGNET



Kwinten loves playing outside, and he loves his dad. As a commander on a naval vessel dad is spending three months at sea. Kwinten seeks comfort with a donkey, a dog and a pig, counting down to the moment of dad's return. DADMAGNET tells about children coping with missing someone.

Missing someone is an emotion. That seems difficult to visualise.

Daphne van den Blink: Not everyone shows their grief in the same way. Kwinten is a tough boy, standing strong. He's not going to cry or anything, he rather turns in upon himself. Kwinten is not the kind of boy who talks a lot or shows feelings easily.

For how long did you follow Kwinten, and how did you do that?

van den Blink: We have been work-

ing on the project for a year, but we only filmed him for five days. We often visited the family, until everyone felt at ease and behaved normally. We became like flies on the wall with our little film crew, observing the people unnoticed. Kwinten was very easy with the camera, he did not care much about it and sometimes almost forgot that we were there.

How difficult was it?

van den Blink: The most difficult part was filming on the boat. We spent a day on that gigantic ship on which 200 soldiers were living, working and sleeping. Such a boat is all the time in motion, all corridors are narrow, steps are steep, you are always getting in the way of someone and you can - like me - get seasick.

Why did you want to make a youth documentary?

van den Blink: If you look and listen closely, you might find many beautiful stories up for grabs on your doorstep.

Director: Daphne van den Blink, film contact: an@timescapes.be

BERTHA & THE WOLFRAM



Bertha fights a heroic battle with her ultimate enemy: wolfram! The doctor explains what wolfram exactly is: a disease affecting her neural system. Bertha's secret weapon is her creativity. Even if ultimately she can't win the fight, she immerses herself in the battle. Together with a befriended artist she prepares an exhibition.

Your film explains about the symptoms of an illness.

Tijs Torfs: The wolfram syndrome is quite mysterious and it is not entirely clear what exactly it might do to you. In Bertha's case it is mainly about her vision getting worse, and about diabetes. But all kinds of other symptoms can appear eventually and unpredictably. I had to include information without knowing if it was completely correct.

You have portrayed Bertha's struggle through the use of animation.

Torfs: That was a way to situate the syndrome in a kind of fantasy world. When Bertha told me about her fight with wolfram, it always sounded like some wild beast. I wrote the story that I wanted to evoke, and then an animation artist brought it to life in an incredible way.

May we feel sorry for Bertha?

Torfs: That is not the intention. Bertha is full of strength, she wants to achieve things, she is creative and very mature for her age. This film shows how Bertha deals with life's obstacles. Maybe she can be a source of inspiration for others. From the start, me and Bertha discussed together what we wanted to convey and how we would do it. We somehow made this film together.

Director: Tijs Torfs, film contact: info@lasbelgas.be