

Marta Prokopová about EVERYTHING WE MISSED

"I heard a boy whispering: Kubko is coming"

Slovak director Marta Prokopová does everything she can to keep the memory of her beloved dog Kubko tangible. She even made a film about it, an affectionate story about a hard-working woman who barely has time for her dog. Until an unexpected catastrophe leaves them reliant on each other. The warm feelings for her now-deceased friend are palpable in everything Marta says and does; it feels like a privilege to talk with her about such a fragile topic.

Marta Prokopová: This is a film about my best friend, a dog named Kubko, and about the bond that grew between us. It's something I didn't expect to happen, but it's the most beautiful thing that happened to me. Kubko completely changed my way of being.

That's where producer Artichoke came into the picture.

Prokopová: After finishing my debut film WILD BEASTS, I took on a job as a CGI artist, working on the Hungarian-Slovak sci-fi film WHITE PLASTIC

SKY. I was learning how to work with new software, as a part of a team. Until producer Juraj Krasnohorsky asked me if maybe I had an idea for an interesting story. Before I even realised it, I was working on a new short film again! We made EVERYTHING WE MISSED with Artichoke as majority producer, the Slovak studio ekran was co-producing and Maur Film was our Czech co-producer.

The main character is based upon the real Kubko.

Prokopová: They don't look exactly alike, but that's how I saw us. This was my first time doing character design for 3D movie characters. Designing the toys and objects was easy - I could finish models in a couple of hours, as if I knew beforehand how they should look. But designing the main characters was a much harder job.

Your topic came with several technical challenges, like animal fur...

Prokopová: For the fur I thought about using a 3D programme, but the result looked artificial. So I ended up



sculpting 3D puppets, then adding details and textures. We strived for a natural puppet animation-like design and vibe so I smuggled several minor flaws into the textures.

Compared to the dog's expressive face, the girl seems rather stone-faced.

Prokopová: She is a toymaker, suffering under work-related pressure. She's designing toys for her dog, but doesn't have time to play with Kubko. That brilliant paradox was brought to the story by screenwriter Katarína Moláková. The girl is based upon my own persona, but she is called Eva

Marty, named after my two friends Eva and Martina, with whom I formed an artistic group during my university years. Together we were involved in multiple art projects. Those names for me still represent ultimate freedom, doing the things that you want to do.

How did you work with your Director of Animation?

Prokopová: You might know Andrej Gregorčok from productions like THE WEBSTERS and MIMI AND LISA. He brought consistency to the animation department. Andrej put a lot of effort into upskilling animators about the characters' acting and their facial ex-

pressions.

How should I estimate your input?

Prokopová: I created the storyboard and animatic, worked on texturing, character design and the concept art for several scenes. I implemented my style into the visual part, worked on directing and art direction and communicated with the team to guarantee continuity.

As if things weren't complicated enough, you threw in some extra scenes without gravity, with both main characters floating in the air.

Prokopová: Such scenes are based on physics, with all sorts of stuff falling and floating around. I'm not particularly good with physics but in my opinion the challenges for these specific scenes were not different from the others.

It's not only people floating, it's even buildings. What was that all about?

Prokopová: The film started with a basic idea about me and Kubko, just being together in the moment. I wrote a few sentences and situations against the backdrop of a pandemic lockdown. Juraj then asked screenwriter Patrik Pašš to add some ideas, and he sent a treatment, involving new per-

spectives and metaphors, such as me and Kubko getting stuck on another planet. I liked his motives very much but found the atmosphere a bit too dark and adult-based; for me Kubko's playful character was missing. There was a certain simplicity in Kubko's perception of the world, at which he looked with completely different eyes than us, complicated people. I wanted to include more playful elements, creating a bridge between the child audience and the world of adults. This I got from Katarína Moláková, a Slovak scriptwriter for children's TV series. She felt my energy and – while adding her personality to the story – gave me plenty of space to express myself.

In those scenes, it seems like even the music has lost all gravity.

Prokopová: The collaboration with the talented Czech composer Jan Šléška, was amazing. I admire his work and was happily surprised by his interest. He wanted to know everything about Kubko's life, using our backstory to add some elements to the score. The lyrics, inspired by an old Welsh poem, are very close to our personal story. When reading them for the first time, I felt deeply touched. Choirboy Josef Čarek is singing Kubko's voice, accompanied by Eva Šléšková, singing my role.

In front of Kubko's house there is a bizarre forest, surrounded by big buildings.

Prokopová: In our apartment, up on the ninth floor, Kubko used to sit on the balcony all day long, keeping an eye on the forest. There is a metaphorical side to this visual, as the forest seems so close, but at the same time far away, because Kubko can't go there by himself. People are at work all day while their dogs - or other creatures - wait for them to come home and share moments together.

EVERYTHING WE MISSED had its first public screening in Zlín.

Prokopová: It was very emotional; tears were rolling down my face all the time. After our introduction, everyone understood about Kubko being a dog. When the lights went out, I heard a boy whispering: "Kubko is coming!" I felt deeply moved by all the warm feelings I picked up from the audience.

We understood that Kubko is no longer with you.

Prokopová: Last winter, we realised something was wrong. The doctor said the disease was terminal, but we decided to fight his cancer together and took him to a clinic in Brno. I am so grateful to all the doctors and



nurses for offering us this extra time. These were the most fragile, vulnerable and precious moments. Kubko was my best friend and I am going to miss him forever. His authentic behaviour has helped me in behaving more authentically towards myself and the world. I'll be always grateful to him for showing me this path.

–

Gert Hermans



This text was made available through CEE Animation, an umbrella of activities for promotion and development of the animation industry in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). More info [here](#).