



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

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*interviews*

**Revolting Rhymes**

**Room 123**

**Rintje**

**ECFA Seminar report**

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# Journal

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*December*

*Photo: Revolting Rhymes*

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## Always worth taking a different perspective

Can Cinderella's Prince be an obnoxious guy? Is a native type of animation a suitable format for discussing a troublesome domestic situation? Are horror films suitable for children?

Well, read the journal and you'll see that you can answer all these questions with 'Yes'!

REVOLTING RHYMES, THE SHELTER and ROOM 213 take different turns on supposedly known stories, subjects and genres. In a very interesting, as well as entertaining way, they convey that it's always worth taking a different perspective.

This was also the core of the ECFA Seminar 'Screening for Children' on September 20th in Stockholm: the approximately 80 participants from now on will never get the same perception again regarding balloons, kites and bicycles on screen. They were inspired by best practice from Italy, Slovenia, France and The Netherlands, reminded how crucial perspective is for telling a story and that children should be enabled to find and express their view on the world. I'd like to quote from Linda Sternö's presentation on 'The Truth and The Camera' (of which you'll find a complete summary in this ECFA Journal): *"We see different things; we value different things. Every individual has a unique, personal perspective on the world. Nevertheless, some people want us to unite and gather around one shared per-*

*spective. Through visual practice we can take part in each other's perspectives and experiences. In a democratic society we must be able to make visible a diversity of perspectives, to make the image of our society complex and nuanced."*

Therefore enjoy taking a different perspective – it broadens our minds and brings us closer to our target audience.

–  
Margret Albers  
ECFA President

# Jakob Schuh & Bin-Han To about REVOLTING RHYMES

## “What to do with a chopped off head?”

Snow White and Little Red Riding Hood are BFF's. Do hungry wolves prefer pigs, grandmothers or children? Jack is in love with Cindy but she's ogling the Prince. And where does this giant beanstalk in Jack's garden suddenly come from? The adaptation of Roald Dahl's *REVOLTING RHYMES* sets in motion a colourful parade of fairy-tale characters, through an ingenious story addressing all ages. Hilarious, poetic and full of unpredictable twists and subplots, this story was originally conceived in a TV-format, yet equally appeals to cinema audiences (as is currently being proven in Belgium and France).

On the occasion of the 'JEF launching weekend' in Antwerp, two out of the three directors Jakob Schuh and Bin-Han To (Jan Lachauer is the third) tirelessly work their way through numerous Q&A's. "Today's youth still knows their fairy-tale classics. That credit

*probably goes to Disney."* Even if those versions slightly differ from what *REVOLTING RHYMES* is offering...

**Bin-Han To:** With Roald Dahl's book, we had more than enough cruelty on our plate: two decapitations, and Dahl writing in detail about the sounds of the heads when they roll... Such descriptions have a clear layer of attraction, but when translating them into film, you have to measure how omnipresent that violence should be.

**Jakob Schuh:** We only realised this the minute we started drawing storyboards. What to do with the image of a head rolling? We tried to keep all the cruelty as funny as possible. But all this seems like nothing, when compared to the original fairy-tale versions, dating from centuries ago. The things happening to Little Red Riding Hood and Cinderella are horrifying, pure torture. In Snow White the evil queen is invited to the wedding ball. There



she's forced into a pair of metal shoes that have been heated in the fire, and while the crowd stands watching, she has to dance until she dies.

**In the book six fairy-tales are included, the film has only five.**

**Schuh:** We only had 60 minutes to cram in as much of the story as we could, so we cut Goldilocks and the story of the Three Little Pigs, we compressed into one scene.

**What was the biggest challenge in adapting this particular book?**

**Schuh:** In the book all stories are told separately without any interconnection, the character arcs are mostly funny, without much panning out. Like

Little Red Riding Hood just showing up and shooting people without any clear reason. We had to invent motivations for all characters. But in general I like book adaptations. It's like going on a sailing trip: you're pushed forward by a really strong wind, with numerous elements to hold on to. Especially with an artist like Roald Dahl. **Bin-Han:** Dahl has such an awful lot of admirers who all expect nothing less than a genius movie. Especially with this book, that is part of the school curriculum in France and Britain. Children know it by heart. I didn't fully grasp this book's status until I was approached by random people in the streets of London, asking me questions like 'what is your favourite



rhyme?’ That’s when we realised: this might somehow get us in trouble...

Schuh: In Britain they have a Roald Dahl Day, during the Roald Dahl Year (celebrating his 100th anniversary) there were mass events going on every month, they had a Roald Dahl celebration in a football stadium! We love Roald Dahl, but Brits seem to have a semi-religious adoration for him.

**Imagine soon your film might be screened in a football stadium, watched by 60.000 delirious people, with a quick game of football in between the two chapters... From which phase did you get involved in the project?**

Schuh: We had worked with the Magic Light production company in London before, and there was a certain level of trust. They sent us the book as a completely open offer: this is a book we’d like to do but we don’t know how – what would you suggest? We decided on the spot all stories should take place simultaneously in one location, and we should interconnect them all. We started writing the script, but the final shape was only revealed in the second phase: the storyboarding. That’s when relationships between characters were conveyed and when



we started working on the visual gags. **Compared to your earlier work, THE GRUFFALO and STICK MAN were like small diamonds, while this one is a much bigger diamond, with a much broader spectre.**

Schuh: Those earlier films had a rather simple storyline and little dialogue. In THE GRUFFALO, compared to the original book, some narrative elements had to be added to stretch the story. REVOLTING RHYMES was completely the opposite. The first animatic was 96 minutes long, and from there on we had to constantly narrow things, make the story tighter. THE GRUFFALO had five main characters, in REVOLTING RHYMES we had overall 42 characters.

**How did the animation procedure work?**

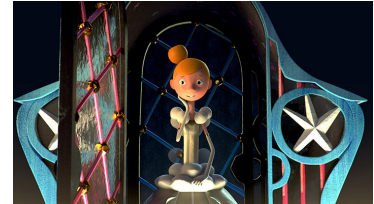
Schuh: We had two animation teams, one in Berlin and one in South Africa. I consider them actors – animators who

act on their computers. We talked all scenes through with them. After receiving the rough versions, we corrected some facial expressions and gestures. That’s how we slowly proceeded through 1017 shots.

Bin-Han: Even with three directors REVOLTING RHYMES was very demanding: so many scenes, so many locations, so many story elements. During the first months of the project, we sat together, discussing the vision and style. We developed the creative foundation together, and when we finally went into production with a big team, we split up the work among us. Our visions were so synced, that each of us could individually take care of every single scene.

**The textures are amazing, with a very tactile look in all the materials.**

Schuh: Jan (Lachauer) and I visited a puppet museum with a collection of beautiful old marionettes. We observed the chipped, painted faces, the hair sculpted out of wood, and cloth for the costumes. The marionette stages were quite lush but all flat, with cut out objects in 2D. We too decided to keep our stages simple (and cheap): flat objects, with a very tactile feel. All the stuff standing around in Jack’s garden is just flat objects lea-



ning against a wall. But when painted in a 3-dimensional way, they obtain a certain thickness with little holes and irregularities on the surface.

Bin-Han: Even in a constructed world, the incoming light should convey that wood looks like real wood, and fabric looks like real fabric. The tactile quality should feel real.

**How did you fit so many different, beautiful locations together in one coherent universe?**

Schuh: We worked with two worlds: the frame story and the main story, both having a different look. For the fairy-tale world two animators designed quite bold designs. Look at the town square: the composition of the roofs is decisive and far from naturalistic. There is a layer of texture and light washing over it, as a strong stylistic unifier. Little Red Riding Hood and Snow White appear in both worlds. In the fairy-tale world they have



sculpted hair, while in the other world they have the same haircut but with real hair.

**The bar where most of the frame story takes place has a kind of Hopper-atmosphere.**

Schuh: The minute the first rendered images came in from our South African team, we realised: this is so realistic, this team is just bloody good. We had to adapt to this level, even if we didn't plan it that way. The wolf for instance wasn't initially supposed to have fur, but considering this newly designed realism, he needed fur to fit in. Our inspiration for this *Hopper-ish* cafeteria we found in 'Cafs', a sort of greasy working class café that you can find everywhere in London.

**What was for you the most difficult scene to make?**

Schuh: The ending. There wasn't much going on... although a lot of things are happening under the surface.

Bin-Han: Cinderella's ball, with all the different lighting and ballroom dresses and so many people dancing in a complex choreography. Together with the animator I scrolled through numerous pictures of dancing people on the internet.

**The wolf is an ambiguous creature in the film.**

Schuh: In narrative terms he's a great help. His ambiguity ties all storylines together. He is sinister but caring and he is a great storyteller. In the book there is a narrator, whom you assume is Roald Dahl. Searching a placeholder for him, we saw the wolf on the cover of the book, grabbed him by the fur and turned him into something much more complex.

**Is he the character with whom you identified most?**

Schuh & Bin-Han (simultaneous): That was the huntsman!

Bin-Han: An innocent guy who slowly gets pushed into a shady situation.

**It's up to you to decide how much of the mystery you want to reveal about the sensual attraction between Snow White and Little Red Riding Hood, expressed in small gazes and gestures, and in a beautiful scene at the bus stop.**

Schuh: We worked hard to achieve that emotional closeness between them. But if people expect a 'racy take on fairy-tales'... there is nothing there!



Jakob Schuh & Bin-Han To : The Brits seem to have a semi-religious adoration for Roald Dahl

Bin-Han: The bus stop sequence was crucial and defines how people measure that relationship. 50% of the audience sees a love story in it, the other 50% doesn't. We've worked on that scene meticulously: how they stay behind as the bus leaves – "*Hi Red*" – and how they make eye contact, how they embrace each other... It's all very ambiguous.

—  
Gert Hermans

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→ watch TV trailer

# NOMINATED FOR THE ECFA AWARD 2018

**Nine titles on one ECFA shortlist, showcasing the best European productions for children in 2017.**

In consultation with a number of children's film festivals, ECFA compiles a list of the best recent young audience films. From this list, more than 100 ECFA members select the overall winner. Last year, the honour went to *MY LIFE AS A ZUCCHINI* by Claude Baras. This year there are 9 nominees, among one title collected no less than 4 nominations. An overview:

## THE DAY MY FATHER BECAME A BUSH

*(Nicole van Kilsdonk, Netherlands)*

Nominated by: JEF Festival (Antwerp, Bruges, Belgium)



## HEARTSTRINGS

*(Michel Boujenah, France)*

Nominated by: BUFF Children & Youth Film Festival (Malmö, Sweden)



## CLOUDBOY

*(Meikeminne Clinckspoor, Belgium / Sweden,...)*

Nominated by: Kristiansand Children's Film Festival (Norway)



## THE RED TURTLE

*(Michael Dudok de Wit, France)*

Nominated by: Ciné Jeune de l'Aisne Festival (L'Aisne region, France)



## UP IN THE SKY

*(Petter Lennstrand, Sweden)*

Nominated by: Film Festival for Children & Youth (Zlin, Czech Republic), KINODiseea Children's Film Festival (Bucharest, Romania), Children's & Youth Film Festival (Oulu, Finland), Just Film Children & Youth Film Festival (Tallinn, Estonia)



## MOUNTAIN MIRACLE

**- AN UNEXPECTED FRIENDSHIP**

*(Tobias Wiemann, Germany)*

Nominated by: Cinema in Sneakers Festival (Warsaw, Poland), Schlingel Film Festival for Children & Young Audience (Chemnitz, Germany)



## THE GIRL DOWN LOCH ÄNZI

*(Alice Schmid, Switzerland)*

Nominated by: Lucas Festival for Young Filmlovers (Frankfurt, Germany)



**NEXT DOOR SPY**

*(Karla von Bengtson, Denmark)*

Nominated by: Ale Kino! Young Audience Film Festival (Poznan, Poland)



**LITTLE HARBOUR**

*(Iveta Grófová, Slovakia & Czech Republic)*

Nominated by: Olympia Children's Film Festival (Pyrgos, Greece)



ECFA members can cast their votes for the ECFA Award 2018 for 'Best Young Audience Film of the Year' and 'Best Young Audience Documentary of the Year'.

Screeners of the nominated films are free available (ECFA members only).

The winners will be announced on 17 February at the Treffen der Kinderfilmszene in Berlin.

**NOMINATED FOR THE ECFA DOC AWARD 2018**

This year will be a real competition between three films nominated in festivals in Germany, Belgium and Greece. One of them also has a nomination for the ECFA feature film Award.

**THE GIRL DOWN LOCH ÄNZI**

*(Alice Schmid, Switzerland)*

Nominated by: Filem'on Children's Film Festival (Brussels, Belgium)



**THE SHELTER**

*(Robin Jensen, Norway)*

Nominated by: Doxs! - Documentaries for Children & Young People (Duisburg, Germany)



**KAYAYO – THE LIVING SHOPPING BASKETS**

*(Mari Bakke Riise, Norway)*

Nominated by: Olympia Children's Film Festival (Pyrgos, Greece)



# Emil Larsson & Martin Jern about ROOM 213

## “We did it for the girls”

When twelve year old Elvira arrives at summer camp it turns out her room has been flooded and together with her roommates Meja and Bea she has to move to room 213, where no one has stayed for sixty years. As strange things start to happen, like distorted photographs, dizzy spells and bewildered dreams, the girls grow suspicious of one another. But what about the rumours of a ghost haunting the camp grounds?

ROOM 213, directed by Emelie Lindblom, is based on a popular novel by Ingelin Angerborn. Emil Larsson and Martin Jern produced the film and wrote the script. “I got the book from the daughter of a friend who told me it was great material for a film,” says Larsson. “For a long time it was just laying around the house, until I started reading and realised: yes, this is it!”

Martin Jern: We write together: talking, playing and acting dialogues. That’s

how we wrote our first teenage movie called FOURTEEN SUCKS, that premiered at the Berlinale in 2004. This time we copied most of the dialogues straight from the book. Ingelin Angerborn’s work is so tremendously popular that we didn’t want to change the tone too much. She wrote a series of three books about these girls, and many more ghost stories for 9 to 12 year olds.

Emil Larsson: Traditionally a producer is mainly a sales person. But at the Dansk Skalle production company we’re involved differently: we come up with ideas and scripts, we find the director and we discuss the visual style. And of course we take care of the financing.

**There’s a lot of conventional horror techniques used in the film. That was a scriptwriters’ decision?**

Jern: I’m a horror fan. Wes Craven is my favourite horror director and THE RING is one of the scariest movies I’ve ever seen. So I’m familiar with those tricks and insisted on using them.



Larsson: Like the camera angle that gives you the idea somebody is watching or the doors opening and closing. But we had to make the ghost more visible. Until about halfway through the film you’re not sure what that ghost-thing is actually about, you only get a sense of it. We understood it had to be shown more clearly.

**A lot of it is also in the soundtrack.**

Jern: Hans Lundgren’s traditional horror score adds to the atmosphere, but the typical jump scare sound we only used once in the film, on a rather harmless moment. Emil and I were like ‘let’s have it all over the movie’ but the sound mixer talked some sense into us.

We constantly had to balance to make things not too scary.

Larsson: The editing process was all

about balancing, both in sounds and in visuals. A 9 year old child should be able to survive the film, but meanwhile a 12 year old should find it at least a bit scary. Choosing this particular target audience didn’t make things easy for us. Jern: It was hard to find reference points. I saw films like POLTERGEIST when I was 13 and our movie is much milder – that audience will find ROOM 213 far from scary. But on the other hand we didn’t want to end up in the THE ADDAMS FAMILY or CASPER THE FRIENDLY GHOST universe. It was difficult for Emelie Lindblom to attract everyone without excluding substantial parts of our target group.

**The frights are not just caused by the ghost.**

Larsson: There is also the element of





being locked out by your friends. Every movie needs a bit of a hero's journey. Elvira is afraid of being alone, afraid to go on a summer camp without a friend, afraid she won't make any new friends. And when she does, once again she's pushed away and she has to win them back. She has to face her true fears.

**There is a strong dynamic between those girls: one is cool and extraverted, one is shy and one is more dreamy.**

Larsson: In the film we made that more outspoken. Emelie Lindblom totally understood the story and knows what it is like to be a young girl. The actresses did great. Ella Fogelström (playing Meja) had been in a few films before, but all the others were making their debut. We found them one year before the shooting and made a pilot with them.

**What I appreciated about them: they're never outrageous. Even when the going gets tough, their acting stays in control.**

Larsson: Just like Emily, most directors coming from the Gothenburg Film School are known for keeping a naturalistic, rather restricted tone in the acting. Keeping the girls' acting a bit held back, helps to make it a more mature film. We didn't want to sound patronising,

there's no playing around, this is serious stuff!

**What about the location? Is there a story behind it?**

Jern: We hoped to be able to film the interiors and exteriors in the same location. We'd been driving around the country, visiting the craziest castles and mansions. But none of them we could afford, or they didn't want a film crew to mess up the place for a whole month. Larsson: Finally we found the right spot: one house for the exteriors and one for the interiors only two kilometres away from each other and we were allowed to 'rebuild' the whole house (as it was to be renovated soon). We used that freedom to the fullest, but we had to make it look bigger, therefore using every single room.

**The film is intensively touring the festivals, as if everybody has been waiting for it.**

Larsson: We didn't have any expectations but the response has been great. In Giffoni, Emily attended a crazy screening with more than 1000 people, screaming constantly. In Haugesund they were queuing up to and fighting over the last available seats and the audience went nuts. In many screenings a few people would leave for a while



when the tension got too strong, but they always came back to see the ending.

Jern: That's why it was important to end with a positive scene. You can't send a 10 year old back home with the idea that an evil ghost might keep on haunting your dreams for ever.

**What gives you most satisfaction about the film?**

Larsson: We've made ROOM 213 especially for young girls, because it felt like no one had made a movie like this for them before. The distributor called us crazy when we decided to focus the promotion campaign entirely on 12 year old girls. He was ready to face a financial

→ watch trailer

catastrophe. Which didn't happen: 1/3 of all Swedish 9-12 year olds, girls and boys, have seen the film. Now it opened in no less than 70 Norwegian cinemas. It feels like we've achieved our goal.

— Gert Hermans

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## JOE BOOTS

**Director: Florian Baron, 30', Germany, 2017**

"I have been lying in a hospital wishing I got my legs blown off. Because then, when people look at me, they would know that I am disabled, and that I am in pain." Florian Baron's documentary **JOE BOOTS** tells the story of a war veteran trying to find his way back into society.

Although the protagonist of the same name was injured at war, his injuries are invisible, making it hard for him to claim compensation. He tells his story without embellishments: why he joined the military, his experiences abroad, and how his life was impacted by Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). By using slow motion, Baron allows the audience to take part in Joe Boots' life. The explosion of a bomb, for example, is represented by leaves being tossed around by a leaf blower. Time seems to stand still and the audience feels detached from what is shown on screen – very much in the same way that Joe feels detached from the lives of people around him. What seemed familiar suddenly becomes surreal.

The way the alienation was translated onto the screen impressed the youth jury at the doxs! festival in Duisburg (Germany) who awarded the film the GROSSE KLAPPE prize. They were convinced by "*the aesthetically demanding images, which are convincingly tied to the content.*" Furthermore, they critically acclaimed the "presentation of different perspectives on war, among them the glorification of military interventions, criticism of patriotism, or society's treatment of those who return" in their statement. "*This very aesthetical display gives JOE BOOTS a special kind of documentary force that touched us and was altogether convincing.*"

Director Florian Baron is no stranger to the festival. As a 2016 doku.klasse fellow he presented his exposé for **JOE BOOTS** and discussed his early ideas with adolescents during the workshop.

### doxs!-festival 2017

This year, the 16th doxs! festival, took place from November 6-12 in Duisburg and six other cities of the Ruhr area: Bochum, Dinslaken, Dortmund, Essen, Gelsenkirchen and Moers. In the context of an award ceremony



*Joe Boots*

two prizes were presented at the Cinema Filmforum, the GROSSE KLAPPE and ECFA Doc Award. **JOE BOOTS** was chosen by a youth jury as the winner of the GROSSE KLAPPE.

A more detailed statement, visual materials of the award-winning films, and pictures of the ceremony are available [here](#).

Directed & produced by Florian Baron on behalf of ZDF/3sat.

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



# Robin Jensen about THE SHELTER

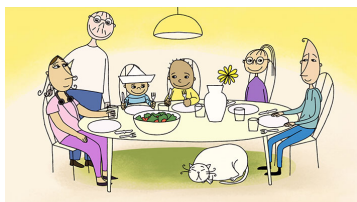
“Kids out there have problems and need to hide”

“I feel a lot safer here”, says Mikael (16). He is one of the children interviewed, who ran from a violent home and settled in at a women’s shelter. Their story is elegantly told in the animated documentary **THE SHELTER** by Robin Jensen, that won the ECFA Doc Award at this year’s doxs! festival. A delicate short film, touching, like a little finger tapping your shoulder for attention.

Robin Jensen: We all know about women’s shelters, but also the children living there are victims, and they don’t have a voice. The shelters’ staff members and directors really wanted this film to be made, it seems the need was really strong: it’s now being distributed to all shelter homes in Norway, probably Sweden and Iceland will follow and it was dubbed in Farsi, Afghan...

## It’s an animated documentary.

Jensen: Because the characters had to remain anonymous. Still, you can relate to them. These kids even look like their animated alter-egos. And although the subject is sad, due to the



animation it’s not a sad film. We show terror and fear in a rather poetic way, as the animation makes them more abstract.

## Even with this naïve style of animation, you were able to create real characters of flesh and blood.

Jensen: It’s all in the voices, that really fit to the drawings. They sound just lovely. Because we only taped them (no cameras involved) the children were extremely honest. It didn’t take long before they opened up.

## You needed somehow to explain in very few words what is the concept of a shelter home.

Jensen: While working on **THE SHELTER** for one year, we assumed that kids are smarter than generally believed. They realise it’s about a hiding

place, they understand there are kids out there that have problems and need to hide, and that’s pretty much the point we wanted to make.

## There’s some interesting details in the animation catching the children’s attention like fishes, birds and a cat, seemingly ‘glueing’ the film together.

Jensen: They make the story bigger and create space to reflect. I didn’t want to frighten our target audience. Although kids in shelters aren’t frightened by anything, since they’ve seen so much evil already. That house is where people have lived terrible situations, I wanted it to look like a warm and cosy place. People were confused by the amount of animals in the film, while actually pets are not allowed in shelters. But animals are important to these kids, they often had pets and now they’re worried: what happened to my cat since we ran off?

## There’s one particular scene in which a girl’s tears turn into raindrops.

Jensen: How to deal with a person bursting into tears while she’s telling you her story? You just want to go and hug her, which finally we did. Until that moment, we never realised how much pain there is inside those



*Robin Jensen facing the ECFA Doc Jury (Marc-André Schmachtel, Remke Oosterhuis & Elise Van Beurden) at the doxs festival achtel, Remke Oosterhuis & Elise Van Beurden) at the doxs festival*

children. The raindrops were added as a smooth, melancholic element of transition.

## What do you learn from Q&A’s like the one here at doxs!?

Jensen: Kids see things different from grown-ups. They relate to children in other ways. Because some of the characters in **THE SHELTER** have a darker skin, grown-ups ask questions like: are all these kids really Norwegian? Children simply don’t think that way.

—  
Gert Hermans

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# Screening For Children September 2017

## Seminar report

The ECFA seminar on 'Screening for children' (20 September, Stockholm) focused on a question pertinent for many people working with children's film: what to do after the screening, when you start processing the film with the young audience? Various experts, including several ECFA members, shared their experiences on how to screen and discuss cinema for and with children so as to engage them with the medium.

It might have seemed like Karen Lury, in her keynote speech, simply offered a bundle of memories on unforgettable movie scenes featuring kites, balloons or bikes. But this pleasant stroll through film history was driven by three main questions:

- Why do these objects feature so prominently in films about children?
- How can we use these objects as devices?
- What do they say about children's mobility?



*De Taartrovers*

Kites often refer to relationships between children and fathers, for instance LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON and MARRY POPPINS make kite flying the symbol of a father-son bonding process. Balloons can be seen as travelling companions for a child. But balloons can also be a bomb, a bad omen (M, THE SIXTH SENSE) because... "*balloons go bang*" (IT). While bikes carry within them the combination of attachment and loss – what can a bicycle do for a boy and what does it say about his sense of being in the world?

### WORKING WITH FILMS IN THE CLASSROOM

Anna Söderberg (Zita Cinema) illustrated the options for film discussions with children through two titles that

have been used widely across Europe: in WADJDA children easily identify with a young girl and her dream of independence. Discussions with SONG OF THE SEA were less drenched with socio-political issues, but often referred to elements of storytelling and imagination.

Study guides were presented by Heta Mulari (Finnish Youth Research Society) as documents embedded in a historical, political and social context. Therefore it's useful to ask yourself: Which are key themes in study guides and what subjects on the other hand are silenced?

It's Koloukino's goal to integrate film language in every school subject (on [www.kouloukino.fi](http://www.kouloukino.fi) you'll find study guides even in English). Marjo Kovanen left the audience with a puzzling dilemma: the Finnish film UNKNOWN SOLDIER has an outspoken nationalistic tone. Trying to create a critical understanding among youngsters through a patriotic film is a big responsibility on Koloukino's shoulders.

Miriam von Schantz (Örebro University) made a statement: you can't teach people to be critical, you can only offer tools to develop a critical mindset, by helping young people realise



*Unknown Soldier*

that:

- all stories (also the ones that make claims on the truth) are told from a particular perspective.
- all stories (also the ones that make claims on the truth) are told with the aim to effect an audience.

### MAKING MORE OF THE FILM EXPERIENCE

Presentations on three cinema initiatives illustrated how screenings for a young audience can be upgraded into a unique experience.

- Elisa Giovannelli (Cineteca di Bologna): "*Film history is not a list of dates, authors and periods, but is in a constant and lively dialogue with society.*"
- Petra Slatinsek (Kinodvor, Ljubljana): "*We want to make children feel they're special by providing them special events. We want to do more than just 'entertain', we want to inspire!*"



Mary Poppins

- Florian Deleporte (Studio des Ur-sulines, Paris): *"We want the cinema to feel like a 'home' for young people from the neighbourhood, a place of their own."*

### FOSTERING CREATIVITY

The artistic collective De Taartrovers (The Cake Robbers, Amsterdam) travels around with approximately 10 installations providing one big 'playground for the imagination'. Remke Oosterhuis: *"Playing is the main part of our film literacy."*

Three elements are at the basis of De Taartrovers' work:

- Wondering: shaping a place of wonder and discovery.

- Exploring: kids come up with ideas, the inspiration is mutual.  
 - Creating: by using all your senses and your entire body.

### BEYOND THE IMAGE

Film critic Malena Janson sees two colliding visions on childhood:

- Children as competent creatures with a capacity to take part in the decision-making process.  
 - Children as vulnerable creatures that need our protection.

When bringing up the topic of 'sexuality', kids nowadays are considered to need more protection than in the 70s.

You'll find a complete summary of the seminar [here](#).

## THE TRUTH AND THE CAMERA

Linda Sternö (Göteborg University) behind and beyond the moving image

Linda Sternö's presentation at the ECFA seminar in Stockholm was an eye-opener for many: what if we take it one step further and look behind the image? Studying the image is all about studying the perspective. Linda Sternö took the audience on a trip beyond the eyes and ears of cinema, and shared her insights with the ECFA Journal.

In the Valand Academy at the Gothenburg University, students and teachers started a film school for children and developed a set of exercises. Linda Sternö: *"Children were learning how to handle a camera, but there is no alphabet for the camera. So we decided to invent one."* This 'alphabet of the camera' is a work in progress, a set of exercises that make you aware of the influence of images and raises awareness about your way of seeing them. Those pages have recently been translated and are now available online. For the use of everyone: [www.kamersabc.com](http://www.kamersabc.com).



When talking about film pedagogy and cinema literacy, it's important to precisely define the element 'film'. *"Through these years of working with and learning from children, I have come to the conclusion that film pedagogy and cinema literacy should be about finding an attitude towards the camera and the image, both moving and still. I think cinema literacy and film pedagogy should not be about film as a product, but as a method, a way to understand (or attack) the world."*

### Film is a limiting word

Living in a digital era adds a troublesome aspect to the word 'film'. Film always was an analogue technique. With the coming of the digital technique, new processes have developed in making and screening films. If we continue using the word film in an analogue sense, while actually talking about a digital technique, we risk carrying on old assumptions and methods which might not be relevant today.



Cameras are there for young children whenever they want them, and can be used however they want to. They do not work with film - they work with a camera. The word 'film' would feel as limiting them. Do teachers and film pedagogues really see the full possibilities in the tools that we are using? Do we see the full potential of the camera today?

There is one thing about the camera: it never lies. It captures what is in front of it. It tells the truth of a certain moment, from a certain distance. But even if an image is 'true', it never tells the whole truth. The aesthetics of the camera also define the ethics. Every time you frame

an image, there are things you exclude. That is the essence of cinema: being able to imagine what is outside the frame, what is left out.

### Happiness is a public toilet

The best way to train critical thinking regarding cinema, is through practice: using the camera, not to tell a story, but as a method to understand things. Like understanding 'what makes people happy'. Answering that question, people often use an image. Like a young girl showing a picture taken while horse-riding, or an old lady showing pictures of a public toilet ("*at my age, clean to-*

*ilets, free of charge, allow me to go out and take part in city life*"), or a young refugee showing a picture of a bed "*in which I can sleep without fear tonight*". Such pictures show fragments of truth, different elements in life, that strongly differ from the ones you usually see in the media. Being surrounded by a massive flow of images, every day, wherever you go, still sometimes it feels like we're seeing the same images over and over again.



Linda Sternö

One of the questions dominating our work with children is: what images are lacking? In this massive flood of images in which we live today, what images and perspectives do not come through? The American analyst Bell Hooks writes about the representation of black people in photographic history. How to live with the visual heritage of images we have today, in which black people are

either invisible and absent or disrespected? And what images should we produce today, not to end up in a similar situation? And on the other hand: what is it like for children growing up today, being so frequently photographed? How does that influence the image they have about themselves?

### The diversity of perspectives

We see different things; we value different things. Every individual has a unique, personal perspective on the world. Nevertheless some people want us to unite and gather around one shared perspective. Through visual practice, we can take part in each other's perspectives and experiences. In a democratic society we must be able to make visible a diversity of perspectives, to make the image of our society complex and nuanced.

To read and write a text is a democratic right today. To read and produce images should be equally considered a democratic right. Everybody should be able to understand how images are produced in order to become a critical consumer. (Linda Sternö)

Check out [the ABC of the Camera!](#)

## Work in progress

# THE INCREDIBLE STORY OF THE GIANT PEAR

Adapting a book into a film, you will often wonder if the author is pleased with the result. “Pleasing Jakob Martin Strid is impossible”, states co-director Philip Einstein Lipski with a smile on his face. Which was more or less the main message of his presentation at the Kristiansand Work in Progress session.

Philip Einstein Lipski: “In 4 years time ‘The Incredible Story of the Giant Pear’ became a classic on the Nordic book market. It is written and illustrated by Jakob Martin Strid, who is insanely talented, but also an anarchist and purist. He works on his own, doesn’t trust anybody, has a very personal style, does everything by hand and is 100% sure that all will turn into shit as soon as somebody else might touch it. He wasn’t very happy when we suggested to make a film based on his book. If we can make the result suck a little bit less than he thinks it will suck that would already feel like victory. Even being good friends with Jakob, I’m rather pessimistic about that.”



“The book has zero educational value, it has no moral and it’s totally surrealist. All events seem to happen by accident. The book was actually written for adults, which is partly the reason for its success: parents love to read it to their children. That’s why we kept the tone not too classical.”

Sebastian the elephant and Mitcho the cat are best friends. One is a cowardly quitter, the other one is all guts. They live in a house on top of the hill by the idyllic village of Solby, where one day the Mayor disappears. His deputy starts rebuilding the entire city, destroying the scenery with modern buildings. Until a message in a bottle arrives from the Mayor, with a gift of a seed that once planted turns into a giant pear. The deputy isn’t pleased by this eccentricity and

runs Mitcho and Sebastian out of town. Ending up at sea in their giant pear, they might as well sail out and find the Mayor. On their great journey they meet pirates, travel the empire of ghost sailors, end up in the belly of a giant sea dragon and finally find the Mayor’s mysterious hide-out. Sailing back home together, the clock is ticking! They have to get back before they’ll all be declared officially ‘dead by missing at sea’.

THE INCREDIBLE STORY OF THE GIANT PEAR is locally financed by the Danish Film Institute, NFTVF and DR. Nordisk Film; Einstein Film and A Film are producing with Philip Einstein Lipski (RONAL THE BARBARIAN), Jørgen Lerdam (NIKO & THE WAY TO THE STARS) and Amalie Naesby Fick as directors and LevelK as world sales agent. Meanwhile the film has been domestically released in October.

Philip Lipski: “We had to search for ways to make the movie stand out. For instance by showing locations in a cut-through version so you can see

inside the houses and vehicles. And Jakob Martin Strid has this obsession that whatever mechanical thing you show in a movie, it should actually be possible to make it work – so there was a lot of mechanical details to figure out. The animation is in 3D – of course Jakob hated that as well! He would rather have Miyazaki doing it. We got him involved in modelling the characters, until he almost got sick of it. He saw the pilot we made, and of course hated it too, but as all his friends liked it so much, he had no other choice than liking it as well. But I can understand... It’s such a job to do it all by yourself and then hand it over, knowing it will never be as good as it should be. As much as I love him, I forgive him.”

More info about THE INCREDIBLE STORY OF THE GIANT PEAR: [here](#) or <http://www.nordiskfilm.dk/>.

Sales: Tine Klint, [tine.klint@levelk.dk](mailto:tine.klint@levelk.dk); Derek Lui, [derek@levelk.dk](mailto:derek@levelk.dk); Festivals: Andrea Frovin, [andrea@levelk.dk](mailto:andrea@levelk.dk); Niklas Teng, [niklas@levelk.dk](mailto:niklas@levelk.dk)

*New European films for children or young people which are ready to be discovered for your programmes. More information and more films can be found at [www.ecfaweb.org/european-childrens-film-network/feature-films](http://www.ecfaweb.org/european-childrens-film-network/feature-films). Producers, distributors and sales agents are kindly invited to inform us of their new releases.*

## 100% Coco

Feature Film, The Netherlands, 2017  
 Director: Tessa Schram  
 Prod. & World Sales: Tom de Mol Prod.  
 Phone: ++31 20 672 7707  
[info@tdmp.nl](mailto:info@tdmp.nl)  
[www.tdmp.nl](http://www.tdmp.nl)

## Bigfoot Junior

Animation, Belgium, 2017  
 Director: Ben Stassen & Jérémie Degruson  
 Prod.: nWave Pictures SA  
 World Sales: StudioCanal  
 Phone: ++33 1 71 35 35 35  
[anna.marsh@studiocanal.com](mailto:anna.marsh@studiocanal.com)

## The Family Jumble

Feature Film, Italy, 2017  
 Director: Max Nardari  
 Prod.: Reset Production  
 World Sales: Media Luna  
 Phone: ++49 221 51 09 18 91  
[info@medialuna.biz](mailto:info@medialuna.biz)  
[www.medialuna.biz](http://www.medialuna.biz)

## The Golden Ball

Feature Film, Spain, 2017  
 Director: Aitor Aspe  
 Prod.: Canal Extremadura TV / Extra Producciones  
 World Sales: Barton Films  
 Phone: ++34 94 424 05 59  
[bartonfilms@bartonfilms.com](mailto:bartonfilms@bartonfilms.com)  
[www.bartonfilms.com](http://www.bartonfilms.com)

## Harvie and the Magic Museum



Animation, Czech Republic / Russia / Belgium, 2017

Director: Inna Evlannikova & Martin Kotik  
 Prod.: Rolling Pictures, KinoAtis, Gorki Filmstudio, Grid Animation  
 World Sales: Rolling Pictures  
 Phone: ++420 281 914 984  
[office@rollingpictures.cz](mailto:office@rollingpictures.cz)  
[www.rollingpictures.cz](http://www.rollingpictures.cz)

## Hodja

Animation, Denmark, 2017  
 Director: Karsten Kailerich  
 Prod. & World Sales: M&M Produc-

tions A/S  
 Phone: ++45 7020 3080  
[mail@mmproductions.dk](mailto:mail@mmproductions.dk)



Hodja

## Hotel True Love

Feature Film, The Netherlands, 2017  
 Director: Ineke Houtman  
 Prod. & World Sales: Kaap Holland Film  
 Phone: ++31 20 346 3700  
[info@kaaphollandfilm.nl](mailto:info@kaaphollandfilm.nl)  
[www.kaaphollandfilm.nl](http://www.kaaphollandfilm.nl)

## I Kill Giants

Feature Film, UK, 2017  
 Director: Anders Walter  
 Prod.: Umedia, Having Me Films  
 World Sales: XYZ Films  
 Phone: ++1 31 09 561 550  
[info@xyzfilms.com](mailto:info@xyzfilms.com)  
[www.xyzfilms.com](http://www.xyzfilms.com)

## Moomins and the Winter Wonderland

Animation, Finland & Poland, 2017  
 Directors: Jacob Wroński & Ira Car-

pelan  
 Prod.: Filmkompaniet Alpha, Animoon  
 World Sales: Global Genesis Group  
 Phone: ++1 702 514 32 19  
[contact@globalgenesisgroup.com](mailto:contact@globalgenesisgroup.com)  
[www.globalgenesisgroup.com](http://www.globalgenesisgroup.com)

## Next Door Spy



Animation, Denmark, 2017  
 Director: Karla von Bengtson  
 Prod.: Copenhagen Bombay, ApS, CB Sweden AB  
 World Sales: Copenhagen Bombay  
 Phone: ++ 45 72 42 08 00  
[info@copenhagenbombay.com](mailto:info@copenhagenbombay.com)  
[www.copenhagenbombay.com](http://www.copenhagenbombay.com)

## Promises

Feature Film, Iceland / Denmark, 2017  
 Director: Bragi Thor Hinriksson  
 Prod.: MPFactory Hreyfimyndasmiðjan  
 World Sales: Icelandic Film Centre  
 Phone: ++354 562 35 80  
[info@icelandicfilmcentre.is](mailto:info@icelandicfilmcentre.is)  
[www.icelandicfilmcentre.is](http://www.icelandicfilmcentre.is)





## The Incredible Story of the Giant Pear

Animation, Denmark, 2017

Director: Philip Einstein Lipski, Jørgen Lerdam & Amalie Næsby Fick

Prod.: Nordisk Film Prod., A-Film

World Sales: LevelK

Phone: ++45 48 44 30 72

[tine.klint@levelk.dk](mailto:tine.klint@levelk.dk)

Festivals: [andrea@levelk.dk](mailto:andrea@levelk.dk)

[www.levelk.dk](http://www.levelk.dk)

## Kidbusters



Feature Film, Denmark, 2017

Director: Frederik Meldal Nørgaard

Production: Regner Grasten

World Sales: Attraction Distribution

Phone: ++1 514 846 12 22

[info@attractiondistribution.ca](mailto:info@attractiondistribution.ca)

[www.attractiondistribution.ca](http://www.attractiondistribution.ca)

## Laika

Animation, Czech Republic, 2017

Director: Aurel Klimt

Prod.: Studio Zvon, Universal Prod.

Partners, Česká Televize

World Sales: Studio Zvon

[monika.seifertova@gmail.com](mailto:monika.seifertova@gmail.com)

[www.lajka.eu](http://www.lajka.eu)



*Laika*

## The Little Vampire 3D

Animation, The Netherlands / Germany, 2017

Directors: Richard Claus & Karsten

Kiilerich

Prod.: Cool Beans, Comet Film, Tele-screen

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)

## Miss Sing Song Surinam

Feature Film, The Netherlands, 2017

Director: Mischa Kamp

Prod. & World Sales: Submarine Film

Phone: ++31 20 820 49 40

[info@submarine.nl](mailto:info@submarine.nl)

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

## The Swan



Feature Film, Iceland, Germany & Estonia, 2017

Director: Ása Helga Hjörleifsdóttir

Prod.: Vintage Pictures, Junafilm,

Kopli Kinokompanii

World Sales: M-Appeal

phone: ++49 30 61 50 75 05

[sales@m-appeal.com](mailto:sales@m-appeal.com)

[www.m-appeal.com](http://www.m-appeal.com)

## Tales From the Lakeside



Feature Film, Hungary, 2017

Director: Zolt Pálfi

Prod. & World Sales: Cinemon Entertainment

Phone: ++36 1 78 07 751

[studio@cinemon.hu](mailto:studio@cinemon.hu)

[www.cinemon.hu](http://www.cinemon.hu)

## Luis and the Aliens

Animation, Germany / Luxembourg / Denmark, 2017

Directors: Wolfgang Lauenstein, Christoph Lauenstein

Prod.: Ulysses Films, Fabrique d'Images, A.Film Prod.

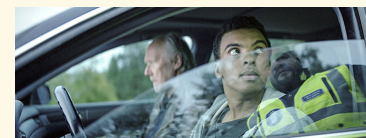
World Sales: Global Screen

Phone: ++49 89 24 41 295 500

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

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

## Unexpected Journey



Feature Film, Finland, 2017

Director: Samuli Valkama

Prod. & World Sales: Solar Films

Phone: ++358 29 370 03 90

[markus.selin@solarfilms.com](mailto:markus.selin@solarfilms.com)

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

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)

## SHORT FILM

### Sanna Lenken about NIGHT GIRL

One day 14-year-old Iggy stands face to face with the young school photographer. No more than a casual contact, it feels as if he truly understands her. Iggy tries to contact him again, thus treading on dangerous ground. Made for Swedish television by Sanna Lenken, NIGHT GIRL (based on a graphic novel by Hanna Gustafsson) is a daring short film that breathes down the neck of a young teenager and reads the despair in her eyes.

During the ECFA seminar in Stockholm, Sanna Lenken (MY SKINNY SISTER) was interviewed on stage by Malena Janson. "Iggy fantasizes about sex, not yet knowing how things would be like in reality."

**Today, films about sexuality often seem rather restricted. Did you force any self-censorship upon yourself?**

Lenken: The film starts with an animated pornographic scene of two men



having sex. At first we thought about doing it as a live action scene, but starting the film with such raw images would scare off the audience. Now the animation adds a humorous tone. The script follows Iggy in all her interests, like how she is curious about penises. From Swedish TV there was no pressure whatsoever to censor that.

#### **What about the audience's reaction?**

Lenken: It was broadcasted on Swedish late night television, not exactly a moment when youngsters are watching. But now that Filmcentrum will distribute the film, reaching out towards a young audience, I hope there will be chances to discuss it with them. At the cinema premiere, some 14-year-olds seemed a bit embarrassed about watching it with their mums and dads.

**Most of the experts in the seminar today would screen the film for a**

#### **12+ audience.**

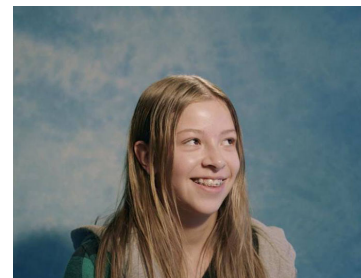
Lenken: That was the age when I started thinking a lot about sex, asking myself questions and trying to find answers in books. The book NATT-BARN was very popular among young adults, libraries started promoting it towards teenagers. I would have loved to read a book like that when I was 14.

#### **How was it for Mimmi Cyon to play the role of Iggy?**

Lenken: Difficult. Iggy stands very far from Mimmi's own extroverted character. In training, we gave her tasks, like trying to behave as if she had a secret to hide. I find it very important to make actors feel secure with me. But there is this fantasy scene in which she kisses a girl, and I told Mimmi: I want it to be a real kiss. As she was already 16 and very mature, I thought she knew... Afterwards she was shocked: "I didn't know tongues were involved!" I felt embarrassed as apparently we agreed on something she didn't understand, which was a tough lesson for me to learn.

#### **What are you working on at the moment?**

Lenken: I'm writing two films. One is again about Iggy and how she loses her virginity, based on Hanna



Gustafsson's book IGGY FOR EVER. And together with Emma Broström (FLOCKEN), I'm writing a story about a girl that is sent to a foster home. As a child I already loved reading emotional stories. Sometimes producers send me scripts about young detectives, but those simply do not appeal to me.

NIGHT GIRL (aka NATTBARN), by Sanna Lenken, Sweden, 2017, 38'.

Contact info:

Festivals: Swedish Film Institute, Jing Haase, [jing.haase@filminstitutet.se](mailto:jing.haase@filminstitutet.se); Production: Tangy Film Production, Annika Rogell, [info@tangy.se](mailto:info@tangy.se).

## Work in progress

# 12 DARES

Norwegian director Izer Aliu and Storyline Pictures producer Khalid Maimouni premiered in 2016 with *HUNTING FLIES*. Now they have teamed up again for a new Swedish-Norwegian coproduction, *12 DARES*, presented at the Kristiansand Work in Progress session.

Khalid Maimouni: "Storyline Pictures is the production arm of a Norwegian post-production and rental company Storyline Studios. *HUNTING FLIES* was our first film. As all dialogues in *12 DARES* are Swedish spoken we needed partners, so we got Swedish company Zentropa on board as main producer. In Norway we were lucky to find Mer Film. If you want your film to be made in our region today you need to partner up."

Izer Aliu is quite a phenomenon: born in Macedonia with Albanian roots, his family moved to Sweden when he was only 2, eventually he grew up in Norway. He is the "hot shot" among the new generation of Norwegian directors, a promising talent with a perso-

nal approach. His feature film debut *HUNTING FLIES* was shot (with a small crew, on a low budget) in Macedonia. *12 DARES* is Swedish and his next film *SONG OF SCABS* (telling the story of 1500 miners on strike in 1907) will be Norwegian, following more or less the trail of Aliu's personal odyssey.

Maimouni: "The story of *12 DARES* reads like a combination of Greek mythology and a dark gangster drama, yet Izer can make even the darkest of stories appear light-hearted, adding a personal touch".

The main character is called Food, he lives in Ryd, a small, run-down, housing project in a Göteborg suburb. Few people escape it and local role models are hard to find. Food's story is about belonging, specifically to a loyal group of friends, a gang often getting involved in fights caused by futile events. But Food isn't much of a fighter, he likes to hide in the shadows. When Food breaks their trust, and therefore gets shunned, he'll go to extremes to regain their trust. Inspired by what they've learned in class the gang suggests Food to "do some Hercules shit" to prove his loyalty. There are 12 dares, varying from burglary and stealing cars to outrunning



the fastest thief in town... When Food takes on his challenges they steer him down a dark path alienating the things that matter most to him; family, true friends and the girl he loves.

Maimouni: "It's all about making the right choices. Belonging to a gang is so important during adolescence, but is it the only option? Is it all worth it? Despite his young age, Alia has a lot of experience. I suppose he had friends like Food, he might even have taken up similar challenges. *12 DARES* is his most personal film yet; I see a lot of Izer in every character. The film is set in a lower-income, multicultural community. From a location that is gene-

rally regarded as sad or dangerous, he shows the buoyant aspects of youth culture. All actors were amateurs, their performance was the result of a group process. Izer is good at that: he makes the best of what he gets and can turn small things into something very big."

The film, made on a €1,5 million budget, financed by Storyline Productions, Film I Väst, and the Norwegian Film Institute will premier early 2018.

Distribution: Mer Filmdistribusjon, <http://semerfilm.no/>.

# Steven De Beul & Ben Tesseur about RINTJE – THE MOVIE

## “They might pee doggy-style, but they don’t bite”

From the Flemish-Dutch animated series RINTJE, nine episodes were selected by distributor JEF and brought together in a compilation film for the very youngest audience. Based on the work of Dutch illustrator Sieb Posthuma, and animated in stop motion with artisanal charm by the Beast Animation studio, run by Steven De Beul & Ben Tesseur.

The naughty puppy Rintje discovers the world together with his friends Tobias and Henriette. He goes out playing in stormy weather, he handles the hairdresser’s scissors and organises a circus show. Rintje’s adventures are as recognisable as they are inventive. The compilation was put together with great care, with handmade settings and a cosy atmosphere as its best assets.

Steven De Beul: The project RINTJE was first brought up about ten years

ago, but quietly disappeared from our radar. Until we suddenly got a phone call from Dutch producer Lemming Film, saying: “RINTJE did not die!” They got Belgian co-producer A Private View on board and talked to us about the stage management.

**Through newspaper columns and books Rintje became a print phenomenon. How did you add a personal plegm to the existing material?**

Ben Tesseur: Sieb drew the props for a teaser made by the Dutch studio Pedri. We were looking forward to work closely with him. However, around the time the contract was signed, Sieb took his own life. We had an intense meeting with Ton Meijer, Sieb’s life partner, who truly wanted the film to be made as a tribute. He remained involved as art-director, keeping close watch. The Rintje character is actually based on their dog.

De Beul: Rintje’s universe was totally



scarce: pen drawings done with ecoline on paper... That’s all. In all the books we found no more than two exterior drawings, just a few corners of Rintje’s home and sketches of other houses didn’t even exist. Discussing every element with Ton, we created the entire street, a village in which dogs could run free. We made sure to incorporate Sieb’s typical wobbly asymmetric style, lacking every straight line.

**Why did they choose Beast Animation?**

Tesseur: Our baseline is: “handmade quality”. Our style might seem a bit “rock ‘n roll” but our final product is solid and high quality. We reflect on

every frame, keep time and budget in mind and are consequent in our use of stages, movement and sound.

**How does that influence the dynamics, the atmosphere?**

De Beul: The stages were kept limited for budgetary reasons: if an episode actually took place in a barn, an attic and a basement we centralised the story in one place. Those ‘budgetary cuts’ had a positive effect on the rhythm.

Tesseur: In the studio a word cloud hung on the wall with all keywords for this series. Like “create a world in which you’d like to live”. That influenced all our executive decisions: the choice of materials (i.e. the grass



looks like something you would lie in), the lighting, the voice casting, the decoupage. For our animators we stipulated every single detail for every single movement of every single character, in every situation: How does Rintje walk when he is sad or happy? To answer all questions we create a sort of “animation bible” with outlines everybody has to stick to.

**Some elements in the film raise questions. Like the choice to always show the mother in an apron in the kitchen, in a world without fathers.**

Tesseur: We discussed this in depth with Ton. It was part of Sieb’s work; only one adult male occurs in the entire series. The mother was at first entirely one-dimensional, way too sweet. We did tweak that a little, just like we gave Henriette’s character a positive touch.

**Was it a difficult exercise to keep the ‘dogness’ in balance with all those human traits?**

Tesseur: All was clearly stipulated in our animation bible, as far as the tempo of the tail-wagging according to their mood. The puppies might pee doggy-style, but they don’t bark - they yell, like kids do. Adults eat with a knife and fork, the kids don’t: Rint-



je breaks an eggshell with a spoon... and then devours it without any cutlery. When the cake falls off the table, the children slobber it right off the ground.

De Beul: Where are the teenagers? Puppies walk on all fours, grown-up dogs walk upright, is there any transitional phase? We don’t know. And what about races? Some dogs have a brown coat, a white one, a black one... This added a multicultural dimension to the film without using words.

**The dogs’ facial expressions are limited.**

Tesseur: Those were hard to do with mouths that only open and close. All the acting is in the movement of the eyebrows, the ears, the body language. We really got the most out of the brows, so one look can really convey a lot of emotion.

De Beul: Body language is one of our cruxes: even the simplest object

has to have spirit. It can’t just move around achromatically. I still love all the little details the animators and cast added. (GH)

Contact info: Lemming Film, Sara Juričič, [sara@lemmingfilm.com](mailto:sara@lemmingfilm.com).

→ [watch the teaser here](#)

## Animators about...

### \* Designing props & stages

“For props we scanned every object in Siebs’ books; a bed, a table... Sieb drew it differently every time. We also created a reference binder on design in the fifties. It is never specified when the stories take place, but the retro feel from the teapots and the oven etc. seemed fitting.

After that we made a model of every stage, conducted colour tests and developed props in their full scale, in proportion to the stages and characters. Beast Animation’s trademark “hand-made quality” can be found in the use of materials; baskets are woven from actual reed, flowerpots are little pots we grinded slightly, it makes this universe look charming, cosy and cuddly. The charity shop right next door comes in handy. They know us there and keep

some useful stuff for us every now and then.”

### \* Puppets & characters

“The puppets were developed by the Dutch studio Pedri Animation; they’re amazing on a technical level. Inside there is a complex system of hinges that replaces the joints. To make the puppets more manageable we left out one joint in the paws of the dogs. Every character comes with his own challenge, Rintje’s white fur has to be treated with utmost caution and Henriette’s furry coat was a nightmare. Everyone hated working with her... except one animator who had this connection with the animal, like Henriette only wanted to listen to her. The easiest episode with Henriette was when there was a storm raging and her fur was allowed to be tangled.”

# Ekaterina Bordacheva brings children's cinema to Planet Russia

## “People will always try”

This is how she sees it: this is a vast country full of opportunities. But when it comes to children's film, it's a bare wasteland, and none of the stakeholders in the film industry are willing to take the risk. But Ekaterina Bordacheva has the ambition to make a change by pulling the right strings, by bringing the right people together, by taking the lead in a new movement that should bring children's film back to Russia. That's why she invited an ECFA delegation to convince stakeholders that children's film could be the right investment.

Rostov-on-Don is a relatively green city with a pleasant atmosphere, along the boards of the river. A city under reconstruction, preparing the coming of the World Championship Football, that should put it more prominently on the map. Here, Bridge of Arts carries with pride its suffix 'Motivational Film Festival': motivating people to see films, motivating



youngsters into active sporting, motivating the cultural industry to close the gap between the occidental and oriental world, of which the borders are set by the river Don. The attempt at the opening night to make Rostov's citizens feel more involved in the festival was distinctly Russian: sabre

dancers performing on a pulsating disco beat, an endless red carpet parade, Lou – Mambo #5 – Vega entertaining the crowd, Miss Russia wearing her biggest smile and a dazzling amount of cocktail dress splits posing for selfies with local 'stars'. Through this Bridge of Arts Festival, Ekaterina Bordacheva is trying hard to bring the children's film genre back to a nation where it once flourished.

### Typical oligopoly

30 years ago, children's films were a Russian trademark. Then what happened? Bordacheva: “In Soviet times, children's films were made, funded by substantial governmental investments. But after 1989 things changed. Nowadays all the money handed out by the Ministry of Culture, goes to the biggest, most powerful producers. A typical example of an oligopoly: a limited amount of companies controlling an entire market. In the national funding regulations a special budget is foreseen for children's cinema, but major companies like Melnitsa, Karo Production or Central Partnership took a claim on the best part of that budget and use it to produce family cinema blockbusters and animation. It would sound fair to split up most of the money among several indepen-



ECFA delegation in Rostov: Marketa Pasmova, Ekaterina Bordacheva, Michael Harbauer & Gert Hermans

dent projects, but small studio's don't stand a chance in Russia. There is simply no room for independent children's cinema and niche movies for teenagers. Only few companies like Gorky Film Studio –already founded in Soviet times– every now and then invest in a children's film production. And from time to time one interesting title is put out on the international market, like the sweet teenager movie 14+ (by Andrey Zaytsev) or GOOD BOY (by Oxana Karas) that was screened in this year's Schlingel Festival.”

### Words on paper

“There are two main funding sources in Russia: Fond Kino (Cinema Foundation of Russia) invests in projects for the commercial market while the Mi-





Good Boy

nistry of Culture focuses on arthouse cinema, young directors, etc. But that's mainly 'words on paper'. Fond Kino yearly has a budget of 4 milliard Roubles to spend, a relatively small amount for such a big market. But what we really lack are structures and frameworks. No wonder production numbers have declined. Five years ago we still made approx. ten children's films per year, then it became five, and now there's only two or three. Those few films we had for a 5-7 audience last year were released on 100 copies for more than 4000 available screens in Russia."

"There are governmental quota in Russia: cinemas are recommended to screen a certain percentage (not less

than 20%) of Russian titles, which mainly appears to be animated features and blockbusters. Thus, films for children and teenagers (digging deeper into their reality and revealing their passions, problems and solutions) have to make room for commercial family comedies."

### Small isolated initiatives

Ekaterina Bordacheva fights her fights simultaneously on more than one battlefield. Besides her work in the Bridge of Arts Festival, she's spreading children's film culture through her festival in Khanty-Mansiysk, she's a member of the Fond Kino expert board (advising the Fond about priority targets for governmen-

tal investments), she's Programme Director and Promotion Producer of the biggest industry forums on the Russian Film Markets in Moscow and Sochi, and she campaigns for ECFA to become a crucial networking platform in Russia.

"When it comes to film education, nothing much has been centralised. There is a bunch of small, isolated initiatives out there, film clubs, school film programmes,... But they seldom share experiences nor funding sources. Luckily people will always try, even if there is no structure or platform provided. That's why we invited an ECFA delegation to Rostov to revive the ambitions of Russian stakeholders and to prove that everybody can benefit from communication and exchange."

### Have your ambition tickled by ECFA

In the Bridge of Arts Industry session, ECFA was represented by festival managers Marketa Pasmova (Zlin), Michael Harbauer (Schlingel) and distributor Gert Hermans, addressing professionals with a message; that there's a future in children's film for those who are willing to invest. Afterwards festival Executive Director Inina Kozljakova and Ekaterina Bordacheva ceremoniously signed the

ECFA membership document. "There is a whole bunch of events for children in the Bridge of Arts Festival, but strangely enough hardly any include cinema. Now the festival is willing to invest, but only if we can also launch an educational programme, based on an interactive exchange with children, thus setting an example for other festivals. After a few masterclasses this year and the round table with ECFA, Bridge of Arts is considering a more ambitious children's programme next year. Everything in this country is centralized in Moscow and Sochi, but this initiative could spread all over Russia. Maybe with Rostov as a national meeting point for children's cinema, who knows..."

— Gert Hermans

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Signing the contract with ECFA: Inina Kozljakova & Marketa Pasmova

## Dagmar Seume about WENDY

### “Values, freedom and endless possibilities”

The 12-year-old Wendy isn't happy about spending the entire summer with her parents at Rosenborg, her grandmother's riding stables. After a horseback riding accident, Wendy never got in the saddle again. But in her holiday resort Dixie crosses her path, a wounded horse that escaped from the butcher and now seems to yearn for her company. Their friendship might put more than just Wendy's life in motion. Since 2006 Dagmar Seume directed documentaries and crime stories alongside films for a young audience. With WENDY she wanted to make a true 'family film' and more than just another teenage-girl-and-horse story.

Dagmar Seume: The story appealed to me because of the idea that the animal notices who is good for him and who isn't. The friendship that grows between Wendy and Dixie allured me. I wanted to communicate values and a feeling of freedom and endless possibilities. I wanted to make children laugh, sympathise, think and make them curious. This film should stimulate their imagination. WENDY didn't



have to be bright, multi-coloured and loud, but calm, warm and slow.

**The film is based on a successful comic-series in 'Wendy', a periodical for horse-loving teenagers. Has this restricted or on the contrary liberated your imagination?**

Seume: There was a first version of the script that didn't follow the comic too strictly. That's the script we further expanded freely, especially emphasising the relation between mankind, nature and animals.

**Sometimes it feels like leading actress Jule Hermann and the horse (that has already played in OST-WIND 2) are very much alike.**

Seume: They are both very much in their character. They both had an unbelievable pleasure in acting and an

open heart for everyone. All actors were fantastic, but Jule is a very discerning girl. She was well prepared and she acts genuinely. Still we had to be cautious. At a certain moment, Wendy lays down next to Dixie in the stable. And even if Dixie is a magnificent animal, it's a huge, heavy horse and one should always be careful.



**You are a former gymnastics trainer. How did you end up on a film set?**

Seume: I came to West Germany a year before the unification, and started a new life. My new job was making coffee at a film set. Through the production management, I became script girl and then finally director. Going from assistant to director was the most difficult part, but it was worth it. I love this job.

**You were in the top regions of the list of 'most successful German films' and your film already played at 16 international festivals. Still you will not be the one producing the sequel WENDY 2 – FRIENDSHIP IN DANGER?**

Seume: I think one should stop at its peak. But it's amazing that this film is travelling the world. This summer I was at the film festival in Giffoni, Italy, it was unbelievable how children admired the film. We just were

awarded 'Best Feature Film' in the Rolan Bykov International Film Festival for Children & Youth in Armenia. And now WENDY will go to Tokyo! Even if I don't have time to attend all these festivals, only the idea stimulates me and I'm happy that so many children of different nationalities can enjoy this story about friendship. What more can a director wish for? I make films for the audience!

–  
Uta Beth

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# KIDS Regio 2018

## Focus on immersive media tools

Digital technology developments are reshaping our industry and influencing the audience. After Augmented Reality, Virtual Reality is another technological hype within the business world that has a potential attraction also for young users. KIDS Regio understood that all too well, and made it the subject of their most important business events in 2018.

Virtual Reality retails a new reality, a multidimensional view into a virtual world that has the potential to engage the audience emotionally through their user experiences. Museums and cinemas are embracing innovative forms of creating virtual worlds in order to attract visitors. Some producers have taken up this new technical possibility and have created 360 degree developed story experiences seen, for example, at Google Spotlight Stories. Children's media professionals are also exploring new possibilities to reach their audience with innovative ideas of storytelling.

The two cornerstone business events of KIDS Regio Berlinale Meeting Point and The Opening Industry Day in collaboration with The Financing Forum for Kids Content will help to analyse whether the creative media professionals are assessing the impact that virtual realities have on the audience.

The KIDS Regio Berlinale Meeting Point New Realities – VR Experiences for children's film content on February 17th 2018 will discuss:

- What impact has virtual reality in film?
- How does virtual reality work in film and how does it affect the art of storytelling and experiences?
- How the young audience actually responds to virtual experiences and how do they interact?
- How would a writer need to tell a story for children within virtual realities?

The Opening Industry Day on March 13th 2018 during The Financing Fo-



Partners: KIDS Regio (Viola Gabrielli) & The Financing Forum (Annette Breyner)

rum for Kids Content will continue with a deeper dive into inspirational cases on VR and Immersion. A special VR lab will provide hands-on experiences for creative media professionals and will try to map out how future young audiences will look at immersive media tools.

Stay tuned about both initiatives on [www.kids-regio.org](http://www.kids-regio.org).

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ECFA's goal is to support cinema for children and youth in its cultural, economical, aesthetic, social, political and educational aspects. Since 1988 ECFA brings together a wide range of European film professionals and associations, producers, directors, distributors. ECFA aims to set up a working structure in every European country for films for children and young people, a structure adapted to Europe's multicultural interests.

For more information and memberships (€ 200 per year):

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[www.ecfaweb.org](http://www.ecfaweb.org)

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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