ICE AND FIRE DOCS

2019-2020

"Ice and Fire Docs" is a documentary workshop for Estonian and Finnish documentary filmmakers with international ambitions. Throughout the three-part workshop the participants work with different aspects of developing, producing, financing and distributing a feature length documentary film.

Participating projects in 2019–2020:

Celebrating life –	
The Danse Macabre	Power Station
Film Tower (EST)	Illume (FIN)
Experts of Love	Smoke Sauna Symphony
Kuukulgur Film (EST)	Alexandra Film, Kinoport (EST)
Karaoke Phenomena	The Children of Talsinki
Napafilms (FIN)	Amrion Productions (EST)
Man's Pain	тні
Missing Pictures - Rühm Pluss Null (EST)	Aadam ja pojad (EST)

Celebrating Life – The Danse Macabre

Director: Madis Ligema Producer: Margus Õunapuu / Film Tower

Length: 90' Estimated budget: 154 833 €

Anthology of thirteen Estonian-style parties, from birth to death: who is Estonian in the second decade of the 21st century?

How to define a nation? The results of a study conducted by the University of Tartu Estonian Genome Project show that genes have no direct benefit in defining a nation - on the basis of genetic information alone, it is difficult to distinguish Estonians from Latvians and Russians.

Yet in national mythology, in jokes - Estonian, Russian, and Latvian - these nationalities are described quite precisely. Estonian - slow, silent and taciturn, but Latvian is talkative; Estonians' favourite food is another Estonian, but Russian is hospitable and friendly.

What makes one person Estonian and who are we willing to consider as an Estonian? Celebration in Estonia (definitely everywhere else also) has found its modern traditions, customs and (unwritten) rules. What to say, even modern folklore states that "partying is the best time a person can have". This is the time when the otherwise modest nature of Estonians opens up and they become good, kind and open. New friends are found and fruitful agreements are made during celebrations. "Celebrating Life – *The Danse Maca-bre*" observes all sorts of events that give us a reason to come together and rejoice. Celebration, this is a dance that accompanies us from birth to death. People with different backgrounds and worldviews are chosen as the centre of events, providing a cross-section of our contrasting society. This film is serving as a chronicle and a guide to the modern lives of a nation (Estonians). *The Danse Macabre* or the dance of a lifetime.

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Experts of Love

Director: Eva Kübar Producers: Andres Maimik, Edina Csüllög / Kuukulgur Film

Length: 90' Estimated budget: 160 874 €

Three people in their early middle age hit the relationship crisis and try to find the solution by the help of polyamory. Is having multiple partners really creating a new culture of love or is it just a spiritualized way of fucking around?

What if it turns out in mid-life that there is no passion left in the relationship but a tantric partner wakes your body from sexual lethargy? Is it time to be modern and start a polyamorous relationship? In "Experts of Love" we observe the personal stories of several 30+ year old people who all see polyamory as a possibility to solve their relationship problems. We follow their fighting with jealousy and lack of self-esteem, getting together, parting and coping with family lives. After 10 years of an unstable on-off relationship Taavi is ready to establish a family and settle down, but his partner Riita forces him to sign an agreement of free love which allows also having other sexual partners.

Marianne raises her two teenager kids alone in a small Estonian village, while her husband Sven works in Germany. Being emotionally alone and sexually frustrated she starts an affair with Kay, a German in his early 50s who is living in a polyamorous relationship with her wife Beate.

"Experts of Love" is an observational documentary that will not advocate or criticize. We follow the characters for



several years to see how these practices change them. Is living with no boundaries and jumping with enthusiasm into every new experience really creating new type love without possession or is it more about avoiding the responsibility?

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Karaoke Phenomena

Director: Einari Paakkanen Producer: Marianne Mäkelä / Napafilms

Length: 80' / 52' Estimated budget: 530 194 €

Through bars, senior homes and car repair shops the film takes us beyond the cliché of karaoke and reveals the singers' unuttered thoughts, life stories and deepest emotions.

In "Karaoke Phenomena" the people of a dark northern country take the courageous step to perform the song of their life on a stage in front of strangers. The vibrant and passionate karaoke culture of Finland creates a comical and entertaining background for the film. But the individual stories of the main characters take us beyond the karaoke and explore larger themes about loneliness, happiness and sadness, birth and death. A divorced, 60-year-old auto mechanic writes love songs and sings karaoke in his car repair shop in the middle of the night. A karaoke hostess, who pulled through the worst times of her life with the power of music, organizes karaoke in senior homes encouraging elderly people to sing. A shy, 25-year-old construction worker, who takes care of his ill mother and spends his weekdays playing computer games, finds strength and new people in singing karaoke. Finland's only karaoke therapist coaches her clients to overcome their fears of singing in front of strangers.



The hybrid documentary alternates between the characters, their life stories and favourite songs in an associative fashion, following the deepest human emotions. Through the karaoke we step into the living rooms and mental landscapes of regular people and visit the quirkiest karaoke places that are hidden all around Finland. A heart-warming

documentary about how the love for music can help us to express ourselves, overcome loneliness and find a connection with another human being.

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Man's Pain

Director: Kullar Viimne Producer: Erik Norkroos / Missing Pictures - Rühm Pluss Null

Length: 80' Estimated budget: 178 000 €

Men working from morning till night finally open their mouths to speak about their lost love.

Three men are working hard from morning till night. Kalju is working alone building a watchtower on the yard of his farm in Haanja Upland. Stone crusher Riho is working alone, lifting the water meadow of Tänassilma River. Toothless lord of the manor Ülo is working alone, renovating Võru fire station. All of them are working hard, not looking at the clock, just to escape from lost love – but cannot run away from yourself forever. Now they start talking – honestly, from their hearts.

A film about the things that have shocked and hurt the men to their very core, leaving just pain.

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Power Station

Director: Antti Haase Producer: Jouko Aaltonen / Illume

Length: 90' Estimated budget: 361 399 €

A story of harnessing a river and a family.

Kemijoki is the longest river in Finland, running through the wild nature of Lapland. After the Word War II, Kemijoki Oy has constructed 15 hydroelectric power stations to the river. My mother's father Ilmari Koivuaho worked from 1950s to 1980s as a foreman building the power stations and power lines. Kemijoki Oy is about to build the last hydropower station of Finland to Sierilä in the village of Oikarainen with 150 inhabitants. Sierilä is located only 20 km east of Rovaniemi, the official hometown of Santa Claus. Kemijoki power stations are one of the biggest achievements of human labour in Lapland, but also a great collective

trauma. Power stations destroyed the famous Kemijoki salmon culture. Thousands of people had to move out as their homes submerged under the rising water.

"Power Station" is a personal documentary film, in which I uncover the dramatic story of harnessing Kemijoki and my grandfather's role in the process. The historical and family story is juxtaposed with the present drama in planning and potentially building the last power station in Sierilä. The great challenges of climate change, energy production and conservation create the frame for the film, which is more than familiar to all of us.



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Smoke Sauna Symphony

Director: Anna Hints Producer: Marianne Ostrat / Alexandra Film, Kinoport

Length: 75' Estimated budget: 150 882 €

The smoke sauna welcomes life and death, but also the secrets, the fears and all that cannot exist elsewhere. In its heat and darkness, under the protection of spirits, we finally show ourselves as we are, naked.

In Estonia, since the dawn of time, women have given life, cared for the sick, and washed the dead in smoke saunas. The smoke sauna is a sacred place where not only the bodies but also the souls are purified. The dim smoke-filled room functions as a confessional booth, in which stories can be shared, that would otherwise remain untold.

Kadi (38) is a single mother struggling with clinical depression and haunted by her turbulent relationship with her late mother. She goes to a journey through the sacred smoke sauna culture to clean her body and soul and get support from other women's stories and confessions.

Women share stories about the intimate and multifaceted details about life as a woman. Each story gives birth to another one. The bath water washes away the dirt from the bodies, and with it, the fears and despairs. Women nourish themselves while washing, whisking, singing ancient runic songs, crying and laughing together.

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The Children of Talsinki

Director: Moonika Siimets Producers: Riina Sildos, Kadri Pahla / Amrion Productions

Length: 80' Estimated budget: 335 660 €

A poetical film about longing and searching for happiness between Estonia and Finland.

More than 70,000 Estonians, or around four percent of the country's population, lives and works in Finland at the same time as their families, parents, children and homes are in Estonia. Estonians form the largest immigrant group in Finland.

These are not people fleeing war or natural disaster. They are viable men and

women who are looking for better living conditions, more money and happiness.

The Estonian media talks about them as "welfare refugees" at the same time as Estonian immigrants are often considered lower class in Finland. "The Children of Talsinki" doesn't judge; it simply looks at the possibility of living a life between two countries, telling stories of longing, solitude, searching for happiness, of the conflict between reality and human desires that sometimes shows that leaving



your home isn't an easy decision even if it is sometimes the only possible one.

The film is a humorously wistful documentation of the gallery of people living their peculiar lives in the snowy fields of Lapland, the spartan apartments of Vantaa, the hotel lobbies, hospital corridors, construction sites and grandmothers' kitchens as they wait for their grandchildren to come back home. The film is a mixture of confessions where people tell their very personal stories that don't make it to the front pages in the media. "The Children of Talsinki" forms a sort of symphony that tries to record a larger and very modern Estonian narrative.

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THI

Director: Jaan Tootsen Producers: Jaan Tootsen / Aadam ja pojad

Length: 88' Estimated budget: 154 028 €

How a youthful and adamant head of state tries to cope with societal expectations. An intellectual who has read shelffuls of books feels most at home as a DJ spinning records at a night club. Having just remarried, with a new child on the way, he can't wait for his presidency to end.

In world history, at times of great upheaval writers and intellectuals have been elected as chiefs of state, rather than your run of the mill politicians. "THI" portrays a person, coincidently the president of a small European country, Toomas Hendrik Ilves, who has never been a classical "party hatchling" but a melomaniac intellectual who has studied psychology and returned to his homeland out of interest in Estonian literature, and in translating it. Ilves was born in Sweden where his parents had fled from the Soviet occupation. They then moved to the United States where the future president spent his youth. He later lived in Munich as a journalist for Radio Free Europe and as the chief of its Estonian desk. From there he returned to Estonia and became the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

We observe Toomas Hendrik Ilves during the last year and a half of his second 5-year term, after having served nearly nine years as president and growing ever more tired of it day by day. The production period has coincided with a very



interesting time in the president's life which has taken quite a few unexpected turns. A tired, broken man facing personal problems after a heavily publicized divorce is, in just a few months, once again transformed into a jovial married man. The world, too, has changed: the refugee crisis, events in Ukraine and Syria, growing discords in Europe... In these demanding times the president tries to deal with important world issues, managing his own private life alongside.

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Organisers:

The workshop is initiated and organised by the Estonian Documentary Guild and the Estonian Film Institute in close co-operation with the European Documentary Network (EDN).



Partners:

The partner organisations include DocPoint Helsinki and DocPoint Tallinn, the Finnish Documentary Guild, the Cultural Endowment of Estonia and the Creative Europe Desk Estonia.

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