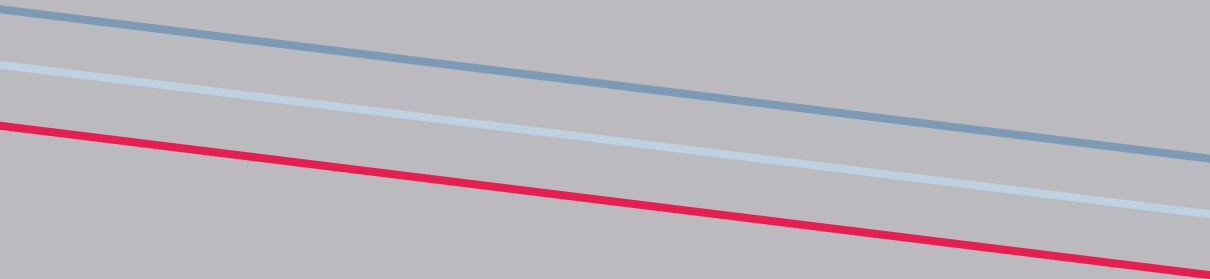




ISTANBUL EXPRESS

by Nisi Masa

ISTANBUL EXPRESS



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introduction



So, an idea:

What if three crews of young filmmakers would leave from three different corners of Europe by train, all travel through the continent via different routes making short documentary films and finally arrive at the same time in Istanbul, finish their films and share their experiences? Yes?

4 It's quite clear that there hasn't been anything exactly like the Istanbul Express project before, but well - there hasn't been anything exactly like NISI MASA before either. In ten years a bunch of cinema youngsters have somehow managed to build an active international network including 26 European Countries. From scratch.

To have 45 filmmakers visiting a total of 23 European cities in one month and end up with 15 short films, was possible firstly because of the strong and ambitious input of all the participants, tutors, project crew and especially all the individual members of NISI MASA and other great people in all the countries helping and hosting the film crews.

I've noticed a tendency of claiming that international film projects and coproductions are tricky and complicated. I won't pretend there wasn't drama, heart-aches, unwanted surprises, budget issues, sickness, anxiety and bed bugs on the way of Istanbul Express, but too often we are putting

obstacles on our way before even starting the journey. Creativity mustn't be crushed by excuses of practicality! I'm happy for the fact that all the project partners and financial supporters had trust in this crazy project since the beginning, and that Istanbul Express got such an open and positive reception everywhere we went.

The main motive to pull off a mega project like this was the wish to unite the whole NISI MASA Network and to test what can be achieved if we put our forces together. The concrete outcome are the 15 short documentaries dealing with multilingualism, but the real (read: immaterial) goals and experiences gained are not something to be put in facts and figures. If we are to believe tutor Boris Mitić's words, taking part in the Istanbul Express equals two years of studies in an average film school. Or like a participant claimed: Istanbul Express and travelling for a month with 14 fellow filmmakers taught him more about human behaviour than anything before in his life.

Istanbul Express is one of the largest and most ambitious projects of NISI MASA. The network is celebrating its 10th anniversary in 2011 and I can't imagine a better example to motivate us for our upcoming projects than this. Crossing borders culturally and creatively is something we tend to do, and I hope this tendency continues with an even greater passion for the future!

Hannaleena Hauru - President of NISI MASA

Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture Agency

Civil Society Dialogue-Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture Grant Scheme Programme

Istanbul was declared European Capital of Culture for 2010 by the European Union on 13 November 2006 along with Germany's Essen and Hungary's Pécs. The Istanbul 2010 ECoC Agency was founded on 2 November 2007 for the purpose of planning and managing the activities for preparing Istanbul as European Capital of Culture by 2010 and for coordinating the joint efforts of public bodies and institutions in order to realize this goal.

The Agency operated in three strategic areas: Culture and arts, urban applications and protection of cultural heritage, tourism and promotion. Projects were carried out by the Directorates of Urban Applications, Cultural Heritage and Museums, Urban Projects Coordination and the Departments of Visual Arts, Music and Opera, Urban Culture, Literature, Cinema and Documentary, Stage and Performing Arts, and Traditional Arts. A main goal is for all projects and activities to be sustainable, continuing well after 2010.

within the context of Instrument for Pre-Accession with the grant scheme programme "Civil Society Dialogue-Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture" that was co-ordinated by Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture Agency. The Programme provided grant support between 50,000 and 150,000 € to nongovernmental organizations active in culture and arts. 11 projects promoting Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture idea and the Civil Society Dialogue between Turkey and the European Union were supported by the Programme. All the projects were implemented in Istanbul and the EU Member States with partners from the EU. The programme aimed to enhance Istanbul's role in the field of culture and arts, to strengthen bonds and to foster sustainable collaboration amongst artistic and cultural milieu between Europe and Turkey, and to support artistic and cultural projects in order to help Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture demonstrate its cultural legacy and capacity.

The European Commission supported Istanbul Express



san sebastian





Tutor

Atanas Georgiev (Macedonia)

Born in 1977, Atanas has edited numerous feature films, documentaries, shorts and music videos. Now he works as a director and editor, running his own production company *Trice Films* in the Czech Republic. His feature documentary *Cash & Marry* has won many international awards and recognitions.



Producer

Elizabeth Mitchell (UK)

Elizabeth has worked in film for ten years. She worked as a script reader and production assistant and was Associate Producer on *Imagining Argentina* which premiered at Venice in 2003. In 2007 she co-founded Tailormade Productions; they completed their first feature film, *Island* in 2010.



Coordinator

Eftihia Stefanidi (Greece)

Eftihia has studied Theatre History in Greece, Filmmaking in Prague and Film Aesthetics at Oxford University. She has worked for the British Film Institute, documentary distribution and international film festivals and journals. Eftihia is the co-director of The Short Film Movement+ and a freelancer in film writing, curating and creative photography.

Turkish in Europe

Kov Kovi (Side by Side)

Ezgi Kaplan

Sander Lopes Cardozo

Tirza Bosshardt

Urban Dialogue

Martha

Lyubomir Pechev

Paulo Martinho

Ainara Vera Esparza

Multilingual Love

Love in Transit

Severine Beaudot

Tuce Zenginkenet

Dena Popova

Translation vs. Eurospeak

Hop On Hop Off

Igor Bezinović

Matthias Kammerer

Zeynep Merve Uygun

Minorities vs. Official Language

I Am Not Here

Paulo Couto

Gisela Ritzén

Anna Brufau

Atanas Georgiev



"There will always be someone in your life wishing to fight with you" were the words of my father I remember while watching the endless landscapes through the train window. *"Mediocrity always struggles to poison wisdom"*. It took me years to really understand these words, but they truly make me contemplate while making documentaries.

I am on a train, surrounded by fifteen people that I have never seen before. They have the capacity of participants of a documentary film workshop traveling 3000 km across Europe. I am here in the capacity of their tutor who is supposed to coach them in making films that should enable them to make films in the future and express their various ideas.

However, hitting the road for making a film without any specific idea, without any previous research, with little money, local support of untrained volunteers, untested equipment and an untrained crew composed of fifteen people with different nationalities and backgrounds meeting for the first time is to say the least, a rare phenomenon.

Therefore, the expectation that the final product of this journey would

be a fascinating film that will make a huge impression or raise an important question seems rather far-fetched. I try to make them focus on a five basic rules for making a documentary that I believe are threatened to be breached in their first attempt; to explain that this is not the right way to make a documentary; to make them stick to the principal idea of the film; to make them forget the identity of the director, cinematographer or the sound designer; to learn that the team work is crucial and face the fact that the films produced at this occasion will hardly be good enough for their CVs.

Rain and clouds keep following us. The filming conditions are bad, the working moral not always high enough. In fact, spending three weeks on a train needs application of special rules of conduct so that failure of the entire project is avoided. One of the members was forced to disembark at the Serbian border due to sudden changes in the visa regime. I wonder why nobody wished to focus on this this story...

Therefore, while watching without any focus the quickly passing-by train with fuel tanks... I remember the "Oil for Food" project and feel some disturbance in my stomach. Nevertheless, the remedy arrives quickly with the thought that Nikola

Tesla discovered numerous ways of producing energy without any costs. This is a huge idea for any work of art, artistic mind... for millions of films to be made and books to be written. How can we make our lives better without hurting our planet, without hurting each other?

Trying to find an answer to this question left Tesla alone, with the pigeons being his only company.

Istanbul is close, i.e. the end of our journey. Editing of hundreds of hours of material done in different languages and formats lie ahead. Poor conditions for editing, inexperienced editors. I wonder whether it is appropriate to make films in such conditions.

The opening night in Istanbul proves that I have been wrong. Although rather incomplete, each of the films carries a clear message, a powerful idea. We have learnt a lot, for sure. Maybe not about how documentaries should really be made, but how to chose the right weapon to fight within a documentary, about searching for ideas and about seeing ideas everywhere around us and inside us, most of all.

And I thank you all for making me learn in such a unique way.

Side by Side / Kovi Kovi 15'06"



Director
Ezgi Kaplan
Cinematographer
Sander Lopes Cardozo
Sound designer
Tirza Bosshardt

Unheard stories of Armenians living in different cities of Europe, who all had Istanbul as a crossroad in their lives.

Ezgi Kaplan (Turkey) was born in Istanbul in 1981. She makes short films and produces documentary projects. She also works as a freelance video and web designer for Çıplak Ayaklar Dance Company. Her short films have been screened in many International film festivals. She was invited to Sarajevo Talent Campus in 2009.

Sander Lopes Cardozo (The Netherlands) was born in France in 1977. After graduating in music and working as a jazz musician, Sander attended Leiden University to study cultural anthropology and sociology. Since 2007, he has worked for television channels as a journalist, cameraman, director and editor.

Tirza Bosshardt (Switzerland) was born in 1987 in Basel, moved to Zurich at 10 years old. After school she worked as a director's assistance in theatre - (where she always missed the pictures, so photographed a lot, but it didn't help.), then studied film at the ZHDK (Zurich Art School) since 2007, mainly editing and directing.



*"In Turkey, I heard about religion classes.
They told me to pray kelime-isahadet- the Islamic testimony
of faith.
I said I was Christian, I could not say it.
He said "I'll teach you".
And I said I did not want to learn, because I was Armenian.
Then he started cursing "You son of a non-Muslim!"
He beat me till he was tired.
12 sergeants and 4 soldiers, they all beat me."*



Through different individual stories, Kov Kovi seeks to make a portrait of new generations of Armenians in Europe. All of them are somehow connected to Turkey because of the very delicate relations between their countries throughout history. The powerful stories seek to represent the horrors of the conflict between both countries.

The actual facts concerning the conflict are far from consensual. According to the Armenian government:

"The Turks massacred thousands of Armenians in 1894 and 1896. The most horrific massacre took place in April 1915 during World War I, when the Turks ordered the deportation of the Armenian population to the deserts of Syria and Mesopotamia. According to the majority of historians, between 600,000 and 1.5 million Armenians were murdered or died of starvation. The Armenian massacre is considered the first genocide in the 20th century."

The Turkish government presents a radically different document, signed by dozens of famous historians, which defends, among other things, that:

"Out of the some 700,000 Armenians who were resettled in this way until early 1916, certainly some lives were lost, (but) it should not be forgotten that, at the same time, an entire Ottoman army of 90,000 men was lost in the East as a result of severe shortages, or that through the remainder of the war as many as three to four million Ottoman subjects of all religions died as a result of the same conditions that afflicted the relocated Armenians. How tragic and unfeeling it is, therefore, for Armenian nationalists to blame the undoubted suffering of the Armenians during the war to something more than the same anarchical conditions which afflicted all the Sultan's subjects. This is the truth behind the false claims distorting historical facts by ill-devised mottoes such as the "first genocide of the Twentieth Century."

Diplomatic relations between the two countries have slowly improved in the past few years

Martha 9'46"



Director

Lyubomir Pechev

Cinematographer

Paulo Martinho

Sound designer

Ainara Vera Esparza

Martha is a young woman that makes her living by performing as a street artist in Vienna. She spends a lot of time crafting her vintage tricks, putting on make up and travelling to the place she likes to perform. Even though the money she earns is not enough to make a good living, she transmits her love of the circus art to her small son Leilo.

Lyubomir Pechev (Bulgaria) was born in Stara Zagora in 1985. He is studying at the National Academy of Film and Theatre Art in Sofia. He has never fired a rifle but shot few short films. His movie *Family* was selected for NISI MASA screening at Cannes Critics' Week 2010.

Paulo Martinho (Portugal) is an artist currently based in Manchester, UK. His visual style and expertise have taken him to various cities around the world helping him fulfill his mutual desires of travel and visual creation through constant development of new projects.

Ainara Vera Esparza (Spain) was born 1985 in Pamplona. After graduating in 2007 in Mass Media Communication she has worked in films. Last year she directed *En la oscuridad*, her first short film.



Jugglers, bear ladies and street art

Atanas Georgiev, Tutor

At the beginning of the workshop I opened a discussion about six different narrative styles that can be used in a documentary film: poetic, expository, participatory, observational, reflexive, and performative. We made a decision that each group could use only one style to work with.

The urban dialogue group chose to use the observational style, to portray street artists in the cities we were passing through. It was a nice and promising idea, easily approachable, but with a deceptively difficult narrative style. In Paris they had their first success: Their first character was supportive and interesting - a juggler from Niger, having problems with his French girlfriend since she couldn't stand his profession and the fact he was an immigrant earning more money than her. Everything was on tape, but we weren't sure of the camera work, and there was a huge amount of material...

The next successful shoot was in Amsterdam. They shot the 'Bear Lady' - a middle-aged woman dressed in a bear costume, interacting with children and grownups as an everyday job. They got nice shots, but there was little personal approach and drama in the material.

In Vienna they found Martha. An intimate story about a female clown and



her son. Good camera work, an invisible approach and only two hours of material. In one afternoon they succeeded in catching a lot of intimate moments, which I think is very hard and usually takes lot of time.

There were many discussions about how to combine all the stories. First, we decided to ban the Bear Lady. Later, we decided to edit them as separate stories and make a split screen movie with both remaining stories at the same time. The concept was to make a connection between the characters, to use comparative methods to show the similarities and the common problems of the street artists. We discussed if a question could be raised at the end of the film: Is it possible for them to communicate without any contact? It was a hard task; there was a huge amount of material and very little time for editing.

So they succeeded in focusing, and editing only the story about Martha.

No interfering with reality

Lyubomir Pechev, Director

In comparison with the other artists we shot, Martha was the only one who could transmit her love and experience of the circus art to her son, Leilo. From the beginning we decided that we had to make a portrait, with no interviews, no directed shots. The story was edited the way we shot it. It's a chronological representation of one day in the life of a street artist. I can't say that's the style of cinema I normally watch, but it's a very good way to be truthful and honest in a documentary, and the audience feels that.

Love in Transit ^{9'52"}



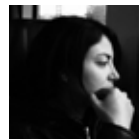
Love in Europe is multilingual, it doesn't know any rule or any border. When you are in love with a foreigner, when you live with someone who has no papers, when the state tries to destroy your love, what should you do?

Director
Severine Beaudot
Cinematographer
Tuce Zenginkinet
Sound designer
Dena Popova

Severine Beaudot (France) was born in Lyon in 1982. She graduated in Broadcast Journalism at the TV Academy in Munich. Since then she has worked with TV news and commercials in France and in Germany. In 2010 she has launched her own company, Anothervision Production, to produce commercials and short documentaries.

Tuce Zenginkinet (UK) was born in Sussex in 1980. After working on various TV shows and documentaries she continued to do her MA in Documentary Production at Salford University, Manchester. She is currently working as a freelance filmmaker, camera operator and editor.

Dena Popova (Bulgaria) was born in Sofia in 1987. She studied Film, French, Photography and Politics in the USA, France and Argentina. She is now writing for newspapers in Sofia, Bulgaria, while studying at the university.



Love in Transit is a piece on cross-border love and the perception of immigrants by different cultures. One of the detention camps portrayed in the film near Brussels raised some reactions from the autonomous No Border organisation:

"For over 10 years the European Union has been closing its borders to migrants: Fortress Europe is a reality. Europe tightens up the repression that Belgium and other member states are implementing. These countries force people into living clandestine lives, frequently doing raids, locking up and deporting undocumented migrants."

"All different, all equal, we share the same uprising against a globalised system, of which we share neither the aspirations nor the "values". Promoting plundering rather than sharing, exploitation rather than participation, commercialisation rather than generosity and exclusion rather than tolerance, this system tries to divide rather than unite. Always."

"We are confronted with a double and paradoxical existence: on the one hand, everybody - no matter his or her ethnical belonging, social status, or character - has to have the right to access this bureaucratic jungle that our society has become; on the other hand, it is unacceptable that the fate of humans is so divided by a gargantuan calculator, of which the inhumane character is incompatible with the right to a free and beautiful life."

Meanwhile, in Europe...

In France, the government establishes higher quotas of immigrants to expel every year and makes it easier for foreigners to lose their French nationality. In Switzerland, more than two thirds of the population voted for a law making it easier to expel clandestine immigrants. In Italy, illegal immigration can be punished with a fine of up to 10 000 Euros, and the period to stay in detention centres has been enlarged from two to six months. In Spain, where 5 million of the 46 million inhabitants are immigrants, the government has announced a "return plan" to encourage people to go back to their countries of origin. In Austria, the fear of foreigners is usually associated with high criminality, even if the incidence of criminal acts is getting lower every year. The Minister of the Interior has proposed a law to make it easier to refuse asylum based on that fear. In Germany, the government tries to reduce immigration, while companies suggest that the country needs qualified work from other countries, and that the lack of it would imply a delocalisation of the company in a different European country. In Portugal, a country that normally provides workers for other countries, the government has announced that it will reduce by half the amount of immigration allowed from outside of the European Union. In Greece, the extreme right wing is as strong as ever, basing its campaign on the fight against immigrants who "threaten the homogeneity of Greece".

In Denmark, the Ministry of Immigration has proposed easier laws to expel Muslims accused of terrorism and harder access to obtaining a residence permit.

(Source: L'Express.fr, 30/09/10)



Hop on Hop off 11'15"



Director

Igor Bezinović

Cinematographer:

Matthias Kammerer

Sound

Zeynep Merve Uygun

Editor/

Additional camera:

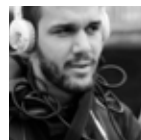
Sander Lopes Cardozo

With

Andres, Anna, Marta,
Mayte, Shauna, Sylvie,
Wolfgang

A film about seeing tourists and about being tourists.

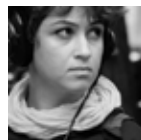
Igor Bezinović (Croatia) was born in Rijeka, Croatia in 1983. He directs mostly documentary films on social and political issues and two days a week teaches philosophy and sociology to high school students.



Matthias Kammerer (Germany) was born in Heidelberg, Germany, in 1983. He studied camera at the Bavarian Academy for Television. He has worked as a cameraman and camera assistant for some production companies and as director of photography for several short documentaries and films.



Zeynep Merve Uygun (Turkey) was born in 1985 in Izmir. She is a graduate student at the Film and Television Department in Istanbul Bilgi University. She worked as a producer, editor and assistant director in many TV programs as well as short film and documentary projects.



"Why are you taking a photo of the Manneken Pis?"

"Well, I'm a tourist. And this is a famous statue."

"It's famous. All the tourists that come here must take this picture."

"Can I be honest? I have no idea. Isn't that disappointing?"

Check out all these people looking at a little boy take a wee..."

Tourist culture

Zeynep Merve Uygun, Sound designer

It may be hard to believe that everything (flourishing ideas, creative process) in this project started online! Imagine that 18 people from different countries gather online at the same time to conduct a Skype meeting, trying to know each other better and in search of creative new stories, ideas and images. Specifically speaking for our group the theme was "Eurospeak vs. Translation". I'm glad to say that thanks to the great sense of humour and sharp intelligence of my friend (also director of *Hop On Hop Off*) Igor Bezinovic, we had deep, fertile, philosophical discussions during the Skype meetings which gave way to a stream of consciousness leading to a really creative process. When we met Elizabeth Mitchell, the producer of our train, for the first time in San Sebastian, her initial reaction to me was *"I'm amazed by the Skype meetings of your group mentioning deconstruction of Orientalism or McDonaldisation, quotations by Edward Said, etc."* Yes, we had various kinds of alternative film ideas, but at the end of the day you have to choose one!

As for *Hop On Hop Off*, we had a concern for the issues like clichés, stereotypes, generalisations, the way people 'orientalise' the other, typical touristic behaviours, criticism of the tourism industries, etc., from the beginning to the end. The film tries to suggest that people cannot be reduced to some common characteristics. You cannot make clear cut distinctions between nations or cultures; however it is impossible to deny the existence of stereotypes. According to David Cronenberg, *"All stereotypes turn out to be true. This is a horrifying thing about life. All those things you fought against as a youth: you begin to realise they're stereotypes because they're true."*

In our minds, the basic criticism of tourists' behaviour was their tendency to visit famous monuments and the best parts of a city unconsciously. That's why we chose to use the quotation from Charles Horton Cooley: *"The idea that seeing life means going from place to place and doing a great variety of obvious things is an illusion natural to dull minds."*

Igor Bezinović, Director

"In terms of production, every new city was a challenge in its own way. In some, we found our subjects easily, in others we had to improvise in order to find something to shoot. For example, the whole scene in front of the Manneken Pis in Bruxelles, was shot only because we couldn't find a Tourist Guide to interview there, which shows that spontaneity can be the main asset of a documentary film."

Although in theory we all believe we're unique and original, in the tourism industry we're in a way obliged to consume a foreign culture in a way that's expected from a tourist. Our film doesn't try to advocate a better tourism, it merely shows that by encountering something we're not familiar with, we're bound to use stereotypes to try to understand new cultures. Our film might challenge the audience viewer to reflect on their behavior the next time they visit a foreign country."

"The matter of the gaze had never been so important to the debate on culture and contemporary societies. A world in which everything is produced to be seen, where everything is shown to the eyes, raises the matter of gaze necessarily as a problem. There are no more veils or mysteries." (Nelson Brissac Peixoto)

I Am Not Here 6'30"



Director

Paulo Couto

Cinematographer

Gisela Ritzén

Sound designer

Anna Brufau

Editing

Paulo Couto

& Anna Brufau

Guest Editor

Tirza Bosshardt

With

Mon Chef Sassi,

Goudini Abdèc, Carla

Oliveira, Yuen Keong

Ng, Marco Prica

"What defines me is the fact that I was born in two countries, two or three languages, and several cultural traditions.

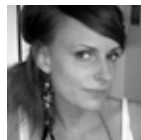
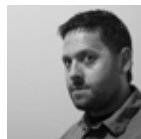
Would I be more authentic if I cut off a part of myself?"

- Amin Maalouf

Paulo Couto (Portugal) works as an independent filmmaker, mainly in Portugal, the country where he was born in 1982, and where he studied to become a filmmaker. After his studies, he worked as videographer for several years in television, both in live production and documentary series.

Gisela Ritzén (Sweden) just quit her job at the casino in Gothenburg to focus on a career in the film industry. She has studied film-science and two years of film-making, mainly focusing on photography and lighting. After that she's been involved in a variety of different projects, mostly documentaries.

Anna Brufau (Spain) was born in Barcelona in 1984. She studied media at university and later on she moved to Denmark to complete her film studies. Since then, back to her hometown, she's been working as a freelance editor.



I Am Not Here is a film about citizenship and identity. The idea of belonging and the confrontation with the eye of a foreigner are particularly well described by the film's researcher:

"I enter a big room with Chinese banners on the wall and simple wooden tables on the sides. An older man gives me a questioning look. He doesn't speak Dutch and walks with me to a woman sitting at a table. After exchanging some heavily Chinese accented words, we come to the conclusion that we do not understand each other and that I should come back another day. For hours, I wander through streets decorated with Dutch as well as Chinese names. I learn that a hundred years ago, numerous Chinese people came to Amsterdam to work in the shipping industry, which also explains the location of Chinatown. The Chinese character adds a mystical element to the well-known Amsterdam features of coffee shops, abandoned bicycles and red light windows. The result is a cosy medley, a folk-neighbourhood. I thought it would be a nice setting for the film." (Bibi Bleekemolen, Researcher Amsterdam)



"Our relationship to other people, whether they are from a different country, race or sex, has completely changed in contemporary times. There is no more symbolic confrontation, settled by religion, rituals and taboos. Except for a concrete confrontation of destruction: 'If you're not like me, I exclude you or I kill you.' Western societies have reduced the reality of others, either by colonisation or by cultural assimilation. Therefore, in a world where such a material abundance has emerged, the real rarity is otherness."

(Marc Guillaume, Figures d'altérité)

"I am a foreigner in appearance, not in nationality. I feel French because I live in a country called France. I automatically feel French, I cannot only feel Moroccan. I only feel Moroccan in spirit, in my tradition, my culture..."

"In Hong Kong, the first day I was walking on the street, a lady asked me how to get to a certain place. I said I didn't know; I had just arrived there, I'd never lived there. She was surprised: 'but you look Chinese, you speak Chinese...' At times like these, of course, you feel different."



thank you
gracias
merci
merci / dank u
dankjewel
danke
dankschen
köszönöm
blagodarya
tesekkurler





Tutor

Antoine Cattin (Switzerland)

Born in 1975, Antoine studied History, Cinema and Russian. He worked as director assistant, and since 2003 he works independently with Pavel Kostomarov as director, cinematographer and editor of documentaries. He founded the production company KINOKO.



Producer

Hannaleena Hauru (Finland)

Hanneleena was born in 1983, graduated from TTVO Tampere Film School and now continues her studies in scriptwriting. Before filmmaking she studied and worked in the field of theatre, mainly as a producer, but also directing, and writing musicals.



Coordinator

Alexandra Marchenko (Ukraine)

Alexandra went to Moscow International Film School to work on documentaries about prisoners, orphans, invalids and the VGIK. Alexandra now works as a director, editor, producer and coordinator of film workshops (Cinetrain, Upstream etc.)

Urban Dialogue

We Are Not Living In A Fucking Hospital

Vappu Tuomisto

Liso Cassano

Jerker Beckman

Minorities vs. Official Language

You Can't Hide Love From Gypsies

Mara Trifu

Lucille Caballero

Ando Naulainen

Multilingual Love

Bachelor Party

Luca Lucchesi

Mihai Marius Apopei

Julia Széphelyi

Translation vs. Eurospeak

Lost In Train Station

Grzegorz Brzozowski

Vefik Karaege

Bas Voorwinde

Turkish in Europe

High High Mountains

Catalin Musat

Vincent Bitaud

Nicolas Servide

Beware: one train may be hiding another...

The first time I heard of NISI MASA (thanks to my colleague Boris Mitić!) was when I got the proposal to join the Istanbul Express. That was exactly 3 days before 3 trains were to leave from 3 corners of Europe, all heading to Turkey. By the time I managed to join the project, the Tallinn train-ferry in which I was invited to hop on had already crossed the Baltic Sea twice. It had well started to draw the rounded part of the sickle its route was due to trace on the European map, with the coming up capitals of Eastern Europe as its handle. Berlin seemed the per-

fect place to catch up with the train and cross its further way down with my hammer... But let's start from the beginning by rendering unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's.

First of all, I should mention the essential contribution of Andrey Paounov. He was supposed to be the tutor on this train. He had done the most difficult and probably most important part in the whole project: selecting the people who would become its passengers and putting them into the most suitable seats according to their wishes and skills. Being forced to renounce to the trip at the last minute, he gave me the opportunity to enjoy its best. But having missed the preludes and even

Antoine Cattin



the first week of the trip, I didn't feel in the best position to hammer my convictions.

Besides that, I was also luckily surrounded by a unique team, reflecting the cheerful friendship between Russia and Finland: thanks to coordinator Aleksandra and producer Hannaleena! During the first week of the trip they'd managed to create a family of 15 children. It turned out to be ambivalent though. Should I become the adoptive father or blame myself for having cheated on the family for a week? Keep the family unity or start to mess up with adultery ideas? For sure the spirit of the group was very high and the atmosphere most lovely. People were helping each other as a whole and not thinking individually in terms of a 3 person team. But sometimes that higher harmony and mutual respect was hiding some inner creative problems within a team. I realized that it was actually the case in 3 out of the 5 teams. And with one of them I understood it only in Istanbul. But here the shy adoptive father (or the nasty adultery husband) is probably mostly the one to blame.

Still that makes me come to my only (real) concern or let's say advice I would suggest, hoping we learn from this experiment to improve it in the future. According to my personal experience, the idea of dividing a team into 3 clearly defined roles (director – DoP – sound) is not very adequate. Let's leave it to the old fashioned traditional cinema industry. The incred-

ible experience of travelling-shooting and LIVING together means here more than ever TEAMWORK: individual initiatives and resourcefulness of the group. Although this «professional» framework organized in guilds guaranteed us some kind of «peace ACT», I'm afraid it didn't have the best artistic impact. Being confined to a specific role, some of the members of a team would end up just «doing their job» (by the way very professionally for many of them). I tried to push them more towards the idea of getting fully involved and «fighting» for a common goal of making THE(ir) film, not just serve the director's needs for instance. Be it through conflicting moments inherent to this approach. If I could start over and from the very beginning, I would even imagine spending the first week forming teams by affinity while getting to know each other.

Speaking about teamwork, I want to pay a special tribute to the volunteers who laid the path to our Jerusalem with palms and flowers. To me their presence was enlightening and definitely helped me to get closer to some part of the world they (re)presented. I would bet even more on the work with those local coordinators: intensify the network between them and the participants, connect them before the trip begins so they can concretely start working together upstream. But that would probably mean to get them equally involved in the project or otherwise financially compensate their contribution.

But enough hammering and mumbling. I'll end up with the real mark (a nice scar) the sickle has left on me. I've understood that the general approach of «traditional observational cinema» I'm used to is very difficult to apply in such a context, the lack of time being the most obvious obstacle to it. No time to be a fly on a moving wall. Another way of catching and rendering reality is wanted here. Something like capturing little bites and fragments of life. But not just fugitive romantic impressions of a traveller. Rather a cubistic representation of life. Find a way to condense and compress the observation by short shots and fast edit so they will then unfold in a new perception on screen. Let's call it ZIP CINEMA. That could be an interesting method to try on a new trip. Well. Thank you dear fellows for letting me join you on this one and for everything we have shared. I wish you could get at least one fifteenth of what you gave to me! Take the opportunity offered now by the protecting wing of NISI MASA to exchange the sickle and hammer for a good cane and hit the Croisette with the eyes wide shut of curious and clever backpackers. As there always maybe more to this than meets the eye...

We are not living in a fucking hospital 7'30"



What would the city feel like if the walls stopped talking to us? Graffiti writers in different parts of Europe share their views on city space.

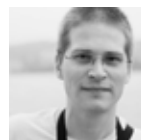
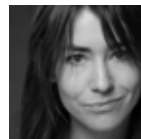
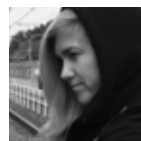
Director
Vappu Tuomisto
Cinematographer/
Editor
Liso Cassano
Sound designer
Jerker Beckman

With: Signor Sick,
Andreas Luigas, Uku
Sepsivart, Sänk, Pintsels,
Chill, Mr.J, eterica's, iig
crew, Today, Smart &
Separ (Kgb crew), Rick,
Siwe, Robot

Vappu Tuomisto (Finland) was born in 1985 in Helsinki. She finished her film studies in 2009. She has also studied art history, political sciences and physical theatre. She has taken part on projects mixing different art forms from puppet theatre to painting, fashion design and performance

Liso Cassano (France) graduated in dramatic arts. Four years and several short movies later, she has worked as a director of photography and editor for the experimental feature film by Richard Texier *L'Hypothèse du Ver Luisant*.

Jerker Beckman (Sweden) works within the theatre, but he has been experiencing new adventures in film. He spent the last decade writing plays, and the past few years writing and directing short films, as well as doing some sound designs for other people's films.



"Soon Istanbul Express will fade into memory as a month-long dream about trains, films and flea-ridden hostels. And about wonderful, wonderful people. But I guess we will have the films to remind us, me more than others, as I have a few hundred gigabytes of making-of clips to go through."

Jerker Beckman, Sound Designer

The poetry of urban spaces

Vappuo Tomisto, Director

"Drawings have been a way to express my feelings and thoughts, also in a very practical way. When I traveled all around the world, I explained my will and needs to train conductors, local people and other travelers through drawings. I have made art all my life in all different forms; some of the works have been in urban areas too. I've always found graffiti to be an interesting art form and some kind of a language I've been able to understand everywhere from a little village in Mexico to the biggest European cities."

"When preparing the script I started to read about graffiti, but very quickly I stopped. I didn't want to know too much about the history and facts. I didn't want to make a film about graffiti, what it is, and who does it. I rather wanted to make a film about us, and the cities we live in, seen through the

eyes of the graffiti writers. So I read poetry about cities and urban areas."

"In the beginning we weren't sure if we would find graffiti writers to shoot and interview. So a very positive surprise was in Tallinn. We went to meet a couple of guys, but when we got to the meeting point there were at least ten guys waiting for us. They took us to see a former prison, a deserted factory building and a closed water tower. Best part of the whole project was maybe the long philosophical discussions we had with the writers in those weird deserted places. Most of that was never captured on camera."

"Graffiti is made by hand, it's really human. It is a complete contrast to all the clean and cold advertisement style. Walls with graffiti are changing all the time, new pieces are coming and going, covering the older paintings and getting covered by new ones. I like this anarchy and disorder, I think it's part of life. There's always anarchy in the nature. It's uncontrollable. So is a city in a way, and I think graffiti is a good example of that."



You can't hide love from gypsies 5'00"



Director

Mara Trifu

Cinematographer

Lucille Caballero

Original Music & Sound

Ando Naulainen

Editors

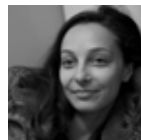
Maximilien Van Aetryck

Ando Naulainen

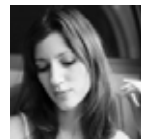
Alexandru Lungu

Put on your dancing shoes and pilot your spaceship into morning. A fortune teller reads the DJ's future in a coffee cup. Some crazy dog like hell is how it feels to live without love. You should be dancing, after tonight it's all over.

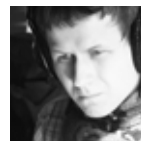
Mara Trifu (Romania) is 25 years old. She is a freelance visual artist from Transilvania. She is now living in Bucharest where she studies film directing



Lucille Caballero (France) is 26 years old. She is a photographer, now living in Paris. She studied Arts at the Paris I – La Sorbonne (2005) and Photography at the Ecole Nationale Supérieure Louis Lumière (2010)



Ando Naulainen (Estonia) is 23 years old. He is a freelance sound/video artist, from the island Saaremaa, now living in Tallinn and studying film sound.





"You have good reasons to show your happiness. Fantastic, you're a dog whisperer. Do you know what I mean?"

You Can't Hide Love From Gypsies is very personal film disguised as a colourful, experimental project. I think I was just very sad at that moment, that's why I came up with such an idea, about feeling estranged like an ever-faithful dog in a world of glitter. Actually, the first thing that drove my attention was the sad yellow dog in a club, a symbol for feeling alone and alienated. I built everything starting from this.

The most difficult thing for me was to decide about what I actually wanted to do, because I changed my mind completely in the middle of the journey, in Berlin. I decided to make this film only after the first half of the trip. So there was not much time left for creating the screenplay and organising the production. It all had to be done very quickly. It was very much about improvisation and taking fast decisions. Experimental films are the kind of approach that suits me the best at the moment. I consider myself a visual artist, not a film director. (*Mara Trifu, Director*)

This experimental approach came out organically after a small theme and topic crisis they underwent during their journey. The *dogs* footage led them to build an unknown character in search of belonging and a meaning to his life. Initially the team was preparing to shoot a documentary

about prostitution in Europe, but the idea quickly developed into something different.

Mara created the character of the unknown man calling the medium. In the beginning, she showed me which sequences she wanted to use in the film and after having played around with them a bit I called a medium in Germany playing the role of a German DJ who has a special relationship with his dog; he is persuaded that he understands his dog more than any other human. After the call was done, I cut the call into short and longer sentences that I thought would help in building an abstract narration, still giving the feeling of a conversation. Once the narration was built we tried out which images would function best.

While editing, the challenge was to reinforce the narration given by the voice with images. This was a rather easy task in the beginning, where we created a specific atmosphere that could mislead the audience. Then, everything was evolving around the image of the real dog and the man in his costume. We tried to connect them and set them in their own world. The atmosphere evolves in this sort of Luna Park environment where people are being put in situation, often lonely; nobody seems to go anywhere, while the woman's voice becomes more and more intimate and confident. We wanted a last scene that would throw you completely out of this universe: daylight, direct sound, and a screaming animal. (*Maximilien van Aertryck, Editor*)

Bachelor Party 15'20"



Is it possible to define Love with images? From Tallinn to Istanbul, a 'structureless' documentary: a collection of memories and traces, pieces of a colourful mosaic, recalling the most important steps of my own sentimental-education.

Luca Lucchesi (Italy) was born in Palermo, Italy in 1983. After the BA degree in Law Studies he moves to filmmaking, directing many short and documentary films. In 2010 he wins the Goethe Institut competition *Die Stadt im Blick* with the documentary film-project *Ohne Sonne – Hamburg*.

Mihai Marius Apopei (Romania) He is M.A. student in Cinematography at the National Film School of Bucharest, Romania. He started with a passion for photography and lately he won some cinematography prizes including Kodak Film School Competition.

Júlia Széphelyi (Hungary) Born in Budapest in 1982. She finished her studies at the University of Drama, Film and Television in Budapest. She has written scripts for features and short films; she has directed short films and several award-winning social advertisings.

Director:

Luca Lucchesi

Cinematographer:

Mihai Marius Apopei

Sound:

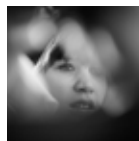
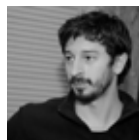
Júlia Széphelyi

Sound Mixing:

Niklas Kammertöns

Additional Camera:

Jerker Beckman



The difficulty of representing love in images

Luca Lucchesi, Director

Shooting is a travelling experience. No matter if you're stuck in a living room with a motionless character, no matter if you're just making the whole film with nothing but pictures from a family album. The moment you turn on your camera, you're already far away.

The route between Tallinn and Istanbul looked so big and extraordinary to me that I wasn't feeling prepared at all to go through it. That was the challenge of Istanbul Express. The more I was thinking about it beforehand, the more I was sure I was not going to manage it. There was a big issue to solve: how to film the story of a real journey? How to shoot a travelling experience? How does it feel to travel across a travelling experience? The challenge, indeed, was to travel TWICE. Something that only angels and saints can do - and since I'm neither I had to struggle hard trying to drive the two journeys together.

Following a suggestion I gave myself, I first focused on the shooting. I thought doing that was the most professional attitude I could offer to my crew and to the project. In two words: minimise everything. I have a topic (Love!), I have a route, I will make research on each city, I have a DoP and a sound designer, I have everything I need. But again... as the song goes... All you need is... Love. And Love this way, doing interminable interviews about it in the first three cities - always the same, always so nice, always so boring... Love was just missing!

The turning point - a sort of crossing of the two travelling-experiences - happened in Turku shortly before our departure on board the Love-boat to Stockholm. I was very disappointed with the shooting so far. My first strategy didn't work at all. I was misleading my film and, most importantly, I was not enjoying my journey. I was thinking all this on a bench outside of the hostel. I lit a cigarette but a voice froze me: "Love sucks sometimes, doesn't it?" That would become the beginning of my new film and, most of

all, pointed to the beginning of the most exciting journey of my life.

The solution was just there but I didn't dare to think about it before! It was, yeah, a double-journey but only ONE traveller got the tickets for both of them. That was me. It was clear: I could only bring my film to the final destination by digging deeply into my own experiences about Love and into my own experience of the road.

The travel became kaleidoscopic. No narrative structure could have represented my concept of Love. The only chapters I decided to allow in the storyline were my own images of Love: the first, the second, the worst, the dearest, the next one. In between, the various steps of a life today in Europe. Divorced grandpas and grandmas singing their blues in a karaoke bar, a bride and groom before the fatal "I do", slices of cities, couples, children in a nursery school listening to a fairytale before going to sleep.

Meeting Elias in Turku and listening to his open-hearted confessions about Love forced me to turn the camera, and the story, on myself. That was the most bizarre decision of my little film career. The most exciting so far.

This was such a personal project to director Luca Lucchesi that sound operator Julia Szephelyi does not hesitate to say:

"I realised the whole project was about group work and fun rather than professional filmmaking. The story was pretty personal, that's why Marius (the director of photography) and me didn't add anything to it. It belongs to Luca."

The only surprise concerning the shooting was the constant moving and the constant changing of lands, moods and point of views - I think, that's why so many directors were confused at the beginning. They should understand the situation first. The topic changed a lot during the trip but finally it changed back to the original plan and Luca started to feel better as he found the line, his personal story again."

Lost in Train Station 8'04"



Director & Script

Grzegorz Brzozowski

Cinematographer

Vefik Karaege

Sound & Editing

Bas Voorwinde

with

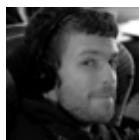
Sandor, Ludvig, Zanna, Kevin, Zdenka, Gary and many, many more strangers met in train stations

Lost in Train Station is a story of accidental encounters in a space where meeting a stranger is almost impossible. From Stockholm to Bucharest, a gallery of characters in local train stations pass by. They stop for a minute, trying to make some human connection. Who are they? What are they looking for? Will they succeed to meet someone?

Grzegorz Brzozowski (Poland) graduated from a documentary class at Andrzej Wajda Master School of Film Directing in Warsaw. Before filmmaking, he studied psychology, sociology and conflict studies at University of Warsaw and Utrecht University.

Vefik Karaege (Turkey) was born in Ankara. After five and a half tormenting years working in mechanical engineering, he started the "Film and Television" masters program in Anadolu University, but never finished. He has worked as a camera assistant and cinematographer.

Bas Voorwinde (The Netherlands) is a filmmaker who studied at the University College Utrecht and the New School in New York. He has mainly worked for VPRO Dorst and as freelancer in the audiovisual industry.





Questions to Grzegorz Brzozowski, director of *Lost in Train Station*:

How did you come up with the idea of representing the first moment strangers meet? The public is never really warned that some of these people were encouraged to talk to each other; we could just think that you happened to witness those scenes.

I combined film studies with sociology, and I am quite inspired by the French nouvelle vague and Jean Rouch, with his inclination for documenting really common people, like the ones we meet on the street. So the first idea came from a sociological insight into railway stations as one of these paradoxical modern spaces, where you have some of the biggest congestions of people and some of the smallest possibilities of actual interaction between strangers. When such a conversation really starts, it is some kind of a miracle. We decided to record these miracles - and sometimes incite them somehow by encouraging people to talk to each other. It was never staged though, as people were coming from these actual train stations and were actually waiting for trains there. And the outcome of their conversation was never predictable either.

Also: if we had waited for it to happen naturally, we would never have been able to finish the project within the super-dynamic Istanbul Express workshop - we usually had only one day in each city for shooting. We had to congest the reality a bit. So we just triggered some actions that some of the participants were actually hoping to do but were too shy to do themselves (like the older man trying to charm a girl in Tallinn).

You probably had a lot of material to select, since these

people are having ordinary conversations. What were the criteria for choosing the best images during editing?

Editing was a big challenge, and we discussed it a lot with Bas Voorwinde (editor) and Antoine Cattin (tutor). We decided to use the jump-cut technique to express the dynamism of these conversations. Within each scene we looked for the biggest amount of awkward interactions - misunderstandings, shyness, silence. Then we also tried to put the episodes in some meaningful order - from the most silent (when the participants are actually just looking) to the most talkative ones (the Romanian episode). It is quite peculiar, how the dynamic of these conversations reflected somehow the national character of our participants. In Finland it took about 10 minutes to incite the conversation! In Romania, our character did not want to quieten down even after we cut.

And how can you present your last scene, the only one without dialogues, and with the characters sitting back to back?

Well, I would obviously like to avoid giving any interpretation of the scene and leave it to the viewers. Let me just say that we found it quite a poetic and mysterious image: two very different people almost touching each other but still not sure to start talking. The awkwardness of this experience is somehow a common thing in everyone's life, and it tells everything without words; that is why we decided not to give the name of the station where it happened. However when the participants start to move and look for a good position to talk to each other, it starts to resemble some sort of flow or a little ballet. It is somehow magical, a promise of something to happen, but we never know where it will lead us. A splendid moment to capture on camera.

High High Mountains 15'00"



Director

Catalin Musat

Cinematographer

Vincent Bitaud

Sound

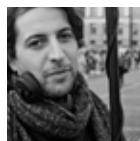
Nicolas Servide

A turkish traditional song travels all across Europe to Istanbul, crossing boundaries of language and culture, uniting people of different backgrounds.

Catalin Musat (Romania) Born in 1978 in Bucharest, Romania. He did a specialization in film directing at the University of Film and Drama in Bucharest. He has directed five short films that have been selected in more than ten international festivals.

Vincent Bitaud (France) Vincent was born in France in 1983. He graduated at Gobelins École de l'Image and then got a Master's degree as a multimedia designer. He has worked as a photographer all over Europe, winning five different group prizes for collective exhibitions.

Nicolas Servide (Denmark) Born in Argentina in the early 1980's. He works as a film and audio editor. He has studied sound design in Dublin and film in Barcelona, where he graduated in 2008 from the "Script writing and editing" line.



Yüksek Yüksek

Yüksek Yüksek Tepelere Ev Kurmasınlar
asiri asiri memlekete kız vermesinler
annesinin birtanesini hor gormesinler

uçan da kurlara malum olsun ben annemi ozledim
hem annemi hem babami ben koyumu ozledim
Ben koyumden ayrilali alti yil oldu,
koyumun dikenleri bana gul oldu.

babamin bir ati olsa binse de gelse
annemin yelkeni olsa uça da gelse
kardeslerin yollarimi bilse de gelse



High High Mountains

Don't let them build a home in the high mountains
Don't let them give girls (as bride) to faraway countries
Don't let them to disdain the mother's one and only

Let the flying birds sense this
I miss my mother
Both my mother and my father
I miss my village

I wish my father had a horse so he would ride it to come to me
I wish my mother had a sail so she'd set it to come to me
I wish my siblings had known my adress so they'd come to me

Catalin: Music is the universal language that transcends boundaries of language and land, so, it came out natural as the subject to portray that theme. I believe that music is a language beyond the one of words. Even if you don't understand what someone is singing, you listen to the song if you like it.

The team built up around the multilingualism theme and we went on the streets, to film people of different nationalities, uniting through music. We got much help from the volunteers in every city we filmed, they found for us musicians and players. We got along easy with these people simply because they are performers, and we were the audience, a small audience with camera and sound recording.

Nicolas We wanted the music to carry the atmosphere of the film; therefore, the sound design was down prioritized in comparison to the tunes from the band. The objective was to let the music from each city tell us something about the spirit of that culture. The challenge here was combining

all those –improvised– music takes into a seamless song, which combines both the nature of the original melody, and the flavors from the new interpreters.

In order to make our life a bit easier, we presented the original song to each new band with a cell-phone recording. That way, we got the bands practicing for a couple of takes in the original tempo and key. Then we took the original song away, and let them go their own way.

At the editing stage, we just had to decide how the progression would be, according to the textures and mood of each interpretation. It was definitely a great challenge to play around with such a famous song, and we were all the way very concerned about how Turkish audience will interpret the “remake”.

**thank you
aitäh
kiitos
tack
danke
dêkuji
dakujem
multumesc
tesekkurler**

Local Coordinators

Tallinn

Anu Aun
Merli Antsmaa
Nele Kukk
Suzanna Vatter
Mariell Raisma
Mari Kangur
Enrico Barone

Helsinki

Eero Erkamo
Lasse Lecklin
Emilia Lehtinen
Katri Myllyniemi
Johanna Kinnari

Turku

Emilia Lehtinen
Joona Kivirinta
Anu Kaaja

Stockholm

Maximilien Van Aertryck
Martin Thorbjörnsson

Berlin

Paula Redlefsen
Hetta Huhtamäki

Prague

Jass Seljamaa
Veronika Kührova

Bratislava

Eva Michalkova
Alex Boskovičová
Veronika Čechová
Jakub Viktorin
Simona Hrušovská
Ludwig Bagin
Katarína Mihalkovičová

Bucharest

Ana Agopian
Laura Chira
Raul Gheba
Raluca Croitoru
Sintia Radu
Olivia Baltasescu

Istanbul

Nesra Gurbuz
Onur Cocelli
Olgu Demir
Beril Sonmez

Local Volunteers

David Havas
Mari Kangur
Emilia Lehtinen
Katri Myllyniemi
Florin Tomisteanu
Radovan Dranga
Martin Thorbjörnsson

turin





Tutor

Boris Mitić (Serbia)

Born in 1977. Graduated in mass communication, fought a war, worked for top-level international media and dedicated the rest of his life to creative documentaries. His three films were shown at 150+ festivals. Lectures at film schools around the world. Started a new 5-year doc project about *Nothing*.



Producer

Vanja Kaludjercic (Croatia)

Born in Pula. Vanja has worked at Motovun Film Festival in Croatia and programmed the Human Rights Film Festival in Zagreb, Croatia. She also worked at Coproduction Office, Hulahop Film and Art production company and the World Festival of Animated Films – Animafest Zagreb.



Coordinator

Jerneja Rebernak (Slovenia)

Born in Slovenia in 1981. She has graduated in Communication science in 2004, and she is currently doing a Master in Media Studies. She worked until recently for the Asia Europe Foundation in Singapore and is now managing the Maribor Capital of Culture 2012 activities.

Urban Dialogue

POLIGRAD

Rui Silveira

Bela Lukac

Marcin Knyziak

Turkish in Europe

1001 Days

Olivier Jourdain

Zeynep Koprülü

Multilingual Love

Do You Really Love Me ?

Alastair Cole

Leo Bruges

Pyotr Magnus Nedov

Minorities vs. Official Language

Listen To Me

Iris Segundo García

Lea Silvia Moneta Caglio

Tuğçe Sönmez

Translation vs. Eurospeak

Say Hello In Slovio

May Abdalla

Niklas Küllstorm

François-Xavier Lesaffre

Boris Mitić

Dear blog / catalogue readers & anonymous commissioned-short-film lovers,

We, the Turin train, are slowly advancing, in joyful spirits and elated harmony with respect to the Balkan train experience – the nearer the goal, the further it stands; the shorter on time, the more it expands. Altogether though, we seem to be heading in the right direction, boldly guided by higher dramaturgy & fate.

The morale of the troops is... casual, sometimes even high. Some believe

to be on vacation and consider waking up, let alone filmmaking, a capital punishment; others are wisely reaping the benefits of early research & round-the-clock consulting. Some set up their shots for hours, others believe wobbly cameras are an acceptable price to pay for dodging the burden of tripods. Some are constantly rethinking their work, others are clinging to any piece of advice as a word of god. Some have triple PhDs, others still think school is not cool. Some write stylish diaries, others are boycotting every possible storage device in their heads.



Almost no one is taking notes about the learning process, at least not in real-time, but hopefully they will remember and appreciate it in the future. Many are vegans, while one girl 'doesn't like vegetables'. As we are entering carnivore Balkans, ordering food, which usually generates more enthusiasm than discussing films, will become even more time-consuming, pending serious gastronomical ultimata on my behalf.

Respect for the travel experience as a whole and for locals in particular (hosts, coordinators, fixers, waiters, drivers) has been equally understated, i.e. ranging from chronic touristic apathy to ephemeral docmakers empathy, so another extracurricular part of my job turns out to be creatively excusing myself on behalf of the whole group, so that the local volunteers feel less exploited. Again, tighter discipline is to be expected, especially as we enter my home territory and its own notorious ways. But hey, we are also drinking our kilometers away and sliding our way through many anecdotic turbulences, and yes, we're also making films.

From the initial dramaturgy sessions and wasted sunshine in Torino to the rainy shooting days in Ljubljana, from bed bugs & moments of truth in Zagreb to hedonistic thermal bath & goulash indulgence in Hungary, from Belgrade nightclubbing to Greek sailor havens, filmmaking was turned into an integrated, daily practice, just as it should be.

The main premise of the Istanbul Express project being "young filmmakers travelling low-budget, making highly-obstructed films with no budget, and relying solely on unpaid local coordinators & fixers", I would like to reiterate the following: young filmmakers travelling low-budget – OK; making thematically and temporally obstructed films as an exercise – OK; making them with no-budget – NOT OK [think trigonometry of the classic Good-Fast-Cheap triangle, where only 2 out of 3 options are possible at once] relying on probable unpaid coordinators & volunteer fixers – ABSOLUTELY NOT OK, for both us & them.

In real life, you should NOT accept to make documentaries under those conditions, nor expect others to devote their time, energy and limited research credits just for the sake of feeling altruistic.

In the end, it all worked out fine, despite of the above. All five of our films got selected for the Istanbul Express omnibus, and each had its own specific added value. The two groups that prepared the most suffered the most in editing -- life proved predictable indeed, but not editable enough. The last minute tectonic changes that had to be imposed were greatly cushioned by all the research and premeditation, but again, these would have been masterpieces without the artificially imposed limitations.

On the other hand, the team that took everything lightly, 'location scouting'

on bicycles all day long and waking up with the lunch hour church bell, ended up creating the most impressive film on the whole project – with one twist in the edit room. Minimalist tableaux, casual metaphysics and impressive sound effects work wonders, especially in short form. The trick, as shown, is to not make it gratuitous.

The group that was initially the most clueless about their story, discovered the strongest inner motivation as the director was instructed to take advantage her own special communicative skills, artistic expression and views on sexuality. Any topic, however stale, can be lit up from within.

Finally, the group that had the most 'personal' problems, i.e. a nervous breakdown of the director who eventually quit, came out with the most complete film, as the reduced 'crew' excelled in emergency multitasking, coming up with a pop-anthropology film idea halfway through the journey and imbuing it with the most humor and passion.

After the final whistle, I have only one thing to say: Congratulations to all, and my apologies for having been sometimes too demanding. Don't make films this way in the future, but don't waste any opportunity to learn either.

POLIGRAD 5'57"



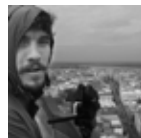
Director
Rui Silveira
Cinematographer
Bela Lukac
Sound Designer:
Marcin Knyziak

POLIGRAD is a vision of the City resulting from the synthesis made in the mind of a traveller by his focused itinerary through several Eastern European cities.

Rui Silveira (Portugal) was born in 1983 in Lisbon. He graduated in Communication Design at the University of Lisbon and has been working with video since then. He participated in several festivals including Rencontres Internationales and Camden International Film Festival.



Bela Lukac (Germany) Born in Berlin during the 80s. Experienced the changes of moving from city to city. Studied film in Cape Town, South Africa. Now advancing his filmmaking career in Vienna, Austria.



Marcin Knyziak (Poland) Born in the time of punk explosion. Spent far too many years in schools. Currently favors storytelling through the off screen sound.
www.makeaudio.co.uk





Marcin Knyziak, Sound Designer

Before we even set out for the road we agreed to follow tutor Boris Mitic's suggestion that there shouldn't be synchronised sound in our film. This was for me, as a sound recordist working mainly on fiction projects, a very liberating thought. It not only meant that I didn't have to take that much sound gear with me, but it also allowed me to explore the Balkans in my own audio-tourist way.

As for the music, very soon, on literally our first recording session we realized that we wanted to capture it with the surroundings. The music mix was done basically by moving musicians in the city space rather than faders on the mixing board. Later on we tried the same approach with all of the musicians that we met, asking them to play in the gardens, parking lots, playgrounds etc. The other thing that I included in the sound design was a Jacques Tati idea of replacing sounds (e.g. a ping pong ball for footsteps). It was a funny experiment as nobody seemed to realize that some sounds were not what they were intended to be.

Rui Silveira, Director

Since the beginning I didn't want to use people as the central element, I wanted to focus on cities and how they dialogue with each other and with their inhabitants.

During the preparation period we decided to shoot similar places in all the cities so we could blend them all together in the end. We decided to start shooting every city from above. We had beautiful images but along the editing process they ended up serving for research rather than for the final visuals. I had the idea of capturing the "insides" of the cities, inspired by Edward Hopper's paintings, so I worked with Bela Lukac to get steady long shots of street perspectives, shops and all the other subjects we had defined. Sometimes they were rather abstract and it was quite difficult to make myself understood. But at the end of our third city we all knew what we had to do.

Not coming from a cinema or a documentary background, I was a bit scared about not having a clear narrative line. It was a constant search, from the moon or daytime cycles, a children or a dog that would pass by on some of the images. Rather than conveying a message I was driven by the contemplation of the subject.

Bela Lukac, Cinematographer

I would say that the content developed out of the form of this film. The restrictions were very clear. The photography tripod was light, but unsteady, which means we couldn't pan or zoom, any touching of the camera made it shake. A handheld camera was never a question for us, as we were not looking for stories to follow. The camcorder had a nice picture, but we weren't able to change focus, while shooting. So all we could do is frame, shoot and wait.

As each framing had to be able to stand on its own, I tried to make each shot somehow graphically/geometrically interesting. Only like that could I bring a certain importance or structure to the image. As this film is still a documentary, I wasn't able to control what would happen within the image. To find the right images meant we travelled a lot in each city, by bike, foot, and bus, and were looking for images and sounds that we liked. Out of all the material we shot this film is probably just one out of many possible films, but one I like a lot for its simplicity.

1001 Days 10'44"



Director:

Olivier Jourdain

Cinematographer:

Olivier Jourdain

Sound Designer:

Zeynep Köprülü

Sound Mixing:

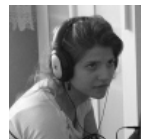
François-Xavier Lesaffre

Roland Boon

1001 Days follows the immense popularity of the Turkish soap opera '1001 nights' throughout the Balkans. This film focuses on hardcore fans met on the road between Zagreb and Istanbul. To which level can a fiction transform people's reality?

Olivier Jourdain (Belgium) Born in Brussels in 1981. After graduating in Social Communication and a getting a MA in Social Anthropology and Documentary Practice (London), he discovered his passion for Cinema, first as a movie editor at the Belgian Public TV, later on as a freelance documentary director.

Zeynep Köprülü (Turkey) Born in Istanbul in 1984, Zeynep graduated from Film &Television Master Program at Istanbul Bilgi University. She currently produces and directs her own short fiction and documentary films.



"The new Turkish mania has become so widespread in Greece that even in the first day of football's World Cup Binbir Gece captured 30.5 percent of viewers while the match between Uruguay and France caught just 28.2 percent. It is the first time that a soap beat the ratings of a soccer match in Greece. Certain travel agencies, determined to cash in on the show's popularity, are offering trips to Turkey following Shahrazad's paths. The number of Bulgarian tourists travelling to Turkey has increased by 40 percent. "They want to visit the places where TV series are made", Jelyazkova said. Zagreb school of foreign languages "Sjajna zvijezda" has registered their highest number of students' interest in the Turkish language: "Our new clients are mainly young women below 30 who are not afraid to admit being motivated by their favourite the TV series. They come having picked up a few words from the show, like "merhaba" (good day) or "iyi geceler" (good evening)", says the school's director Jasmin Selihovic."

(The Macedonian Truth)

Olivier Jourdain, Director

The idea to make a documentary about a Turkish TV soap came to me very spontaneously in Zagreb. I had no clue of its existence before so there was no plan basically. We started asking people in the streets to tell us the plot. I wanted to use some

"The love story between Scheherazade - a drop-dead-gorgeous and talented architect - and her boss Onur has mesmerised Croatian audiences. Called One Thousand and One Nights after the well-known collection of oriental stories that the enchanting protagonist Scheherazade tells to the cruel ruler in an attempt to prolong her life, the soap opera borrows not only the name but also the magic from its ancient predecessor. The show was also aired in Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kuwait, Romania, the Republic of Macedonia, Serbia, Greece, Montenegro and Bosnia & Herzegovina."

visual codes of a TV soap and let the story be told by the people who identify with the series, so that they would be some kind of actors of the series they love to watch.

When mentioning the name of the series or the main actors (Onur and Seherzad) people became hugely talkative, in a very frenetic way. You could feel there was something special about it. Then Zeynep Köprülü and me focused not just on mere fans, but started looking for hardcore fanatics. The idea was to find people who were strongly affected by the series. That's how we encountered interesting profiles for our film.

I have always loved subjects that gather a lot people, especially linked to the media. Usually the soaps are

"When it first appeared on Kanal D in Turkey in 2006, Binbir Gece both scandalised and enthralled audiences with its main plotline in which an architect, Sehzazat Evliyaoglu, reluctantly agrees to sleep with her boss, Onur Aksal, in exchange for the money she needs to afford a bone marrow transplant for her young, desperately ill son. Over time, romance blooms between the pair."

(SETimes)

destined for housewives, but the interesting thing with 1001 Days was that everybody, each generation, is watching it. The streets were literally empty during the show. I also think the series works as some kind of mirror of our own family lives. It reassures us or makes us experience something we don't have. The documentary doesn't speak about 1001 Nights in particular, it says a lot about ourselves. It is more a film about being a fan and how strongly we can be affected by the media that surrounds us.



Do You Really Love Me? 11'02"



Director
Alastair Cole
Cinematographer
Leo Bruges
Sound
Pyotr Magnus Nedov

A short, light hearted insight into the world of multilingual couples in Europe. The film follows six couples from across southern Europe into their worlds of language and love.

Alastair Cole (UK) is a New Zealand born documentary filmmaker. He has directed a collection of short documentary films dealing with topics around language, literacy and education in Africa, Europe and his current home in Scotland.

Leo Bruges (UK) is a Scottish based cinematographer with over 40 short film credits to his name. His work has encompassed award winning documentary films including as a cinematographer on *The Shutdown* and BBC screened *Motion/Static*.

Pyotr Magnus Nedov (Moldova) was born in 1982. He studied Celtic history, romance languages, and film. He is an author and filmmaker. He is currently working on his graduation film *Jarik's 7 days* at the Academy of Media Arts Cologne as well as on his novel *Sugarlife*.



"It's really basic international English that we use. It's not very comfortable. We started to have some problems, and it was really hard to discuss them because of the linguistic problem. Nowadays we stop and we exchange e-mails, we speak in e-mails. I write down or he writes down and then we explain. Because it's easier than just go and shout something that the other person doesn't understand."

Alastair Cole, Director:

During the original planning of the project one of the suggested options was 'multilingual love'. I have been in a multilingual relationship for a while so immediately the idea of making a film around the subject was interesting for me personally. The idea of using a poem to link the various couples across the trip actually was originally conceived as a piece of theatre text, but as it happened the poem that we used was somewhat more universal as a text and was great to translate into all the languages we had along the way.

How did you meet and choose these couples? *We did public calls through various online networks like Facebook and Couchsurfing, and got a pretty great response. Finally, we also filmed couples that were organised by local fixers; some were even their friends and families so access was made a bit easier. We actually shot 13 couples or single stories over the course of the trip before we decided*



on the final 6 we were to use. Originally we requested any couples that were in a multilingual relationship and interested in chatting to us about their thoughts on language and love, aiming to film two couples in each city. Although you have a natural tendency with this sort of film to try and tick the archetypal boxes for couples and do a sort of overview of relationship types, we really tried to find couples with interesting stories and language combinations above all else. The focus of the film for us was language rather than relationships, so although finally we did end up with couples to cover a variety of stages of relationships which was a nice addition, we really tried to keep that second to the themes of language and love.

What were the difficulties and surprises found during the shooting and editing? *Working to such a manic time schedule really made the film-making process tough at times. Editing in a hotel room for four days without sleep while Turkish dance parties roared*

outside, doing final sound mixing in toilets at 6am, and making subtitles one hour before screenings all probably aren't ideal film-making scenarios. However, the warmth and openness of the couples we met along the way, who without fail greeted us with great hospitality and normally a bottle ready on the table, was a great surprise. Also the linguistic barriers really weren't as big a problem as we had anticipated, between fixers, crew, friends and the couples themselves we managed to negotiate our way around 15 different languages, surprisingly without too much headache.

We had a scary amount of footage, over 20 hours for a 10-minute film, which is madness really. As the edit was so tight time wise we really had to pick and choose from the outset without giving too much thought to trying various things out. Seeing the film and the way it's edited is a nice reminder of the whole trip.

Listen to me 10'45"



Director

Iris Segundo García

Cinematographer

Léa Silvia Moneta Caglio

Sound

Tuğçe Sönmez

Editor

Iris Segundo García

With

Vanda Šagovac, Lea Starčević, Koča Popović
Dušan Nikolić, Katarina Nikolić, Aleksandra Denić

In a loud world among noisy people there are some of us who use their hands to communicate. Serbian and Croatian deaf people sign about their dreams and fears, the feelings about their world and how they interact with their hearing friends, partners and family. A sensitive documentary about a community which shouts for understanding and integration.

Iris Segundo García (Germany) was born in Madrid in 1986. She has written, directed, produced and edited fiction short films, documentaries and video arts, which have been screened in various international film festivals and art exhibitions.



Léa Silvia Moneta Caglio (Germany) was born in Milan in 1987. She came to documentary filmmaking late in her studies. She has worked on projects all around the world that could broaden her knowledge of humankind and her own consciousness. Since 2009 she is based in Berlin.



Tuğçe Sönmez (Turkey) was born in Ankara in 1988. She graduated in Industrial Design at the Middle East Technical University in 2010. She has been working on several film productions as a camera assistant and sound designer.



The first time I went to a club for deaf people, I was shocked. Everybody was talking in sign language and I hadn't learned it. I felt like a stranger. All these people were asking me: "But are you deaf?" I answered: "Yes, yes, yes!"

*Léa Silvia Moneta Caglio,
Cinematographer*

We had a couple of difficulties with the interviewees at the very beginning. In Ljubljana we met by chance two deaf people in the hostel. Even though the film director, Iris, was very tactful and sensitive to explain the project, the interview was cancelled at the very last moment. It was just too improvised. But once we communicated our turning point in the project to the NISI MASA partners around Balkans, everything happened very easily. Thanks to the runners, and thanks above all to the great networking deaf people communities have.

Some welcomed us in their place of work, others even in their house. They were very willing to share their experiences, to help other deaf people be more self-confident, and hearing people to deal with deaf relatives and to be more interested in their issues. Normally I would expect more resentment toward hearing people, because of all what the hearing impaired have been through on account of the oral culture monopoly. But many of the interviewees were also able to speak

the official language of their country, and were feeling all right with it. The people we interviewed were very well integrated, one was a tourist guide, another one was designer, painter or owner of her own beauty center. It would have been already something to encounter such successful stories in an established deaf community like the French one is supposed to be. But in the Balkans, it was really unexpected! They were really well organized, and aware of their rights.

Something that appears to me obvious now, but wasn't at the beginning of the experience, is the frame you have to keep so that the person is able to express herself properly. Starting from the chest up till the head. Hands and face expressions and gestures are really important. If you take only a detail, you will lose the speech; signs can then be misunderstood, since the frame misses a part of them. The face expressions help also to their interpretation. What we, hearing persons, get mostly through the voice's intonation.

I would say that the last cut was a lot determined by all these things above. I mean the non use of many hours of footage we had with the characters outside of the interview situation. To alternate interview and footage, without a voice-over that would have denaturalized the characters, was hard to imagine - especially with the short length we had at our disposal!



Say Hello in Slovio 6'16"



Mark Hucko dedicated his life to the invention of a new language with which he hoped to unite all Slav people. He claims his Slovio, 'a Slavic esperanto', can be innately understood by some 400 million people 'from the Baltic to the Balkans and the borders of Finland to those of Japan. Say Hello in Slovio travels through this divided territory to test his incredible claim and finds a world not quite ready to run with his utopian dream.

Director

May Abdalla

Cinematographer

Niklas Kullström

Sound

Fx Unguest Lesaffre

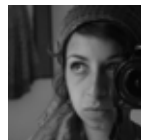
With

Mark Hucko

May Abdalla (UK) is a documentary film director whose character-driven films touch on the absurd and ordinary in people's lives. Past films have included following the rites of passage of Syrian children over a school year, and touring with a bus full of Muslim punks across the US for the BBC.

Niklas Kullström (Finland) Niklas has studied Art, Aesthetics and Philosophy, with specializations on film studies, film editing and photography. He has worked as a cinematographer in several music videos, short films, feature films and television series.

François-Xavier Lesaffre (France) FX learned soundcraft in the underground rock scene, working in alternative venues all over Europe. In 2008, he discovered the Kino-Session network. He bought a boom and a handy sound recorder and took part in the great little cinema experience..



Conversation with director May Abdalla and cinematographer Niklas Kullström

How did you meet the man responsible for creating Slovio?

May Abdalla: Mark Hucko had set up a website for Slovio and I came across it during one of those strange hyperlinking journeys you sometimes have on the Internet. Looking into the background, I discovered that Mark had also created a science of immortality. I was intrigued by a man with such futuristic obsessions, got in touch and we chatted on Skype before we finally met in his flat in Bratislava.

two letters to the alphabet last year and Bosnia still has no official language.

Do you think a common language would be interesting to have people understand each other?

Niklas Kullström: I think *Say Hello in Slovio* tries to highlight some of the issues found between nationalities in mainly the former Yugoslavia through language, and put an emphasis on how important language can be in the shaping of identity. On the other hand there is also the aspect of unity through a common language and understanding through communication. I would say

of thought. It affects the way songs are written and sung or the way books and poetry are written. A Japanese haiku and a sonnet by Shakespeare could only have been conceived through the specific parameters built by those different languages.

The current version of *Say Hello in Slovio* is meant to be a light-hearted take on the difficulties of communication in different languages, and one man's quest to solve this problem, at least for all the Slavic tribes (as one of our subjects put it). Humour is a construction tied into *Say Hello in Slovio* in order to lighten its



Mark claims he's had hundreds of people contact him, and there are some cult fans out there in cyberspace as well as vociferous critics, including a Dutch competitor with his own pan-Slavic language. The world of invented languages is full of deception and intrigue. Slovio is a provocative idea, ideologically, politically, linguistically and especially in the ex-Soviet bloc where experimentation with a shared language and identity hangs in recent memory. Language is political and part of nationalisms even now. In Croatia there is a biannual nationwide competition for new Croatian words, distinguishing the language from old Serbo-Croat. Montenegro added

that *Say Hello in Slovio* represents both cultural diversity and unity between Slavonic people. The unanswered question of the film would be if Slovio could do anything to bridge the divide between people, or if it would broaden it?

Culture and language are strongly intertwined with each other. Families of language work in building cultural blocks all around the world that share common traits specific for that language group. For example the Scandinavian languages, Spanish and Portuguese in Latin America and Arabic languages in the Middle-East. Language also affects speech patterns, intonation and ways

mood, build up a structure and give it a pace. The large array of different characters and their different opinions contribute to opportunities of humoristic juxtaposition, but the serious undercurrent of conflict through language is still running beneath the dialogue. Mark works as a kind of catalyst for all the action and he is also the one who has potential to bring his quest to a finish. Where Slovio and Mark will go from here (the end of *Say Hello in Slovio*) is however an unwritten chapter.

thank you

grazie

hvala

hvala

köszönöm

hvala

blagodaram

efcharisto

tesekkurler

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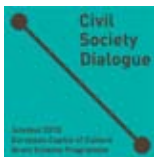
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In collaboration with:

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Turkish Embassy Tallin



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The Istanbul Express Project



20/09 to 16/10 2010

İSTANBUL EXPRESS

EXPLORING MULTILINGUALISM ACROSS EUROPE



NİSİ MASA

WWW.NISI.MASA.COM

NISI MASA

European Network of Young Cinema
Réseau européen du jeune cinéma

NISI MASA is a European network gathering hundreds of young film enthusiasts in 19 countries (across the EU as well as in the neighbouring states of Croatia, Macedonia, Kosovo, Turkey and Russia). Composed of national organisations with different profiles, its members consist of young Europeans sharing a common passion: cinema.

The association was founded in 2001. The name 'NISI MASA' is a reference to the film 8 ½ by Federico Fellini, in which Marcello Mastroianni repeats the phrase Asa Nisi Masa. The film, a European cinema classic, and the sentence, an incantation belonging to no specific language, both reflect the cinematic and cross-border spirit of the network.

Our aims

- To discover & promote new film talents
- To foster European awareness through the means of cinema
- To develop cross-cultural cinema projects
- To create a platform of discussion and collaboration for young European filmmakers.

Our main activities

Throughout the year, NISI MASA organizes various events all over Europe, involving hundreds of film buffs & talents: scriptwriting and directing workshops, seminars, film screenings, etc. NISI MASA also publishes DVD compilations of short films and books as a result of its activities,

as well as a daily magazine (www.nisimazine.eu) during different film festivals alongside our monthly newsletter Nisimazine.

We are a non-profit organisation supported, amongst others, by the European Union, the Council of Europe, the European Cultural Foundation, the Allianz Cultural Foundation and the Fondation de France. Each project is organised by one or several member associations. All activities are coordinated by a central European Secretariat, based in Paris, France.

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The NISI MASA network is composed of:

Albania - First Step Association
Austria - kino5
Bulgaria - SEVEN
Croatia - Kinoklub Zagreb
Croatia - Palunko
Czech Republic - Fresh Film Fest
Estonia - NISI MASA Estonia
Finland - Euphoria Borealis ry
France - NISI MASA France
Germany - filmArche
Germany - Munich Film Society
Hungary - NISI MASA Hungary
Italy - Franti NISI MASA Italia
Kosovo - 7arte
Lithuania - Kaunas International Film Festival
Luxembourg - Filmreakter
Macedonia - Cre8ive8
Netherlands - Breaking Ground
Portugal - FEST – Associação Cultural
Romania - Control N
Russia - Moviemment
Slovakia - Early Melons
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Spain - Cinestlesias
Sweden - NISI MASA Sweden
Turkey - NISI MASA Turkey
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10

NISI MASA is celebrating
its tenth year
of activities
in 2011

