



CA' FOSCARI SHORT FILM FESTIVAL 13

22-25 MARCH 2023

WIDESPREAD IN VENICE

web: <http://cafoscarishort.unive.it> - *mail:* cafoscarishort@unive.it

INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION

30 short films from the most prestigious film schools and universities around the world, representing 28 countries:

Armenia, Austria, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, China, Colombia, South Korea, Egypt, Philippines, France, Georgia, Germany, Iran, Italy, Mexico, Nepal, Netherlands, Poland, United Kingdom, Czech Republic, Russia, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, United States, Hungary, Turkey.

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

9 – 5

Director: Maša Šarović

School: Faculty of Dramatic Arts in Belgrade

Serbia, 2022, Serbian, 21'06", *fiction*

Ivan does a job that requires creativity, but his efforts are not appreciated. He must continue to feign enthusiasm and confidence, despite feeling more and more pressure. The effects of job dissatisfaction extend far beyond his office hours; the stress has a detrimental impact on his love and sex life, withering his human relationships and making him progressively lonelier and apathetic. The long-camera shots, which often show the protagonist in the background, lost behind unrelated or unfamiliar secondary characters, help convey a sense of alienation to the audience.

AGLAYA, S ROZHDESTVOM! – AGLAYA, MERRY CHRISTMAS!

Director: Elizaveta Alexandrovna Dorozhkina

School: Moscow Film School

Russia, 2022, Russian, 19'31", *fiction*

Medical student Aglaya Streltsova undergoes a cosmetic surgery injection for her wedding that will prove fatal due to anaphylactic shock. On Christmas' eve, however, she miraculously resurrects and emerges from her coffin. After the initial confusion, Aglaya heads to the nearest gas station, where she meets her fellow student Savich. The man is conducting a study on the resurrection of the dead, and therefore decides to help the girl return to the world of the living by making her the subject of his research. To Aglaya's surprise, however, none of her relatives are happy about her return, least of all the man who would become her husband, who has already found another woman. Only by rejecting a hypocritical and cynical society will Aglaya be able to "rise again," finding her true self and salvation in love.

AS DÚAS EN PUNTO – ANARCHISM AT TWO O' CLOCK

Director: Uliane Tatit

School: ECIB – School of Cinema of Barcelona

Spain, 2022, Spanish, 23'40", *documentary*

In the park of Alameda Santiago de Compostela, the sculpture of two sisters arm in arm dressed in brightly colored dresses blends amidst the passers-by. Known as 'Las Dos Marias', their real names were Maruxa and Coralía Fandiño Ricart, and they lived in the time period between the Spanish Civil War and the French dictatorship, in an intolerant and conservative Santiago de Compostela. Reduced to poverty and persecuted for their anarchist ideas, they were forgotten for a long time, until the moment of their reconstruction thanks to narratives such as the one devised by Uliane Tatit, who immortalizes a personal alternative pilgrimage to Santiago with her documentary. The destination is the sculptures of Maruxa and Coralía, committed to their daily walk at two o'clock. The sisters are briefly shown through some photographs, but it is by walking through the streets of Santiago that the director rediscovers them in the faces of the women engaged in their daily chatter.

AU BORD DU DÉLIRE – ON THE EDGE

Director: María Claudia Blanco

School: La Fémis, Paris

Colombia/France, 2022, French/Spanish, 20'48", *fiction*

An argument between two women on an underground train carriage becomes increasingly heated. The scene is being observed from the perspective of a young boy with his dog, who inevitably finds himself a silent witness to this quarrel. The protagonists are complete strangers, but they all have seen their lives being turned upside down because of the pandemic. The film narrates, through the characters' anxieties, the difficulty of moving forwards because of their inability to act, and the alienation caused by being stuck in a situation that seems to have no way out due to the countless contradictions of which it is made. The film director creates a perfect combination between innocence and maturity, energy and tenderness, where love proves to be the best way for healing.

AVT'UNE

Director: Ani Grigorian

School: Yerevan State Institute of Theatre and Cinematography

Armenia, 2022, Armenian, 26'37", *documentary*

"In my fairy tale, there are no dragons, only reality." Only seven Yezidi families live in the remote village of Avtona, including that of Suko, a 12-year-old boy who takes the audience, through his eyes and thoughts, into two worlds: an imaginary and a real one. However, Suko is always true to himself, the only difference being that in one world he is active while in the other he is quieter. The short follows the simple life of a Yezidi child who manages to reconcile the carefree spirit typical of his age with the need to work to help out the family, as has been the case for generations now. Life passes slowly, the seasons go by, and everything remains the same in Avtona as much

as it does for Suko, who does not see a chance to change his life and leave as many other families have done, because his place is in that remote village in Armenia, alongside his family.

AWEL MARA – HOLY MOTHER

Director: Hussein Hossam

School: Prague Film School

Czech Republic/Egypt, 2022, English/Arabic, 19'33", *fiction*

Maryam is a senior in high school and dreams of becoming a successful fashion designer. Therefore, she would like to move to Paris together with her boyfriend Filip and attend a fashion school, so that she can leave behind her family's expectations and freely embrace her sexuality. The play crudely stages—bordering on splatter—the reality of a Muslim girl living in a European city. Indeed, on the one hand, she is mocked by her classmates for her cultural heritage, and on the other, she is forced to make extreme decisions to escape the wishes of her conservative and traditionalist family, which would like her to be married to a man chosen by them and with a destiny already written.

BIAŁA DAMA – THE WHITE LADY

Director: Maria Magdalena Jeziorowska

School: Krzysztof Kieślowski Film School, Katowice

Poland, 2022, Polish, 18'22", *fiction*

Teresa is a wedding photographer who is now tired of her job. One evening, she is hired to photograph the reception of a young married couple, where she senses the heavy pressure that an aggressive groom and an overbearing mother exert on the woman. When Teresa discovers a shady affair involving the bride herself in the parking lot, the story takes on the hues of an unexpected investigation. Interested since her early shorts in reflecting on the social and cultural condition of women in contemporary society, the director here tackles crucial issues such as abuse and violence that exist in a couple's relationship, but crowns the ending with a sense of revenge given by a skillful use of irony.

BLOODY GRAVEL

Director: Hojat Hosseini

School: Iranian Youth Cinema Association, Tehran

Iran, 2022, Persian, 18'14", *fiction*

Roya and Bashir try to escape from Afghanistan across the Iranian border by relying on two human traffickers, Saku and Osho. Roya is mute and is carrying a baby that was not planned. She is frightened, but Bashir reminds her of the risks of returning to her family, and so gets her into the traffickers' car. During an uncomfortable and inconvenient journey, Roya goes into labor. A dramatic event is followed by an unexpected gesture of tenderness that reaffirms the value of individual ethics and the possibility of choice even when violence seems the only reality.

DIE UNSICHTBARE GRENZE – INVISIBLE BORDER

Director: Mark Siegfried Gerstorfer

School: Filmakademie Wien

Austria, 26'40", German/Albanian, *fiction*

It is late at night in Vienna. Police officer Nancy and her colleagues prepare for an expatriation operation against a family originally from Kosovo. Fear, denial, and astonishment are palpable in individuals who are about to lose everything, even the place they call home, an "adopted" homeland. What should have been a quick and uncomplicated action turns out to be a drama that wrenches the future plans of a family unit, where even Nancy will have to deal with emotions that create a rift between her profession and her humanity. In one night, in an anonymous Viennese

apartment building, that invisible barrier that marks the painful differences between people becomes increasingly insurmountable.

DIE VERLORENEN

Director: Simon Baucks

School: Academy of Media Arts Cologne

Germany, 2022, German, 19'59", *fiction*

The work follows the parallel stories of three characters: Runau, an MMA fighter controlled by the Mafia, and siblings Amelie and Jonas who care for their seriously ill mother. Seemingly very different, they are all united by one thing: addiction. Indeed, the central theme of the story is abuse as a coping mechanism for grief and bereavement, which leads the characters into uncomfortable and difficult situations. Their stories at first have parallel developments that eventually converge and find themselves to be, as the original title states, "the lost ones." The narrative is continually interrupted by moments of anxiety and suspense, amplified by the fast pace of the music and the movements of the shoulder-mounted camera.

EN CUALQUIER LUGAR - ANY PLACE

Director: Minerva Rivera Bolaños

School: Centro de Capacitación Cinematográfica, México City

Mexico, 2022, Spanish, 13'09", *fiction*

In Mexico, a five-year-old girl lives in a society where cultural traditions and gender roles seem immutable. Her life continues in a carefree manner until she is forced to say farewell to childhood. Deprived of her innocence, she makes an extreme act to save herself, those she loves and to free herself from the burden that grips her. The director tackles a challenging topic, portraying a cross-section of local family conviviality. By using brilliant framing cuts, the chaotic world of the adults is opposed by the one of the children who are misunderstood, unheard, silenced. Nothing seems to happen, yet behind bright colors and festive atmospheres lies a terrible truth. A film that denounces abuses perpetrated in a world that too often chooses not to see.

EONNILEUL GIEOGHAE – REMEMBER OUR SISTER

Director: Hayoung Jo

School: Dong-Ah Institute of Media and Arts, Anseong

Republic of Korea, 2022, Korean, 28'55", *fiction / musical*

South Korea, 1980s: the stationing of an American base in a South Korean village has shaken its citizens, who are forced to provide for the entertainment and pleasure of soldiers. Thirteen-year-old Hong lives in the village with his older sister and leads a carefree existence, still protected by his age from the soldiers' violence. Gradually, however, Hong begins to realize that something strange is happening in the village. With great technical skill and expressive power, Hayoung Jo manages to capture the dramatic situation in the village, on the one hand through the eyes of a little girl, and on the other through the disillusionment of adults. At the heart of the story emerge the strong bonds of the Korean women protagonists and the values of courage, solidarity and hope they embody, while the historical backdrop of foreign military control hovers ominously in the background. The work is based on real-life events.

FLY HIGH

Director: Giuseppina Fais, Lorenzo Pappa Monteforte, Kevin Rosso, Yagiz Tunceli

School: Experimental Center of Cinematography, Piedmont

Italy, 2022, English, 6'39", *animation*

In a modern metropolitan city, amidst tall skyscrapers and busy streets, the unexpected sight of a man flying undisturbed in the sky disrupts the busy coming and going of people. Unable to find explanations for this extraordinary fact, a collective frenzy ensues. The web goes crazy, newspapers

and radio stations speak solely of this event. The most unlikely hypotheses are proposed: some speak of aliens, others of terrorism, some say they predicted it themselves. What emerges as central is the precariousness of everyday life and how much an unprecedented, if harmless, fact can destabilize the community. Highlighted, not without irony, are in fact people's reactions to what cannot be attributed to ordinary existence: truths dispensed without any scientific basis, exploitation for personal gain, general chaos, fury, exaltation, paranoia and fear.

FOOTPRINTS OF ANTS

Director: Ümit Güç

School: Çukurova University, Department of Film, Radio and Television, Adana
Turkey, 2022, 15'00", Arabic/Kurdish/Turkish, *fiction*

Asylum seekers and farm workers coexist in a refugee camp in Turkey, but their extremely poor conditions create tension between different cultures and ethnicities. Evin tells a secret to Baris, and, holding bread in their hands, the two children disappear, leaving behind the differences and daily routine of those struggling to survive. At dusk, a desperate search begins that will last all night, the concern of their respective parents breaking down their prejudices. The two runaways, once found, move the adults through the childlike, dreamy perception of that blurred boundary between the joy of life and the pain of death. A tale of a journey, the human itinerary of those forced to leave and those fortunate enough to arrive, but also of the movement that characterizes ants, the “worker” insects distinguished by their laboriousness.

HOMELAND OF SILENCE

Director: Štefánia Lovasová

School: Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava
Slovakia, 2022, Slovak, 26'50", *fiction*

After a recent political attack in a small Eastern European village, everyone has stopped talking to 13-year-old Ivana as if she instigated the conflict. While seeking hope in people and relationships, Ivana feels the sensation of losing an important connection. The work shows a harsh political snapshot of Slovakia through the innocent eyes of a girl trying to understand her everyday reality. Ivana's is a story of exclusion, isolation, and prejudice that poignantly reflects on social issues beyond the reach of a teenage girl.

IN THE NATION OF CAR LOVERS

Director: Sagar Gahatraj

School: Akademija umetnosti Univerze, Nova Gorica
Nepal/Slovenia, 2022, Slovenian, 29'57", *fiction*

In a world where industrial farm animals are turned into human-slaves who are made to believe that they can earn their freedom with enough chips, a naive and eager worker, Elvis, is sent to a car wash center only to see his efforts continually thwarted by a society that seems unwilling to accept those like him. The color details, set against a stunning black and white, hint at an emblematic symbolism that keeps alive the attention and curiosity about this reality. In a powerful indictment of exploitation and alienation in an extremely hierarchical system, the director rails against the basest discrimination and indifference as perpetrated by ordinary people and society itself. A stinging allegory where the audience is left to wonder whether what he is witnessing is merely the tragic drift of a dystopian world, or whether he is somehow already part of it.

MORNING COMMUTE

Director: George Gray

School: Norwich University of the Arts
United Kingdom, 2022, English, 7'23", *fiction*

A man is waiting for his train on a bench while he is trying to impress a girl sitting in front of him, on the opposite side of the platform, by finding very creative and unusual solutions for his courtship. Built on the comic skills of the lead actor, who possesses a remarkable bodily expressivity, the work stands out for its directorial cut and editing timing. The scenic space is sparse, almost theatrical, but immediately comprehensible. The result is a surprising work that blurs the line between comedy and tragedy.

NOT FOR SALE

Director: Alejandro Sánchez Porras; MIRIAM

School: Edinburgh Napier University

United Kingdom, 2022, English, 16'58", *fiction*

Daisy, a shop owner, and her employees, who are still furious with the ruthless manager who drove them out of business, organize a fake art sale to defraud the arrogant billionaire businessman William Carter, CEO member of the supermarket chain that drove Daisy and her crew to bankruptcy. William hopes to purchase a painting as an investment, but he is completely ignorant regarding art. Will the crooks be able to take advantage of Carter's greed?

ÖRDÖGMUZSIKA – DEVIL'S CHANTER

Director: Karim Hema

School: SZFE - University of Theatre and Film Arts, Budapest

Hungary, 2022, no dialogue, 9'25", *documentary*

Inspired by the legend of the shepherd who stole the goat dearest to him from the devil and turned it into the first bagpipe, Devil's Chanter shows the process of transforming a living being into another entity: music. A narrative that relies not on words, but on the senses. Its start with cold colors and soft music makes one perceive the approach of something gloomy and ominous, and then concludes with brightly colored images of folklore. The director takes the audience on an intense journey full of sensory stimuli that becomes a reflection on the cycle of life.

PERERUG

Director: Mikhail Philippovich Boreysa

School: Institute of Contemporary Art, Moscow

Russia, 2022, Russian, 25'27", *fiction*

During a hunting trip, three friends end up killing a mythological creature. Back home, they realize that they have been missing for much longer than expected and have acquired supernatural abilities, which give them life-and-death power over people. Soon, the price to be paid will turn the apparent gift into a curse. Tension permeates every second of this dark, supernatural thriller with vivid photography, in which the protagonists evolve rapidly, giving voice to their deepest nature and innermost inclinations. Good and evil are nothing more than the different results of a clash, forced by circumstances, between the will to survive and the moral values on which the concept of humanity is based. Adapted for the screen from one of his short stories by Italian writer Diego Zucca, it is an original example of how genre films can challenge shared ethical axioms.

PÍNGJÌNG DE TUĀNLIÚ – BELOW THE RIVER

Director: Li Yinze

School: Hebei Institute of Communication

China, 2022, Chinese, 28'43", *fiction*

Ma Pingchuan is a driver and his wife sells clothes online. The plot, immersed in harmonious blue shades, unfolds in a city without a name at the bottom of mountains scattered with pagodas. Their life as a couple, already undergoing a crisis, changes radically when a mysterious customer leaves a bag full of money in the protagonist's car. Should they hand the money to the police or keep it? The core of the story seems to be revolving around this ethical dilemma related to materialism. In

reality, the work presents an incisive cross-section of contemporary China, creating a growing and fragile tension between failed family relationships, betrayal and alienation. The director explores the human soul in the age of technology and people's attitude towards life. The title, 'calm turbulence' in Chinese, underlines how more complex dynamics creep beneath a surface of apparent stillness.

QUESTBOUND – FORBIDDEN VENTURES OF THE UNDEAD SOUL

Director: Alexander Bierling, Owen Buckley

School: Hogeschool van de Kunsten, Utrecht

Netherlands, 2022, English, 8'30", *animation*

The protagonist of the story is an old king, now reduced to a skeleton, who has been ruling for time immemorial. Many have tried to overthrow him, but no one has ever succeeded. However, a brave knight arrives at the castle one day and something unexpected happens. If at first the King is impressed by his opponent's strength in a duel, later his admiration turns into the long-forgotten human warmth. The typically gloomy medieval atmosphere is followed by a sudden change that gives rise to a paradoxical situation: the King, misinterpreting, mistakes the knight's attitude for a sign of interest in him and begins to flirt with him. Their difference humanizes the protagonists and breaks the patterns of the chivalric *topos*: first ironically and then dramatically by focusing on the depth of the feelings of the King who, as legend has it, shed his first tears that day.

ROZKWIT ZIMOWY – WINTER BLOOM

Director: Ivan Krupenikov

School: Warsaw Film School

Poland, 2022, Polish, 29'59", *fiction*

In an isolated field, a mercenary finds himself on what he thinks is his last mission, but the reality is quite different. In an attempt to retire and find new employment, he is induced to accept one last assignment, which however will reveal an incredible secret that will turn his plans upside down. The director offers a glimpse into a hypothetical future in which the world has been destroyed by an ecological catastrophe. By exploiting post-apocalyptic imagery, the film stimulates the audience to reflect on present-day issues. The dark tones and the soundtrack make the atmosphere even more oppressive, thus contributing to the success of a profound and provocative short film.

RUNAWAY

Director: Salome Kintsurashvili

School: Moscow School of New Cinema

Georgia/Russia, 2022, Georgian, 25', *fiction*

Late at night, a man lying in the backseat of a car wakes up on the outskirts of Moscow. He asks for a cigarette and is given one by a ten-year-old boy named Gigi. His family runs a Georgian bar for a living and the mystery guest only has to stay for two days, or so say the men who offer bribes to his father, who refuses. The mother says that Gigi is still a child, but is he? The director seeks an answer to this question and in the meantime portrays a social context with autobiographical roots, particularly those of Georgian immigrants in Russia. Silences and glances prevail over words in a work that proves to be heir to the Russian film school in its search for expressive shots, unusual vanishing points and a two-level narration that gives the "background" an often symbolic value.

SEE YOU YESTERDAY

Director: Ethan Dela Cruz

School: Siena College of Taytay

Philippines, 2022, Filipino, 19'51", *fiction*

Gabo considers himself one of the "luckiest people in the world": he has a home, a perfect family, and a planned trip. The audience is immersed in a joyful and reassuring atmosphere until the line between dream and reality begins to shatter in front of his eyes. As everything plummets, one detail lingers in the background: the photograph of Gabo's family. The work, divided into three chapters, uses complex and layered editing — capable of distorting the temporal linearity of the story — to immerse itself in the pain of a family divided by a terrible secret. The protagonist must choose whether to continue to take refuge in the illusory and protected world of dreams, or to accept the compromises of a disappointing reality.

SWALLOW FLYING TO THE SOUTH

Director: Mochi Lin

School: Rhode Island School of Design

U.S.A./Canada/China, 2022, Chinese, 17'38", *animation*

In China during 1976, Swallow, a five-year-old girl, is abandoned in a Beijing kindergarten boarding school. Far from happy, she fails to bond with her classmates and adjust to the rigidity of the imposed rules. The traumatic experience of boarding school, where one's individuality is completely neglected and the urge to conform is strong, has a powerful impact on the existence of a little girl who can remember nothing but a life of tears. However, the traumatic news of Mao Zedong's death opens the door to a new possibility. The only glimmer of light comes with the flight of swallows as the persimmons ripen during the arrival of spring.

TEAR OFF

Director: Clément Del Negro, Charlotte Fargier, Héloïse Neveu, Camille Souchard, Nalini Bashin, Mikko Petremand, Matthias Bourgeuil

School: Supinfocom Rubika

France, 2022, French, 5'48', *animation*

A young bee sustains an injury in a wing and plummets into the darkest depths of its hive, where it will encounter a ferocious hornet, ready to destroy and devour all the bees. The protagonist will have to test its courage and risk its life to save the home. The work establishes a sharp shift in perspective between an existence cadenced by the repetitive rhythms of worker bees constantly at work and the fear of the unknown and the dark. The audience follows the events of the protagonist in a crescendo of suffocation and terror within an unfamiliar world. The bright lights and ethereal atmosphere that characterize the narrative of life in the hive soon give way to a hostile and gloomy place.

THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD

Director: Alexandar Tomov

School: Southwest University "Neofit Rilski," Blagoevgrad

Bulgaria, 2022, Bulgarian, 21'22", *fiction*

Based on true events, the story features a woman and her son leading a life of extreme poverty, whose only solace is alcohol. One night, returning home, the mother confesses to her drunken son that she has committed an absurd crime. A black comedy with a staggering pace like its protagonists that traces the fateful night through dialogues, flashbacks and an ending that leaves room for reflection. The director highlights here an unorthodox view of the world and human existence through a tragicomic register.

VOLVER AL SUR - RETURNING SOUTH

Director: Sofia Ayala

School: German Film and TV Academy Berlin

Germany/Mexico, 2022, Spanish/fictional language, 14'53", *fiction*

A story of migration. The harrowing journey of a family indelibly marked by loss. The test of courage of a brother and sister united by an unbreakable bond: transporting their father's corpse to the south of the border for burial. Accepting the risk is the only way to return. The reality the two face, however, is surreal because the place they called home is unrecognizable. Their fate is suddenly hanging by a thread. The director has harnessed the expressive power of silences, interrupted by singing and shouting, to generate an atmosphere of tension in which the theme of death is central, accentuated by stark landscapes and slow rhythms. Strangeness, unpredictability and helplessness hover in the air, culminating in an ending that in its rawness becomes the perfect representation of contemporary society's treatment of millions of people fleeing their homeland.

YUTA

Director: Matheus Malburg

School: FAAP - Fundação Armando Alvares Penteado

Brazil, 2022, Spanish/Portuguese, 14'55", *fiction*

Two Argentine boys, Matias and Franco, are fans of Chacarita Junior, a small soccer team in San Martín, near Buenos Aires. In order to support them, the two decide to follow their beloved team to Brazil, despite the fact that they do not understand the language well. After asking for a ride, they are stopped along the road by the police. It is the latter — called "Yuta" with provocation and mockery in the suburbs of Buenos Aires — who become responsible for abusing and violating the boys. However, the two decide not to submit to the will of power and risk everything, even their lives, in order to remain free and continue on their way to cheer on their favorite team.