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Welcome! Dobro došli! Bienvenue! Willkommen! Benvenuti! Youkoso!

Follow new Slovak film titles and find out what's on the above pictures. Send the right answer to kinecko@kinecko.com and win a great original prize from Kinečko.

Our dear English-speaking readers, we very much appreciate your kind support so far. Here's our way of saying "Thank you!" – the first English issue of our magazine, under the title TheKINEČKO. Now you can enjoy more than just the sight of our pretty cover envelopes, the pics inside, and the bonus DVDs included with each issue. Our goal was to give you the chance to enjoy the content of this unique Slovak film magazine. Many of you that we have interviewed, met at festivals, organised discussions and projections with, but above all, become friends with, have been encouraging us to publish an issue that you would be able to read and understand.

To those not yet familiar with KINEČKO, we dedicate these words introducing our project:

KINEČKO is a new bimonthly magazine that reflects cinematography in the context of contemporary culture, presents to the public a profound non-conformist analysis of film, and supports writing about film as a relevant component of living cinematography. It also serves as a source of information and a platform for unofficial, yet well-founded debate between contemporary filmmakers and critics. The target group of KINEČKO comprises film professionals, students, festival-goers, film club members, film enthusiasts without limits, and those interested in sharing a bolder perspective on contemporary cinematography.

Slovakia scarcely has 5 million inhabitants, its cinematography is very small, and therefore writing about film in our country was until recently considered a luxury. Some even saw it as a certain kind of unnecessary parasitism. That is why KINEČKO set the goal to raise awareness of film not only by means of writing about cinematography. We also provide opportunities for filmmakers and film critics to meet as equals, to reflect on the problems of cinematography, and to cultivate film conditions together.

The choice of articles included in the Slovak version of KINEČKO is a little different from the English version you are reading right now. The Slovak KINEČKO tries to focus more on local activities, and emphasizes remarkable film enterprises that are neglected or ignored by the mainstream. It is divided into 5 sections: *Around the World*, *Close Up of Slovak Film*, *Film Basement* (an underground look at underground film), *Beyond*

Cinema (a section dedicated to video art and other crossovers of film with fine art) and *D.I.Y.* (legal counselling for producers). Apart from publishing the magazine, KINEČKO also organises debates and screenings related to the articles included in the magazine. As film distribution in our country lags behind world premieres, it is essential to us that viewers have the chance to see the contemporary creation that they read about.

We decided to adjust The KINEČKO to the interests and priorities of foreign readers who probably expect a Slovak magazine to convey information mainly about Slovak film and Slovak filmmakers. For this reason we have prepared a number of texts written and translated exclusively to briefly present you with the contemporary situation in Slovak cinematography. The overview you find here doesn't copy the statistics of film attendance that you can find on the internet. It abides by the original taste of The KINEČKO's editorial team. Apart from the Slovakia-related content, we have also included exclusive interviews with world renowned filmmakers.

The KINEČKO doesn't approve of any walls or boundaries, so readers can enter without being afraid of going astray, and without worrying about any barriers that would impede their minds to move freely. However, we would like to offer you our guidance to make your excursion into this imaginary landscape more effective.

The picture you are looking at is a screenshot from one of the Slovak films mentioned in the following articles. If you can identify the film and are the first to send the correct answer via e-mail to KINEČKO, you will receive a small present and an opportunity to publish your own photo riddle on the cover of the next edition of The KINEČKO.

After you have finished reading the editorial, you will probably proceed to "Close Up of Slovak Film," the section introducing the most interesting pieces originating in Slovak film. It also reviews the rises and falls of last year's cinematography, and foreshadows some events to come this year. We introduce seven active young filmmakers through their answers to our questions, and you will also have the opportunity to read reviews of Slovak films.

In the following section entitled *At our closest neighbours* we crossed our border to track the situation in Czech cinematography. Czech film has played a very significant role in Slovakia. For almost half century we were united as one country and the languages we speak are very similar, so we have never regarded our neighbours as a "foreign country." However, it wouldn't be justifiable to include the account of Czech cinematography in the Slovak section. The last part of The KINEČKO will take you on a journey around the world. Even though most of you live in countries with first-rate film criticism and famous film magazines, countries abounding in quality film press, we couldn't help but share with you some of the most exciting encounters and most interesting interviews that we experienced last year on our festival trips. There were many, but unfortunately we had to pick just three to fit onto the 12 pages.

For the editorial team of KINEČKO, I would like to wish you pleasant reading, and in the name of young Slovak film, I hope you will find much inspiring information on the following pages. And if you feel like sharing your ideas, reactions or advice, or to get some extra copies of The KINEČKO for your friends, colleagues or festivals, don't hesitate to e-mail us at kinecko@kinecko.com. We will also be very glad if you befriend us on Facebook, or follow our activities at www.kinecko.com.

Still haven't found out why we named this issue The KINEČKO? We wanted to give the international issue an international name, so we added the English article, but we also wanted to preserve the Slovak diacritical mark over the Č, which most foreigners find so "cute" and characteristic of our language. By the way, did you know that the English translation for KINEČKO would be "little cinema"?

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EVA KRIŽKOVÁ
(trans. by BD)

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Drawbacks of Film Production in Slovakia

The Slovak audiovisual environment has been struggling for independence since its inception. It has been radically influenced and continuously formed by various political, social and legislative aspects. Under the ever-changing circumstances of film financing, we cannot really talk about a stable environment for audiovisual creation. Producers have to find ways to produce films, although their profession is often underestimated, criticised and misunderstood.

In this article, I complemented my personal experience with the opinions of my colleagues. The interviewed producers evaluate the conditions for filmmaking from the points of view of the professional and technological equipment of production and postproduction, and from the angle of production financing. According to the words of Ján Opatry¹ “after the fall of the Koliba Film Studios² and the shutdown of dramatic production in Slovak Television, some professions disappeared from our region and their replacement is poor, because the continuity was broken...” Erik Panák³ points out that technology is developing and this makes filmmaking easier; he even states that the new gadgets are a delight to work with. The worse thing is that it gets increasingly difficult to find efficient and reliable people as operators. Mátýás Prikler⁴, on the contrary, thinks that in Slovak audio-visual there are many skilled, productive and creative people. Lívia Filusová⁵ claims that “the technological base has expanded thanks to a wide range of well equipped studios that provide a technological and professional guarantee for the production of all film formats.” Ivana Laučíková⁶ has a different opinion. She states that “in the field of animated film, there is no professional production background. The small number of animation films that are made, are produced in small studios or at animators’ homes.” She adds that “RTVS⁷ doesn’t offer any type of cooperation to animators, and the only possible source for the financing of this kind of creation is the Audiovisual Fund”. Milan Stráňava⁸ also emphasises the problems related to the lack of financial support for film production: “Private stations are not interested in participating in independent film production and they try to push their own projects for the AVF⁹ financing. The European fund Eurimages is almost unavailable for projects from this unstable background, and the same can be said about potential foreign co-producers whose opinion of our environment is not very flattering. In addition, filmmakers harm their own circles with spite and disunity.”

Can we talk about the support of audiovisual creation in Slovakia as a systematic initiative?

Thanks to the foundation of the Audiovisual Fund (AVF) which has also served as an inspiration for our “closest” neighbours, the conditions for film production have improved considerably in our country. Among the most positive changes, we should certainly mention that the institution is more accessible to applicants than the Ministry of Culture (which had been responsible for the financing of audiovisual projects before). With the establishment of the Fund, more financial resources are invested in cinematography and the grants are not directly linked to the state budget. Despite some turbulence and media fuss that accompanied the initial process of adjusting the criteria and the system of its functioning, we can now say that many producers consider the establishment of the AVF as a positive event. The Audiovisual Fund is the only real backer of cinematography. Although RTVS-Slovak public television should also form part of the financing system, as its very essence is

to support domestic audiovisual creation, the conditions it sets for independent producers are mostly unacceptable and paradoxically, they often complicate the production process and represent a burden to producers. Private stations a priori don’t encourage cinematography, since they focus rather on the production of their own series. As for sponsors, the low audience potential discourages them from investing in film production. The distributors’ financing by means of a “minimum guarantee” system is not an option in Slovakia. Neither is “presale” by vendors. The banking sector is not very open to this kind of project, and region-based film financing is an unrealisable utopia in Slovakia. There are two more institutions: the Slovak Film Institute (SFI), whose role (among others) is to present Slovak films home and abroad, and then there is the Audiovisual Information Centre (AIC), that provides information on the situation in Slovak audio-visual and cinematography. From my personal experience, I evaluate the cooperation with both these institutions as very positive. And though their resources are limited, I find them really helpful to producers, as they do activities that producers cannot afford. Many of our producers share these views, although with certain reservations. Lívia Filusová finds cooperation with RTVS insufficient, non-systemic, and she thinks that this institution acts according to its own interests: “Pretending transparency in the choice of so-called external projects is a ridicule of honest filmmakers who try to create quality projects that could represent an alternative to commercial stations...” Patrik Pašš¹⁰ asserts that Slovakia hasn’t yet managed to establish a complex system endorsing the continual development and growth of cinematography. With respect to RTVS, he says: “Lawmakers have long been avoiding the problem of sub-standard financing of RTVS, which resulted in a stagnation of human, technological and programme resources. So far, the parliament hasn’t managed to create conditions to encourage original audiovisual creation in RTVS. The prolongation of this inactivity takes audiovisual creation back to the situation from 10 years ago, as it invalidates the existence of the second pillar of its financing system. The solution is up to those responsible members of parliament who will pluck up the courage to undertake certain systemic measures (e.g. to sign a contract with the State). As for the filmmakers, they should unite and support these measures constructively in order to achieve progress.” Lubomír Slivka¹¹ is convinced that “similarly to Czech Television, RTVS could enhance its trademark supporting domestic film creation... films don’t just represent expenses to production, they can also be a source of income if they manage to sell abroad.” He regards the cooperation with SFI as very efficient. He also emphasises that “Slovakia is too small a country to have the luxury to finance national cinematography on her own.”

And because of this reason, I personally consider communication with foreign partners and the presentation of projects at the international level as essential, which has been proved by the examples of Slovak directors Peter Kerekeš, Marko Škop and Juraj Lehotský¹².

Michal Kollár¹³ adds that “thanks to the support of SFI, the film House (Dom) by Zuzana Liová could participate in the prestigious competition and be featured in the Variety’s Critic Choice at Karlovy Vary. And I could take part in the 2011 European Film Promotion’s Producer on the Move presentation in Cannes, which would not have been possible without their backing. They help to establish long-term cooperation with co-producers abroad and what is more, they encourage further propagation of films that have been produced.”

AIC also has a very important role in these activities. According to Mátýás Prikler: “AIC has done a great deal to promote Slovak film abroad since it participates at important festivals. It wasn’t always like that, but in the past few years it has become a standard, which is very significant.”

Having overcome the problems with financing, there is another crucial task for producers – they have to get their work among viewers. Considering the size of our distribution market, the timing of a campaign and cinema release is essential. Unfortunately, attendance statistics suggest that these factors are rarely taken into account. Domestic film production represents a negligible part of distributors’ portfolios, and to them it is just a marginal activity. Based on contracts for exclusive representation, foreign companies usually supply their distributors with whole film packages including complete promotion services. Thus distributors don’t have to invest in any media campaign. What is worse, they expect the same approach from Slovak producers, which is completely inadequate. And so producers often have to substitute for distributors communicating with the mass media, producing distribution copies, bearing all costs related to film promotion including the costs for the press screening, hire of the cinema hall, charges for launching the film in digital cinemas, etc. As a rule, Slovak films are screened at the weakest projection times, and cinemas show them often for very short periods of time. Obviously, the reason can be found in the policies of multiplex owners, who give preference mainly to their own commercial interests.

What is the producers’ view of the distribution of Slovak films, and what are the drawbacks they encounter most?

Marián Urban¹⁴ emphasises that “...there is an increasing problem related to the closing of small, single-screen cinema halls, as there is no systemic help for cinema digitalisation, save some minor support by AVF.” Lívia Filusová sees Slovak distribution as lamentable and she thinks that “a distributor should assume responsibility for the result – cinema attendance”. Erik Panák believes that the main problem is competitiveness. Milan Stráňava says that “the range of themes and production activities is quite wide, and viewers don’t respond to that. The peak attendances of Slovak films reach around 100,000 viewers, but usually the numbers range from ten to twenty thousand.” Lubomír Slivka shares this opinion and adds: “...Propagation is a huge problem. Film critics don’t bother to indicate which films are aimed

for which target audience to help the potential viewer choose. Their self-conceit turns them into unintentional saboteurs.” Patrik Pašš: “Slovak films have to compete with high-budget foreign movies to win the attention of the audience. This is an issue that creators, distributors and lawmakers haven’t managed to solve so far.” Ivana Laučíková points out that: “In Slovakia there is still an option to present a short film as a supporting film to a feature, which is an advantage to foreign countries. Unfortunately, this kind of release doesn’t bring the producer any income, it just represents more expense. That is why small producers cannot afford it without support from institutions.”

To objectify the attitudes of distributors to Slovak film, I have to acknowledge that many Slovak films don’t reach the artistic or commercial level that would attract viewers.

What is the biggest problem with Slovak film and cinematography according to Slovak producers, and how do they evaluate the character of contemporary Slovak audiovisual creation?

To Lubomír Slivka it seems that the biggest problem with our films is that they are Slovak: “It is a trademark that has gained a bad reputation. On the other hand, we have to admit that Slovak films lack attractiveness. They are mostly gloomy, which is something viewers don’t like, for they have their own worries. Slovak film is still looking for its own face. There has been a gap in Slovak film creation caused by the lack of a whole generation of filmmakers. I believe that the young generation will revive film. If a film is made primarily for cinema, its target audience is usually up to 25 years old. Whether we like it or not, we have become a part of the film industry.” Ivana Laučíková states that: “Contemporary Slovak short animated films are quite successful abroad. But because of their low production, they cannot find a place in distribution as a regular standard format. The creation of an animated series is almost unthinkable; feature-length cartoons are also very rare. The general knowledge of animation in Slovakia is very limited, therefore it is not a profitable audiovisual merchandise.” According to Ján Opatry “the problem can also be found in the lack of good screenplays – exciting, dramatic and emotive literary texts. And it is also necessary to invest more public resources in film, and to form legislative and fiscal conditions for the private sector (banks, financial groups, large companies) to motivate its cooperation on film production, if patriotism is not a sufficient motivation.” Marián Urban claims that “Too many Slovak films are enclosed in local or regional ‘self-centredness,’ which limits their distribution options abroad.”

A possible solution could be the support of young filmmakers’ mobility, so they can confront the world, and gain experience at international events and competitions. At present they don’t have enough courage to leave the line, use new ways of expression, or deal with less serious topics.

From the point of view of a young producer, I have to say that it is almost impossible to pursue film production in Slovakia without having other sources of income. All Slovak producers would agree with that. Each and every



poster of Revolution’s Men

audiovisual work in our country has originated only thanks to the stamina of the team of people who have found the strength and courage, and overcome all of the impediments of our audiovisual environment. Filmmaking has become a question of personal enthusiasm and a struggle to create permanent values. Because of the weak backbone of the system and the size of the Slovak market, the role of a producer to ensure the recoverability of financial resources is almost impossible to accomplish. There are some exceptions, but these are often just a result of a lucky concurrence of circumstances, and not always can their success be assigned to producers’ abilities. Unfortunately, we often see in practice the quote from Ivana Laučíková: “by the spirit of the age of market, those who create values instead of income are considered parasites. Art and culture have become unwanted. Under such circumstances, it is extremely difficult not only to provide the resources to create a work, but most of all, to answer yourself the crucial question: why and for whom do I create?”

Despite all the drawbacks and often also existential problems of filmmakers, film has retained the power to capture and fascinate. That is why most film producers remain faithful to their profession, try to finish the projects they started, and believe that one day they will find a subject, a theme or a project that will capture them to such an extent that they will know their previous experience was worth it.

— BARBARA HARUMOVÁ HESSOVÁ¹⁵

- Ján Opatry – producer and documentarist, executive of Alef JO Filmstudio
- Koliba: Slovak film creation used to be represented by Koliba Film Studios. The non-transparent privatisation in 1989 resulted in the fragmentation of the film community and the decline of the technological base.
- Erik Panák – producer, works for ARINA
- Mátýás Prikler – director, producer, executive of MPhlms
- Lívia Filusová – producer, works for FURIA FILM
- Ivana Laučíková – animator, producer of animated short films, executive of feel me film
- RTVS – Radio and Television of Slovakia, public institution
- Milan Stráňava – producer, executive of JMB Film & TV Production Bratislava
- AVF – The Audiovisual Fund
- Patrik Pašš – producer, editor, executive of TRIGON PRODUCTION, former chairman of the AVF Committee
- Lubomír Slivka – producer, distributor, script editor, executive of ATTACK FILM
- Peter Kerekeš – documentarist, producer, Juraj Lehotský – director, Marko Škop – documentarist, producer for Artileria
- Michal Kollár – producer for Fog’n Desire Films
- Marián Urban – producer and executive of ALEF Film and Media Group
- Barbara Harumová Hessová – independent producer and executive of AH production, s.r.o.

Film Journalism Becomes Her

Zuzana Piussi got famous – in Slovakia at least – by pissing people off. With her fondness of topics that have a detonating impact on society and its communities. Her wanton choice of untypical representatives (*Grandma*, *Angels do weep*), or ones who recklessly betray their subordinates (*Scrap*). Her directorial decisions to focus on unsolved cases (*Koliba*); her outrageous editing that leads to unflattering or misleading analogies; her hybrid approach (cross-breeding journalism with stylization, or a reporter’s story with staged action).

All this has earned Zuzana Piussi the fame of a rebel filmmaker, a “She-Knight-Shining”, with no shield or armour of documentary filmmaking principles. And with no scruples.

After the feature *Grandma* (2008) and the short *Hero of our Time* (2009), Piussi briefly diverted toward a tongue-in-cheek report on the best chicken wings in America, *Chicken love* (2011). With her latest two flicks she returns home: in *Third Power Ailing* (2011) and *Revolution’s Men* (2012) she ventures into socially urgent, even agonizing topics. Also into one the public relates to with a heavy dose of nostalgia.

With these two films, Zuzana Piussi grew serious. She rejoined her tendency that had been already outlined in her student-time *Scrap* and deepened in *Koliba*: concentrating on social-political journalism, letting go of excessive authorship. The first film, *Third Power Ailing*, can be defined as engaged journalism. Piussi openly chooses her camp here, siding with the bullied Slovak judges who protest against the repressive policies of Slovak Chief Justice Štefan Harabin. She allows Harabin, the judges, as well as journalists and civil activists, to speak out. The picture Piussi delivers of the situation in Slovak justice is emotional. She can’t help it actually. For she speaks not only about a profession, but also about individual judges: their destinies shaken by disproportionate disciplinary actions, themselves frustrated by the overall sense of fear in Slovak justice, and who, with utmost accuracy, diagnose its worst disease: on one side, the abuse of power; on the other side, the fear of the bullied.

Piussi also manages to label the disease of Slovak society: lethargy, indifference, minimal long-term civic involvement resulting in civic impotence. “A thousand people show at a protest rally, ten thousand sign a petition... and then, nothing”, Zuzana Wienk of the Fair-Play Alliance says in the film. “People go to work, they get on with their lives.” This is why the tyrant may continue to smile on camera, self-complacent, scot-free, and protected both by his office and by the sheepishness of the public. This is exactly why I would very much like to see this film act as a detonator.

The first part of *Revolution’s Men* shows the contrasting era of the general public’s mobilization, endowed (albeit temporarily) by an intense will to partake in the transformation of the political system and the functioning of society as a whole.

But it is exactly this picture of the “Gentle Revolution”¹ that Zuzana Piussi shatters. She lifts the veil of nostalgia and uncovers processes that the public, even their revolutionary leaders, did not know much about at the time. The first part of the film covers several months, from the end of 1989 to the first free parliamentary election in June 1990 (The second

part – the one I am curious about – covers the 20 next years.). With the first part’s time this dense, Piussi succeeds in remaining true to her theme – the apparatuses hand down their power yet re-emerge in its new structures; the state security’s archives are destroyed yet certain materials reappear in deceptive and selective screenings. It is fascinating to witness how the protagonists of the Gentle Revolution self-advocate, cleanse, and reason their actions. Marcel Ophüls, the legendary French documentary filmmaker, once stated that when it comes to memories, he is less interested in whether the witnesses succeed in truly reconstructing the events. Rather, it is the way they relate – how they mislead, lie, exaggerate, or even defend themselves. How their statements morph in function of the later consequences of their actions. This applies to the statements of the *Revolution’s Men* as well. Confronting two testimonies, Piussi does not probe which one is telling the truth: she is satisfied with showing both interpretations. Similarly, by means of intercutting, she shows the Czech vs. Slovak haggle about the politicians who were spared of screening, but who definitely would not pass if they were investigated: a Slovak politician points out that a majority of them were Czech, while in turn a Czech historian turns the spotlight on the Slovak ones.

Nonetheless, Piussi does not relativize nor does she resign from the search for the right version of history: she captures the state where any memory creates past events anew: since the witness knows the future of the past in question and hence, for the present, he (or she) selects the relevant subjectively.

Both *Revolution’s Men* and *Ailing Third Power* alike mostly rely on “talking heads”, complemented in a sober fashion by archive footage. The irritation these films may spark is not gratuitous. Instead, Piussi concentrates on naming the state of the society. She even looks for answers although she may not know the questions, pretty much like her audience. Therefore it seems to me that with these two films, Zuzana Piussi has finally found her place in the Slovak documentary film genre. A place she has a good view from, and one from which she succeeds in irritating and discomforting her audience in the best and most productive way.

— MÁRIA FERENČUHOVÁ (trans. by DJ)

- From the start, Gentle Revolution was the official title of the 1989’s Velvet Revolution in the territory of Slovakia, distinguishing the future countries from day One.

and Kiarostami later wrote two screenplays for Panahi: *The White Balloon* and *Crimson Gold*.

The White Balloon (1995), Panahi's debut that earned him a Camera d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival, is the story of a girl who wants to buy a goldfish, but she loses her money on the way. She drops it through a grate of a sewer and tries to retrieve it throughout the film. In the meantime, she meets all sorts of people (but not stereotyped characters), which creates a portrait of Iranian society. The fact that the protagonist is a child enabled the director to conceal his critical views. She doesn't yet know all the rules of conduct, therefore she can question them with her childish naivety. The girl obstinately follows her goal, she stands up to her parents, but she also gets deceived by swindlers.

Iranian Cinema often uses child characters to expose particular phenomena. Another Panahi film, *The Mirror* (1997), awarded the Golden Leopard in Locarno, also builds on this pattern. This time a girl tries to get home on her own because her mother didn't come to pick her up. But in the middle of the film there is a surprising twist: the girl resigns her role, she refuses to act, and the rest of the film is about her "real" way home, during which she is "secretly" followed by the film crew.

Once more, we can observe a portrait of the society, but the forsaking of her role emphasizes the realism in several ways. When the girl explicitly denotes the first part of the film as fiction, it inevitably makes the second part a "documentary" or an account of "reality." On the other hand, these two parts are so similar (the girl continues on her way home), that if the second part is "real", it makes us see the first part as very realistic, though it is a fiction.

Panahi's third film represents a certain shift in his creation, even if the motifs emphasised in this work also appeared in previous films. *The Circle* (2000), awarded the Venetian Golden Lion, is the story of

a number of women who are afraid and powerless. There are scenes when we don't really get to know what their problems are, the film doesn't go into details. We just witness anonymous harm, pressure originated by the system, not by concrete people. We don't see the faces of policemen because they don't act as individuals, but as part of a system. As a rule, in Panahi's films there are no actual protagonists or antagonists.

The metaphor of the circle appears in this film at the level of narration, telling the stories of the particular women one by one. They pass the main role in the film among themselves at the moment they meet, as if they were passing one another a relay baton (in fact, Panahi was inspired by the pattern of a relay). In addition, the film ends where it started, in prison. But there is another level of the circular structure – the implicit one. The characters find themselves in a vicious circle from which there is no chance of escape. Their only possibility to find more freedom and room for life is to extend the radius of the circle. In this film we also do not get a closer look at the characters, everything is impersonal: we just observe small fragments of their lives. This way, the movie is more universal and it stops being related exclusively to Iran or to the position of women. It is about the personal freedom of all people.

Crimson Gold (2003) differs from the rest of this director's films. It abandons crude realism and is more melancholic. Through the character of a young thief, Panahi exposes the differences between the rich and the poor. In *Offside* (2006), his last film, that was awarded at the Berlinale with the Silver Bear, he returns to female characters. This time he follows the story of girls that try to get into a football match, something that is not allowed for women.

Many of the elements we find in these films are also present in his documentary

This is not a film. But here the victim of the anonymous evil is Panahi himself, and he is the one who has to learn how to expand the circle around him. Although it is evident that he became a victim of a politicized process, he doesn't designate the problem explicitly, he doesn't blame the government. Even when the demonstrations against the government appear in the film, he doesn't comment on them. Instead of an open fight, he protests with his art, making a film that is not a film. His gesture is comparable to the actions of the women characters in his films. When they try to get into a football match or light a cigarette in the middle of the street, these aren't actually acts of revolt, but in the given situation it makes them feel a little freer.

To him it is more important to orientate himself in the situation and to push borders as far as he can, to achieve as much personal freedom as possible. So when he isn't allowed to shoot a film, he tries to create it in a different way, by making it inside his mind.

The documentary takes place within the span of one day, when Panahi was still under house arrest, waiting for the decision of the Court of Appeal. We witness his everyday routine (he talks to his neighbors, plays with an iguana, calls his lawyer, etc.), which presents him in a similar way as he employed to depict his characters (and this retrospectively emphasizes the realism of his previous films).

However, the most interesting part of the film is the director's reflections about it. The most powerful scenes take place in his living room where he tries to stage his non-film according to the screenplay he wasn't allowed to shoot. He explains his vision and becomes an actor himself. He actually poses the question if what he does could be considered a film, or if a "true" film has to be shot on a film strip. Eventually, he realizes that there's no point in continuing the shooting. With tears in his eyes, he realizes that this is not a film. But right after

that, he starts to talk with enthusiasm about his previous films and about takes in which he managed to capture something unique.

That is why the central motif of this non-film is the love of film, the passion for something forbidden (which brings us back to the theme of inner freedom). At the same time, this piece contains an ontological moment for cinema: What is film? Is it an audiovisual recording or is it rather the mental scheme of a director/a viewer? Are the scenes created in Panahi's mind a film? Or is it necessary that he shoots them with actors, and only then would it be considered a film? And if he shoots himself talking about his ideas about the film, will the recording be a film or will it just be some non-film?

In addition, there is the moral aspect of the whole situation that forces us to reflect on whether it is even possible for a director to make a film under such circumstances, or whether he is confined to making just non-films? And there is another angle: if the previous movies that Panahi made were considered non-films by the Iranian government and banned, if the rest of his films were not films, then this one cannot be a film either. Panahi's works offer countless impulses for consideration. In a way, we can (even) think about Magritte's painting, *This is not a pipe...*

The title *This is not a Film* is obviously a message to the Iranian authorities. Even though Panahi is inside his flat throughout the film (save for the last few seconds), by means of this non-film he comments on the state of the entire society in which he lives. At the same time, the title claims something that should be questioned by the viewer. If (even) this is not a film, then what (the) film is?

TOMÁŠ HUDÁK
(trans. by BD)

Animals in the World

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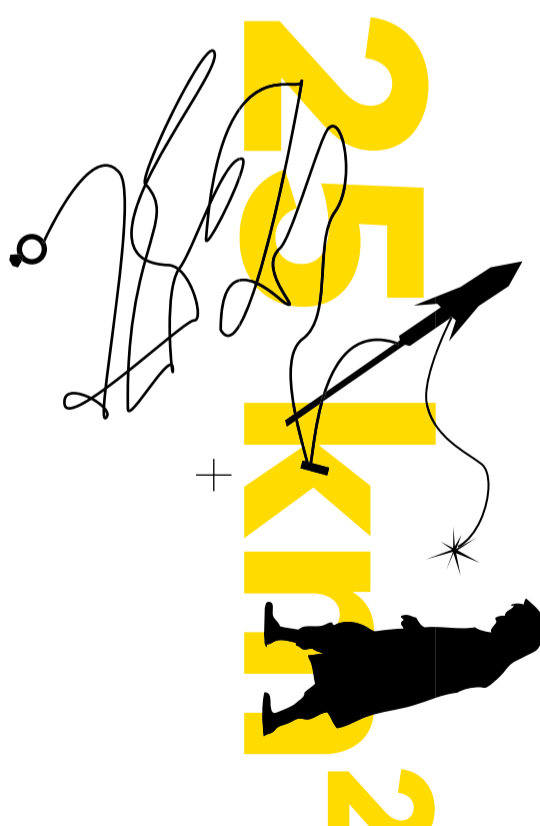
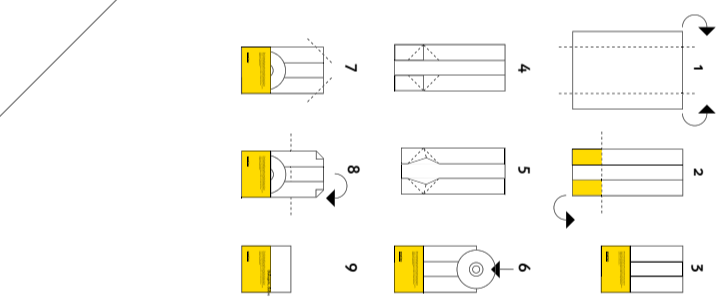
The short film **25 km²** by Jana Mináriková is about a (non)fictitious man called Martin. Since childhood his life has been connected with jewellery making. At first as a hobby, later as a profession that bears risks related to the specific hydrometeorological method he uses. It is based on the fact that pieces of metal radically change under the influence of the electric energy of lightning. But metals are not the only things that change. So does Martin. **25 km²** was filmed on an 8mm camera, not out of whimsy, but for reasons that will be explained in the film.

The young Slovak director Jana Mináriková studied graphic arts in Nitra. Later, she attended the Department of Screenwriting of the Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava, and she graduated in Documentary Creation at the same college.

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25 km²