

MOBILEFILM®

little alien

A film by **Nina Kusturica**

They're teenagers who fled crisis regions and undertook an extremely dangerous journey to Europe, all alone, hoping for one thing: to live. After arriving here, they fight to live normal lives, struggling against a system that demands they sacrifice their youth to an uncertain future.



A MOBILEFILM Production

little alien – a film by Nina Kusturica

Feature Documentary/Austria/2009

94 min./35mm/1:1.85/color/Dolby Digital

Original languages: Dari, Somali, German, English, Arabic,
Spanish, French, Slovakian

Subtitles: German/English

World premiere: March 19, 2009, at Diagonale 09 in Graz
Cinematic Release Austria: October 2009

The film was shot at the following locations between summer
2007 and fall 2008:

Austria: Vienna, Traiskirchen, Innsbruck

Slovakia/Ukraine border

Spain: Ceuta and Melilla, exclaves in North Africa

Morocco: Tangiers

Greece: Mytilene, Patras, Athens

SYNOPSIS



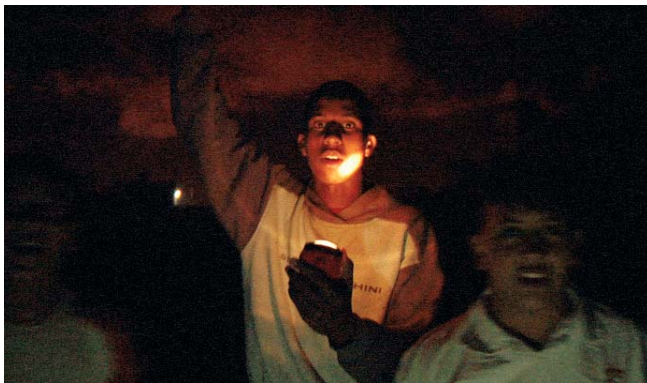
“If life were a movie, I’d be an actress.”

NURA BISHAR

They’re alive. Because they fled. | Teenagers Juma and Hishame attempt an extremely dangerous journey to Europe, hiding in the chassis of a truck, where they will become the prey of border officers. Ahmed, Nura, Achmad and Asha have managed to get over the fences.

After arriving in Austria, they try to reorder their lives and fight for their rights to a more or less trouble-free youth. Jawid and Alem have already spent a year and a half in Vienna, hoping their asylum applications will be approved. | The trauma of loss, the longing for their families, the prospect of a completely uncertain future, the meaning [and sense] of laws and odysseys past the government officials and agencies they must deal with characterize their new beginnings.

Although their lives are determined primarily by laws, many of which are inhumane, they take it all with a great deal of humor and have developed their own strategies for dealing with the situation. | They spend their youths living life to the fullest, they’re loud, in-your-face and in love, young people who are trying to conquer life for themselves.



ABOUT THE FILM

When looking for helpful information on a screen at Austria's Federal Asylum Office, you are greeted with the melody of "The Blue Danube." "Remember that smugglers are only interested in money, not in you as a human being." This, in all seriousness, is the first recommendation given. This scene from Nina Kusturica's "Little Alien" not only demonstrates clearly that the truth is stranger than fiction; in its detached anonymity, the screen also shows the dark side of this documentary. The actions of a state that only knows how to administrate refugees is contrasted with an emphatic look at underage asylum seekers, a look informed by an awareness of everyone's individuality, without however limiting itself to sympathy.

One could say that Kusturica's work conforms to orthodox documentary conventions: The refugee is not turned into a figure in such a way that one's humanistic persuasion can be put on display. He or she remains a "naked individual," a person who, before the eyes of the patient observer, is given their concrete image back—precarious though it might be.

In the concrete realization, this means above all accompanying them circumspectly, which is less important during their flight than in the period between the submission of their application and the granting [or rejection] of asylum. This is a zone of uncertainty in which each type of status, each sense of having arrived and—most importantly—each sense of safety is only temporary. Asha and Nura, two young women from Somalia, and Alem and Jawid, two young men from Afghanistan, represent the two pairs of figures around whom Kusturica documents a form of normality under abnormal conditions.

At an accelerated pace her observations coalesce to portray a passage to an uncertain destination. In consultations with legal advisors the extreme difficulty of assessing the application process becomes obvious—a state of disorientation that the film does more to underline than overcome. "Little Alien" is permitted to accompany its protagonists only to the doors behind which their fate is decided. The power of bureaucracy remains outside the frame. Kusturica was not permitted to film in government offices.

"We'll all get together next Saturday. There's another girl I have to find a boy for." ASHA ABDIRAHMAN





“I was on the sea. That was my hard day.”

ACHMAD ABDIRAHMAN

This empty space is filled with other material which is made more impressive by the fact that it does not employ conventional victim templates. When we watch Asha and Nura, who find a place to stay temporarily at Camp Traiskirchen, we witness an “upside-down” reality: Perspectives are widened or otherwise shifted, stereotypes are torn down by the scenes shown. One example: At the train station the girls are harassed by a passerby. They do not understand a word of what he says, and the woman accompanying them explains that the man is expressing his fears of other people through xenophobia. The scene is almost didactic, as it portrays reality and analyzes it simultaneously.

At the same time, there are fleeting moments snatched from their current lives in which the protagonists grow into characters with unmistakable features: During a pleasant get-together, hopes of love and a future manifest themselves, personal background details are revealed—something that Kusturica never forces,

because this does not represent vital information. A scene at a charity clothes shop where Asha and Nura are allowed to pick out some things shows for a brief moment the quiet wishes, and this coexists with helpless attempts to intermeditate when Alem and Jawid answer questions posed in an Austrian schoolroom, which underlines the social gap that sets them apart.

The main narrative threads in “Little Alien” are defined by spotlighted snapshots featuring other young refugees stuck in the Spanish exclave Ceuta in North Africa, at the harbor of Patras in Greece or in Morocco’s Tangiers. These locations show concretely how a pan-Europe policy of exclusion is applied, which is first manifested in the monitor images at the film’s beginning, in which refugees are indicated merely by a figure that gives off heat as detected by an infrared camera. This cold eye, which does not differentiate, is contrasted with the individuals for whom differences mean everything. Dominik Kamalzadeh



“IN A FICTION FEATURE, NOBODY WOULD HAVE BELIEVED IT.” NINA KUSTURICA IN AN INTERVIEW WITH CORINNA MILBORN

How did this film about teenage refugees come to be made?

Before I start a movie, I ask questions, such as: What interests me? And what about it is ahead of its time? I like the idea of pulling the future into the present. Then I ask myself: Do I want to do it? Then you live with the topic for about two years if everything goes well. And finally: What can I contribute? The answers were all positive with this topic—part of the reason being that I was a refugee once myself. However, for a long time I thought about whether it should be a feature or a documentary. During preproduction I had an appointment with some local authorities, where a young refugee was asked to decide when he was supposedly born. He only knew the year and had to decide on the exact date—with all the consequences, such as the date for coming of legal age. This was so absurd that I knew then: This is going to be a documentary. If I put a scene like this in a script, nobody would believe it.

You yourself came to Austria as a refugee from Bosnia.

Did you see yourself in that young man?

Yes, very much so. My situation wasn't necessarily comparable—I came with my family, which is a lot easier, of course. But those initial difficulties, the images of Austria, the naiveté with which one enters this new country—I recognized that. I was exactly the same. It was encouraging to see that after all this time, my problems at the time weren't anything special. It seems to be the same for everybody.

You spent a lot of time with the protagonists.

How did you meet and select them?

We had to be with them from the very beginning, so the starting point was the refugee camp in Traiskirchen. There, however, we were immediately confronted with a stipulation: We weren't allowed to talk to anybody. We were shown the sanitary facilities, empty buildings, the computer for the fingerprints. At that time there were 700 refugees at Traiskirchen, 80 of them in the building for minors, and we weren't allowed to talk to any of them. In addition, the director remarked disparagingly that, for the most part, they weren't teenagers anyway—he'd even had this gray-haired guy once who insisted he was 17. I myself turned gray when the war broke out in Bosnia. I was 17 at the time, and I've been coloring my hair ever since. This cynicism encouraged me. This film had to be made.

How did you get close to these teenagers under these circumstances?

We eventually managed to encounter them on one of their day trips, which volunteers go on with the teenagers. We met them in the vineyards around Baden, and on a hunch, we had interpreters with us. There in the woods we explained the project and told them: Whoever wants to participate should go to the Kebabstube coffee shop in Traiskirchen tomorrow. And there we sat, wondering: Who's going to show up? Who's going to be in the film? But it worked.



“I called Death, but he didn’t come. Even Death hates us.”

JAWID NAJAFI



You got very close to the protagonists—they talk to each other as if they weren’t on camera, as if they were by themselves. How did you manage that?

From the beginning it was our goal to participate in the lives of these teenagers without looking through a keyhole. This was made possible by the very long duration of shooting: time, time, time. We became a regular part of their lives. Of course, that came with a big responsibility. I wanted to make a film they would like and even show their grandchildren someday.

How did you manage to keep a professional distance?

At first, we thought a lot about establishing boundaries. But those young people let us into their lives, we let them into ours. It was very beautiful and often also very moving. Achmad, for example, the young Somali, was arrested and allowed one phone call before being deported to Italy. He called us. We managed to get him out of jail because he had been wrongly arrested. If he hadn’t taken our card, he wouldn’t be here now. Things like that establish a bond between people: Now I have 20 new friends.

You were also present during many trips to the authorities.

Was it difficult to obtain permits for filming?

It was a constant struggle. The social workers for these young adults are very cautious, the authorities sometimes completely uncooperative. For example, at the Ministry of the Interior we had no access at all: We were never present at any of the interviews, and only found out what happened during them from the teenagers.

You show a great deal of these young people at dances, or at a snowball fight. Why did you decide to dedicate so much space to everyday life and those more pleasant aspects?

That was very important to me! There is this way of thinking that foreigners are “different.” I wanted to show that there is no difference. The girls get their clothes from a charity shop rather than a store. But they think like any other girls: Do I want a sweater with or without a collar? Therefore, these scenes are for identification.

Isn’t there danger of a regarding a certain reflex response, such as “They seem to be doing fine”?

We’ve had that reaction. For example: They even have cell phones! Of course they do. They’re teenagers—they would rather starve than go without a cell phone. The image of the barefoot refugee is no longer true for the ones who made it all the way to Austria. The “have-not” aspect shifts: At the border it’s still the lack of food. Here it’s the waiting, being kept weak, being at somebody’s mercy, being kept from going to school, from working, from gathering strength.





“...if I had the whole world, ...I’d sell it and go to America.” AHMED KHODADADI

On three occasions you also filmed at the EU’s borders. For me, those scenes are some of the most moving in the film. Why the decision to leave these teenagers’ microcosm in Vienna?

We wanted to show that they didn’t just drop in from the sky, they’ve come a long ways. Of course, these borders could be a film all by themselves. So we wanted to tell selected stories which could have easily been part of our protagonists’ journeys. But we also wanted to show the system—the absurdity, the efforts the EU makes to supposedly protect them. And who’s affected.

And there at the borders, you also got very close to the underage refugees, who live under deplorable conditions. Was it difficult to make contact?

They weren’t afraid at all—much less than the ones who had already fought their way to Austria. They’re not nearly as intimidated, but still full of naiveté and hope. They think: There must be a mistake! I must be the only one who’s being treated like this! They want to show that, and asked us over and over again: Tell our story! Show it to the world! They still think: This kind of thing shouldn’t be happening. We had some drastic experiences. The teenagers we filmed in Ceuta were arrested around that time—a typical intimidation tactic, they told us. When we left, we were deeply shocked that we could simply board the ferry while they were chased around and had to remain behind the fence.

Did your protagonists like the film?

This was the most difficult premiere of my life! They laughed a lot but were also sad—it was like after a trip when you get together to look at the photographs. They gave me the feeling that they were proud of the film and stood by it.

What do you hope that moviegoers take away from the experience?

I hope that some leave the theater and say: I got to know a world I wasn’t familiar with. Also, I hope the film makes people think. I would also like to discuss it, preferably with Austrian teenagers: I hope that the film deepens their understanding about the reality of refugees their age. It’s still very difficult to make contact with people when you arrive in Austria.

After all this time with those teenagers—how should the system change?

The entire system is wrong. There are so many opportunities for abuse of power that a few minor regulatory changes won’t fix it. But I was also introduced to some positive projects that work on a small scale, for example, the Connecting People sponsorship project. However, as an artist I don’t have any sweeping solutions to offer: utopian ideas, perhaps. Maybe I’ll make a feature film about this topic someday.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

About The Film

The idea for this film occurred to me 15 years ago when I came to Vienna—after fleeing a war—at the age of 17. This alternative perspective, this clash of different worlds and expectations, the simultaneous existence of numerous realities has stayed with me to the present day. I feel privileged to use the means available to me now, film, to provide time and space for a discussion of this topic.

In the research phase of the film, there was already a director's note with all the intentions, ideas and visions with which the filming commenced. However, little by little, during the 80 days of shooting and more than 15,000 kilometers of travel over a period of almost two years, the theoretical concept turned into an intense, true-to-life experience, a complete immersion into the world of the young people portrayed in this film.

The greatest task revolved around the attempt to show on film this open-spiritedness, the absurdity of their daily encounters, the tears as well as the joys with as little commentary as possible. The recurring questions at the end of day's shooting were: "Did the material we filmed reflect what we saw? Is it possible to communicate it, represent it? What did the camera see of all this? Is it even possible to show the shock, outrage and the resulting conclusions in a documentary without commentary?" One thing was clear: The story would be told in situations and moods, without interviews; the conversations would be incidental; we will see how these people communicate with each other and what their relationships are.

This was only possible after a great deal of preparations and continuous contact, in the course of which a certain familiarity with the protagonists developed; as a result, they were able to relax and act natural, like in daily life, while being filmed. The film is intended to be an offer to the audience, an offer and an invitation, which we—the team—were privileged to accept in your place.

From more than 120 hours of footage, which were turned into a 94-minute documentary following an intensive editing process, everyone in the audience should be able to think out the whole story to its conclusion. There was never a desire to explain, explicate or provide clever thoughts on the topic from the omniscient film, so to speak. Our intention was to capture an impression of the whole by means of associations, which is much more transparent and profound than it could ever be with the help of comments or by looking from the outside in.

As a result, it was possible to create space for the energy and also the impudence of young people, who are always exuberant and surprising in the little things—and to do so even in the most difficult situations, such as the ones where sheer survival is concerned.

Finding an acceptable way of filming people who live in a constant state of emergency presented the greatest challenge. These are individuals who are denied necessities such as safety, freedom and rights. We wanted to participate in truthful situations without looking through a keyhole, to let images develop in harmony with the individuals and the film itself. Finally, the task was also a quest during which it was necessary to provide time and space for ever-changing situations and surprises.

Over time, this project had less and less to do with the classic rules of filmmaking and more with life itself, and even more so, with the question of what film can ultimately achieve.

And the answer was: communicate. Film should communicate.



"I won't go home
with empty hands."

IBRAHIM HACHUBE

“Europe, Europe,
I’m coming.”

HISHAME ZAIR



On Obstacles—What You Won’t See In This Film

Two issues repeatedly surfaced during the work on “Little Alien”: first, the struggle to obtain film permits and the opportunity to shoot this film at all, and second, the question of the refugees’ ages. Both represented doubts which were brought to the film from the outside. And both go to show how even the idea of reporting about things that are ignored or covered up is regarded as provocation, something which doesn’t even stop with those who believe themselves to be politically correct.

A brief report:

After days of talks and negotiations we were given permits to film that contained more restrictions than actual permissions. In public places, where a permit is not usually required, the shoots were constantly interrupted by police controls under various pretexts. We quickly realized that with the camera, i.e. the “red light,” we drew attention to things that were supposed to remain hidden. This is one of the statements that we heard repeatedly from the “authorities”: “This topic is very often misunderstood, so we have to be careful, since we only want the best for these teenagers.” And certain scenes repeated themselves as well:

We asked teenagers if we could film something with them on camera. They replied: “Yes, of course, as long as my hair looks OK.” But we shot and worked under tight restrictions, which affected the teenagers as much as it did us. The film was being enclosed and confined, a [border] fence made of rules was erected around us. Every day, the film and its crew had to find a new hideout. Officials from the various ministries told us that, in all likelihood, we wouldn’t even have any actual teenagers in our film since they almost certainly falsified their age in order to gain advantages during the application procedures.

We thought about this: How should we select young people if we don’t know how old they really are? The authorities usually send them for magnetic resonance imaging and to a physician who is supposed to determine their age after a 20-minute interview.

During the course of our research, we met experienced, scientifically oriented physicians who told us that not even a genetic test could determine a person’s precise age. When they’re young, deviations of up to two years are possible.

And so there are teenagers in our film who look younger or older than they actually are. The question of their age was asked even after the completion of “Little Alien” because nobody could imagine children and young adults in such situations.

Many things can be put on from “outside,” but much to our delight, not appearances.



“They said,
‘We’re going to kill you.’”

JUMA KARIMI



About the Theme

Young girls and boys from Central Africa and eastern Central Asia flee from their homes to come to Europe, tempted by its glitter, hungry for a safe place to live, or just survive. Once upon a time this was all very different.

The supreme commander had to disguise himself as a bull, grab the girl—daughter of the Phoenician king—and swim halfway across the Mediterranean with her on his back. In the end he seduced her. That’s how this girl, named Europa, came to our part of the world and gave it its name, “the best of all worlds.”

Today, young foreigners are no longer abducted and taken to Europe. They aren’t being invited either. Young foreigners are prevented from even approaching it. Europe employs people to protect its borders, its peace and its standards. The citizens of Europe live in fear of foreigners who might take away their wealth, their security, their traditional values. This fear corresponds to the propaganda of their political leaders. Little aliens, however, still manage to climb over the wall and through the fences and accept the abstract game of rules and regulations and the struggle with the endless wait.

For them, this means that the following is perfectly legal according to European laws:

- beatings
- arrest
- being denied gainful employment
- being denied an education
- being denied equal rights
- being denied a place to live

These young men and women left their worlds behind. They risked life and limb—and once here, they’re being forced to bear the unbearable once again.

We saw how the system can’t keep these foreign teenagers, many of them deeply traumatized, from living their lives, not even with laws and clever legal manipulation.

We discovered how they still manage to laugh, move around with confidence, with friends they made on the roads of silk, tea and coffee; how they celebrate youth. Those friendships are treasures, substitutes for family, enjoyment and play.

And they have invited us, in your place: Please come in, take a seat, spend 90 minutes with us, Nura, Ahmed, Asha, Jawid, Achmad and Alem. Nina Kusturica, Vienna, March 2009



PRESS COMMENTS

“Little Alien” is made outstanding by its excellent structuring, which covers extensive thematic areas such as difficult issues involving borders, the failings of government officials and problems experienced by asylum seekers with formal consistency. A film that stands apart in a positive way because of its intelligent approach and touching personal stories.

[David Rams, Allesfilm](#)

Nina Kusturica, the Austrian director of “Little Alien,” has made a straightforward film which is reflective to an extremely intelligent degree. She accompanied young people over more than a year, watching them with a sensitive eye for minor matters on their journey into an uncertain future. This is a matter of personal concern, a statement that the director and her team made again after the premiere: When taking the stage for a discussion with the audience, they wore life preservers in solidarity with the many refugees who drown every year on their dangerous journeys toward a better life.

[Köksal Baltacı, Tiroler Tageszeitung](#)

The film is characterized by sensitive observation. Conventional interviews were not employed in the main narrative threads; instead, the viewer accompanies the protagonists Asha and Nura from Somalia, Alem und Jawid from Afghanistan, and many others like just another member of the group on their way into and through a world which is new to them. In addition, a matter-of-fact look at the “other side,” the advanced technology of the border installations and surveillance centers around the European Union, is taken in a few strategically placed scenes. These images evoke painful memories of the Berlin Wall and similar structures.

[Max Werschitz, Kinomo](#)

Without reconstructing individual stories of personal suffering, Kusturica successfully highlights a number of traumatic experiences: a gunshot wound that continues to cause headaches, the sea journey to Lampedusa, the innumerable beatings and mistreatment at the hands of police officers and soldiers. Kusturica does not juxtapose the government officials, such as at the Federal Asylum Office, who make the decisions and the young people, with the former as faceless anonymous forces; she sketches a precise portrait of the institutional process and the dynamic involved, and even the helpers, organizations and interpreters are part of one and the same system. “If I had stayed in Afghanistan, they would have shot me and then I’d have peace,” says one of the refugees. “Tell them that here and they’ll shoot you too,” replies another tersely.

[Michael Pekler, Der Standard](#)

They are familiar with the streets and harbors of Spain, Greece and Morocco that another kind of alien, one with money and documents, would not normally see.

They know how to disappear and get by without help, though they never seem tough or cool. The documentary’s locations are “Europe’s borders” in the middle of Vienna, Linz and Traiskirchen.

These are oppressive images, without commentary, in which young people are shown living in parks and condemned buildings.

At the borders the police apparently act in a gray area and, according to what the refugees say, they tend to be fast with clubs and their fists.

Nina Kusturica has made a powerful film that is certainly worth seeing.

[Pascal Honisch, Kurier](#)

An animated sequence of images, scenes from a flight: At times there are too many to take in, and they are difficult to categorize, making use of things from the past, the narrative illuminated by spotlights. In this way Kusturica finds a dramatic structure, a narrative method for found realities. The immediacy of a number of scenes lays a claim to being political, where convention would normally be expected. The refugee as an abused subject, for example. Instead, there are traces leading back to the place of origin, though not in a geographic sense, but in physical postures, that can be read on someone’s face, for example. Not in a frown, but in laughter.

“I’ve never laughed so hard, Hallazi,” jokes a young woman from Somalia in a small group of people from her home country. At the non-place of their gathering—a restaurant, the lounge at an organization?—something becomes evident behind what’s happening, the surface of the image: an attitude toward, a way of behaving in a certain situation.

It’s surprising, what “Little Alien” manages to do on this level: Social stigmatization, whether with good or bad intentions, can’t be found here. The main thing is the presentation of places, actors, experiences and signals in a context. But a great deal is ambiguous: Government offices and organizations look after these minor refugees, and they also organize and regulate them. Kusturica successfully makes these ambivalences visible. The young peoples’ hopes collide with processes they must submit to in order to make their hopes become reality—trying to assert themselves at the same time. In just a few scenes the selected material provides a clear portrait of what dealing with government bureaucrats charged with administering migrants is like.

In spite of the camera’s presence, grotesque moments clearly show that the distance from “foreign” to “alien” isn’t very far: Different worlds, not cultures, meet here.

[Gunnar Landsgesell, Kolik Film](#)



“If you have Article 8 and things are OK in your country again, they send you back.” ALEM GHAMARI

Asylum

Asylum entails refuge and protection from danger or persecution. Being able to “seek and enjoy asylum from persecution” in another country constitutes a human right [Article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948], which every citizen on Earth enjoys—365 days a year, 24 hours a day.

Refugee

Article 1 of the Geneva Refugee Convention defines a refugee as a person who, due to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, ethnicity, political opinion or membership in a particular social group, is outside the country of his or her nationality or permanent residency and is unable or unwilling to avail him or herself of that country’s protection because of such fear.

Legally, refugees are people who fulfill the criteria of the Geneva Refugee Convention [GRC] and shall, therefore, receive refugee status. In addition, there is a second form of international protection, subsidiary protection [refugees according to the European Convention on Human Rights]. Source: UNHCR

Subsidiary Protection [Article 8, Austrian Asylum and Immigration Law]

Subsidiary protection is granted to refugees who do not fulfill the requirements under the Geneva Refugee Convention [GRC] but who are refugees under the European Convention on Human Rights, e.g. they might be exposed to inhumane treatment or torture upon their return home. They too require protection from being forcibly returned to their country of origin and the protection of a new homeland. Yet, in many European countries that provide asylum, they have fewer rights than refugees under the GRC, which has proven to be one of the biggest obstacles to integration. Source: UNHCR

“The White Card”

[Article 51, Austrian Asylum and Immigration Law, 2005; Temporary Residence Card]

A temporary residence card is also known as the “white card” among asylum seekers and their advisors. It is issued after approval of the asylum application and entitles asylum seekers to remain in Austria until the application process is completed. However, it does not entail permanent residency. If the asylum application is denied, the right of residence is terminated and the white card is withdrawn.

Source: Sebastian Schuhmacher, expert on immigration and asylum law and the application process

Unaccompanied Minor Refugee

Unaccompanied minor refugees are persons who are within the EU’s borders without the company of a legal guardian. The term minor refers to persons under the age of 18. With regard to proceedings and jurisdiction, the law differentiates between minors of foreign origins and refugees. During asylum application process, minors are represented by the child or youth welfare department.

The number of children around the world who are escaping from war, poverty and persecution is unknown. For teenagers and children it is especially difficult to leave conflict regions since, for the most part, they do not have the necessary resources for an extended flight.

Crossing the outer borders of the EU presents an enormous obstacle and potential danger for those young people. Many pay for the attempt to reach Europe with their lives. But even if the outer EU border is crossed, safe haven awaits in very few instances only. In many European countries they are threatened by jail, isolation and discrimination. The dreams of economic success and a life in freedom and dignity burst like a bubble.

In 2008 872 unaccompanied minor refugees [UMR] filed asylum requests in Austria. In 97 cases the ages given were deemed implausible by the asylum authorities and, after age assessments, the applicants were declared of legal age. Source: Asylum Coordination Austria

Determination of Age

Currently no scientifically foolproof method exists for determining the age of an adolescent within a range of less than several years. Yet the asylum authorities continue to find physicians of various disciplines who, against their better judgement and for considerable fees, perform age assessments. During appeal proceedings, such age assessments are regularly dismissed, and even the professional medical association has clearly expressed its doubt concerning their reliability. A medical determination of legal age offers the authorities primarily the opportunity, within the framework of the Dublin II Convention, to deport more people to other European countries than would otherwise be possible with minors. Source: Otto Hollerwöger / Integrationshaus

A glossary on the topics Geneva Refugee Convention/Who Is a Refugee?/Dublin II Regulation/Asylum/“The White Card”/Unaccompanied Minor Refugees/Determination of Age/Subsidiary Protection/Basic Care and Provisions/The Three Great Asylum Myths [Refuted by UNHCR with Facts] can be found in the website www.littlealien.at

NINA KUSTURICA



Biography

Born in Mostar, Bosnia-Herzegovina, in 1975, she grew up in Sarajevo in a family of artists. Throughout her time at school she worked on theatrical productions in a number of creative positions. She has lived in Vienna in 1992, since the beginning of the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Studied Directing and Editing at Vienna's Film Academy, University of Music and Performing Arts. For both subjects she made a number of documentary and fiction films and participated at international and domestic film festivals.

Her thesis film, "Auswege," opened the Diagonale—Festival of Austrian Film in March 2003, its world premiere was at the international film festival in Berlin—Forum des jungen Films, and it received more than 30 invitations to festivals after that.

In 2003 she founded the film production company Mobilefilm with Eva Testor.

Nina Kusturica writes articles for books and periodicals, teaches at the University of Vienna, and conducts directing and editing workshops.

Nina Kusturica lives in Vienna and works as a director, editor, writer and producer.

Filmography

director, producer, editor [selection]

2009: [LITTLE ALIEN](#) feature documentary
Festivals: world premiere at Diagonale 2009

2004: [24 REALITIES PER SECOND—Michael Haneke in Film](#)
TV documentary [together with Eva Testor]
Festivals: Diagonale 2005, IFF Bratislava, IFF Rotterdam, IFF Sofia, Febiofest Prague, NAT IFF, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria IFF, Moscow IFF, etc.

2003: [AUSWEGE](#) feature fiction
Thesis film at Vienna's Film Academy
Festivals: opening film at Diagonale 2003; world premiere at Berlinale—Forum des Jungen Films 2004; Emden film festival; Cinema Jove Valencia; International Women's Film Festival, Turin; Leeds Int. Film Festival; etc.
Awards: nomination for the First Steps Award, 2003, Berlin; 2003 International Student Film Festival, Vienna, Golden Bobby for Outstanding Achievement, full-length fiction film; International Women's Film Festival, Turin, first prize of the youth jury, special mention for cast, second prize of the jury.
Cinematic release in Austria: November 2003; cinematic release in Germany: October 2004; distributor: FDK

2001: [DER FREIHEIT](#) short fiction film
Festivals: Max Ophüls Award Competition, Munich student film festival, Cairo SFF, Tel Aviv student film festival, etc.
Broadcast on 3Sat

2000: [LIEBE LJILJANA](#) documentary
Festivals: Diagonale 2000, honorable mention by jury; Duisburg Filmwoche; Sarajevo FF; Premiers Plans Festival d'Angers, etc.
Broadcast on 3Sat as part of "Vom Nachbar und Feind"
Award: Diagonale 2000, special mention of jury

1999: [WISHES](#) short fiction film
Festivals: 1999 International Student Film Festival, Vienna; Angers—Premiers Plans; Tel Aviv student film festival; Sarajevo IFF; etc. Broadcast on ORF: "Kunststücke," May 1999
Awards: 1999 International Student Film Festival, Vienna, Golden Bobby for Best Production

1997: [ICH BIN DER NEUE STAR](#) documentary
Festivals: Diagonale 1998; 1999 International Student Film Festival, Vienna
ORF broadcast: "Kunststücke," May 1999
Award: 1999 International Student Film Festival, Vienna, Golden Bobby for Best Documentary

Production/editing [selection]

2007: [VIENNA'S LOST DAUGHTERS](#)
feature documentary/production, editing/directed by M. Unger

2007: [LINE BY LINE—Paul Flora im Film](#)
documentary/production/directed by Eva Testor

2005: [KOTSCH](#) feature fiction/editing/directed by Helmut Köpping.
Diagonale 2006: award for best editing of a fiction film [together with Bernhard Schmid]

2002: [LOUD AND CLEAR](#) documentary/editing/directed by Maria Arlamowsky

1999: [LESEN MACHT TOT](#) short film/editing/directed by Jörg Kalt

1997: [SPEAK EASY](#) short film/editing/directed by Mirjam Unger

A film production company hanging from the ceiling and brought to oscillation by whiffs of air, continuously in movement since September 2003. The launch of Mobilefilm Produktion arose from the common idea to allow free, necessary and rebellious films. The goal is continuous work on films that are creative, artful, mobile. Telling stories of people, our world and society, from an independent point of view.

Mobilefilm believes in stories. Mobilefilm stands apart.

Moving from place to place in mind and body, free, everywhere, fast, slowly, moved by wind, carrying the story, on its way to the most secret areas of the heart.

MOBILEFILM – Filmography

2009: **LITTLE ALIEN**

Feature documentary by Nina Kusturica
World premiere: Diagonale 2009

2007: **VIENNA'S LOST DAUGHTERS**

Feature documentary by Mirjam Unger
World premiere: Diagonale 2007
Audience award at Diagonale 2007

2007: **LINE BY LINE—Paul Flora in Film**

TV documentary by Eva Testor
A co-production with ORF and RAI Bolzano
World premiere: Diagonale 2007

2006: **SELLING SALES**

A documentary about deindividuation in the world of sales by Marco Antoniazzi and Gregor Stadlober
World premiere: Diagonale 2006

2005: **24 REALITIES PER SECOND – Michael Haneke in Film**

TV documentary by Nina Kusturica und Eva Testor
A co-production with ORF
World premiere: Diagonale 2005 Bratislava IFF, Rotterdam IFF, Sofia Film Festival, Febiofest Prag Film Festival, NAT Film Festival Copenhagen, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria IFF, FEMINA Rio de Janeiro, International Women's Film Festival, Moskau IFF, Split IFF, DOKU.ARTS Berlin
Worldsales Deckert Distribution / USA Sales Cinema Guild

IN PREPARATION

BETWEEN DAY AND NIGHT

Feature fiction by Sabine Derflinger

OH YEAH, SHE PERFORMS!

Feature documentary by Mirjam Unger

WITH Nura Bishar, Asha Abdirahman, Jawid Najafi, Alem Ghamari, Ahmed Khodadadi, Achmad Abdirahman

DIRECTOR, SCREENWRITER Nina Kusturica

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR Nora Friedel

CAMERA Christoph Hochenbichler

SOUND Atanas Tcholakov, Nina Kusturica

EDITOR Julia Pontiller, Nina Kusturica

DRAMATIC ADVISOR Dieter Pichler

SOUND DESIGN Johannes Konecny

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PRODUCTION OFFICE Lejla Memisevic

MUSIC RIGHTS Claus Hofmann

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ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS Steve Wilder

HD POSTPRODUCTION Listo Videofilm GmbH

SOUND STUDIO Tremens Film Tonstudio

SOUND MIX Bernhard Maisch

MARKETING, PR apomat* büro für kommunikation, Nikolaus Heinelt, noPRoblem Public Relations

GRAPHICS Karl Ulbl, Iris Buchholz

WEB DESIGN Marco Antoniazzi

PRODUCERS Nina Kusturica, Eva Testor

DISTRIBUTION AUSTRIA Polyfilm

PRODUKTION Mobilefilm Produktion

DEVELOPED WITH THE SUPPORT OF



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