

LUX FILM DAYS



SUBTITLING FILMS
IN 24 EU LANGUAGES



LUX
PRIZE
.EU

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OUR STORIES ILLUMINATED BY THE EMOTION OF FILM

Cinema is one of our most powerful cultural forms. It can evoke memories of people, places, events and moments in our lives. It moves and inspires us, enriching and encouraging debate. As a source of emotion, it allows us to reflect on ourselves and on our own identities.

Most European films are only shown in the country in which they were produced and are rarely distributed across borders. This is even more striking when we consider that more than 60 % of all films released in the EU are European, but they only account for one third of the cinema audience.

The European Parliament created the LUX FILM PRIZE to enhance the distribution of high-quality European films and to stimulate European debate.

The distribution of LUX films across Europe has been made easier by the European Parliament's support in subtitling the three films of the official competition in the EU's 24 official languages, helping to produce a national copy of the final films for each country. This has resulted in a larger audience, boosting the films' market chances.

At a time when new borders are being drawn across Europe, countries are building walls, society is becoming more and more divided and perspectives are narrowing, cinema, as a cultural mass medium, can be viewed as an opportunity to better understand each other, to cross these borders and, above all else, to share experiences. As European values are called into question, cinema challenges us by reminding us of our humanity and shared values.

Culture and film should be seen as the keys to unlocking dialogue between communities. They are ideal tools for addressing stereotypes and prejudices, promoting intercultural dialogue and responding to the educational challenges faced by our society.

The LUX FILM PRIZE continuously explores new ways of crossing borders and overcoming barriers. By building bridges paved with the sentiments evoked by the films, the prize aims to inspire a feeling of shared foundations, which bind together our European identity and diversity.

Over the past 12 years, the LUX FILM PRIZE has created a community that has one thing in common: a platform where different opinions and world views can develop and evolve. The films put in the spotlight by the LUX FILM PRIZE stimulate our curiosity and help us learn about our differences and similarities. In this context, we are proud of the LUX Film Days and of the screenings and debates organised in recent years on the most pertinent of topics, involving audiences, film directors and Members of the European Parliament.

Culture should remain a pillar of mutual respect and understanding in an open Europe, and cinema should be its lingua franca.

LUX FILM PRIZE

The LUX FILM PRIZE, established in 2007, is awarded each year by the European Parliament.

The **European Parliament** is actively committed to promoting cultural and linguistic diversity, as stated in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights⁽¹⁾. In addition, its legislative powers make it a crucial player in shaping EU policies that affect the everyday lives of 500 million Europeans. Its remit covers key issues such as immigration, integration, poverty, freedom of expression and women's rights.

Against this backdrop, the LUX FILM PRIZE pursues **two main objectives**: to enhance the circulation of European films across Europe and to spark Europe-wide debate and discussion on major societal issues.

The LUX FILM PRIZE promotes the distribution of its three finalist films by subtitling each of them in the EU's 24 official languages and by producing a digital cinema package for each country. It has also given rise to the LUX FILM DAYS, which offer an indelible cultural experience.

The European Parliament's LUX FILM PRIZE will continue to shed light on stories and films that do more than merely entertain. These are films that portray our quest for answers, our search for identity and our need for consolation in times of hardship. They make us aware of our own and others' realities.

⁽¹⁾ Preamble to the Charter: '... respecting the diversity of the cultures and traditions of the peoples of Europe as well as the national identities of the Member States ...'

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT TEAMS UP WITH THE EUROPEAN FILM INDUSTRY ...

The LUX FILM PRIZE is a partner with numerous film festivals in Europe, including the Berlinale, the Directors' Fortnight (Cannes), Karlovy Vary, Giornate degli Autori, Sofia, Stockholm, Thessaloniki, the Viennale, Tallinn Black Nights, Cork, Bratislava and Seville.

... AND ENGAGES YOUNG PEOPLE

Cinema helps us understand the lives of our neighbours. It is a common language that speaks to our emotions and invites us to question our identities. As such, cinema is a powerful educational tool.

As a result, the LUX FILM PRIZE, in collaboration with cultural associations and film institutes, provides education packs on the competing films. These packs often serve to support the debates that follow the screenings and can be of great use to teachers.

28 TIMES CINEMA

Since 2010 the 28 Times Cinema project has been promoted by the LUX FILM PRIZE in cooperation with Giornate degli Autori and Europa Cinemas, and with the support of Cineuropa. This initiative brings together 28 young film lovers from across Europe to attend an 11-day intensive training course in Venice. The 28 film enthusiasts, aged 18 to 25, attend screenings and participate in debates on European cinema. 28 Times Cinema involves directors, writers, film professionals and Members of the European Parliament. This year, for the fifth time, these young film enthusiasts will sit on the jury for the Giornate degli Autori Award and will present the prize. The 28 Times Cinema agenda also includes the screening of the three films competing for the LUX FILM PRIZE.

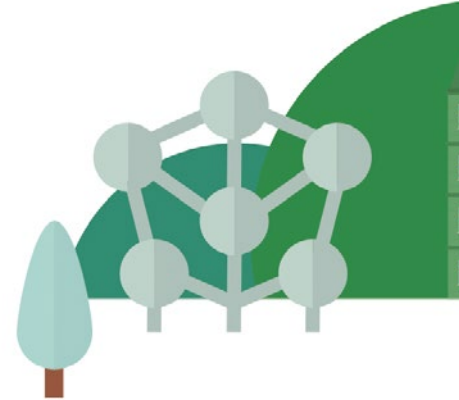
SELECTION PROCESS

To be eligible for the LUX FILM PRIZE, films must:

1. be fictional or creative documentaries (they may be animated);
2. be at least 60 minutes in length;
3. be productions or co-productions eligible for the Creative Europe MEDIA programme (i.e. be produced or co-produced in an EU Member State or in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Montenegro or Norway);
4. illustrate the diversity of European traditions, shed light on the process of European integration and provide insights into the building of Europe;
5. have their festival premiere or first release between 10 May of the preceding year and 15 April of the prize year;
6. not have been awarded the first prize at the Venice, San Sebastián, Berlin, Cannes, Karlovy Vary or Locarno film festivals.

APRIL

BRUSSELS ►



20 film experts sit on the selection panel and meet to discuss more than 50 films.

JULY

KARLOVY VARY ►



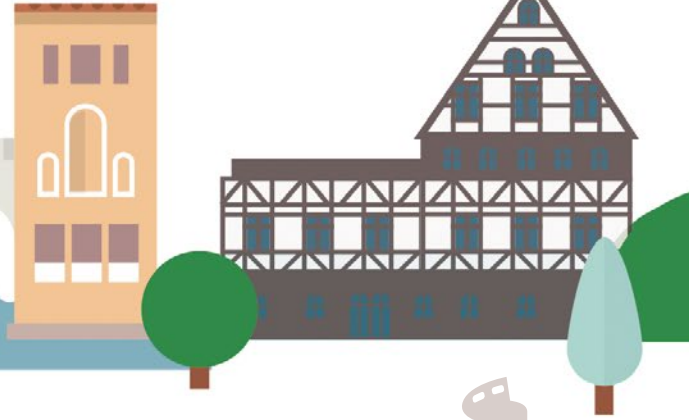
SEPTEMBER

VENICE ►



NOVEMBER

STRASBOURG



The official selection is announced, consisting of **10 FILMS** chosen by the selection panel.

3 FILMS from the official selection compete for the LUX FILM PRIZE. The LUX FILM DAYS take them to the 28 Member States, in the EU's 24 official languages.

1 LUX FILM PRIZE WINNER is voted for by the Members of the European Parliament and announced by its President. The winning film is further promoted, and adapted for the visually and hearing-impaired.



LUX FILM PRIZE OFFICIAL SELECTION 2019

HER JOB
I Douleia tis
by Nikos Labôt
Greece, France, Serbia



INVISIBLES
Les Invisibles
by Louis-Julien Petit
France



SYSTEM CRASHER
Systemsprenger
by Nora Fingscheidt
Germany



CLERGY
Kler
by Wojciech Smarzowski
Poland



HONEYLAND
Medena zemja
by Tamara Kotevska, Ljubomir Stefanov
North Macedonia



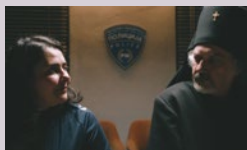
RAY & LIZ
by Richard Billingham
United Kingdom



THE MAN WHO SURPRISED EVERYONE
Tchelovek, kotorij udivil vsekh
by Natasha Merkulova, Aleksey Chupov
Russia, Estonia, France

LUX FILM PRIZE OFFICIAL COMPETITION 2019

COLD CASE HAMMARSKJÖLD
by Mads Brügger
Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Belgium



GOD EXISTS, HER NAME IS PETRUNYA
Gospod postoji, imeto i 'e Petrunija
by Teona Strugar Mitevska
North Macedonia, Belgium, Slovenia, France, Croatia



THE REALM (¹)
El Reino
by Rodrigo Sorogoyen
Spain, France

(¹) *The Candidate* in Ireland, Malta and the United Kingdom

LUX FILM DAYS

In 2012, the European Parliament's LUX FILM PRIZE gave rise to the LUX FILM DAYS. Every year, from October to January, the LUX FILM DAYS transcend geographical and linguistic borders to create a transnational, European space where cinema lovers across the 28 EU Member States can watch and share three remarkable films in the EU's 24 official languages. The screenings, organised by the European Parliament's Liaison Offices, are shown at film festivals and in art house or other cinemas, and are often national previews.

The LUX FILM DAYS give Europeans a chance to experience and share the diversity and richness of European cinema and to debate the issues raised by the films competing for the LUX FILM PRIZE — both in live debates and on social media.

Thanks to the cooperation between the LUX FILM PRIZE and the Creative Europe programme, audiences throughout Europe can live a unique cinematic event — simultaneous screenings. Films are shown simultaneously in several cinemas, connecting audiences via a live interactive talk show with film-makers.

LUX PRIZE OFFICIAL COMPETITION 2019

The European Parliament is pleased to present the **three films competing for the 2019 LUX FILM PRIZE:**

COLD CASE HAMMARSKJÖLD

by Mads Brügger

Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Belgium

GOD EXISTS, HER NAME IS PETRUNYA (*Gospod postoi, imeto i'e Petrunija*)

by Teona Strugar Mitevska

North Macedonia, Belgium, Slovenia, France, Croatia

THE REALM (*El Reino*)

by Rodrigo Sorogoyen

Spain, France

The three films allow us to experience stories in a touching and provocative way; this is a shortlist of refreshing and eye-opening European works, which will challenge the audience with an incredible diversity of genre and cinematic language.

We invite you to see them during the eighth edition of the LUX FILM DAYS.

Members of the audience are invited to share their views and to **vote** for their favourite film on the **LUX FILM PRIZE** website or on Facebook. The winning film will be awarded the **LUX FILM Audience Mention Award** at the 2020 Karlovy Vary International Film Festival, bringing the current LUX FILM PRIZE edition to a close. The announcement of the 10 films of the official selection at KVIFF will raise the curtain on next year's edition.

WATCH,
DEBATE
& VOTE



LUX FILM DAYS

3 FILMS
24 LANGUAGES
28 COUNTRIES

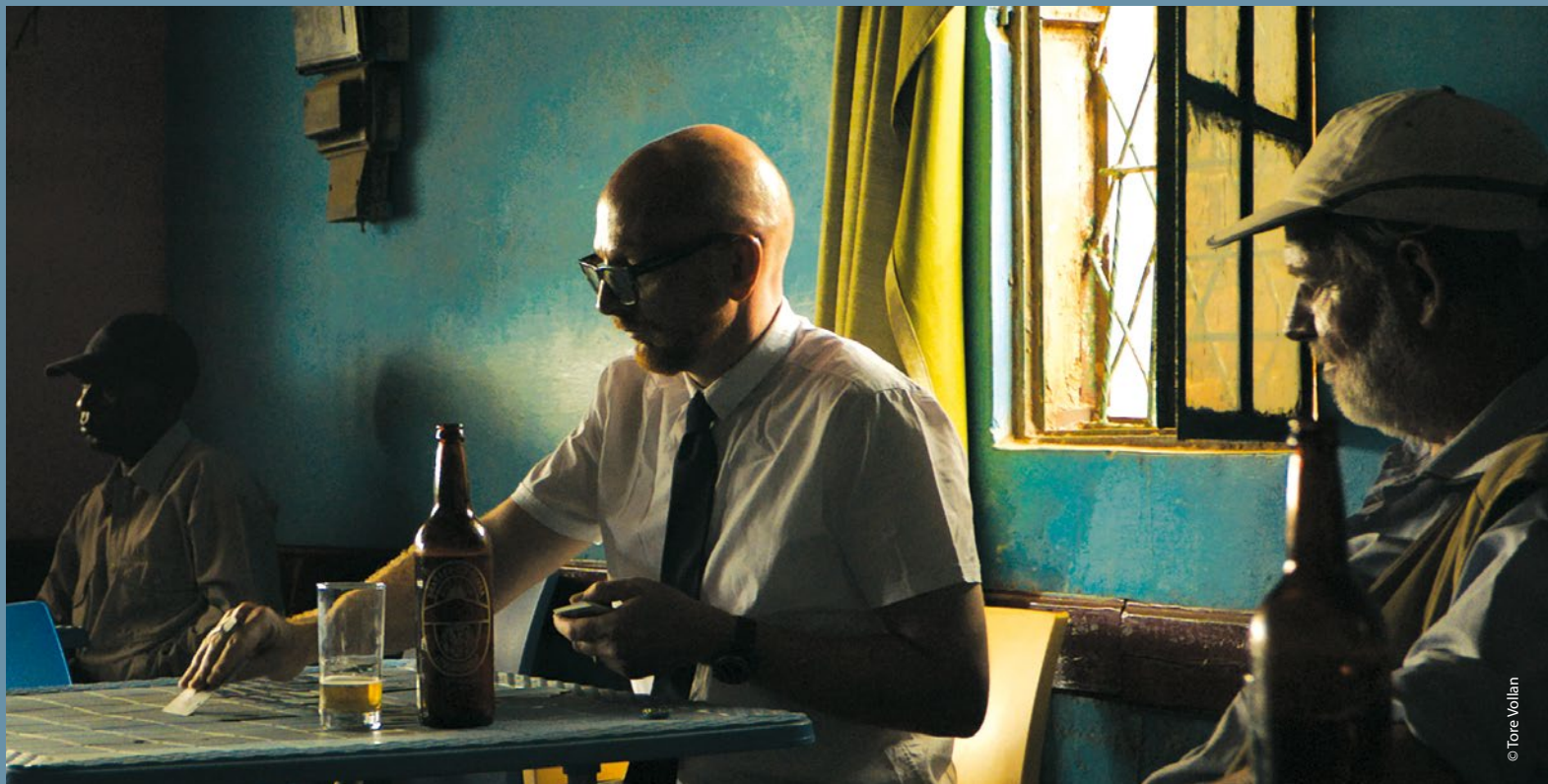
COLD CASE HAMMARSKJÖLD

by Mads Brügger

Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Belgium

Cold Case Hammarskjöld revisits the unexplained death of United Nations Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld on 18 September 1961: Hammarskjöld's plane crashed in mysterious circumstances just as he was preparing to meet Moïse Tshombe, the leader of the rebel province of Katanga, which had just declared independence from the Congo. Hammarskjöld was hoping to resolve a conflict in which massive interests were at stake by convincing Katanga — which was backed at the time by Union Minière, a powerful Belgian company with considerable economic interests in Africa — to rejoin the independent Congo.

More than half a century later, Danish journalist and director Mads Brügger decided to look into the case with the help of Swedish private investigator Göran Björkdahl. Mads Brügger's film covers all the stages in the investigation — from the identification of those involved at the time to the efforts to trace and interview witnesses, a search of the crash site to find fragments of the plane buried in the soil, and the analysis and cross-referencing of information from various documents — which would eventually put the two men on the trail of a clandestine white supremacist paramilitary organisation based in South Africa, which may have been involved in the UN Secretary-General's assassination. We follow the investigators as they uncover other, almost unimaginable crimes.



CONTEXT

In addition to shedding light on the circumstances surrounding the suspicious death of Dag Hammarskjöld, Mads Brügger's film offers much broader insights into the hidden side of the decolonisation of the African continent as a whole, and the former Belgian Congo in particular — a process which fell foul of Western interests. It would take 3 years of pressure from the UN (and military intervention by its forces) before the wealthy Katanga province finally rejoined the newly independent country.

The situation then has many echoes today, as many Western multinationals are ruthlessly exploiting Africa's natural resources and its cheap labour force, made up of people who have to work for them to survive. Taking advantage of the complicity of authoritarian and/or corrupt regimes, many of which are supported by Western countries, these multinationals are shameless in putting their private interests ahead of the collective interests of local people and the environment in which they live, showing utter disregard for the often disastrous state of the public finances of the countries concerned.

Mads Brügger's film serves as the starting point of a vital debate about the urgent need to reassert political authority in the face of powerful private interests, globalisation as a form of economic and financial colonisation and the ever-growing wealth gap between the North and the South.

MADS BRÜGGER'S APPROACH

Mads Brügger's film is entirely original: in presenting his findings, he films himself in a range of situations as a way of structuring the vast quantities of information he has gathered and the various stages in his investigation. As viewers, we feel as though we are present at the very creation of the film, as though we ourselves have a role in the narrative, sometimes as witnesses and sometimes as trusted confidantes with whom Mads Brügger can share his doubts, difficulties, thoughts, misgivings, moments of humour and point of view.

Mads Brügger serves as a lens through which we view his work — not only its undeniable revelations, but also its mysteries, and sometimes its shortcomings and his uncertainties. While this way of presenting the various stages in the investigation might seem confusing to some viewers, it is precisely this deeply human, fallible — and





© Tore Vollen

often self-mocking — approach which makes *Cold Case Hammar skjöld* all the more powerful and authentic. In introducing his film as 'either the world's greatest murder mystery or the world's most idiotic conspiracy theory', Brügger openly admits that he is aware of the limits to his investigation.

ROLE-PLAYING AND PLAYING A CHARACTER ONESELF

After a black-and-white credit sequence showing images of the plane crash in which Dag Hammar skjöld died, the film opens with two short scenes explaining the form the narrative will take. From the outset, we know that the film will be set in 2018, in Cape Town, South Africa, and in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo, with a different secretary for each of the two locations: Clarinah and Saphir. The first thing that strikes us in these scenes is the way Mads Brügger presents himself to these two Congolese women: with their help, he will tell a story in which the 'baddie' was dressed in white, just like him, and in Kinshasa he has decided to write his screenplay in the Memling Hotel, where the very same baddie supposedly stayed in 1965. He therefore explicitly puts himself in the shoes of a man to whom he will attribute most of the blame for the assassination of the UN Secretary-General, and who — as we will later discover — played a leading role in a vast project to eradicate the black population. No less provocative is the scene where Brügger and Göran Björkdahl visit the crash site, both wearing colonial helmets. In much the same vein, we see him playing the role of another 'baddie' when, on a number of occasions, he is filmed playing solitaire (in his hotel room, or in the bar) with a deck of cards containing nothing but the ace of spades (!) — the very same card which was found on Dag Hammar skjöld's body and which was also a notorious CIA 'visiting card'.

In this way, costumes and accessories are used to create an entirely separate character, thereby putting an ironic distance between the film-maker and his immediate audience (his assistants and witnesses on the spot) and his wider audience (the viewers), giving *Cold Case Hammar skjöld* a personal, incisive feel and emphasising the fact that it makes no claims to historical accuracy.

(!) Whatever our interpretation of the cards' significance in these particular scenes may be, 52-card decks containing nothing but the ace of spades really were produced during the Vietnam War at the request of the US Army: they were handed out to soldiers, who used them as a psychological weapon against superstitious enemies, for whom the ace of spades was said to be a symbol of death. Thousands of 'Bicycle Secret Weapon' cards ended up strewn throughout the jungle and hostile villages.

A NARRATIVE TOLD IN STICKY NOTES

The structure of the film, broken down into chapters announced by means of sticky notes handwritten by Clarinah or Saphir and pasted onto the wall of their shared working space, gives the film an improvised quality, as if it were put together hastily or haphazardly. The use of sticky notes suggests a trivial message scribbled down for oneself or a trusted friend, to be read once and then thrown away. There is a stark contrast, therefore, between the seriousness of the subject matter and the apparently lighthearted, sometimes disjointed (going back and forth in time and location), way it is treated. The narrative device, which involves dialogue between the film-maker and his secretaries, compensates for the lack of coherence by flagging up each new stage in the investigation. Through their naïve questions, common-sense reflections or reactions of surprise or incredulity, Clarinah and Saphir act as conduits for our own thoughts and questions as viewers, forcing Mads Brügger to keep explaining, clarifying and recapitulating. This approach gives the story a different, lively, spontaneous and certainly less 'serious' structure.

Against the backdrop of this 'in-the-moment' narrative style, the brutal halting by the authorities of Brügger's excavation of the crash site serves as a turning point, and Brügger shares his thoughts in a voice-over set to images of himself alone in his room, in the bar or getting drunk and playing solitaire. Disheartened by the fact that 6 years of work have gone down the drain, he shares with us directly his disappointment and all the ideas he came up with at the time to save his film. In retrospect, this moment appears pivotal, as he then decides to return to South Africa with Göran Björkdahl to pursue his investigation into the South African Institute for Maritime Research (SAIMR). The film then takes a completely different turn when what they uncover moves it far beyond the initial scope of the investigation. The activities of the clandestine South African white supremacist organisation, as recounted in detail by a number of witnesses, are given a section of their own in the documentary, even though they have no direct link with the initial line of inquiry.





© Tore Vøllan

IMAGES AND LEVELS OF TRUTH

Another distinctive characteristic of the documentary is the choice of images to illustrate the various sequences. While Mads Brügger is on screen for most of the film — discussing his findings with the two secretaries, visiting the crash site or in South Africa with Göran Björkdahl — other sequences comprise archive images or old news footage, anchoring the film in reality, with extracts from speeches by Dag Hammarskjöld defending the economic independence of African countries, images of clashes between Moïse Tshombe’s soldiers and the UN’s Blue Helmets, images of the committee of experts that met in the Netherlands in 2013 to announce the conclusions of its investigations into Hammarskjöld’s death, and images of South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who chaired the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, outlining at a 1998 press conference the criminal activities carried out by the SAIMR and, in particular, its direct involvement in the sabotage of Hammarskjöld’s plane, etc. Not only that, but old photographs and recordings, produced as evidence of the existence of people who have been forgotten and events whose veracity is disputed, contradict the official version of events.

Lastly, black-and-white animated sequences are used to recount hypothetical events about whose nature, protagonists or very existence there is no agreement. The choice of a deliberately non-realistic medium reflects the need to treat unverified source material with extreme caution.

IN CONCLUSION

As we have seen, Mads Brügger has in some ways given his film-making choices priority over the rigorous factual approach we would expect of a journalist. These choices, however, make it possible to fit objective, proven facts into a much more subjective scenario made up of hypothetical constructs and witness accounts which, although they very often corroborate one another, are not backed up by the historical record. We therefore have to ask ourselves how much credence we should give to what we see in the film.

However, our legitimate questions should not blind us to what the investigation did uncover: the very high degree of likelihood that Dag Hammarskjöld was assassinated and that the SAIMR was directly involved, and that a thorough investigation should be carried out into the claim that the HIV virus was the result of secret research carried out by this clandestine organisation in cooperation with the CIA and the British secret services and that it was used as a biological weapon in Africa to wipe out the black population and safeguard Western interests across the continent. It is precisely this enormous, unexpected, shocking revelation, sensibly presented by the Danish film-maker not as fact but as a new hypothesis worth investigating, that gives the film its force and its value.

SOME POINTS FOR DISCUSSION

- At various points in *Cold Case Hammarskjöld*, we see Mads Brügger playing solitaire, but all the cards in his deck are the ace of spades — a clear reference to the CIA 'visiting card' which was left on the UN Secretary-General's body after the plane crash. What is your interpretation of this absurdist detail in the context of the film?
- After he is forced to stop digging at the Ndola crash site, the director opens up and shares with us his plan to cover up the failure of his journalistic investigations. He says that, by going out there with two secretaries of African origin, he had hoped to salvage his film. What do you think he means by that? Why would their presence help him?
- At the end of an interview, which coincides — significantly — with the end of the film, Alexander Jones says that Africa would have been a totally different continent if Hammarskjöld had lived and continued his work. What do you think he means by that?





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© Tore Vollan



© Tore Vollan

DIRECTOR Mads Brügger
SCRIPT Mads Brügger
CAST Mads Brügger,
Göran Björkdahl
CINEMATOGRAPHY Tore Vollan
PRODUCERS Peter Engel, Bjarte
Mørner Tveit, Andreas Rocksén
PRODUCTION Wingman Media,
Piraya Film and Laika Film &
Television
YEAR 2019
RUNNING TIME 119'
GENRE Documentary
COUNTRIES Denmark, Norway,
Sweden, Belgium
ORIGINAL VERSION English,
French, Bemba, Swedish, Danish

LUX FILM DAYS

3 FILMS
24 LANGUAGES
28 COUNTRIES

GOD EXISTS, HER NAME IS PETRUNYA

Gospod postoji, imeto i'e Petrunija

by Teona Strugar Mitevska

North Macedonia, Belgium, Slovenia, France, Croatia

Petrunya, 32 years old and unemployed, lives with her parents in Štip, North Macedonia. On her way back from an unsuccessful job interview she gets caught up in a religious festival, during which young men from across the country compete to be the first to retrieve a cross hurled into a river by a priest; the reward is a year of good luck and prosperity. On the spur of the moment, Petrunya plunges into the water and catches the cross first. Her indisputable victory throws her community into confusion, however, as the competition is only open to men: how will the church and society as a whole resolve this conflict?



'LIFE ISN'T A FAIRY TALE'

After a somewhat cryptic opening scene (Petrunya stands motionless in an empty swimming pool with heavy metal music playing in the background), the film establishes her situation: Petrunya, 32 years old, lives with her parents and is unemployed. Through a friend, her mother secures her an interview for a job in a sewing workshop. Unable to sew, however, Petrunya tries to put her history degree to good use and asks if there is a secretarial job going, but the manager can see no use for her; she is no good for anything, not even for shagging, he says.

Petrunya is not the only person to find herself in a precarious situation. Her friend Blagica works as a sales assistant in a (fairly dismal) boutique owned by her lover, a married man, from whom she can expect no long-term commitment. Job opportunities seem very limited for these young women. Their qualifications mean little to the employers in their province, so much so that Petrunya's mother, when interviewed later on in the film by a journalist reporting on the events, makes it abundantly clear that what her daughter needs more than anything else is a job. One interviewee argues that the journalist would be better off approaching the politicians who seem incapable of helping those struggling to 'make ends meet'. Even the cameraman, it transpires, bets on football matches to top up his salary.

The difficult employment situation is compounded by the patriarchy's domination of women. We see this clearly in the sewing workshop, where the manager, a man, has a windowed office in the centre of the workshop so that he can monitor the women working around him. Constantly staring at his smartphone, he seems to have precious little to do. He exploits his authority, however, in order to flirt (in the form of displays of machismo or just plain harassment) with his female employees. What is more, Petrunya's mother seems to condone female subordination when she insists that her daughter conform to male expectations as much as possible by, amongst other things, dressing smartly and lying about her age.

The first part of the film, therefore, establishes just how difficult it is for an educated young woman to find her place in society in this province of Northern Macedonia, a sentiment Petrunya confirms when she says that 'life is not a fairy tale.'





© Virginie Saint-Martin

THE GORDIAN KNOT

Petrunya encounters the procession by chance, and its dual nature quickly becomes clear: it is both religious and folkloric, with priests, crosses, hymns and prayers juxtaposed with young men in swimming trunks eager to jump into the water. When the priest makes a mess of throwing the cross, which is deflected off course and lands close to Petrunya, she jumps into the water and grabs it. Her actions immediately spark outrage: her victory, caught on film, is indisputable, yet she did not have the right to take part. As the boys snatch the cross from her, the priest intervenes and returns the good luck charm to her. Petrunya takes advantage of the ensuing commotion to slip away back home.

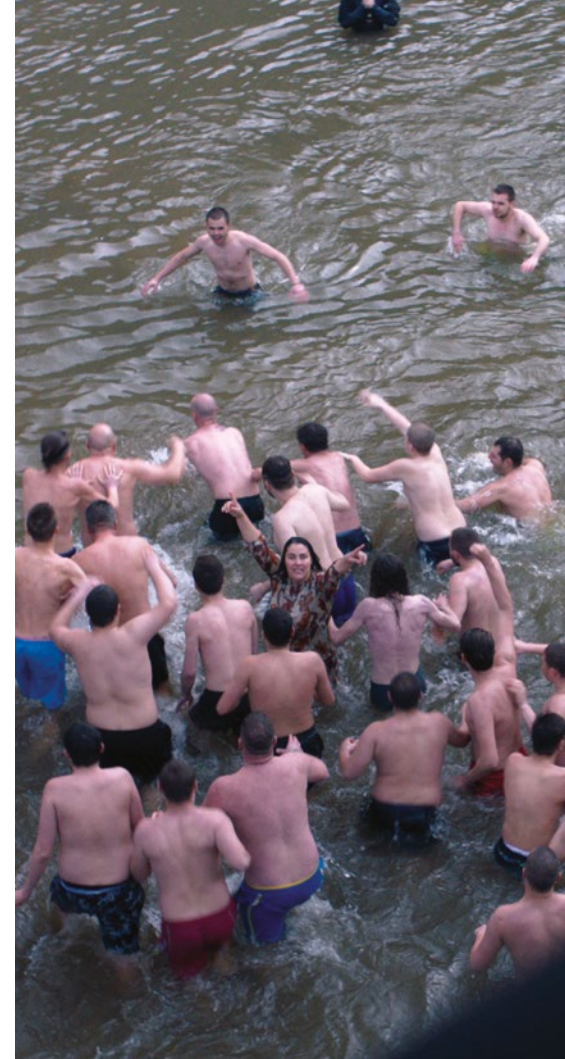
The rest of the film takes place at the police station where Petrunya is being held. The Gordian knot that binds Petrunya is most clearly visible in this setting, where religion and the state are intertwined, personified by the figures of the priest and the police officers, two forms of authority that demand her obedience. But Petrunya's astute questions expose the absurdity of the situation: which law has she broken, the law of men or the law of God? If the former, why is the priest there trying to placate her? If the latter, why is she being held in a police station? The complicity between the chief of police and the priest (they drink together and are on first-name terms) clearly reflects the broader collusion between these two powers. Indeed, they are united by both a common goal (to cement their authority by restoring peace and order) and a common method: to make a defiant young woman bend to their will by surrendering the cross which they believe is not hers to keep. As for the journalist, she invokes some big ideas (which do make sense in the context) to describe and analyse the situation, ideas like patriarchy, gender discrimination and male dominance, all of which are hidden under the mask of tradition. She also highlights the anachronistic nature of the situation by comparing it to a very distant and less enlightened past.

Curiously, when the chief of police questions Petrunya, he tries to humour her by asking if she wrote her thesis on Alexander the Great. Rather than studying her country's ancient history, however, Petrunya chose to write on the integration of communism in democratic structures during the Chinese revolution. The young woman thus makes clear her commitment to values of equality, fraternity and justice in a way that is much more modern than either the police or the priesthood, which do no more than protect the established order. As Alexander did, will Petrunya be able to sever the ideological knot that binds her, and then set off to conquer the world?

TWENTY-FOUR HOURS IN THE LIFE OF A WOMAN

The film's plot takes place over the course of a single day. Between waking up in the morning and leaving the police station at night, Petrunya undertakes a long and arduous journey to secure her freedom. One could argue that her journey corresponds to the stages in a person's life. At the start of the film, Petrunya is portrayed as a sulking child who refuses to get out of bed, whose mother tries to tempt her out of her room by slipping her a sandwich under her sheets. Her next incarnation is as a rebellious, defiant teenager who questions the authority of her elders. Finally, she is transformed into an independent young woman, freed from custody but also from her own preconceptions of the world that had hitherto held her captive. At this point, she accepts her mother for who she is: someone who is incapable of understanding what her daughter is going through. This is also the moment when she hands the cross back to the priest, declaring that he and the others need it more than she does.

Little by little she carves out freedom for herself, fighting injustice first with anger and then with intelligence and steely calmness. She can rely on some support, of course: the YouTube video of her feat becomes very popular and Darko, the kind police officer, expresses admiration for her courage. The moment she really starts to get back on her feet is when she has to fight off multiple attacks and attempts to intimidate her. For example, the police try to break her will by holding her at the station for hours, and their interrogations often turn violent; Petrunya is also handed over to and attacked by a group of furious young men and their leader (she is freed right at the moment when the mob arrives at the station to demand 'justice', in what appears to be a cruel attempt to make her yield). In the face of all these tests she remains defiant, resists and finally discovers that she is not a 'sheep', but a 'wolf'. In the end, she is released, unbowed, utterly in control of her own destiny.





AND WHAT IF GOD WAS A WOMAN?

Petrunya's allies include the journalist, whose reports analyse the affair through the lens of patriarchy and male domination. In this vein, she interviews one of Petrunya's friends, who defends Petrunya and asks the question 'and what if God was a woman?' This idea, which lends the film its title, poses a challenge to the dominance of men in society, even though very few characters in the film are actually religious. When the chief of police asks Petrunya if she is religious, she refuses to answer and argues that the question is irrelevant because she considers religion, like sexuality, to be a private matter. Petrunya's parents are likewise not religious (except when there's a holiday involved), the young men show very little respect for the procession they participate in, the chief of police declares that he is an atheist and the people the journalist interviews have no interest in religion or the scandal Petrunya has caused.

Male hegemony, meanwhile, still maintains a vital force in society, mainly on account of the prejudices that play a major role in shaping relations between people. A gender-based analysis of the film's protagonists confirms that it is indeed the men who hold both power and authority: the police have both, the priests the latter, while the young men wield force and violence. These three groups are united in their desire to compel a woman who defies their power to submit to them. Nevertheless, Petrunya can count on Darko's support (he does not like working with his exceedingly dim-witted colleagues) and that of her father, two independent individuals who have no power of their own. While Petrunya tries to assert her rights in the face of male adversity, the journalist receives no support from her bosses (who ultimately even take away her cameraman) or from the father of her daughter, who 'forgets' to pick up their child while she is at

work far from home. As for Petrunya's mother and Blagica, they are perhaps not even aware of how unjust male hegemony is and act as if they are unable to resist it, deciding that it is better to cooperate instead. Against this background the series of static shots of women, which resemble portraits, can be interpreted as a kind of demand: why are these women (Petrunya, her mother, Blagica, the journalist, a nameless woman smoking a cigarette) unable to achieve equality with men?

And so, through its humorously 'provocative' title, the film makes the bold claim that religion (in particular the three monotheistic religions) is merely a means of asserting male dominance.

SOME POINTS FOR DISCUSSION

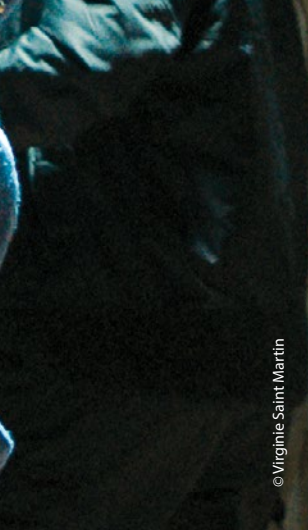
- How do you interpret the film's opening scene, which depicts Petrunya standing still and alone in an empty swimming pool with heavy metal music playing in the background?
- Do you think that Petrunya would have dived into the river had she got the job at the sewing workshop? Do you think that her circumstances were a factor in her ostensibly 'spontaneous' action?
- The devil is visible in a number of religious paintings shown at the beginning of the film. When the furious young men arrive at the police station, their leader says, referring to Petrunya, 'this woman is Lucifer'. In the past, witches were suspected of doing deals with the devil. To what extent can we regard Petrunya as a kind of modern witch?

les grignoux
● ● ● ●





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DIRECTOR Teona Strugar Mitevska

SCRIPT Elma Tataragic, Teona Strugar Mitevska

CAST Zorica Nusheva, Labina Mitevska, Simeon Moni Damevski, Suad Begovski, Stefan Vujisic, Violeta Shapkovska, Xhevdet Jashari

CINEMATOGRAPHY Virginie Saint-Martin

PRODUCERS Labina Mitevska (Sisters and Brother Mitevski)

CO-PRODUCTION Sebastien Delloye (Entre Chien et Loup), Danijel Hocevar (Vertigo), Zdenka Gold (Spiritus Movens), Marie Dubas (Deuxième Ligne Films),

Elie Meirovitz (EZ films)

YEAR 2019

RUNNING TIME 100'

GENRE Fiction/drama

COUNTRIES North Macedonia, Belgium, Slovenia, France, Croatia

ORIGINAL VERSION Macedonian

LUX FILM DAYS

3 FILMS
24 LANGUAGES
28 COUNTRIES

THE REALM ⁽¹⁾

El Reino

by Rodrigo Sorogoyen

Spain, France

Local politician Manuel López Vidal is a rising star. Dapper and go-ahead, he looks set to inherit the mantle of a regional potentate, but when news breaks of a corruption scandal in which he is implicated, his upward trajectory comes to an abrupt halt. As the revelations multiply, Manuel's party (which is never named or located on the political spectrum) moves to throw out the 'bad apples'. Manuel is cornered: having expected at least tacit support from his party colleagues, he finds instead that he is isolated and he tries to protect himself by threatening to uncover the full scale of the dirty dealing in which the party is mired.

The Realm is a political thriller, an exposé of the corruption corroding the world of politics, and it peels back the skin to show how the rot sets in, almost as a matter of course, among men and women convinced that certain kinds of behaviour are perfectly normal. Antonio de la Torre is masterful in the role of a desperate man determined not to pay the price of his own vanity.

(¹) *The Candidate* in Ireland, Malta and the United Kingdom



THE SKILL OF THE DIRECTOR

It is not hard to identify the inspiration for *The Realm* in the series of scandals that have tainted politics in recent years. However, it is not the mission of the film to retell specific murky stories; rather, it is a work of fiction with a wider message to convey. Significantly, the plot tracks a single character, Manuel, who is clearly small fry in this scandal. A coming man, he is nonetheless a mere cog in a very big system over which he has no control. And it is the fact of being abandoned by his party that triggers the reaction whereby a desire for vengeance gradually consumes him. He is determined not to be singled out as the fall guy.

Almost insidiously, the viewer begins to empathise with the character, and the empathy develops. Yes, Manuel is rich, ambitious, arrogant and corrupt, but we witness his transformation, step by step, into something like a trapped rat. And, of course, in terms of corruption, he is not the worst offender. We learn of a further scandal — the ‘Persika’ case — much bigger than the affair in which Manuel is implicated, and involving some very senior figures. This, indeed, is Manuel’s line of defence both politically and morally (or immorally): if everyone is corrupt, why should I be the only one to go down?

And, in a sense, the director takes us down too, as Manuel falls. We are keen to see the full extent of the scandal uncovered, and our identification with the character is fostered through a range of cinematographic techniques. Notably, the rhythmical visual pacing pulls us along with him, for Manuel is never still. We follow him in constant motion, whether on foot (and often running) or in vehicles — when he loses his chauffeur-driven car he takes taxis — travelling the length and breadth of Spain and, in one memorable sequence, through Andorra. The techno beat of Olivier Arson’s score racks up the stress at critical moments, as if we were eavesdropping on Manuel’s accelerating heart rate.

The Realm also includes several stock characters from the thriller genre, as well as undisguised references to famous scenes in other works. For example, film buffs will recognise the sequence where Manuel, coming straight from the beach to a restaurant, passes through the kitchen, lifting a plate of seafood and taking it with him to join his friends at their table, as a nod to a similar kitchen scene in Martin Scorsese’s *Goodfellas*. However, in his use of these coded thriller techniques, Sorogoyen has a habit of neatly upending the viewer’s expectations.





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For example, in the opening scene Manuel seems to possess remarkable physical fluidity but then, as the story unfolds and the scandal breaks, we see him repeatedly tripping and bumping into obstacles. Trapped by forces beyond his control, he tries to regain the initiative but all his efforts fail miserably, to varying extents.

The pace of the action continues to build, however, and with it the suspense, until we are convinced that — barring some spectacular plot twist in the closing minutes — Manuel will finally succeed in revealing on TV the full extent of his party's involvement in financial scandals. Once again, however, Sorogoyen wrong-foots both his character and the audience. What the television presenter in this final scene delivers is not an exposé but a lesson in political morality. In a sense, the thriller format has led us down the wrong track from the start, and suddenly we have to confront the deeper questions the director is asking. How has corruption on this scale been possible? How could Manuel have behaved so immorally?

A LESSON IN POLITICAL MORALITY

So we are not offered any detailed denouement. And here lies the key to Sorogoyen's choice in making *The Realm* a work of fiction rather than a documentary — with a message more universal than that of a documentary.

It is a characteristic of fiction, and a surprisingly significant one, that most viewers are unlikely to retain the names of the various characters in a story. In this case, we will obviously remember Manuel, as the central character, and the name of Paco, who is referred to frequently, will probably also stick but, even as we watch, we will quickly forget most of the other characters' names. This is quite unlike the way we watch news reports about corruption scandals, in which those involved are identified precisely and repeatedly. *The Realm* takes a much more oblique and allusive approach to the theme and we do not need to know exactly who each character is, or to follow every intricacy of the murky deals. It is the pace of the thriller, rather than the detail of the events, that is important.

So how then do we understand the story that the film tells? We rely on the characters' physical appearance for recognition, especially their facial features, and this works in most cases, even when the fleeting nature of certain characters' appearances makes the task harder. At the same time, the verbal exchanges between characters enable us to place them and to understand their respective roles. The characters' names are not important to us: only their function in the unfolding story really matters. And of course we need a basic grasp of how society works in order to understand these distinct roles.

The film depicts corrupt politicians but it draws a distinction, at an early stage, between two levels of power, local and national. While it seems, at first, that only the local politicians are involved in corruption and that the national leadership intends to banish the 'bad apples' from the party, we soon learn that corruption is rife at every level. There is at least one party figure who retains a claim to integrity, even though Manuel manages to organise a one-to-one meeting with him. This is the tall, lean Alvarado, over whom the director hangs a question mark: will he too succumb to corruption in the end? The film offers no answer here and we are left to wonder just how far the rot has spread and, especially, just how much force corruption can exert on men and women whose only goal is power. And there is a further unanswered question: to what lengths will these men and women go to avert their own downfall?

The other group depicted are the corruptors — in this case property developers. They want to build on sites initially zoned for agricultural use but otherwise ideal for their purposes, and which are then improperly rezoned for development. These entrepreneurs are depicted as a lesser group in the pecking order: obviously so, one might say, but the film explicitly highlights the point that wealth does not in itself confer power. Those who exercise real power are the politicians.

Alongside these two groups, we are introduced at an early stage to a third force, namely the press. At first the role of the press is not clear-cut, for the female journalist with whom Manuel has several meetings and who turns out to be a useful contact in the media appears to have close ties with the corrupt politicians. When the scandal first hits the headlines, Manuel is alerted by a journalist who knows of his part in it and goes straight to the editor of the local paper in a bid to quash, or at least postpone, further revelations. But it is too late: the revelations have acquired their own unstoppable momentum.

We thus observe that — beyond glib generalisations about 'power protecting power' — the press and other media still constitute an independent 'fourth power' with a counter-balancing role to play. And the justice system, of course, intervenes decisively, calling the whole corrupt edifice to account.





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The character who has the last word in this story is Amaia — the journalist who refuses to follow Manuel's script in breaking the scandal that will shame the entire party. It is here, in the finale, that the core message of *The Realm* comes across most clearly. The director is not concerned with telling a specific tale of corruption: he wants us to consider questions of ethics about corruption as a phenomenon. How, at an individual, human level, has Manuel managed to act out his part in this system for almost 15 years? How has he justified to himself and his family the fact of profiting from 'dirty money'?

FICTION AND REALITY

Thus, we do not need to understand all the ins and outs of the intrigue that *The Realm* portrays, for this is on-screen fiction and it works in a different way, conjuring a more general and diffuse atmosphere of conspiracy, secrecy and scheming. It is an atmosphere that could feed a conspiracy-theory mindset or provoke a rejection of politicians generally on the grounds that they are all 'bad apples'.

But that is not the message of *The Realm*: far from it. We are compelled to see the world through the eyes of Manuel, the eyes of a local politician who spends his time in the company of others like himself, corrupt or peddling corruption, and thus comes to view corrupt practices as normal, widespread forms of behaviour that require no explanation..

SOME POINTS FOR DISCUSSION

- It is interesting for viewers to share their impressions of the film, especially with regard to aspects of the plot that may be unclear or open to various interpretations. What is the thinking behind the oblique approach taken in *The Realm*?
- Who bears most responsibility for the systematic corruption that the film portrays? Businesspeople? Politicians and, if so, at local or national level? Or are there other guilty parties?
- What specifically is the journalist, Amaia, saying in the final scene? What precisely is she asking of Manuel? And might her own integrity be suspect?





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DIRECTOR Rodrigo Sorogoyen
SCRIPT Isabel Peña,
Rodrigo Sorogoyen
CAST Antonio de la Torre, Mónica
López, José María Pou, Nacho
Fresneda, Ana Wagener, Bárbara
Lennie, Luis Zahera, Francisco
Reyes, María De Nati, Paco Revilla,
Sonia Almarcha, David Lorente,
Andrés Lima, Oscar de la Fuente
CINEMATOGRAPHY Alex de
Pablo
PRODUCERS Gerardo Herrero
(Tornasol), Mikel Lejarza
(Atresmedia Cine), Mercedes
Gamero (Atresmedia Cine)
CO-PRODUCERS Jean Labadie
(Le Pacte), Anne-Laure Labadie
(Le Pacte), Stéphane Sorlat
(Mondex et Cie)
PRODUCTION Tornasol
(Spain), Trianera PC AIE (Spain),
Atresmedia Cine (Spain)
In collaboration with Le Pacte
(France), Mondex et Cie (France),
Bowfinger (Spain)
YEAR 2018
RUNNING TIME 122'
GENRE Fiction, thriller
COUNTRIES Spain, France
ORIGINAL VERSION Spanish
DISTRIBUTOR Signature
Entertainment (Ireland, Malta,
United Kingdom)

SELECTION PANEL 2019

Jürgen BIESINGER

Germany: Producer of the European Film Awards

Peter BOGNAR

Hungary: Distributor, Festival Programmer

Mihai Cristian CHIRILOV

Romania: Film Critic, Artistic Director of Transylvania International Film Festival

Ditte DAGBJERG CHRISTENSEN

Denmark: Øst for Paradis Cinema, Managing Director and Head of Distribution

Jose Luis CIENFUEGOS

Spain: Director of the Sevilla European Film Festival

Juliette DURET

Belgium: Head of Cinema, BOZAR

Jakub DUSZYNSKI

Poland: Distributor, GUTER Film

Benedikt ERLINGSSON

Iceland: Director and Producer of Woman at War, LUX winner 2018

Giorgio GOSETTI

Italy: Artistic Director of Giornate degli Autori

Mathilde HENROT

France: Founder of Festival Scope

Mathias HOLTZ

Sweden: Cinema Exhibitor and Programming Manager, Folkets Hus och Parke

Yorgos KRASSAKOPOULOS

Greece: Programmer, Thessaloniki International Film Festival, Film Critic

Christophe LEPARC

France: Secretary General of Director's Fortnight, Cannes Film Festival

Selma MEHADZIC

Croatia: Programmer, Zagreb Film Festival

Susan NEWMAN-BAUDAIS

Eurimages

Nikolaj NIKITIN

Germany: Central/Northern/Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the Caucasus delegate, Berlin Film Festival, Rector, School of Film Agents, Artistic Director, Febiofest (Czechia)

Karel OCH

Czechia: Film Critic and Artistic Director of Karlovy Vary International Film Festival

Tina POGLAJEN

Slovenia: Board of Ljubljana International Film Festival, freelance film critic

Mira STALEVA

Bulgaria: Deputy Director, Sofia International Film Festival

Mante VALIŪNAITĖ

Lithuania: Senior Programmer of Vilnius International Film Festival

OBSERVER

Lauriane BERTRAND

European Commission, Creative Europe

LUX FILM PRIZE FILMOGRAPHY 2018-2007

2018

KONA FER Í STRÍÐ
DRUGA STRANA SVEGA
STYX
DONBASS
EL SILENCIO DE OTROS
GIRL
GRÄNS
LAZZARO FELICE
TWARZ
UTØYA 22. JULI

2017

SAMEBLÖD
120 BATTEMENTS PAR MINUTE
WESTERN
A CIAMBRA
ESTIU 1993
HJARTASTEINN
KING OF THE BELGIANS
OSTATNIA RODZINA
SLAVA
TOIVON TUOLLA PUOLEN

2016

TONI ERDMANN
À PEINE J'OUVRE LES YEUX
MA VIE DE COURGETTE
A SYRIAN LOVE STORY
CARTAS DA GUERRA
KRIGEN
L'AVENIR
LA PAZZA GIOIA
SIERANEVADA
SUNTAN

2015

MUSTANG
MEDITERRANEA
UROK
45 YEARS
A PERFECT DAY
HRÚTAR
LA LOI DU MARCHÉ
SAUL FIA
TOTO SI SURORILE LUI
ZVIZDAN

2014

IDA
BANDE DE FILLES
RAZREDNI SOVRAŽNIK
FEHÉR ISTEN
HERMOSA JUVENTUD
KREUZWEG
LE MERAVIGLIE
MACONDO
TURIST
XENIA

2013

THE BROKEN CIRCLE BREAKDOWN
MIELE
THE SELFISH GIANT
ĀTA SOVA DŌ
GRZELI NATELI DGEEBI
KRUGOVI
OH BOY!
LA GRANDE BELLEZZA
LA PLAGA
PEVNOST

2012

IO SONO LI
CSAK A SZÉL
TABU
À PERDRE LA RAISON
BARBARA
CESARE DEVE MORIRE
CRULIC—DRUMUL SPRE DINCOLO
DJECA
L'ENFANT D'EN HAUT
LOUISE WIMMER

2011

LES NEIGES DU KILIMANDJARO
ATTENBERG
PLAY
A TORINÓI LÓ
ESSENTIAL KILLING
HABEMUS PAPAM
LE HAVRE
MISTÉRIOS DE LISBOA
MORGEN
PINA

2010

DIE FREMDE
AKADIMIA PLATONOS
ILLEGAL
BIBLIOTHEQUE PASCAL
INDIGÈNE D'EURASIE
IO SONO L'AMORE
LA BOCCA DEL LUPO
LOURDES
MEDALIA DE ONOARE
R

2009

WELCOME
EASTERN PLAYS
STURM
35 RHUMS
ANDER
EIN AUGENBLICK FREIHEIT
KATALIN VARGA
LOST PERSONS AREA
NORD
PANDORA'NIN KUTUSU

2008

LE SILENCE DE LORNA
DELTA
OBČAN HAVEL
IL RESTO DELLA NOTTE
REVANCHE
SÜGISBALL
SVETAT E GOLYAM I SPASENIE DEBNE
OTVSYAKADE
SZTUCZKI
TO VERDENER
WOLKE 9

2007

AUF DER ANDEREN SEITE
4 LUNI, 3 SAPTAMINI SI 2 ZILE
BELLE TOUJOURS
CALIFORNIA DREAMIN' [NESFARSIT]
DAS FRÄULEIN
EXILE FAMILY MOVIE
IMPORT/EXPORT
ISZKA UTAZÁSA
PLOSHCHA
KURZ DAVOR IST ES PASSIERT

LUX FILM PRIZE

BRINGING FILMS FROM
EUROPE TO EUROPEANS



Creative
Europe
MEDIA



European Parliament