April 7, 2020

Film house of travel

International documentary competition at the 60th Krakow Film Festival

 **In this difficult time of quarantine the documentary competition will be your window to the world. It will take our audience to the faraway corners of the world and let them take a close look at the heroes from different cultures, their emotions and problems. Films from prestigious festivals as well as long-awaited world premieres will be competing for a Golden Horn and Silver Horns in front of the international jury. Three Polish productions are among them.**

**All quiet on the eastern front**

*“This year we have a considerable number of films from Russia and about Russia. Most of all they reveal a picture of Leviathan in the state of inertia, but the documentary filmmakers offer us also a completely different images of that country. And they do it using great variety of means,”* Anita Piotrowska, film critic and curator of the documentary competition, says.

Maciej Cuske’s film **“The Whale from Lorino”** is a unique journey nearly to the end of the world – to Chukotka. In order to survive, the local tribe is forced to whale hunt. A little bit farther south lies a small island of Kunashir, annexed by the USSR after the WW2. Japanese inhabitants, who had lived there for generations, were all forced to leave. The protagonists of the **“Kunashir”** documentary still to this day discover traces of the Japanese past while looking forward to a brighter future. **“The Foundation Pit”** shows uncensored present-day Russia through a YouTube video kaleidoscope. The grumbling and cursing, recorded by the desperate and frustrated, fills the screen. All messages are addressed to President Putin. At the same time the heroes of a Swedish documentary **“Bitter Love”** by Jerzy Śladkowski set off on a river cruise on the Volga to mend broken hearts, experience unforgetable love affairs and save struggling relationships.

 **In our own backyard**

*“Polish documentary cinema will be also visibly present – there will be a place both for shocking found footage and a contemplative film essay,” Piotrowska says*. Apart from the films by Maciej Cuske and Jerzy Śladkowski, we will see the latest films from other outstanding Polish documentary filmmakers – Piotr Stasik and Tomasz Wolski.

The former will take the audience on a poetic journey into a human brain. **“Odmienne stany świadomości”** [“Altered States”] by Piotr Stasik is an intimate portrait of people with autism and Asperger’s syndrome. The director develops a close bond with his protagonists which helps him discover fascinating nooks and crannies of an unconventional imagination. **“An Ordinary Country”** by Tomasz Wolski is a brutal picture of a life under surveillance in the communist Poland. Controlled conversations and footage from hidden cameras, dirty recordings of interrogations and recruitment attempts as well as video tutorials for the secret service agents make for a gut-wrenching perspective on captive minds.

**Between art and life**

In the documentary competition we will also see two unique portraits of female artists. Barbora Kysilkova is a protagonist of a documentary **“The Painter and the Thief”**, awarded at the Sundance Festival, who after losing two paintings gets in touch with the captured thief. That event gives a start to a fascinating yet toxic relationship. Lene Marie Fossen, the protagonist of **“The Self Portrait”**, does not want to become an “anorexia icon”, even though photography is for her a form of self-therapy. Her photographs, shocking yet beautiful, become a diary of her desperate battle against illness and death.

 **Love and other addictions**

People living in Camden, New York, and in the suburbs of Colorado Springs, who are the topic of two documentary films – **“I Love You I Miss You I Hope I See You Before I Die”** and **“Higher Love”** - all want to break the hopeless cycle of poverty and addictions affecting consecutive generations.

**Hermetic world**

The opening film of the IDFA Festival in Amsterdam – **“Sunless Shadows”** – shows an inaccessible world behind the walls of an Iranian prison for women who were convicted for murdering their fathers, brothers, cousins, husbands. Their life behind the bars, in a closed, supportive community, is often more safe and free than the one outside.

Life in isolation is also a reality for a large Romani family who for years has been inhabiting the swamps belonging to a nature reserve in Bucharest. Documentary film **“Acasa, My Home”** focuses on a dramatic moment when civilisation pervades the existence of the family who up to that point had remained untouched by the modern world problems.

**Films in the international documentary competition of the 60th Krakow Film Festival.**

1. “Acasa, My Home”, dir. Radu Ciorniciuc, 85’, Romania, Finland, Germany
2. “The Self Portrait”, dir. Margreth Olin, Katja Hogset, Espen Wallin, 70’, Norway
3. “Sunless Shadows”, dir. Mehrdad Oskouei, 74’, Iran, Norway
4. “Kunashir”, dir. Vladimir Kozlov, 71’, France
5. “Bitter Love”, dir. Jerzy Śladkowski, 86’, Sweden
6. “I Love You I Miss You I Hope I See You Before I Die”, dir. Eva Marie Rødbro, 76’, Denmark
7. “The Painter and the Thief”, dir. Benjamin Ree, 102’, Norway
8. “Odmienne stany świadomości”, dir. Piotr Stasik, Poland
9. “Higher Love”, dir. Hasan Oswald, 78’, USA
10. “The Whale from Lorino”, dir. Maciej Cuske, Poland
11. “The Foundation Pit”, dir. Andrey Gryazev, 70’, Russia
12. “An Ordinary Country”, dir. Tomasz Wolski, 53’, Poland

The Krakow Film Festival is on the exclusive list of the Academy Awards documentary feature qualifying events and the winner of the Golden Horn is shortlisted for the Oscar selection. 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 60th Krakow Film Festival will take place online from May 31 to June 7, 2020.**

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