

TRANSFERENCE

A new film by Zuzana Piussi about child abuse, its causes and consequences, and about the social system that is somewhat asocial

BRIEFLY ABOUT THE FILM

European statistics indicate an increase in child abuse in many countries; the figures are growing in the Czech Republic and Slovakia is one of those countries where official statistics have not been compiled even though non-governmental organisations have been warning that the situation is alarming in this field. In recent years, the general public has been shocked by several child abuse cases that ended up with death. Are these unpredictable exceptions or does this mean that social mechanisms are failing? The film offers an insight into the workings of the social system which tends to act in an asocial manner at times. Is the conflict between a humane approach and the bureaucratic juggernaut akin to Don Quixote's struggle, or is this simply the only way to pursue until matters improve?

FILM SPECIFICATIONS

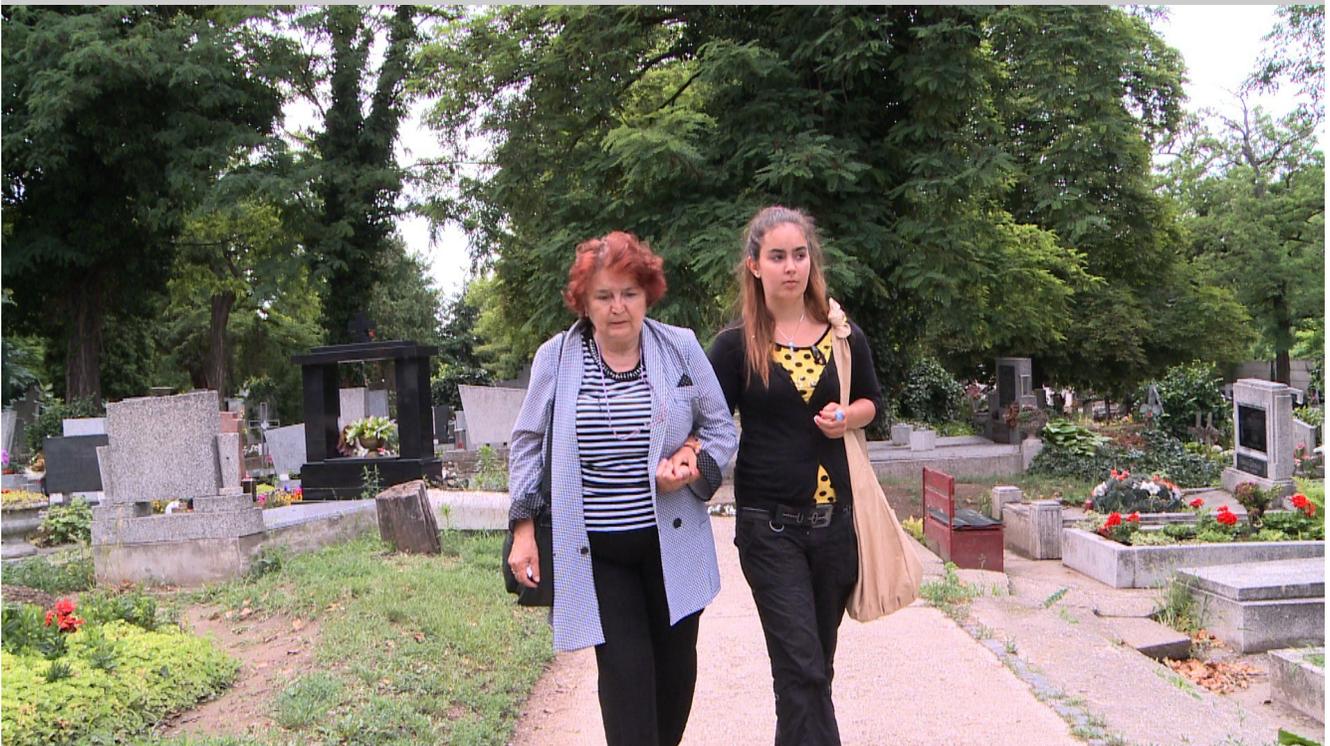
Duration: 57 minutes

Language: Slovak, Hungarian

Language of subtitles: English

The film was shot with the 16:9 aspect ratio and is available in the following formats: DVD, ProRes (.mov), DCP, BlueRay

The making of the film was supported by the Slovak Audiovisual Fund.



RELEASE OF THE FILM

World premiere: Jihlava International Documentary Film Festival, October 2014



ZUZANA PIUSSI ABOUT THE FILM

Your work often focuses on phenomena across the society, which are symptomatic of a crisis in a certain field. Can you say that this is the case with this film as well?

I think so; it is about a topic that is sad – child abuse.

While there are many people featured in the film, the lead character is an extraordinarily interesting woman, nurse and social worker named Serafínka. How did you find her?

Ivan Leitman from the Náruč [Embrace] civic association convinced me about the urgency of this topic. I agreed to make the film at the very moment he introduced me to Serafínka Hermanová because it suddenly became clear to me how I should treat the topic. I was enthusiastic about the possibility of watching a social worker in practice, visiting schools and families with her. Another layer of the film is an analysis of the system which, as it shows, fails when it should help an abused child. On the one hand, the system will not help children who really should be taken away from families where they inevitably suffer – as it was in the recent cases of Lucka and Marika, the two girls tortured to death. On the other hand it does act and takes children away from mothers only because they are poor, then places children in shelters and other facilities where the state pays huge amounts for them. If their own family had the money, the family's problem would be solved for the most part. The boy who is shown in the film had been to twenty-five of such facilities in his life, including a psychiatric clinic, and he openly describes the system abuse in response to his futile resistance and desperation that stemmed from his separation from his family, which he was unable to understand...

The overall image of the system as shown here is not very encouraging. How come that such things happen?

Cases of abused children surface every once in a while. Years ago, there was Marika – her stepfather hurled her into her bed in such a manner that her brains ran out. But her uncle who currently takes care of the girl – she is severely disabled forever – had repeatedly alerted social workers to the fact that she was abused. Her physician knew about it too but nobody did anything. They feared the violent father. Last time, there was Lucka – another case where everybody knew about it yet nobody did anything. Every time things go so far, officials go crazy and a special meeting is called at the ministry. I filmed one such meeting. It was said there that we had no system for protecting children, and right after that it was also said that we had it, only we should use it better. As my husband said, this film's genre is accusation. I would be happy to stir at least a bit of a discussion or defence, which, hopefully, might lead to an improvement in the state of affairs...

SALES, FESTIVALS AND DISTRIBUTION

D1film Production

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ZUZANA PIUSSI

born 1971 in Bratislava, Czechoslovakia. Since 1992 collaborated as stage and costum designer, later also as an actress with alternative Bratislava's theatre Stoka. Later she co-founded theatre Skrat. She entered filmmaking later, through studies at Bratislava's Film and Television Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava. Her films since the school often provoke debate in society.

Filmography:

Výmet (Wipe out), 22 min. (2003)

Bezbožná krajina (Godless country; TV film), 34 min. (2004)

Anjeli plačú (Angels Cry), 54 min. (2005)

Stoka (2007), 18 min. – (About the theater *Stoka*.)

Stoka – Epilog (2007), 19 min.

Babička (Grandmother), 74 min. (2008)

Myslím, tedy slam (I think, therefore slam), 51 min. (2008)

Koliba, 45 min. (2009) – (About the scandalous way *Koliba*, the Slovak national film studios, were privatized and stolen away.)

Hrdina našich čias (A Hero of Our Time), 55 min. (2009)

Nemoc tretej moci (Disease of the Third Power), 52 min. (2011)– (Scandals that afflict the Slovak judiciary.)

Kuracia láska (Chicken Love), 45 min. (2011)

Muži revolúcie (Men of the Revolution), 65 min. (2011) – (*Politicians November 1989* are remembering today the events that occurred at that time, offering conflicting versions.)

Od Fica do Fica (From Fico to Fico), 82 min. (2012)

Krehká identita (Fragile Identity), 70 min. (2012)

Full information is on Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zuzana_Piussi



FILM CREDITS

Appearance

Serafína Hermanová
Katalin Mrkvová
Peter Mrkva
Ivan Leitman
Mara Leitmanová
Ida Želinská
Jozef Bráblik
Nataša Holinová

Thanks to

Slávka Karkošková
Tatiana Notinová
OZ Náruč
RUR

Image post-production
Michal Mocňák - RUR

Producers

Maroš Berák - Ultrafilm
Vít Janeček - D1film

Sound design

Jan Richtr

Edited by

Zuzana Piussi
Vít Janeček

Camera

Zuzana Piussi
Maroš Berák

Directed by

Zuzana Piussi

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