24 kwietnia 2018

Best of the best

**Festivals winners at the 58th Krakow Film Festival**

**Krakow Film Festival consist chiefly of the film premieres of the best documentaries, shorts and animations, presented in four different competitions. In the special Festivals Winners section we will see films which won the highest awards at prestigious festivals around the world. This year the audience in Krakow will see 8 different titles.**

We open our list with a short narrative film **“Bonboné”** (dir. Rakan Mayasi) in which the music of the Krakow band Kroke takes us to the Israeli prison, where a Palestinian inmate is waiting impatiently for his sweetheart's visit. The couple, avoiding the restrictions imposed by the prison bars, decides to have a baby at any cost. The main part in their elaborate, secret plan will be played by a bonbon. The film was well received at the festivals in Locarno, Berlin, Dubai, New York and Toronto while at Kustendorf Film and Music Festival it was awarded Grand Prix.

Rakan Mayasi's film fiction corresponds closely with the story presented in the documentary **“Empty Room - The State Of Israel Vs. Irit And Asher”** (dir. Shirly Berkovitz), which will be presented in another festival section - World Stories. Irit and Aser whose son, an officer in Israeli navy, was killed before he could start his own family, decide to use his sperm to get a grandson. However, the law is not on their site. The documentary registers couple's struggle with various officials and courts, but it's integral part is a portrait of an ordinary Israeli family for whom the memory of the deceased is still present.

In the Festivals Winners section we will see three other stories with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the background. **“Muhi - Generally Temporary”**( dir. Tamir Elterman, Rina Castelnuovo-Hollander) is a documentary story of a 7-year-old boy called Muhi, who spent almost all his life in an Israeli hospital. Despite his serious disability he is full of energy and he enjoys his life. Unfortunately, the contact with his parents, who come from the Gaza Strip, is very limited. In their absence his grandfather takes care of him. The hospital not only helps the boy to live normally but also protects him from the outside world. The film was awarded at the DocAviv Film Festival and in Guangzhou.

In another documentary **“Foreign Land”** (dir. Shlomi Eldar) we meet the Jewish documentary director and former journalist and an Arabic actor who used to be a sitcom celebrity. The men cannot find their place in a conflicted reality of the modern Israel. Although they both try - the director writing reportages and the actor staring in independent plays - they feel more and more marginalized and underestimated.

**“Shmama”** (dir. Miki Polonski) is the another Israeli production that will be presented in this section. The protagonists are a mother and her daughter who work in a monumental hotel in a holiday resort by the Dead Sea. The concrete giant is their home but also their prison. They look to the future differently but at the same time need each other badly. Delicate, beautifully shot story of mother-daughter relationship: about being together and searching for one's own path.

Michał Waszyński, or rather Mosze Waks, is the protagonist of the famous documentary **“The Prince and the Dybbuk”** by Piotr Rosołowski and Elwira Niewiera. The Polish film director of Jewish descent is without a doubt one of the most interesting and most mysterious characters in the world cinema. Waszyński, popular film director in Poland before the war, survived Holocaust and while being an emigrant became one of the most influential people in the industry, responsible for the careers of many movie stars. A wonderful documentary journey into the biography of the man for whom film fiction was more beautiful than the truth. The film was recognized at the festival in Venice where it received the best documentary award of the Venice Classics section.

**“Facing Mecca”** (dir. Jan-Eric Mack), awarded in various festivals including Palm Springs and the winner of the Student Academy Award 2017 and Swiss Film Award, is a story about mutual respect, love and... ruthless bureaucracy. Fareed, Syrian refugee, was warmly welcomed by his new Swiss neighbours. He tries to pay back their kindness. However, when his wife dies it turns out that he cannot bury her according to the Muslim tradition. Yet when the articles are blocking the way the most important are empathy, understanding and human heart.

A complicated story of Romania, told through the eyes of a 92-year-old man, is presented in the documentary “**Licu. A Romanian Story**” (dir. Ana Dumitrescu). Licu lives alone in a house full of photographs and things that bring back the memories. Beloved wife, summer holidays with friends, sickness and death - all that in the shadow of war and totalitarian communist party. A story about love, old age and passing, but most of all about how the history of a country can leave its stamp on the lives of ordinary people.

The list is closed with an original Greek narrative film **“Play”**,which is a must for the pop culture fans. Refined in every detail, the film bewilders with it colours, energy, sound, music and costumes, which didn't go without notice at, among others, Drama Short Film Festival where the film received a special award for the costume design. A directorial debut of Vangelis Liberopoulos is a new, charismatic and vivid voice in the contemporary Greek cinema.

**The films in the Festival Winners section at the 58th Krakow Film Festival:**

“Bonboné”, dir. Rakan Mayasi, fict., 15’, Lebanon, Palestine, 2017

“Play”, dir. Vangelis Liberopoulos, fict., 33’, Greece, Cyprus, 2017

“The Prince and the Dybbuk”, dir. Piotr Rosołowski, Elwira Niewiera, doc. 82’**,** Poland, Germany, 2017

“Licu, A Romanian Story”, dir. Ana Dumitrescu, doc. 87’, Romania, 2016

“Muhi - Generally Temporary”, dir. Tamir Elterman, Rina Castelnuovo-Hollander, doc. 87’, Israel, Germany, 2017

“Foreign Land”, dir. Shlomi Eldar, doc. 73’, Israel, USA, 2017

“Shmama”, dir. Miki Polonski, fict. 26’, Israel, 2017

“Facing Mecca”, dir. Jan-Eric Mack, fict. 27’, Switzerland, 2017