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Panorama

WHEN THE DAY HAD NO NAME

a film by

Teona Strugar Mitevska



WHEN THE DAY

SYNOPSIS

Milan and his best friend Petar prepare an adventurous excursion with some other teenagers from the outskirts of Skopje. They are adrenalized for a boys' night out of drinking and horseplay before an early morning fishing expedition. They are typical teenagers full of sexual and romantic tensions and angst about money and material things. They are sometimes devilish and sometimes angelic; hungry to be adults, yet they still mostly act like children. They all have dysfunctional relationships with their parents, and they represent a whole generation of youth raised in a time of transition and questionable values. Their night of fun is tainted by ethnic tensions and a visit gone wrong to a teenaged prostitute...

HAD NO NAME

*COMMENTS FROM WRITER-DIRECTOR
TEONA STRUGAR MITEVSKA*

ORIGIN OF THE PROJECT

The storyline is inspired by an actual event that took place a few years ago in the early morning hours besides a lake on the outskirts of Skopje. The corpses of four teenagers were found. The event created a real uproar and intensified the already strained relationship between two ethnic communities. The Macedonian community went on the street, asking for justice. The Albanian community claimed they were being judged without any real evidence. Fingers were very quickly pointed from one to the other and there was fear of a war although at the time there was no solid indication of who had committed the crime. A couple of individuals have since been arrested, but the juridical process is still going on.

NO FUTURE FOR BALKAN MEN

Stating in the opening that this film is not about the murdered boys might appear as provocation, but for me it is an indication that the film isn't an investigation into the proprietors of the murder. The boys were murdered is fact, but what provoked me was the culture, the society behind this violent act. Violence induces violence. With this film, I wanted to put the spotlight on the problem of violence in Balkan society. We are a violent culture living in a violent world, and unless we learn how to tolerate, respect and honor others, there will be no future for us in the Balkans. There will be no future for humankind or as I like to say it: no future for Balkan men.





CASTING

I am the mother of a teenage boy, but I prepared the film before he entered this period, so the film was an indirect preview into that particular world. For this film, it was mostly through the casting process that I entered deeper into the world of these young men.

The casting was an open call and it lasted more than three months. We needed to find the six boys who were imagined in the script. I knew that I wanted them to be non-professionals for the truth and roughness of their energy. I also wanted them to be individually different and diverse, each presenting a different aspect of human nature and masculinity. They also needed to be likable in all of their foolishness and stupidity. Once preliminary choices were made, we spent a few months working together in a sort of acting workshop where I slowly introduced them to the world of cinema and role interpretation. I prepared them accordingly, but keeping their freshness was essential to me. In the second part of the film, they are almost constantly together in frame, so it was crucial to be precise in terms of mise-en-scene and acting. The whole process was fulfilling and revelatory for me.

THE ONLY OPTION IS BEING A MAN

During the casting process, I interviewed teenage boys about the most intimate aspects of their lives. I ended up with hours and hours of very personal testimonials into the real concerns of these men. What was most surprising was the openness; these interviews in a way became a platform for many of them to speak of issues they would not speak of otherwise. For long time I did not understand why this is, what I knew is that it was definitely not my presence and magic that made them speak up, later I understood that they live in a society where their only option is being a man, a real man. This often means being “important”, a macho with a great car and the right pair of shoes. But young people are smart, and if you ask the right questions or give them an opportunity for deeper reflection, they will jump at the chance.

ABSENT FATHERS

I deliberately did not show the boys' fathers in the films. This is connected to the idea that these boys are trapped in an existence that they did not choose. It's the ways of their fathers and grandfathers. Even if they wanted to change this, they are unable to because this definition of masculinity is so installed in every aspect of their lives that they have no other choice than to follow the exact same pattern.

RITE OF PASSAGE

The scene where the boys visit the young prostitute is based on a story told to me by one of the boys interviewed during the casting. Nobody speaks about this rite of passage. It is not considered to be a written rule, but it is known to happen frequently. It is terrifying that in this day, acts like these are considered to be common everyday behavior. By re-enacting such a tough incident in my film, I hope to denounce it. Treating woman as objects is the unfortunate result of years of deviation. When the character Vladan asks "What is the point of all of us sharing the same whore", he actually questions the morality of their actions, he challenges the established macho code. Questioning is the beginning of something positive, a rebellion of the Balkan man.



A CO-PRODUCTION WITH BELGIUM

I have always had a creative connection to Belgium. In my first film *How I Killed a Saint* I worked with Alan Marcoen. In the second I had an entire creative team: Virginie Saint Martin, Fred Meert and Thomas Gauder. In *The Woman who Brushed Off Her Tears* I collaborated with Paul Haymans and Fred Meert again. *Theresa and I*, a TV series which I made for Macedonian TV, was shot by Virginie and mixed by Thomas again, and edited by Ewin Ryckaert. And things don't end there, since December of 2013 I live in Belgium with my son Kaeliok. Life has curious ways of putting things in place. I myself am most surprised by this development but very happy to embrace it.

FEMALE EMPOWERMENT

"The future of the Balkans is in us women", Renata says in the film. I deeply believe in this: change will come from these young women! Currently, there is a very interesting affair in Skopje involving three women public prosecutors that have been fighting corruption relentlessly. I love the empowerment of women that is taking place as we speak. Some 10 years ago when I made my second feature *I AM FROM TITOV VELES*, I had a review that labeled it as a "chick film". That felt condescending, but that was then and I'm happy now things are a bit different. I don't think anyone would dare label a film that way today. These are exciting times and the world is changing, even here in Macedonia.

CONFIDENCE

It is incredible the road one needs to walk as a woman in this field. I did my first film because everyone said to me it couldn't be done. I did my second film to show to Balkan men that I am as good if not better than them. I did a third film to show I could simply be a professional. It took me a while, but I finally feel like I'm in a position to have full confidence in making a film, without fear and hesitation. Confidence instills awareness and clarity that entitles us to look and go beyond our little selves.

TRIPTYCH

When *The Day Had No Name* is the first of a triptych of films on the social aspects of Macedonian society. I'm currently preparing the second film, *God Exists, Her Name is Petrunija*. It's the story of a woman and a cross, the scenario is in a process of being written. *Man Whole Day* will be the third, a story of an aging man, his relationship to his body and the need to be assumed by society. He lives in an abandoned house/hotel structure besides the highway on the outskirts of the capital.



TEONA STRUGAR MITEVSKA (writer-director)

2017 **When the Day Had No Name**

2014 **Teresa and I** *(documentary series)*

2012 **The Woman Who Brushed Off Her Tears**

2008 **I Am from Titov Veles**

2004 **How I Killed a Saint**

2001 **Veta** *(short)*

2000 **Amer in Amerika** *(documentary short)*

1999 **Why is Betty Boop Angry** *(short)*

WHEN THE DAY HAD NO NAME

[KOGA DENOT NEMASE IME]

a film by Teona Strugar Mitevska

2017 – Macedonia/Belgium/Slovenia

84 minutes – ratio 1:1.85 sound 5.1 - in Macedonian

MAIN CAST

Leon Ristov [Milan]

Hanis Bagashov [Petar]

Stefan Kitanovic [Ace]

Dragan Mishevski [Vladan]

Ivan Vrtev Soptrajanov [Rape]

Igorco Postolov [Cvetan]

Perunika Kiselicki [Miliana]

Ines Hodic [Renata]

Erina Poplavaska [Maja]

Labina Mitevska [Milan's Stepmother]

MAIN CREW

Director: Teona Strugar Mitevska

Screenplay: Teona Strugar Mitevska, Elma Tataragić

Cinematography: Agnés Godard

Editing: Stefan Stanbenow, Sophie Vercruysse

Music: Jean Paul Dessy

Sound Design: Ingrid Simon

Sound Recording: Thomas Gauder, Paul Heymans

Production Design: Vuk Mitevski

Costume Design: Monika Lorber

Make-up: Mojca Gorogranc Petrushevska

Casting: Kirjana Nikoloska

Production Manager: Viktor Pavlovski

Producer: Labina Mitevska

Co-producers: Sébastien Delloye, Diana Elbaum, Francois Touwaide, Danijel Hočevar

a production of Sisters and Brother Mitevski [Macedonia]

in co-production with Entre Chien et Loup [Belgium] and Vertigo [Slovenia]

with support from: Macedonian Film Agency, Eurimages,

Centre du Cinéma et de l'Audiovisuel de la Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles



SISTERS AND BROTHER MITEVSKI PRODUCTION is a family-run company based in Macedonia since 2001.

Labina Mitevaska is managing director and producer and actress. Teona Strugar Mitevaska is a director and screenwriter. Vuk Mitevski is an animation filmmaker and production designer. The company has produced all four features by Teona and two shorts by Vuk [ALERIK, THE BOY WITH A TORN SOCK IN THE RIGHT HAND]. The company recently co-produced Christi Puiu's SIERANEVADA and Damjan Kozole's NIGHTLIFE. The latest coproduction is the new film of Nuri Bilge Ceylan, THE WILD PEAR TREE.

The Sisters and Brother Mitevski company motto is:

“Cinema is first and foremost a visual form and it is our duty to use it masterfully and push its limits.”

CONTACT:

Sisters and Brother Mitevski Production
F. Ruzvelt 4-38, 1000 Skopje MACEDONIA
Tel: +38977690688
mail: info@sistersandbrothermitevski.com
www.sistersandbrothermitevski.com





A group of teenaged boys' night out is tainted by ethnic tensions and a visit gone wrong to a young prostitute...
A Balkan portrait of a whole generation of youth raised in a time of transition and questionable values.

From the director of
THE WOMAN WHO BRUSHED OFF HER TEARS and
I AM FROM TITOV VELES.

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CERCAMON

In Berlin: MGB #16

Sebastien Chesneau

cell +33 6 21 71 39 11

sebastien@cercamon.biz

www.cercamon.biz

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