



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

interviews

Up in the Sky

Supa Modo

Girl in Flight - La Fuga

Halkaa

Rosie & Moussa

Journal

No. 2 | 2018

May

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www.ecfaweb.org

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I lost my suitcase but found ECFA



1981: my first children's film festival in Gijon, Spain. My suitcase got lost, in the hotel a drunken man had picked my door to fall asleep against for the night, I didn't speak any Spanish and the only word I knew was *maleta* (suitcase). It's there that I met Felix Vanginderhuysen, who told me he had plans to create a new association. Back in Italy, I started the first children's film circuit in my region, Lombardia, and called it 'Arrivano i Film'.

1991: Duisburg, at the first major ECFA event. It became clear to me that all participants were 'special' people, with an interest in the audio-visual world and in quality films. It was not the market that brought them together, it was the passion, competence and enthusiasm, which still define our network today. ECFA's members, from different cultural backgrounds and professions, continue to act as pioneers in promoting films and cinematographic activities in education.

In the following years, numerous events were organised to bring children's film and media education to the attention of MEPs and European policy makers, and ECFA was always involved: from the hearing at the Cultural Commission of the European Parliament (February 1996) to the many editions of the international KID'SCREEN seminar. A crucial event was the RAINBOW project - Rights Against INTolerance: Building an Open-minded World - that

connected EU gay and lesbian associations, schools and media professionals in order to promote the rights of children and youth to freely express their sexual identity and orientation.

Now that new technologies are changing children's media habits, I believe that ECFA must have the courage to swim against the tide, taking in the somehow alarming research results about the world of children. We should profoundly invest in increasing communication and in the sharing of emotions; meaning we should continue to promote films that tackle the important social issues kids are facing nowadays (isolation, violence, poverty, migration, overexposure to social media etc.).

After a lobbying campaign, supported by KIDS Regio and ECFA (and many of our individual members), the amount of children's film festivals receiving financial EU support, compared to last year has more than doubled in 2018. For the current half-year-term, no less than 10 festivals will receive funds that will help them to keep up the good work. Long live ECFA!

—
Eva Schwarzwald
ECFA President
2000 – 2001



Winner of the ECFA Award 2018: UP IN THE SKY

Petter Lennstrand: “Puppets in itself are dead material”

This year's ECFA Award winner addresses the very youngest audience with a feature in which live actors and puppets playing alongside each other. In this wonderfully absurd adventure everything is possible, thanks to a brave girl with a boundless imagination. Director Petter Lennstrand came to Berlin to collect his prize: *“I'm really happy about this award. In Sweden the expectations for UP IN THE SKY were limited, but the film will still be around for a while in the festivals.”*

Like last year in the Zlin Festival, where the actors even brought along one of the puppets.

Petter Lennstrand: I've attended a few festivals. A couple of years ago, I suddenly got afraid of flying, which made every festival trip a challenge. But for UP IN THE SKY, I got over it completely. The fear is gone, and I really enjoy those festival trips. The movie has brought me to Berlin, to Tromsø, to Lubeck and every time it

was great to see it with an audience.

You picture your main character very clearly from the first second of the movie, when Pottan is the last one to come out of the school.

Giske: Lennstrand: She is a girl that isn't noticed, a feeling that everybody can relate to. I remember as a child sometimes having this feeling of total loneliness.

Like in that beautiful scene in which Pottan and Dennis share this overwhelming loneliness, while fantasizing about how life could be on another planet.

Lennstrand: Both main characters have something to offer each other, although that seems rather unlikely at first glance. They're the only two who profoundly change throughout the story. All the other characters impersonate but one clear emotion. Like Rydberg, who's driving the movie forward by his manic behaviour.



He is pretty extreme! What's going on in his mind?

Lennstrand: He considers himself a good person, and presumes everyone is exactly like him. His way of seeing the world is very different from ours. His self-confidence is unlimited, which makes him an excellent entrepreneur, who doesn't really fit into society. For a puppeteer such egocentric characters are fun to work with. That's why I love Rydberg. He is totally crazy, in a way that makes you more astonished than afraid.

When a child remains unseen, is it the parents who are to blame?

Lennstrand: Sometimes children can easily take care of themselves. When my wife and I were totally occupied, it

was no problem for our kids to act very independently. Or maybe Pottan's family is super dysfunctional - that's for the audience to decide. But that was not my motivation behind the story. This idea first came up a long time ago, when my son was eight, and I noticed how he was constantly directed by rules and regulations, mostly coming with the best intentions about safety and protection – *when cycling, always wear a helmet!* – but putting up so many boundaries. UP IN THE SKY plays around with those rules, it's my creative fantasy about a world where things are done a bit different. Three sofas can be on top of each other and there is a rocket in the garage.





When the parents disappear, something happens that I really appreciate: the puppets enter the stage, without an introduction or explanation. They're just... there!

Lennstrand: Nobody ever needed an explanation for that. It's a place where rules are different. It could be a fantasy, a dream. Here Pottan is seen, she's noticed. That's why she decides to stay.

You have a formation as a puppeteer.

Lennstrand: At the age of 14 I joined an amateur theatre group. A few years later I built my first puppet and got really hooked on it. Combining these two passions, I started performing puppet theatre when I was 17. I discovered a theatre in Stockholm, where puppets from all over the world were collected in a museum. The director invited me for a three-years

formation and with that theatre I toured the world and started developing my own projects. Like in 1995 when I acquired the rights to do a Spiderman puppet play – nowadays that wouldn't be possible anymore. I made puppets for music videos and commercials and got my own programme on TV. I started a company, me and my partner got more skilled and we experimented with new techniques. UP IN THE SKY is the ultimate combination of all these aspects: all the concepts and techniques culminated in one movie, summarising all the things I've done so far in my career and adding a few new ones.

Is it really the puppets doing all the acting?

Lennstrand: What you see is 99% what you get. All puppets are played by puppeteers. Human actors can express an emotion in a blink of an eye, but when acting with puppets you need time to transmit a feeling. The puppet in itself is dead material. To make the audience realise there is an emotion inside, you have to do it in a theatrical way, like *commedia dell'arte*. It's all about body language and rhythm, there is hardly any facial expression. The puppets design is simple, but fits with the characters. We

experimented with puppets that looked very realistic, with skin and hair, but then every single detail should be perfect. With a simple puppet in cloth, you don't notice the weak spots. I made more arty puppets on other occasions, or traditional marionettes sculpted in wood, but for comedy I find these stylized puppets very efficient.



Was all the space mumbo jumbo in the film ever scientifically checked?

Lennstrand: All was precisely calculated. We started with rocket science, then loosened our approach, but kept some realistic elements. In every Q&A kids ask: did they really go into space? Of course they know the answer, but they feel it's somehow a little bit real.

How was it for actress Mira Forsell to be on the set with the puppets?

Lennstrand: Our producer Lars Jönsson understood the importance of

finding the right person and pushed our casting agent to go the extra mile. Mira came with her grandmother to an audition, having no experience at all, but she was definitely the right one. She was only seven years old, but very responsible. She said: *"It's easier to play happy with the puppets, and it's easier to play sad with the humans."* If the film was such a positive experience, that was partly due to Mira and her entire family, who were very supportive.

When Dennis reads Pottan a bedtime story, I presume it's no coincidence that it's Astrid Lindgren's 'Emil and Ida'?

Lennstrand: That book is very famous in Sweden, and it was nice to make it our own. The audience realises how Dennis is changing the story a bit, which tells you more about his background.

–

Gert Hermans

[→ watch trailer](#)

Likarion Wainaina: “SUPA MODO doesn’t glorify poverty, it shows life despite poverty”

Jo, living in a village in Kenya, is nine years old and adores superheroes. There’s nothing she would like to do more than play in an action adventure. Only through her fantasy, she can forget that she is actually terminally ill. When Jo gets convinced about her own super powers, the entire village comes together to make her dream come true. But does every superhero movie get a happy ending?

In the Generation screening in Berlin, the audience went wild for SUPA MODO. Maybe that had to do with the indomitable lust for life in this film that overshadows sickness and death, and that was perfectly impersonated on screen as well as on stage by young actress Stycie Waweru.

When director Likarion Wainaina assures me “*don’t worry, I’m easy*”, those were truly rightful words. (The interview was completed with quotes from other crew members.)

Likarion Wainaina: In my movies I want to show something beyond what people are used to. I want to show a more intimate side of Kenya. We are happy people, we laugh a lot, and we love excitement. SUPA MODO doesn’t glorify poverty, it shows life despite poverty.

What was logistically your biggest challenge?

Wainaina: The scale. We took over an entire town, which wasn’t easy to control. Every day we had around 80 people coming to the set, asking for a job. They would go and sit under a tree, and every time we needed extras we went to pick a couple. And the weather was tough on us. In the morning you couldn’t even recognise the person standing in front of you, because of the fog.

That’s how you got the local community involved?

Wainaina: Some main roles are played



by professional actors from Nairobi, but all other actors we found in the village. The women coming to pray in Jo’s house are real – praying is what they really do. We thought we should teach them about acting, but in the end they were teaching us about life. We’ve put the actor playing the chairman and the real village chairman alongside each other in one scene. It was all very authentic: art creates life and life creates art. Producer Sarika Hemi Lakhani: Our aim was to film as much as possible in one village, so that we didn’t have to move the crew around all the time. Working with a child actor, we knew time was going to be essential, and we didn’t want to spend it in cars, we wanted to spend it on the set. All

we needed, we found in Kabuku. Jo’s house is a family home in Kabuku, next door we found parking space and dressing rooms for the actors. The crew stayed in a hotel and we bought food and water from a local merchant. By involving them, we gave the villagers a sense of ‘artistic ownership’.

You already named a few ‘stakeholders’ from the village, coming to Jo’s house to have a say about her situation.

Lakhani: They represent the elderly people, the church, the council... They’re all obsessed with their mission and that is true to reality.

Wainaina: In every village we have a council of the elders, who are considered as wise people. They have lived



longer so they have better judgement. When Kenya was a new country, the government couldn't reach certain areas. Rarely people had the chance to take their court cases to town, so the village elders were there to sort out smaller disputes. They help to keep the community united, passing down principles from one generation to another. Such things are getting faded out in society. Nowadays Nairobi is like New York: no one really cares about you, you're alienated.

Which lends your film a certain sense of nostalgia?

Wainaina: It's a story about how life used to be in Kenya, when community was everything we had. I want to encourage the younger generation: know about your neighbour and get reconnected with a time when family meant everything. If you alienate yourself, you're missing out on so many things.

In the film we pick up a glimpse of some sort of superhero B-movies. Is there a market for such productions that we never get to see in the West?

Lakhani: I find it diminishing to call them B-movies. I'd prefer 'local productions with a small scale budget'. In

video halls, the local audience comes to watch Nigerian soaps, Latin-American TV-series... all sorts of popular content.

Wainaina: Not many people in Kenya have access to cinemas. But in every village you'll find someone with a 42 inch television, who rents out a small shop with wooden benches, where people come to watch movies for a small fee. Those movies are sometimes too complex for our audience, as they deal with cultures people aren't familiar with. The role of the V-jay is to make it fun, and make the film relatable. He'll translate dialogues, add sound effects and comments, or change the name of the characters. The V-jay creates a bridge between the local audience and the world of cinema. When I grew up, I watched the same type of movies Jo is watching: Jackie Chan, Chuck Norris... Nowadays V-jays work with every single movie, even with AVENGERS. When we were scouting locations, we came across V-jays translating very complex movie content. We often sat back and watched, losing 45 minutes of precious time, because it's such fun. I saw PRISON BREAK with a V-jay and it was hilarious.

Lakhani: But the film clip you get to see in SUPA MODO is not from a real



movie, as we couldn't get those rights cleared. One of our directors plays in a band called Just A Band and we used some extracts from their music video.

In Jo's own film, you deliberately introduce us to the world of 'crappy special effects'.

Wainaina: Mike, who's shooting the film, represents most filmmakers in Kenya. He's extremely practical. Guys like Mike will find practical solutions to whatever they can't afford. The lousy cardboard cut-out effects in SUPA MODO were fun to make. The costumes were inspired by comics, with references to Black Panther, Superman, Batman etc. That's the world Mike and Jo live in.

The film is all about finding the right balance between 'happy' and 'sad', between 'optimism' and 'depression'. How did you get that balance so correct?

Co-author Silas Miami: We took off with an extremely sad script, to which the producers said 'no'. Then we went from one extreme to the other, which ended up being too comical. Finally we picked the best elements from both versions and found the right balance.

Lakhani: Life is not dark, not in Kenya. Life is full of humour and colours and love. We are never only one thing, we are the sum of everything.

Co-author Wanjeri Gakuru: This balance is also created through Jo's





relationships with others. Her mother represents the truth, the reality: my child is dying and I want to keep her safe. She wants her daughter to spend her last moments in a family atmosphere. But the dynamic with Jo's sister Mwix is very different: light and energetic. This conversion generates an interesting triangle with three women from the same family.

Was this balance also something to keep in mind on a visual level?

Wainaina: Because I like dark films and I always try to push emotions to the maximum, SUPA MODO was an interesting journey for me. I had to find the humour in darkness, and I had to keep things simple. The cinematographer and me were slaves to the story.

What the writers gave us, was strong enough in itself, and all our decisions were made in favour of that core story. We played around with colours in terms of mood, balancing when to go dark and when to go bright. In this film life and death come together. If we would favour life and ignore death, the movie would make the wrong statement. But if we focus on death and ignore life, again that would be the wrong statement. This balance we found with the entire crew together, as if we all shared one collective brain. It's very rare to have that experience and I feel very fortunate.

How much of a 'sick girl' did you want Jo to be? She has plenty of 'lust for life'.

Wainaina: Creating Jo's character was tricky, even on a visual level. I wanted to keep her a mystery. If I would determine exactly who she is, the audience can't see beyond that individual image anymore. We had to leave her as hollow as possible. That's why her gender was never strongly determined: she looks boyish, she doesn't wear dresses, her room isn't pink. In terms of Jo's sickness, the audience should get carried away with excitement and forget that she's sick. Once her sickness is established, all we showcase is Jo having fun. She wants to live her life and exit on her own terms. Jo's character can symbolise anyone you want, I give you the permission to take Jo out and replace her with whoever you want.

Originally Jo was supposed to be a boy!

Wainaina: I felt like I was locking down that character too much, and the moment we decided to make Jo a girl, our minds opened up. Sets had already been built, costumes had been bought, we already auditioned 200 boys, but all of a sudden we were rearranging the entire story, and everything fell into place. I was over excited, running around the office like an idiot, speaking with producers and scriptwriters, whom all said: "Why

didn't we think of this in the first place? It messes up all logistics... but it works!" So we urgently had to cast another 200 kids to find Jo.

And that's when you found Stycie Waweru?

Lakhani: Stycie is living a life that stands very close to what you see in the movie, as you can check on her YouTube channel. She's lively and enthusiastic. Stycie is very focussed in everything she does, she is very much there in the moment.

Wainaina: This is how we met: because we had little time to find the right girl, we booked two rooms for auditions, with a casting director in one room and me waiting in the next room for kids that he thought were special. One day, for three hours he didn't send a single kid. I went to check his room and found it empty. The casting director was gone, there was just one little girl sitting all by herself in a corner, swinging her feet in the air, looking like she was in her own world. I sat next to her on the floor, and we started talking. I asked her what was the last movie she watched, and she replied SOUL BOY, which happens to be a teenager movie from our One Fine Day project, tackling heavy issues. The moment she started telling me the story, my heart said: you're





the one! The casting director thought I had gone insane: *"There's plenty of other kids to audition."* - *"Okay, but I'm telling you: this will be my Jo."* And that's what happened.

Did she know it was going to be a tough job?

Wainaina: I was scared to tell her that Jo was going to die and avoided the subject. Until she came to me: *"I read in the script that Jo is very sick. Am I going to die?"* - *"Well... your character is going to die."* - *"Yes, but I am my character. Okay, I understand."* For five minutes she talked about death. I

told her: from now on I will forever be honest with you, the same way you're honest with me.

What will happen to her now?

Wainaina: Stycie is a star now. She got job offers, she's going to shoot another movie, she's big! For my next movie, I can't afford her anymore. In Kenya actors rarely start a career at such a young age, but Stycie is the exception, paving the path for other kids. Her acting coach Mugambi Nthiga and me are working with her dad now, making sure that she won't get lost in the system. We want her to make the right decisions.

The film was made within the One Fine Day programme, that offers training to African filmmakers. In cooperation with the Deutsche Welle Academy, an organisation for international media development.

Lakhani: Ten years ago Tom Tykwer and his wife Marie Steinmann had the idea to teach filmmaking... by making films. The basic idea was: having films made by African filmmakers with a few European people guiding them through the process. Meanwhile we've made six features, currently preparing the seventh one, all shot in Kenya.

Wainaina: One Fine Day educates and equips Kenyan filmmakers, so that they'll be able to generate their own movies. My friends and family told me I was crazy when I left a very well paid job to join One Fine Day, but for me there wasn't any doubt, I definitely wanted to do this. It opened so many doors for me.

Lakhani: If working strictly by the producer's codebook, a project like this could never happen. But my Kenyan co-producer Ginger Wilson always says: I'm only interested in making films that otherwise wouldn't be made. Being born to a German mother and a Kenyan-Indian father, I'm "an international co-production" myself.

That is what the One Fine Day titles have in common?

Lakhani: In terms of production there is a structure, set up by Ginger and me. We select the directors, actors, writers and also the partnerships to create a window for our movies. It's not only about offering a skill-set to the local industry, it's about building up a filmmakers community.

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Gert Hermans

[→ watch trailer](#)



Likarion Wainaina

LISTEN – Nominated for the first ECFA Short Film Award

On May 7th the first ECFA Short Film Award nomination was given out at the children & youth competition in the International Short Film Festival Oberhausen. And the winner is: LISTEN by Dutch director Astrid Bussink.



At the age of eight Astrid Bussink once called the number of the Kindertelefoon (the Dutch children's telephone helpline) with an agonising problem. That helpline offers children the possibility to talk about their issues while remaining anonymous. Bussink still remembers the good feeling of being taken seriously. Based on that experience she started to research, wondering if the helpline still existed and if children are still using it. Just like the children's telephone line, the film LISTEN takes children and their needs, fears and aspirations

absolutely serious and meets them as equals.

The phone calls we hear in the film are staged, but based on experiences of helpline volunteers and their callers. We get to listen to four very different sets of problems, offering young viewers various possibilities to empathise.

The fact that we can't see the protagonists could be considered an obstruction for our emotional involvement at first glance. But Bussink knows how to convert this obstacle: by combining the (re-enacted) telephone calls with different visual concepts, implemented with the help of children, LISTEN gains an experimental quality that is rarely to be seen in a young audience documentary.



The different styles are related to the actual visual habits of the target audience: subjective shots taken from a skateboard, plenty of mobile camera use, flashy scripture and commonplace photos with a Snapchat-kind of feel. But Bussink does not only respond to those habits, she also challenges them by intercutting the stories, letting the audience find its way through a labyrinth of voices and visual approaches.

Despite its heavy content, in times of fake news, international tensions and politic threats, the message of the film – listening is a virtue and communication can actually help – seems refreshingly positive.

LISTEN also received the IDFA Special Jury Award for Children's Documentary – a strong indication that young people are open to different kinds of viewing habits and a different narrative pace. LISTEN will also be in competition in the 20th Mo&Friese Children's Short Film Festival this June.

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



Nila Madhab Panda about HALKAA

“I spoke about smell and fragrance”

Some people divide humanity into ‘cat lovers and dog lovers’. Others see a decisive distinction between ‘vegetarians and meat eaters’. But for Pichku, living in a Delhi slum, the world is divided differently: between those who can poo in public and those who can’t. He himself simply isn’t able to find his relief (literally HALKAA) when others are watching. Despite the disdain of many, he finds out he’s not the only one facing that problem. HALKAA, by Indian director Nila Madhab Panda (I AM KALAM) could be a feast for all your senses: the eyes, the ears, but what about the nose?

HALKAA’s main subject is difficult to describe in one sentence without the use of bad language. Could you perhaps help me out?

Rima Nila Madhab Panda: It’s a film about shit.

Thank you, that was a big help! Is that how you introduced the project with actors and investors?

Panda: No, I spoke about smell and fragrance. Indian slums in general are known as dirty and the place where we

shot is probably the worst you’ve ever seen. Not a single child wants to live in shit. Our main character Pichku dreams of a simple thing: a 4 by 4 feet space where nobody sees him while defecating. And while nobody else can fulfil his dream, he himself will do that.

To make that film, you had to descend knee-deep in shit yourself.

Panda: This was the most difficult film I ever made. My biggest concern was to protect the children from health issues. Since they were not born in a slum, it’s even difficult for them to sustain one day. 90% of the crew fell sick, there was a massive food poisoning and all of us were living on antibiotics. More than food, we needed medicines. While shooting with kids in this dump yard we had an extra layer on our body, like a second skin, made out of mosquitos. I couldn’t see my skin anymore.

Personal hygiene is a constant issue throughout the film.

Panda: HALKAA fits indeed into a larger government campaign about toilet habits, washing hands etc. Hygiene is an



issue that India has been struggling with for decades. Since the new government came in power, in 2014, our prime minister is running the biggest campaign ever, called Swachhata Abhiyan, meaning ‘Mission Cleanliness’.

Could you describe the location of the story, with a skyline defined by train wires, garbage and fast growing skyscrapers?

Panda: It’s a slum right in the centre of Delhi. Amidst the buildings and metro and railway lines, lies this 50 years old

slum. In the middle of a modern city, we’ve forgotten about humanity. Only animals can poo anywhere, naked in front of others. We don’t know how to respect our resources and environment. Look at the monster we’ve created. When a city grows, innocence dies. It’s a mad rush for survival and it’s always the children suffering worst. As you can see in the film.

The place looks like a village in itself.

Panda: Workers have come from the



countryside to build this city. But how is it possible that someone who has lived in those beautiful Indian villages, and who has contributed to the development of modern architecture and technology, himself has to live in shit? Among the population of that slum in HALKAA, you might recognise people from South, North and East India, all communities coming together. An Indian audience will understand that this multicultural community represents our entire country.

What could influence society's general acceptance that lower classes should deal with the upper classes' shit?

Panda: Differences in caste and culture are diminishing due to the Indian government's big campaigning efforts on sanity and cleanliness. The kids in the film see each other differently: they look at each other as children, having fun when meeting together. There is no crisis, there is equality.

In one scene, kids from the garbage dump get basic education at the street corner.

Panda: There are no schools in the slums, but NGO's are running evening schools where children study all together.

I'm having difficulties understanding Pichku's relationship with his father. Can you put this character in the right perspective for a western audience?

Panda: The father comes from a poor background and the first priority for a poor man is to earn his livelihood. Although he loves his son, he reaches out to him with a basic idea: to get a better life, you have to work hard and do as I say. He doesn't realise times have changed: only education can offer a child a better future. The father represents the old mind-set: better to make children work instead of sending them to school.

In a few scenes in which the entire community gathers to have an open debate about the toilet problem, there is a sense of democratic decision making with a glimpse of corruption.

Panda: The government has offered people money to build toilets. Which they didn't do. A good idea failed because of corruption on both sides. But now the right people have come to make it happen. Sanity and cleanliness is no longer a logistical problem, it's an attitude problem. It has taken years for people to understand, but this is a change we see in India today.

What about this strange character of the medicine man? Why did you bring him into the story?



Panda: He is a doctor, claiming that he is able to cure people, who might blindly believe him. Whereas he himself knows where the problem comes from, he has no solution, clinging on to society's old mind-set.

The film is touring the festivals, already winning prizes, like 'the Grand Prix de Montreal' in FIFEM. What could be HALKAA's international impact?

Panda: I'm bringing something simple that people haven't seen yet regarding children's rights. While the world is going so fast, we should realise about simple, basic needs. HALKAA only sets one example. It could have been anything, it could have been sexuality, or nutrition, or obesity, but I decided to talk about this specific problem. I can only hope

that this type of children's cinema is effective not only in terms of entertainment, but also in making a child aware of its inner consciousness.

I wonder if there are any personal toilet experiences you want to share with us.

Panda: In the village where I grew up, the biggest problem to face with open defecation during the rainy season were the snakes. When you found yourself a secret place near the river for taking a dump, you never knew whether the water snakes would come and bite you. Luckily that never happened to me.

–
Gert Hermans

Documentaries for Kids by Harun Farocki

The doxs! festival 2017 offered a very special screening for its youngest audience: short documentary films by German avant-garde filmmaker and video artist Harun Farocki (1944-2014), primarily known for his political essay films. However, he also made several shorts for children, once screened in the context of DAS SANDMÄNNCHEN and the German version of SESAME STREET in the 1970s. Some of these were restored and shown at different locations during the festival.

Based on these films, the evolution of documentaries for children and youth over the past decades becomes apparent. In contrast to common formats like kids' portraits, Farocki shows the world in a creative, observational and dramatic way that is easily accessible for children. By depicting everyday processes and jobs – be it the use of tools (in HAMMER AND SAWS), the role that money plays in society (THE WAY OF MONEY) or the working routine in the harbour (DOCK) – the filmmaker ex-



BEDTIME STORIES © Harun Farocki 1977

plains complex procedures in an easy manner that is entertaining for children and adults alike. His two daughters starred in *BEDTIME STORIES*. What they tell each other exalts the imagination, but is at the same time related to activities that children in the audience themselves might be familiar with.

On average, the films aren't much longer than 4 minutes, but nonetheless stimulate the children's urge to talk about what they saw. After each screening there was a discussion with the young audience about what they recognised, but also about the differences to what

they are used to from watching TV today. It quickly became clear that the children did not necessarily experience Farocki's films as "old" or anachronistic. Apart from funny clothes and haircuts, they still felt extremely relatable and offered a different look on the world.

The screening at the doxs! festival 2017 has proved that the Farocki films clearly withstood the test of time. They are as relevant for small children as they were 40 years ago, and taking them out of the archive was a rightful tribute to the memory of Harun Farocki. The screenings took place in cooperation with the Harun Farocki Institute, the Harun Farocki GbR, the Grimme Institute, and the Goethe Institute, with the kind support of the NDR/Sesame Workshop.

doxs! festival 2018

This year, the doxs! film festival will take place from 5-11 November 2018 in Duisburg and other cities in the Ruhr area. In the context of an award presentation, the two prizes GROSSE KLAPPE and ECFA Documentary Award will be presented. The complete festival programme will be available from early September on the doxs!-homepage: www.do-xs.de/kino.html

HARUN FAROCKI PROGRAMME, Director: Harun Farocki; Production: Larabel Film Harun Farocki, Berlin-West / Harun Farocki Filmproduktion; Broadcaster: NDR

Contact: Harun Farocki GbR, Antje Ehmann: www.harunfarocki.de



DOCK © Harun Farocki 1977

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



Kendis about KENDIS

“I’m in pain, at every moment of the day”

While struggling with a nasty memory of an accident that nearly destroyed her life, 15-year-old Lavanya conquers the world as DJ Kendis. Dutch director Bibi Fadlalla made a documentary about her. After the screening at the JEF Festival (Antwerp), Kendis played a blasting DJ set.



After she was hit by a bus cycling home, for a long time Kendis didn't dare to leave the house and was fully committed to her old passion: music. The documentary KENDIS not only portrays a successful young DJ, but also a girl who suffers from a pain that puts her body permanently to the test. And a father who closely monitors his daughter's career.

DJ Kendis: I am an urban dance DJ. For

my family I am Lavanya, Kendis exists exclusively in the world of music. When my father and I were looking for a name, he woke me up in the middle of the night: what do you think of Kendis? I immediately fell in love with that name. It stands close to my roots: Kendis means ‚pure‘ in Sanskrit.

You refer to ‚the accident‘ as a turning point in your life?

Kendis: This traumatic event changed me completely. I didn't dare to go out anymore, I was afraid of everything and completely lost myself to the music. That made me stronger. My injuries meant the starting point for my career. Nevertheless I'm in pain, every moment of the day. Not only physical, but also mental. I have Post Traumatic Stress Disorder: I get flashbacks and nightmares and I'm permanently afraid.

You prefer not to talk about it. But in the film there were all these questions to answer.

Kendis: Bibi Fadlalla was a great director, she knew exactly how far she could go and she never exceeded that

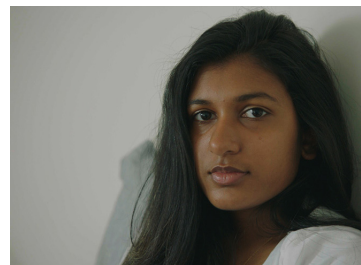
limit. That's why I love her so much. She has become part of the family and she is such a nice person to be with. I would never be as proud about the film if it was made by someone else. There must have been a storyboard somewhere, but I've never seen one. Although Bibi had a plan, everything seemed very spontaneous. Eric Raghoenandan: She has been with us for five days and there wasn't a single moment when her presence felt disturbing.

Although she makes clear how closely your father is involved in every decision?

Kendis: He is my manager, my anchor, my answer to all musical problems. But with personal problems I usually go to my mother. Raghoenandan: When Lavanya wanted to become a DJ, I stood behind her for the full 200%. Kendis has become a family business, for which I have to take decisions, even if I'm trying to take some distance and step back. But I'll continue to accompany her to her shows, because apart from a super DJ, Kendis is also our daughter.

Before every show you perform a family ritual together.

Raghoenandan: We thank the Lord that our little girl is giving us so much



pleasure and brings so much enrichment to our lives. Bibi liked that just as much about our family: we manage just fine by ourselves and we shy away from nothing. We do as we please.

What do you hope the audience will pick up from the film?

Kendis: That everything is possible as long as you believe in yourself. Even though I have had an accident, I make people dance, and that makes me happy. And I want to tell parents they should support their children in their true passion.

— Gert Hermans

→ watch trailer

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. Producers, distributors and sales agents are kindly invited to inform us of their new releases.

Amateurs

Feature Film, Sweden, 2018

Director: Gabriela Pichler
 Prod.: Garagefilm Int.
 World Sales: LevelK
 Phone: ++46 8 68 44 13 00
tine.klint@levelk.dk
www.levelk.dk

Capt'n Sharky

Animation, Germany, 2018

Director: Hubert Weiland
 Prod.: Caligari Filmproduction
 World Sales: Global Screen
 Phone: ++49 89 24 41 29 55 00
info@globalscreen.de
www.captn-sharky.com

Cornelius, the howling Miller

Feature Film, France, 2018

Director: Yann Le Quellec
 Production: Agat Films & Cie, Les Films de Mon Moulin, Ex Nihilo,...
 World Sales: Films Boutique
 Phone: ++49 30 69 53 78 50

info@filmsboutique.com
www.filmsboutique.com

The Curie Case



Feature Film, Bulgaria, 2018
 Director: Andrey Hadjivasilev
 Prod. & World Sales: Revive Vision
 Phone: ++359 88 87 36 822
andrey@revivevision.com
www.revivevision.com
www.thecuriecaser.com/en

Gaja's World

Feature Film, Slovenia, 2018
 Director: Peter Bratuša
 Prod.: Felina Films, RTV Slovenija
 World Sales: Felina Films
 Phone: ++386 41 68 80 28
nives@felinafilms.si
www.felinafilms.si

Grandpa more dangerous than computer

Feature Film, Latvia, 2017
 Director: Varis Brasla
 Prod. & World Sales: Studio F.O.R.M.A.
 Phone: ++371 73 13 105
s.forma@studioforma.lv

www.studioforma.lv/en



Grandpa more dangerous than computer

I am William

Feature Film, Denmark, 2017
 Director: Jonas Elmer
 Prod. & World Sales: Meta Film Rights
info@metafilm.dk
www.metafilm.dk

JimButton and Luke the engine driver



Feature Film, Germany, 2018
 Director: Dennis Gansel
 Production: Rat Pack, Warner Bros.,

Studio Babelsberg,..
 World Sales: Timeless Films
 Phone: ++44 14 94 67 07 05
info@timelessfilms.co.uk
www.timelessfilms.co.uk
 Festival screenings: Renate Zylla,
RZylla@arcor.de

Manou the Swift

Feature Film, Germany, 2018
 Directors: Christian Haas, Andrea Block
 Prod.: Luxx Film
 World Sales: Sola Media
 Phone: ++49 711 96 89 44 40
post@sola-media.com
www.sola-media.com

Money Problem

Feature Film, Sweden, 2017
 Director: Nikeisha Andersson
 Prod. & World Sales: FilmLance Int.
 Phone: ++46 8 45 97 380
filmlance@filmlance.se
www.filmlance.se

The Monkey and the Mouth

Docufiction, Norway, 2017
 Director: Thea Hwistendahl
 Prod.: Drama Einar
 World Sales: LevelK
 Phone: ++46 8 68 44 13 00
tine.klint@levelk.dk
www.levelk.dk



Never leave me



Feature Film, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Turkey, Serbia, 2017

Director: Aida Begic

Prod. & World Sales: Filmhouse

Sarajevo

Phone: ++387 33 20 05 42

info@filmhouse.ba

www.filmhouse.ba

www.birakmabenifilm.com

Operation Shadowman

Feature Film, Norway, 2018

Director: Grethe Bøe-Waal

Prod.: Filmkameratene

World Sales: Svensk Filmindustri

Phone: ++46 8 68 03 500

international@sf.se

www.sfindernational.se

Paradise '89

Feature Film, Latvia, 2018

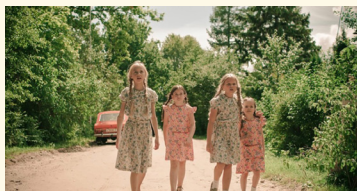
Director: Madara Dišlere

Prod. & World Sales: Tasse Film

Phone: ++371 26 15 63 56

reinis@tasse.lv

www.tasse.lv/en/works/films/released/get/nid/5



Paradise '89

Ploey - You never fly alone

Animation, Iceland, Belgium, 2018

Directors: Gunnar Karlsson & Arni Asgeirsson

Asgeirsson

Prod.: GunHil Ltd., Cyborn

World Sales: ARRI Media Int.

Phone: ++49 89 38 09 12 88

aexacoustos@arri.de

www.arri.de/international

Rosie & Moussa



Feature Film, Belgium, 2018

Director: Dorothee van den Bergh

Prod.: Caviar

World Sales: Attraction Distribution

Phone: ++1 514 846 12 22

info@attractiondistribution.ca

www.attractiondistribution.ca

Thick Lashes of Lauri Mäntyvaara

Feature Film, Finland, 2017

Director: Hannaleena Hauru

Prod.: ElokuvaYhtiö Oy AAMU

World Sales: Premium Films

Phone: ++33 1 42 77 06 31

contact@premium-films.com

www.premium-films.com

www.lmtr.fi

Vitello

Animation, Denmark, 2018

Director: Dorte Bengtson

Prod.: Ja Film

World Sales: TrustNordisk Film Int.

Sales

Phone: ++45 36 86 87 88

info@trustnordisk.com

www.trustnordisk.com

The War Game



Feature Film, Sweden, 2017

Director: Goran Kapetanović

Prod.: CB Sverige, Copenhagen

Bombay

World Sales: Copenhagen Bombay

Phone: ++ 45 72 42 08 00

info@copenhagenbombay.com

www.copenhagenbombay.com

The Witch Hunters

Feature Film, Serbia, Macedonia, 2018

Director: Rasko Miljkovic

Prod.: Akcija produkcija, Dream Factory

This and That

World Sales: Akcija produkcija

jovanakaraulic@gmail.com

Zooks



Animation, Belgium, 2017

Directors: Kristoff Leue, Dimitri Leue

Prod. & World Sales: Potemkino

lize@potemkino.com

www.potemkino.com

www.zooks.be

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

www.ecfaweb.org/european-child-rens-film-network/feature-films

Sandra Vannucchi about GIRL IN FLIGHT - LA FUGA

“An act of rebellion, a grand gesture...”

Nominated for the EFA Award 2018, [GIRL IN FLIGHT](#) is an independent low budget feature by Italian director and writer Sandra Vannucchi, produced by co-writer Michael King (USA). Shot in Tuscany and Rome with non-professional gypsy actors and Italian professionals, Vannucchi's first feature tells about the friendship between 11 year old Silvia from Tuscany and the 13 year old Roma girl Emina. Silvia ran away from home, after her family trip to Rome was cancelled, due to her mother's clinical depression. Now she sets out to see the city, spending the night in a gypsy camp. This impressive coming of age story, telling about various aspects of depression and about the situation of Roma people in Italy, was inspired by real events from Sandra Vannucchi's childhood.

Sandra Vannucchi: This is a very personal story, partly based on events that I actually lived through. My mother suffered from clinical depression

and was hospitalised at various times during my childhood. It was all very confusing: as long as she was healthy, she was a warm and loving mother, but then suddenly she would become ill, not willing to deal with anything or to even get out of bed. Therapeutic treatments were tried out on her continuously. Sometimes when she took care of the family, still she wasn't 'quite there' as the medications had such a strong effect on her. As a child I had many conflicting feelings about my mother, and most importantly, I was never sure how she felt about me. Her illness did put an enormous pressure on the entire family, particularly on my 'old school' father, a man with very clear ideas on how things should be done. My father and I often got into big conflicts, as in the end, we both had very similar, stubborn and determined characters.

That was a reason for running away from home?

Vannucchi: I wanted to see Rome so



badly. One day when, again, my parents wouldn't commit to go there I took a train from my small Tuscan town and made it to Rome by myself. I wasn't really thinking, I just did it. I was so determined to have a 'normal' childhood and do what other kids did. It was an act of rebellion, a grand gesture but different from the film, in real life my aunt and uncle were waiting for me the moment I got off the train in Rome. Somehow my father had figured out what I was up to and immediately phoned them. To my great embarrassment — because I had met a friend on the train and told him how I was going to visit Rome all by myself — I got busted right away.

Were you able to keep a certain distance to such a personal story?

Vannucchi: That was a necessary defence mechanism, protecting myself from painful feelings. Sometimes, when recording family scenes, memories got quite overwhelming. Donatella Finocchiaro and Filippo Nigro, playing the mother and father, were such amazing actors they made me feel like reliving my childhood. A strange and intense feeling.

How did you find both young actors?

Vannucchi: To find our protagonist Silvia, casting director Cristina Raffaelli and me saw about 400 young girls in open auditions. We came across many



amazing young actresses, but Lisa Ruth Andreozzi always stood out. She had been acting since she was four years old and she has an interesting charisma, a strength that radiates on screen. With extreme dedication, she proved herself able to carry the entire movie.



Finding Emina was a different process: she didn't come to us, we came to find her. I wanted to shoot in a gypsy settlement in Rome, so while spotting locations, we were also on the lookout for the cast. One night we went to visit a family in one of the camps, and I remember the intense look of a young girl across the room. She didn't speak much that night, but I couldn't forget those eyes and the intensity of her gaze. I realised immediately she could be the one. When we had auditions in that camp, she came and luckily agreed on playing the part.

Was it difficult to win the confidence of the Roma community?

Vannucchi: Everyone was always

open and friendly, but we never approached anyone without being introduced. We were lucky to have the well-known charity organisation Sant'Egidio at our side with a contact person guiding us around. That made a big difference. I was extremely keen on learning as much as possible about their lives, so I tried to spend as much time as possible with them without being intrusive, whenever they offered us hospitality inside their homes. After filming in the camp, I could sense a feeling of true affection for the people living there and vice versa, helping out each other in a spirit of playfulness, friendliness, and professionalism.

How is the situation for Roma people in Italy?

Vannucchi: Very difficult in general. There is still an incredible amount of racism and prejudices, and a lot of misinformation. Most critically, there is only few interactions between the Roma and other Italians, despite the fact that half of the Roma here are Italian citizens themselves. On one hand many Italians don't want to get in touch with Roma, on the other hand Roma in general are extremely protective about their culture. Hopefully our film and its introduction into a culture can open a few minds.



What about that title?

Vannucchi: The full title is GIRL IN FLIGHT - LA FUGA, with 'la fuga' referring to the 'mini-escape' on a trip to Rome, but also a greater escape from the overall family situation. Only now, looking back upon my childhood experience, I can define my adventure as some sort of general escape. 'Girl in Flight' refers not only to the act of running away, but also to Silvia beginning to take off and metaphorically fly. Through this moment of rebellion Silvia has begun to define herself outside of her family, a first step to take life in her own hands. I very much

wanted the story of Emina and Silvia to develop in parallel directions, strongly interconnected, as both girls have issues with their mothers for different reasons.

By choosing those two protagonists, did you strive for a particular perspective?

Vannucchi: From a young girl's point of view I want to explore the subject of depression, which is still taboo today, and through that same unfiltered lens I want to show parts of Roma culture. I hope the film will remind parents not to be self-absorbed and



When the other one said: "That girl didn't say a word – does she have an attitude or what? How many days do we have to spend together? Naturally, that made me feel rather concerned, because if the girls couldn't come across as natural friends, the entire film would fall apart. The most satisfying aspect of the filming was probably the moment, after rehearsals,



to make sure they communicate with their children, even in difficult times. I hope people will learn to look at marginalised groups the same way as Silvia looks at Emina - without prejudice or fear. Meanwhile I have attended several festival screenings, like in BUFF Malmö, and the audience reactions were stupendous. Both kids and adults seem to feel emotionally engaged with the film and their questions often refer to exactly those themes.

What were the biggest challenges in making your first feature?

Vannucchi: We had a small budget and a limited shooting schedule (21 days). I found it most difficult to shoot quickly, unlearning to be a perfectionist who always asks for more. Otherwise we would never have been able to finish the entire film. This was

all our budget permitted. It was hard anyway, trying to find a line producer in Rome who could make the film happen on such limited resources. Directing young actors was another challenge at times, although I totally enjoyed every minute of it. They are fresh and truthful, and just witnessing their honesty gave me a lot of creative inspiration. There were also practical difficulties, for instance when we lost one of our main locations (Silvia's house) the night before filming, so I had to scout locations at 10 pm to instantly pick a new one (that actually worked even better than the original one). We lost time to the rain (it rained for three days continuously) and to other small disasters, like a wasp's nest that was found in our camper.

There must have been more satisfying moments on the set as well.

Vannucchi: After I introduced the two young actresses to each other, both of them came to me separately to speak out their doubts about one another. One said: "That girl talks too much," while the other one said: "That girl didn't say a word – does she have an attitude or what? How many days do we have to spend together? Naturally, that made me feel rather concerned, because if the girls couldn't come across as natural friends, the entire film would fall apart. The most satisfying aspect of the filming was probably the moment, after rehearsals,



when they both started working together, making that connection. That was a huge relief! (Meanwhile they've somehow lost touch with each other, but perhaps we'll get them together again soon, when the film will enter the Italian theatres). The same can be



said about the mother and father characters, it was lovely to see how well they worked together. Shooting in a gypsy settlement was also exciting, even though we had little time. There was a wonderful, stimulating energy there that helped me finding ways to get the job done.

How did you come up with the name for your and Michael King's production company [Perchenofilms](#)?

Vannucchi: The name comes partly from a phrase, often attributed to Robert F. Kennedy: "There are those that look at things the way they are, and ask why? I dream of things that never were, and ask why not?"

–
Uta Beth

→ watch trailer

Films in Hospitals

Imagine all children having access to quality films. Even those who are physically unable to go to cinemas or participate in festivals. What about children who are sick and in and out hospitals or revalidation centres? In the Hospital Film Project, supported by Creative Europe, several members of ECFA are using the web to reach out to those children.

In 2011 the project was launched by the European Youth Film Festival (Antwerp), with the help of [Bednet](#), an organisation facilitating online streaming from the classroom to sick children at home or in hospitals. During the festival, all short films in competition and some feature films were screened. Each film came with an introduction clip, made by former children's jury members, to carry out the overall 'festival atmosphere'. Children could log in on the festival website to watch those films and even vote online for the Film Fun in Bed 'Best Short Film Award'. Coordinator Iris Verhoeven: "We focussed on

a qualitative approach rather than on obtaining a quantitative goal. Cooperating with several hospitals we reached out to as many children as possible. Later we expanded the project with an online film lab."

New partners, extra content

After several successful editions there was an urge to expand the project and connect with other European partners. The call for Promotion of European Works Online, launched by the European Commission, was the moment for teaming up with new partners Kids meet Art (Croatia) and BUFF (Sweden). An international platform was created, dedicated to film

screenings and audience engagement for children in hospitals, with different sections for different age groups: for young patients 3+, 6+, 9+ and 12+, for parents of patients and hospital staff.

Verhoeven: "Together we enlarged the available film database to 12 features (3 for each age group) and 30 short films, year round available with high-lights during the festival periods. We stimulated interactivity by creating the option to review films, share images and stories and by including poll options. Clips and reports are added during festivals to make the experience even more exclusive. An extra platform is integrated for children to provide ex-

tra content, for instance tutorials on filmmaking techniques and apps that should motivate them to start experimenting themselves."

The future

Other European festivals are welcome to join the Hospital Film Project and create a wider European platform, through which even more young people can be reached in their specific situation. Verhoeven: "This online project is worldwide by nature. With a code for Wordpress and Vimeo available, the only thing that new partners should do, is to implement their own profile and graphic design."

Co-funded by the European Union  Creative Europe MEDIA

For more information: contact laura@jeugdofilm.be.

Laura De Bruyn



J'E.F.



Dorothee van den Berghe about ROSIE & MOUSSA

“Blocks from a block box”

Moving with her mother to an apartment on the other side of town, Rosie meets the new neighbour boy Moussa, who tows her around the neighbourhood. They even climb all the way up to the roof of the building and partner up looking for Rosie’s dad, who hasn’t come home for a while. Although set in the big city the Brussels quarter looks like a village in itself.

Dorothee van den Berghe: We wanted to limit the world of Rosie and Moussa to one block. First there is the tunnel, an element of beauty amidst a desolate quarter, and next to it are the high-rises where they both live and from where you can see the trains going. The entire world brought together around one small square. The only time when Rosie and Moussa leave the neighbourhood, they take a tram, and it feels like a huge journey.

That’s their biotope.

van den Berghe: During a casting session, I asked children from the

suburbs to describe how they saw their neighbourhood. Imad Borji, who plays Moussa and lives in the suburb in Molenbeek where the film was actually shot, saw enormous beauty in the place where he grew up. That’s what I wanted in the film: the vision of a child who doesn’t focus on problematic aspects, like adults do, but believes in the place’s positive charm. I discovered much more social cohesion in those neighbourhoods than I could ever expect.

You depict those large high-rises beautifully as massive geometric figures.

van den Berghe: I wanted to work with only a few available element that I could refine to the fullest. Like a child playing with blocks from a block box, the tunnel and the high-rises were the objects from my box that I could use in a figurative sense.

With coloured figures and stripes sliding over them.

van den Berghe: At first glance, I



found that neighbourhood looking very grim. We needed to add something picturesque to that grayness, a link between the suburb’s rough neorealism and its zany, eccentric inhabitants. *Risograph printing* is a technique, similar to a stencil machine, that works with different layers of colour. We printed and edited all sorts of figures on paper and added an element of movement via layers of colour, trying to convert an analogue process into film in a way that was playful but not childish.

Through that landscape, trains are

running that are more than ‘just trains’.

van den Berghe: Those trains are a proof that you can escape from the oppression of that neighbourhood - you just get on board and there you go.

Also the music fits into that urban scenery.

van den Berghe: During the casting we realised that rap music is extremely important for boys from Molenbeek. Imad made some home recordings, but his style of rapping was rather intense and aggressive. We selected



some themes and quotes from him, which we presented to Le Motel, a trendy rap musician in the Brussels scene. His music is playful, urban and cinematic at the same time, with many layers of sound one above to other.

In those high-rises, every apartment is a world of its own. How did you visualise all those worlds?

van den Berghe: That was the most fun part of the film! I would have loved to put a camera in front of an open building – no façade – capturing the lives inside every apartment, like a dollhouse. We emphasised the contrast between Rosie's bare apartment and the hubbub and commotion at Moussa's crowded home.



The roof was another remarkable location. How was it to shoot there, logistically?

van den Berghe: Hell! Filming on a roof with children is a bad idea in the first place. Everyone was secured with cables but still I was all the time scree-

ming: "Watch out!" Struggling with my fear of heights, it was absolute horror for me. But equally fantastic: the view was relaxing, it felt like a day at the beach with the crew. Until Rosie and Moussa had to lie on the edge of the roof for one scene. Not my favourite shot!

Tell us about Moussa's cat Titus... what a fantastic specimen!

van den Berghe: I was looking for a special cat and this one had a flat snout, as if she had ran into a door. She was unmanageable, especially when going up on the roof on a leash. But she also brought the young actors closer together. Savannah and Imad didn't have much in common in terms of background, but the animal sucked them in and brought them together. Just like in the movie.

Rosie is childish and mature at the same time, Moussa is as self-confident as he is vulnerable. You can't accuse your characters of being one-dimensional.

van den Berghe: At that age they are at a turning point: small and big at the same time. In the audition I felt that cool Imad still has a very childish fantasy, which makes him credible for cuddling a cat or dreaming to become a train engineer. A director can't force



that - you have to be patient in the casting and wait for the right boy to come along.

It is quite a challenge to outline the complex relationship between Rosie and her father.

van den Berghe: In her uncertainty, Rosie's feelings jump in all directions, from one extreme to the other. But as soon as they meet, you can feel that strong bond between them: they share the same humour, the same fantasy... We have recorded different versions of the end and doubted which one to choose: a version in which father leaves for going abroad, and a version in which he stays. Children nowadays grow up more often with an absent father and we don't have to cover that up. We opted for an end in which Rosie's imagination and the harsh reality gently grind along each other.

Throughout the process children had a big impact on the final result. They've chosen the poster...

van den Berghe: It was also my first choice, and it reassured me that children chose exactly the same.

... and the young actors left their mark on the story.

van den Berghe: Especially Imad. Working in Molenbeek wasn't easy, and he was often the link between the crew and the local neighbourhood. He knew everyone there and often was our first mediator.

Also Savannah had a special bond with the film, through her mother.

van den Berghe: Her mother Charlotte played the main character in my feature debut MEISJE in 2002. When she brought her daughter to the audition, I was catapulted back in time. On the set that felt weird and sometimes confusing.

—
Gert Hermans

→ watch trailer

Mauro D'Addio about ON WHEELS

“Love stories do not necessarily have to be big”

Since an accident made him wheelchair bound, Lucas has turned introverted and insecure. Lais is completely the opposite: exuberant, straightforward, and headstrong. She lives with her mother and grandmother and has no idea who could be her father. With no more than a photograph of his truck in her pocket, she sets out on a quest, convincing Lucas to join her.



In this warm road movie two young teenagers, searching for their place under the sun, drive over sandy pathways through a mesmerising landscape that makes them feel both free and small.

Mauro D'Addio: We shot ON WHEELS in Monte Alegre, 2,5 hours driving from São Paulo, in the countryside. As a filmmaker you have to connect with places and people. In that sense, this

rural location was very important for lending the film the right vibe.

You picture life in a small town where everyone knows each other and people dance together in the street. Do such places still exist?

D'Addio: Coming from São Paulo, I'm always impressed when visiting my family in one of those towns, that seem to have got lost in the track of time. It's like visiting the past. I tried to transmit that feeling onto the screen. Although the story is taking place today, it has a certain nostalgic tone. In my films I like to play around with the perception of time.

It's not the first time for Latin-American films to deal with the topic of a biological father gone missing.

D'Addio: Demographically the absence of fathers is a big problem in Brazil and other Latin-American countries, due to this old-school male mind-set: I can go everywhere, make children and then leave, and it's not my problem. The data are truly shocking; 5,5 million Brazilian kids don't have their father's name on their birth certifica-



te (2013), and in 11,6 million Brazilian families children are raised by a single mum (2015). In Brazilian screenings I received a lot of feedback on this topic. Even girls coming to the auditions often felt personally touched. I wrote the film the year my mother died. The only solution to a pain that you can't cure is: being resilient, finding a way to keep going.

ON WHEELS brings generations together: three women living in the same house, lending the film a strong feminine power.

D'Addio: A grandmother, a mother and a daughter, three generations of women taking care of each other. They can handle everything. It's not exceptional for women in Latin-America to live together like this. Lais' mother has a tough life and there's always this big, unsolved case pen-

ding between them. Therefore Lais connects more smoothly with her grandmother. All of them are strong characters, and I'm trying to convince the girls in the audience: you can do it, even if there is no male role-model around, still you can live your life and travel your own journey. Lais and her grandmother also have a love story in common - love stories do not necessarily have to be big, it's something that can happen to everybody.

Your other protagonist rides a wheelchair. Does he react only with anger and frustration, or is there more to it?

D'Addio: Although Lucas has a problem that he can not solve, he should find a way to enjoy life. Don't let your limitations hold you back. The problem was that for his character I didn't have a proper ending. That's why I



came up with a dream scene, as a solution to keep the opportunity of 'moving' open. Uruguayan writer Eduardo Galeano and Argentinean filmmaker Fernando Birri, whom I both admire, used to say about Utopia: we have to keep dreaming, because that is what keeps us moving.



Lais tells him: you're more than just a wheelchair.

D'Addio: That sentence comes from my personal experience. During a hard period in my life, I was sick for a long time. By that time I was falling in love. The girl – who meanwhile has become my wife – said to me: to me you're not just your disease. I've never forgotten those words and now I'm using them in a film to express the true affection that people can offer.

Together they're an odd couple. The energy that sizzles between them, was it hard work or was it all in the casting?

D'Addio: We auditioned many children, and chemistry was the crucial element. Among the crew we had

many discussions whether it could work between these two or not. We were sure about him, but with the girl there wasn't a natural chemistry. During rehearsals, they worked on it. From the first moment I wanted Lais to take the leading position - she's the one bringing things in motion. And in a symbolical way, she is also bringing the movement back to Lucas.

Like in that beautiful scene when they share earphones to listen to a song.

D'Addio: When I was their age having a night out was really special. I remember one night with all our friends together in the countryside, sleeping under the stars, and it was a very special moment for us. It felt like the biggest time of our life.

I really appreciated the little sparkles of humour that you added to the story, like the dog on the sidewalk, or my personal favourite: the silly police officer.

D'Addio: I'm glad you said that. I'm the actor playing that role. Didn't you notice?

No!?! He was my favourite character, acting so calm and easy-going.

D'Addio: In terms of police work, this guy is all wrong: he should take action to find those missing teenagers. But



that's the vibe you get in these small towns: nothing bad happens here, so sit back and relax. Just like that sort of witch they meet, who is inspired by Hansel and Gretel. That's the kind of sad and lonely woman you could actually meet in those places.

One technical thing: You seem to be really happy about the invention of drones. What would you have done without them?

D'Addio: I'm not a big fan of drones, but those shots represent the element of flying, which is strongly connected with travelling. To emphasise that, I might have included a few more drone shots than originally intended. Our budget was extremely small and I had only two days to re-

cord all the scenes 'on the road': one day with camera cars and one day with a limited crew: three people and a drone. I had to work with the tools I had. Those images also reach out to THE STRAIGHT STORY, a film that was a big inspiration for me. The boy in ON WHEELS wears the same kind of shirt like the old man in David Lynch's film. Cinema is constructed of little details that nobody really cares about, but all together, that's a film.

–
Gert Hermans

→ watch trailer

KARAKUM – THE DIRECTOR’S CUT

In 1994 renowned children’s film director Arend Agthe premiered at the Berlinale with a film that should become the highlight of his career. KARAKUM tells an exciting story about the German boy Robert, flying to Turkmenistan to visit his father, who is stationed in the Karakum desert as an oil engineer. He is picked up from the airport by Pjotr, a truck driver, and his nephew Murad. But in the middle of the desert, disaster strikes: the truck comes to a standstill, and when Pjotr doesn’t return from his search for help, the two boys – who do not even speak each other’s language – set out on a journey through the burning sand, with nothing in common but their sense for adventure and an ingenious vehicle that they construct together.

Now, more than 20 years later, KARAKUM is back in a digitally remastered director’s cut, that includes a digital makeover, a new sound mix and a slightly adapted narrative paste.

Arend Agthe: In terms of logistics, KARAKUM was the hardest film I ever made. The entire production was haunted by bad luck. Co-pro-

ducer Turkmen Film from Ashgabat brought in 5,000,000 Roubles, which by that time was the budget for an entire feature film in the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics. One year later, when Turkmenistan had stepped out of the Union, the Rouble had devalued by 2000%. What once seemed a treasure box, now appeared to be an empty wallet. We found out about it only when arriving in Turkmenistan, with 35 German crew members in the desert. Luckily our production manager Dietrich Voigtlaender was ready to improvise. He asked a local oil company for helicopters and paid them with TV sets – *“We’ll bring you the latest Sony sets, what can you offer in return?”* There was no telephone, only fax, but still he was able to manage. Then we needed trucks to drive us to the set. At that moment the Russian army was withdrawing from Turkmenistan. One commander who offered us vehicles, was also paid in TV sets.

You were strongly depending upon the flexibility of your crew.

Agthe: We had the crew waiting at the spot for more than two weeks, getting paid, while me and set designer Ulrich Bergfelder tried to get things organised. Being a Werner Herzog



veteran, he would always manage somehow. The intentional idea was to shoot in September, because in summer, with temperatures over 55°C, it was impossible to work in the desert. But by the time we finally got started, it was almost October and temperatures at night dropped under zero degrees. When our young Turkmen actor Murad Orazov fell sick, we decided to go back home and wait until the next year to complete the shooting.

A confusing time table!

Agthe: All our money was spent already, but I wanted to make sure all the work we had done was not in vain. I edited all the footage we had and presented a rough-cut to German experts and funders. The first one to bite was Dieter Kosslick, back then working for the *“Filmstiftung”* in North

Rhine-Westphalia. Finally we collected the money to go back in spring and shoot all the missing footage in ten days.

Finally there was a film.

Agthe: But still the Odyssey continued. Right after the premiere, our distribution company Connexion Film was planning a release of 70 film copies. One week later Connexion was bankrupt (due to some risky Hollywood investment), and all copies disappeared into the archives. Later Basis Film Distribution, Berlin, gave it another try, but they didn’t have the resources to make it a strong release. I always dreamed of giving this film a fair chance and release it again in Germany. KARAKUM wasn’t even released on DVD, although everyone who





saw the film told me it was maybe my best work. And that's how I think about it too.

Despite all the challenges on the set: the heat, the cold, the sand...

Agthe: Temperatures were not too bad. We worked all day, even the Turkmen crew. But the biggest problem was the sand: with 32 people on the set, nobody realises about the footprints they make in the sand. Which was often problematic for our next take. When two people walk up a sand dune, the entire landscape is 'destroyed' for filming. That's why we had a small helicopter stand by, to swirl up the sand and give it a 'clean look' all the time. And it was a long way to get to the set: we had to ship our material from Hamburg to Saint Petersburg and then drive our trucks more than 2000 kilometres down South, until there were no more roads left, only tracks in the sand.

What happened to the two young actors, Max Kullmann and Murad Orazov?

Agthe: Max became a photographer, working for the Berlinale's Generation, doing a great job. Keeping track of Murad is more complicated. In the nineties, the situation in Turkmenistan became very unstable, until dictator Saparmurat Niazov closed the country more or less to the outside world. There is no way we could pick up Murad's trace again. I wrote the script together with Uzmaan Saparov, now living in Moscow, but he still has contacts back home in Turkmenistan. He is trying to find out about Murad's whereabouts. Everybody is on the lookout for him.



Has time maybe added a new dimension to the film's story?

Agthe: My wife works as a psychoanalyst in refugee centres and she showed KARAKUM to refugees from Syria, Lebanon etc. who immediately understood what the story was about.

Days after the screening, they were still talking about the film and were acting some of the scenes and dialogues.

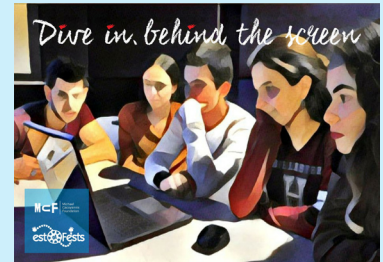
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Gert Hermans

More info on KARAKUM – THE DIRECTOR'S CUT: MFA+ Film Distribution, info@mfa-film.de.

→ watch trailer

FEST OF FESTS Project Platform about to be launched

"Screenwiser" is a fourth generation platform, designed and developed to serve the needs of a community of practice by enabling communication, exchange of experience, online cooperation and synergies, crowdsourcing of ideas, data mining for research projects etc.



"Screenwiser" will focus on active viewership and the development of audience-centric initiatives for the younger audiences. The younger generation being already active in a digitally interconnected world, is better suited for researching, testing and adjusting interactive, web-based ways of non-formal training and access to multi-layered information on film and visual culture.

The platform will be presented at the **Fest of Fests** launching forum in Athens, on June 25-28th.

Stay tuned: <http://screenwiser.com>
All info on www.mcf.gr



ECFA Journal

Published by ECFA

European Children's Film Association

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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 (€ 250 per year):

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ECFA Journal No. 2- 2018

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