April 28, 2020

A short report from the world before the pandemic

International short film competition at the 60th Krakow Film Festival

**In this most diverse festival competition short documentaries, animations and live action films from all round the world will compete for a Golden and Silver Dragons in front of an international jury. Six Polish films are among them. The awards given in this competition make winners eligible to submit for Oscars and European Film Awards consideration.**

**Documentary films**

*Over four hundred films were watched, an entire notebook was filled with notes, a number of serious conversations took place – all that to select thirteen films for the competition. The official selection consists mostly of family stories, often based on some amateur footage from the years before. There is also a number of stories devoted to difficulties that women and minorities have to face in various parts of the world. Subjects like war and refugees are still very present. The world can see its reflection in the films submitted to the Krakow Film Festival* – Maciej Gil who selects the festival films says.

Documentary films will also take us to often inaccessible places: in **“keep shiftin”** we’ll take a peek at un incredibly photogenic process of glass blowing in a factory on the Czechia-Germany border, while **“Depot Asmara”** will take us to the railways of Eritrea where two friends work on impressive locomotives. As always, we will meet fascinating characters and learn their extraordinary fates, e.g. in a documentary **“The Fantastic”** which tells the story of former North Korea citizens and their first impressions after watching films from abroad, which in their country were illegal; and in an animated documentary **“Just a Guy”** in which three women confess their love for a serial killer.

**Live action films**

*During the selection we were looking for lighter, more cheerful films, but the programme is always shaped by the directors and they apparently want to talk about things outside of our comfort zone, things that bring pain or sometimes even fear. And that’s why the programme is dominated by farewells and borderline situations, impossible choices that nonetheless have to be made. The characters are confronted with the most difficult experiences like illness and death of the loved ones, separation, rape, sexual harassment, discrimination, everyday struggles in not so friendly environment* – Dagmara Romanowska, who selects live action films, says.

However, those stories are not always dark, as even in the darkest times one still can find a bit of humour and warmth, like in **“Los Bengalas”** which radiates musical energy while telling a story of… Alzheimer’s disease. Or in **“The Father”** – a film about the intergenerational exchange of responsibility, the moment when one definitively and irrevocably ceases to be a child and has to carry life’s burden on one’s own back. It will be easy to get emotional e.g. in **“Between a Rock and a Hard Place”**, a film which takes on a topic rarely occurring in cinema – taking care of people with disabilities – and does it from an unusual perspective. At the same time **“Innocence”**, which focuses on a boy with Down syndrome, can surprise the audience with its specific structure thatbrings to mind the best British crime films from the recent years, e.g. “Broadchurch”.

In live action short films we can also find individuals fighting with a hostile system. In **“My Name Is Sonila”** the protagonist’s attempts to report to the police the men who robbed her in a bus are futile. In **“White Eye”** the main character finds his stolen bike chained on a street, however getting it back will involve a lot of surprising twists. Lastly, **“The Verdict in the Case of K.”** shows the possible consequences of enforcing the law on your own.

**Animated films**

As always, the animation directors will surprise us with their imagination that knows no bounds and a vast range of topics. Insane and dark stories (**“Ghost Eye”**) meet with stories full of humour (**“Toomas Beneath the Valley of the Wild Wolves”**). **“Wood Child and Hidden Forest Mother”** will take us on a psychedelic and ambiguous trip through the forest, **“Average Happiness”** will breathe life into Power Point charts, and the film **“How My Grandmother Became a Chair”** will try to find an answer to the query included in the title.

As Robert Sowa, the curator of the animation section, likes to stress: *This year we have a lot of premieres and film debuts. We show many films that are only at the beginning of their careers and we will definitely hear about them in the future. The festival attracts the best animations from Poland and abroad, that’s why it’s worth following the competition and the filmmakers who will present their films in Krakow.*

**Polish films in the competition**

Polish films also will compete in the international short film competition. Among the documentaries we’ll see **“Dad You've Never Had”** by Dominika Łapka about a complicated relation between a grown up daughter and her father, and **“I Need the Handshakes”** (dir. Andrej Kuciła) in which a 92-year-old Walentyna by the end of her life goes through her daughter’s old notebooks and takes us on a journey through an unfamiliar world of a person who “everyone forgot about”.

Polish animations will be represented by Tomek Ducki with his latest production **“Plantarium”** about a man cultivating a mysterious garden who one day finds a little boy in one of his flower pots, and Marcin Wojciechowski with his film **“backstage.episodes”**which explores the psychological states of an individual while making references to Ian Curtis.

Among the live action films the audience will see a surrealistic coming-of-age story **“Alice and the Frog”** directed by Olga Bołądź and **“Problem”** by Tomasz Wolski in which a quiet afternoon is disturbed by the aforementioned problem – an unconscious man lying on a grass.

**Films selected to the international short film competition:**

**Documentary short films:**

1. “Dad You've Never Had”, dir. Dominika Łapka, 29’, Poland, 2020
2. “A Second Family”, dir. Ramón Sánchez Orense, Susanne Krauss, 8’, Democratic Republic of the Congo, 2019
3. “A Friendly Man”, dir. Łukasz Konopa, 22’, Israel, 2019
4. “Epitaph”, dir. Victor Asliuk, 28’, Belarus, 2020
5. “The Fantastic”, dir. Maija Blåfield, 29’, Finland, 2020
6. “The Butler”, dir. Daniel Dencik, 25’, Denmark, 2019
7. “Overdue”, dir. Tessa Louise Pope, 24’, The Netherlands, 2019
8. “keep shiftin'”, dir. Verena Wagner, 21’, Germany, 2019
9. “I Need the Handshakes”, dir. Andrej Kuciła, 19’, Poland, 2020
10. “There's No Shooting in Kyiv”, dir. Jakub Šedý, 30, Czech Republic, 2019
11. “Depot Asmara”, dir. Beatrice Möller, 25’, Germany, 2019
12. “The Golden Buttons”, dir. Alex Evstigneev, 19’, Russia, 2020
13. “Just a Guy”, dir. Shoko Hara, 15’, Germany, 2020

**Live action short films:**

1. “Alice and the Frog”, dir. Olga Bołądź, 28’, Poland, 2020
2. “White Eye”, dir. Tomer Shushan, 21’, Israel, 2019
3. “Adults”, dir. Zhenya Kryukova, 26’, Russia, 2019
4. “Los Bengalas”, dir. David Valero Simón, 21’, Spain, 2019
5. “My Name Is Sonila”, dir. Suela Bako, 20’, France, 2019
6. “Innocence”, dir. Ben Reid, 20’, United Kingdom, 2019
7. “Nina”, dir. Hristo Simeonov, 20’, Bulgaria, 2019
8. “The Father”, dir. Gleb Osatinski, 9’, USA, 2019
9. “Problem”, dir. Tomasz Wolski, 15’, Poland, 2020
10. “Chubby”, dir. Madeleine Sims-Fewer, Dusty Mancinelli, 22’, Canada, 2019
11. “Majority”, dir. Tessa Hoffe, 15’, United Kingdom, 2019
12. “Between a Rock and a Hard Place”, dir. Mads Koudal, 19’, Denmark, 2019
13. “The Verdict in the Case of K.”, dir. Özgür Anil, 30’, Austria, 2020

**Animated short films:**

1. “backstage.episodes”, dir. Marcin Wojciechowski, Poland, 2020
2. “Wade”, dir. Upamanyu Bhattacharyya, Kalp Sanghvi, 11’, India, 2019
3. “Wood Child and Hidden Forest Mother”, dir. Stephen Irwin, 10’, United Kingdom, 2020
4. “How My Grandmother Became a Chair”, dir. Nicolas Fattouh, 10’, Lebanon, Germany, 2020
5. “Beyond Noh”, dir. Patrick Smith, 4’ USA, Japan, 2020
6. “Average Happiness”, dir. Maja Gehrig, 7’, Switzerland, 2019
7. “Little Miss Fate”, dir. Joder von Rotz, 8’, Switzerland, 2020
8. “Ghost Eye”, dir. Wouter Sel, Thijs De Cloedt, 19’, Belgium, 2020’
9. “He Can't Live Without Cosmos”, dir. Konstantin Bronzit, 16’, Russia, 2019
10. “Plantarium”, dir. Tomek Ducki, dir. Poland, Hungary, 7’, 2020
11. “Coming Home”, dir. Benjamin Swiczinsky, 4’, Austria, 2019
12. “Toomas Beneath the Valley of the Wild Wolves”, dir. Chintis Lundgren, 18’, Estonia, Croatia, France, 2019
13. “All Her Dying Lovers”, dir. Anna Benner, Eluned Zoe Aiano, 6’, Germany, Czech Republic, 2020

Krakow Film Festival is on the exclusive list of the Academy Awards documentary

feature qualifying events and the winner of the Golden Horn is eligible to submit for Oscar

consideration. KFF also qualifies short films (live action, animated, documentary) for the

Academy Awards and recommends them for the European Film Awards.

The programme of the 60th Krakow Film Festival will be moved entirely online! The latest

documentary, animated and short films from around the world, awaited Polish premieres and

meetings with filmmakers will be available online, from the safety of your own home. The full

festival programme will be announced mid-May.

**The 60 th Krakow Film Festival will take place online from May 31 to June 7, 2020.**

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