

WHAT IS THE LUX PRIZE?

Established in 2007, the LUX Prize is a film prize awarded each year by the European Parliament. The LUX Prize pursues two main objectives: spotlighting the public debate on Europe, and supporting circulation of European co-productions within the Union. Indeed, distribution is "the Achilles heel" of European cinema, weakened by language barriers. The LUX Prize aims at overcoming them.

The LUX Prize has helped European films to reach a wider audience by supporting their subtitling and distribution. Through the LUX Prize, the European Parliament supports cultural diversity and helps building bridges among Europeans.

WHAT ARE THE LUX FILM DAYS?

Screenings of the 3 films of the LUX Prize Official Competition across all 28 European countries during the same period of time - autumn 2013. For the LUX Film Days, as part of the LUX Prize, the 3 films of the Competition are subtitled in the 24 official languages of the European Union. The aim is to share the diversity and richness of European cinema with the largest possible number of Europeans and to debate the topics depicted by the films of the LUX Prize 2013. The subjects raised by these films are common to all of us, they tell our stories, touch our emotions, and address issues we all face.

HOW ARE THE FILMS SELECTED?

The films are selected by a group of film industry professionals who form the Selection Panel. The 3 films of the Official Competition are the outcome of the Selection Panel's choice.

The winner is decided by the Members of the European Parliament. This year, the award ceremony takes place on 11 December.

WHAT IS THE PUBLIC MENTION?

The Public Mention is the people's choice. It is your opportunity to elect your favourite LUX film or theme. Simply visit our website luxprize.eu or Facebook page and express your point of view. The result of the Public Mention is announced at the Karlovy Vary International Film Festival in June/July 2014. It symbolically closes the current LUX Prize edition and gives way to the new one - with the unveiling of the new 10 films of the Official Selection 2014.



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DEBATE
& VOTE



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LUX FILM DAYS

3 FILMS | 24 LANGUAGES
28 EUROPEAN COUNTRIES
WWW.LUXPRIZE.EU



THE SELFISH GIANT

Director: Clio Barnard
Country: United Kingdom
Year: 2013
Running Time: 93'
Cast: Sean Gilder, Siobhan Finneran, Lorraine Ashbourne, Steve Evets, Elliott Tittensor, Conner Chapman, Shaun Thomas
Producer: Tracy O'Riordan
Production: Moonspun Films, BFI Film Fund, FilmFour
Awards/Selection: Cannes 2013, Directors' Fortnight, LUX Prize Official Selection Competition

Synopsis

A contemporary fable about 13-year-old Arbor and his best friend Swifty. Excluded from school and outsiders in their own community, the boys meet Kitten, a local scrap dealer, and begin collecting scrap metal for him using a horse and cart. Swifty has a natural gift with horses and Arbor has a business brain and a way with words - they make a good team. But when Arbor begins to emulate Kitten by becoming greedy and exploitative, tensions build, leading to a tragic event which transforms them all irrevocably.

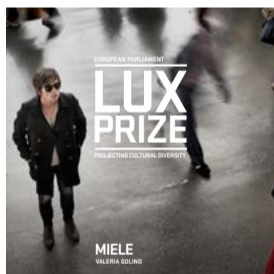


THE BROKEN CIRCLE BREAKDOWN

Director: Felix van Groeningen
Country: Belgium
Year: 2012
Running Time: 110'
Cast: Veerle Baetens, Johan Heldenbergh, Nell Cattrysse, Geert van Rampelberg, Nils de Caster
Producer: Dirk Impens
Co-producers: Frans Van Gestel, Arnold Heslenfeld, Laurette Schillings
Production: Menuet Producties, Topkapi Films
Awards/Selection: Berlinale 2013, Panorama Special Audience Award, CPH PIX 2013, LUX Prize 2013 Official Selection Competition, Tribeca Film Festival 2013

Synopsis

The Broken Circle Breakdown tells the love story between Elise and Didier. She has her own tattoo shop; he plays the banjo in a band. It is love at first sight, in spite of major differences. He talks, she listens. He is a dedicated atheist, although at the same time a naive romantic. She has a cross tattooed on her neck, even though she has both feet firmly on the ground. Their happiness is complete after their little girl Maybelle is born. Unfortunately, Maybelle, at six years old, becomes seriously ill. Didier and Elise respond in very different ways. But Maybelle does not leave them any choice. Didier and Elise will have to fight for her together.



MIELE

Director: Valeria Golino
Country: Italy, France
Year: 2013
Running Time: 100'
Cast: Jasmine Trinca, Carlo Cecchi, Libero De Rienzo, Vinicio Marchioni, Iaia Forte
Producer: Viola Prestieri, Riccardo Scamarcio, Anne-Dominique Toussaint, Raphael Berdugo
Production: Buena Onda, Les Films des Tournelles, Rai Cinema, Cité Films
Awards/Selection: Cannes 2013, Un Certain Regard, Brussels Film Festival 2013, LUX Prize Official Selection Competition, Globi d'Oro 2013, Best debut film, Best actress (Jasmine Trinca)

Synopsis

Irene lives a pretty isolated life alone. Her clandestine job is to help terminally-ill people to die with dignity by giving them a drug. One day she supplies a new "client" with a fatal dose, only to find out he's perfectly healthy. Irene is determined not to be responsible for his suicide. From this moment, Irene and Grimaldi are locked unwillingly in a tense and unusual relationship which will change Irene's life forever.

BECAUSE cinema has the power to move us and culture to enlighten us.

BECAUSE cinema and culture are ideal instruments to discover our common background as well as our diversities.

BECAUSE we are united in diversity and the European Union is our common space.

MIELE by Valeria GOLINO, **THE BROKEN CIRCLE BREAKDOWN** by Felix van Groeningen and **THE SELFISH GIANT** by Clio Barnard are on the programme of the 2nd edition of LUX FILM DAYS, organised by the European Parliament.

Taken together, these three remarkable films reflect the richness, depth and beauty of the European cinema. Each has its own take on the questions facing our society, approaching them realistically or imaginatively, harshly or delicately.

Go and see these films and discuss on luxprize.eu the problems of the legitimacy (or not) of alleviating others' pain when people cannot take this fatal decision freely (MIELE), or the way youngsters react when they are cast aside by society and institutions (THE SELFISH GIANT) or how a young European couple is suddenly hit by tragic events which question all their values (THE BROKEN CIRCLE BREAKDOWN).

28 EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

BELGIQUE / BELGIË
BRUXELLES / BRUSSEL

БЪЛГАРИЯ
СОФИЯ

ČESKÁ REPUBLIKA
BRNO

DANMARK
KØBENHAVN

DEUTSCHLAND
BERLIN, KÖLN, MÜNCHEN

EESTI
TALLINN

ÉIRE / IRELAND
CORCAIGH / CORK

ΕΛΛΑΔΑ
ΘΕΣΣΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ

ESPAÑA
BARCELONA, GIJON,
LANZAROTE, SANTIAGO DE
COMPOSTELA, SEGOVIA,
SEVILLA

FRANCE
ANGOULÊME, MARSEILLE,
STRASBOURG

HRVATSKA
ZAGREB

ITALIA
ROMA, BOLOGNA

ΚΥΠΡΟΣ
ΛΕΥΚΩΣΙΑ

LATVIJA
RĪGA

LIETUVA
VILNIUS, KAUNAS, PANEVĖŽYS

**LUXEMBOURG /
LUXEMBURG**
LUXEMBOURG / LUXEMBURG

MAGYARORSZÁG
BUDAPEST

MALTA
VALLETTA

NEDERLAND
LEIDEN

ÖSTERREICH
WIEN

POLSKA
WARSAWA, WROCŁAW

PORTUGAL
LISBOA

ROMÂNIA
BUCUREȘTI

SLOVENIJA
LJUBLJANA

SLOVENSKO
BRATISLAVA

SUOMI / FINLAND
HELSINGFORS / HELSINKI

SVERIGE
STOCKHOLM

UNITED KINGDOM
LONDON, BELFAST, GLASGOW

WATCH,
DEBATE
& VOTE



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AN UNBREAKABLE BOND?

The two boys have much in common beyond just being the same age. They grew up in the same social and cultural environment, and both come from difficult family backgrounds. Swifty has many young brothers and sisters, and his parents are destitute. His mother can't pay the electricity bill, his father is forced to sell the living room sofa, and their food is basic and lacking in variety... and cold, since there is no electricity. As for Arbor, he lives with his single mother, for whom bringing up her two boys is a daily struggle. His older brother takes drugs, is difficult to control, is sometimes violently harassed by people to whom he owes money, and probably steals the medicines meant for Arbor, who depends on them to keep his condition in check.

Both boys are fiercely loyal to those close to them. Although they are often coarse and violent with each other, they deal with life's challenges together. For example, they are happy to hand over their scrap-metal earnings to their families to pay bills or debts. That said, they are very different in other ways. Arbor is a short, blond-haired boy, skinny and highly strung, whereas Swifty is taller, quiet and a little awkward. Arbor is the leader, while Swifty follows. But the most striking thing about their relationship is the obvious strength of their friendship. Swifty seems to have the unique ability to calm Arbor down and reassure him during his crises. This is well illustrated by the film's opening scene, which ends with a close-up of their hands clasped tightly together. The viewer is left in no doubt as to the boys' physical closeness, whether expressed in teasing, games or sometimes even tender embraces.

-1-

AT A GLANCE

Loosely based on a short story by Oscar Wilde, *The Selfish Giant* focuses on two teenagers living in an area of contemporary Britain plagued by poverty and deprivation. Arbor, who suffers from a condition which has never been properly diagnosed and which makes him hyperactive, has serious issues with authority and gets himself expelled from school. His friend Swifty is also suspended for a few days for fighting. Left to their own devices, the two boys hit upon a money-making scheme which involves selling scrap metal to a local dealer named Kitten. Arbor is primarily in it for the money, while Swifty is more interested in Kitten's horses, taking a particular shine to a dray horse which is a superb trotter.

AN ATMOSPHERE OF GLOOM

The film can therefore be seen as the story of a broken friendship and of loss set against the backdrop of industrial decline. The prevailing atmosphere is one of gloom: in addition to explicit signs of economic ruin (the fact that both boys' parents are poor, unable to pay their bills and forced to sell basic household items, and that the trade in scrap metal and other unwanted materials is thriving, encouraging the poorest in society to steal them) there are other symbols whose meaning is more subtle. For example, the director chooses to film industrial facilities (cooling towers, industrial buildings, etc.) wreathed in mist, or in certain types of light, so that they are not magnified, but rather seem to be coming to the end of their lives, as if they had lost all meaning. Including animals (horses, sheep, etc.) in some of those very beautiful shots reinforces that idea, as if nature were reasserting itself.

The sense of impending economic disaster is also highlighted by the social issues that the film deals with: Arbor's expulsion from school, on the flimsy grounds that the teachers are unable to look after a child that is so 'different'; the drug dealing and drug use that destroys his brother's life; and the helplessness of their single mother, who is left to bring up her two difficult children on her own. Perhaps because everything is falling apart around them, people are shown to have lost all sense of right and wrong: children harass each other in the playground; Arbor's brother receives dire threats from people to whom he owes money; the world of the scrap metal dealers is particularly tough, with Kitten arbitrarily docking one pound each from Arbor's and Swifty's pay, on the spurious grounds that they are under age;

he also organises a dangerous illegal horse race, and threatens to crush Arbor's hand to punish him for having stolen the copper; another scrap metal dealer gets hold of Arbor's copper without giving him anything in return. In this setting, traditional authority figures appear extremely weak: teachers are incapable of winning respect and even the police obey Arbor when he orders them to remove their shoes before entering his house. Society is disintegrating (consider the environment in which the story takes place: crumbling pavements, dilapidated shops, houses in a pitiful state...), as reflected in the fact that life seems to be increasingly dictated by the law of the survival of the fittest, so that some moral values appear all the more important: Arbor and Swifty's friendship, despite Arbor's betrayal; their loyalty toward their families; Kitten's admission of guilt; and the forgiveness offered to Arbor by Swifty's mother.

In conclusion, *The Selfish Giant* can be seen as a fable or a morality tale set in a realistic context (cable theft is on the increase in several European countries; the scrap metal trade is thriving; metal prices are soaring; unemployment is growing and families all over Europe are becoming poorer) in which it is vital to stand up for humanist values.

Anne Vervier
Les Grignoux (Liège Brussels)

-3-

DRIFTING APART

Their special friendship begins to founder, however, as the boys' relationship with Kitten develops and their different personalities emerge. Kitten spots Swifty's way with horses and gives him more and more responsibility, allowing him to take care of their beloved horse and even take it out occasionally. Swifty responds by showing a great deal of gratitude towards Kitten (each time he is 'promoted' he celebrates with an enthusiastic 'Get in!') and understandably wants to safeguard the relationship of trust established between them.

Arbor, meanwhile, displays nothing of the spontaneous sensitivity that comes so naturally to Swifty. While Swifty is able to calm an animal down and have it eating out of his hand, Arbor's violent and impulsive nature has the opposite effect. Kitten not only takes Swifty under his wing as his protégé, he also violently shuns Arbor.

Arbor feels rejected, and reacts by betraying both Swifty and Kitten. He does this by gratuitously killing a foal. (His original intention was to sacrifice the foal in order to check if the power line that had fallen to the ground was live. Even if it was not, Arbor could never have detached it and carried it away without Swifty's help.) The killing of the foal, therefore, can only be seen as an attempt to hurt Swifty, the horse lover, punishing him for effectively abandoning Arbor; a less obvious interpretation is that it was merely an experiment to stave off boredom. Arbor, who has regularly been taking large amounts of copper from Kitten's stockpile, decides to go and sell it to another dealer (using Kitten's horse and cart!). Swifty catches him in the act and sees it as another betrayal, since Kitten has effectively become his boss. But Arbor's deal falls through and

Kitten finds out. He then threatens to crush Arbor's hand in front of a terrified Swifty.

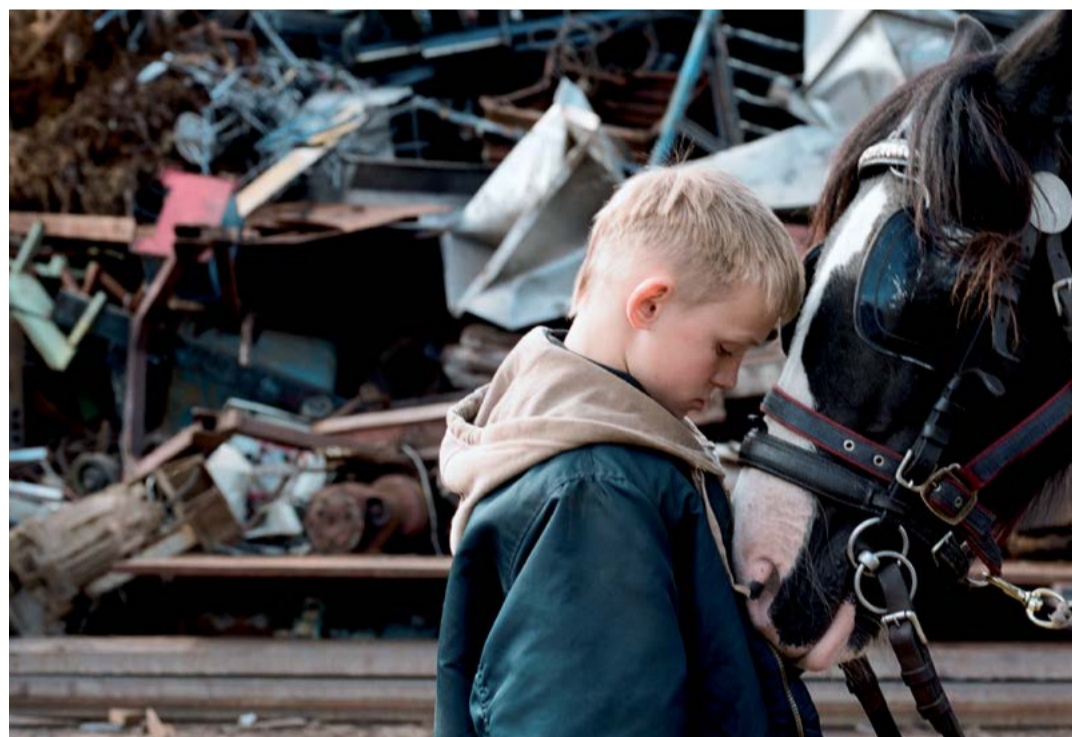
TRAGEDY AND RESOLUTION

To pay off his debt (another dealer took the copper Arbor had stolen, without giving anything in return), Kitten furiously sends Arbor to steal a similar amount of copper from near the power station. First he needs to open a hatch that is blocked by a concrete slab, then climb inside and grab hold of any cables that he can find, all the while with the worrying sound of live electric wires buzzing above him. Arbor is there on his own with the horse, unable to shift the concrete slab by himself, when Swifty, setting aside his deep feelings of hurt, arrives to help out. He clammers into the shaft and is electrocuted. Arbor then carries Swifty's body back to Kitten, who unexpectedly takes all responsibility for the accident.

This is the start of Arbor's purgatory, as he tries to make contact with Swifty's mother. He knocks several times on her door, but each time is told to go away. He retreats beneath his bed, which is where we saw him, beside himself with agitation, at the beginning of the film. This quiet, dark place is a refuge that no one but Swifty could ever get him to leave. Finally, Swifty's mother turns up at Arbor's house and he receives the forgiveness he had been waiting for, as his friend's mother hugs him tightly.

The film ends on a quiet note, with Arbor brushing a horse, the camera lingering on the animal's face, whose expression it is left up to the viewer to interpret. But the care that Arbor takes with the horse can surely only be seen as a tribute to his dead friend.

-2-



SOME IDEAS FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION

- The film takes place in the area around Bradford, in the county of Yorkshire in the UK. Do you think that the story could have been set in another part of Europe? If so, why? If not, why not?
- Electricity is a theme running through the film: the live electric cables, the deaths of the foal and of Swifty, Swifty's family's unpaid bills, and the metal cables that are potentially a source of income for those who collect scrap metal. What conclusions can be drawn from all of these 'electrical connections' and the metaphors that they suggest (tension, resistance, Arbor seeming not to have an 'off' button, etc.)?
- Some aesthetic choices in *The Selfish Giant* are also worth emphasising, particularly the lack of music, but also the use of still shots of the natural environment or animals (sheep, horses, etc.), juxtaposed with industrial facilities. How do you interpret these choices?



-4-