



CA' FOSCARI SHORT FILM FESTIVAL 10
7-10 OCTOBER, 2020
AUDITORIUM SANTA MARGHERITA, VENICE
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INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION 2020

30 short films from the most prestigious film schools and universities around the world, representing 27 countries:

Belgium, Chile, China, Colombia, Estonia, France, Japan, UK, Hong Kong, India, Iran, Israel, Italy, Lebanon, Morocco, Mexico, Poland, Portugal, Czech Republic, Spain, Singapore, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, Turkey, USA

(all the works will be screened in the original version with subtitles in English and Italian)

AYSAN

Director: Mehrshad Kheradmand
School: Isfahan Sepehr University
Iran, 2019, Persian, 19'55", *fiction*

In a society where lies are commonplace, a firm is specialised in offering to professional actresses the role of deceased or missing people on request of their families. Our protagonist is accustomed to assuming the role of young women, and she voluntarily chose the arduous challenge of filling a close friend of her shoes, in order to find her. She will soon discover some disturbing backstory and find how difficult it will be keeping her typical detachment. A work trying to make us reflect on the human need to seek consolation in illusion, trying to escape from a harsh reality. A dystopic background on a lying society causing addiction to deception. Can you live on the line between reality and fiction? What role does indifference play? Is detachment from reality always possible?

THERESE

Director: Fabiana Serpa
School: ZHdK
Switzerland, 2019, German – Portuguese, 29', *fiction*

Teresa of Bavaria, during an anonymous expedition to Brazil, is collecting tropical botanical specimens to be documented and studied before departure. Accompanied by the faithful Franziska, captain von Speidel and their Brazilian guide, she enjoys the freedom and simplicity of life in the middle of nature, far from court duties. But soon things will get complicated and the characters will have to face difficult

choices. This short film is not a tribute to the Princess Teresa of Bavaria, but to "Therese" and her great humanity. A touching historical episode that makes us question ourselves on themes such as essentiality and happiness, reaching the deepest roots and instincts of the human soul.

SOLEIL

Director: Tianxiang Yang, Hoiming Pau

School: Sun Yet-Sen University

China/Hong Kong, 2019, Cantonese, 29'49", *fiction*

A stage, some actors, an audience. And a drama: how to bring back from Death your beloved? A mysterious sorcerer unveils his secret: you need to eat your beloved eyes and she will come back from the reign of death. Nevertheless, this "undigested" meal will put an end to their tragic love. Are the actors the real characters of this story? How should we try to understand this weird plot? Words to the viewer.

4. SUPERFICIES - SURFACES

Director: José Luis González Peña

School: National Autonomous University of Mexico

Mexico, 2019, spanish, 21'40", *fiction*

Mirlo and his brother, Elanio, are stuck in the middle of nowhere, in the desert, because of a bad tire. While Elanio is seeking for a new tire, Mirlo is left guarding the misterious "cargo" which they are delivering. While he is waiting for his brother, Mirlo meets Alondra, a farm girl who promises them her help in return for two things: money and a ride for Mexico City. But will the girl have other plans? And what will the mysterious content of the truck be?

SONREÍR - SMILE

Director: Francisco Fernández Andrew

School: Centro de Capacitación Cinematográfica

Mexico, 2019, Spanish, 30', *fiction*

The protagonist, Fabián Aguirre, is a professional killer, but also a comedy lover. Fabián is in charge of killing the man whom he has admired all his life: the "Cuquis", the last great Mexican comedian, who is indebted to Fabián's boss, Gabino Mendoza. The protagonist will have a big dilemma, since his esteem and admiration for "Cuquis" are unbridgeable. It will be at this moment that Fabián will take the risk to make his dream come true.

MOYA

Director: Siyabonga Mbele

School: University of the Withwatersrand Johannesburg

South Africa, 2019, Zulu, 15'35", *Experimental*

Moya is the journey of a girl whose spirit is divided before the mystery of Death, unable to find her own religious identity. It is a journey of the soul, both supernatural and surreal, through a variety of urban and natural settings where ghostly figures roam, incarnating the doubts and fears of the main character. A search unfolds within a limbo portrayed with evocative images. A search that is first of all individual but that inevitably raises questions on a larger scale, reflecting on religious syncretism and on the possibility that two seemingly incompatible faiths might coexist.

ORANGE

Director: Liu Yuchen, Lu Hai, Zhang Zihan

School: Communication University of China

China, 2019, Chinese, 5'50", *animation*

A slice of life focused on a family tragedy that occurred years before, during Mr. Wang's funeral. The events of his life are confusedly narrated by neighbors, who immediately keep silent when the son of the deceased arrives. The short film slowly reveals its plot, following the narration of the compatriots and

outlining a story as intense as ambiguous, because it goes from mouth to mouth becoming public, but also less clear. At the center of this evocation there is a fruit, a symbol of sharing and memory.

MOTHER'S

Director: Hippolyte Leibovici

School: Institut National Supérieur des Arts

Belgium, 2019, French, 20', *documentary*

A family of drag queens belonging to four different generation gets ready for a show. Gathered in the dressing room, they discuss about the difficulties that their choice of life entails in both family and social sphere. Their reference point is “maman”, the drag mother who, thanks to the sacrifices made by her generation, was able to make the life of her “daughters” easier. A character of great charisma that encourages the others to seek freedom and gain self-confidence: only in this way they will be happy. A dreamlike ending elevates “maman” to the status of mother, regardless of any gender distinction.

ROMANCE DEL ROBO DEL SACRAMENTO – BALLAD FOR THE ROBBERY OF THE SACRAMENT

Director Antonio Llamas

School: Ecam

Spain, 2019, Spanish, 8', *fiction*

This short film opens with the peaceful urban environment of a Spanish village. Its faithful and devoted locals are forced to leave their own sites. The heart of the village loses life. Souls full of memories join a long journey together. A forced and suffered separation. A journey from which, maybe, they won't come back. What is left of the village is jealously kept by those who lived in. A decorative drape is left in the church as a sign of gratitude and reverence despite an inexorable fate awaits them. The spirituality will be kept in mind of each of them.

DOMANI ALL'ALBA - TOMORROW AT DAWN

Director: Giulia Di Battista

School: Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia

Italy, 2019, 16', Italian, *fiction*

We are in 1943, Italian population has been called to duty. Amerigo is the only man of his small town who was not drafted due to his crippled leg. He lives with his wife and daughter, which is seriously ill. She needs medical attention as soon as possible. This short film explores the conflict of interest between the individual and the community, adding some veins of thriller to the recipe. Amerigo will have to face a hard choice: follow popular belief and delegate his daughter treatment to the village holy woman, or follow his family and walk the valley searching for a doctor.

LADIES OF WAKALIWOOD

Director: Linn Björklund, Nora Fogelstrom, Amanda Moen

School: Red Cross School

Sweden, 2019, English, 15'34", Fiction

Zari, Shirah and Haaw are three women united by the common curiosity for theatre and the will to emancipate themselves from standards. They are hired at the Ramon Film Production, an action film company in the “Hollywood of Uganda”, Wakaliwood, located in the slum of Kampala. Zari gets the leading role in the upcoming movie and she is afraid of not being cut out for action scenes. She is surprised as she finally feels involved and admired and that is because she has a role uncommon for a woman in the slum. With the background of an extremely poor yet vibrant village, the documentary shows the brave path of self-affirmation and consciousness, despite the too often accepted stereotypical image of a woman.

DAUGHTER

Director: Daria Kashcheeva

School: FAMU - Film and TV School of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague
Czech Republic, 2019, English, 14'44", *animation*

A daughter at her father's bedside traces their story. The disappointments of an enthusiastic girl who is unappreciated and ignored, her unsuccessful attempts to have paternal attention, the inability to receive affection and love. At the same time, the father also reflects about his own inadequacy and inability to make himself loving and present, about his clumsy and late attempts to establish a complicity that can no longer exist. Both retain the regret of inadequacy and suffer the impotence of wasted time, but just a gesture, an object full of memories is enough to bring to the father's and daughter's mind, what both need. An almost dreamlike story between past and present that alternates dynamic sequences with fixed and almost immutable images. 2020 Oscar nominee for Best Animated Short Film.

LOCOMOTOR

Director: Isaku Kaneko

School: Tama Art University

Japan, 2019, No dialogue, 3'06", *animation*

'Locomotor': movement in rectilinear motion associated with the locomotive activity which reduces resistance and minimizes the travel distance. This defines the main character, a human train, an apparatus composed by an active part (the locomotive) and a passive part (the body). Both strive to maintain balance, and the human train proceeds at great speed towards a sea of petroleum. The human part that allows him to save himself is what the locomotive decides to detach from and continue its journey. In the world where everything moves, everything runs, everything turns quickly, in which we live side by side with cars, will it still be possible to walk independently? Is the body a limitation or a support?

TERRE FERME - DRY LAND

Director: Iván James Hayward

School: Cinécreatis Écoles Créatives Nantes

France, 2019, French, 17', *fiction*

In the 1950s French countryside, Émile lives in a farm with the mother Irene, the angel of the house, and the father, Gerard, who tries to instruct him severely in order to entrust to him the family business one day. The monotony of the farm, however, does not suit Émile's aspirations, in whose eyes shines a single word: "freedom". Freedom is presented to him one day in the form of Jacques, a young airplane pilot. The kid immediately sees him as an older brother as well as what he aspires to be when he grows up. You cannot discover new oceans until you have the courage to lose sight of the beach.

PIOŁUN - BITTER HERB

Director: Maria Ornał

School: Polish National Film School in Łódź

Poland, 2019, Polish, 16'28", *Fiction*

In a society where kids seem to live without coordinates, we witness the story of little Ewa, who has a difficult relationship with her mother, forced to prostitution. Focusing on the eloquent eyes of the two female leads, the director portrays at the same time a broken childhood and the sorrow of a mother who, instead of embodying a safe nest, pushes her daughter away, just like women used to wean children rubbing the wormwood mentioned in the title on their breasts. Bitterness, after all, is what connects the characters of *Piołun*, who are often victims and oppressors at once, participating in a cycle passed on from generation to generation, apparently impossible to break.

ARDHVIRAAM

Director: Abhishek Gowda

School: Whistling Woods

India, 2019, hindi/undhi, 19'54", *fiction*

India, 1947. It's the tragic moment of the "Division", new boundaries are marked along the northern side of India, to give space to the newborn Pakistan. Chaos is everywhere, also inside Kalid's head. He is a schizophrenic writer, heir of a rich Muslim family. He finds himself living in city mostly inhabited by Hindi ethnic groups, surrounded by rising inter religious tension and violence. However, nothing really concerns him, except his very own drama: the conclusion of his most ambitious novel. Inside a house that is too big, inhabited only by characters, Khalid is always wandering, unconcerned – or maybe a reflection – of the chaos that surrounds him, an element implied throughout (almost) the whole duration of the short movie.

17. FUEGO LENTO

Director: Joan S. Viáfara

School: Universidad de Chile,

Chile/Colombia, 16' 33", spanish, fiction

A Chilean man, who has recently moved to Colombia, is living a very difficult situation in which he manifests, maybe for the first time in his life, his real sexual orientation. Actually Jorge is happily married and has a child, but he is in an omosexual relationship with his fellow colleague, while his wife is currently abroad. In this short film, where the protagonist's actions are accompanied by a suggestive contrast of neon colors, we can attend the moral conflict of a man who has to choose to follow his sexual tendencies or to sacrifice his true self in favour of his family, to keep in this way the "natural" order of things.

UKDE - UKDE: UNFULFILLED DESIRE

Director: Hüsneğül Çelik

School: Anatolian University

Turkey, 2019, Turkish, 19'48", *Fiction*

Zeliha and Ahmet have given up on having children, despite the woman's daily prayers. Midwife of the village, she is forced to witness the miracle of life unable to give birth herself. Fate knocks at the door when the wealthy Sami entrusts them with the care of a pregnant girl. When the young mother dies while giving birth, the couple sees the tragic accident as the chance of finally raising their own child. *Ukde* is a tale of unanswered prayers and lives that seem to be already written, where hope is nothing but a weak light that is destined to die out in an otherwise cold and dull world, where oppressors always have the upper hand.

ADAM

Director: Shoki Lin

School: Nanyang Technological University

Singapore, 2019, chinese/malaysian, 19'33", *fiction*

Adam, his father with his new partner and newborn half-brother live in an apartment in a public house. Having a small child to look after, Adam's father does not seem to have much consideration for him, except when it comes to being strict and punitive. The young boy lives in a state of constant fear and anguish, relieved only by the rare moments of solitary play. Tired of the situation, he decides to seek comfort by going to his mother's, but it turns out that the relationship with her is troubling as well. Hurt and disappointed, Adam has no intention of going back home, but realizes he has nowhere else to feel loved. Detachment from affections will be the first step in Adam's search of his own place in the world where he can finally be treated for what it is: just a child.

WAR GAME

Director: Mehrnoosh Fetrat, Jon Appel

School: Temple University

USA/Iran, 2019, English/Spanish/Chinese, 18'40", *experimental*

The United States of America confront in war the imaginary state of Cubuchilia, ideally located in South America. The narrative voice is Harry's, an American soldier who secretly draws economic gain from the conflict. Because of this, he makes sure that the conflict never comes to an end,

manipulating news and access to water. This, however, only lasts until Harry himself accidentally causes the end of the war. The short film, with its strongly theatrical approach, calls out the intrusive modern means of communication and those who use the drama of war for their own personal gain, in a crude, cynical way.

THE ANTIDOTE

Director: Wang Cheng En

School: National Taiwan University of Arts

Taiwan, 2019, Chinese, 25'20", *fiction*

Xiuzhen is a nurse, but she is also a mother. One day, her very own daughter gets hospitalized in critical conditions. The only hope of saving the child is a medicinal product, and its limited availability will bring Xiuzhen to take unexpected decisions that will make her question everything. This short film's pressing rhythm and visual power completely sink the viewer in the distress of a mother who is living in her worst nightmare.

How far can you go to save your own daughter?

NOA

Director: Dekel Nitzan

School: Tel Aviv University

Israel, 2019, Hebrew, 25', *Fiction*

The single mother Noa lives in a small village, desperately looking for a job while taking care of her baby with her mother's help. The woman's life seems to be taking a turn when she meets Yair, vice president of a successful company, who moves to the village with his wife and kids. The frantic search for the much-desired job, which always ends in a door slammed in her face, is the mirror of a search for social and emotional stability within a community where she feels like nothing but an outcast. It is the daily intimate fight for the right to live a "normality" that she can only witness from the outside but to which access is constantly denied.

RITA

Director: Loubna Briac

School: Master Cinéma documentaire de Tétouan

Morocco, 2019, Arabic, 26'44", *documentary*

July 8, 2014: date in which the operation "Protection margin" begins; it is the military campaign started by the Israel Defense Forces against the Hamas Palestinians and other related groups in the Gaza strip. The testimony is that of Fadoua and her husband Raefat, a former Palestinian prisoner forced to seek political asylum in Europe. Rita, a four-year-old girl, is born from their love; she is an innocent victim of the war and because of this conflict she has never seen her father. The sand is the thread of the story. The events that are presented on television or in newspapers may look like distant scenarios from movies or books, but when witnesses – and their eyes – speak, everything becomes dramatically real.

XIAO XIAN

Director: Jiajie Yu Yan

School: EFTI Centro Internacional de Fotografía y Cine

Spain, 2019, Chinese/Spanish, 17', Fiction while

While her mother and her friends are enjoying an evening together, young Xiao Xian is busy sewing a dress, but a friend of hers, Sheng Xia, shows up at her door and convinces her to go out. However, something unexpected happens as the simple touch of Xian's fingers on Sheng Xia's back causes unclear thoughts to bubble in her mind. Once at the club, a young and charming artist meets the girls' gaze and invites them on stage. The boy and Sheng Xia dance to the rhythm of the music, leaning into each other, suddenly triggering Xiao Xian's jealousy and abrupt detachment from the two. Her disappointed expression will be explained in an unexpected finale.

LE CHANTE DE NEPTUNE - NEPTUNE'S SONG

Director: Pierre Lazarus

School: La Fémis

France, 2019, French, 20'02", *fiction*

"Once upon a time there was a little fish named Neptune..." In a world where the whole marine life has disappeared, Balthazar, the protagonist, to make ends meet, creates shows for children where he tells the story of Neptune through prints of ancient fishes. Actually, Balthazar keeps a secret treasure: he owns the last living fish on Earth. The story develops through a play of lights and shadows, shapes and sounds, creating enchantment and mystery, not only for Balthazar's young audience, but also for the viewers themselves.

VÄRVID MUST-VALGEL - BLACK AND WHITE

Director: German Golub

School: BFM Baltic Film, Media, Arts and Communication School

Estonia, 2019, Estonian, 17'58", *fiction*

It's the 70s. The protagonist, Paula, is a professional TV journalist who finds herself facing some changes, which reveal her insecurities and increase her deepest fear: aging. The TV world is transforming, moving from black and white to color, and she feels left behind in a world that is changing so fast. This short film reflects on the feeling of inadequacy that comes from dealing with change, and on how people try to satisfy other's expectations, overwhelmed by the fear of losing what they love. However, the meaning of everything is not to be found in the surface, but rather in the purpose of it.

NOVEMBER 1st

Director: Charlie Manton

School: National Film & Television School

United Kingdom, 2019, English, 24'41", *fiction*

Bonnie is travelling with his daughter in order to witness the execution of his son's killer, which has been postponed many times. November 1st is the day in which she hopes to seek justice after 28 long years. Family relation have been deeply influenced by the anticipation of this very day, tearing apart the relation between mother and daughter. From their dialogue we grasp the anger and pain which have overwhelmed them for years, making them two extraneous. Winner of the Student Accademy Awards 2019.

ALNAJMA

Director: Gilbert Karam

School: Université Libanaise

Lebanon, 2019, arabic, 11'14", *fiction*

Once the performance on the stage has ended in one of the most known Lebanese theatres in Beirut, famous actress Aida goes in her changing room, still experiencing the success of her last performance. Her immeasurable fame is testified by countless journalists and photographers, standing at her door after the show, ready to take pictures of her. Nevertheless, the outside reality is far from her expectations. Aida finds out that she is alone and fragile. Even though she had been praised, applauded and appreciated for her talent, she must now face people's indifference. She must live daily life's routine and trivial irrelevance, just as normal people do. Once she leaves the stage she feels the spotlights going out from her.

FELIZ NATAL, SR. MONSTRO – MERRY CHRISTMAS, MR. MONSTER

Director: João Pais da Silva, André Rodrigues

School: Universidade de Beira Interior

Portugal, 2019, Portuguese, 13'27", *fiction*

It's Christmas night in an abandoned mall. A little girl wakes up and begins to walk among unsettling places, she meets a man dressed as Santa Claus who, with a map drawn in a childish way, is looking for a treasure. The strange couple spends time together inside the building, but the relationship will plummet

after a quarrel. The short film proposes an unconventional vision of the hidden monster in the recesses of the human being.

MENTRE DORMI – WHILE YOU'RE SLEEPING

Director: Francesca Giuffrida

School: Civica Scuola di Cinema Luchino Visconti

Italy, 2019, italian, 22', *fiction*

Anna, a famous fifty-old cellist, takes care of her husband Giovanni, in a coma for one year. One day she decides to try a software that let patients live their unconscious desires when connected to their brain. Thanks to the software, virtual reality becomes the chance for a second life. However, something unpredictable emerges from the experience, because inner desires can be inexpressible. While Anna wonders what her husband feels, Giovanni lives a crisis derived from confusion between real and virtual life.