



National Film Centre of Latvia

LATVIAN FILMS

Latvija 100



FOR LATVIA'S CENTENARY



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National Film Centre of Latvia

Latvija 100

Latvia celebrates its centenary in 2018 – both by reviewing the most spectacular events in its past, while taking pride in the people who contribute to its present.

The Republic of Latvia was proclaimed on 18 November 1918. Although the formation of a new state was full of challenges, a lot was achieved in a short time and Latvia rapidly progressed alongside the other countries in Europe. However, in 1940 Latvia



was occupied by the USSR and the Republic of Latvia only regained its independence on 4 May 1990.

The Latvian film industry has been working on its gift for Latvia's centenary for quite a few years and now it's ready – 16 full-length films for a wide range of audiences. The first three have already reached their viewers in 2017; the rest will celebrate their premieres one after another in 2018 – both at home and at international festivals.

We hope and believe that everyone will be able to find one or more stories amongst these 16 films that tell them what they want to know about Latvia, its ancient and more recent history, its today and also tomorrow. Because in the film collection there are fighters and thinkers, grandfathers and grandchildren, painters and riflemen, museum treasures and KGB archives, mummies and carousels, monuments and bunkers, the last pagans and the first poets, Rīga's suburbs and Latvia's borderland. There is also

growing up full of worries, youthful courage and respected wisdom...

Film is a unique medium: it allows one to stop time, it allows one to create and reconstruct the events of the past, it allows us to become more knowledgeable, wiser and worldly. Films have long lives, and the films that are created for Latvia's centenary will have a longer lifespan than the anniversary of our state. However, for each film to live both today and in the future, it needs an audience. We believe that the professional work invested in the Centenary Programme, the creative inspiration and the energy of the authors of the films will echo and speak to the viewers both in the cities and in the furthest Latvian towns and homesteads, and throughout the whole wide world. Many happy returns, Latvia!

DITA RIĒTUMA,
National Film Centre of Latvia

IN THIS “FAMILY PHOTO” LATVIAN FILMS FOR LATVIA’S CENTENARY PROGRAMME IS REPRESENTED BY:

1st row from the left:

Akvelīna Līvmane – Granny, *Grandpa More Dangerous than a Computer*

A drawing by Kurts Fridrihsons – *Kurts Fridrihsons*

Kristīne Želve – director *Mērija’s Journey*

Lidija Doroņina-Lasmane – the protagonist *Lustrum*

Marta Ģertrūde Auzāne – Maija *Paradise’89*

Ivars Seleckis – director *To Be Continued* and protagonist *Bridges of Time*

Līva Ločmele – Laurēns *Paradise’89*

2nd row from the left:

Daughter of the Sun – *Before the Day Breaks*

Elīna Vāne – Bille’s mother *Bille*

Imants Strads – Kārlis Zāle *Wounded Rider*

Dāvis Sīmanis – director *The Mover*

Evelīna Ozola – Linda *Paradise’89*

Magda Lote Auziņa – Paula *Paradise’89*

Jacob – *Jacob, Mimmi and the Talking Dogs*

3rd row from the left:

Raitis and Lauris Ābeles – directors *The Baltic Tribes*

Andris Keišs – Painter *Salutaur, Homo Novus*

Askolds Saulītis – director of *Eight Stars*

Kaspars Dumburs – social democrat fighter *Svilpe, 1906*



Photo: Gatis Rozenfelds

GRANDPA MORE DANGEROUS THAN A COMPUTER

VECTĒVS, KAS BĪSTAMĀKS PAR DATORU

FICTION FEATURE

94 MIN | COLOUR | PREMIERE: 17 AUGUST 2017



A film for the whole family. Eight-year-old Oskars' summer holiday in the country begins as a never-ending hassle with his grandpa, which eventually transforms into a friendship between two menfolk, who manage to save grandma from a scam planned by her former student.

Oskars' parents "swap" his computer for his grandfather – in order to protect the child from the dangerous influence of the internet. Oskars' visit with his grandpa gets off to a bad start – old Kode makes him do "men's work" and refuses to buy him the sneakers his heart desires. His grandma is an out-

of-work teacher, because the number of children in the town has decreased and the municipality deputy, a former grandma's student Modrītis, has promptly sold the school. Instead Modrītis offers her a tempting job that leads Oskars to a series of adventures: teaching grandma to rap, soaking a billy-goat's coat with his friend Olga's French perfume etc. Grandpa and his grandson's battle against the sleazy deputy Modrītis makes them forget their own differences.

When the holidays at grandpa's house end, Oskars discovers that life without lies and computer can bring joy!



VARIS BRASLA

■ A director with vast experience in filmmaking, Varis Brasla got a Diploma in Dramatic Theatre and Film Directing in 1962. Four of Brasla's fiction features have received the main award of the *Lielais Kristaps* National Film Festival. The director has also shot a number of TV documentaries, a 28-episode educational series for television (1997-2001), and has directed numerous theatre performances. Of the 13 fiction features directed by Brasla, three have established his reputation as a talented director of children's movies. The films have also received a number of prizes at international film festivals, including CIFEJ prize at LUCAS International festival for Young Film Lovers and The Best Feature at Taiwan International Children's Film Festival for *Christmas Huddle* and Children's Jury Prize at Chicago International Children's Film Festival for *Waterbomb for the Fat Tomcat* among others.

Studio F.O.R.M.A.

■ The film production company Studio F.O.R.M.A. was founded in 1993 with the aim of making quality feature films not only for Latvian but also foreign audiences. The production company has also created more than ten documentaries. Studio F.O.R.M.A. has produced seven fiction feature films: a number of these are co-productions, particularly with Estonian colleagues; three films are aimed at family audiences and their main characters are children. By winning the approval of their target audiences, a number of these fiction features have become box office hits in Latvia.

Director Varis Brasla

Screenwriter Alvis Lapiņš

Cinematographer Uldis Jancis

Production Designer Mārtiņš Milbrets

Costume Designer Jurate Silakaktiņa

Make-up Artist Sarmīte Balode

Sound Director Anrijs Krenbergs

Composer Emīls Zilberts

Editor Māris Bērziņš

Main Cast Markuss Jānis Eglītis, Mārtiņš Vilsons, Akvelīna Līvmane, Eva Ozola, Mārtiņš Meiers, Uldis Dumpis, Lauris Dzelzītis, Alise Polačenko, Inese Pudža, Vizma Kalme

Producer Gatis Upmalis

Production Company Studio F.O.R.M.A.

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■ Those who know and love films by Varis Brasla do not have to guess where in Latvia his new film is located – in Kuldīga – a charming town in Kurzeme, in the Western part of Latvia, dating back to the 13th century. It turns out that the director is connected to this part of Latvia through family ties. Of course, this is not the main reason for him to choose to work in Kuldīga – the film location does not follow any routine or well-trodden paths – no, Brasla continues to find something surprising and beautiful around every corner. This is why at least six of his films are associated in one way or another with the town.

Brasla experienced filming in this “pearl” of Kurzeme already in the last century – for example, in 1972, when he was the second director in Rolands Kalniņš’ film *Ceplis (The Ceplis Affair)*, in which the gun fight and the brick making process were filmed in the Kuldīga region. Also, another masterpiece of Latvian film heritage – the film *Ezera sonāte (Lake Sonata)*, 1976, for which Varis Brasla was the director together with Gunārs Cilinskis, was filmed at various locations near Kuldīga. Brasla remembers the wonderful mushrooming in forests stretching from Kuldīga to Dundaga from the filming of *Tereona galva (The Tereon’s Head)*, 1982). The best mushrooming happened alongside the cinematographer Dāvis Sīmanis, because he, in contrast to

Brasla, easily found his way in the forest and knew how to identify the edible mushrooms...

Three of the best films by Varis Brasla have been filmed in Kuldīga – *Emīla nedarbi (Naughty Emil)*, 1985), *Ūdensbumba resnajam runcim (Waterbomb for the Fat Tomcat)*, 2004) and the most recent: *Vectēvs, kas bīstamāks par datoru*.

The director calls Kuldīga the lucky town, because it escaped bombing in the WW2, which means many untouched historical details have been preserved there – the feel of various eras in Italianesque courtyards, picturesque wooden houses, the landscape decorated by a network of laneways, not to mention the imposing brick bridge and the Venta Rapid – the widest waterfall in Europe. Of course, one can also understand the locals who say – the old water pump is romantic in summer, but when it freezes over in winter and you have to carry two buckets up the stairs to the second floor... Nevertheless, Brasla knows that the 21st century is no stranger to Kuldīga, and is lucky that there is a sensible city council attuned to preservation, which will not allow asphalt to be laid on top of ancient cobblestones for cars to have a smoother ride.

There is another beneficial aspect of Kuldīga: Varis has never found any locals to be unhelpful or unresponsive, and because of this obliging attitude, it is very easy to work there. This also suggests that *Vectēvs, kas bīstamāks par datoru* is not Varis Brasla’s last work filmed in Kuldīga.

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WOUNDED RIDER

IEVAINOTAIS JĀTNIKXS

DOCUMENTARY

95 MIN | PREMIERE: 24 OCTOBER 2017



A film about sculptor and author of the Latvian Freedom Monument, Kārlis Zāle, whose 130th anniversary will be celebrated in 2018 along with Latvia's 100th. Zāle immortalized his vision of the Latvian State in two monumental symbols of the Latvian national psyche – the Freedom Monument and the Brothers' Cemetery, which will both endure as long as Latvia survives. Kārlis Zāle, with his typ-

ically monumental approach, sees life and sculpture in large, powerful lines, an attitude requiring great vitality and daring. The film follows the building of the Freedom Monument and events in the life of the sculptor at a time when the Latvian State was being born. It offers a view to the political and social landscape of the era, acquainting the viewer with ideals of the time, and prominent personalities in culture and art.

ILONA BRUVER

■ A director with a distinctive, reconstructed and theatricalized documentary style, which makes her documentaries similar to feature films. Bruver studied at the People's Film Actors Studio, and after completing high school, she worked at the Rīga Film Studio as assistant director and editor, studied journalism at the University of Latvia, and in 1979 moved to the Federal Republic of Germany. There she worked as a director, screenwriter and producer for Hamburger Filmbüro, the Hamburg Film and TV directors' association. In 1991 Brūvere returned to Latvia, and created cinematic portraits of celebrated culture personalities; documentary feature films; culture programmes for TV; worked as an editor and journalist specializing in culture for print media; and compiled a book of her selected publications in the field of culture (2009). Bruver is the author of ambitious, cinematically spectacular open-air shows and the editor of the culture portal www.kants.lv

KINOLATS

■ Founded in 1997, film production company KINOLATS has continued to produce work in the genre of creative documentary making and docudrama, begun by director Ilona Bruver in Germany. The company works closely with Latvian Television, making series of portrait shows and films for TV. KINOLATS also produces large-scale city celebrations, and took part in both Rīga 800 anniversary celebrations and the programme of Rīga 2014 – European Capital of Culture. Films produced by KINOLATS have received awards both at the *Lielais Kristaps* National Film Festival and in competitions of television and events productions.

Director, Screenwriter Ilona Bruver

Cinematographer Elīna Bandēna

Production Designer Ilona Bruver

Costume Designer Ilona Bruver

Make-up Artist Baiba Grīna

Sound Director Anrijs Krenbergs,
Viktors Andrejevs

Composer Ēriks Ešenvalds

Editor Ilona Bruver

Main Cast Imants Strads,
Dārta Daneviča, Mārtiņš Brūveris,
Ieva Aleksandrova-Eklone, Marta Grase,
Dainis Gaidelis, Lauris Subatnieks

Producer Ilona Bruver

Production Company Kinolats

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ILONA BRUVER

■ Kārlis Zāle was a vital, brilliant and daring personality, who created his work in broad strokes and enjoyed life. Not every artist would load a jury into a plane and take them to Paris, but Kārlis Zāle did exactly that, in an attempt to explain his vision for the Freedom Monument. “I want to create a monument for it to be understood by all, in any era,” said the sculptor about the national symbol of Latvia.

The funding required for building the grandiose Freedom Monument was much greater than the capacity of the Latvian state in the 1930s. This is why Latvian inhabitants put their forces together and donated around two million Lats in the time period between 1932 and 1935 for the symbol of freedom to be built. Each donor received a certificate for their donation – one of these can be seen in the hands of Ilona Bruver, the director of the film.

The Freedom Monument was unveiled on 18 November 1935, on the seventeenth anniversary of the proclamation of the Republic of Latvia. Despite discussions about its destruction and the Soviet ban on looking up at its three gilt stars, the Monument has miraculously survived throughout all historical eras. On 14 June 1987 around 5000 independence campaigners laid flowers at the base of the Monument in memory of victims of the communist terror. This became a significant turning point of the road to restoring the independence of the Republic of Latvia.



EIGHT STARS

ASTOŅAS ZVAIGZNES

DOCUMENTARY

100 MIN | PREMIERE: 18 NOVEMBER 2017



A film about the Latvian Riflemen – the most striking and tragic phenomenon in the development of the self-awareness of the Latvian nation.

A historically chronological study of the Latvian riflemen battalions, their formation and participation in the battles of the WW1 and battles of the Latvian War of Independence up until the end of the Russian Civil War, when a large part of the riflemen returned to the recently founded Republic of Latvia. They came home.

The first regiment of Latvian riflemen was that of Daugavgrīva; the second, Rīga; the third, Kurzeme; fourth, Vidzeme; fifth, Zemgale; sixth, Tukums; seventh, Bauska and eighth, Valmiera – these represented Latvia even before Latvian statehood was achieved. Eight real-life stories associated with the battles are included in the film that also reflect the overall fate of Latvia. The story about eight riflemen's stars is about simple people, whose lives were defined by the challenge of living in a Great Era.



ASKOLDS SAULĪTIS

■ At the age of 20 Askolds Saulītis began to work at the Rīga Film Studio. In parallel, Saulītis also became involved in the film amateurs' movement. In 1993 he debuted as a documentary film director, and in 1999 he simultaneously created his first and for now, only attempt at different film genres – an animated short and a short fiction. Saulītis got a BA in TV Directing in 2000. Saulītis has regularly received awards at the *Lielais Kristaps* National Film Festival. Over time, his main thematic interest as a director and producer has turned to the history of the State of Latvia during the entire 20th century.

Director Askolds Saulītis
Screenwriters Dainis Īvāns,
Askolds Saulītis
Cinematographer
Andrejs Verhoustinskis
Sound Director Jānis Brunovskis
Composer Jānis Brunovskis
Editor Askolds Saulītis
Producer Bruno Aščuks
Co-producer Askolds Saulītis
Production Companies
Studio Centurms, Terra Europa

Studio CENTRUMS

■ Founded in 2004, the company specializes in interdisciplinary films, in which documentary footage is mixed with animation and recreated scenes. E.g., *Čīža acīm* (*Little Birds Diary*, 2007) is an animated film based on documentary material, while the previous collaboration with director Askolds Saulītis on *Bermontiāda* (*Bermontiada*, 2009) is a combination of archival material and documentary footage with computer graphics and historical recreations with actors. The critically acclaimed cultural computer game *Uzcel Gaismas pili!* (*Raise the Castle of Light!*) (2007) was also developed under the guidance of producer Bruno Aščuks.

TERRA EUROPA

■ The production company was established by Askolds Saulītis in 2011. Since then two documentaries have been created there: *Atmodas antoloģija* (*The Anthology of the Awakening*, 2013) and *Baltijas Brīvības ceļš* (*The Path to Freedom*, 2014).

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RIFLEMEN BADGE

■ When the Latvian Riflemen battalions were formed, a Rifleman badge was also made, which soldiers pinned to the shirts of their uniforms. The original idea was simple: the design of the flag and badge should be based on Latvian folk tradition, and it must be simple, without busy elements. As a result the now legendary Rifleman badge designed by Ansis Cīrulis was born. It depicts a wreath of oak leaves (Kurzeme region in the Western part of Latvia) and evergreens (Vidzeme region in the central part of Latvia). On the wreath there is an image of the sun with eight broken rays, above this is a two-headed Russian eagle (Fatherland) and a sword (power). On the shield there are three initials L.S.B. (*Latviešu Strēlnieku Bataljons*: Latvian

Rifleman Battalion) in Cyrillic and Latin lettering. In September 1916 when Latvian Riflemen battalions were transformed into regiments, the initials on the badges were changed to L.S.P (*Latviešu Strēlnieku Pulks*: Latvian Riflemen's Regiment). The badges were made both in centralized workshops and individually. Rarely one can find badges that were made by the riflemen themselves – using copper from belt buckles or aluminium from unexploded shells.



LATVIAN RIFLEMEN IN THE LATVIAN WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

■ With the breakdown of the Russian army, Latvian riflemen dispersed throughout the whole former Empire – a large part of them took the Bolsheviks side. A part of them demobilized and remained in Latvia, another part battled with Anti-Bolshevik forces. In early 1919 and during the summer of this year a few thousand ex-riflemen joined the armed forces of the recently

proclaimed Republic of Latvia. During the Latvian War of Independence, they fought against both the Red army and the Bermondts army, but in the summer of 1920 on the Eastern front they defeated the last Bolshevik units and drove them out of Latvia. 202 Latvian riflemen received the highest Latvian military award, the Order of Lāčplēsis.

Photo: A group of Latvian soldiers at the front line in Latgale region (the Eastern part of Latvia), 1919.



PARADISE '89

PARADĪZE '89

FICTION FEATURE

89 MIN | PREMIERE: 22 FEBRUARY 2018



It is August 1989, the time when Latvia starts its road to regain independence from the Soviet Union. Two sisters – Paula, aged nine, and Laura, aged seven, also called Laurēns – arrive in a country town to spend the summer holidays with their cousins. The cousins' mother, Ieva, isn't home, and the girls enjoy their “freedom”, pretending to be grown-ups: cousin Maija adopts the role of directing the girls' domestic life. After a phone conversation with her mother, Paula gets the impression that her parents are separating. Paula is confused, and the tension is increased by TV news about

bloodshed. Fear of the imminent war combines with an inability to emotionally deal with the life of adults, and interactions between the girls become strained.

Thinking that the situation will turn out the best for everyone if Latvia regains independence, Paula decides to take action and goes to the “Baltic Way” demonstration. The television announces a state of emergency in the country, and the girls, left in the hands of destiny, begin to prepare for war. Ieva comes back home.



MADARA DIŠLERE

■ Even though Madara Dišlere is one of the youngest directors in the Centenary film programme, she has been involved in film since her childhood – at the age of five she played the role of Emīls' sister Ida in the feature film directed by Varis Brasla, *Emīla nedarbi* (*Naughty Emil*, 1985). In 2012 Dišlere got a BA in Film Directing from the Latvian Academy of Culture. Since 2004 Dišlere has worked in different roles, mainly as assistant director and second director, and on more than ten fiction feature films. Since 2008 Dišlere has directed ten shorts, several of them have earned recognition in Latvia and abroad. *Paradise '89* is Dišlere's debut directing a fiction feature film.

TASSE FILM

■ The creative production team TASSE FILM focuses on supporting new talent. It was founded in February 2011 by two energetic producers Aija Bērziņa and Alise Ģelze. They have previously gained experience in other companies producing successful and globally award-winning feature films and documentaries. They have also gained experience in the production of international projects. In February 2016 the first fiction feature film produced by TASSE FILM, director's Renārs Vimba debut *Es esmu šeit* (*Mellow Mud*), celebrated its premiere at the Berlin International Film Festival in the Generation 14plus competition and won the main award, a Crystal Bear.

Director and Screenwriter

Madara Dišlere

Cinematographer Gints Bērziņš

Production Designer Aivars Žukovskis

Costume Designer Līga Krāsone

Make-up Artist Maija Gundare

Sound Director Ernests Ansons

Editor Heike Parplies

Main Cast Magda Lote Auziņa, Marta Ģertrūde Auzāne, Līva Ločmele, Evelīna Ozola, Guna Zariņa, Inga Apine, Gatis Gāga, Kaspars Gods, Ivars Krasts

Producers Aija Bērziņa, Alise Ģelze

Production Company Tasse Film

Co-producer Michael Luda, Bastei Media (Germany)

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■ The main character of the film, nine-year-old Paula worries about events not only in her own family, but in the whole of Latvia. She makes friends with the Lithuanian dissident Jonas and heroically tries to hide him from the military police.

■ Laurēns is Paula's younger sister, a first grader, who loves sweets and who is excited about finding imported stickers in her cousin's house.

■ Paula's cousin Maija, the head of the group, imitates adults – she wears high

heels, paints and reads sophisticated books.

■ Paula's cousin Linda likes to have fun and is not at all interested in the life of adults.

TO BE CONTINUED

TURPINĀJUMS

DOCUMENTARY

95 MIN | PREMIERE: 22 MARCH 2018



The documentary *To Be Continued* shot over the course of two years follows five children who started school in 2015 in various locations of the country. Among them there is someone with strong family roots in the Latvian countryside, whose parents would like their child to grow up to be a proper farmer; someone who lives with their granny while

her mother works in the UK; someone of a different nationality who wants to become a businessman and whose grandparents came to Latvia after the WW2.

A view of life in Latvia through the eyes of five first graders is the beginning of a project that over the years will continue to follow the development of societal and political processes in Latvia.



IVARS SELECKIS

Ivars Seleckis is one of the legendary Latvian documentary filmmakers, and a founder of the legendary Rīga School of Poetic Documentary Cinema. Educated as a food technologist, Seleckis began to work at the Rīga Film Studio in 1958 as a camera assistant, in 1966 he received a degree in Cinematography from the Moscow Film Institute, and in 1968 debuted as a documentary film director. A large number of films by Seleckis can be included in the golden heritage of the Latvian film history: his film *Šķērsiela* (*The Crossroad Street*, 1988) received three of the most prestigious documentary awards in Europe – EFA award for the Best Documentary, Joris Ivens and Robert Flaherty awards. At the age of 80 Seleckis received the National award Lielais Kristaps for his lifetime achievement.

MISTRUS MEDIA

The film production company MISTRUS MEDIA was established in 2000 and has since become one of the leading film studios in Latvia. MISTRUS MEDIA is a producer of feature documentaries, feature fiction films as well as a provider of filming and location services and a producer of industrial films and commercials.

In November, 2016 the latest historical drama produced by MISTRUS MEDIA – *The Chronicles of Melanie* (dir. Viestur Kairish), an international co-production, received the award for the Best Cinematography at the Tallinn Black Nights Film Festival as well as awards in 5 different categories at the *Lielais Kristaps* National Film Festival. It was the official selection for the best foreign-language film for the 2018 Oscars from Latvia.

In 2018 MISTRUS MEDIA will release 5 feature films, with the first premiere in March – a documentary *To be Continued* by the legendary filmmaker Ivars Seleckis. Other releases will be: fiction *The Mover* (dir. Dāvis Simanis), documentary *Lustrum* (dir. Gints Grūbe), documentary *Daughter of a Spy* (dir. Jaak Kilmi, Gints Grūbe), fiction *Breathing into Marble*, minority co-producer (dir. Giedrē Beinoriūtē).

Director Ivars Seleckis

Screenwriters Ivars Seleckis,

Dace Dzenovska

Cinematographer Valdis Celmiņš

Composer Kārlis Auzāns

Editor Andra Doršs

Producers Antra Gaile, Gints Grūbe

Production Company Mistrus Media

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Blaumaņa iela 11/13-13

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■ I had to start school in the autumn of 1940. We were already under the Soviet rule, and as it happened, I started to attend school in a Latvia that was no longer independent.

I have a memory from the period of free Latvia, when Ulmanis was in power in 1940. The sun was shining in the evening, and who knows why, but I was at the bus stop. A 1.5 tonne GAZ truck stopped, and threw out a kerosene barrel. And I heard a song in Russian coming from the park: *A čort jevo zna-jet, začem on morgajet, začem on morgajet...* (who knows why he blinks, why he blinks).

Then I remember being in Rīga – it was 17 June 1940 – I was on the corner of Avotu and Marija Streets, in a house that still stands there today. The second-floor windows were open, and there was heavy noise from the street. We looked out – green Soviet tanks were driving down Marijas Street, a whole column. And dusty soldiers sat on the tanks, and people stood watching on the side of the road.

Perhaps some people knew something more... Dad and I went down to have a look. Very unusual cars were driving towards Oškalni Train Station, now called Zemitāni Station in Rīga. So, those are my memories from the time right before I started school.

From an interview with Ivars Seleckis

BILLE

BILLE

FICTION FEATURE

110 MIN | PREMIERE: 3 APRIL 2018



A film for the whole family, based on the autobiographical novel “Bille” by Vizma Belševica.

Bille is a tender but simultaneously life-affirming, witty story full of hope. It's a growing up story about the life of the main character in Latvia in the late 1930s. The film is a dedication to us today, reminding of the real values – tolerance, sacrifice, and the need to prove oneself.

Seven-year-old Bille lives in a world where the rich have their streets and the poor have theirs. Bille has learned to cope with poverty, although she is deprived of a mother's love. Other

people care for Bille, but keep reminding her that she is a rough child and no good will come of her...

This hurts Bille, and the girl has a dream – to prove herself and break free from her feelings of inferiority. The path of Bille's personal growth winds through a complicated period in Latvian history.

In reality Bille – the writer Vizma Belševica – was successful in finding her own path and proving that dreams can come true. Her creative work has earned many awards, including an Order of the Three Stars and a nomination for the Nobel Prize in literature.

INĀRA KOLMANE

■ Ināra Kolmane studied TV direction at the Saint Petersburg State Institute of Theatre, Music and Cinema. In 1991 Kolmane together with colleagues founded the Film Studio DEVIŅI, and debuted in directing advertising video clips and commissioned films, and receiving awards in international advertising festivals. Kolmane has directed more than ten documentaries, of which the most globally recognized and awarded is *Mans vīrs Andrejs Saharovs (My Husband Andrei Sakharov, 2006)* and *Pretrunīgā vēsture (Controversial History, 2010)*. Kolmane's documentary *Ručs un Norie (Ruch & Norie)* became of the most popular films of 2014, which also received the most awards in the *Lielaists Kristaps* National Film Festival.

In 2012 Kolmane completed her first fiction feature *Mona* (co-production with Iceland). Parallel to filmmaking, Kolmane has also directed a number of pieces for the Latvian Radio theatre.

Film Studio DEVIŅI

■ Film Studio DEVIŅI was founded in 1991 with the aim of creating experimental and creative documentaries, dedicated to history, culture and social problems. Until now more than 20 documentaries as well as one fiction feature film are produced by the company, attracting interest by international film festivals as well as broadcasters. DEVIŅI has also co-production experience with French, German, Danish, Icelandic, American and Russian companies.

Director Ināra Kolmane

Screenwriters Arvis Kolmanis,
Evita Sniedze

Cinematographer Jurgis Kmins

Production Designer Ieva Romanova

Costume Designer Ieva Veita

Make-up Artist Gunda Zvirbule

Editor Mihails Lanskis

Main Cast Rūta Kronberga, Sofija Juška,
Elīna Vāne, Artūrs Skrastiņš,
Lolita Cauka, Gundars Āboliņš,
Lilīta Ozoliņa, Guna Zariņa

Producers Jānis Juhņevičs,
Marta Romanova-Jēkabsons

Production Company Film Studio Deviņi

Co-producers Studija 2 (Lithuania),
MasterFilm, Magic Lab (Czech Republic)

Film Studio DEVIŅI

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www.facebook.com/BilleTheFilm

■ Vizma Belševica's novel *Bille* is one of the classics of Latvian literature, and has been included in the Latvian Cultural Canon. When shooting the film about the childhood world of little Bille, the creative team attempted to present the streetscapes of Rīga and Latvia as closely as possible to the feel of the 1930s.

A large part of the filming happened in authentic locations in Grīziņkalns, including inside the house at 6 Vārnu Street and in its courtyard, where the writer spent her childhood.

The current owner of the house, Rita, provided two apartments for the duration of the filming. The production team connected them, creating a small film studio – Bille's apartment with removable and sliding walls. The interiors were so true to the early 20th century, that visitors to the film set were amazed that the whole setup had been preserved so well for 80 years. The apartment was especially arranged to be dark and create a crowded feeling, because Bille lived together with her mother, father, and sometimes also her grandmother, in one room, where there was never any direct sunlight and everything was crammed with mum's sewing fabrics and dried herbal teas.

A large collection of authentic props from the 1930s was amassed thanks to careful research, combing junk markets, collaboration with museum workers and private collectors.

In some instances, copies of authentic objects were made for the purposes of the film – including the doll's head that can be seen held by director Ināra Kolmane, which was part of little Bille's dream of owning a doll of her own.



INĀRA KOLMANE

BRIDGES OF TIME

LAIKA TILTI

DOCUMENTARY

80 MIN | PREMIERE: APRIL 2018



The story of the Baltic Poetic Documentary Cinema movement and spiritual journeys in art in earlier times and today.

In the beginning of 1960s behind the Iron Wall a new generation of filmmakers in Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia challenged the Soviet dogma of propaganda newsreels and turned documentary filmmaking into a form of Art. They explored metaphors, promoted associative thinking, balanced facts and images in an earlier unseen and groundbreaking visual language – all this was and is called Poetic cinema.

Half a century later we try to build bridges of time and detect how the old masters were thinking and how they managed – in the midst of that vast Soviet Solaris Ocean – to put a Human in the focus and search for the answers to the Eternal questions – the ones that every generation has to answer anew...

This phenomenon continues to influence and inspire generations of filmmakers and their audiences in the world. The time passes but we are still getting only *Ten minutes older*.



KRISTĪNE BRIEDE

■ Kristīne Briede is as a screenwriter, producer, director and cinematographer for various cultural, artistic and social integration projects. In 2000 Briede was one of the founders and a long-term director of the flourishing culture and information centre K@2 at the Karosta in Liepāja, a historically degraded zone.



AUDRIUS STONYS

■ Audrius Stonys is a globally acclaimed Lithuanian documentary filmmaker. In 1989 Stonys graduated from the Lithuanian State Conservatoire, where his master was Henrikas Šablevičius. In 1990 Stonys completed a masterclass of Jonas Mekas in New York. In 1992 he was awarded a Felix Award from the European Film Academy for his documentary *Earth of the Blind*.

VFS FILMS

■ VFS Films houses a large group of filmmakers around a tight nucleus – the best at telling human stories through award-winning documentaries or creative TV productions.

VFS Films creates films that regularly participate in the leading world documentary film festivals and are broadcasted worldwide. To mention some – *Ukrainian Sheriffs* (2016), *Double Aliens* (2016), *Liberation Day* (2017) coproduced with Ukraine, Georgia and Norway, were premiered at IDFA, where *Ukrainian Sheriffs* were awarded *The Best Feature Length Documentary*. Co-production with Lithuania – *Wonderful Losers. A Different World* (2017) – was awarded *The Best Documentary Feature* at the International Warsaw Film Festival.

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Directors and Screenwriters

Kristīne Briede, Audrius Stonys

Co-Screenwriters Ramune Rakauskaite, Arunas Matelis, Riho Västriik

Cinematographers Valdis Celmiņš, Audrius Kemežys, Josep Matjús, Jānis Šēnbergs, Laisvūnas Karvelis

Sound Recordists Arvīds Ceļmalis, Kostas Radlinskas

Sound Director Artis Dukaļskis

Editors Kostas Radlinskas, Andra Doršs

Producer Uldis Cekulis

Production Company VFS Films

Co-producers Arunas Matelis, Studio Nominum (Lithuania)

Riho Västriik, Vesilind (Estonia)

VFS FILMS

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■ Once in Florence when attending a film festival, the directors Audrius Stonys and Herz Frank went to the old town and chanced upon a group of homeless people having a quiet drink. Audrius remembers: Frank, who spent the second half of his life walking around with a small video camera on his shoulder, unhesitatingly approached the group and began to film them. The homeless people became very angry, attacked Frank and ripped off his beret. After a tense battle to get the beret back, the disturbers of the peace – both of the directors – were given the chance to retreat and get away. However, as soon as the beret was back on his head, Frank turned and began filming again – almost literally “shooting”. It was a question of principle for him. How is it that someone could stop him from filming?!



Audrius Stonys with the Leica camera belonging to Herz Frank, which he almost always carried with him.

Herz Frank comments on the film *Vecāks par desmit minūtēm (Ten Minutes Older)*:

■ I made *Ten Minutes Older* with Juris Podnieks in 1978... initially it was not even understood as a film. The Chairman of the USSR State Committee for Cinematography said “But where’s the text? Where’s the text?!” Because in my description of the film it was written that according to the constitution, it is parents’ responsibility to educate their children, and a fairy tale is a useful tool in this process of education and upbringing. Therefore, fairy tales presented on stage are not only wonderful experiences for children – celebrations – but they are also educational opportunities. This was all written so that I could get the funding and make the film. “But where’s the text?”

Because without text you can’t understand anything! What are those children watching, what do they see there? And after that he says: how long is the film? – Ten minutes. – I see. I thought it was longer. There is no text... well, it



should have been shortened a bit more... – But the film is not edited. – What, not edited?! – Well, we started filming, and then we stopped. – Then why did it take so long to produce, if there is no editing?!

But in the end, he says: – How much did the film cost? – Oh, it was really nothing, alright, let it be.

After that no one needed the film for a long time, and more than 20 years passed. Nevertheless, I occasionally showed it to students, and at various seminars, and now it has been screened at a countless number of festivals, and sometimes it is included in programmes entitled “New trends”...

MĒRIJA'S JOURNEY

MĒRIJAS CEĻOJUMS

DOCUMENTARY

80 MIN | PREMIERE: 2 MAY 2018



The story of Mērija Grīnberga, a young woman who saved a large number of Latvia's museum treasures during the World War 2.

At the end of the WW2 the retreating German army took with them 700 crates of treasures from Latvian museum collections. If not for a young woman Mērija Grīnberga, many of the exhibition halls in Latvian museums would be empty today. In 1944 Mērija volunteered to travel with the train of Latvian art treasures and returned with them back to Riga in 1945.

The German occupying forces tried to take the treasures out of the country, and the Soviet occupying forces brought them back again, but Mērija stuck to her mission until the very end. Instead of receiving gratitude, Mērija was fired from her job at the museum and was forced to work at a factory. And all her life she was plagued by suspicion.

The film is based on the diaries of Mērija's mother and reveal both Mērija Grīnberga's unusual fate, as well as the twists and turns of the Latvian history.

KRISTĪNE ŽELVE

■ Film director, writer and publicist Kristīne Želve was a graduate of the first course of film directing at the Latvian Academy of Culture in 1996, which was tutored by the outstanding-documentary filmmaker Ansis Eppers. In the early 1990s Želve participated in various video art festivals, worked at the film forum *Arsenāls*, the magazine *Kino Raksti* and the culture newspaper *Forums*. She has been hosting the TV show *100 Grams of Culture* on national television for 10 years. Želve has created a number of documentaries and TV films. The most recent one, released in 2012 is a documentary *Fedja*, dedicated to the Latvian born Finnish film director Teuvo Tulio.

VIVAT!

■ VIVAT! is a new, development-oriented production company, that has worked actively since 2016. The company is based on 15 years of experience of the founder, producer and screenwriter Elvita Ruka who has produced almost 20 documentaries. Elvita is also the author of seven books (travelling diaries) and countless other publications. VIVAT! gathers brilliant and talented people in the creation of vital, life-affirming and thought-provoking works of art. VIVAT! team is united by their openness to the world and the belief that films and books can change the world for the better.

Director, Screenwriter Kristīne Želve
Cinematographer Andrejs Rudzāts
Production Designer Ieva Stūre
Make-up Artist Vivita Jansone
Sound Director Aleksandrs Vaicahovskis
Composer Juris Vaivods
Editor Gunta Ikere
Main Cast Daiga Kažociņa,
Marīna Janaus
Producer Elvita Ruka
Production Company Vivat!

VIVAT!

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www.facebook.com/Mērijas-ceļojums



KRISTĪNE ŽELVE:

■ Rīga was the European Capital of Culture in 2014, and as part of the diverse cultural programme *Stūra māja* (former KGB building, called “Corner House”) was opened to the public for the first time. Finally, the traumas of our past and dark history met with the attempt to interpret them, to talk about them, to verbalize them, to tell the story. Mērija's boots were displayed in the last room of the exhibition “Stories of People and Power in 10 Objects”. Photographs of members of her upper class family looked down with melancholy at the pair of German army boots shod with 30 nails surrounded by the museum objects brought back from Sudetenland by Mērija Grīnberga. Like the guards of Mērija's secret. In the depths of the room, a husky voice of an actress read Mērija's written explanation to the authorities from 1946 about what she experienced in her “European journey” – business-like, brief, reserved. I realised that the woman, younger than me at the time, had performed a heroic act wearing these shod soldier's boots. An act for which she did not receive gratitude her whole lifetime. This story, the destiny and Mērija's boots haunted me until on January 1, 2015, I sat down at the computer and wrote a letter to the Museum of the History of Rīga and Navigation about the fact I wished to “do something” with Mērija's story... This is how it all began.



The director of the film holding an ethnographic copy of a traditional bridal crown from Kurzeme (Western part of Latvia) – one of the objects that Mērija Grīnberga saved

THE BALTIC TRIBES

BALTU CILTIS

DOCUMENTARY

90 MIN | PREMIERE: MAY 2018



A popular science documentary about the Baltic tribes in the 13th century, which later formed the Latvian nation. The main hero, merchant Larss from Gotland, travels to lands which are inhabited by Latgalians, Selonians, Semigallians, Prussians, Yotvingians, Galindians, Augštaitians and Žemaitians, becoming acquainted with the

cultures of the region, and offering the viewer an insight into the life of our ancestors – what they did, how they lived, what they believed in and what made them strong?

Historical reconstructions and recreations, computer animations and a voiceover from experts from the field allow us to gain an impression of the life of Europe's last pagans.



Lauris ĀBELE | Raitis ĀBELE

■ The directors, brothers Lauris and Raitis Ābele, have different educations, but since 2007 they have been working together in the film industry. Lauris has a BA in Philosophy and an MA in Film Directing from the Latvian Academy of Culture (2011). Raitis

Ābele has earned an MA in Clinical Psychology and has studied film at the New York Film Academy (2011).

Their first short – *Kastrāts Kuilis* (*Castratus the Boar* 2014) has received Grand Prix at Tampere Short film festival, while the documentary *Kurši* (2014) was recognized as the best short documentary at the *Lielais Kristaps* National Film Festival.

TRITONE STUDIO

■ Was founded in 2009, uniting a number of computer graphics and video editing specialists, directors and cinematographers. The company offers a full range of film production and post-production services. The company's experts have made animated films, music videos and advertising clips for clients in Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Russia, Kazakhstan, Sweden, Denmark, Finland and the USA.

Directors Raitis Ābele, Lauris Ābele

Screenwriter Toms Ķencis

Cinematographers Mārcis Ābele,
Jānis Indriks

Production Designer Zanda Zeidaka

Make-up Artist Aija Beata Besaraba

Sound Director Verners Biters

Composer Kaspars Bārbals

Producers Dace Siatkovska,
Kristele Pudane, Thom Palmen

Production Company Tritone Studio

Co-producer Dorota Roszkowska,
Arkana Studio (Poland)

TRITONE STUDIO

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lastpagansofeurop

■ Wise men and priestesses by a sacred oak tree demonstrate the film's relationship to history – we are not attempting to present more than just imaginary visions; however, we do this with total dedication, following experts' opinion.



■ It is not possible for any modern car to get through a sea of mud to reach a film set of ancient Selonians. As a result, the film crew is helped by the legendary GAZ 452 from the neighbourhood.



■ During the shoot, alongside the actors and extras, we also involved people whom we met right there on the film set. Occasionally the assistant director had to use various tricks to overcome the initially shy Latvian nature, so that at the end of the day the “new actors” would say with a smile: “How funny, today I spent my day in the 13th century”.



■ Around 40 naked actors were used to film the summer solstice ritual on the banks of the Gauja river. The nude scene was a particular challenge for the makeup artists, because body hair has lost its popularity over the centuries. Some bearded members of the film crew even had to donate their facial hair for one nude scene close-up.



■ Not expecting to find actors who would be willing to fall through the ice of a frozen lake, the directors themselves were ready to do it. However, Latvian surfers, well acquainted with icy water, came to help without batting an eye, and the film crew could remain dry behind their cameras and monitors.

LUSTRUM

LUSTRUM

DOCUMENTARY

90 MIN | PREMIERE: 29 AUGUST 2018



A story about the unresolved past in the renewed Latvian state.

“Lustrum” was one of the governing principles of state administration in the Roman Empire, which determined that when there was a change of government, the representatives of the previous government ceremonially confessed all of their sins and pledged allegiance to the new power.

The Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia has resolved to open up the remaining KGB (Soviet Secret Service) archives on May 2018. The film includes parallel story lines about the official historical research of the KGB archives carried out

by the state, as well as the alternative research undertaken by the new generation of journalists and historians – conversations with eye witnesses, former KGB staff, known collaborators and victims of the totalitarian system.

This story about evaluating the past in a rebuilt State is an attempt to understand the system that has been disrupting the process of Latvia’s development for the last 25 years, and an attempt to answer the question about whether the lustration that did not occur in the 1990s could prove to be dangerous to the further existence of statehood.



GINTS GRŪBE

■ Gints Grūbe is a film director and producer with an MA in Political Science. He also studied philosophy and history at the University of Latvia, Bonn and Berlin. Grūbe began his creative work in the 1990s in special publications – the newspaper *Atmoda* and weekly paper *Nakts*, worked in the office of scholarly journalism NIP, and for 12 years as a TV producer for the company *Labvakar*. Grūbe created and hosted the popular TV show *Vakar intervija* for a period of seven years on Latvian Public Television. Grūbe has lectured in political science; has worked in the President’s Strategic Analysis Committee, the National Electronic Mass Media Council, the team of producers of Rīga – European Capital of Culture; and has chaired the National Film Council. Grūbe is the director of four documentaries.

MISTRUS MEDIA

■ The film production company MISTRUS MEDIA was established in 2000 and has since become one of the leading film studios in Latvia. MISTRUS MEDIA is a producer of documentaries and fiction films that have received national and international festival awards and have been broadcast on TV stations worldwide.

In 2016 the latest historical drama produced by MISTRUS MEDIA – *The Chronicles of Melanie* (dir. Viestur Kairish), an international co-production, received the award for the Best Cinematography at the Tallinn Black Nights Film Festival as well as awards in 5 different categories at the *Lielais Kristaps* National Film Festival. It was the official selection for the best foreign-language film for the 2018 Oscars from Latvia.

Director, Screenwriter Gints Grūbe

Journalists Sanita Jemberga,
Ilze Jaunalksne

Cinematographer

Andrejs Verhoustinskis

Editor Armands Začs

Producer Elīna Gedīņa-Ducena

Production Studio Mistrus Media

MISTRUS MEDIA

Blaumaņa iela 11/13-13
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GINTS GRŪBE, DIRECTOR:

■ A part of our past that has not yet been resolved shapes Latvia's daily political climate and to a large degree also influences how our nation will develop in the future.

25 years have passed since the KGB officially stopped functioning in Latvia. It is planned that the KGB archives will be opened during the year of Latvia's centenary, although it is still doubtful if this will happen. Examination of the heritage of the Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic from the perspective of the KGB archives on the one hand raises conspiracy theories, on the other hand – it stops our growth as a democratic nation. The film provides an opportunity to investigate the complicated nature of this question independently of whether the KGB archives will be opened in May 2018 or not.

With this film we wish to look back in time, to help us understand what it is that stops Latvia from “growing up” –

what makes us reject this part of the past as something that never happened? This exploration makes us aware that that which apparently never happened has a great influence on society and politics today, and it also proves that a mistake has been made.

While observing the study of the KGB documents I understood that it is also important to raise the question of ethics, even if the form of expression is film. We continue to be a post-totalitarian society, because there has not been a process of evaluating the past. The film is a way to free oneself of stereotypes. Discussion and demonstration of doubts and uncertainties will allow each viewer to find their own answer to the part of the past that has been associated with the former Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic, the KGB, agents and informers.

KURTS FRIDRIHSONS

KURTS FRIDRIHSONS

DOCUMENTARY

66 MIN | PREMIERE: 7 SEPTEMBER 2018



A personal story by a Latvian writer Gundega Repše about Kurtis Frīdrihsons – artist, spiritual leader, outsider, prisoner and nonconformist in the twists and turns of the Latvian history.

The radiance of the personality of Kurtis Frīdrihsons has almost outgrown the significance of his art – because there were not many people in the Soviet Latvia who were unyielding to the regime, still being brilliant artists. The charm and grace of

Frīdrihsons personality – an echo of pre-war civilized Europe and the free Latvia, was a sharp contrast to the reality of the Soviet life. He was an example and an inspiration for many people whose inner world did not wish to accept the existing system.

It is essentially important to learn about an independent thinker such as Frīdrihsons when thousands of people still justify their lack of resistance and acceptance of the Soviet regime with the phrase: “that’s how we had to act back then”.

DZINTRA GEKA

■ Dzintra Geka is a director with a marked interest in historical themes, particularly about crimes against humanity of the Soviet regime, because her own father spent 15 years in exile in the so-called Gulag.

In 1970, Geka began to work at the Rīga Film Studio as a director’s assistant and editor. In 1979 she received a degree in TV Directing at the State Institute of Theatre, Music and Cinema in Leningrad (Saint Petersburg today). In the 1980s Geka made films about cultural history. Since 2001 Geka is regularly making documentaries on the fates of people exiled to Siberia by the Soviet regime. Geka has received several awards at the *Lielais Kristaps* National Film Festival for her numerous documentaries.

SIBĪRIJAS BĒRNI

■ The Foundation Sibīrijas Bērni was established in 2001 with the initial aim to document the memories of the politically repressed and deported in interviews, films and books. Gradually the thematic range of documentaries has broadened, including cultural and historical personalities in various eras. Geka’s documentary *Dieva putniņi* (*God’s Sparrows*, 2015) about Displaced persons camps in Germany after the WW2 has earned an international recognition echoing the rebirth of refugee camps in Europe of today.

Director Dzintra Geka
Screenwriter Gundega Repše
Cinematographer Viktors Grībermans
Composer Gustavs Frīdrihsons
Editor Gunta Ikere
Producer Dzintra Geka
Production Company Sibīrijas bērni

SIBĪRIJAS BĒRNI

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■ A few years ago, before the programme of Latvian Films for Latvian Centenary was planned, director Dzintra Geka began to work on a documentary about the artist Ilmārs Blumbergs, with the assistance of screenwriter Gundega Repše. In frequent conversations about prominent personalities, both authors often mentioned Kurts Frīdrihsons – not only as an acclaimed artist, but also as one of Repše’s relatives, who has been deeply etched into the memories of her childhood and youth, also serving as a source of inspiration for her own literary work.

One night Dzintra had a very realistic dream – she was raising a small boy, who was playing and talking to her, but suddenly another boy appeared, a little older, who said: “You are paying too much attention to that little one, I am also your son! Have you forgotten about me?”

In the morning Dzintra rang Gundega and asked her what this could mean, and Gundega replied: “Don’t you understand? It’s Kurts! You have to make a film about him!” This is how it all began.



Kurts Frīdrihsons with his mother and older brother



Gundega Repše and Kurts Frīdrihsons in the 1980s

DZINTRA GEKA



HOMO NOVUS

HOMO NOVUS

FICTION FEATURE

110 MIN | PREMIERE: 26 SEPTEMBER 2018



The film looks back with a smile at the passions in Rīga's arts scene in the 1930s. The impoverished artist Juris Upenājs arrives in Rīga from the country at the same time as the refined Eižens Žibeika returns from painting in Paris, with hopes to receive his father's sizeable inheritance. While Upenājs, who is loyal to his art, starts to climb higher in the social ladder with the help of the colourful bohemian community in Rīga, the talented dilettante Žibeika sinks lower and lower. He loses his money, the woman he

loves finds his salvation in the painting.

Upenājs, under the leadership of curator and critic Kurcums, encounters the comical personalities of the art world, their differing attitude to original and borrowed forms of artistic expression. He experiences successes and failures, love and disdain. Ignoring clichés and finding his own style as well as following the advice of his old master: "Real artists try, through painting, to understand, come closer to, and reveal the spirit of his people," Upenājs triumphs winning a scholarship to Paris.

ANNA VIDULEJA

■ Director Anna Viduleja has grown up in a family of artists: her mother is the screenwriter and editor for a number of brilliant TV musical films, her father – a film critic. Viduleja has studied at the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Latvia, at the Latvian Academy of Culture and the European Film College (Denmark). She has graduated from the National Film and Television School in Great Britain. Her graduation work *Nakstputni* (*Nocturnal*, 2000) was included in the student film competition programme of the Cannes film festival. Together with three other directors she created a four part fiction feature film, *Vogelfrei* (2007), that received a number of nominations and awards at the *Lielais Kristaps* National Film Festival and was screened in Rotterdam, San Sebastian, Torino and other film festivals. Anna is one of the founders of the Film Angels Studio, and a lecturer at the RISEBA University.

FILM ANGELS PRODUCTIONS

■ A film production company aimed at international collaborations and production, which developed from the FILM ANGEL STUDIO founded in 2002. One of the liveliest production companies in the region, FILM ANGELS produces advertising, music videos, collaborates with partners locally and abroad, provides a film production service for crews from Germany, Denmark, Japan, Hong Kong, and films such as *A Gentle Creature* by Sergey Loznitsa, *Out* by Gyuri Kristóf, both included in the Official programmes of Cannes IFF 2017.

Director, Screenwriter Anna Viduleja

Based on a novel by Anšlavs Eglītis

Cinematographer Jānis Eglītis

Production Designer Kirils Šuvalovs

Costume Designer Liene Roļšteina

Make-up Artist Ilze Trumpe

Editor Andris Grants

Main Cast Igors Šelegovskis,
Kristīne Krūze, Kaspars Zvīgulis,
Kaspars Znotiņš, Andris Keišs,
Vilis Daudziņš, Aurēlija Anužīte,
Ģirts Ēcis, Agnese Cīrule,
Nikolajs Korobovs

Producers Ivo Ceplevičs, Jānis Kalējs

Production Company

Film Angels Productions

FILM ANGELS PRODUCTIONS

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■ Anšlavs Eglītis (1906–1993), a famous Latvian writer, used real artists from the 1930s as prototypes for his heroes in his novel *Homo Novus*. In order to accentuate Eglītis' intent and to give the film added artistic value, real paintings were used in shooting the film – works by Voldemārs Tone, Jānis Tidemanis, Uga Skulme, Oto Skulme, Marta Skulme, Kārlis Padegs, Ludolfs Liberts, Ģederts Eliāš, Hermanis Grīnbergs, Anšlavs Eglītis himself and other known artists. Therefore, the film will also serve as an educational tool about Latvian art history during this period. The palette held by Anna Viduleja is also authentic and has been used in the creation of a real painting by painter Normunds Brasliņš.

■ This film's cast is composed of the actors from all the professional theatres in Latvia, as well as a number of local show businesses celebrities – the popular singer Intars Busulis and the well-known basketball player and boxer Kaspars Kambala.



ANNA
VIDULEJA

JACOB, MIMMI AND THE TALKING DOGS

JĒKABS, MIMMI UN RUNĀJOŠIE SUŅI
ANIMATED FEATURE
70 MIN | PREMIERE: 18 OCTOBER 2018



A summer adventure story about two children, a pack of talking dogs and saving a neighbourhood. Jacob, a boy from the centre of Rīga, has to spend summer with relatives in a suburb called Maskačka. It is terrible! His cousin Mimmi is quite intolerable, and his uncle Eagle, a former sailor, simply has no time for him. However, it

turns out that this suburb is a very unusual place – talking dogs live there! And Mimmi discovers that the evil businessman Lord Pie plans to ruin this romantic neighbourhood with soulless high rises. This can't be allowed to happen! Will the children be successful in making friends with the talking dogs and together save Maskačka?



EDMUNDS JANSONS

■ Director of animated films and children's book illustrator. Jansons got his MA in Animated Film Directing from the Estonian Academy of Arts (2012). Jansons has lectured in animated film directing at the Art Academy of Latvia since 2014. In 2001 Jansons established the production company Atom Art. Jansons was awarded national awards and gained the interest of international festivals with *Čīža acīm* (*Little Bird's Diary*, 2007), an animated film based on documentary material. Jansons entered the high society of the animation world with his short film *Kora turneja* (*Choir Tour*, 2012) participating in over 90 international festivals and receiving awards at Hiroshima IAFF, Zagrebfest, Monstra and other festivals. *Starptautiskā Tēva diena* (*International Father's Day*, 2013) took part in more than 60 festivals, including Ottawa, Hiroshima, Stuttgart, Chicago, Bradford, Leuven. *Roņu sala* (*The Isle of Seals*, 2015) was screened at Annecy, Fantoche, DokLeipzig and received a Special Prize of Jury at Sommets du cinéma d'animation.

ATOM ART

■ A flourishing animation production company that was established in 2001. During the last years, Atom Art has premiered more than ten award winning animated shorts that travel festivals around the world. The company is developing in two directions: to warm-hearted and educational short-format stories for kindergarten age children (the TV series about the Shammies) and brilliant author animated films at a world class standard. Additionally to this the company also collaborates with different partners to provide videos, designed titles, animated sequences, opening sequences for documentaries, feature films and TV shows.

Director Edmunds Jansons
Screenwriter Līga Gaisa,
based on the novel by Luīze Pastore
Art Designer Elīna Brasliņa
Animator Mārtiņš Dūmiņš
Sound Director Ģirts Bišs
Composer Kšištofs Aleksandrs Jančaks
Producer Sabīne Andersone
Production Company Atom Art
Co-producer Jakub Karwowski,
Letko (Poland)

ATOM ART

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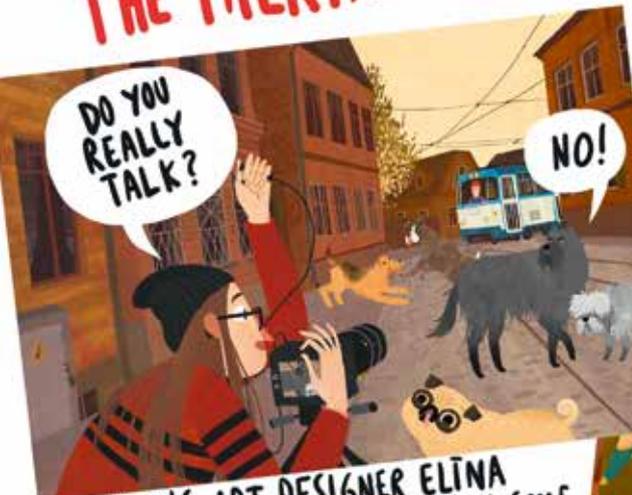
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New Europe Film Sales
Jan Naszewski
+48 60017 3205

A BEHIND-THE-SCENES LOOK AT THE CREATION OF JACOB, MIMMI AND THE TALKING DOGS



SCREENWRITER
LİGA GAISA AND
AUTHOR
LUIZE
PASTORE
ARE
POLISHING
THE DIALOGUES



THE FILM'S ART DESIGNER ELİNA BRASLINA GETS ACQUAINTED WITH SOME OF MASKAKKAS INHABITANTS



THE TEAM OF ANIMATORS ARE WORKING IN MIMMI'S APARTMENT



THE LEADER OF THE TALKING DOGS, BOSS, GIVES A LESSON TO THE ACTOR ANDRIS KEİS



THE CREATIVE PROCESS IS SUPERVISED BY THE DIRECTOR EDMUNDS JANSONS, PRODUCER SABİNE ANDERSONE AND PRODUCTION MANAGER İVA VAİCKOVSKA

THE MOVER

TĒVS NAKTS

FICTION FEATURE

90 MIN | PREMIERE: 30 OCTOBER 2018



It was a decision dangerous for all. Those facing death became his contraband and saving them an obsession bordering on madness. Hardly anyone would have predicted that Žanis Lipke would miraculously become a hero. He was a completely ordinary Latvian blue-collar worker. In order to be able to support his family under wartime conditions, he worked at the German military aviation warehouses and supplemented his income by smuggling at night.

Yet as soon as the German occupation regime began its bloody repressions against Riga's Jews, he made the decision

that could end lethally not only to himself but also to his family. In the lorry in which he recently transported bootleg alcohol, dozens of people were plucked out of the Riga Ghetto and forced labour sites. As soon as their temporary hiding place came under threat of being discovered, Žanis began sheltering Jews at his own home, in a specially dug underground bunker under his shed. His wife Johanna and young son Zigis also became involved.

This film attempts to answer the question whether Žanis' courage stems from his adventurous and daring spirit, stubbornness, or a sense of responsibility towards people in need.

DĀVIS SĪMANIS

■ Dāvis Sīmanis junior was born into the family of talented Latvian cinematographer Dāvis Sīmanis. Sīmanis earned BA (2003) and MA (2005) degrees at the History and Philosophy faculty of the University of Latvia, and a PhD in Art History (2014) at the Latvian Academy of Culture. Sīmanis lectures at the Academy of Culture, at the Alto University in Helsinki and is also a recognized film editor.

In 2006 Sīmanis received the Best Debut award for documentary short film *Versija. LNO* at the *Lielais Kristaps* National Film Festival. Since then he has made five documentaries and a recreation based on documentary material, *Escaping Riga* (2014). The first fiction feature film directed by Sīmanis, *Pelnu sanatorija (Exiled, 2016)*, starring Ulrich Matthes was screened at Moscow IFF, Shanghai IFF, Cairo IFF (*Fipresci Prize*), *Go East* FF, *Fajr* IFF.

MISTRUS MEDIA

■ The film production company MISTRUS MEDIA was established in 2000 and has since become one of the leading film studios in Latvia. MISTRUS MEDIA is a producer of feature documentaries, feature fiction films as well as a provider of filming and location services and a producer of industrial films and commercials.

In 2016 the latest historical drama produced by MISTRUS MEDIA – *The Chronicles of Melanie* (dir. Viestur Kairish), an international co-production, received the award for the Best Cinematography at the Tallinn Black Nights Film Festival as well as awards in 5 different categories at the *Lielais Kristaps* National Film Festival. It was the official selection for the best foreign-language film for the 2018 Oscars from Latvia.

Director Dāvis Sīmanis

Screenwriters Dāvis Sīmanis,
Matīss Gricmanis

Based on the novel *The Boy and the Dog*
by Inese Zandere

Production Designer Kristīne Jurjāne

Make-up Artist Sarmīte Balode

Cinematographer Andrejs Rudzāts

Editors Andris Grants, Dāvis Sīmanis

Main Cast Artūrs Skrastiņš,

Ilze Blauberģa, Matīss Kļipņuks,

Mihails Karasikovs, Milena Gulbe,

Toms Treinis, Steffen Scheumann

Producers Gints Grūbe, Antra Gaile

Production Company Mistrus Media

MISTRUS MEDIA

Blaumaņa iela 11/13-13

Rīga, LV1011, Latvia

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www.mistrusmedia.lv

www.facebook.com/TevsNakts



Dāvis Sīmanis, director and Matīss Kipļuks, featuring as Žanis Lipke's son Zigis in the film

DĀVIS SĪMANIS, DIRECTOR:

■ I think that even today there is a relatively grey area in which some people would suddenly act strangely and selflessly at a time of crisis. I think that it is only because of the actions of these kinds of unusual people, that often cannot be explained from the standpoint of survival, that society or the nation can continue to exist in a seemingly meaningful way.

BEFORE THE DAY BREAKS

SAULE BRAUCA DEBEŠĪS

ANIMATED FEATURE

70 MIN | PREMIERE: 18 NOVEMBER 2018



A visual poem about Latvia as the Daughter of the Sun, who is born in the dark, is kidnapped but later released to bloom like a beautiful blossom in eternity.

The Sun and the Moon have a child, and mummies arrive to congratulate them. In the following frivolity no one notices that the Sun's daughter disappears, until everyone notices an empty cradle. No matter how strong the mother Sun and father Moon are, they cannot find the child, nor bring her home. The mummer Nabašnieks, as well as a girl and her little brother, offers to help to bring home the Daughter of the Sun.

They have only three days in their disposal – if the Daughter is not found by then, she will lose her magical powers and become just a human girl. A journey full of adventures begins, whereby everyone has to prove their bravery and resourcefulness, resilience and helpfulness.

In the end the underground world sinks deep into the earth, becoming both the foundation and roots of the Tree of Light, which reaches up into the sky, carrying the Daughter of the Sun upward.

ROZE STIEBRA

■ Director, screenwriter and producer Roze Stiebra, together with her husband Ansis Bērziņš, are the founders of two-dimensional animation in Latvia. From 1960-1964 Stiebra gained an education as a puppet theatre actress in Leningrad (now Saint Petersburg). In 1969 she made her first animated film. In 1983 Stiebra created the first film in drawing animation technique in Latvia. She has directed a total of 62 films – from shorts to features. Stiebra has received an award from the Latvian Culture Foundation for her life-long input into the creation of professional animation in Latvia.

LOCOMOTIVE PRODUCTIONS

■ Established in 1999, produces fiction films, documentaries and animated films. LOCOMOTIVE is the only production company in Latvia that received seven awards at the *Lielais Kristaps* National Film Festival for three different films in 2016. It is also the only production company in Latvia that has two films nominated for Oscars in the same year – from Latvia and Lithuania. The project *Before the Day Breaks* is the company's first collaboration with the prolific director Roze Stiebra.

Director and Screenwriter Roze Stiebra

Art Designer Ilze Vītoliņa

Composer Juris Kaukulis

Producer Roberts Vinovskis

Production Company

Locomotive Productions

LOCOMOTIVE PRODUCTIONS

Bruninieku iela 28-57

Rīga, LV1011, Latvia

office@locomotive.lv

www.locomotive.lv

www.facebook.com/

Saule-brauca-debesis

ROZE STIEBRA, DIRECTOR:

■ The sun has always been sacred for all peoples, as the giver of light and life. The main characteristic of the sun is its unconditional love – it gives light and warmth to everyone alike, not dividing or judging that this one should have more and this one, less. This is the idea of the film and its main message – that it is important to maintain this dimension of light in oneself, to expand one's consciousness and cultivate the Sun's characteristics in oneself.

However, this is just an idea from which the film was developed: a humorous and exciting animation about the Sun, Moon and their child, who is stolen or more simply – lost. And who of us hasn't experienced those grim moments in life, when the light is gone, the world has sunk into the darkness and hope has disappeared? The heroes of our film also go through this, so that at the end of a whirl of adventures, each of them can ride up into the sky with the Sun.

JURIS KAUKULIS, COMPOSER:

■ From the very first hours of work on this project the Sun's chariot rose rapidly into the sky – the music score followed, but sometimes also ran ahead of the sash of stories that Roze Stiebra created for the film. This adorned the wall of our sound studio for a whole year. We were very inspired by the unusual thoughts in this story. E.g. the wolf becoming the godfather of the Daughter of the Sun. It will surely be a fun film to watch!



ROZE STIEBRA

1906

1906

FICTION FEATURE

120 MIN | PREMIERE: NOVEMBER 2018



Rīga, 1906. The Tsar government has succeeded to suppress the social democratic uprising. Only one group of revolutionary fighters is still operational. An ambitious, but inexperienced fighter Grey is assigned to lead an assault on a factory cash desk. The robbery should provide means for further resistance. While preparing the attack, Grey starts an affair with an aspiring poetess Violet. He gets drawn

into the flamboyant crowd of Rīga's decadent artists and writers. Grey is inspired by Violet and starts questioning his own secretive and violent life style. Meanwhile Violet gradually gets involved in the dangerous world of revolutionary fighters. November 1906 in Rīga is still remembered as a month of bohemian craziness and bloody terror.



GATIS ŠMITS

■ Gatis Šmits is an award winning Latvian film and theatre director, founder of Film Studio TANKA. Gatis has graduated from the Latvian Academy of Culture as BA in Theatre Directing (1997) and has got an MA in Film Directing at the New York University Tisch School of the Arts (2004). His film directing credits include *Agents iemīlas* (*Agent Madly in Love*, Clermont-Ferrand IFF) and *Seržanta Lapīna atgriešanās* (*Return of Sergeant Lapins*, Busan IFF). Gatis Šmits also produced the feature *Mammu, es tevi mīlu!* (*Mother, I Love You!* winner of Berlinale and LA Film Festival), that went to become Latvian submission to 2014 Foreign Language Oscars.

FILM STUDIO TANKA

■ The Film Studio Tanka was founded in 2002. It has produced two fiction features – the comedy *Seržanta Lapīna atgriešanās* (*Return of Sergeant Lapins*, 2010) directed by Gatis Šmits and internationally award-winning coming of age drama *Mammu, es tevi mīlu!* (*Mother, I Love You!* 2013) directed by Jānis Nords.

Director, Screenwriter Gatis Šmits
Co-screenwriter Inga Rozentāle
Cinematographer Jurgis Kmins
Production Designer Rūdolfs Balčiņš
Costume Designer Keita
Composer Rihards Zaļupe
Producers Gatis Šmits, Reinis Kalviņš
Main Cast Inese Pudža, Mārtiņš Kalīta, Kaspars Zvīgulis, Gatis Gāga, Toms Auniņš, Kaspars Dumburs
Production Company Tanka

FILM STUDIO TANKA

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Rīga, LV1050, Latvia
gatissmits@gmail.com

■ Letters and photographs were found in the attic of a house in Rīga, which in their time had been sent by a social democrat fighter. It is possible that the sender is the second from the right in the photograph.



DEAR ANNIE!

I am behind bars, without a waistcoat, living on the bread of the prison, with the lice as my companions. I feel like a fish out of water: the food here is the kind you can't put in your mouth. The room is a pure pit of rubbish: you eat here, sleep here, spit. In the corner there is a bucket for defecating, which stinks like in a super phosphate factory. You are allowed to carry out the faeces once a week [...] We sleep on the bare floor in our clothes, the only thing we are given is a pillow stuffed with god-knows-what. We comrades joke and curse to hell... During the first days we chewed on dry bread with water and salt, because we had nothing else with us from home... My stomach is flat like a tobacco pouch, and if you could see my face, you wouldn't love it...

Overall, I feel this is the end of me. I say good-bye to all my loved ones with warm-hearted kisses, to you darling, to Mirdza... Have a better life, pray to whomever you want (the devil or God) for my soul... You should know you were my love and I am sending you my first and seemingly also my last kiss ... Live happily with someone else, but don't forget that someone once loved you with a pure, unhappy love...

Terribly spiteful and brutal, but it's the truth. Good-bye, my love, live happily and don't forget me.

With a sincere kiss:
Your vagabond Jūlis.

Postmark on the envelope: 8 January 1906.



LATVIAN FILMS FOR

www.nkc.gov.lv



LATVIA'S CENTENARY

www.lv100.lv

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