

KuBus 64
Riga – Moscow Street

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00'05"

Fifteen films by Latvian and German students – fifteen films about life, death, remembering, friendship, loss and recovery.

Entertainment and documentary films made in the summer of 2004 in a joint seminar of the Film Schools of Riga and Potsdam.

For three months the German students lived and worked in the Latvian capital. The films now give the picture of a country making a breakthrough – searching for its place in Europe.

00'40"

The starting point is the Moscow Street. It stretches from the Market Hall in the centre of Riga to the city limits – and has a reputation for drugs and criminality. Dealing with this was how the students developed their film ideas.

00'53"Original sound, Fred Kelemen, Film-maker, Lecturer

"Moscow Street is a street that I have always liked because it has a lot of contrasts and because it is hard. It's not a pedestrian zone for tourists, but a street that runs from the centre through various sections that have historical value, but which are also important for today's reality of life and it also touches on the edges of society."

01'17"

It began in April: when five German film students from Potsdam arrived in Riga. Together with 12 Latvian students they created a class for themselves. Their task: each of them had to make a film within three months, from shooting script to finished edit. An opportunity and also a challenge.

01'32"

"We try to make possible every film the way you want it. So don't limit yourself before talking."

01'38"

Linda's film deals with childhood and remembering. A young boy loses his sister.

01'49"Original sound

"And next is graveyard. And Lucas is at the graveyard and sees a glass with flowers. And we jump to childhood."

02'03"

Linda discusses her shooting script with Fred Kelemen and the class. An intense discussion.

02'08"Original sound, Liene Neimane, Film student

"It's a great opportunity and I doubt that I could find such kind of opportunity anywhere in Latvia".

02'19"Original sound, Jana Marsik, Film student

"It's very intensive. For months we've worked intensively on shooting scripts. I've never done that before."

02'26"Original sound, Fred Kelemen, Film-maker, Lecturer

"Every one understands that he can't make the film he wants to without involving himself. There is no getting around that."

02'36"Original sound, Liene Neimane, Film student

"And I love that Fred allows us to do whatever we want to do, he encourages us to do things maybe we are afraid of."

02'56"

Moscow Street residents, the melancholy and sometimes quite undramatic daily life of a poor district. Chosen locations, but chance incidents.

03'24"

Made from a combined Latvian and German viewpoint; observation from the closest quarters.

03'36"Original sound

"Her face like that, very close. But then we can't see what she is doing. But we have already seen that."

03'48"

Annett from Germany and Aleksandr from Latvia have spent weeks in this district. Their documentary film deals mainly with life on the street. That was not exactly without some danger. But in tricky situations they could depend completely on each other.

04'13"Original sound, Maija Romasko, Film student

"Actually somehow at first time I thought like I want to try, maybe I don't make my film, but I want to try. But now I think I will make my film."

04'30"

A Russian lad from Moscow Street. Despite his hard upbringing he values the small and beautiful things in life, such as an ant. One day he meets a lady from the upper classes.

05'07"

She wants to look after and help him but in the end she has to acknowledge that there is a lot more she can learn from him.

05'19" Original sound

"Please go there just to look. And she says no, no, I don't want to. And then he says please, please and then they go."

05'29"

Maija really did find the lad on Moscow Street. He lived there with his parents. The film was shot in their flat. A completely new world for Maija.

Not only in film but also in reality there is a meeting of worlds that are far apart.

05'49"

A bit of a rest – the work amidst ruins and rubbish is tiring.

06'01"

The students are struggling not only with a rainy summer but also with technical problems – and their self doubt.

For them the project is a small test for Latvia's entrance into the European Union. What will that change? Where do we stand?

06'19"Original sound, Artūrs Nikolajevs, Film student

"German people are a bit more aggressive than we are."

06'26"Original sound, Liene Neimane, Film student

"I suppose that German and Latvian culture and intelligence and temperament are very close. Because a lot of Latvians are half German you know."

06'37"Original sound, Fred Kelemen, Film-maker, Lecturer

"Naturally the Latvians have a different experience of life. Basically life is harder here and they deal differently with hardships and they are not quite so shy about being hard."

06'52"

And that is exactly what so impressed Fred Kelemen. This is the second film project that has brought him to Riga. He loves the honesty and the warmth of the city and its people.

07'04"

Riga still suffers from the turbulent history of its oppression under the both the Soviet and German occupations.

The younger generation is totally committed to a new start and that is reflected in the films.

07'19"

A brother and sister sell fruit at a market stall on Moscow Street. One day they hide in the woods away from their abusive parents who are drinkers and exploit them.

07'40"

They lose their way and are found at night by a man. To begin with he gives the hungry children something to eat and then a warm bed before he reveals his true self. A modern version of Hansel and Gretel.

07'58"

About 100 kilometres from Riga. Liene's last day of shooting. A short break. Once more she goes through the dialogue and action with her young actors.

Both professionals and amateurs they are ready to drop after the hard work of the production. All they have to do now is see it through.

08'25"Original sound, Liene Neimane, Film student

"Yesterday was a hard day as well. Because somehow you come to the point when you think that there is no more power in you and then you have to go over it and then second breath comes to you and you open up. But today the second breath doesn't come. I am just oh!"

08'49"

Fred Kelemen advises on camera angles and lightning. Liene needs help. Too many things have to be thought about at the same time. Children play a great part in practically all of the student's films. Perhaps they stand for the future, for optimism and utopia.

09'12"

The children in the film – tortured and fattened up, like Hansel and Gretel.

09'26"

They defend themselves and kill their tormentors.

The Latvian films often have a dark side but always end with a blow for freedom.

09'40"

Artūrs. He is also making a film. The first location: a café in the central square in Riga. And the weather is playing along as well. The seminar encouraged him to consider something new.

09'53"Original sound, Artūrs Nikolajevs, Film student

"I learned from him that nothing is impossible. And that we must find new ways of shooting.

10'04"

Moscow Street: a real place and endlessly long. A symbol for the dark side of today's Latvia.

Artūrs' story is also a kind of fairy tale.

He sometimes works for Latvian television and the film project gave him the chance to take an uncluttered look at his own generation.

10'20"

City limits: the end of Moscow Street. The youth of Riga take off from here in search of freedom and a little happiness.

10'57"

Liene in the editing room. The last stage after weeks of hard work and a few crises. Every scene must be made under the Lecturer's critical eyes.

Her country is going through a change and the students see the seminar as a part of that.

11'13"Original sound, Maija Romasko, Film student

"We Latvians need some time, maybe two or five years for having good relations with other countries. But this project is like one very good step for doing this."

11'28"Original sound, Liene Neimane, Film student

"Half of the students, of my colleagues, wanted to shoot some comedy or something like that. But it turned out they are going to be serious films again. But this is what I mean. Maybe this political aspect has been taken to light all the time and we are too sad. We have to be more cheerful. And maybe this national and political things are like we don't know what to say anymore."

12'00"Original sound, Fred Kelemen, Film-maker, Lecturer

"Naturally there's no way a project can help a country to change itself, but the project can help individuals to be stronger."

12'19"

Night time in Moscow Street.

After three months the film project has come to an end. But everyone agrees that something new has now begun. Germans and Latvians have become closer.

A step forward into Europe's future.

Length: 12'35"

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