WHAT'S SLOVAK IN BERLIN?

FEBRUARY 7–17, 2019
**THE KITE DEALS WITH THE ISSUE OF DEATH, BUT IT DOES SO IN A SIMPLE METAPHORICAL AND SYMBOLIC WAY ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN A LITTLE BOY AND HIS GRANDPA. THE FILM EXPLAINS THAT NONE OF US ARE HERE FOREVER AND THAT ALL LIVING CREATURES MUST DIE, BUT ALSO SHOWS THAT DEATH DOESN’T MEAN THE END OF OUR JOURNEY.**

**INTERVIEW WITH MARTIN SMATANA, DIRECTOR, SCRIPTWRITER AND ANIMATOR OF THE FILM**

Martin Smatana (1991) finished his master’s degree in Animation at FAMU, Prague. During his bachelor studies he completed an internship at Nokufilm Studios in Tallinn, Estonia. For 5 years he has been leading animation workshops for children. His debut Rossa Papevero premiered at Berlinale 2015 Generation Kplus. This year, the same competition section screens his new short The Kite.

The Kite is told from the point of view of a child who witnesses aging and departure of his grandpa whom he deeply loves. What brought you to the idea and what was your approach?

When I started to develop the idea, many asked me if I had gone mad. Then, I was reading a lot about how to speak about such complex issues with children, how to answer their questions truthfully without any underestimating. At the same time, we wanted to approach the matter employing metaphors, symbols, but still in a manner apprehensible for children. Still, it was important for us to have joy and hope in a story about death. That is also why it has taken us a long time to finish the film.

You created a charming and enticing world full of rather popular pastel tones that still avoids being obtrusive. Considering the heavy nature of the film’s theme, we know we needed to employ a kind, soft way of interpretation. I like, for instance, how the puppets’ faces are somewhat incomplete, with only eyes and brows. We found inspiration in the facial expressions of animals, you know, all those cute little dogs that we love just because of their eyes. Also, one of the first things we learn already as small children, is to read emotions from facial expressions. We wanted the story, the film to be universally understood.

You have enlightened us on the development of the idea of The Kite, but how did its script evolve over time?

I wrote the scripts for both of my films in collaboration with Ivana Sujová. Development of The Kite took us very long. That means a lot of Skyving, many meetings and consultations. The final version was written by me alone. From the story development point, I found pitching consultations very helpful. I discussed the story with Philip Laždník, scriptwriter for Dreamworks, at Anifilm in Třeboň. It was he who suggested leaving out a whole flashback passage I then had scripted and sticking with the simplest storytelling model possible. Laždník’s advice shortly before the Anifilm in Łódź helped me a lot. Well, it left me with very little time to write a new script, but it won the pitching.

Your specialty are films for children. How is your script evolve over time?

When we were working on The Kite, we let children see the animatic and discussed what they saw to learn whether they understood what we meant to say. With Ondřej (Ondřej Nedvěd, film’s DoP – ed. note) we were very happy to hear the kids identifying our ideas. Some expressed them in ways beyond our own capacities.

Quite unusually, you stay faithful to puppet animation, despite the fact that there are cheaper and less time-consuming techniques available.

I like the simple fact that it is handmade and that everything you see in the film exists in reality. That you can touch and see the materials used. One of my first records in the family book of children’s quotes is my birthday present request: “I want a pile, a chisel and a grip.” When I was seven-ish, I made these small figures – an army that I took a picture of, moved it a bit, took another picture, moved it again… I had no idea one calls this “animation” not to say “puppet animation” and that one day I will make a living doing it.

Thanks to winning the Anifilm Pitching in Łódź two years ago, you could work at the Polish animation studio CeTA. Looking back, how do you feel about this experience?

That was a first-class opportunity. We had a fully equipped hall and three assistants at our disposal. Our original plan was to produce the whole film in Prague, but this award allowed us to go bigger and to even make shots we otherwise couldn’t have managed. Shots that are bigger, roomier… It suited us more than well, as The Kite deals with flying.

The pitching forums seem to have been important milestones in various phases of the film’s production. Where do you see their benefits?

Already in the sole event of presenting the film, the pitching preparations, the need to formulate the idea to myself, to sort it out. Just working on the presentation moves the project forward. They can be particularly helpful during development, as you can meet well established script editors who can help you identify the strong and the weak points.

Abridged from Film.sk (2019 English Special Edition)

**WHAT’S SLOVAK IN BERLIN?**

**THE KITE**

**SARKAN**

**SCREENINGS**

**FEB 12 > 10:00 > HKW WORLD PREMIERE**

**FEB 13 > 11:30 > CINEMAXX 1**

**FEB 15 > 9:30 > FILM THEATER AM FRIEDRICHSHAIN**

**FEB 16 > 10:00 > HKW**

This film was financially supported by

**WORLD PREMIERE:**

**GENERATION KPLUS**

**DIRECTOR:** Martin Smatana

**SCREENPLAY:** Martin Smatana

**DOP:** Ondřej Nedvěd

**PRODUCTION:** BFILM (SK), BFILM.cz (CZ), FAMU (CZ), CeTA (PL)

**PRODUCER:** BFILM, Peter Badač,
+421 908 882 273, peter@bfilm.sk, www.bfilm.sk

**FESTIVALS:** BFILM, Alexandra Gabrižová,
+421 948 505 304, bfilm@bfilm.sk

**SALES:** Magnetfilm, Georg Gruber,
+49 163 801 0753, georg.gruber@magnetfilm.de

**FEB 14 > 10:00 > FILMTEATER AM FRIEDRICHSHAIN**

**FEB 16 > 10:00 > HKW**

**INTERNET**

**INTERVIEW WITH MARTIN SMATANA, DIRECTOR, SCRIPTWRITER AND ANIMATOR OF THE FILM**

Martin Smatana (1991) finished his master’s degree in Animation at FAMU, Prague. During his bachelor studies he completed an internship at Nokufilm Studios in Tallinn, Estonia. For 5 years he has been leading animation workshops for children. His debut Rossa Papevero premiered at Berlinale 2015 Generation Kplus. This year, the same competition section screens his new short The Kite.

The Kite is told from the point of view of a child who witnesses aging and departure of his grandpa whom he deeply loves. What brought you to the idea and what was your approach?

When I started to develop the idea, many asked me if I had gone mad. Then, I was reading a lot about how to speak about such complex issues with children, how to answer their questions truthfully without any underestimating. At the same time, we wanted to approach the matter employing metaphors, symbols, but still in a manner apprehensible for children. Still, it was important for us to have joy and hope in a story about death. That is also why it has taken us a long time to finish the film.

You created a charming and enticing world full of rather popular pastel tones that still avoids being obtrusive. Considering the heavy nature of the film’s theme, we knew we needed to employ a kind, soft way of interpretation. I like, for instance, how the puppets’ faces are somewhat incomplete, with only eyes and brows. We found inspiration in the facial expressions of animals, you know, all those cute little dogs that we love just because of their eyes. Also, one of the first things we learn already as small children, is to read emotions from facial expressions. We wanted the story, the film to be universally understood.

You have enlightened us on the development of the idea of The Kite, but how did its script evolve over time?

I wrote the scripts for both of my films in collaboration with Ivana Sujová. Development of The Kite took us very long. That means a lot of Skyving, many meetings and consultations. The final version was written by me alone. From the story development point, I found pitching consultations very helpful. I discussed the story with Philip Laždník, scriptwriter for Dreamworks, at Anifilm in Třeboň. It was he who suggested leaving out a whole flashback passage I then had scripted and sticking with the simplest storytelling model possible. Laždník’s advice shortly before the Anifilm in Łódź helped me a lot. Well, it left me with very little time to write a new script, but it won the pitching.

Your specialty are films for children. How is your script evolve over time?

When we were working on The Kite, we let children see the animatic and discussed what they saw to learn whether they understood what we meant to say. With Ondřej (Ondřej Nedvěd, film’s DoP – ed. note) we were very happy to hear the kids identifying our ideas. Some expressed them in ways beyond our own capacities.

Quite unusually, you stay faithful to puppet animation, despite the fact that there are cheaper and less time-consuming techniques available.

I like the simple fact that it is handmade and that everything you see in the film exists in reality. That you can touch and see the materials used. One of my first records in the family book of children’s quotes is my birthday present request: “I want a pile, a chisel and a grip.” When I was seven-ish, I made these small figures – an army that I took a picture of, moved it a bit, took another picture, moved it again… I had no idea one calls this “animation” not to say “puppet animation” and that one day I will make a living doing it.

Thanks to winning the Anifilm Pitching in Łódź two years ago, you could work at the Polish animation studio CeTA. Looking back, how do you feel about this experience?

That was a first-class opportunity. We had a fully equipped hall and three assistants at our disposal. Our original plan was to produce the whole film in Prague, but this award allowed us to go bigger and to even make shots we otherwise couldn’t have managed. Shots that are bigger, roomier… It suited us more than well, as The Kite deals with flying.

The pitching forums seem to have been important milestones in various phases of the film’s production. Where do you see their benefits?

Already in the sole event of presenting the film, the pitching preparations, the need to formulate the idea to myself, to sort it out. Just working on the presentation moves the project forward. They can be particularly helpful during development, as you can meet well established script editors who can help you identify the strong and the weak points.

Abridged from Film.sk (2019 English Special Edition)
A story of a father whose son has been murdered. Four perpetrators are charged with the crime, but thanks to an erroneous court ruling, they soon get to walk free. Determined to uncover the truth, the father enters into an uneven struggle with a passive police force, a corrupt judiciary and a dominant mob. Can he prevail in such a crooked system?

**DOMESTIQUE**  
**OSTRÝM NOŽOM**  

**SK, CZ > 2019 > 89 min. > FICTION**  
**DIRECTOR:** Teodor Kuhn  
**SCREENPLAY:** Jakub Medvecký, Teodor Kuhn  
**DOP:** Denisa Buranová  
**CAST:** Roman Luknár, Ela Lehotská, Miroslav Krobot, Marián Mitaš, Ela Štefunková, David Hartl  
**PRODUCTION:** nutprodukcia (SK), nutprodukce (CZ), Rozhlas a televízia Slovenska (SK)  
**PRODUCER:** Jakub Viktorín, +421 948 050 189, jakub.viktorin@gmail.com, www.nutprodukcia.sk  
**FESTIVALS:** WIDE, Matthias Angoulvant, +33 7 70 07 64 04, ma@widemanagement.com, www.widemanagement.com  
**SALES:** WIDE, Danyah Hannah, +33 7 61 57 96 86, dh@widemanagement.com, www.widemanagement.com  

This film was financially supported by...

**SK, CZ > 2018 > 116 min. > FICTION**  
**DIRECTOR:** Adam Sedláček  
**SCREENPLAY:** Adam Sedláček  
**DOP:** Dušan Husár  
**CAST:** Tereza Horová, Jiří Konvalinka, Miroslav Hanuš, Tomáš Rambužek  
**PRODUCTION:** Shore Points (CZ), sentimentalfilm (SK), Elektra Film (CZ), Soundsquare (CZ), UPF (CZ), Česká televize (CZ)  
**PRODUCER:** Jakub Jíra, +420 602 846 925, jakub@shorepoints.cz, www.shorepoints.cz  
**SLAVAK CO-PRODUCER:** sentimentalfilm, Ivan Ostrochovský, ivan@sentimentalfilm.sk, www.sentimentalfilm.sk  
**FESTIVALS & SALES:** Stray Dogs, Lison Hervé, +33 7 71 88 39 64, lison@stray-dogs.com, www.stray-dogs.biz  

This film was financially supported by...
**The Glass Room**

The Glass Room is an adaptation of Simon Mawer’s novel that traces the history of Czechoslovakia in the 20th century and, at the same time, features three love stories of characters who lived in the Villa Tugendhat over several decades. Liesel Landauer and her friend Hana are the protagonists of the film, telling the story of love, friendship and fundamental life decisions. Two women joined by a life-long relationship and an exceptional house built for Liesel and her husband Viktor by architect Rainer Von Abt.

**My Grandpa Is an Alien**

 Una (9) and an alien robot have 24 hours to find her grandpa who was kidnapped by aliens. This extraordinary adventure will lead to a new friendship, the rational robotic logic will be replaced by emotions, and Una’s selfless love will save her half-alien family.
What’s Slovak in Berlin?

What’s Slovak in Berlin?

ScriptEast 2018 – 2019

ScriptEast is a year-long training programme designed specifically for experienced scriptwriters from Central and Eastern Europe. ScriptEast focuses on the script development, as well as on the overall promotion of film projects and their authors. For the 2018 – 2019 edition, Tereza Nvotová and Barbora Námerová have been selected to further develop their film project The Nightsiren.

THE NIGHTSIREN SVETLONOC

SCREENPLAY: Barbora Námerová
DIRECTOR: Tereza Nvotová

Charlotte returns to a remote cabin in the mountains where she ran away from a child. She seeks solitude after a recent traumatic miscarriage. Instead, she’s confronted by suspicious locals who believe her arrival awakens the witch who once lived there. Charlotte doesn’t believe in witches, but when she finds out that a child was once found there, she starts to wonder whether it could be her long-lost sister. The only local not to help Charlotte is eccentric herbalist Mira. She teaches Charlotte how to free herself from fear and listen to her own body. Together they pick herbs, discover the magic of the forest, and raise suspicions, as rumours of a bald-headed witch spread in the village.

When Charlotte is told that her sister had died, she is overwhelmed by guilt and jumps off a cliff. She awakens wounded, with her wig off, facing Mira, who has saved her. Charlotte admits that she has been tearing out her hair as a punishment for her past mistreatment of her sister. But now Mira reveals her true identity. She is the lost sister whom Charlotte would have thrown off a cliff if she had not been saved by an old hermit woman in the forest, who had raised her in secret.

The sisters begin a new life together in the cabin, but that only needs the hysteria in the village. When two children disappear, the locals are convinced they have been taken off by witch sisters. Charlotte and Mira are brutally attacked, and the cabin is set on fire. To save their lives, Charlotte has to find the strength to forgive herself and liberate her sister from the flames.

PRODUCER: BR Film, Peter Badař, +421 908 882 273, peter@brfilm.sk, www.brfilm.sk

WANDA ADAMÍK HRYCOVÁ

Wanda Adamík Hrycová (1978) has more than 20 years of experience in TV, film and theatre production, she has produced 14 world known theatre musicals, TV fiction series and TV entertainment shows. Between 2010 and 2012, she worked as general director of Media Pro Entertainment Slovakia, which produced the entire local content for TV Markíza. She later established production company Wandal Production and produced feature films Colette (d. M. Cieslar), The Line (d. P. Bebjak), and co-produced documentary My Unknown Soldier (d. A. Kryvenko). Last year, she became president of Slovak Film and Television Academy.

CONTACT: Wandal Production, +421 905 101 803, wanda@wandal.sk, www.wandal.sk

WHAT’S SLOVAK IN BERLIN?

Emerging Producers is a promotional and educational project of the Ji.hlava IDFF, which brings together talented European documentary film producers. Since 2017, following the success of the previous five editions, the programme was extended with an additional four-day meeting in Berlin and producers’ presentation during Berlinale. Slovak Emerging Producer 2019 is Wanda Adamík Hrycová.

NATION’S BELOVED DRAMA IN DEVELOPMENT

It’s the early 1960s. Three former hockey legends of the entire Czechoslovak nation are dealing with the aftermath of a law suit fabricated by the communist party with the golden sportsmen. But the story is still very much alive for all three world champions and friends, yet it means something different to each of them. Each one is carrying a different trauma to deal with, just to go on with their lives. Despite it all, all three are trying to find the long lost mutual friendships and maybe even their last hope in a nation they once represented, that now has turned its back on them.

UPCOMING FILMS:

Oligarch

THRILLER IN DEVELOPMENT

The life of Roman Savojský, oligarch and head of an influential finance group, turns upside down after he finds out the safe flat he’s been using to corrupt high-ranked politicians was wiretapped by the Secret Service. This launches a series of suspenseful events, searches, hunts and intelligence schemes that include media, politicians, Slovak Film Institute, Savojsky’s closest associates and even his own family.

ACCOMpanying EVENTS

Emerging Producers 2019

WHAT’S SLOVAK IN BERLIN?

Slovak Film Commission

Slovak Film News

Emerging Producers 2019

Slovakia in Spotlight at When East Meets West

2019 started off well for Slovakia, being one of the countries in spotlight at When East Meets West (January 20 – 22, 2019), industry platform of Trieste Film Festival (January 18 – 25, 2019). Each year, WEMY dedicates a special EastWest double focus to two selected regions. This year’s edition drew attention to Central Eastern Europe, notably Slovak, Czech Republic, Poland, and Ukraine, as well as Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands for the Benelux. The aim of this regional double focus is to offer the countries in spotlight a special room for the presentation of their audiovisual landscape, with the aim to strengthen collaboration between them.

A strong delegation of Slovak producers, fund and institution representatives, as well as decision makers participated in the event. Furthermore, feature debut by Michal Blaško Victim was presented among the 22 selected projects of the co-production forum, where it received the FLOW Postproduction Award, and producer Jakub Viktorín won the EAVE Producers’ Workshop scholarship.

Slovak producer and director Peter Kerekes, whose project Wishing on a Star won the main award – CNC Development Award at last year’s edition, sat as a jury member of the co-production forum this year. His upcoming documentary Wind (d. M. Bielawski) was screened to an exclusive panel within Last Stop Trieste, a work in progress section for projects in fine cut stage, and his latest film Occupation 1968 (d. E. Moskovka, I. Dombrovský, M. Szymkow, M. E. Scheff, S. Kímanád) veied in the documentary competition of the 30th Trieste Film Festival. The Festival introduced The interpreter (d. M. Šulík) within the feature film competition, (screened by D. Nědeljíčková, N. Majaka) in the short film competition, as well as creative documentary My Unknown Soldier (d. A. Kryvenko) in section当我邂逅Trieste.Slovak classic Sitting on a Bench, I am Fear (d. J. Jakubisko) part of retrospective section 1989 – 2019 Wind of Change.

Slovak participation at WEMW 2019 was co-organized by Slovak Film Institute (SFI) and Slovak Film Commission (SFC).
The following season opened with a retrospective dedicated to Viktor Kubal at SITGES - International Fantastic Film Festival of Catalonia, Spain. Feature animation The Bloody Lady (1960), recounting the historical legend of Countess Bathory alleged of kidnapping and killing virgins from the Castrice region and bathing in their blood to keep eternal youth, screened together with six shorts by Kubal: Earth (1966), Tom Thumb at the Magician’s (1977), Cinema (1977), What Happened to Johnny on the Road (1981), The Weathermen (1983), and The Fall (1989). The Barnabás Kos Case (1964), a satire by Peter Solan on what might happen when a seemingly harmless, almost invisible person raises to power, screened literally only a few days later. Story of Barnabás Kos, a triangle player who becomes director of the orchestra, was presented as one of the Archival Treasures and Curiosities by the Lumiére Grand Lyon Film Festival, France. Later in the year, the film became a part of the In Focus: 100-year-old as a part of Czechoslovak double bill together with Joseph Kilián’s The Idol (1965), a film that cast light on the film and its legacy, while 2 short archival snippets in an original text by Martin Krauss.

The Film shows one day in the life of a perpetrator of domestic violence, Jaroslav K., who works as hospital attendant. Jaroslav, a handsome and seemingly good-natured man and husband, is in fact obsessed with sex and cooking. He is pathologically jealous of his wife Blanka, whom he terrorises in their large family house in a small city. He does not hesitate to use violence, deceit and terror against others, which ultimately leads to a family tragedy and finally turns against him.

Mira Fornay’s second feature film My Dog Killer won the Hivos Tiger Award at IFF in Rotterdam in 2013.

This project was financially supported by

CENTRAL EUROPEAN CINEMA STAND NO. 110 Gregius Bau

Slovakia is hosted at the European Film Market in Berlin for the 14th time. With friends and colleagues from Czech Republic and Slovenia, under the umbrella stand “Central European Cinema” Slovak Film Institute offers an informational and promotional point for Slovak cinema and a networking place for Slovak film professionals and their international counterparts. Come & meet us at the EFMI www.efm-berlinale.de

Slovak Film Institute

National Film Archive, National Cinemographic Centre, seat of Creative Europe Desk Slovak Republic, Kino Luxembourg, Kláštorisko, store, member of RFAF and EFP

REPRESENTATIVES AT BERLINALE 2019

Rastislav Steranka, Feb 7 – 13, rastislav.steranka@sfu.sk, +421 905 539 500
Kristina Aschenbrennerová, Feb 6 – 16, kristina.aschenbrennerova@sfu.sk, +421 917 684 839
Lea Pagáčová, Feb 6 – 16, lea.pagacova@sfu.sk, +421 905 422 281
Vanda Vavclavová (SH Sales), Feb 7 – 10, vanda.vavclavova@sfu.sk
Zuzana Bieliková (FSF), Feb 8 – 14, zuzana.bielikova@filmcommission.sk, +421 365 303 073
Eva Pospišillová (FSF), Feb 8 – 14, eva.pospisilova@filmcommission.sk, +421 948 768 846

CONTACT

Slovak Film Institute / Slovenský filmeový ústav Grosslingová 32, 811 09 Bratislava +421 2 570 1503, sfu@sfu.sk

Andrea Hartmancová

In the 2nd half of 2018, digitally restored films from the collection of the National Film Archive of Slovak Film Institute participated at several film festivals. Aside from short documentaries on the events of 1968 – 1969 in Czechoslovakia, three features were introduced at prestigious events.

The summer of 2018 opened with World War I drama by Martin Holý Signum Lauds (1985), story of Corporal Hoferik, who, in his devotion to the Habsburg Monarchy, fanatically carries out his military orders, but ultimately suffers the Empire’s disfavour. The film was screened at Out of Past section of Karlovy Vary International Film Festival, Czech Republic.


The third bluray released in 2018, Peter Solan’s second feature film My Dog Killer was nominated for Best First Feature Film Award by festival director Dieter Kosslick in 2019.

What’s Slovak in Berlin?

It comes with bonus material putting the film into a broader historical context: short documentary by Stefan Uher Marked by Darkness (1999) about a school for visually impaired children, documentary The Story of The Miraculous Virgin by Ivan Ostrochovský sheds light on the film and its legacy, while 2 short archival snippets looking for Anabella and a trailer round up its offer. The release features booklet with an original essay by film historian Michal Malichov.

A successful year for digitally restored Slovak classics

HATS OFF TO THE SLOVAK FILM INSTITUTE...
SLOVAK FILM INSTITUTE AND SLOVAK FILM COMMISSION JOIN FORCES TO PROMOTE SLOVAKIA AT INTERNATIONAL FILM MARKETS.

EUROPEAN FILM MARKET, BERLINALE 2019
[ 7 — 15 FEBRUARY 2019 ]

MARCHÉ DU FILM, FESTIVAL DE CANNES 2019
[ 14 — 23 MAY 2019 ]