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shortrrmag

ISSUE 1 - MAR 2021

the
OSCAR S
SHORTLIST
edition



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HAVE MADE IT
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THE OSCAR® *SHORTLIST* EDITION

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Publisher: Erango Media, Inc.

Volume #1, Issue #1

March 13, 2021

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PROUDLY PUBLISHED IN CANADA
by ERANGO MEDIA INC.

300-22420 DEWDNEY TRUNK ROAD - MAPLE RIDGE, BRITISH COLUMBIA - V2X3J5

THE BIG FUTURE FOR SHORT FILMS

The biggest ambition for any artist is to be able to showcase their art to the largest audience possible. Today, the most widely recognised and most popular platform for any filmmaker to be featured on is the **Oscars**. It is THE label one would want to be associated with their film. Just being Oscar Nominated is a dream come true for many filmmakers out there and winning one would not only be career defining but also a life milestone for every aspiring film professional anywhere in the world.

Traditionally, a high percentage of successful film professionals across the world would have started their careers by being associated with a short film - be it a student film or a private project. The addiction to the medium is first tasted in the short format! So, every year when this time comes around, it is heartwarming to see the fresh crop of talent and new content we are priviledged to consume. Talented filmmakers from all corners of the world are pushing the boundaries of what it means to make a short film and are being recognised for their efforts by the Academy.

This year has been tough on every industry, but the creativity and talent has found a way to thrive. “Shortrrmag” was created to showcase and champion the best shortfilms of the world and we are proud to bring our premiere issue, talking about the 20 films that are on the cusp of making history. Getting shortlisted from amongst 270 films that qualified for the Oscars, these films are already making waves across the world. We are thrilled to have the opportunity to talk to the people behind these films. Read on to get a peek into their minds!

“Shortrrmag” is proud to be a part of shaping the future of the international short film industry.



The 93rd Oscar Nominations Announcement is on
Monday, March 15th 2021

Watch the The 93rd Oscars® Live on
Sunday, April 25th at 5:00 PM PT.

televised live on ABC and in more than 225 countries and territories worldwide.

THE OSCAR *SHORTLIST* EDITION

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AND EVERYTHING ELSE ABOUT THE OSCAR SHORTLISTED SHORTS



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BURROW

A young rabbit embarks on a journey to dig the burrow of her dreams, despite not having a clue what she's doing.



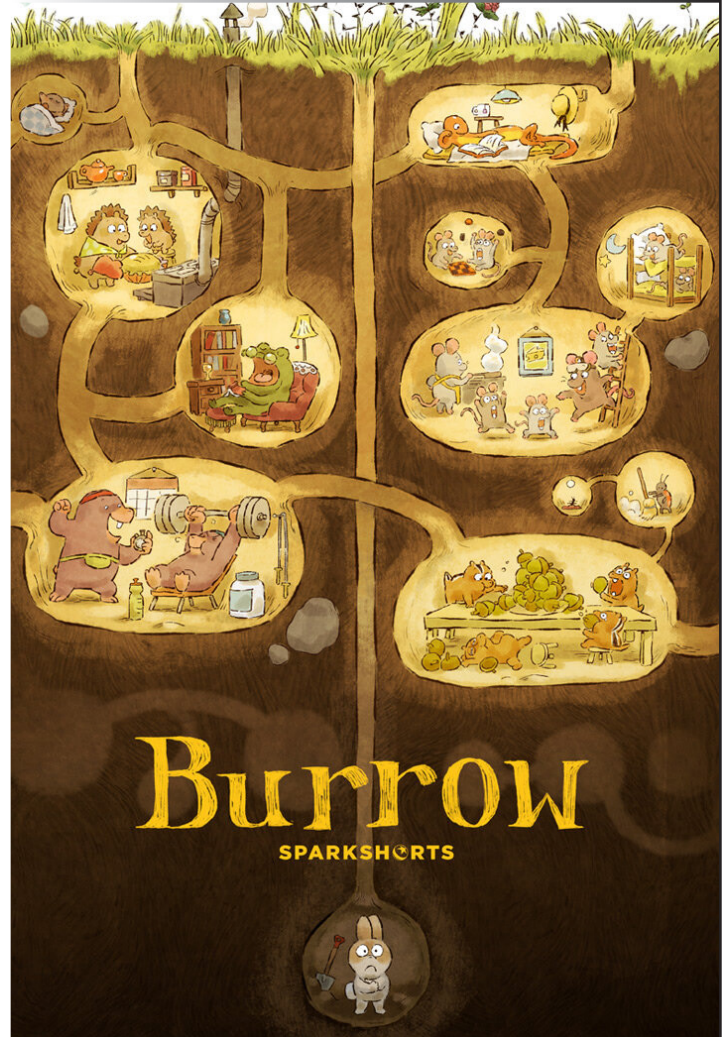


Directed by	Madeline Sharafian
Produced by	Mike Capbarat
Screenplay by	Madeline Sharafian
Cinematography	Andrew Jimenez
Edited by	Anna Wolitzky
Production company	Pixar Animation Studios
Distributed by	Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures
Running time	6 minutes
Country	United States
Language	English

In just six minutes this magnificent short coming from Pixar's SparkShorts program drives home a very important message – **never be afraid to ask for help.**

'Burrow' by Madeline Sharafian is the story of a young bunny rabbit who is trying to make her dream home and find her tiny space in the community. On her burrowing journey, she encounters various fellow beings big and small who all live underground. Some friendly, some reserved and some simply not interested in her. The bunny faces all her emotions like fear, embarrassment and apprehension, but most importantly her fear of trusting others and the fear of being mocked. Uncomfortable in each neighbourhood, she burrows deeper and deeper till she reaches (quite literally) rock bottom. The fiercely independent bunny has no choice but to let go of her apprehensions and seek the help of her fellow underground beings.

Made in just six months, 'Burrow' is impressive to say the least. Madeline chose to go with a classic hand-drawn 2D style because she had worked in this style before and she was prepared to take on a large part of the work on herself. The film is a beautiful homage to classic children's books and even features backgrounds



reminiscent of Beatrix Potter, Richard Scarry, and Jill Barklem.

Filled to the brim with charmingly simple and yet amazingly intricate settings like a frog library, a salamander sauna room and a beetle restaurant, this short forces you to rewatch the burrowing montages to take it all in. Told completely without dialogue, the film is visually stimulating and touches a sentiment that is universal in appeal.

What makes this short truly outstanding apart from all the cuteness that will make you want to curl up with 'Burrow', is how relevant it is in today's day and age. In a time when we are getting increasingly distant from our neighbours, we tend to hide away and refrain from asking for help. Madeline has said she made this film as a reminder to herself that she could always open up to new opportunities by letting people into her life. 'Burrow' is a testament to the power of building new bonds and supporting your neighbour.

'Burrow' released on 25th December 2020 and is streaming on *Disney+*

GENIUS LOCI

Reine, a young loner, sees the urban chaos as a mystical oneness that seems alive, like some sort of guide.

Directed by *Adrien Mérigeau*
Produced by *Amaury Ovisse, Manon Messiant*
Enguerrand Déterville, Reginald de Guillebon
Screenplay by *Adrien Mérigeau, Nicolas Pleskof*
Production company *Kazak Productions | Folimage*
Centre National du Cinéma et de l'Image Animée
Distributed by *France 3 (FR 3) | Région Auvergne*
Running time *16 minutes*
Country *France*
Language *French*

The term 'Genius Loci' originates from Roman mythology and refers to the protective spirit of a place or location.

Reine, a young and solitary person who is going through a bad phase in her life, one night ventures out and experiences urban chaos. The message of the film is not obvious, and it's because not even Reine understands the world around her, let alone when she's constantly seeing visions. The film has interesting scenes where blown papers turn into dogs, a woman bursts into flames, an apple suddenly becomes a telephone, and so on. These scenes lend themselves to varied and interesting interpretations.

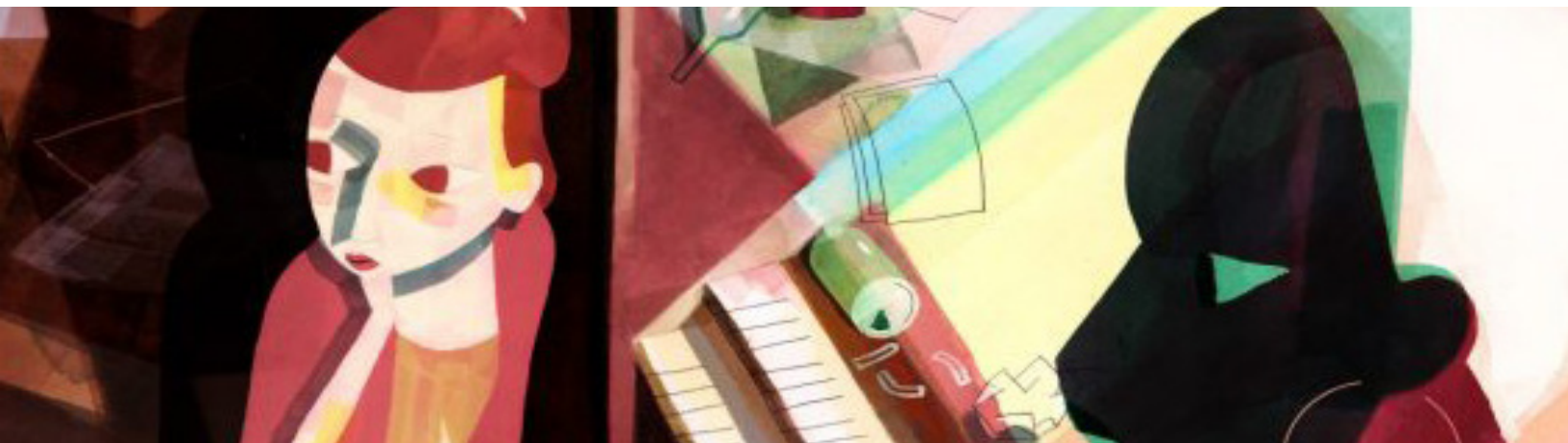
'Genius Loci' is directed by the French animator Adrien Mérigeau, who also did *Old Fangs* in 2009. Brecht Evens is the artistic director. Brecht's style is colourful and expressive, and blends perfectly with Mérigeau's creative instincts.

The inspiration for the storyline of the film came to Adrien from two sources: The relationship between a poet and their spirit and the mystical place where ideas come from; and the fact that run down parts of a city which are open spaces full



of broken stuff can sometimes feel like the middle of the jungle. If we, for a moment, keep aside the sense of meaning to things around us and just observe or listen to them, we can see beauty everywhere.

Described variously as playful, inventive and thoroughly breathtaking, 'Genius Loci' is a short that pushes the boundaries of animation, and sets one thinking.



A film by
Will McCormack & Michael Govier

If anything happens I love you



If anything happens I love you

In the aftermath of tragedy, two grieving parents journey through an emotional void as they mourn the loss of a child.

If 'Anything Happens I Love You' by Michael Govier and Will McCormack is a poignant story of a couple who have lost their ten year old daughter in a school shooting. The emotions of the grieving parents are portrayed as a flashback of happy events that happened with their daughter. The scene of the mother washing her dead daughter's shirt by mistake brings tears to the eyes.

We caught up with Michael and Will for an exclusive interview.

Michael and Will met at an acting class in Los Angeles. They are both writers and became fast friends. They say, "We'd meet for coffee and pitch each other ideas and talk about ideas. We both wanted to wrestle narratively with grief and loss."

They knew they had to do something big together. Mutual respect for each other, and each others' work, is the foundation of their partnership. "It's paramount that team members have equal standing. Film is a team sport, and everyone's contribution is essential to the story," they assert.

So, how did 'If Anything Happens I Love You' come about, we asked. They echoed, "We worked on the 12 page script for about a year to be very specific about what we wanted to communicate. We had no other resources other than the script - no money, no animators, no equipment. We knew the story had to be great to help build a team. We were lucky to connect with veteran, prolific animation producer Maryann Garger. We were able to finance the film through Film Independent and from contributions from Gary Gilbert at Gilbert Films who was an ardent supporter. When Youngran Nho, our animation director joined our



team, it took about nine to ten months to animate. All in all, from when we first met, until our first screening, the film took about two and a half years to complete."

The topic is serious and relevant to our times. So, authenticity was important. They reached out to the experts for help. They say, "Everytown for Gun Safety has been a friend of the film from the very early stages. We reached out to them initially because this is sensitive material, and we wanted to make sure we were honouring the survivors. We still work closely with Everytown, and are honoured to be aligned with them on this project."

With Everytown's help, Micheal and Will interviewed many parents who had lost their children in school



shootings in the US. They wanted to tell the story without any words except **If Anything Happens I Love You.**

The writers use shadows as a means to convey emotions difficult to portray in animation. The shadow effect actually brings a spiritual angle to the story. The classic black and white palette is used to convey the grief and sadness of the characters.

The music was composed by Lindsay Marcus and the ‘Beautiful Dreamer’ sequence was performed by the Inner City Youth Orchestra of LA.

The film created a stir on social media soon after it was released. Within a week of the film’s release, there were more than 30 million hashtag views of the film on TikTok. Michael and Will are grateful for the love the film has received. They say, “The TikTok phenomenon was completely unexpected and surreal and exciting. We have over 67 million hashtag views of the film. The film really connected with a young audience who filmed themselves showing their reactions. We were so moved to see so many people show up to the film and be vulnerable.”

So, what’s next for Michael and Will?

“We loved working together and we have another short film that we are launching now. We are also writing/directing a feature animated film,” they say, in unison.

<i>Directed by</i>	<i>Michael Govier, Will McCormack</i>
<i>Produced by</i>	<i>Gerald Chamales, Maryann Garger Gary Gilbert, Michael Govier</i>
<i>Screenplay by</i>	<i>Michael Govier, Will McCormack</i>
<i>Edited by</i>	<i>Peter Ettinger</i>
<i>Production company</i>	<i>Gilbert Films Oh Good Productions</i>
<i>Distributed by</i>	<i>Netflix</i>
<i>Running time</i>	<i>12 minutes</i>
<i>Country</i>	<i>United States</i>
<i>Language</i>	<i>English</i>





A folk tale from Hawaii, handed down through the generations orally, 'Kapaemahu' is about four mahus (extraordinary beings of dual male and female spirit) who brought the healing arts from Tahiti to Hawaii some 700 years ago. Ten years of research on the story threw up different versions of the tale. In most of them, mahu, and mahu entertainers in particular, were demonised. Till recently, the word mahu was considered bad and that changed when the directors of 'Kapaemahu' discovered a handwritten manuscript from 1906 conveyed by James Boyd, a member of the Hawaiian nobility.

Kapaemahu is the name of the leader of the mahus, who were beloved by the Hawaiian people for their gentle ways and miraculous cures. The four boulders are believed to be gifts given to the mahus by the islanders in gratitude for their service. The mahus then transferred their healing powers to the stones and it is believed

that even today they can be heard if only one is willing to listen. Although the stones still stand on Waikiki Beach, the true story behind them has been hidden from history until now.

Directors Hinaleimoana Wong-Kalu, Dean Hamer and Joe Wilson made the film in the Hawaiian language Olelo Niihau. The larger than life models of the mahus created by Sousa were inspired by Henry Moore sculptures. The mahus were drawn as very large female figures with broad shoulders and very small heads, with a kind of imposing presence to make them look like superheroes. The story is told from a child's perspective.

In addition to winning awards at numerous film festivals, this film was also nominated for Best Children's Film at the Ottawa International Animation Festival and won the Children's Jury Award from The Chicago International Children's Film Festival.

Kapaemahu

Narrated in an ancient Hawaiian dialect, Kapaemahu brings this powerful legend back to life in vivid animation, seen through the eyes of a curious child.



Wilson and Hamer are both gay and come from marginalised communities. After making 'Kapaemahu', they are thrilled that this story is being told in a grand and beautiful way. They hope that it will resonate with young people in the transgender spectrum.

The canvas of 'Kapaemahu' is beautifully done by Oscar nominated Sousa. The tones used are green, orange and rust red. The highlight of the film is its music and chanting which is outstanding.

The scene of the concluding ceremonies at the beach in moon night is mesmerising to say the least. At times, it feels like you are present in the ceremony.

In the soul of the film is the word 'Aloha'. It is the Hawaiian word for love, affection, peace, compassion and mercy, that is commonly used as a simple greeting but has a deeper cultural and spiritual significance to native Hawaiians, for whom the term is used to define a force that holds together existence. The essence of the film can be summed up in this word 'Aloha'.

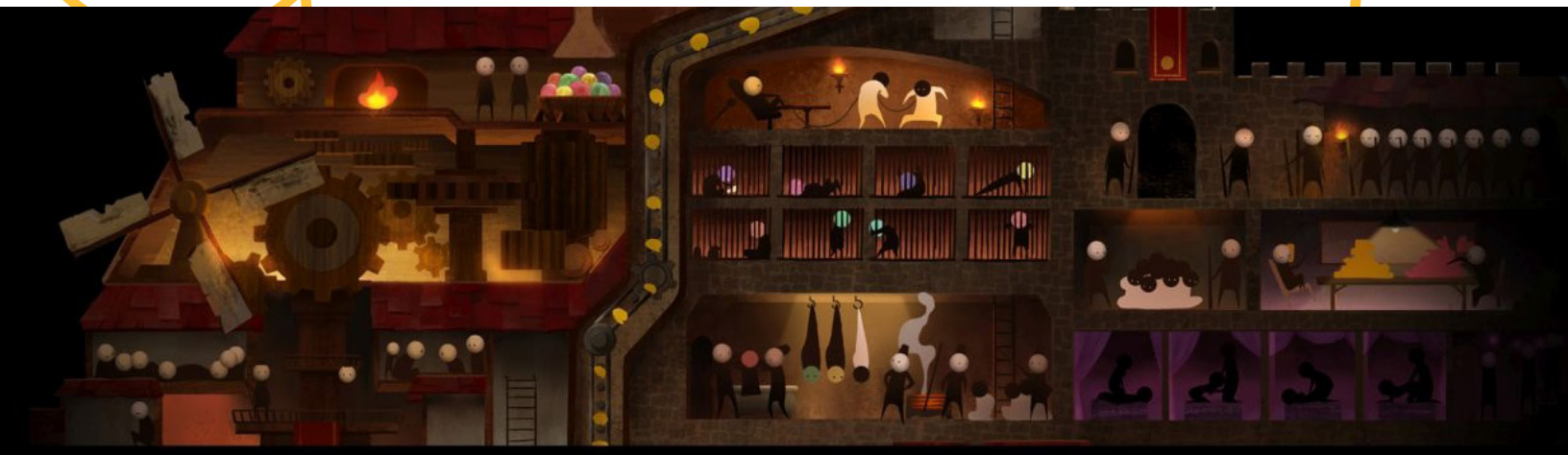


<i>Directed by</i>	Dean Hamer, Joe Wilson
<i>Produced by</i>	Hinaleimoana Wong-Kalu
<i>Animation Director</i>	Daniel Sousa
<i>Production company</i>	Kanaka Pakipika qWaves.com
<i>Distributed by</i>	The Animation Showcase The Criterion Channel
<i>Running time</i>	8 minutes
<i>Country</i>	United States
<i>Language</i>	Hawaiian



OPERA

Our society and history, which is filled with beauty and absurdity.



Directed by
Storyboard
Production company
Distributed by
Running time
Country
Language

Erick Oh
Jeeyoon Park, Hyein Park
Beasts and Natives Alike
Beasts and Natives Alike
9 minutes
United States | South Korea
English

‘Opera’ is a visually stunning treat to the eyes. Through its characters, you will find various human emotions like hope, happiness, sadness, fear and terror beautifully portrayed. Topics of racism, terrorism, war, natural disasters, and general chaos that permeate different classes and sections of society are conveyed through a huge CG pyramid.

‘Opera’ is made by Erick Oh. Erick felt there was a lot of chaos in the world, and ‘Opera’ was his way to tell this story.

We caught up with Erick for an exclusive interview.

Erick affirms that while ‘Opera’ is not based on his personal journey, it is certainly his way of documenting what he sees and hears around him. “Every incident that happened, not only here in America and in Korea, but everywhere else as well, natural disasters, political conflicts, all the social issues we had, like racism, sexism, they were my inspiration, because at the end of the day, that just really makes me sadly sceptical towards ourselves,” he says, going on to ask, “Are we actually evolving? Are we actually making our days better than yesterday? Are we actually marching forward? Or are we all stuck in this vicious cycle of humanity?”

Erick managed to stitch together a team of thirty-two extremely talented artists working weekends on voluntary basis. The project took four years to create. We asked him how he kept the team focused on one goal over this period of time. Erick says, “We had a team of artists who were working out of love and passion, right? But, it also meant that when something more important happened, this could, kind of wait, you know. Even I had a lot of priorities I had to focus on, and there were moments that I actually wanted to give up. Who cares, you know, if I stopped working. No one was waiting for this. No one was going to lose any money. But then, something happened again in the world. And then it was like, ‘Oh my God! I have to get back. This has to see the light of day.’ That motivated all of us to get cracking again. I am really thankful that none of them, nobody, gave up on this.”

‘Opera’ is highly provocative. It could be described as a living piece of art that questions society and human behaviour. Each section and individual character’s activities are intrinsically connected so the viewer can eventually enjoy the entire pyramid no matter which character they set their eyes on first.

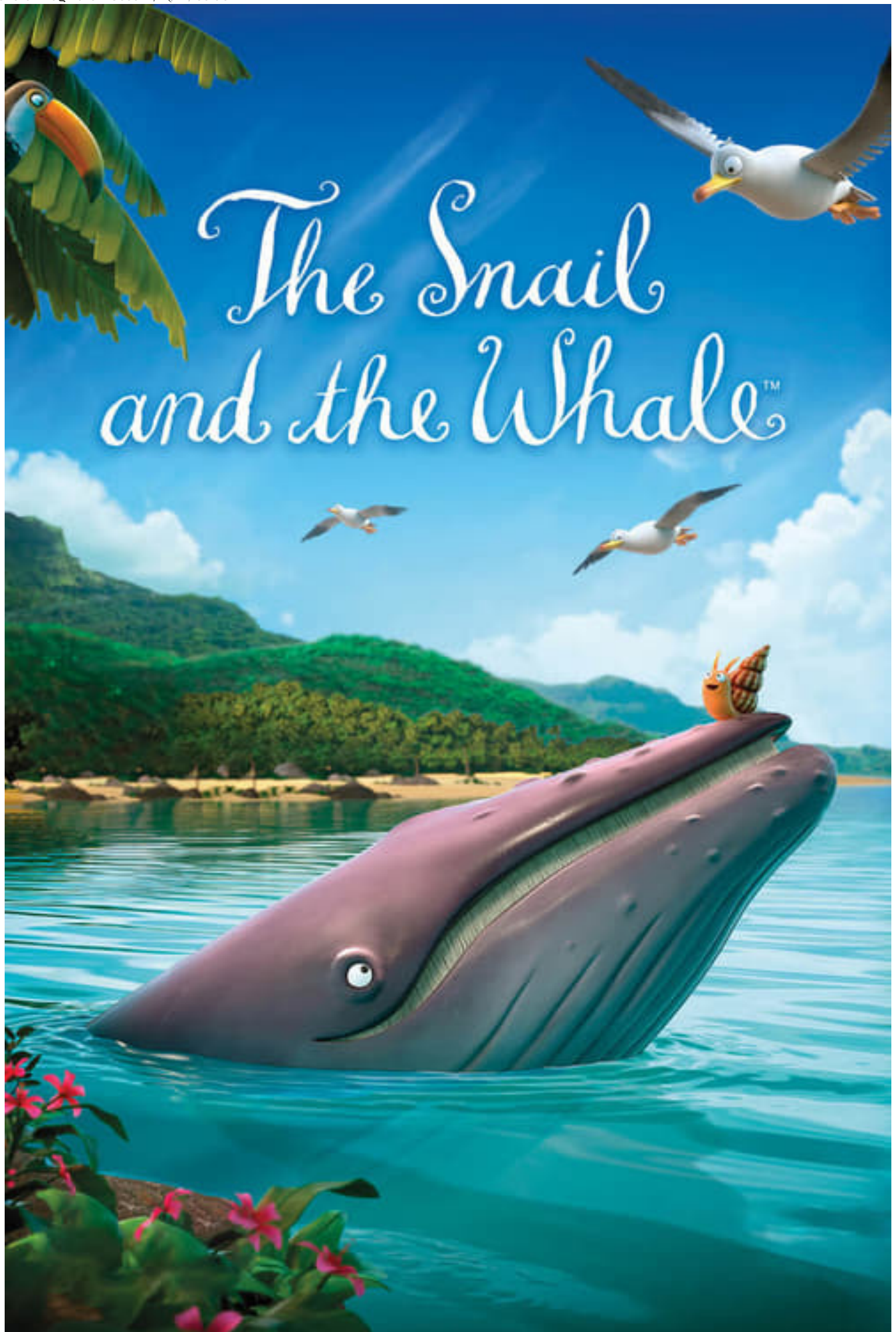
It also means that to fully comprehend the whole idea, one needs to see ‘Opera’ multiple times, focusing on different parts of it each time. Choreographing all of this surely was a challenge, we wondered. Says Erick, “Think about it as a clock. It is a combination of all these things that are moving. With one thing missing, it is not going to move, right? So, it was like putting millions of puzzle pieces together. Yes, planning took some time. I did a lot of writing, made lot of thumbnails and drawings, and then said OK, these are a bunch of ideas I’ll have to actually put down. And then, what I came up with was a triangular format. I thought that was the most iconic, representative image that symbolises who we are. Then it was like, in this triangular format, how can I tell these many stories in one rhythm, you know, as you said? I had to put it together like a puzzle. This goes over here, and then it affects this section over here, and then this has to come over here. So, it was challenging, but it was a very satisfying experience to make it as a perfect clock.”

‘Opera’ will generate discussion on many topics. We asked Erick if there are any specific topics he would like to see it generate discussions on. His reply was, “First of all, natural disasters. Not sure if you noticed a huge fish, hanging down over there, and then there are God-like figures in the two corners, right? I don’t think of them as God, but more like Mother Nature. They do the healing process. At the end of the day, we are only human kind of message, you know. The other thing is, people fighting and killing each other in the name of different ideologies. There is a section where people are getting killed because they have different colours in their heads, or kids are getting coloured white because they have different thoughts. Those are two things

that’s really breaking my heart. So, when people see this piece, at least, I love people to actually find those.”

So, what’s next for Erick, we ask. “My philosophy has always been, I want to be a story teller. And not only through animation films, it can be VR, a picture book, comics, a painting, an expression. ‘Opera’ is a really good example of my will to break those barriers. Is it animation, is it film, is it exhibition, is it painting? Don’t try to categorise it. My next project is actually VR. It’s called Namoo. It premiered at Sundance this year. And, I am currently working on a new Netflix original series. A very narrative film. I’ll keep pushing myself to be a multimedia artist, hopefully.”





The Snail and the Whale

A tiny snail goes on an amazing journey by hitching a ride on the tail of a huge humpback whale.

The Snail and the Whale' follows the amazing journey of a tiny snail who longs to see the world and hitches a ride on the tail of a friendly humpback whale. A joyous, empowering story about the natural wonders of the world and discovering that no matter how small you are, you can make a difference.

Written by Julia Donaldson and illustrated by Axel Scheffler, it was originally published as a picture book in 2003. The film was made in 2019, directed by Max Lang and Daniel Snaddon, with music by Rene Aubry.

We caught up with Max and Dan for an exclusive interview.

Nether of them is a stranger to Julia Donaldson books or Rene Aubry's music. We asked Max about his work on two of her books, both of which became Oscar nominated Animation shorts: 'Gruffalo' and 'Room on the Broom'. Max countered, "Actually, for me, it's number four and for Dan, it's number two. We collaborated on a film, kind of overlapping with 'The Snail and the Whale'. It's called 'Zog.' That is also based on a Julia Donaldson book, and has Rene Aubry's music. And, prior to that, Dan actually directed 'Stick Man'. Yeah. It all started with the 'Gruffalo' ten years ago."

Dan had read out the story of 'The Snail and the Whale' to his son Frank even before he was born. Frank is now two years old, and "was playing with his stuffed toys the other day, and I realised he was acting out the moment where the people dig the whale out of the ground. So, it's really sunk in there. It's deep in his subconscious now," says Dan, laughing.

Technology changes fast, and so we wanted to know from Max what changes he sees in the way the films were made then and now. Max was forthcoming, saying, "'Gruffalo' was actually produced in Germany. Back then, we had stop motion sets, and CG characters that we integrated into that. At that time, that was really the only way to achieve that



look. And the same with 'Room on the Broom', actually. After that, the production shifted to Triggerfish in South Africa and I was a little bit involved with the films, like I wrote the scripts for some of them, but to me, it was always like well, 'The Snail and the Whale', I don't see how we could ever do that in that technology, it's such a big film, like we have to go around the whole world, there's all the water, how would we do that. In 'Gruffalo', I don't know, we have a couple of water shots, it took us the whole production to get them. And, pretty much the same in all the other films. When I then, at some point, saw what Triggerfish was doing with 'Stick Man', 'The Highway Rat', 'Revolt Rhymes', and all these films, and how they had adapted the pipeline to CG and they could achieve that look, with all the advantages of a CG pipeline, 'The Snail and the Whale' became a bit more possible. Even then, 'Zog' was done on a slightly different pipeline, where we



had not used Houdini before for the water effects, so we had to integrate Houdini in our pipeline, and it was a huge undertaking. The whole team had to be pretty much retrained, or we had to bring in new people who knew how to work with Houdini, and so yeah, every project has its own technological requirements, and we try to find the best software pipeline for that. And it's usually dictated by the story."

From the narrative point of view, one of the problems was how to create a connection between two characters that cannot really share a frame owing to their size (the smallest creature in the world and the largest creature in the world). Dan explained how they approached this problem. "Its only when the snail is reacting to something this way, and showing the whale is looking behind him, even though technically, they would not be able to, there's no line of sight, do you get the sense that they are sharing experiences, and that they are communicating. The fact is we are not able to add dialogue. In the book, they don't really have conversations," he says, adding, "The second thing that's tricky is from a technical point of view, when you look at those two

different scales, and you look at the kind of details you want to get into the picture, you realise that when you are a snail, you see a micro world, and when you are a whale, you see a macro world."

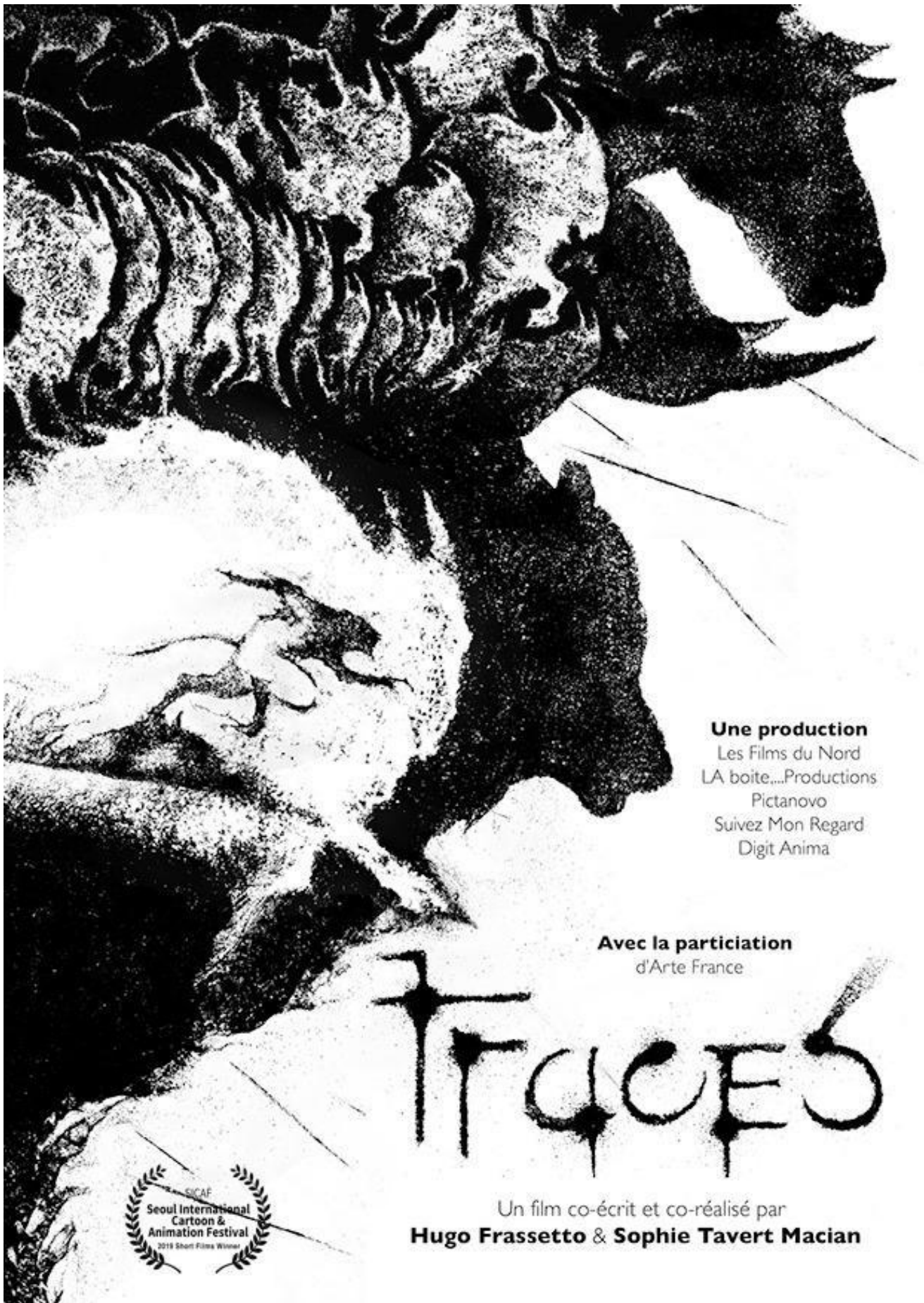
On the message they hope the world will take from the film, Dan says, "The message that I hope that audiences, both young and old, will take away is that what they do matters. That their actions count. That they can make a difference."

Max adds, "And what I love about it is that the film does it in such an

optimistic and positive way, like it's not like preaching to you like everything is bad and we have to fix it. It's much more like, 'Look at this, this is amazing! Try to preserve it.'"

<i>Directed by</i>	<i>Max Lang, Daniel Snaddon</i>
<i>Produced by</i>	<i>Martin Pope, Michael Rose</i>
<i>Screenplay by</i>	<i>Max Lang, Suzanne Lang</i>
<i>Production company</i>	<i>Magic Light Pictures</i>
<i>Distributed by</i>	<i>Magic Light Pictures</i>
<i>Running time</i>	<i>27 minutes</i>
<i>Country</i>	<i>United Kingdom</i>
<i>Language</i>	<i>English</i>





Une production
Les Films du Nord
LA boîte...Productions
Pictanovo
Suivez Mon Regard
Digit Anima

Avec la participation
d'Arte France

TRACES

Un film co-écrit et co-réalisé par
Hugo Frassetto & Sophie Taver Macian



A short animation about Paleolithic magical drawings, animal totem, hunting, education of a young man by his father, survive and discover of the essence of life.

The oldest surviving work of great literature, the Epic of Gilgamesh, was engraved on ancient Babylonian tablets 4,000 years ago. If that sounds like a long time ago, how about this? A story written 36,000 years ago on the walls of a giant system of caves, is what forms the basis of Hugo Frassetto and Sophie Tavert Macian's Oscar shortlisted animation film, 'Traces'.

During that time, when an animal was painted, it was hunted. When it is time to go painting and hunting, Karou the painter and his apprentice Lani set off to paint the walls of the great cavern, but they are surprised by a cave lion.

That it is one of the oldest known stories is not the only thing that is fascinating about this story. It reveals a very interesting interplay between art and science, and underlines the importance of art to life, something that we would do well to remind ourselves as a civilisation. In that sense, the film is an attempt to connect to the origins of our humanity.

Using the painstaking and unforgiving technique of paint on glass animation, 'Traces' tells the story vividly, and with good pace.

We caught up with Sophie, who spoke for Hugo and herself, in an exclusive interview.

"In French, 'traces' is a polysemic word. The trace is the drawing, what the act of drawing leaves behind. It is also what hunters follow when they track an animal. And, in a broader way, this word evokes the past, what we leave behind and what reaches us from ancient times. This word contains the whole film, so to speak. It was perfect. Short. With a dry consonance, as straight as an assegai or a line. Strangely, it took us a long time to choose it because there is something austere about the word, much more with French than English pronunciation, but in the end the title is obvious from every point of view," she asserts. We agree!

The film is inspired by the Chauvet Cave frescoes. "The film was born from a 36,000-year-old image, the fresco of lions in the Chauvet cave. It is a hunting scene where a pack of lions chase a herd of buffalo. It is a powerful and



<i>Directed by</i>	<i>Sophie Tavert Macian, Hugo Frassetto</i>
<i>Produced by</i>	<i>Arnaud Demuyneck</i>
<i>Screenplay by</i>	<i>Sophie Tavert Macian, Hugo Frassetto</i>
<i>Production company</i>	<i>Les Films du Nord</i>
<i>Distributed by</i>	<i>Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures</i>
<i>Running time</i>	<i>13 minutes</i>
<i>Country</i>	<i>France</i>
<i>Language</i>	<i>French</i>

mysterious image, fascinating, which made us want to tell the story of the artist who painted it," says Sophie.

In addition to the frescoes, there is other human evidence in the caves like the charred remains of ancient hearths, carbon smoke stains from torches, foot prints of a young child and a wolf or dog walking side by side (suggesting the origin of the domestic dog), and so on. There is also fossilised remains, prints, and markings from a variety of animals, some of which are now extinct. These caves were discovered in 1994, and have been sealed off to the public ever since. So, did the makers of Traces ever get to see the fresco in the cave themselves, we wondered.

Sophie says, "Unfortunately, we were not able to visit the real cave, which is open to a very small circle of people over a very short period of the year in order to preserve the paintings, which are very sensitive to changes in the atmosphere. But thanks to its classification as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the cave could be reproduced identically.

TRACES



So we visited the reproduction, which is in fact an immersive museum, which stages the cave and its works 'as if we were there'. We had to totally project what it would do to us, how magical it could be, to create the sequence where Lani sinks into the depths of the cave. However, we had access to all the surrounding environment: the gorges of the Ardèche, the caves that dot its banks and especially the Pont d'Arc, this immense bridge of natural rocks that crosses the river, in front of which was the cliff where the original entrance to the cave opened."

The project took three years to write and finance, and one-and-a-half years to 'fabricate', as Sophie puts it.

Another highlight of the film is the sound design. The sound effects are not just unique, they are almost

therapeutic, and beautifully complement the visuals to keep the viewer glued to the screen. Says Sophie of the sound design, "With Fabrice Faltraue, our amazing sound designer and music composer, we started from two ideas: nature and 'stone age'. We were looking for a sound universe that evokes distant times, that appeals to our collective unconscious. We also wanted the soundtrack to have a narrative role, accompanying the supernatural dimension of the film in connection with sand. The sound of 'Traces' is a mix between natural noises, stone noises, voices and electronic sounds."

Sophie says getting shortlisted is a 'big good surprise'. "Overall, we are very proud to represent traditional animation, artisanal and demanding cinema. Alongside the nine other films, we participate of an abundant and inventive world animation, where all techniques and all universes cohabit, where each creation has its story, its importance and its 'magic power,'" she avers.

Hugo is currently working on a new film and Sophie is in post-production of her first feature film, 'Nightshades'. Their adventures in animation are not over yet!



OUT

On an average day, Greg's life is filled with family, love and a rambunctious little dog - but despite all of this, Greg has a secret. Today is different, though. With some help from his precocious pup, and a little bit of magic, Greg might learn that he has nothing to hide.

Another outstanding film coming from from Pixar's SHORTSPARKS programme that highlights the hardships of a gay couple in a subtle, emotional and hilarious manner – 'Out' is a the tale of conquering your fears and valuing your love above everything else.

'Out' by Steven Clay Hunter is the story of the protagonist Greg whose biggest hurdle in life is trying to figure out how to come out as gay to his parents, when they show up at his house, unannounced. Though the comical interactions that follow make for highly entertaining watching, they do not dampen the impact of the core message of the film which is to highlight the stigma attached to the subject of openly gay relationships.

What makes this film special is that it is a simple story weaved beautifully around five characters - A boy, his boyfriend his dog and his parents. The story follows the rules of good writing all the way where a hero has a goal to achieve, faces obstacles in his journey and how it changes his life.

The story successfully threads the needle of the sensitivity of the subject matter and portrays the emotions and fear of uncertainty humans have when communicating with others on such sensitive topics. The manner in which the protagonist's fears are alleviated when he understands his mother's stand on his sexuality is heartwarming and relatable.

'Out' is largely driven by Steven's personal experiences of coming out. Steven hails from a small town in Canada. In the eighties, when he was growing up, speaking out on the topic of homosexuality was taboo and being gay was considered illegal.

The Twilight Zone was a major influence for Steven's Oscar



<i>Directed by</i>	Steven Hunter
<i>Produced by</i>	Max Sachar
<i>Screenplay</i>	Steven Hunter
<i>Cinematography</i>	Max Sachar
<i>Editing</i>	Noah Newman
<i>Production company</i>	Pixar Animation Studios
<i>Distributed by</i>	Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures
<i>Running time</i>	9 minutes
<i>Country</i>	United States
<i>Language</i>	English

shortlisted short. It is highlighted in his choice of setting: a "Freaky Friday-esque" sequence where the protagonist and his dog exchange consciousnesses. 'Out' is set in a world without limits and everything is magical or mystical yet very real.

Steven decided to opt for the classic hand-drawn 2D style painted frames but with little tears and imperfect texturing making the film "unique in it's own way".





To: Gerard

<i>Directed by</i>	<i>Taylor Meacham</i>
<i>Produced by</i>	<i>Jeff Hermann</i>
<i>Editor</i>	<i>James Ryan</i>
<i>Production company</i>	<i>DreamWorks Animation</i>
<i>Distributed by</i>	<i>Peacock</i>
<i>Running time</i>	<i>7 minutes</i>
<i>Country</i>	<i>United States</i>
<i>Language</i>	<i>English</i>

An elderly mailman charms his first-ever audience member with an impromptu magic show.

To: Gerard' is the story of Gerard who works as a mail sorter in the mailroom. His life is mundane, but he nurses a dream - to perform magic on stage. He has the talent for performing magical tricks, but it remains a secret since he never got a chance to showcase it, until a chance meeting with an inquisitive young girl, Jules. In this moment, two artists, a generation apart, unknowingly set off a chain reaction that changes both of their lives forever.

Taylor Meacham, who works as a permanent staff member at Dreamworks, directed 'To: Gerard'. This is the first time a Dreamworks management staff was allowed to transit into an artistic role.

The two main inspirations for the film were Taylor's love for magic (he attended magic camps as a kid) and his chat with his 70 year old father who in his youth was doing different and daring things like riding motorcycles or going hand gliding, not to mention he was also a good artist but could not pursue it.

The emotional bond between the two main characters of the film, Gerard and Jules brings tears to one's eyes. The emotions portrayed by the characters are a class apart, and there is no doubt it touches an emotional cord with the audience.

The film has no dialogues. Taylor gives the credit to Layla Minoui, the music composer, for bringing out the emotional connect between the two characters without a single word being spoken between them.

Like Jules in this animation short, Meacham is also the untapped talent that was found when he got to pitch his own idea, and was given the chance to direct. Meacham is now an inspiration to others who also hope to see their dreams come true.

Yes People



Directed by *Gísli Darri Halldórsson*
Produced by *Arnar Gunnarsson*
Gísli Darri Halldórsson
Screenplay *Steven Hunter*
Production company *CAOZ hf.*
Hólamói
Running time *8 minutes*
Country *Iceland*
Language *Icelandic*

One morning an eclectic mix of people faces the everyday battle - such as work, school and dish-washing. As the day progresses, their relationships are tested and ultimately their capacity to cope.

How many times do we say ‘Yes’ in a day? And in how many ways? It sure will be interesting to find out. Gísli Darri Halldórsson’s Oscar shortlisted short film shows us a humorous way to find out.

Various occupants of an apartment complex go about their daily chores, and in the process say ‘Yes’ many times, sometimes with joy, sometimes with doubt, sometimes with surprise, sometimes with annoyance, sometimes with relief, and sometimes with expectation.

By deliberately blanking out all other conversation, Gísli has managed to create a film that the jury for the Oscars have said ‘Yes’ to shortlisting. And, we hope they will say ‘Yes’ again for Gísli’s delightful short, ‘Yes People’.

We caught up with Gísli for an exclusive interview.

About the film’s journey, Gísli says, “I got the seeds for the film in 2012, and wrote and designed it in between jobs here and there from 2013 onwards. It was really frustrating because I didn’t have much time, but in 2018 I received a grant from the Icelandic Film Centre to make it and that’s when I could really focus on it. It’s very hard to say how long it took in total but I can say with certainty that we were animating at roughly 12 seconds per week. It was a time of incredible joy and ridiculous set-backs.”

Gísli prefers that the story dictates the style of animation. In fact, he would rather not use the word ‘style’. He explains, “Instead of the word ‘style’ I find it more helpful to think of the idea of limitations. Style is a bit of a polluted word - often perceived as fashionable or kind of arbitrarily ‘cool’. It’s just the limitations that create the style so that is definitely my starting point.”

2020 has been a tough year for everyone, but more so for Gísli. The film played in 40+ festivals, but he could attend only one of them (Reykjavik International Film Festival). Of the experience, he says, “It was just fantastic to see films on the big screen again. I believe in the cinematic experience more than ever before. I can’t wait to go back to the cinema!”

Gísli is no stranger to the Oscars. He animated on Max Lang’s ‘Room on the Broom’ which was nominated for the Oscar in 2014. Being in the shortlist feels special to him,

not just because of the high-quality of all the films, but also because there are big names like Disney, Pixar and Dreamworks in the shortlist. He muses, “I’ve also followed Adrien Merigau’s (‘Genius Loci’) work over the years and seen all the other great films. It makes me feel very humble. To think about my tiny crew of 13 (including 6 actors) and how I was mostly animating on my laptop, in the kitchen, while my partner and baby daughter were playing on the floor.”

Gísli hails from Iceland, the land of Fire and Ice, and the safest country in the world. We complimented Gísli on the shortlisting and asked him how it felt to be following in the footsteps of 2020 Oscar winner Hildur Guðnadóttir in the Oscar journey. He responded, “Thank you. This shortlist is very special to me because Iceland has very little history or tradition in animation. So, it feels significant to have made it this far. Hildur Guðnadóttir’s work is sublime and has enormous presence. I draw much inspiration from the Icelandic music scene in general. In fact, one of my directorial goals was to make the film feel like music. The characters use musicality to communicate but I also strived to give the film a musical quality - a quality that could sustain multiple viewings and offer little discoveries on additional viewings. And I don’t mean hidden gags or easter eggs but that journey that good music can give you. Animation is just such a time-consuming medium

that it makes sense to approach it this way.”

Gísli has dedicated the film to his grandparents Erna Guðmundsdóttir and Gísli Kristjánsson. He fondly recalls them, “They were extremely supportive of my animation pursuit. They were quite conservative and animation was not an obvious career in Iceland. It still barely is in today’s Iceland. But they were very enthusiastic and indeed my whole family has been nothing but supportive. I have witnessed very talented people abandon their artistic pursuits because of the lack of support. This has made me feel more grateful over the years. But my grandparents died during the making of my film. And I had written the positive energy between them into the storyline and interactions of the old couple in the film. So, it is a very personal film for me despite it being quite comedic on the surface.”

So what does the future hold for Gísli?

“I write a lot and I have much more in me that I’d like to materialise,” he says, “Making ‘Yes People’ with the support of the Icelandic Film Center was a very liberating and a good experience. Once they accepted the pitch - I had that sense of freedom that I had hoped for in a long time. So, I do hope to make more animated-shorts but at the rate I write I’m also considering other less time-consuming mediums.”





FEELING THROUGH

A late-night encounter on a New York City street leads to a profound connection between a teen in need and a man who is deaf & blind.



Tereek — a young man trying hard not to reveal his lack of a home — is desperately looking for a bed for the night. The Deaf-Blind man needs help crossing the street and getting to a bus stand.

‘Feeling Through’ is a short film based on a real-life late-night encounter between Writer-Director Doug Roland and a Deaf-Blind man who was indeed trying to get home.

Many years after the incident, when Doug was ready to make the film, he tried locating the Deaf-Blind man he had met, but he couldn’t track him down. Not wanting to cast a professional actor, he reached out to the Hellen Keller National Center for Deaf-Blind Youths and Adults to help him locate a suitable Deaf-Blind person to play the role.

The Center helped Doug audition more than a dozen Deaf-Blind men from across the country, but none of them made the cut. Finally, an employee at the center asked, “How about Robert?”

Robert Tarango had spent twenty years in the Center’s kitchen, negotiating his often long, complicated commute on public transit every day. He was brought in, straight from the kitchen. And that is how this effusive and charismatic person participated in the audition, still in his apron, his hands wet and his face puzzled.

He not only got the role, but also went on to deliver an outstanding performance. Steven Prescod as the homeless Tereek has also delivered a memorable portrayal of the desperate teenager. At a screening of the film in Manhattan, Robert Tarango was cheered heartily as he joined Doug Roland and Steven Prescod in a panel discussion. Also enjoying the spotlight was Artz — Artemio Tavares, 39, of the Bronx, and the Deaf-Blind man that Doug Roland had been searching for, who inspired this story!

Directed by	Doug Roland
Produced by	Luis Augusto Figueroa, Phil Newsom Doug Roland, Sue Ruzenski
Editor	Doug Roland
Cinematographer	Eugene Koh
Production Company	Doug Roland Films Giant Hunter Media
Running time	19 minutes
Country	USA
Language	English

BITTU

A close friendship between two girls is eclipsed by an accidental poisoning at school.

‘Bittu’ is a short film inspired by a true story about a close friendship between two girls, eclipsed by a poisoning accident that took place in a school in rural Bihar in India in the year 2013.

Of her protagonist Bittu, Director Karishma Dev Dube says, “Bittu is this little kid who was kind of beyond her years and unaware of traditional gender norms and a bit like an individual in a herd who is somehow punished for her individuality on this seemingly normal day at school and is eventually somehow saved by it.”

Though inspired by the accident, the film focuses on a child’s psychology rather than the incident. Explaining this, Karishma says, “This film is less about why and how the poisoning happened; instead, it explores a child’s experience when she is suddenly and senselessly thrown into such peril. In reimagining the narrative, I took the story to a remote village in the Himalayas’ forgotten side, a place that was also home to my boarding school growing up. It was here that I formed my complicated relationship with authority, much like the one Bittu has with her teachers in school.”

‘Bittu’ doesn’t feature any known names. Karishma opted for street casting. She went to local communities and government schools in rural area and organised theatre workshops and selected kids for her film.

Says Karishma of her experience, “The little girl who plays Bittu, Rani, she kind of emerged from the group pretty quickly and there was something very electric about her. We connected instantly.”

After rehearsals, which went on for two months, ‘Bittu’ was shot in a span of just six days.

Karishma Dev Dube has previously bagged the prestigious Director’s Guild of America (DGA) Student Award for Outstanding Directorial Achievement in the Asian American Category for Bittu.



Directed by	Karishma Dev Dube
Produced by	Karishma Dev Dube Shreya Dev Dube Mary Evangelista
Editor	Collin Elliott, Karishma Dev Dube
Cinematographer	Shreya Dev Dube
Running time	17 minutes
Country	India
Language	Hindi



THE HUMAN VOICE

Directed by *Pedro Almodóvar*
Produced by *Agustín Almodóvar, Esther García*
Editor *Teresa Font*
Cinematographer *José Luis Alcaine*
Production Company *El Deseo*
Distributed by *Avalon | Cinéart | Odeon, Pathe UK |
Sony Pictures Classics | Wanda Films*

Running time *30 minutes*
Country *Spain*
Language *English, Spanish*

A woman watches time passing next to the suitcases of her ex-lover (who is supposed to come pick them up, but never arrives) and a restless dog who doesn't understand that his master has abandoned him. Two living beings facing abandonment.

The *Human Voice*, a film by internationally acclaimed Spanish film maker Pedro Almodovar, is a story of a woman who has been abandoned by her lover without a reason and is not able to come to terms with it.

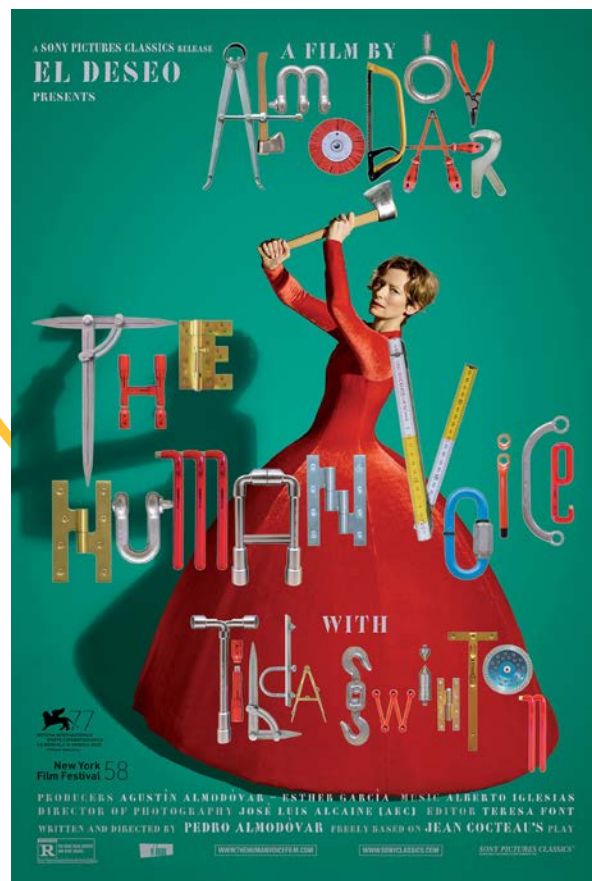
'The Human Voice' is the director's first work in English. The protagonist is an actress played by the award winning Scottish actress Katharine Matilda (Tilda) Swinton. The film is closer to a feature than a short film. In thirty minutes Almodovar take his audience through a journey of a woman's life where she is not able to come to terms with the realities of life. Based on Jean Cocteau's one act play of the same name, Almodovar has tweaked this classic play to the modern times.

The set of the house is shown as a cinema theatre with sensual visuals and bright colours, a signature mark of Almodovar's films. The film was shot in Madrid in Spain during the pandemic. It premiered at the Venice Film Festival in September 2020.

Tilda's outstanding performance clubbed with the classic Almodovar's sets with sensual colours is a treat to the audience. Added to it, the mesmerising music by Alberto Iglesias is as Tilda says in an interview 'Virtual Reality'. The costume designer Sonia Grande needs a special mention especially about the lovely red dress worn by Tilda.

'The Human Voice' has been produced by Almodovar's production house and rights acquired by Sony.

A Pedro Almodovar film has all elements of the human voice like fantasy, grief, sorrow, sensitivity, hope and love.





THE KICKSLED CHOIR

Ten-year-old Gabriel dreams of joining the Kicksled Choir, a local caroling group known for raising donations for the refugees in his community. But Gabriel faces an unexpected hurdle after he witnesses his father's alarming aggression towards the very people he wants to help.

It is hard for refugees to be welcomed unanimously anywhere. Norway and northern Norway is no different. In the 18-minute film, 'The Kicksled Choir', writer/director Torfinn Iversen and producer Julia Andersen of Fjordic Films, have dealt with this topic, among other important and interesting ones, like father-son relationships, building your own identity, and fighting for one's beliefs.

Norway has many choirs, especially in the smaller towns. One such choir of residents in a small village in northern Norway goes door-to-door singing to collect money or clothes for the refugees living nearby. They get around on kicksleds, sleds with seats, and hence the name.

There's not a lot of dialogue, as the tension of the silence takes its place. In the beginning, Gabriel's father (Stig Henrik Hoff) is buying a window. When a refugee won't get out of the way so Gabriel's father can drive past, the two get into a fight and Gabriel's father throws the man over a railing into the river. This shocks Gabriel. At home, while they sit through a quiet dinner, the choir comes by. Ten-year old Gabriel (played by debutante Benoni Brox Krane), who loves to sing, longs to join the choir, and so welcomes them, but his father shoos them away. At school, he overhears people saying, "the crazy farmer threw the refugee in the river," and "don't call them immigrants, they're refugees."

The film has already won awards at many film festivals around the world. It was the official selection at several other film festivals.

<i>Directed by</i>	<i>Torfinn Iversen</i>
<i>Produced by</i>	<i>Julia Andersen, Kristoffer Jørgensen</i>
<i>Cinematographer</i>	<i>Odd Reinhardt Nicolaysen</i>
<i>Editor</i>	<i>Torfinn Iversen</i>
<i>Production company</i>	<i>Fjordic Film</i>
<i>Distributed by</i>	<i>Shorts TV</i>
<i>Running time</i>	<i>18 minutes</i>
<i>Country</i>	<i>Norway</i>
<i>Language</i>	<i>Norwegian</i>



OFFICIALLY SELECTED FOR
FILM FEST GENT

A short film By **Anthony Nti**

DAYIE

Goua Grovogui • **Prince Agortey** • **Matilda Enchil**

written and produced by **Anthony Nti & Chingiz Karibekov** | cinematography by **PJ Claessens**
edited by **Frederik Vandewalle** | Sound recording by **Vincent Struelens** | TAC **Jordan Vanschel** | Sound engineer **Seppe Monbaliu**
Executive producer: **Nicole Balken** | Line producer **Charles Nti** | Associated producer: **Dimitri Verbeek** | Fixer **Anthony Yeboah**
Floor manager **Clement Gyegyey** | Art Direction by **Pjizzle, Chalé and Chingz** | Catering **Jane Pinnaman**
Child carer **Godwin Akowua** | Foley by **Flo Van Deuren** | Grading by **Florian Keirse**
Music composed by **Maxim Helincks and Milco Geryl**

Rondini

ace

CAWAR

sabam
for culture

RITCS

DA YIE

shortrrmag - the #Oscar *SHORTLIST* edition

Young Matilda and Prince are taken on a life-changing trip by a stranger. Kids, gangsters and Ghana's vibrant coast as you've never seen them.

How do you take a lovely seaside village in Ghana with its fun loving people, football playing innocent school children who have to get home in time so their mothers do not beat them, a friendly foreigner who offers a fun road trip, and make a film out of this that makes the audiences sit on the edge of their seats in tension?

We caught up with Anthony Nti, Director of the film, 'Da Yie', for an exclusive interview, to find out.

"'Da Yie' is my graduation film, and is based on my childhood in Ghana, so I was looking for someone like me," says Anthony. "We did an open cast call in a primary school. My cousin knew the headmaster. We wrote down the characteristics of the two child characters, and one of them had to be able to play good football, rap, be like super enthusiastic, you know, like sharp with words (snaps his fingers). The teacher read the characteristics, and he said, 'Can a girl come, also?' and I'm like, 'Yeah, man, if it fits, why not?' and the first person that walked into the casting room was Matilda. She walked in and we were like we have this rap thing, should we write something for you, do you have your own stuff, and she had her own rap stuff, she started rapping, it was like, 'Oh my God, this is like a diamond!' And so it became Matilda. And it still fitted the film, and her presence was so amazing and it just made sense for her to play that role."

But directing non-actors could be a daunting task, right? Not for Anthony. "I've been working with kids for a while now. You know, my previous films, my previous short films, I've done some videos, narrative video clips, where I worked with kids. In Belgium, in Antwerp where I live, we do like workshops for the kids, you know, kids who are non-actors. At the end of the workshop, we always do a film project. Every time I work with kids, I learn so much. With kids, if a kid doesn't understand, he doesn't understand. And so, for me, it is learning how to communicate with kids that is most exciting."

'Da Yie' is the story of how two innocent children, for different reasons, end up going on a road trip with a foreigner for the evening. They have a lot of fun and as night falls, the foreigner has to deliver them to his masters in a house full of shady characters. The foreigner realises the kids are not

cut out for the task these masters have in mind for them, and so tries to leave the house, only to be beaten and stopped. The kids escape in the melee, and have to make their way home on foot, all alone, in the dark of night.

When they finally reach home, and the audience heaves a sigh of relief, they wish each other 'Da Yie'. With a glint in the eye,



Anthony says, "Da Yie is Akan for Good Night. If you have seen the film, it takes place in the day, and at night. Throughout the journey, these kids go through the road trip, the excitement, which kinda ends well, so they had a good night, you know. Also, those are the last words the characters exchange in the film, despite going through so much, they do wish each other good night. It just fitted. It made sense to call the film Good Night, and that's why we went for Da Yie."

Anthony plays a window cleaner cameo in the film, and related an incident to us regarding this cameo. "To be honest with you, we were a small crew of five, you know. We were in traffic. We had a car in front and a car behind, and my nephews were in the car, and I said, OK, I'll do it. It was so much fun, because it was so chaotic. We just did the shoot. And the people around were like,



In 2020, it won the Clermont-Ferrand International Short Film Festival and was amongst the finalists for the BAFTA Los Angeles Student Film Awards.

‘Why are you doing it? Why are you being disrespectful to him? He just wants to clean the window.’ And I’m like ‘Yeah. Beat him up.’ (laughs). It was fun, but I wouldn’t have played it if we had others to do it.”

The project was ably supported by his extended family in Ghana. He is grateful to his family for helping out. “They are so proud, you know. Do you wanna hear a funny story? When I got the news that we were shortlisted, it was in the night. So, I called my family, and they were sleeping obviously. My Dad called me back, and you know, me calling Dad late, he thought there was something wrong, something happened, you know. He was like, ‘You called?’. I am like, ‘Dad, we are shortlisted for the Oscars!!’ and he goes, ‘Aaa... congrats ... let me call you back in the morning, I’m too sleepy now.’ The next day, of course, there were so many phone calls, so much joy. Yeah, everybody was super happy, because they saw the project growing from the beginning.”

Anthony is working on a feature next. “Any format, as long as I can tell a story,” he asserts.

<i>Directed by</i>	<i>Anthony Nti</i>
<i>Produced by</i>	<i>Anthony Nti, Chingiz Karibekov, Dimitri Verbeek</i>
<i>Screenplay by</i>	<i>Anthony Nti, Chingiz Karibekov</i>
<i>Cinematography</i>	<i>Pieter-Jan Claessens</i>
<i>Edited by</i>	<i>Frederik Vandewalle</i>
<i>Production company</i>	<i>Caviar Films RITCS Rondini</i>
<i>Distributed by</i>	<i>Salaud Morisset</i>
<i>Running time</i>	<i>20 minutes</i>
<i>Country</i>	<i>Belgium Ghana</i>
<i>Language</i>	<i>Akan French English</i>





FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION
Best live action short film

WHITE



A FILM BY TOMER SHUSHAN

DAWIT TEKLEAB DANIEL GAD

PRODUCERS SHIRA HOCHMAN & KOBI MIZRAHI CINEMATOGRAPHER SAAR MIZRAHI
EDITOR SHIRA HOCHMAN SOUND DESIGN NIM HAZAN ASSISTANT DIRECTOR NITZAN ROZEN
ART DIRECTOR NITZAN ZIFRUT MUSIC YOSEF SHLOMO POSTER DESIGN GREG KOTLER CAST
REUT AKKERMAN KHAMIS EL SHIECH AMIR BUSHARI OMRI DAVID MUHAMMAD ABU LEIL
GOSHA DEMIR ALONA RETER



WHITE EYE

A man finds his stolen bicycle and it now belongs to a stranger. In his attempts to retrieve the bicycle, he struggles to remain human.

If you belong to the privileged class of locals in a country and lose something that has sentimental value but is otherwise inexpensive for you, whom do you suspect of stealing it? The ‘outsiders’ or immigrant people, of course!

Tomer Shushan’s short, ‘White Eye,’ based on a real-life experience of the filmmaker, drives this point home. And in dramatic fashion, points out the extreme vulnerability that this suspicion puts the immigrants in. We caught up with Tomer for an exclusive interview.

“From Q&As I have done with lots of Film Festivals around the world, I see that people everywhere feel connected to this topic. There are clashes between classes, between locals and strangers, everywhere. I feel this topic is very strong these days, and I am really happy that I could make this film to show people this simple story that can change someone’s life,” says Tomer, who is pleasantly surprised that his film is in the Oscar shortlist, “It was out of this world, this feeling that your independent film, your personal story, is now on the Oscar shortlist! Life is so crazy, you know!”

The film’s protagonist, Omer, discovers someone stole his bike. He finds it, locked, in the night on a lonely street. He reaches out to the police to help him unlock it. When the police arrive, they are courteous to him, but insist on following the rule book, and ask him to locate the thief and lodge a complaint first.

When a poor, immigrant worker Yunes from a nearby meat factory appears and claims he bought the bike, Omer concludes Yunes has stolen the bike. Yunes appeals to Omer not to involve the police, and that he can have the bike for the amount he paid to buy the bike. But, it is too late for that.

The police discover that Yunes is living in the country on an expired visa. Omer realises he has hurt Yunes irrevocably without intending to. The same police that spoke about rules with Omer, is now willing to take Yunes into custody, ignoring due process.

The sight of other immigrants hiding in a freezer in the meat factory illustrates the constant fear that the immigrants live under. These are people living in our midst, yet we do not see



them!

“To me,” says Tomer, “White Eye symbolises blindness. My protagonist is a bit blind at the beginning. White Eye also symbolises the story as seen by the eyes of a white person.”

‘White Eye’ is an award-winning short film, and was made as a one-shot film, with just enough funds to complete the shoot in one night. Daniel Gad as Omer and Dawit Tekelaeb as Yunes have turned in excellent performances.

In fact, about the character Yunes, Tomer says, “First of all, it was very important for me to work with a real refugee, someone that wakes up every morning knowing they are illegal, just their being, you know. I remember, walking one night, I saw Dawit washing dishes in a restaurant through a window. He caught my eye, and I knew it had to be him. There is no explanation to this. It is just a feeling I had. I went to him and told him. He was shocked, and did not really understand what I wanted. I guess after I met him the next day over coffee and told him the story and



In 2020, it won the Lighthouse International Film Festival and was amongst the finalists for the Palm Springs International ShortFest and the Indy Shorts International Film Festival.



<i>Directed by</i>	<i>Tomer Shushan</i>
<i>Produced by</i>	<i>Shira Hochman, Kobi Mizrahi</i>
<i>Screenplay by</i>	<i>Tomer Shushan</i>
<i>Cinematography</i>	<i>Saar Mizrahi</i>
<i>Edited by</i>	<i>Shira Hochman</i>
<i>Production company</i>	<i>Mina Films KM Productions</i> <i>Makor Foundation for Israeli Films</i>
<i>Distributed by</i>	<i>Eroin Corp.</i>
<i>Running time</i>	<i>21 minutes</i>
<i>Country</i>	<i>Israel</i>
<i>Language</i>	<i>Hebrew</i>

about his character, he felt it was really important for him to do something like this because it was a way for him to represent his community, and to convey the message to the world that they want to feel equal. That was the hardest part, to find a non-actor, someone from the street we don't know, and to work with him for a film."

Making a one-shot film is never easy, as we all know. It took a lot of hard work and lots of practice to make this film happen. Says Tomer, "We had camera rehearsals. We also had rehearsals for, say, the guy with the sound, since he needed to know who's talking when, and that he is not casting shadows on the wall, since the cameras were going 360. So, we needed choreography for everyone on set, not just for the actors. Everyone needed to know where they were going to be and when. It was very challenging. I have to say this, I will think ten times if I have to do a one-shot film again. It is too much work."

To make sure the audience experience was fresh, Tomer even made sure the characters did not meet each other till it was time for the take. He explains, "I guess I wanted to feel the magic of the click that happens the first time you meet someone."

Since it was based on Tomer's personal experience, he made sure he and Daniel got to know each other over two months before they started discussing the script, so he could think like him. In other words, a lot of attention to detail has gone into the making of this film.

Tomer plans to make a feature film based on 'White Eye', and has started working on the storyline of his feature.

The Letter Room

When a corrections officer is transferred to the letter room, he soon finds himself enmeshed in a prisoner's deeply private life.

'The Letter Room' by Elvira Lind is the story of a lonely prison employee whose job is to scan and read letter of inmates. Elvira hails from Copenhagen and specialised in documentaries. This is a first fiction short film by her. While doing this film, Elvira was thrilled to direct Issac Oscar who also happens to be her husband.

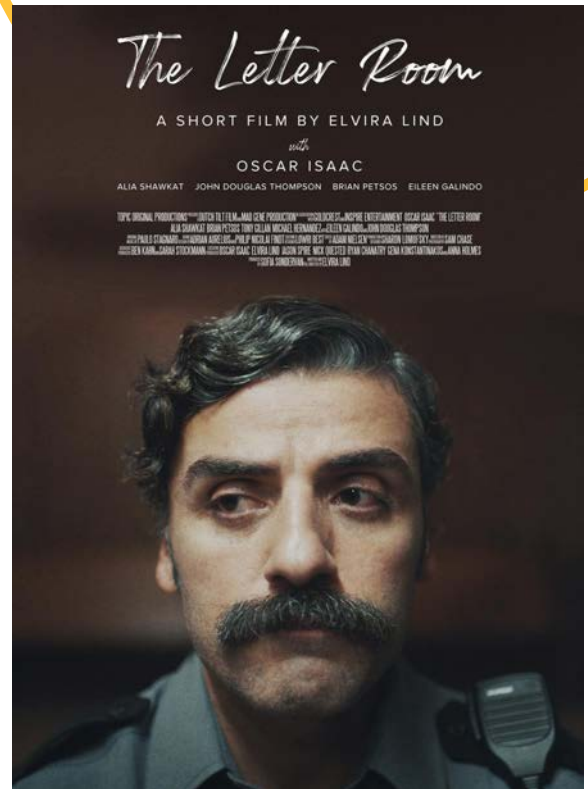
The main theme of the film is loneliness and it resonates more in the current COVID times, when we are forced to keep distances from each other.

The story revolves around a Communications Director at the prison, played by Isaac Oscar, famous for films like Star Wars and X-Men. Oscar plays the role of a very lonely man who works in the prison and comes home daily to an empty house.

In the course of his duties, he starts getting involved in the intimate secrets of the prisoners conveyed through letters written to them by their family and lovers. The theme of loneliness is subtly shown as the protagonist eating food from the refrigerator and watching soap operas.

The message Elvira wants to convey through this film is that all of us are in some way lonely and fighting our inner demons. But as humanity, we need to connect with each other. There is still a need to write love letters, especially in these present pandemic times.

Premiered at Hollyshorts, this film has done the rounds of many film festivals including Tribeca and Palm Springs International Short Fest. This Academy Awards contender in the live short film section has interesting music of only congas and this was being recorded live while the shots were happening. The music adds to the anticipation of the next shot for the audience.



Directed by	Elvira Lind
Produced by	Sofia Sondervan, Oscar Isaac, Ben Kahn, Anna Holmes, Ryan Chanatry, Gena Konstantinacos, Nick Quested, Tara Sheffer, Jason Spire, Sara Stockmann
Cinematographer	Sam Chase
Editor	Adam Nielsen
Screenplay	Steven Hunter
Production company	Ballad Dutch Tilt Film
Disttributed by	Salaud Morisset Topic
Running time	30 minutes
Country	USA
Language	English





THE PRESENT

On his wedding anniversary, Yusef and his young daughter set out in the West Bank to buy his wife a gift. Between soldiers, segregated roads and checkpoints, how easy would it be to go shopping?

Co-written and directed by a British-Palestinian director Farah Nabulsi, 'The Present' is a simple yet hard hitting tale of the atrocities the Palestinians have to face at the Israeli occupied borders. This is her directorial debut.

The opening scene is live footage at checkpoint 300 which is outside Bethlehem. It beautifully sets the tone to the story.

Based on her personal experiences growing up as a Palestinian, Farah shows what it means to be 'Without Freedom of Movement'. The right to freedom of movement is something we tend to take for granted in most parts of the world.

The story is about the daily life of a Palestinian man Yousef (played by the very talented actor Saleh Bakri) and his family that lives just outside the Israeli check-post. For every little thing including groceries he has to cross the checkpoint on foot and each time face unwanted questions and abuse. His life consists of his small family; Mariam Kanj the daughter and Mariam Basha his wife. The film is about one such trip with his daughter to the grocery store across the checkpoint to buy a 'present' for his wife on their wedding anniversary.

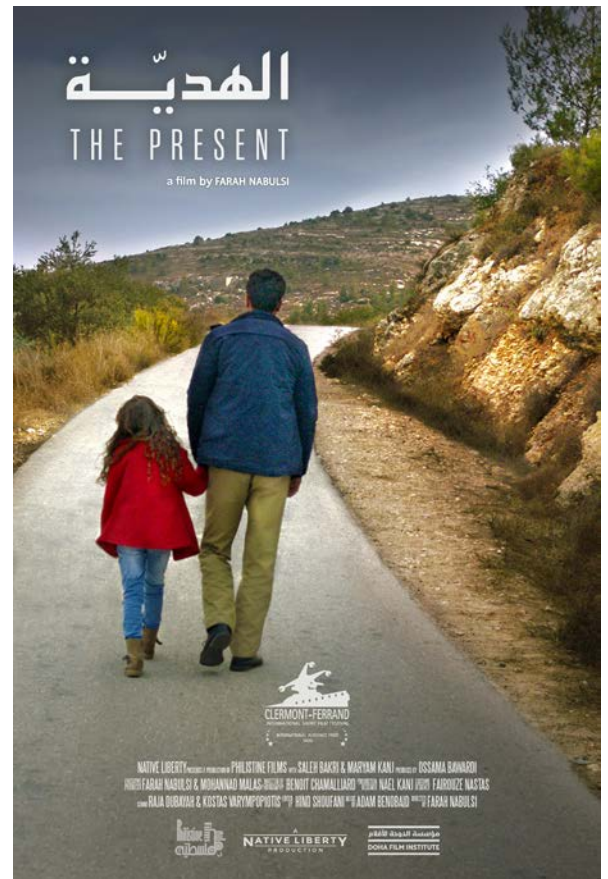
The film premiered at the Clement Ferrand Short Film Festival and won the audience choice awards. It has won 25 awards and 20 nominations.

The interaction between the father and daughter is emotional and will bring tears to your eyes when at a point she tells her father "There was nothing you could have done".

The music score by Adam Benobaid is natural and emotive. The French cinematographer Benoît Chamailard has done fantastic work on the film.

In this tense and emotional story, Farah has weaved in few moments of laughter which blend beautifully into the story. The scene where the daughter is standing behind a caged bird, says so much without saying anything.

The message Farah wants to convey to the audience is as she says in an interview, "the film shows a cruel and absurd reality!"



<i>Directed by</i>	Farah Nabulsi
<i>Produced by</i>	Ossama Bawardi, Farah Nabulsi
<i>Editor</i>	Abdallah Sada, Hind Shoufani
<i>Cinematographer</i>	Benoît Chamailard
<i>Production Company</i>	Philistine Films
<i>Distributed by</i>	Front Row Filmed Entertainment
<i>Running time</i>	25 minutes
<i>Country</i>	Palestine
<i>Language</i>	Arabic, English

TWO DISTANT STRANGERS



Cartoonist Carter James' repeated attempts to get home to his dog are thwarted by a recurring deadly encounter that forces him to re-live the same awful day over and over again.

‘T’wo Distant Strangers’ is accomplished comedian and independent film maker Travon Free’s debut film, directed along with Martin Desmondroe. The story touches a raw nerve about the atrocities committed by the police in US on the black population day in and day out.

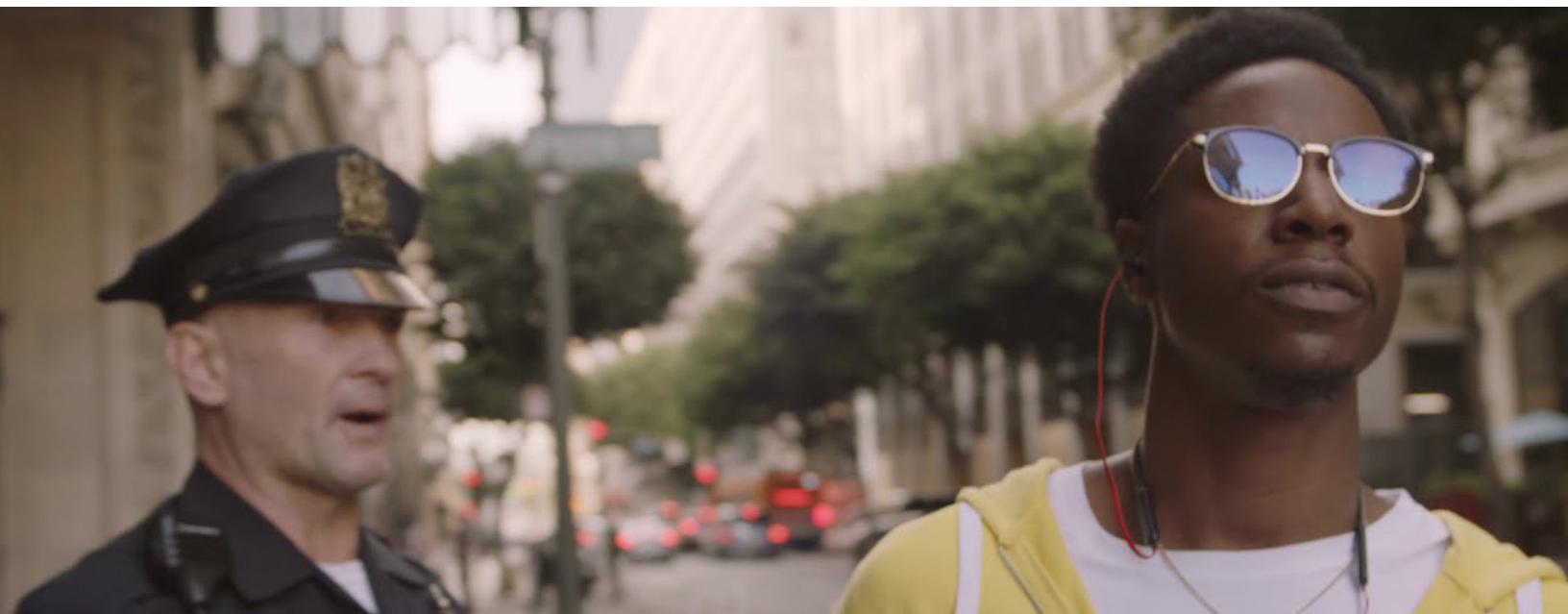
Starring famous rapper and musician Joey Bada\$\$ who plays James Carter, a cartoonist who is trying hard to get home to his dog and has continuous deadly police encounters. The female lead is played by Zaria Perri as the love interest of Carter.

Filmed in just five days, this film portrays the pain and struggle of the black community where they are always terrified as to what encounter they will face around the corner.

The police brutality against the black community in the US has gained a lot of attention recently. Joey says in an interview it is important to bring about police reforms and have strict screening before appointing them especially with respect to mental health issues, which are not easily detected.

Joey Bada\$\$ as James Carter is the best thing to happen to this film. He is extremely popular with the young population and hopes that the message of this film will help in bringing about change in making people more compassionate and understanding towards this problem.

Directed by *Travon Free, Martin Desmond Roe*
Produced by *Lawrence Bender, Chris Uettwiller, Jesse Williams, Mike Shafia, Nick Frew, Nicholas Veneroso,*
Editor *Alex Odesmith*
Cinematographer *Jessica Young*
Production Company *Dirty Robber | NowThis*
Running time *29 minutes*
Country *USA*
Language *English*



THE VAN

The Van stops, the doors open, and Ben comes out alive. Another few fights and he will be able to leave Albania. He still hopes his father will leave with him.

People everywhere are dreaming of getting out of their ghettos and starting anew in some place that offers hope for a better life. Erenik Beqiri's 'The Van' is about generational differences regarding the question of immigration. But it is also a family drama. Two strong-willed main characters, father (played by Arben Bajraktaraj) and son Ben (played by Phénix Brossard), dream different dreams – one of building a business at home, and the other of a better life in England. While Ben is doing everything to get away from Albania, with England as the final destination on his mind, his father – a widowed construction worker, dreams to make it big in the construction business one day.

Ben's concrete plan to fulfil his dream is to earn money through illegal boxing matches in a moving van, where only one winner can make it out alive.

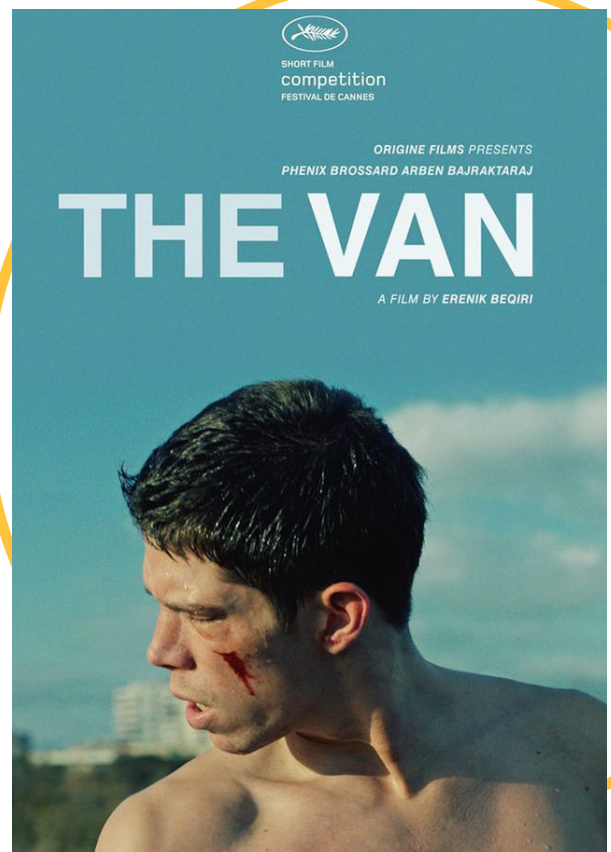
The local gangsters profit from the misery of others. The rules are clear. Money is the only thing that matters, and money will decide the destinies of father and son. Curt conversations and threats delivered in chillingly friendly tones are part of the characters' journey.

Ben's psychological trauma requires no dialogue, we see it in his face. We follow every bruise and wound and we feel every blow.

'The Van' was shot in 5 days, and in a month, the film was ready.

The crew ended up having to work in the freezing cold, but the actors and crew were willing to go the extra mile.

'The Van' is about a family of two men who are ready to do anything for each other, but acting on their own respective impulses, they are actually doing a disservice to each other.



<i>Directed by</i>	Erenik Beqiri
<i>Produced by</i>	Olivier Berlemont, Émilie Dubois Ermir Keta, Amantia Peza
<i>Cinematographer</i>	Guillaume le Grontec
<i>Editor</i>	Pauline Pallier
<i>Production company</i>	Anima Pictures OriGine Films
<i>Distriuted by</i>	FILMPIXS OriGine Films
<i>Running time</i>	15 minutes
<i>Country</i>	France Albania
<i>Language</i>	Albanian



THE SHORT FILM INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY

shortrrmag

THE OSCAR SHORTLIST EDITION

ISSUE 1 - MARCH 2021

PROUDLY PUBLISHED IN CANADA
by ERANGO MEDIA INC.

300-22420 DEWDNEY TRUNK ROAD - MAPLE RIDGE, BRITISH COLUMBIA - V2X3J5

