

LUX

The European
Audience
Film Award
2021



LUX
AUDIENCE AWARD



EUROPEAN FILM - OUR STORIES, OUR SOUL

As European citizens, we are born into a story. A story of great cultural differences and historic richness. This background influences the way we experience life. It has an impact on how we cope with daily challenges. How we laugh, how we love, how we grieve. How we deal with what happens on our journey.

European identity is more than the sum of our cultural differences. It embraces differences and enables us to contribute to building a society based on respect, dignity and above all understanding. Because understanding is the key to acceptance.

The European Parliament mirrors the cultural diversity of all citizens in the EU. Likewise, the European Film Academy (EFA) embodies the diversity of European film culture. By jointly promoting the new LUX Audience Award, the European Parliament and the EFA are celebrating European films that illustrate this diversity in an emotional and touching way. Through the LUX Film Days, these stories are made accessible to the people they were created for, allowing a borderless debate to flourish.

We are, despite everything, all connected by our values. Strengthening them is not only our fundamental right, but is also a legacy for future generations.

Building bridges is the best way to reinforce democracy. Culture should remain a pillar of mutual respect and cinema should be its lingua franca.

LUX Audience Award

LUX
AWARD
.EU

LUX - THE EUROPEAN AUDIENCE FILM AWARD

Standing up for cinema and culture that truly connect people has never been as important as it is now, in the midst of a global pandemic. Against this challenging backdrop, the European Parliament and the European Film Academy, together with their partners, are proud to present a newly minted film award.

‘LUX – the European Audience Film Award’ by the European Parliament and the European Film Academy (EFA), launched in September 2020, is the successor to the LUX Film Prize, established by the European Parliament in 2007, and the EFA’s People’s Choice Award, introduced in 1997.

With this revamped award, the European Parliament and the EFA, in partnership with the European Commission and Europa Cinemas, are celebrating filmmakers who bring European stories to our screens.

The aim is to encourage you, the viewers, to discover the best of European cinema and engage with cinematic stories written and shot by European storytellers and directors with you in mind.

You are invited to become part of the biggest European jury ever by rating the nominated films. Together with the Members of the European Parliament, you can take part in a debate and decide which is the most influential, touching story. The film you choose might reflect certain emotions, it might tell a story about a fight for change or a cause, or it might depict a spiritual journey. It might also capture your imagination with its outstanding characters, masterful camera work or settings, landscapes or topics. It might engage you by telling a story you can relate to, by depicting a situation you are particularly familiar with or by helping you to make new discoveries. It does not matter which film you choose; we just want you to **HAVE YOUR VOICE HEARD!**



LUX
AWARD
.EU

WATCH & VOTE



▶ 23/05/21
LUXAWARD.EU

WE WANT YOU TO HAVE YOUR VOICE HEARD! HOW?

Visit www.luxaward.eu and give each of the films you have seen one to five stars. You can change your rating multiple times until the vote closes on 23 May 2021. The film with the highest average rating wins.

Stay tuned as it could be you who gets randomly selected to attend the LUX Audience Award Ceremony in Strasbourg, where you will have the chance to meet the film crews and Members of the European Parliament, and where you will be able to go behind the scenes of the European Parliament. You might alternatively be picked to attend the Gala Ceremony of the European Film Awards, where the films nominated for next year's LUX Audience Award will be unveiled.

The nominated films are selected by the [LUX Selection panel](#). The panel is chaired by its Honorary President Mike Downey, Chairman of the EFA, and comprises 21 film professionals representing diverse backgrounds, sectors and countries.

For those who have not seen the nominated films or would like to see them again, the European Parliament will be organising special free screenings from mid-March to May in each EU country during the LUX Film Days. In addition, the new LUX Audience Award will be organising LUX Audience Week, during which there will be simultaneous screenings of the nominated films in numerous cities across Europe, followed by streamed pan-European Q&A sessions with representatives of the films (the directors, the actors, etc.).

WHERE CAN I WATCH THE NOMINATED FILMS SUBTITLED IN THE 24 OFFICIAL EU LANGUAGES?

You can check the availability of each film in the *'LUX screenings'* section of our luxaward.eu website or on the webpages of the European Parliament offices in your country. You can also follow us on [Facebook](#) or [Instagram](#).

Due to the pandemic, there are only three nominees for this year's edition. As of next year, if the pandemic and its effects on the film industry have eased, the LUX Audience Award will showcase five films.

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT TEAMS UP WITH THE EUROPEAN FILM INDUSTRY

In 2020, the European Parliament and the [European Film Academy](#) joined forces to create the LUX Audience Award. Founded in 1988, the European Film Academy now unites 3 800 European film professionals with the common aim of promoting Europe's film culture. The main partners of the LUX Audience Award are the [European Commission](#) and [Europa Cinemas](#).

The LUX AUDIENCE AWARD is also a partner of numerous cinematic events and film festivals in Europe, including Berlinale, the Directors' Fortnight (Cannes), Karlovy Vary, Giornate degli Autori (Venice), Sofia, Stockholm, Thessaloniki, Viennale, Tallinn Black Nights, Cork, Bratislava and Seville, just to mention a few.

... AND ENGAGES YOUNG PEOPLE

Cinema is a window on the world; it helps us to understand the lives of our neighbours. This common language speaks to our emotions and invites us to question our identities, making cinema a powerful educational tool.

In that vein, LUX AUDIENCE AWARD, in collaboration with cultural associations and film institutes, provides materials on the nominated films in the EU's 24 official languages. They often serve to support the debates that follow the screenings and can be of great use to teachers.

27 TIMES CINEMA

Promoting European shared values and cultural diversity among young people has always been a priority of the European Parliament. What better medium than cinema to generate passionate debate about European ideas?

The '*27/28 Times Cinema*' project was established in 2010 and since then has been promoted by the LUX Film Prize together with Giornate degli Autori (Venice Festival) and Europa Cinemas. This project, which is also an important element of the new award, builds on an intensive 10-day training course in Venice for 27 young European film enthusiasts and influencers in the cultural field.

During their stay in Venice, they meet with MEPs, influencers, communication experts, exhibitors, film directors and selection panel members and make up the youngest jury of the Venice Festival for the Giornate degli Autori Director's Award. Once back in their own country, they become 'LUX Ambassadors', promoting the films and related activities in their communities. A network of more than 300 supporters, enthusiastic LUX Ambassadors and various campaigners is growing each year.

LUX AUDIENCE AWARD - FILM SELECTION PROCESS

Eligibility criteria for the 2021 edition *

General:

- To have received an award or mention at a major festival.
- To have been sold or/and theatrically released in at least five EU countries (sold in at least three EU countries in the case of films from the Venice Festival).
- To have had their first official public screening at a festival (including online festivals) or cinema between 1 June 2019 and 12 September 2020.

Topics:

- Films must illustrate the diversity of topics at the heart of European debate and be accessible to a wide, diverse and large European audience.
- They must cover a variety of themes, promoting and encouraging public debate on daily life in Europe and its future. Diversity of tone, topics and variety of genre are encouraged.

The production's geographical origin:

- Films need to be produced or co-produced in countries eligible for the Creative Europe MEDIA sub-programme.

Main production country:

- In order to keep the richest geographical variety that a shortlist of three films allows, shortlisting two films from the same country of origin will not be allowed.

Genre:

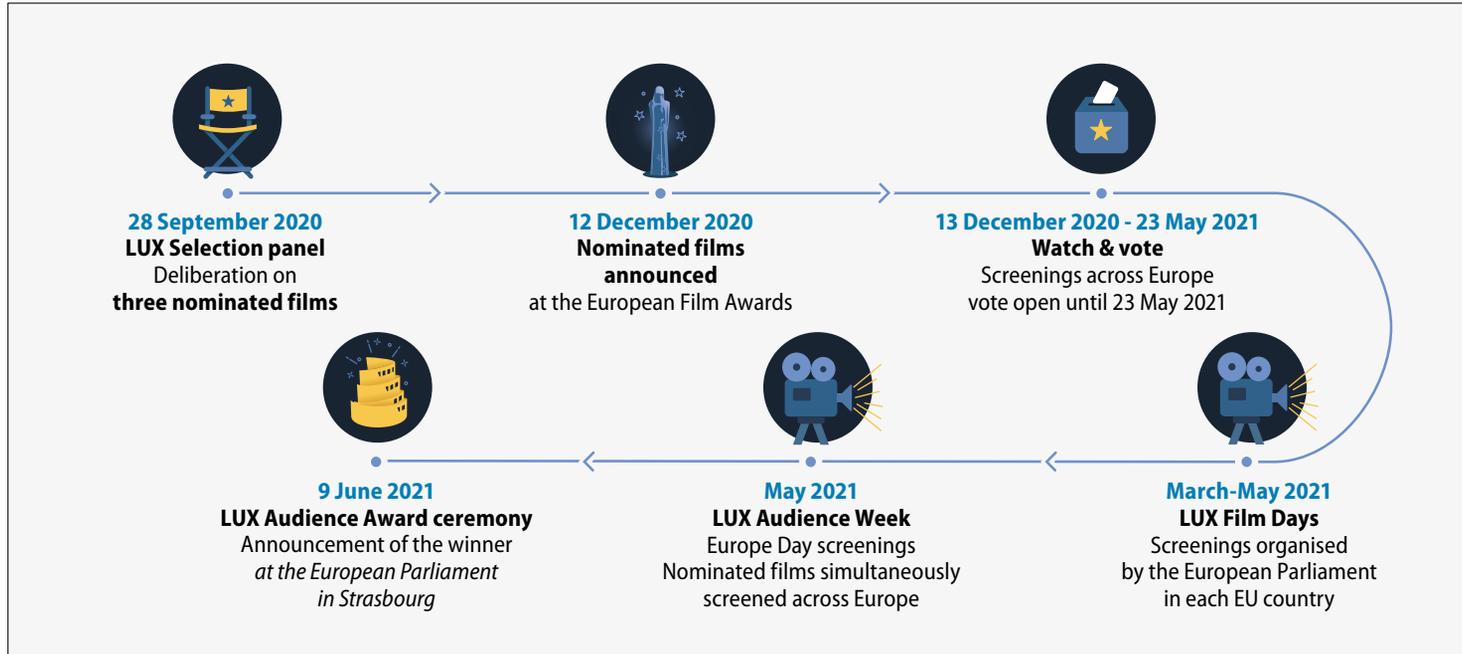
- Fiction, animation or documentary.

Running time:

- At least 60 minutes. Films with a running time of more than 120 minutes should be avoided where possible.

LUX AUDIENCE AWARD 2021 TIMELINE

How the audience and MEPs choose the winner *



* the audience and MEPs each have 50% of the vote

LUX AUDIENCE AWARD NOMINATIONS 2021

The European Parliament and the European Film Academy, in partnership with the European Commission and Europa Cinemas, are pleased to present **the three films competing for the 2021 LUX Audience Award:**

**WATCH
& VOTE**



▶ 23/05/21
LUXAWARD.EU



Another Round (*Druk*)

by Thomas Vinterberg
Denmark, the Netherlands, Sweden



Collective (*Colectiv*)

by Alexander Nanau
Romania, Luxembourg



Corpus Christi (*Boże Ciało*)

by Jan Komasa
Poland, France

The three films are perfect examples of refreshing and eye-opening European productions, which challenge the audience with an incredible diversity of genre and cinematic language.

LUX AUDIENCE AWARD

3 FILMS
24 LANGUAGES

LUX FILM DAYS & LUX AUDIENCE WEEK

We invite you to watch them during the LUX Film Days organised across Europe. Find [a screening near you](#) or check if the films are available on a [VOD service](#) in your country.

Members of the European Parliament and members of the public are invited to cast their votes by rating the films **by 23 May 2021**. MEPs can vote using the European Parliament's dedicated platform for Members, while members of the public can vote on [luxaward.eu](#).

LUX Film Days - from March to May 2021, the three nominated films, *Another Round*, *Collective* and *Corpus Christi*, subtitled in the 24 official languages of the EU, will be screened all across Europe (if the pandemic situation allows).

In addition, **LUX Audience Week** in May will feature the nominated films in screenings simultaneously shown in numerous cities in the EU, followed by a Q&A session with the crews and representatives of the films.



LUX
AUDIENCE AWARD
NOMINATION

ANOTHER ROUND *(Druk)*

by Thomas Vinterberg
Denmark, the Netherlands, Sweden

Four forty-something teachers whose love lives and careers seem to have come to a standstill decide to test out a Norwegian psychiatrist's theory that humans run a slight natural alcohol deficit of 0.05 % in their bloodstreams. Not only do they quickly make up the deficit; they overshoot it considerably! To begin with, the alcohol boosts their self-confidence and re-energises them, but things soon take a turn for the worse. Their lives may well go into free fall. But is being sensible really a life choice?

Another Round is clearly a work of fiction, or even an entertaining imaginative exercise, and a far cry from true alcoholism, which it certainly neither apologises for nor condemns. However, this fanciful experiment is indirectly rooted in reality through its characters and aspects of their experiences, which are presented in a piecemeal but meaningful way.

The dramatic arc is easy for the audience to follow. It follows the protagonists' growing and increasingly unbridled consumption of alcohol until their collapse, both real and symbolic: Martin, the lead character, ends up passed out on the ground, with a cut on his forehead, after an evening drinking binge that rapidly leads to a split with his wife Anika. It is hard not to notice the echoes of religion of this fall in a film that quotes Kierkegaard several times and highlights mankind's fallibility. Their behaviour is morally wrong, even if it is very common in a country where everyone 'drinks like maniacs'! But the film's ending does not exactly confirm this interpretation; it appears to be a release from rather than a condemnation of human weakness.

FOUR CHARACTERS

Other screenplay choices provide us with an opportunity to take a closer look at the film's subject matter. The four main characters' most prominent attributes are closely linked to the experiment that they carry out. They are secondary school teachers in charge of pupils in their final year. Their profession may seem irrelevant, but it exposes them to teenagers approaching adulthood, an age that is known for independence, indulgence and partying. The prologue sets the tone with a challenge in which teenagers drink beer while racing around a lake. The scene contrasts with the protagonists' behaviour later in the film, when they are forced to hide their alcohol consumption. Freedom is juxtaposed with the constraints, rules and restraint that generally govern adult life. The film questions whether the price paid to become an adult is too high.



Similarly, the birthday party at the beginning of the film appears to be fairly restrained, with the men all in suits, even if the few slip-ups following the revelry, particularly from Martin, who originally planned not to drink that evening, hint at the characters' flaws or weaknesses. These are people in their forties who, as the saying goes, are at a turning point in their lives, which lead them to do some stocktaking. The early scenes reveal that all four of them, to a greater or lesser extent, have been lacking drive or have failed to achieve success in their careers. The few details we learn about Martin's life confirm he is going through an existential crisis: his father is dead, he did not do the doctorate he had planned, his relationship with his wife is lacklustre, and he used to be a fantastic jazz dancer but he's given it up ... Unlike the students, who seem to make merry on a regular basis, Martin very clearly uses alcohol to compensate for a feeling of professional and emotional failure.

On this point, it is interesting to note the differences between the main characters: one, Nikolaj, is the father in a family with three children; by contrast, another, Peter, complains about not having any children; Tommy is divorced and finds comfort in caring for his old dog; and Martin has a wife and two boys, who seem distant and detached. Their efforts to build a family, one of the markers of adulthood, have turned out to be disappointing or at least problematic. As Anika says, Martin prefers to have fun with his friends – i.e. getting drunk – to having fun with her.

A third characteristic of the characters is so obvious that it could easily go unnoticed: they are all men, and women only play second fiddle. There is an important detail here: the school is headed up by a woman, which is not surprising in Denmark, but it shows that for these men, women – the headmistress and their wives – represent social order, or even conformity. What is more, the zany example that Martin uses in class to support alcohol consumption highlights only male figures, with whom he suggests his pupils might identify. He thus contrasts the egalitarianism of Danish society (particularly where gender is concerned) with models of ambition, exception, excessiveness and, of



course, overindulgence, including Churchill's and Hemingway's lifestyles. The implicit lesson is that there is no greatness without excess. But this 'lesson' actually sounds like a regret, or else remorse, one of unachieved early ambitions.

Taken together, these three characteristics highlight the gulf between the individuals and the roles that they are expected to play – teacher, adult, husband, father – and the resulting inner loneliness. The *mise en scène* draws attention to this gulf, for example when Martin is confronted by his students and their parents, and when he tries to reconnect with his wife and their children: the camera captures his sharp figure in the foreground while the other characters are blurred in the background, before the focus is reversed, which in turn blurs him. The soundtrack is also muffled on a number of occasions, drowning out the speakers' words in the surrounding hubbub. Of course, alcohol then seems like an answer or even a solution to this feeling of loneliness.

MARTIN AND ANIKA

The female figure of Anika, Martin's wife, is undoubtedly more ambivalent than that of the headmistress, who has to fulfil her role as an authority figure. At the beginning of the film, Martin tries – in vain – to talk to his wife, seeking support from her to cope with the malaise he is feeling. Of course, his initially moderate consumption of alcohol helps him to get out of the marital rut and reconnect with Anika on their autumn canoeing holiday. Martin then distances himself from his companions when they decide to drink 'to the point of ignition and beyond' because he wants to get back to his family. But he changes his mind after tasting the drinks prepared by Nikolaj and Peter.

Conformity and ennui may be features of his day-to-day life, but for Martin, love undoubtedly has a transcendent value that could counter the seduction of alcohol. It will not be enough, however,



to prevent his swift and unexpected break-up with Anika, following one final drunken provocation. Tommy, the lonely divorced man, soon reminds Martin that he and his wife used to be the perfect couple. It is this reminder that most likely leads Martin to clumsily try to reconnect with her.

The final part of the film then returns to this issue. After the alcohol high comes a low, a return to normality tinged with a subdued melancholy that only an unexpected turn of events can put an end to: Anika sends Martin a text message that provides a glimmer of hope. But our protagonists spot the parade put on to celebrate the students' success going past them and soon join in the festivities. Once again, love and alcohol seem to compete as two distinct paths open up before Martin. He seems to choose partying, dancing and drinking before jumping up and... diving into the sea. The frame is abruptly cut off, leaving the audience in limbo, but Martin's elation cannot hide the fact that his gesture is reminiscent, albeit in an excited way, of a leap into the void.

What value does Martin attach to love? We may recall the Kierkegaard quotation that opens the film: 'What is youth? A dream. What is love? The dream's content.' Love is nothing more than an illusion of youth, and the loss of youth, which is emphasised at length in one of the key scenes at the beginning of the film, may also spell the end of this illusion. Is it possible that the only real thrill to be found is in partying and drinking?

A film is not, of course, a treatise on philosophy or a health education manual, and *Another Round* seems to be as much an imaginary experience as an existential tale. Martin's last decision certainly gives us viewers pause for thought, as we are asked how far we are willing to go to feel fully alive in the present.



SOME POINTS FOR DISCUSSION

- *Another Round* takes place during a clearly marked time frame, and we even witness the passing of the seasons. Is this time span important to the film?
- On several occasions, the consumption of alcohol is accompanied by activities and comments that underscore the special qualities of the drinks consumed. Is this drinking culture important in understanding alcohol's seductive hold on the characters?
- The characters drink a lot, but they also dance, particularly Martin. Does dancing hold the same value as drinking? Is it a form of release, of exhilaration, a way to come out of their shells?
- There is a lot of music in *Another Round*. Did it make an impression on you? Did you find the general tone of the music melancholic, or vibrant and uplifting?
- The four protagonists share some characteristics: they are teachers, in their forties, male and... Danish. Do you think the fact that they are Danish is significant in the context of the film?

Michel Condé
Les Grignoux Cultural Centre



DIRECTOR Thomas Vinterberg
SCREENPLAY Thomas Vinterberg, Tobias Lindholm
CAST Mads Mikkelsen, Thomas Bo Larsen, Magnus Millang, Lars Ranthe, Maria Bonnevie, Helene Reingaard Neumann, Susse Wold
CINEMATOGRAPHY Sturla Brandth Grøvlen
PRODUCERS Sisse Graum Jørgensen, Kasper Dissing
CO-PRODUCTION Film i Väst, Topkapi Films, Zentropa International Sweden, Zentropa International Netherlands
PRODUCTION Zentropa Entertainments
YEAR 2020
LENGTH 116 min.
GENRE fiction
COUNTRIES Denmark, the Netherlands, Sweden
ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Danish
DISTRIBUTOR(S) StudioCanal (UK, Ireland), Samuel Goldwyn films (US)





COLLECTIVE (*Colectiv*)

by Alexander Nanau
Romania, Luxembourg

In the aftermath of a tragic fire in a Romanian music club, more burn victims begin dying in hospitals from wounds that were initially not life threatening. A team of investigative journalists move into action to uncover massive corruption in the health system and other state institutions. Following journalists, whistle-blowers, and government officials, *Collective* is an immersive and uncompromising look into the price of corruption and the price of truth.



LUX
AUDIENCE AWARD
NOMINATION

‘WE ARE NOT HUMAN ANYMORE. WE ONLY CARE ABOUT MONEY.’

This scathing statement, uttered in **Alexander Nanau**’s documentary *Collective*, is not just a sequence of empty words, nor is it the expression of some kind of idealism. In fact, the film is a step-by-step investigation that reveals a Romanian healthcare system that is rotten to the core. Corruption at every level leaves citizens to die in absurd circumstances, while they naively believe their hospitals will be able to treat them properly. And all of this happens with the full knowledge of government authorities.

The film was presented out of competition in Venice in 2019, screened in Toronto and awarded Best Film in the International Documentary Film Competition of the Zurich film festival. It has been shown at countless festivals since then, was awarded the best documentary prize at the European Film Awards in 2020, and has been selected to represent Romania in the Best International Film category at the Oscars.

A shocking and edifying analysis that the German director (born in Romania and already highly regarded for his previous work *Toto and His Sisters*) shot with exceptional cinematic mastery, *Collective* takes a very different cinematic approach to conventional investigative TV documentaries. Nanau has managed to combine suspense worthy of a thriller as we follow the journalists’ subsequent discoveries and a new minister’s attempts to clean up the system, with pathos-free but infinitely respectful sequences dedicated to the victims and survivors.

It all starts with a dramatic event that was widely covered in the media. On 30 October 2015, a fire breaks out at *Colectiv Club*, a nightclub in Bucharest without any emergency exits: 27 young people die and 180 are wounded (nearly 90 of them critically). The Romanian Government promises that they will be treated ‘as well as they would be treated in Germany’. However, 37 of the severely burn victims die in the following weeks because, as a source tells journalists **Catalin Tolontan**,



Mirela Neag and **Răzvan Lutac**, who have decided to investigate the story, 'they were kept in an environment that was not sanitised, and were exposed to one of the most resistant hospital bacteria in Europe (*pseudomonas aeruginosa*)'. The trio from the Sports Gazette follows the thread and finds out that the disinfection products supplied to 350 hospitals (and 2 000 operating rooms) by the Hexi Pharma factory were diluted up to ten times the normal dosage once delivered. This practice conceals corruption at several levels, tax avoidance schemes and secret protection by the state, which had been aware of this practice for a long time. Despite a propaganda campaign, the scandal brings down the Health Minister, who is replaced by **Vlad Voiculescu**, a former activist for patients' rights who wants to reform the recruitment process for hospital managers, and will face many obstacles. Meanwhile, other revelations are bubbling to the surface thanks to some brave testimonies shared by the team from the Sports Gazette, and all of this unfolds under the watchful eyes of severe burn survivors such as **Tedy Ursuleanu**, who try to recover and get on with their lives.

Secret service involvement, strange car accidents, arrests, protests, strategy meetings for the editorial team or in the minister's office, stake-outs to photograph suspects, negotiations with potential sources, explosive debates on television shows, counter-attacks from the powers that be: Collective is a thrilling and terrifying documentary, shot and edited with a masterful hand, which reveals with ruthless honesty that ending nepotism, politicisation, and conflicts of interest is a difficult, long, sometimes hopeless struggle that falls on the shoulders of a few clear-headed individuals working for the common good.

Fabien Lemercier



DIRECTOR'S NOTES (EXCERPTS)

Living between cultures and countries, I never had the feeling of belonging anywhere. Witnessing thousands united in protest after the devastating Colectiv Club fire in Romania, the country I was born in, awakened in me a need to understand people dedicated to the greater good. Only by moulding the lives of my protagonists could I begin to grasp their courage, their dedication to the search for truth, and their resilience in overcoming the deepest pain. In the process, I also learned how people and systems manipulate others from positions of power, pervert the truth and the law, and step over human dignity and fundamental rights. For me, this film is about not taking democracies and social justice for granted.

No interviews, no voice-over. My process of documentary filmmaking is a purely observational one. It is a process of learning from the lives of others, of growing on a personal level by getting as close as possible, up to a point of complete identification with the chosen protagonists. When I start filming a story, at first I don't want to know too much from – nor about – my characters. I actually never know for sure if from the moment I step into their lives anything worthy of a cinematic story will develop. But what I experience in the process, I am trying to frame in a way that will make the viewers feel as if they were living in close proximity to and discovering the characters. The audience should feel as if it were witnessing its own process of personal growth through the lives of others. That I think is what cinema should do.

I was born in Romania. I have lived most of my life in Germany, but at the end of 2015, when Romanian society was devastated by the Colectiv Club fire, I was back living in Bucharest. By being right there at that time, I experienced the full extent of the blow suffered by a democratic European society which could never have imagined that dozens of people could die after going out to a club. The fire at Colectiv was a national trauma.



It felt like everybody in the country was part of it. Like any single traumatised human, a traumatised society becomes easy to manipulate and lie to. During the days after the fire, I witnessed an institutional lie, with the authorities completely covering up the tragedy, and the lie being constantly repeated to a grieving population through the media. I saw people being silenced and stopped from asking questions for a time. While young people injured in the fire kept dying in hospitals.

My very first attempt was to understand the direct impact of the tragedy on the private lives of the survivors and families who had lost their children in hospitals after the fire. Mihai Grecea, a filmmaker himself, is a Colectiv survivor who joined my team right after he woke up from a coma. Together with Mihai, I plunged into the big family of the Colectiv victims. I stayed as close to them as I could through their innermost grief and their struggle to understand why they had to lose their loved ones weeks after the fire if the medical treatment they received was as good as the authorities claimed. The hardest challenge for me, as a father, was to witness the pain the parents went through after losing a child. The pain of not having been able to save the life of one's own child when it would still have been possible because of the power and the lies of state authorities. As I was aware that one day the same situation could affect my own life, I needed to understand more, to delve deeper, to reach out and to try to film what had been well hidden. It was an organic decision to follow the very few who also doubted the official version of events. The ones who were asking unexpected yet simple questions. So, the office of the investigative team of journalists at the Sports Gazette that started to investigate the role of authorities in the tragedy right after the fire was the best place to start filming the part of the story I wanted to understand...



...The investigations started to uncover a series of inescapable facts about corruption in the healthcare system which had endangered patients' lives for years. By then, I was already following the journalists' work with my camera, as they got caught up in a vortex of disclosures, reaching the highest levels of government...

With the change of the Minister of Health, I took the chance to get my lens on the inner workings of the state government too. I was lucky to be trusted by an open-minded new minister who gave me unprecedented access to the system from within. I brought my camera into advisors' meetings, brainstorming sessions and coaching meetings before going out to the press. I was able to witness crisis management decisions and personal breakdowns.

I filmed as the cruel truth came to light about the fragility of democracies and their state institutions without the constant scrutiny of the media and citizenry.

The biggest challenge we faced during the editing phase of the film was to balance the real-life events, seen from different perspectives, and offer a better understanding of the powers that shape our private lives in a society. When I started working on this film in early 2016, I never imagined that the year would be a major turning point for democracy all around the world. ...The year 2016 tested democracies worldwide, but it also tested each and every one of us.

Alexander Nanau



SOME POINTS FOR DISCUSSION

- You might find it interesting to read up on some of the film's protagonists. By doing so, you might come to see them in a different light. The facts you dig up might either confirm or contradict the impression left by the film's portrayal of the issue. You might also stumble across information that will challenge the way you view the events depicted in the film. Why not find out more about Vlad Voiculescu, Tedy Ursuleanu, or the group Goodbye to Gravity, which was playing at Colectiv on 30 October 2015, for example?
- While the beginning of the film builds up a picture of widespread corruption, viewers are then given hope when a minister is appointed who truly has patients' interests at heart. But the election result then breaks the spell. This ending leaves viewers with a general feeling of failure, hopelessness and dismay. What does this pessimistic ending tell us about the filmmaker's intentions? If the true story had been edited differently, might the film have ended on a different note? What effect might another ending have had?
- Try to remember all the people who feature in the film – not only the protagonists, but also all those in a more secondary role. What values do they bring, and what emotions do they convey? Think about the men versus the women. Which side shows more courage or compassion, is more powerful or selfish, etc.?
- Cătălin Tolontan and his team embark upon a real investigation: they gather first-hand accounts, protect their sources, fact-check and run stories. Their newspaper is neither aimed at a general readership nor is it a tabloid. What are the most widely read newspapers in your country? Which of those carry out investigative journalism? What is your relationship with the press?

Anne Vervier
Les Grignoux Cultural Centre



DIRECTOR Alexander Nanau
SCREENPLAY Antoaneta Opreș, Alexander Nanau
CAST Narcis Hogeia, Cătălin Tolontan, Mirela Neag, Camelia Roiu, Răzvan Luțac, Tedy Ursuleanu, Vlad Voiculescu
CINEMATOGRAPHY Alexander Nanau
PRODUCERS Alexander Nanau, Bianca Oana (Alexander Nanau Production), Bernard Michaux (Samsa Film), Hanka Kastelicová (HBO Europe)
CO-PRODUCTION Samsa Film Luxembourg, HBO Europe, with the participation of MDR, RTS, RSI, YES Docu
PRODUCTION Alexander Nanau Production
YEAR 2019
LENGTH 109 min.
GENRE Documentary
COUNTRIES Romania, Luxembourg
ORIGINAL LANGUAGES Romanian, English
DISTRIBUTOR(S) Dogwoof (UK, Ireland, Malta), Magnolia pictures/ Participant (US, Canada)



CORPUS CHRISTI *(Boże Ciało)*

by Jan Komasa

Poland, France

Daniel is a young offender serving his sentence in a detention centre, a violent world where he owes his few moments of grace to Father Tomasz, the chaplain at the centre, who has picked him to help him with services. This is how he finds an unexpected calling, although it will be impossible for him to take it any further, given his criminal past. Having been forced to take a job in a remote corner of the Polish countryside once he has served his time, he stops in a small village where he introduces himself as a priest on a pilgrimage.



LUX
AUDIENCE AWARD
NOMINATION

He is caught in a web of his own lies and has no choice but to agree to the local priest's proposal that Daniel replace him in the parish for some time. He takes on Father Tomasz's identity to officiate at the church and look after the parishioners, who are deeply scarred by a tragic accident that drastically altered their lives.

CONTEXT

As 90% of Poland's population is Catholic, and when it comes to religion, it is a homogenous country. Religion also heavily influences political and social life. Jan Komasa's film takes place against this specific backdrop, mainly in a small village in south-east Poland.

Daniel's sudden arrival causes a clash between two religious understandings (dogmatic instruction vs sincere faith) that revolves around some central questions: what is morality? What is faith? Are worship and its rites more important than Christian values such as truth and forgiveness? Does the cow make the monk?

What is more, Daniel and the parishioners claim the same attachment to God and religion, and they share, albeit in a hidden or internalised way, the same shortcomings, such as lying and 'acting in bad faith', raising new questions about the limits of what is an acceptable 'transgression' and how to achieve redemption. Is it right that a man who is responsible for the death of another man and has been punished by civil society for it to be denied access to the church, in spite of his faith and his aspiration to become one of its representatives? In other words, does this man amount to anything more than his criminal past? Is his fate as a criminal completely sealed? Can we expect him to turn things around? By means of Daniel's character and his journey, Jan Komasa's film asks all these questions with much aplomb.



A CRISIS OF VALUES

By highlighting the failures of figures of moral authority, *Corpus Christi* questions the values that have shaped our society. Firstly, the parish priest supports the hateful bad faith of the parishioners by refusing to bury Sławek, who is considered a murderer, and implicitly endorses his widow's isolation and the cruel harassment to which she is subjected. Secondly, the staff at the detention centre turn a blind eye to the extreme violence that drives relationships between the detainees (assault and battery, gang rapes, etc.).

Neither are playing their role properly any longer, leaving society without any real moral compass. In such a setting, it is significant that Daniel and later the parishioners achieve redemption by means of a sham, as if there were no other way to improve their status.

WHEN LYING REBUILDS MORAL AUTHORITY

When Daniel arrives in the village, he enters a church and meets a young girl who is trying to find out where he comes from. She does not believe him when he claims to be a priest but changes her tune when he takes out the clerical collar that he stole from Father Tomasz. The girl immediately drops her informal tone, adopting a deferential attitude instead, and puts him in contact with the parish priest. Initially Daniel tries to run away, but in the end he agrees to stand in for the priest for a few days. Between homilies inspired by Father Tomasz's sermons or drawn from deep within him and cathartic communion sessions in front of the small memorial put up by the relatives of the victims of a terrible accident, the young man puzzles and impresses the villagers. His greatest achievement is to defy the mayor's authority and lead the villagers along the path to forgiveness with the aim of giving the man everyone considers responsible for the accident a proper burial.



Thus, as a result of his unpremeditated act of identity theft, Daniel gets the villagers to rise above the hatred that drives them. By focusing on Christian values such as forgiveness, truth, charity, sharing, tolerance and justice, Daniel becomes a new figure of moral authority, which has real consequences for the parish community. In addition to Daniel's many good deeds, which are unearthed when Father Tomasz happens upon thank you notes in the presbytery, he turns out to be the redeemer of an entire community. His unexpected accomplishment of something that the parish priest had been unable to do coincides closely in the film with the exposure of Daniel's ruse and his arrest, a situation that is reminiscent of the Passion of Christ and its fatal outcome.

WHEN THE TRUTH SEALS A CRIMINAL FATE

Corpus Christi starts and ends at the detention centre, with very violent scenes. This plot choice brings to mind an irreversibly closing loop. More specifically, the cruel punishment that society inflicts on Daniel shows that it gives absolute priority to the crime of fraud, without the least acknowledgement of his healing and benevolent involvement with the parishioners. Once his act of fraud has been revealed, Daniel is condemned to return to the cycle of violence that will set him on a path to a new crime. To depict this tragic ending, Jan Komasa puts together a montage that alternates between scenes at the centre and moments from the village mass, where the priest has returned to his duties. It is an opportunity for us to see that the church has emptied but also that Daniel's actions have had the desired effects. By juxtaposing the two events through alternating shots, the director strongly emphasises the shocking gulf between what Daniel has done for the village and the fate in store for him. But mercifully this pessimistic ending is countered with a third event, a few shots of which are also incorporated into the alternating sequence: Lidia's daughter gets into a car with a large bag in her hand, which leads us to believe that she is leaving the village for good, now deprived of her 'spiritual guide' and having fallen back into the straitjacket of the Church.



THE COMPLEXITY OF MORAL JUDGEMENT

The viewers are the only witnesses to the final act of violence. As at the start of the film, the instructor has to leave the room where the young offenders are assembled, and Bonus immediately takes advantage of this – possibly even premeditated – opportunity to attack Daniel. Bloodied and enraged by the blows he has received, Daniel flies into an uncontrollable frenzy and beats his rival to death. The inmates hastily set about getting Daniel out and set fire to the place, erasing all trace of the crime. As the inmates choose to conceal the truth (is it to protect Daniel, or simply because they do not want to face up to their inaction given the seriousness of the events?), no one will be able to understand afterwards what really happened, a situation which invites a comparison with the earlier accident in the village. In the same way that we will never know who is really responsible for the accident in the village, the film ends with a situation that will make it impossible to establish who is responsible for, and the exact circumstances of, the fire. Only we, at that point, know that the responsibility is shared. And ultimately a valuable lesson in wisdom and empathy emerges from the film's storyline, one which encourages us not to make hasty judgements and to take into consideration not only the nature of the facts but also people's motivations and intentions.



SOME POINTS FOR DISCUSSION

- *Corpus Christi* stands out for its use of long fixed shots, including many subtle high-angle shots of the village frozen in the heart of the countryside, and close-ups of faces that rarely show any flickers of emotion. What significance do you give to this style of filming? Could it be said that the film's framing poses a permanent constraint? In what way?
- The film features dominant bluish or greenish hues, very cold colours, but it also creates many chiaroscuro effects through the use of a strong whitish light. How do these original visual characteristics affect the film's dimensions? How do they affect the story told and the protagonists' portrayal? Think of religious painting, which often uses this process to render the mystical, supernatural dimension of the scenes depicted.

Vinciane Fonck
Les Grignoux Cultural Centre



DIRECTOR Jan Komasa

SCREENPLAY Mateusz Pacewicz

CAST Bartosz Bielenia, Eliza Rycembel, Aleksandra Konieczna, Tomasz Ziętek, Leszek Lichota, Łukasz Simlat

CINEMATOGRAPHY Piotr

Sobociński Jr

PRODUCERS Aneta

Hickinbotham, Leszek Bodzak

CO-PRODUCTION CANAL+

POLSKA, WFS Walter Film Studio, Podkarpackie Regional

Film Fund, Les Contes Modernes

CO-PRODUCERS Patrice Nezan,

Piotr Walter, Manuel Rougeron,

Frederic Berardi, Marek Jastrzębski

PRODUCTION Aurum Film

YEAR 2019

LENGTH 116 min.

GENRE drama

COUNTRIES Poland, France

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE Polish

DISTRIBUTOR(S) Vertigo Films

(UK, Ireland), Film Movement (US, Canada)



LUX FILM PRIZE FILMOGRAPHY 2019-2007

2019
GOSPOD POSTOI,
IMETO I'E PETRUNIJA
COLD CASE HAMMARSKJÖLD
EL REINO
I DOULEIA TIS
KLER
LES INVISIBLES
MADENA ZEMJA
RAY & LIZ
SYSTEMSPRENGER
TCHELOVEK, KOTORIJ UDIVIL VSEKH

2018
KONA FER Í STRÍÐ
DRUGA STRANA SVEGA
STYX
DONBASS
EL SILENCIO DE OTROS
GIRL
GRÄNS
LAZZARO FELICE
TWARZ
UTØYA 22. JULI

2017
SAMEBLOD
120 BATTLEMENTS PAR MINUTE
WESTERN
A CIAMBRA
ESTIU 1993
HJARTASTEINN
KING OF THE BELGIANS
OSTATNIA RODZINA
SLAVA
TOIVON TUOLLA PUOLEN

2016
TONI ERDMANN
À PEINE J'OUVRE LES YEUX
MA VIE DE COURGETTE
A SYRIAN LOVE STORY
CARTAS DA GUERRA
KRIGEN
L'AVENIR
LA PAZZA GIOIA
SIERANEVADA
SUNTAN

2015
MUSTANG
MEDITERRANEA
UROK
45 YEARS
A PERFECT DAY
HRŮTAR
LA LOI DU MARCHÉ
SAUL FIA
TOTO SI SURORILE LUI
ZVIZDAN

2014
IDA
BANDE DE FILLES
RAZREDNI SOVRAŽNIK
FEHÉR ISTEN
HERMOSA JUVENTUD
KREUZWEG
LE MERAVIGLIE
MACONDO
TURIST
XENIA

2013
THE BROKEN CIRCLE
BREAKDOWN
MIELE
THE SELFISH GIANT
ĀTA SOVA DÖ
GRZELI NATELI DGEEBI
KRUGOVI
OH BOY!
LA GRANDE BELLEZZA
LA PLAGA
PEVNOST

2012
IO SONO LI
CSAK A SZÉL
TABU
À PERDRE LA RAISON
BARBARA
CESARE DEVE MORIRE
CRULIC—DRUMUL SPRE DINCOLO
DJECA
L'ENFANT D'EN HAUT
LOUISE WIMMER

2011
LES NEIGES DU KILIMANDJARO
ATTENBERG
PLAY
A TORINÓI LÓ
ESSENTIAL KILLING
HABEMUS PAPAM
LE HAVRE
MISTÉRIOS DE LISBOA
MORGEN
PINA

2010
DIE FREMDE
AKADIMIA PLATONOS
ILLEGAL
BIBLIOTHEQUE PASCAL
INDIGÈNE D'EURASIE
IO SONO L'AMORE
LA BOCCA DEL LUPO
LOURDES
MEDALIA DE ONOARE
R

2009
WELCOME
EASTERN PLAYS
STURM
35 RHUMS
ANDER
EIN AUGENBLICK FREIHEIT
KATALIN VARGA
LOST PERSONS AREA
NORD
PANDORA'NIN KUTUSU

2008
LE SILENCE DE LORNA
DELTA
OBČAN HAVEL
IL RESTO DELLA NOTTE
REVANCHE
SÜGISBALL
SVETAT E GOLYAM I SPASENIE DEBNE
OTVSYAKADE
SZTUCZKI
TO VERDENER
WOLKE 9

2007
AUF DER ANDEREN SEITE
4 LUNI, 3 SAPTAMINI SI 2 ZILE
BELLE TOUJOURS
CALIFORNIA DREAMIN' [NESFARSIT]
DAS FRÄULEIN
EXILE FAMILY MOVIE
IMPORT/EXPORT
ISZKA UTAZÁSA
PLOSHCHA
KURZ DAVOR IST ES PASSIERT



@luxaward



#luxaward



LUX
AWARD
.EU

Photo credits

P. 1, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16: © Zentropa productions

P. 1, 9, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22: © Alexander Nanau Production/ Samsa Film /HBO Europe

P. 1, 9, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29: © Aurum Film

Manuscript completed in January 2021

Produced by the Directorate-General for Communication, European Parliament

Neither the European Parliament nor any person acting on behalf of the European Parliament is responsible for the use that might be made of the following information.

Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2021

© European Union, 2021

Reproduction is authorised provided the source is acknowledged.

For any use or reproduction of photos or other material that is not under the EU copyright, permission must be sought directly from the copyright holders.

Should you notice any errors or omissions, please let us know by sending an email to luxaward@ep.europa.eu.

PDF: ISBN 978-92-846-7601-9

PRINT: ISBN 978-92-846-7635-4

doi: 10.2861/20

doi: 10.2861/958093

QA-03-20-855-EN-N

QA-03-20-855-EN-C