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All about a mother at the 60th Krakow Film Festival

 **Motherhood is probably one of the hardest and at the same time strangest life roles that a woman can fulfil. It would be a mistake to look at that process through the lens of universal values and experiences. Each image of a mother is a separate story full of extreme emotions and constant changes. That must be the reason why the topic of motherhood so often attracts filmmakers’ attention.**

On the foreground of motherhood stories in this year’s festival programme comes a documentary **“I Need the Handshakes”** (dir. Andrej Kuciła). We meet in it a 92-year-old Walentyna who lives in a vast Belarussian back country and takes care of her daughter who has been suffering from paralysis since birth. Andrej Kuciła’s film is filled to the brink with emotions even though its maker is extremely careful not to cross the boundaries of his protagonists’ intimacy.

Also a Danish short film **“Between a Rock and a Hard Place”** (dir. Mads Koudal) in a smart and at the same time extremely credible way takes on a subject of a mother taking care of a child with disability. However, it avoids cheap sentimentalism and banality. It truly moves you – not only the situation itself, but the performance of both actresses. Simple, delicate, respectful story of a deep bond between mother and daughter.

In Julia Orlik’s animation **“I’m Here”** and in Martyna Peszko’s short documentary **“Tell Me More”** the roles are reversed. We see an everyday life of women-mothers who due to illness are stuck in bed and completely dependent on others. Their daughters take care of them. Both films are a piercing stories about helplessness, human ties and unconditional love in the face of family dilemmas.

Motherhood stories can be even more tangled. **“Lili”** (dir. Peter Hegedus) is a harrowing story showing how trauma can take its toll on three generations of women. Lili’s daughter sets on a journey across three continents to unravel family secrets and confront her loved ones with a dramatic past. The film paints an emotional picture of a woman-mother who abandons her own child.

In animation **“He Can’t Live Without Cosmos”** Konstantin Bronzit once again takes the audience into space. His 2004 Oscar-nominated animation told a story of two friends who wanted to become astronauts. This time the director presents a relation between a woman and her son who comes into the world in… a space suit. Boy’s dreams to get to the outer space are being hindered by his mother who already lost to cosmos someone she loved. A moving animation about love, sacrifice and loneliness told with sensitivity but also filled with subtle humour.

Among the protagonists of the festival films we also meet those who more or less consciously give up on maternity by choosing to have an abortion. In a documentary **“Overdue”** (dir. Tessa Louise Pope) we meet three girls who talk about making the most important decision in their life so far. Their faces in close-ups express more than words: pain and an overwhelming weight of responsibility. Even though all three are convinced that they did the right thing, the experience of abortion will change their lives forever.

In her directorial debut Olga Bołądź takes on the topic of abortion in a very different manner.
A difficult, arousing intense emotions subject presented in her short film **“Alice and the Frog”** is a surprising, crazy and colourful story. Grotesque meets with humour and “Alice in Wonderland”. Decision can’t be deferred forever and the place if filled with advisors. For? Against? There is no single answer and probably none is good anyway. All depends on a person. Fairy tale, musical and drama in one; a film which will definitely start conversations.

* “I Need the Handshakes”, dir. Andrej Kuciła, 19’, documentary, Poland 2020
* “I'm Here”, dir. Julia Orlik, 15’, animation, Poland 2020
* “Tell Me More”, dir. Martyna Peszko, 29’, documentary, Poland 2020
* “Between a Rock and a Hard Place”, dir. Mads Koudal, 19’, live action, Dania 2019
* “Lili”, dir. Peter Hegedus, 75’, documentary, Australia, Hungary, 2019
* “He Can't Live Without Cosmos”, dir. Konstantin Bronzit, 16’, animation, Russia 2019
* “Overdue”, dir. Tessa Louise Pope, 24’, documentary, Netherlands 2019
* “Alice and the Frog”, dir. Olga Bołądź, 27’, Poland 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 is available on <http://www.krakowfilmfestival.pl/en>

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

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