Generation 2017: Celebrating 40 Years of Film Programming for Young Audiences at the Berlinale

Description

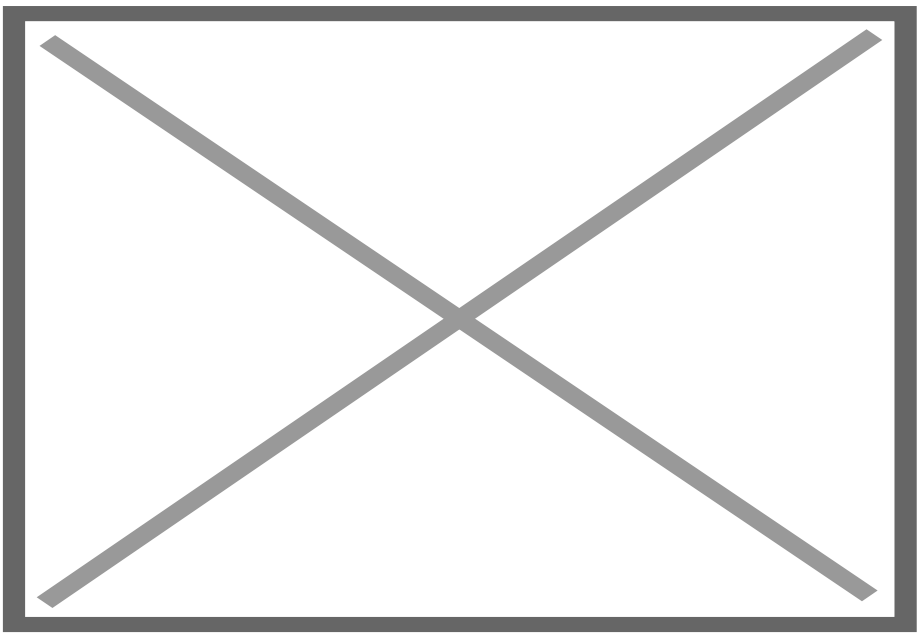
Posted by Larry Gleeson

Forty years ago, the Berlinale launched the festival programme for the young cineastes. From the beginning the concept was embraced and celebrated by its target audiences and consequently expanded through the establishment of a further competition programme catering to adolescents. Since 2007, the *Generation* section has united the *Kplus* and *14plus* competitions together under one roof and provided an opportunity not only for young people to participate in the greater conversation on cinema and culture that the festival represents.

In 2017, a grand total of 62 short and feature-length films hailing from 41 countries of production will take part in the *Generation Kplus* and *Generation 14plus* competitions. Both programmes feature a wide range of thematic concerns and aesthetic approaches. Animated productions rich in contrast, quiet observations, iconoclastic collages and sensitive dramas signalise the programme. Drawn from life, the films demonstrate the experiential horizons of young people â?? their desires and dreams, those things they wish to leave behind, those things that bind them and of their sense of longing to explore other realms.

Maryanne Redpath, head of the Generations section of the Berlin International Film Festival (Photo via berlinale.de)

â??Our world is not in great shape. Often this means children and adolescents are left on their own and have to search for solutions and ways out of their predicaments. *Generation* shows young people on the move, crossing boundaries and tearing down walls, erecting barricades and overcoming them. Everything is in motion,â?• comments section head Maryanne Redpath in regard to this yearâ??s programme.



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Ceux qui font les rÃ©volutions Ã moitiÃ© nâ??ont fait que se creuser un tombeau (*Those Who Make Revolution Halfway Only Dig Their Own Graves*) by Mathieu Denis and Simon Lavoie

Documentary Forms

The programme is enriched by a great variety of approaches to documentary filmmaking. Diverse methods of presentation are utilised by filmmakers in the observation of their subjects. Ever vigilant but never intrusive, they reflect upon the wider topics of our times by capturing intimate portraits. They provide privileged insight into closed-off spaces and direct our attention to the all too easily overlooked. They are always on the move, in search of images of the world and opportunities to render the invisible visible for all to see.

Short Films at *Generation*

In the short film competitions, *Generation* is presenting productions from a total of 28 countries. The three *Kplus* short film programmes are colourful, sensitive and serious; the young protagonists face the challenges life has set before them with great bravery, staking out new spaces for themselves with growing self-confidence. With strong contrasts and brisk pacing, explosive and soothing moments and no lack of twists and turns, the two *14plus* short film programmes also pay tribute to the contradictory nature of our world.

***Kplus* Opening Film**

The *Generation Kplus* competition will open at the Haus der Kulturen der Welt with a screening of *Red Dog: True Blue* by Kriv Stenders. *Generation* looks forward to starting the sectionâ??s 40th anniversary edition with a bang in the presence of the Australian director and his cast.

Generation 14plus

In addition to the previously announced selections, including the opening film for *14plus*, Michael Winterbottomâ??s *On the Road*, the following productions have also been invited to screen at *Generation 14plus*.

Ben Niao (The Foolish Bird)

The Peopleâ??s Republic of China
By Huang Ji, Ryuji Otsuka
World premiere

For the sake of her mother, who lives far away, withdrawn Lynn searches for a way to be accepted into the local police academy. At the same time, the 16-year-old gets caught up in a criminal mess involving stolen cell phones. Huang Ji and Ryuji Otsuka (*The Warmth of Orange Peel*, *Generation* 2010) employ precise imagery to tell a story of isolation and lack of perspective in a small Chinese city marked by corruption, sexual violence and the all-permeating presence of new media.

Freak Show

USA
By Trudie Styler
World premiere

Somewhere between David Bowie, Lady Gaga, Freddy Mercury and Oscar Wilde, Billy has carved out his own spot in the sparkling firmament of pop culture. Though the denizens of his conservative surroundings find all this markedly less fabulous, Billy has no intention of deviating from his plan to campaign for the role of Homecoming Queen at his school. What at first seems a high school caper transforms into a bombastic yet nuanced drama, one which earns the attribution that Billy himself has also claimed as his own: trans-visionary. Aside from Alex Lawtherâ??s brilliant performance, Bette Midler, Laverne Cox, Larry Pine and Ian Nelson also shine in this one-of-a-kind film.

Loving Lorna

Sweden
By Annika Karlsson, Jessica Karlsson
International premiere

In Ballymun, a poor suburb of Dublin, horses have been an integral part of everyday life for generations. 17-year-old Lornaâ??s family is no exception. Lorna would like to become a farrier after she finishes school, if only she werenâ??t plagued by a bad back. In this poetic study, the two Swedish directors paint a portrait of a young woman in search of happiness, fulfilled dreams and her own proper place in the world.

NÃ£o devore meu coraÃ§Ã£o! (*Donâ??t Swallow My Heart, Alligator Girl!*)

Brazil / The Netherlands / France
By Felipe BraganÃ§a
European premiere

The Rio Apa, the river marking the border between Paraguay and Brazil, serves as the central setting for this visually stunning, modern and powerful Romeo and Juliet story of the relationship between 13-year-old Joca and the mysterious GuaranÃ girl, Basano. BraganÃ§a tells his tale of an adolescent â??amour fouâ?• against the backdrop of contemporary conflicts concerning land theft and cultural identity. His fiction feature debut makes a strong impression on the big screen also through the successful use of both young Brazilian stars and local non actors.

Poi E: The Story of Our Song

New Zealand
By Tearepa Kahi
European premiere

The incredible story of a Maori pop song that took New Zealandâ??s charts by storm quite unexpectedly in 1984. Back in those days it was a near miracle for a piece of traditionally inspired music to become so popular. That is, until singer Dalvanius Prime, an imposing Maori with a powerfully smooth voice, and the singers of the Patea Maori Club came along. Prime had long been into soul â?? but now he combined the Maori-language song with modern beats and rap on stage. The media would have preferred to pretend he didnâ??t exist. Alas, both the song and video managed to become cult hits and helped many Maoris â?? especially young folks â?? to gain a new sense of self along the way.

The Inland Road

New Zealand
By Jackie van Beek
World premiere

On a road running through the New Zealand countryside, a fatal accident brings 16-year-old Tia together with expectant dad Will. Along with Willâ??s pregnant wife Donna and four-year-old Lily, a finely spun and electrifying drama about wounds both visible and invisible unfolds. This beautifully shot, atmospherically dense work is New Zealand native Jackie van Beekâ??s feature film debut as a director. Berlinale audiences have been able to enjoy her comedic and acting talents previously (*What We Do in the Shadows*, *Generation* 2014) as well as her work as a short film director (*Go the Dogs*, *Generation* 2011).

***Shkola nomer 3* (*School Number 3*)**

Ukraine / Germany
By Yelizaveta Smith, Georg Genoux
World premiere

Thirteen adolescents from a rebuilt school in South Ukrainian Donbass relate their hopes and fears. In rigorously composed shots, the documentary film shows the protagonists in their everyday environment, while they tell of experiences that move them, of nascent new loves and personal loss alike. The war is often only immediately perceptible on the periphery, yet it makes its presence felt as an unavoidable frame of reference. The puristic way in which it is shot renders the overall impression made by Yelizaveta Smith and Georg Genouxâ??s film all the more haunting.

***Soldado* (*Soldier*)**

Argentina
By Manuel Abramovich
World premiere

Following orders, rehearsing snappy marches and running through more drills than you can shake a drum stick at. A 19-year-old Argentinian man goes off into the army, where he becomes a drummer in a military band. A measured but poignant study of the collision between young individuality and military uniformity, which expands on the contradictions and uncertainties of entering into adulthood within the constraints of a rigid hierarchy. A coming-of-age story set in a â??total institutionâ?•.

Already announced in the previous press release:

Almost Heaven, United Kingdom, Carol Salter â?? WP
Butterfly Kisses, United Kingdom, Rafael Kapelinski â?? WP
***Ceux qui font les rÃ©volutions Ã moitiÃ© nâ??ont fait que se creuser un tombeau* (*Those Who Make Revolution Halfway Only Dig Their Own Graves*)**, Canada, Mathieu Denis, Simon Lavoie â?? EP
Emo the Musical, Australia, Neil Triffett â?? IP
***Mulher do pai* (*Nalu on the Border*)**, Brazil / Uruguay, Cristiane Oliveira -IP
My Entire High School Sinking into the Sea, USA, Dash Shaw â?? EP
On The Road, United Kingdom, Michael Winterbottom, screening out of competition â?? IP â?? opening film for *14plus*
***Krolewicz Olch* (*The Erlprince*)**, Poland, Kuba Czekaj â?? EP
Weirdos, Canada, Bruce McDonald â?? EP

Generation Kplus

Amelie rennt (*Mountain Miracle â?? An Unexpected Friendship*)

Germany / Italy
By Tobias Wiemann
World premiere

Headstrong Amelie is the queen of cursing â?? at her parents, her patronising doctors and her damn asthma above all else. During a forced stay in a special clinic in South Tirol she suddenly decides to run away. During the arduous trek up the mountain she not only gains an unsolicited travelling companion, she is also confronted by risky trials of courage and the overwhelming tingle of first love. An emotional roller-coaster ride.

Becoming Who I Was

Republic of Korea
By Moon Chang-Yong, Jeon Jin
International premiere

Angdu is not your average boy, he is Rinpoche. In a past life he was actually a venerable Buddhist master. Together with his carer, he sets out one day on foot from India to distant Tibet, the centre of his faith. Questions about friendship and life in general accompany the duo on their trek through the awe-inspiring landscape of the remote alpine region. With its narrative approach steeped in a serene sense of concentration, this film, composed over a period of eight years, is a fundamental experience in its own right.

Estiu 1993 (*Summer 1993*)

Spain
By Carla SimÃ³n
World premiere

Summer in Catalonia, 1993. For six-year-old Frida, the death of her mother means the beginning of a whole new life. In the loving care of her uncle and his family far away from her home in Barcelona, she first has to get used to her new life in the countryside. Moments of childish mischievousness turn into thoughtful detachment. Despite the summery atmosphere, serious undertones underlie this precocious

coming-of-age drama. The inevitable consequences of AIDS, in those days still incalculable, have induced in gentle images Carla SimÃ³nâ??s (*Berlinale Talents* alumna) stunning debut feature film.

Oskars Amerika (*Oskarâ??s America*)

Norway / Sweden
By Torfinn Iversen
World premiere

Torfinn Iversenâ??s feature debut is based on motifs and characters first explored in his short film *Leviâ??s Horse* (*Generation*, 2012). Now this moving portrait of an unusual friendship can be enjoyed at length on the big screen. Oskarâ??s deepest wish is to be able to ride on the prairie with his mother over summer break. But alas, everything turns out differently than expected and the 10-year-old is forced to spend his vacation on his grumpy grandfatherâ??s farm. Oskarâ??s only friend is the outsider Levi, who talks with his pony. Together they hatch a plan to get away from their grim reality: theyâ??ll row across the Atlantic to America in Grandfatherâ??s boat!

Piata LoÄ• (*Little Harbour*)

Slovak Republic / Czech Republic / Hungary
By Iveta GrÃ³fovÃ¡
World premiere

Crushed by her motherâ??s lack of affection for her, ten-year-old Jarka stumbles upon two abandoned infants. Together with her neighbour, 8-year-old Kristian, she lovingly cares for the tiny twins in what becomes a welcome escape from her own dysfunctional family situation. The Slovakian directorâ??s film is an adaptation of a novel by Monika KompanÃkovÃ¡, in which children assume the roles of adults. The story, sensitively told from the childrenâ??s perspective, employs dynamic imagery to trace the universal desire for family and a sense of emotional security and belonging.

Uilenbal (*Owls & Mice*)

The Netherlands
By Simone van Dusseldorp
International premiere

Meral is new in town and the first friend she makes is her little grey housemate: the mouse Peepeep. On a school trip both are confronted by the wonder and challenges of life. Meral is forced to watch as her beloved new buddy is swept up by an owl. In spite of this frightening development, through rocking musical numbers, owl pellets and the wonders of life in the woods Meral learns to understand the meaning of true friendship. Dutch director Simone von Dusseldorp will celebrate with this *Generation*

highlight for young audiences.

***Upp i det blÃ¥* (*Up in the Sky*)**

Sweden
By Petter Lennstrand
International premiere

Pottanâ??s stressed-out parents actually wanted to drop her off at summer camp, but somehow the 8-year-old ends up at a scrapyard inhabited by extremely odd residents instead. Together the gang is hard at work building a homemade spaceship so that they can blast off for the stars. In his feature film debut, complete with a healthy dose of humour and a great appetite for adventure, television producer and puppeteer Petter Lennstrand tells a tale of unexpected friendships and what they can enable us to accomplish.

Wallay

France / Burkina Faso / Qatar
By Berni Goldblat
World premiere

When his father sends him off to Burkina Faso to visit relatives, 15-year-old Ady is excited at the prospect of being able to enjoy a laid-back vacation in his native land. Alas, on arrival the young man is met with a chilly reception and it soon becomes clear to him that his trip is not going to be the pleasant break from life back home that he expected. Swiss director Berni Goldblat approaches his feature film debut with the sharp eye of a documentary filmmaker in this depiction of everyday life in his adopted West African home of Burkina Faso.

Already announced in the previous press release:

***As duas Irenes* (*Two Irenes*)**, Brazil, Fabio Meira â?? WP
***Die HÃ¤schenschule â?? Jagd nach dem Goldenen Ei* (*Rabbit School â?? Guardians of the Golden Egg*)**, Germany, Ute von MÃ¼nchow-Pohl â?? WP
***Primero enero* (*January*)**, Argentina, DarÃo Mascambroni â?? EP
Red Dog: True Blue, Australia, Kriv Stenders â?? EP
Richard the Stork, Germany / Belgium / Luxembourg / Norway, Toby Genkel, Reza Memari â?? WP
Tesoros, Mexico, MarÃa Novaro â?? WP
***Shi Tou* (*Stonehead*)**, Peopleâ??s Republic of China, Zhao Xiang â?? WP

Short Films *Generation 14plus*

After the Smoke, Australia, Nick Waterman â?? WP
In a Nutshell, Switzerland, Fabio Friedli â?? WP
***La prima sueca* (*Swedish Cousin*)**, Argentina, InÃ©s MarÃa Barrionuevo, Agustina San MartÃn â?? WP
***LibÃ©lula* (*Firefly*)**, Mexico, JosÃ© Pablo Escamilla GonzÃ¡les AragÃ³n â?? IP
Milk, Lithuania, Daria Vlasova â?? WP
Morning Cowboy, Spain, Fernando Pomares â?? WP
***Sheva Dakot* (*Seven Minutes*)**, Israel, Assaf Machnes â?? IP
Sirens, Monaco, Emmanuel Trousse, screening out of competition â?? WP
Smashed, Australia, Sean Lahiff â?? WP
SNIP, Canada, Terril Calder â?? EP
The Jungle Knows You Better Than You Do, Columbia / Belgium, Juanita Onzaga â?? WP
***U Plavetnilo* (*Into the Blue*)**, Croatia / Slovenia / Sweden, Antoneta Alamat Kusijanovic â?? WP
White Riot: London, United Kingdom, Rubika Shah â?? EP
Wolfe, Australia, Claire Randall â?? WP

Short Films *Generation Kplus*

***1Minuutje natuur* (*1Minute of Nature*)**, Netherlands, Stefanie Visjager, Katinka Baehr â?? IP
***Aaba* (*Grandfather*)**, India, Amar Kaushik â?? WP
***Der kleine Vogel und die Raupe* (*The Little Bird and the Caterpillar*)**, Switzerland, Lena von DÃ¶hren â?? WP
***DziedoÅ¡ais Hugo un viÅ?a neticamie piedzÄ«vojumi* (*Singing Hugo and His Incredible Adventures*)**, Latvia, Reinis Kalnaellis â?? WP
***Em busca da terra sem males* (*In Search of the Land Without Evil*)**, Brazil, Anna Azevedo â?? WP
***Engitengâ?? Narok Lukunya* (*Black Head Cow*)**, USA, Elizabeth Nichols â?? EP
HedgehogÂ´s Home, Canada / Czech Republic, Eva Cvijanovic â?? WP
Jazzoo, Sweden, Adam Marko-Nord â?? IP
Li.le, Georgia, Natia Nikolashvili â?? WP
***Min Homosyster* (*My Gay Sister*)**, Sweden / Norway, Lia Hietala â?? IP
***Odd er et egg* (*Odd is an Egg*)**, Norway / Portugal, Kristin Ulseth â?? IP
Promise, USA, Xie Tian â?? IP
Sabaku, Netherlands, Marlies van der Wel â?? IP
***Terrain de jeux* (*Playground*)**, France, Maxence Lemonnier â?? WP
The Catch, Canada, Holly Brace-Lavoie â?? WP
The Dress on Her, Taiwan, Wen Chih Yi- WP
***VulkÃ¡nsziget* (*Volcanoisland*)**, Hungary, Anna Katalin Lovrity â?? WP
***XalÃ© Bu RÃ©rr* (*Lost Child*)**, Senegal, Abdou Khadir Ndiaye â?? WP

(Source: Berlinale Press Office)

Category

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2. Venice International Film Festival

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