26th European Film Awards
European Short Film 2013
The Nominations
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This year’s short film nominations include documentary, fiction, experimental and animation films. A lot of these films depart from difficult, sometimes very intimate, situations. From the darkness of a locked apartment, they take us across Europe to the Southeast of Turkey and a remote Russian village and beyond to Palestine and China and into outer space. Each of them opens a window into a different world and still altogether they can only offer a glimpse of the galaxy of human experience, perception and emotion – and of the breath-taking creative diversity of European cinema. It is with great pleasure that we present this year’s nominated short films.

The EFA Short Film Initiative has long been an established item on the annual international short film agenda. It is organised in co-operation with fifteen partner festivals at each of which an independent international jury presents one of the European short films in competition with a nomination for the award European Short Film.

During the past thirteen years, the interest in the short film initiative and this collection of short films has constantly been increasing. The nominated films go through a series of 50 screenings across the world. From Helsinki to Hong Kong, from Colombia to Kosovo, we are proud to draw world-wide attention to these short films and their creators. And I invite you to leaf through this booklet and meet the nominees – creative people from all over Europe.
The body as a wound that never heals.

Christoph Girardet & Matthias Müller

They have been collaborating since PHOENIX TAPES, premiered at the Venice FF in 1999. Their work has been screened at the festivals of Cannes, Venice, Berlin, Rotterdam, Toronto, Oberhausen, and many others. Moreover, it has been exhibited at major art institutions worldwide, such as the Walker Art Center (Minneapolis), Bozar (Brussels), Tate Modern (London), and EYE Institute (Amsterdam).

How long did it take to make your short? Was it difficult to get financing?

Since many of our films are based on an elaborate and time-consuming research, the phase of pre-production is often as long as the artistic work itself – and the starting point can hardly be named in retrospect. CUT took us about half a year in the making. It was developed on a small grant according to the reference system of the German Federal Film Board.

Which thoughts come to mind concerning a “European cinema community”? The term is not relevant to us as long as this “community” neglects crucial species of filmmaking.

If you owned a theatre for one night, which films would you screen?

Films beyond the standards of the industry, films that seriously strive for art. One night would not do though and the cinema would have to stay occupied for all those films and audiences that do not have a place in the film culture that we live in.

What is your next project?

We are preparing an exhibition devoted to our work at Kunstverein Hannover in January 2014.

Tom Van Avermaet

Enchanted from an early age by the celuloid dreamscape of film, Tom Van Avermaet (born 1982) always aspired to be an audio-visual storyteller. Inspiration was found in the great surrealists of cinematic past & present, as in a love for the fantastic and imaginative. DEATH OF A SHADOW is his first professional short after the thesis film DREAMTIME (2006).

How long did it take to make your short? Was it difficult to get financing?

It took five years in total from start to finish to make the film. I was lucky enough to win something called a “wildcard”, a subsidy granted to two fiction student filmmakers each year by the Flanders Audiovisual Fund, to make a new project. Unfortunately this wasn’t enough to make the movie, so we had to go look for extra funding, which was quite hard. Finally we got a co-production deal with the region ‘Champagne-Ardenne’ and a couple from a company named Intraco via the Belgian Tax Shelter system for film.

Which thoughts come to mind concerning a “European cinema community”?

Even with the very different kinds of films made in Europe, I do think that we take our history and culture very serious in the movies and the fact that we have such amazing locations and sets all over Europe makes that community all the more strong. I also believe that cinema has the great strength to unite different filmmakers from different countries, of which EFA is a great example as well.

If you owned a theatre for one night, which Aims would you screen?

I would screen a lot of the works by Stanley Kubrick and films like OLDBOY, BRAZIL, ETERNAL SUNSHINE OF THE SPOTLESS MIND, PAN’S LABYRINTH, MEMENTO, REQUIEM FOR A DREAM... the list is almost endless, so I’d need a year to show all the films I love!

What is your next project?

My next project will be my first feature film, I’m still pursuing different options, stories and ideas, hopefully I’ll have a film in production phase next year.
Which thoughts come to mind concerning a "European cinema community"?

European cinema is above all realistic and humanistic. European movies concentrate on emotions and relations. At the same time they confront us with a slowness which helps us to get the time we need to process things afterwards.

If you owned a theatre for one night, which films would you screen?

I would screen FESTEN by Thomas Vinterberg and SHAME by Ingmar Bergman.

What is your next project?

My next project is called BLUE SILENCE. It’s a feature on which I’ve already been working for two years about an ex-soldier who lives with his wife and their son in a village in the South East of Turkey. The local Kurdish community ignores them, which increases the tensions in the family, especially when another ex-soldier makes contact again with his old friend.

The first two attempts to shoot the film failed and finally the third succeeded.

Which thoughts come to mind concerning a "European cinema community"?

To me, the two most essential concerns are the diversity and the liberty of expression which are most possibly at the heart of European cinema.

If you owned a theatre for one night, which films would you screen?

Hmm, it’s a pity that it is only for one night. I would love to organise a special screenings for children like my three-year-old daughter. Of course, they can shout and run in the theatre. Or maybe, four or five films for the night, is it a good idea for kids? So these films would be: PIPPI LONGSTOCKING, MARY POPPINS, THE WIZARD OF OZ, DONKEY SKIN, THE KING AND THE MOCKING BIRD...

What is your next project?

A particular film, strange and mysterious. I would leave you some suspense.

22-year old Dilan pays for her forbidden love for a young man in a neighbouring village with her life. She has shamed the family and therefore must die at the hands of her own brothers. And as tradition will have it, the killing must be compensated.

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How long did it take to make your short? Was it difficult to get financing?

The preparation took two days and we shot the movie in five days. In the beginning of the project, I invested in the production myself. Later on, during editing, we got financial support from the VAF [Flanders Audiovisual Fund]. From shooting till release in Venice it took us about one year. 

How long did it take to make your short? Was it difficult to get financing?

I wrote the scenario in one week and two months later we obtained the financial support of the French CNC and ARTE French television. But shooting was much more complicated because the crew was formed by French and Chinese technicians and with Tibetan actors. With such a team, shooting in China next to Tibet was extremely complex. The first two attempts to shoot the film failed and finally the third succeeded.

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A particular film, strange and mysterious. I would leave you some suspense.
A remote village in the North-West of Russia. A mental asylum is located in an old wooden house. The place and its inhabitants seem to be untouched by civilisation. In this pristine setting no articulate human voice is heard, and pain is muted.

Sergei Loznitsa
Born in 1964 in Baranovichi (Belarus, former USSR), Sergei Loznitsa grew up in Kiev, and in 1987 graduated from the Kiev Polytechnic Institute with a degree in Applied Mathematics. From 1987 to 1991 he worked as a scientist at the Kiev Institute of Cybernetics, specialising in artificial intelligence research. He also worked as a translator from Japanese.

In 1997 he graduated from the Russian State Institute of Cinematography (VGIK), where he studied feature film-making. Sergei Loznitsa has been making documentary films since 1996. He has directed 13 documentaries and has received numerous international and national awards, including the Russian National Film awards “Nika” and “Laurel”. Sergei Loznitsa’s montage film BLOCKADE (2005) is based on the archive footage of besieged Leningrad.

His feature debut MY JOY (2010) premiered in the main competition of the Cannes IFF. It was followed by the WWII drama IN THE FOG, which was screened in competition in Cannes in 2012, and was awarded the FIPRESCI prize.

How long did it take to make your short? Was it difficult to get financing?
I filmed the footage back in 2001, when I was making the documentary SETTLEMENT in a mental asylum. The material spent ten years in my archive until I finally had time and resources to edit it and to finance post-production. I invested my own money into this film. In fact, it was the first film produced by my company ATOMS & VOID.

Which thoughts come to mind concerning a “European cinema community”?
A community that makes the movies that I really like: movies made without fear.

If you owned a theatre for one night, which films would you screen?
SLEEP by Andy Warhol
BABY YAR – a feature film about the murder of Jews in the Ukraine in 1941. I will shoot it next summer. I am also working on a short documentary film about Sarajevo.

How long did it take to make your short? Was it difficult to get financing?
The film was financed with an award for the screenplay so to find money was not very difficult... Also, it is a very cheap film. The writing and re-writing and re-re-writing took some months. At the end of that very long process of writing, the short film had become so clear in my mind that the shooting and the editing went really fast.

Which thoughts come to mind concerning a “European cinema community”?
A community that makes the movies that I really like: movies made without fear...
A distraught woman doesn’t want to be disturbed, but the front doorbell keeps ringing and the caller won’t leave until she answers.

Cathy Brady
Cathy Brady, from Northern Ireland, won the 2011 Irish Television and Film Award (IFTA) for Best Short for her first film SMALL CHANGE, which screened at Sundance and Palm Springs. In 2011 she was selected for NFTS Directing fiction MA as well as Channel 4’s Coming Up scheme where she made ROUGH SKIN – starring THIS IS ENGLAND’s Vicky McClure – which was nominated for a BIFA. Cathy’s NFTS graduation film WASTED was selected in competition to premiere at the Edinburgh Film Festival 2013.

How long did it take to make your short? Was it difficult to get financing?
MORNING was my first fully improvised film. It was workshopped and researched with the actors for nearly a month in advance of the shoot. We filmed over four days. It was made on a micro budget with the support of the National Film and Television School.

Which thoughts come to mind concerning a “European cinema community”?
I think of a group of people who are open, exciting, passionate and not afraid to challenge themselves or each other.

If you owned a theatre for one night, which films would you screen?
1. THE WIZARD OF OZ by Victor Fleming
2. PATHER PANCHALI by Satyajit Ray
3. I WAS BORN, BUT … by Yasujiro Ozu
4. FANNY AND ALEXANDER by Ingmar Bergman
(We’ll be up all night.)

What is your next project?
My next project is a fiction film about a company whose goal is to stop people from being afraid.

Miguel Fonseca
Born in Lisbon in 1973, Miguel Fonseca studied philosophy in college and in 2008 he directed ALPHA, his first short film. He produced the experimental short film I KNOW YOU CAN HEAR ME, a film within a film – a film within the first John Rambo film, FIRST BLOOD, directed by Ted Kotcheff in 1982. He works as a director, as a writer and as a continuity supervisor. Miguel Fonseca lives in Lisbon.

How long did it take to make your short? Was it difficult to get financing?
It took me two years to make my short. It wasn’t difficult to get financing.

Which thoughts come to mind concerning a “European cinema community”?
If a “European cinema community” is not a reality, film will disappear from Europe.

If you owned a theatre for one night, which films would you screen?
1. THE WIZARD OF OZ by Victor Fleming
2. PATHER PANCHALI by Satyajit Ray
3. I WAS BORN, BUT … by Yasujiro Ozu
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My next project is a fictional film about a company whose goal is to stop people from being afraid.
values and a sci-fi setting often associated with Hollywood, but totally feels closer to European film heroes of mine such as Emir Kusturica and Jean-Pierre Jeunet.

If you owned a theatre for one night, which films would you screen?

I would open with THE NAVIGATORS by Vincent Ward. I love the editing and tactile design of that film and although it’s probably my all-time favourite movie, I’ve never seen it on a big screen. Then I’d probably screen CITY LIGHTS to put me in a lovely warm mood before screening TRANSFORMERS (the animated version) during which I’m sure everyone else with taste would leave and I could watch it all by myself because it’s awe-some.

What is your next project?

I’m writing two feature films at the moment: an adaptation of my short film SKYBORN for the BFI and a contained sea-monster family film for BBC films. I am also attached to direct a horror-comedy about a disgruntled vampire hunter in the spring.
How long did it take to make your short? Was it difficult to get financing?

Nine Months. No, it was a grant of the film fund of Baden-Württemberg. And my films do not cost so much.

Which thoughts come to mind concerning a “European cinema community”?

That only very few people know about it, especially concerning short film. And that it is very nice having this esteem for short film on this European level!

If you owned a theatre for one night, which films would you screen?

Some films by different filmmakers, of my students and of my own.

What is your next project?

SUNDAY ZERO

Jochen Kuhn

Born in Wiesbaden, Germany, Jochen Kuhn studied Fine Arts in Hamburg from 1975 to 1980. He received a DAAD grant in Rome, Italy (1981-82), and a grant from the German Academy Rome Villa Massimo (1988-1989). He became a professor at the Academy of Film Baden-Württemberg and lives and works in Ludwigsburg, Germany.
THOUGH I KNOW THE RIVER IS DRY

WRITTEN, DIRECTED & EDITED BY: Omar Robert Hamilton
PRODUCED BY: Louis Lewarne
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: Omar Robert Hamilton
SOUND DESIGN: Basel Abbas
MAIN CAST: Kais Nashif

He has returned to Palestine. On the fraught road through the country he relives the choice that sent him to America and the forces of history now driving him home.

Omar Robert Hamilton

Omar Robert Hamilton is an independent filmmaker, producer of the Palestine Festival of Literature and a founding member of the Mosireen Collective in Cairo. Since 2011 he has made dozens of short documentaries on the Egyptian Revolution, helping to make Mosireen the most watched non-profit YouTube channel in Egypt of all time.

His films have appeared on the BBC, al Jazeera and ONTV; his articles in the Guardian, the Economist, al Shorouq and the Daily Beast.

How long did it take to make your short? Was it difficult to get financing?

It took about two years in total. We decided to try crowd-funding to finance the film and it was a tremendous success. In the end we ran two separate campaigns – one for production costs and one for post-production – and were supported by 161 people, which was a great motivator.

Which thoughts come to mind concerning a “European cinema community”?

I think it’s a crucial step towards challenging the monopoly that Hollywood has over audiences across the world.

If you owned a theatre for one night, which films would you screen?

It depends where the theatre is. If it was in New York, I’d show a night of Palestinian revolutionary cinema and archival material. If it was in Palestine, I’d show a night of Third Cinema films.

What is your next project?

I’m cutting together a feature documentary on the Egyptian Revolution using the video archive that has been collected and housed by the Mosireen Collective, of which I’m a member.

NUCLEAR WASTE

WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY: Myroslav Slaboshpytskiy
PRODUCED BY: Volodymyr Tykhyy & Denys Ivanov
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: Dmytro Sannykov
EDITOR: Kristof Hoornaert
SOUND DESIGN: Sergiy Stepansky
MAIN CAST: Sergiy Gavryluk, Svenlana Shtanko

Sergiy and Sveta live in Chernobyl. He is a truck-driver at a radioactive waste plant. She works at a radioactive decontamination station. Their work and life are dictated by one unchangeable rhythm with clockwork precision. But what sets this mechanism in motion - day by day?

Myroslav Slaboshpytskiy

Born in Kiev in 1974, he graduated from the Kiev State Institute of Theatre and Arts. His short films DIAGNOSIS and DEAFNESS were nominated for the Golden Bear (Berlinale 2009/2010). In 2010, he received a grant for development of his full-length feature film THE TRIBE (Plemya) from the Hubert Bals Fund of the IFF Rotterdam. In 2012, he won the Silver Leopard in Locarno for NUCLEAR WASTE.

How long did it take to make your short? Was it difficult to get financing?

I had a full feature project in development about Chernobyl which I had to stop due to some difficulties with financing. Arthouse Traffic LLC offered me to make a short film on the same topic. Negotiations and pre-production lasted for a month and then we had three day of shooting.

Which thoughts come to mind concerning a “European cinema community”?

Even though Ukraine is not yet a member of European Union due to political reasons, I have always felt a part of the European film community and a lot of my activities and projects would not be possible without the support of my friends from Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, the UK and France. We understand each other perfectly and there are no borders between us and no language barrier. We are all united by our mutual passion for film.

If you owned a theatre for one night, which films would you screen?

DOGVILLE by Lars von Trier.

What is your next project?

Currently I am working on the full feature film THE TRIBE about life in a boarding school for deaf children with the participation of deaf actors only. The film is supported by the Hubert Bals Fund of the IFF Rotterdam and the Ukrainian State Film Agency.
train back to Moscow.

filming outdoors at -35 degrees and editing on the film in such extreme conditions and little time - and physical struggle of trying to put together a but also a tough one; I’ll never forget the creative month. It was a fun and very rewarding project, whole shooting and editing took just about a Trans-Siberian Railway in mid-winter 2013. The travelling from Moscow to Lake Baikal on the ZIMA was created within the Cinetrain project difficult to get financing?

The first thing that comes to my mind is the diversity and richness of the different film cultures within Europe, a richness that still has great possibilities of developing and renewing itself with the next generations of filmmakers. If you owned a theatre for one night, which films would you screen? I would screen the work of directors and artists who had, for different reason and in different stages, an impact on my perception of what filmmaking could be, particularly those who explored different ways of working with factuality-based material – directors such as Chris Marker, Werner Herzog, Jonas Mekas, including the British artist John Smith. I would also love to screen some Italian films I deeply love, such as ROME OPEN CITY by Roberto Rossellini, THE ADVENTURE by Michelangelo Antonioni, AMARCORD by Federico Fellini and many others. Or maybe, in the end, I would simply try to look for films by brave, original, less known independent filmmakers and give them a chance to be seen. Which thoughts come to mind concerning a “European cinema community”? For me, a “European cinema community” is something that can be important to push the idea of European cinema from the borders towards the centre of the world – and maybe, it is also something we have to be ready to define and understand. A portrait of a season – a journey through North Russia and Siberia, through the feelings and thoughts of the people who have to cope with one of the world’s harshest climates; a reality where the boundary between life and death is so thin that it is sometimes almost non-existent, where civilization constantly both fights and embraces nature and its millenarian rules and rites. A reflection on life, on adaptation and on the immutable cycles of existence.

Cristina Picchi Born in Lucca in 1981, she has directed and edited the short documentaries UNDER YOUR SKIN (2011), FRAGMENTS OF A DREAM (2011) and THE DISASSOCIATED (2010-2013). Her films have been screened in festivals and galleries worldwide while her written work includes short stories and contributions to award-winning books. She holds a degree in European Literature from the University of Pisa and a master’s degree in Screen Documentary from Goldsmiths University. How long did it take to make your short? Was it difficult to get financing?

ZIMA was created within the Cinetrain project travelling from Moscow to Lake Baikal on the Trans-Siberian Railway in mid-winter 2013. The whole shooting and editing took just about a month. It was a fun and very rewarding project, but also a tough one; I’ll never forget the creative and physical struggle of trying to put together a film in such extreme conditions and little time - filming outdoors at ~35 degrees and editing on the train back to Moscow.

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Founded in 1988, the European Film Academy (EFA) now unites 2,900 European film professionals with the common aim of promoting European film culture. Throughout the year, the EFA initiates and participates in a series of activities dealing with film politics as well as economic, artistic, and training aspects. The programme includes conferences, seminars and workshops, and a common goal is to build a bridge between creativity and the industry. These activities culminate in the annual presentation of the European Film Awards.