

FEST Forward, Project book

National Selection



A Man sings after the War

Documentary

WRITER AND DIRECTOR

Ana Otašević

PRODUCER

Srđan Šarenac

PRODUCTION COMPANY

DarMar films

APPROX. BUDGET OF THE FILM

199.637,00 EUR

FINANCING IN PLACE

56.637,00 EUR

CONTACT

Dar Mar films

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Synopsis

Diala, Ali and Goran are hunted by the images of the war. Three artists from three different parts of the world, Serbia, Iraq and Syria, are facing their traumas through art.

Diala draws for children. In Syria drawing was her way of resistance. She found refuge in France where she continues her work. She smiles on photos, but at night she can't sleep, why pencil and paper are never far. She is on her way to Beirut to meet teenage girls from Syrian refugee camps hoping to offer them relief through art.

Ali is living in the rhythm of bomb attacks that are shaping lives of citizens of Baghdad for years. He is working on a choreography inspired by the attack in which he lost members of his family. Each actor on stage has a near dead experience.

Goran developed his technique of automatic drawing during bombing in 1999, while he was hiding in a cellar in Kosovo. The art is a therapy for him. He is applying it in his work with patients in the psychiatric hospital in Belgrade. He is preparing a performance in an attempt to break from the war memories that never leave him.

Director's statement

In March 1999 I was in my hometown of Belgrade when the bombing of the country started. I was 27 and I didn't know how the war is going to profoundly change my life. Two years later, I went to France and my life got a different turn. The memory of the bombing was fading. Now and then the sound of the air raid sirens during routine tests would fill me up with anxiety. A glance at the passer by, a woman in the cafe or children playing in the park would get a different meaning. Who am I and where do I come from so many times I had to answer these questions to authorities applying for residence papers, to new friends and colleagues. At some point I have stopped being satisfied with my answers and started asking myself the very same questions. It took me a long time to understand that the experience of war is deeply engraved in me. I became interested in many layers of this experience. The idea for the film came from the research of Nina Mihaljinac, a young art historian who studied some 160 artists from Serbia whose work was directly or indirectly inspired by the war in 1999. Going through the drawings, photos and video work from that period I was trying to imagine the circumstances in which they were created and wondered why these works have been forgotten. The idea for the film was born out of desire to explore different experiences of war through the artists' eyes. A man sings after the war follows artists originated from three countries - Diala Brisly from Syria Ali Daim from Iraq and Goran Stojčević is from Serbia. They use their experience of war in their art.

The protagonists experienced the trauma of war directly. The characters are imposing the director's choices. The camera follows the process of creation, it is an observer of their internal conflicts. The power of their visual and body expression turns their experience into a collective act which has a healing function, whether it is Goran's work with patients in Military hospital in Belgrade, Ali's interaction with actors or Diala's work with children in refugee camps. The camera is there to witness their exchange; the dialogue is caught up as it flows, without explanation. Words are indicating the meaning that is gradually being revealed. Hand held camera is going to be used to approach the protagonists, close ups are there to capture their intimate world and long shots to show the chaotic structure of the places where they live and work Baghdad, Saint Denis or Belgrade (usage of drones is considered as well). The structure of the documentary is developing in the process of seeking of intersections of artists' different experiences of the war. This means a long process of preparation in order to craft carefully the structure of the film. The drawing, which is the form of expression of two of the protagonists, is one of the elements of the film. It reflects their inner world and their past experience. The intention is to use the animation sporadically in order to intensify this experience. The sound will have an important place in the film as a way to reflect the inner experience of the war. Whether it is the sound of missiles evoking fear and distress or musical and environmental sounds related to the time of war, it is one of the main ingredients in this documentary. The sound is one of the components that are linking the three stories. Cooperation with the Czech composer Vladimir Chaba, with whom I worked in the previous documentary, is considered in this regard.

Biography director

Ana Otašević is director, scriptwriter, producer and journalist. She worked for 15 years as a correspondent in France for Serbian and international media. She has been collaborating with French TV stations, as well as with German and Japanese broadcasters.

She studied directing, scriptwriting and producing of documentaries at Paris 1 Sorbonne

with producers and directors Serge Lalou and Virginie Guibbaud from Les Films d'ici. Nicolas Philibert and Claire Simon were among contributors during her studies. She made short films before authoring her first long documentary, *Nedjo's house*, a story of a Roma from Kosovo in the aftermath of the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia. The film has been screened at festivals in Serbia, Greece and Paris and broadcasted on TV. *A man sings after the war* is her second documentary.

Biography producer

Srđan Šarenac is an award winning film director, screenwriter and producer with many years of experience in Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia, Netherlands, France. In 2003, he wrote and directed *Poklon za Sanju* (A Present For Sanja), which was selected for 10 international film festivals and broadcasted on national television. In 2004 he directed the documentary series *How was made Top lists of Surrealists*, which had its premiere on a prime time show for New Year's Eve 2004 and was the most watched documentary series in Bosnia in 2004. In 2005 he directed the documentary *Selma – the best ballad* written by Goran Bregović – that received a public award for Best Movie shown out of official selection at the Documentary and Short Croatian Film Festival, in Zagreb. Srđan started to develop his first feature, *Spaseni (The Rescued)* at the Binger FilmLab in Amsterdam for which he won «la Bourse d'Aide au Développement at 28th Festival Cinéma Méditerranéen Montpellier 2006. Srđan coproduced short fiction *I do not dream in German* by Ivana Lalović premiered in Corto Cortissimo section of 65th Venice film festival, Italia. In 2010 he directed a feature documentary *Village Without Women* that had a world premiere at IDFA. It was later screened on 80 film festivals winning 14 awards. In 2016 Srdjan coproduced *The Road Movie*, the movie had a world premiere at IDFA.

Company profile

DarMar films is young production house founded by Ana Otašević. She developed more personal approach after studing directing, scriptwriting and production at Paris 1 Sorbonne. The main goal of DarMar films is to develop an authors' approach to documentary filmmaking in the best tradition of European documentary school. DarMar is putting a great emphasis to cooperation with European producers and directors.

Blame on me

Na mene

Fiction

WRITER AND DIRECTOR

Ivan Stojiljković

PRODUCER

Marija Stojanović

PRODUCTION COMPANY

SENSE Production

APPROX. BUDGET OF THE FILM

653.100,00 EUR

FINANCING IN PLACE

63.600,00 EUR

CONTACT

SENSE Production

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Synopsis

OLJA (41), single mom, who brings up her three sons in a small Serbian provincial town, is forced to sell her apartment - her only valuable property, in order to pay back the over the years accumulated debts. Despite being in what is possibly the most complicated and desperate situation in her life so far, she decides once more to go her old ways - to improvise and impulsively lie to her sons about the situation they are in, thanks to her own mistakes and bad choices. Her liveliness, more often than not, turns into pervasive anxiety and frequently causes a chain of inexplicable and intense events - and she had been behaving in that manner her whole life - from falling in love with, marrying and divorcing her husband, to constantly improvising with money. So, unchanged, Olja once more tells her sons that everything will be fine, and takes them to a long planned road trip to her hometown, another small Serbian provincial town to attend together the wedding of her brother's daughter, having in mind a plan to settle there for a while.

Director's statement

Having been banished from home by executors while being a kid with a single mother and my younger sister, I feel a strong need to tell the story of those who are forced to live life from one day to the other. No matter who is to blame.

Olja's starting position is showing no responsibility whatsoever. Not towards herself, her home nor her children. This behavior has caused numerous problems for her family during the years and almost destroyed it. It also consequently fuelled anger within her sons, who blame everything on her, even their father's departure. As the journey brings them all back together, Olja realizes that she has to change her way of living, even if it means losing everything else, including her family. By taking radical steps in order to protect her sons, Olja takes responsibility for her past and her family's future.

The story's main motif is running away and not facing one's own issues, which is present in each of the main characters. The tin box, which serves as a memory of the husband who left her and to which Olja goes back time and time again, is the best indicator of Olja's failure to accept reality and her holding onto something that does not exist.

The relationships are not idyllic, no one in this story is merely a victim. We want to identify with their characters, not just evoke a feeling of empathy.

This is a Rite-of-Passage story and it depicts the last moments in the life of an old pack leader, giving place to a new and younger one. It is also a road-movie and the movement additionally underlines the motif of escapism – running away without a clear goal – which further paints the absence of solid ground or foundations, as well as uprooting. Their ride emphasizes the changes that happen ad hoc, rushed and spontaneous, which are the characteristics of our heroes.

The opening of the film occurs in an extremely stressful moment for the family. Intended as a one-shot sequence, it shows in one fell swoop the chaos and hopelessness that our characters take in their stride with dignity, strengthened by the many defeats from their past. At the journey's inception, the tempo is in accordance with our characters' traits: rapid changes in shots depict running away, aggression, rushing into the unknown. Everything seems rehearsed, choreographed, but also explicit, coming close to an incident or spilling over into one. They bring chaos wherever they go – it is an inevitable part of their style.

The main drama and clashes occur at the places where the family stops, while the ride is a representation of claustrophobia which is sometimes a preparation for, and other times a consequence of their conflicts. The atmosphere is charged with sweat, dirt and blood. Animal instinct and survival skills are an unavoidable part of their choreography. They are a pack. They show cheer and hatred in the same way, they dance and fight in the same way, and we can always see excitement in their faces. As the trip progresses, the tempo is slowed down – "an adrenaline drop after a major shock". The anticlimax comes at a time when everything our characters go through on the outside starts manifesting itself on the inside. There is less talk and more action, maturing through deeds. We start seeing the characters more individually and observe their change. When the running away comes to an end and when they start facing key issues, hope is renewed and the story re-establishes its dynamism which announces a resolution to the situation from the beginning of the film. All of this serves to create another turnaround which causes the ultimate drop.

Biography director

Ivan Stojiljković was born in 1984. in Croatia. He finished Film and TV directing at Faculty of Dramatic Arts in Belgrade. He studied Japanese language and literature at Faculty of Philology in Belgrade. Ivan's education includes: Sarajevo Talent Campus (2013) and script doctoring work shop FILM TEEP in Bucharest, Romania (2013). He received funding for Script development, Ministry of Culture of Serbia (2013) and was awarded with the scholarship for Erasmus + program (2015).

Directed over 30 videos for domestic pop and alternative musicians. Directed video campaigns for festivals as *EXIT* (2011) and *Cinema City* (2014). Is an active director for different commercial brands. Copywriter and director for various humanitarian campaigns. He is right now in preparations of his latest short fiction project called *The Goalgetter*.

Biography producer

Marija Stojanović was born in 1986. in Belgrade, Serbia. Since 2007. she has been working as a freelance film professional (Producer, Line Producer, Production Manager, Unit Production Manager) on many Serbian and international film and TV projects such as: *The Circles* (2013 / dir. Srdan Golubović), *Barbarians* (2014 / dir. Ivan Ikić), *The Black Pin* (2016 / dir. Ivan Marinović), *Only Girls Cry* (2017 / dir. Vladimir Milovanović).

Current slate includes: feature fiction *Blame on Me*, dir. Ivan Stojiljković (script development), short fiction *Goalgetter*, dir. Ivan Stojiljković (pre-production), feature fiction *Forever Hold Your Peace*, dir. Ivan Marinović (project development), feature fiction *The Users*, dir. Ivan Ikić (project development), feature fiction *Yugo Florida*, dir. Vladimir Tagić (script development).

Company profile

SENSE Production is a film & video production company from Belgrade, gathering young auteurs and professionals with an exciting approach to drama and visual.

So far, SENSE Production produced the award-winning feature film *Barbarians* by Ivan Ikić (2014 / Special Mention, Karlovy Vary IFF / Best Film, Crossing Europe Linz / Seyfi Teoman Award, EFF Palic), *Battle of Kumanovo: Blood and Mist*, a high-quality history TV documentary, the debut documentary film *The Way of the East* (2017) by Katarina Mutić and *Only Girls Cry* (2017 / Grand Prix, Belgrade Documentary and Short Film Festival) by Vladimir Milovanović. The company also co-produced Greek film *Her Job* (2018 / TIFF, Discovery; Warsaw FF, Best 1-2 Film, FIPRESCI; Thessaloniki FF, Best Actress), while the new film by the father of Romanian New Wave Cristi Puiu Malmkrog is in post- production.

Projects in the production stage include *The Forbidden Aunt*, a documentary by the actress-turned filmmaker Bojana Novaković, an animated short *Lights & Shadows* by living legend Rastko Čirić and short films *Ladies on the Hunt* by Bojana Babić and *Goalgetter* by Ivan Stojiljković.

Christina

Kristina

Documentary, Hybrid

WRITER & PRODUCER	Milanka Gvoić
DIRECTOR & PRODUCER	Nikola Spasić
PRODUCTION COMPANY	REZON
APPROX. BUDGET OF THE FILM	309.500,00 EUR
FINANCING IN PLACE	15.000,00 EUR
CONTACT	REZON Gundulićeva 21a 21000 Novi Sad, Serbia +381 62 169 05 29 inkubator.rezon@gmail.com

Synopsis

Christina was born in a little Serbian town in traditional family as a first male child. During her sophomore year, as an A student of the gymnasium, she drops out of school and leaves her hometown because no one understands her, and no one accept her for who she is.

In a world we live in, money doesn't solve all problems, but it could solve many of Christina's problems. That is why she decides to earn it and manages to do that. After ten years of serious battle, hormonal therapy and several surgeries, her sex has finally been adjusted to her gender identity.

Today, Christina is a successful business woman. She is hard-working and economical. The clients adore her because she fulfills their dreams and fantasies. The problems in Christina's well organized life occur when a police inspector tries to enter it, in a rude way, and wants to impose himself as her pimp. Simultaneously with his aggressive entrance, a man slowly walks into Christina's life, with whom she starts building a platonic love.

And just when she thinks that she will finally find true love, Christina gets arrested for sex work that is illegal in Serbia. While dealing with state and administration of justice, the man who is her platonic love, disappears. Christina engages in an unplanned subtle detective research to find out where he is. By following a lead she accidentally discovered, she embarks on a trip to find the man who is missing, but also to run away from the inspector, who desperately wants to become her pimp.

After an exciting journey, she finds her love in an extremely rural area, surrounded by family. By watching him, she decides that it is best for her to back down, so she could protect him from herself.

Director's statement

Christina is a film about a transgender sex worker, Christina Ferrari. We put joints and bindings borrowed from a feature film dramaturgy on a documentary foundation in combination with the elements of fiction with which we visualize the wishes, the fears and the dreams of the main protagonist, who lets us all the way into her inner world as well as into the world that surrounds her. Our goal is to build a character- driven narrative, which embodies the soul and body of the main protagonist with its form.

All the drama material was formed by Christina's personality, and even the surreal elements of this film were based on her experience, i.e., her dreams, fears, hopes and fantasies.

The film is composed of numerous vivid and authentic scenes that keep the three main action flows together. One flow are the periodical, random encounters with an unknown man with whom Christina starts to develop some kind of a platonic relationship, the second flow are the encounters with the policeman who tries to impose himself as a pimp, and the third flow is the visualization of Christina's job and her transposition into a fantasy world through it.

The film will have a mildly slower tempo, the shots will be symmetrically photographic- composed and mostly static with minimal mechanical movement, except when following the walk of the main protagonist, and the atmosphere will mostly be in a serious tone.

I do not think there is one person who was not a victim of prejudice. There are only those who decide to follow the path of least resistance, so instead of fighting against prejudices, they adopt them and judge without thinking, instead of trying to understand. I was also a victim of prejudice and I know very well how much the condemnation of the environment can complicate our lives even though that same life of ours does not pose a threat to them in any way. Christina's courage to live in the truth, no matter the cost, is my personal reason to make this film.

Biography director / producer

Nikola Spasić is a film director who lives and works in Novi Sad. He graduated from the Academy of Arts in Novi Sad and earned a bachelor's degree in Film and TV directing, earned a master's degree in Editing at the Faculty of Dramatic Arts in Belgrade and is currently a final-year PhD student at the Academy of Arts in Novi Sad. In January, 2017, his documentary film "Why did Dragan gather his band" had a premiere at the MiradasDoc festival in Spain and has been shown at more than 30 festivals around the world.

He participated in numerous markets and pitching forums supported by numerous markets and pitching forums supported by the MEDIA sub-program of Creative Europe such as: ZagrebdoxPro 2015 (special mention for the best project), BDC Discoveries (the best project award), Dok. Leipzig coproduction meetings, East Doc Platform, MiradasDoc market, When East Meets West coproduction market, Beldocs Market etc. Nikola has made several short feature films and video installations.

Biography producer / writer

Milanka Gvoić graduated from the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Belgrade and earned a master's degree in Philosophy. Participated in numerous markets and pitching forums supported by the MEDIA sub-program of Creative Europe such as: ZagrebDoxPro 2015 (special mention for the best project), BDC Discoveries (the best project award), Dok.Leipzig coproduction meetings, East Doc Platform, MiradasDoc market, When East Meets West coproduction market etc. The movies she worked on as a screenwriter and a producer were shown at festivals around the world and won several awards. Those feature and documentary programs she was a part of and involved in were shown on several TV stations in the region, including the Al Jazeera Balkans, Croatian Radio-Television (HRT), Radio-Television of Serbia (RTS) and Radio-Television of Vojvodina (RTV). She participated in the creation and production of many commercial and several socially engaged campaigns.

Company profile

Incubator of multimedia arts and creative industries - **REZON** is production house based in Novi Sad, Serbia, founded by Nikola Spasić and Milanka Gvoić in 2013. Today, REZON is leading documentary and short film production in Serbian Autonomous Province of Vojvodina. Rezon producers were present in numerous markets, workshops and pitching forums such as ZagrebDoxPro, BDC Discoveries, DOK Co-Pro Market, East Doc Platform, Balkan Film Market, MiradasDoc Market, East Silver Market, WEMW, French-Serbian Meetings etc. Rezon is currently producing docufiction film under working title *Christina* about transgender sex worker and docudrama under working title *Milica Tomić* about first woman news publisher and editor in Serbia.

Roots

Koreni

Documentary

DIRECTOR	Tea Lukač
PRODUCER	Andrijana Sofranic
PRODUCTION COMPANY	NANA 143
APPROX. BUDGET OF THE FILM	30.100,00 EUR
FINANCING IN PLACE	15.600,00 EUR
CONTACT	NANA 143 +381 61 177 69 53 andrijana.sofranic@gmail.com

Synopsis

As a teenager, Rade came upon a hornets' nest. Accidentally, he knocked it down from a tree and it fell on him. Ending up with 21 stings, a sure death was waiting. Without a hospital nearby, his family already started to mourn him. Desperate to save him, his grandmother digs a hole in the ground. Believing that the soil pulls out the poisons, she buries him underground, leaving just enough space for him to breathe. Rade spent three days buried, under high fever before lastly coming to his senses. Since that day was never sick in his life. While enlisting the army, doctors found that his immune system was as strong as if he survived the bite of two poisonous snakes. They proclaimed him as a medical miracle and he himself believes he entered the Guinness's book of records as a man who survived the most hornets' stings.

Film is made out of long static shots of similar duration, filmed from the inside of a moving car. The only people shown are passengers, natives of Dvor. They travel alone, in pairs or in a group and are shown in moments of anticipation or reminiscence. Hornets' nests, placing bets on bull fighting, masked children fresh from Carneval, Chinese daughter-in-laws from mixed marriages, petitions against nuclear waste, singing gatherings, good meals at funerals frame the content of the film. Due to its rare practice, events they are visiting seem absurd and unreal, thus making passenger's conversations as such as well. The car never stops, on the contrary – it is always on the move and in motion. Framing and duration of the shots give a sensory impression of the characters. Even though documentary at its core, these scenes-shoots are set in a structurally-formalistic way. Focus is on repetition of the travel and rhythmic pauses. Visually, body and space are juxtaposed. People are the ones that are always still while landscape is in constant movement.

Dvor is surrounded by a big evergreen forest, making nature and weather a dominant element that defines the place. Uninhabited wooden houses are scattered along the hills. Rivers are see-through clean, fast and full of small cascades. Woods are dark green, hidden with fog, frighteningly quiet and still, especially during winter when snow, rain, fog and storms prevail. Short cuts to exterior shots will separate the segments from the car, juxtaposing two spaces – indoor and outdoor, intimate and public one aiding to the conflict of transience and eternity.

Director's statement

I left my hometown, Dvor na Uni, when I was six due to war breaking out. During the next 25 years I would often visit what's left of my roots and witness a history unwinding in front of my eyes. To observe something that is beyond your control, especially when it comes to rapid influence of time is a fascinating feeling. Life is at the same time ongoing, still and long gone while past, present and future are intertwined. Due to nature of war, written and visual traces of culture and personal histories are gone and scattered, mine included. Toys I used to play with, photos of my family, places and people are all just a cloud of hearsay - a personal mythology never quite palpable. Today Dvor is inhabited mostly by elderly and what remains are just habits, rituals and oral tradition, all slowly decaying amid the unjust but inevitable path to oblivion. Although interwoven into the DNA of the place, *Roots* are not about war, but about the glorious diversity of human soul.

The movie combines structural-formalistic approach with the method of sensory ethnography. Content of the conversations is based on authentic stories, customs, rituals and culture of people who live or have lived in Dvor, adding to an anthropological value. Without a clear beginning or end, through strangeness of subjects, sights and people, a dream-like world is created, both universal and isolated.

The lightning is natural and camera is fixed. Passengers on the back seat of the car are shot from the same angle with average duration 7-10 min. They alternate with significantly shorter images of landscape where camera is still or panned. There, the camera changes positions and represents a series of blocks thematically shaped around certain weather condition (lifting of the fog, rain, dew, wind). Minimalistic approach and duration of the shots are used to achieve the effect of closeness with the character. Absence of metaphorical association, discontinued blocks without progress in narrative and visual repetition give the movie a meditative character.

Editing is associative and scenes are in contrast with one another – quietness of nature vs lively chit-chatting. Human voices, movements and humming of the engine dominate the interior scenes, while the sounds of nature are emphasized (water dripping, howling of the wind) and designed to a more melodic rhythm.

The Roots portray people frozen in time long gone; fragments of fragile life and memories conflicted with eternity of nature and course of history that overpowers them. However, they are not deprived of life. On the contrary, it is a strangely wondrous and occasionally a funny movie.

Biography director

Tea Lukač's short fiction movies got selected for numerous national and intl. festivals (Cottbus, Trieste, Poitiers). Her feature documentary *The Most Important Boy in the World* had a national premiere at International Documentary FF Beldocs in 2016, got invited to IDFA Docs for Sale market and won the award for best Serbian music documentary at Doc'n'Ritam FF in Belgrade (2017), as well as the award for best documentary at Balkan FF in Sweden (2017). She exhibits in group exhibitions in galleries G12 Hub, Štab gallery, Inex center, Parobrod and Student's City Cultural Center. Her piece *Intervention* gets published in 2015. in 'Propeler' magazine. Jury member of Beldocs FF in 2017. Currently doing her PhD studies at Faculty of Dramatic Arts.

Biography producer

In 2016. **Andrijana Sofranić** established production company – NANA 143. Also, since 2014. Andrijana works at the companies Gargantua Films and Mali Budo ltd and member of production team that works on development, as well as production and distribution of every project.

Filmography:

- Feature fiction film *Mamonga* (dir. Stefan Malešević); in post-production/ Producer
- Experimental documentary *Roots* (dir. Tea Lukač); in development / Producer
- Short animation film *Adjusted* (dir. Marko Mrđenović, Risto Topaloski); in development / Producer
- Feature film *Trials of Chul* (dir. Danilo Bećković); in late development / Project manager
- Feature film *The Great Tram Robbery* (dir. Slobodan Šijan); in financing / Project manager
- Feature film *The Samurai in Autumn* (dir. Danilo Becković) / Executive in charge of Production
- Distribution Coordinator/ Feature film *Little Buddho* (dir. Danilo Bećković) / Executive in charge of Production.

Company profile

NANA 143 is young production company from Loznica, Serbia. Andrijana Sofranić established company in 2016. Current slate of NANA 143 is eclectic combination of fiction, hybrid documentary and animation films: Experimental documentary *ROOTS* (in development), debutant feature fiction film *MAMONGA* (in postproduction) and short animation film *ADJUSTED* (in development). NANA 143 aspire to grow into a company with a strong regional and eventually international network, as all the projects are regional and co-productions (Roots with Croatia, Mamonga with Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Adjusted with Croatia).

The Celts

Kelti

Fiction

DIRECTOR	Milica Tomović
PRODUCER	Jelena Radenković
PRODUCTION COMPANY	EED PRODUCTIONS
APPROX. BUDGET OF THE FILM	402.280,00 EUR
FINANCING IN PLACE	203.000,00 EUR
CONTACT	EED PRODUCTIONS Vojvode Stepe 118 11000 Beograd, Serbia +381 69 251 59 40 rjelena@yahoo.com www.eed.rs

Synopsis

Winter, 1993. Bill Clinton is elected president. Audrey Hepburn dies. Wars following the breakup of socialist Yugoslavia are continued in Croatia and Bosnia. Belgrade is under sanctions and inflations that threaten to become hyperinflations. MOTHER (38) wakes up on a day when she has to do all the preparation for her younger daughter's birthday party - cooking awaits her, guests await her and dirty dishes await her, when the night is over. After a full year of not having sex with her husband, Mother introduced masturbation in her everyday routine.

On that day Mother fails to reach an orgasm. On that day TAMARA (14), the older sister, gets her period and gets an order to craft a costume for her little sister. On that day GRANDMOTHER (68) finds out her friend has died and also finds out she has to use walnuts to make an almond cake for her granddaughter. On that day FATHER (35), the taxi driver doesn't charge the ride and lies to his youngest, she'll get a puppy for her birthday. On that day MINJA (8), birthday girl, can't wait to get home and put on a Raphael costume (the red Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle) to welcome her schoolmates. She invited everyone, even the Princess, who stuck a gum in her best friend's hair.

Mother tries to be polite while she welcomes Ninja's friends and gets criticized by parents for organizing a costume party. Mother tries to seem excited when the guests start to arrive: Uncle and his boyfriend, Father's colleague from an old firm - the drunk, Mother's best friend Zaga with a new girlfriend, and just after two of them, Zaga's ex-lover rings the doorbell,

too. Mother expresses compassion for the problems of her friends - the two ex-lovers which becomes the main topic of the night. Mother tries not to notice that Father is flirting with a newly arrived guest - young actress. Mother feels invisible while she drowns in endless dramas and repeated conversations. Mother decides to leave the party and finally do something for herself.

On the streets she gets a chance to reach an orgasm, to insult someone and to smoke a cigarette with a stranger. On the streets Mother also gets a chance to realize she's inevitably part of a family in which: margarine is used instead of butter, walnut instead of almond, masturbation instead of sex and one declares as Celt instead of Yugoslav.

Director's statement

The Celts is a family drama with the elements of comedy written with a desire to make a fun, crazy, nostalgic, emotional film that audience would wish never to end. It is a film about disappearance of one country and loss of one's identity which are portrayed through three different generations within one family and their daily routine while preparing the birthday party for the youngest daughter. Idea was to simultaneously deal with my childhood and with my adult life, by trapping them inside one house and one day, and by giving an eight-year-old perspective on that period with an opportunity to grasp what my parents were going through, now that I've reached their years.

The year 1993 in Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) marks the end of Dafiment bank - Ponzi scheme that was supported by president Slobodan Milošević, which finally led to hyperinflation. Milošević's regime deeply damaged country's GDP as well as life standard of all its citizens. Moreover, his regime was one of the main causes of wars in Bosnia and Croatia, which by then reached devastating points. Through the characters - family members, I want to represent a person's developing path from childhood, through adolescence and till the adulthood. By doing so I will try to explore the ways in which these characters were shaped by their experiences. The question which interests me is if in some cases a certain experience can even have such an effect on one's life, that from one point on everything goes irrevocably wrong. In the same way, I wish to explore the epoch, approaching it with a distance of the present moment and with a desire to comprehend where it all went irreversibly wrong with the country we were born in, Yugoslavia. At the same time, together with my characters, I am trying to question my identity, or to consider the possibility of obtaining a new one.

Nineties are used as a frame for an intimate family story, but also as a metaphor of our present time and inevitable repetitions - which are displayed in personal relationships, political contexts and events. This film should point out that what people of my parent's generation witnessed and lived through in the nineties, has everything to do with what we live through and witness right now.

Biography director

Milica Tomović was born in 1986. in Belgrade, Serbia

Work experience:

2019. Director of series *Jutro će promeniti sve* by This and That Productions

2018. Second assistant director and casting director for feature film *Asymmetry* by Maša Nešković

2018. Second assistant director and casting director on *The Load* by Ognjen Glavonić

2017. Second assistant director and casting director on film *Requiem for Mrs. J* by Bojan Vuletić

2016. Writer and director of short film *Transition* which had its international film premire in Locarno as part of Pardi di domani selection, North American premiere on Toronto Film Festival as part of Short Cuts Programme. Shown in Premiers Plans Film Festival in Angers, Vilnius International Film Festival. *Transition* won golden plaque in Serbian short fiction film selection in Belgrade Film Festival, Heart of Sarajevo best short film in Sarajevo Film Festival, Best Director Award at the International Short Film Festival of Cyprus, best film in selection Brave Balkans at Auteur Film Festival in Belgrade.

2016. Assistant director on film *All The Cities Of The North* by Dane Komljen

2015. Second assistant director on film *Otadžbina* by Oleg Novković

2014. One of casting managers (Serbian cast) for series *The Last Panthers*, produced by Haut et Court&Warp Films with Canal +& Sky Atlantic

2011. Writer and director of segment *Graduation* in omnibus *October*, which was shown in Cinema City (Novi Sad)(Special mention award, and award for main actor in segment "Graduation"), Trieste Film Festival, Cottbus Film Festival, Sofia International Film Festival, LIFFE(Leskovac)(award for main actor in segment "Graduation"), LIFFE(Ljubljana).

Biography producer

Jelena Radenković was born in 1984 in Kruševac, Serbia. After studying journalism at the Faculty of Political Science, she graduated from the Faculty of Drama and Arts in 2012 (Film and TV Production). During her studies, she participated in the realization of numerous film and television projects, music videos and the organization of the film festivals Free zone film festival and Cinema city. From the beginning of 2014 to April 2016 she worked as a producer at Tuna Fish studio. She is currently developing several art projects, living and working in Belgrade.

Company profile

EED Productions was founded by producer Vladimir Vasiljević after more than ten years of experience in executive production. Main goal for EED PRODUCTIONS is to produce films that we filmmakers would like to see in theatres, to collaborate with creative young authors and to keep making international co-productions. Our films were screened at numerous film festivals around the world such as: Locarno Film Festival, Toronto International Film Festival, Sarajevo Film Festival, Film Festival Cottbus, Thessaloniki International Film Festival. Apart from producing films, EED Productions act as service provider for domestic and international companies.

The Users

Korisnici

Fiction

WRITER & DIRECTOR

Ivan Ikić

PRODUCER

Milan Stojanović

PRODUCTION COMPANY

SENSE Production

APPROX. BUDGET OF THE FILM

690.000,00 EUR

FINANCING IN PLACE

411.500,00 EUR

CONTACT

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Synopsis

ROBERT (17) is a melancholic teenager, a user of Home for children and youth with special needs, whose tendency to lock in more than once resulted in cut wrists. These infertile attempts for suicide were often accompanied by DRAGANA (16), his faithful friend and accomplice, very much in love with Robert. Their relationship and daily routine is interrupted when MARIA (17), a new user with aggressive behavior, comes to the Home. She also falls in love with Robert, hiding this from Dragana, her instant-new-best-friend.

When Robert and Maria abandon the collective plan for suicide and choose love instead, Dragana, hurt, proceeds and ends her life. Situation get even more complicated by Robert's caretaker, who identifies Maria as the generator of the bad influence on him. He has a plan how to separate Robert and Maria and he executes it ruthlessly in order to turn Robert into an obedient user of the Home. The caretaker keeps breaking Robert's character and, completely ignoring his wishes and emotions and forces him into a relationship with another girl.

After months of separation and psychical pressure he's been under by his caretaker, Robert meets Maria again, determined to complete their plan of cutting their wrists together.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

As a film student at the Belgrade Faculty of Dramatic Arts, I had the opportunity to visit one of these institutions and do some documentary work there. There, I met Robert, an introvert boy who could break dance fascinatingly well. He could see these choreographies only on TV

and managed to replicate them with great detail. Robert had stopped talking and his only means of communication with the other users was through his break dance choreographies which he performed in the public rooms of the institution. There was one more detail about Robert that spoke more about him, and that was the vast amount of scars on his hands from many unsuccessful attempts to slit his wrists. The mystery about this boy was that which left a strong impression on me and convinced me that he was the hero of my documentary film. His new caretaker was optimistic about Robert's lack of communication, as there were earlier periods of time where he had stopped talking, and suggested that we start shooting when Robert came out of his depressive phase. During filming, which was focused on the relationship between Robert and his caretaker, who was trying to socialize him using his own "methods", the mystery about his attempted suicides that preceded his withdrawal began to become clear. A love triangle with a melodramatic plot between him and two of the female users, almost had a fatal ending for him in his delicate emotional state and started a chain of events that luckily did not end in tragedy. This story surpassed the possibilities and limits of the documentary I was filming at that moment, but became the core inspiration for this film. The film will be shot in real locations at an existing institution and actual users found there will play the main characters. The "actors" will then go through a workshop where they will be slowly introduced to the characters they are to play, while the script will be adapted to the real characters of the participants. In that way the film will have more authenticity and the real life participants will not be forced into a situation which is not close to their characteristics in real life. The director's focus will be on the main characters, whose authentic emotions will be best represented through integrated shots where the camera will follow the inner rhythm, but not from a distance, and only from their intimate perspective. The camera is always with the hero and shows us the world as he views it, experiences the same things and the movement suggests to the viewer his inner state. The minimalism of film methodology will be compensated with complicated mise en scene and strong color accents in the photography (set design and costumes) which will show the intensity of infantile sensations in their perception of their surroundings. Traditional film music will not be used, but only music coming from realistic sources in the shot in any occasion when it corresponds to the dramaturgy of the story.

During my former experience, while performing a documentary shoot in the institution, I gained the trust of the users to share their world of honest and intense emotion with me. In me, they found a mediator, a way to channel their honest cry to the world, a world which does not understand them, and wishes not to. A world that is ashamed of them as if they are a mistake, a world that is not ready to hear or have compassion for their cry, a world to which I and all of us from the other side of the institution wall belong. I have taken a vow that their cry will, somehow, be heard.

Biography director

Ivan Ikić wrote and directed *Barbarians* (2014), which premiered at Karlovy Vary International Film Festival, winning Special Jury Mention in East of the West Competition and having a festival run of over 30 appearances across the World afterwards. Before *Barbarians*, Ikić directed *Tarot Serbia!* (2010), a documentary presented at numerous documentary film festivals. Ikić was born in 1982. He graduated Film & TV Directing at Faculty of Drama Arts in Belgrade in 2006 as the Best Student of the Generation. He participated in Sarajevo and Berlinale Talents Campus.

He was a member of the Board of Beldocs International Film Festival.

Biography producer

Milan Stojanović produced the award-winning debut by Ivan Ikić - *Barbarians* (2014 / Special Mention at Karlovy Vary FF / Seyfi Teoman Award, European FF Palić / Best Film, Crossing Europe Linz) and *The Way of the East* (2017), a documentary by Katarina Mutić. Milan is the co-producer of the debut by Greek filmmaker Nikos Labot *Her Job*, which premiered at this year's Toronto International Film Festival and the new film by Cristi Puiu - *Malmkrog*, which is in post-production stage.

From 2002 to 2011, he worked as a freelance associate (production manager, line producer) in more than 15 Serbian and international production.

Milan Stojanović was born in 1983 in Belgrade, Serbia. He graduated Film & TV Producing at Faculty of Drama Arts in Belgrade and completed Filmmaking Course at New York Film Academy. He is the first laureate of the Promotional prize for young East European producers at Cottbus Film Festival (2007).

He is an alumni of EAVE Producers Workshop, Berlinale Talents, Emerging Producers, Producers on the Move and Trans-Atlantic Partners and a voting member of the European Film Academy. Milan is one of the founders of Filmkultura, Association for Education in Audiovisual Culture. From 2014 to 2017, he was the Program Director of Cinema City International Film Festival in Novi Sad.

Company profile

SENSE Production is a film & video production company from Belgrade, gathering young auteurs and professionals with an exciting approach to drama and visual.

So far, SENSE Production produced the award-winning feature film *Barbarians* by Ivan Ikić (2014 / Special Mention, Karlovy Vary IFF / Best Film, Crossing Europe Linz / Seyfi Teoman Award, EFF Palić), *Battle of Kumanovo: Blood and Mist*, a high-quality history TV documentary, the debut documentary film *The Way of the East* (2017) by Katarina Mutić and *Only Girls Cry* (2017 / Grand Prix, Belgrade Documentary and Short Film Festival) by Vladimir Milovanović. The company also co-produced Greek film *Her Job* (2018 / TIFF, Discovery; Warsaw FF, Best 1-2 Film, FIPRESCI; Thessaloniki FF, Best Actress), while the new film by the father of Romanian New Wave Cristi Puiu *Malmkrog* is in post-production.

Projects in the production stage include *The Forbidden Aunt*, a documentary by the actress-turned filmmaker Bojana Novaković, an animated short *Lights & Shadows* by living legend Rastko Čirić and short films *Ladies on the Hunt* by Bojana Babić and *Goalgetter* by Ivan Stojiljković.