

وجهة نظر POINT OF VIEW

DOX BOX News

Dox Box 2010 is drawing to an end. The closing film Boris Rayzhy by Dutsch director Aliona Van Der Horst will be screened at 18:30 in Cinema al-Kindy on March 11th.

The winners of the "DOX BOX Audience Award" estimated at SYP 150,000 (USD 3250) and "DOX BOX - SOURA" estimated at SYP 100,000 (USD 2200) will be announced before the closing film screening.

While last year 12,000 people attended DOX BOX 2009, this year the number of attendance increased by 40%.

10TH MARCH آذار



سينما الكندي | ALKINDI
مسرح الحمراء | ALHAMRA

16:00 - 17:00	العمة هالا / AUNT HALA	لبنان / لبنان	14 m
	سامية / SAMIA	سورية / سورية	40 m
17:30 - 18:15	جبال الصوّان / FLINT MOUNTAINS	سورية / سورية	46 m
18:30 - 19:30	لو كان للضباب جذور / IF FOG HAD ROOTS	بلجيكا / Belgium	52 m
20:00 - 21:30	12 لبنانياً غاضباً / 12 ANGRY LEBANESE	لبنان / لبنان	78 m
16:30 - 18:00	أنطوان / ANTOINE	كندا / Canada	82 m
18:30 - 20:00	شارعنا: نسخة السينما / OUR STREET: CINEMA VERSION	بولندا / Poland	90 m

What do you think of DOX BOX 2010?

DOX BOX' audience has increased this year by 40 percent. "Point of View" went out on the street to ask people what they think of DOX BOX 2010.

Chirsten Norway

I found the festival amazing. The fact that everything is free and that there are Arabic movies and movies from all over the world is so inspiring.

Catherine Ferrier, an artist from England

It was great to see so many Syrian films and productions this year and I hope there will be more next year.

Noile Hashema, student from the US

The film program was very varied this year but with the focus on people's films. I'd like to see next year something about the environment or maybe about animals.

Sarah, secretary

I would like to watch films that reflect our youth situation, but I haven't seen any this year.

Dima, law student

The festival was great this year. It's quite impressive to find that it's being organized by young people of our age, who come from different cultural backgrounds. They have shown us what it means to be proactive and to work collectively to achieve a certain goal.

Hassan Abdullah, cinema Director

Such a cultural event is a notable phenomenon. At least it makes you optimistic to see cinema theatres coming back to life and to see new trends among the youth, especially young women.

11TH MARCH آذار



سينما الكندي | ALKINDI
مسرح الحمراء | ALHAMRA

17:00 - 17:30	رجال المدينة / MEN OF THE CITY	المملكة المتحدة / UK	9 m
18:30 - 19:30	فيلم الختام "بوريس ريزي" / CLOSING FILM "BORIS RYZHI"	هولندا / The Netherlands	60 m
20:00	الفيلم الحائز على جائزة DOX BOX - SOURA AWARD WINNER		
17:30	الفيلم الحائز على جائزة الجمهور DOX BOX - AUDIENCE AWARD WINNER		

This will encourage us to make our own cinema. The great efforts made by individuals to organize such a festival are fabulous; they have been able to achieve what takes an institutional organization to achieve.

Leila Asaad

M.A Archaeology

Although I didn't like some of the films, but the documentaries were all of high standards.

Boris Ryzhy by Dutch director Aliona Van Der Horst

"Best take the tram if you're going back to the past with its bell, the drunk bloke next to you, the grimy school kid, the mad old girl, and, of course, the poplar leaves drawn in its trail. Five or six tramstops later we ride into the nineteen-eighties -"

The Traveller: Boris Ryzhy

When writing these words, Boris Ryzhy couldn't have guessed that Der Horst's tram will come by and take us all back to the Russian eighties, to the Perestroika generation that witnessed the end of their country's Cold War with the US and the beginning of the mafia war.

While following Ryzhy's life, the film sheds light on the Russian youth's life during that era. The more the film delves into the details of Ryzhy's life, the more we learn about a generation of Russians that the poet wrote so much about before committing suicide in 2001.

Contrary to what others might think, "Boris Ryzhy" couldn't really unveil the secret behind the 26 year-old poet's suicide. Rather, it delves into the details that made up his life. That's maybe because the director was more interested in delivering a human message, and learning about the perestroika generation than the poet's suicide. Or maybe because his death "can only be felt but cannot be put it into words," as Ryzhy's wife explained.

That of course doesn't mean that we learn nothing about the reasons behind his suicide, but the film is more of a celebration of the poet's life rather than his death.

Combining recorded videos of the late poet with what his family and friends are saying today, Der Horst succeeded in merging the past with the future and bringing Ryzhy back to life! For instance, while one of the poet's friends talks about their profound friendship, we see Ryzhy in an interview talking about his friends.



When we see his son fighting with kids at school, we hear Ryzhy's voice telling us how important it is for boys to stand their ground. The director goes as far as resurrecting the poet during his funeral as his recorded voice joins his wife's shivering words as she recites these lines:

"when the words of this poet will get a European glow, I'll forget my fairy-like city of Sverdlovsk and the playground in Scrap Metal. But wherever I'll finally breathe my last, in the heat of Paris, the chill of London. Let my poor bones be buried, in a nameless cemetery in Sverdlovsk."

"Boris Ryzhy" is a human and warm film that takes us into a world of poetry, love, joy and sadness. Der Horts uses both her vision and imagination to guide her camera to capture political, social and psychological issues without overwhelming us with ideologies and power struggles that our world is still facing today.

By Kinana Issa

Interview with Laura Bari director of Antoine



A sensitive and poetical portrait of the real and imaginary life of Antoine, a boy detective who runs, drives, hosts radio shows and adores simultaneous telephone conversations.

Over the course of two years he uses a mini-boom microphone to discover and capture the sounds surrounding him. In this manner he co-created the sound track of this film.

This child, who is of Vietnamese origin, was born one hundred days prematurely. He is integrated into the regular school system in Montreal, with unprecedented success. Antoine is five years old and he is blind.

POV met the Argentinean filmmaker Laura Bari to find out more about the film.

1. While a documentary, "Antoine" is to a certain extent a fiction film, it's the brainchild of Antoine's imagination and dreams. What was the idea behind making this film?



Fullness, cleverness and beautifulness achieved by arts, mental health and inclusive educational system are the ideas behind making this film.

When an object exists, it's reality. When a person exists, it's reality and I believe that when an idea exists, it's also reality. Unlike documentaries, fiction films are invented. But inventions, at the end, are a recreation of reality because all the elements of an invention already exist so to invent or imagine something all we need is the ability to combine real elements to recreate reality. In Antoine, we get into this little boy's mind. The film is built on a dialogue between what he can see through his imagination and what we can.

2. Some people criticized the film for being too long and repetitive. What do you think?

I wanted the structure of the film to be similar to that of a 6 year-old child's personality. I've been studying the structure of personality and the influence of art and immigration on it. At this age children can switch from reality to imagination in a minute. You scream so they imagine you as a monster. Next minute you tell them let's go eat so you become their mother or aunt. In my film I wanted to celebrate children's ability to switch between imagination and reality because once you grow older you can't do it anymore as people would consider you schizophrenic. Furthermore, children keep repeating the same things so that's why I repeated some scenes because I wanted the film to be coherent with the child's rhythm.

3. In your film we see Antoine experimenting audiovisual arts like painting and music, playing detective and searching for clues along with other sighted children. These are activities that many blind Syrians don't take part in. How important it is to integrate art to childhood in general and to that of the blind in particular?

Children are educated in a very rational way that destroys their creativity. When I met Antoine for the first time I asked him "what would you like to do the most"? He said "I would like to drive a car."

So I gave him the keys to my car. He was astonished! "What else?" I asked him. "I want a mobile." So I gave him my mobile and told him detectives drive cars and answer mobile calls, so why don't we play detective? "It's impossible!" He thought. But he could make it!

Through playing detective I wanted to break this boundary between reality and imagination to set him free. I wanted him to learn to overcome his boundaries. Just like the African slaves who were taken to Brazil. Their legs were heavily chained which prevented them from dancing so they created salsa and merengue. Creativity is an association between things you don't associate. In the case of Antoine, he painted with colors that he couldn't see. But still he could imagine them by associating the colors with things he knew. Orange and green, for example, are his favorites because he can taste them when eating oranges and lemons. Although blind, Antoine was capable of engaging in all the activities other children did.

He plays sport and he even took part in the schools run race. This helps him gain more confidence. Antoine used to fear cats and dogs. But at the end of the movie he touched a horse for the first time in his life. It's because art that he gained this confidence.

4. "Antoine" is one of the rare documentaries where the characters take part in the editing process. Antoine collaborated to the soundtrack creation by capturing and choosing sounds thus making the film more than a simple portrait of him. Could you tell us more about this editing process?

He worked with me all along. He was my sound man and my technician. He put the pieces of the camera and the microphone together. He could put the batteries faster than me. In some cases I even let him take decisions.

Antoine had a rare thirst to learn. We should give him and other kids like him the possibility to do so. We have to treat blind children like kids not like sick people. They are different but who isn't? We are all different and it's our job to find a way to integrate.

Samia by Syrian director Ammar Al Beik

Obama might have said in his speech that "Jerusalem is a Jewish Capital, and will never be divided," but Samia, a Palestinian artist who lives in exile since 1948 has another opinion. Armed by her camera, Samia roams the streets of Ramallah filming her old house and other locations deeply carved in her memory.

When she sends the video to her friend in Syria Ammar Al Beik, he edits her footage to create this film as a tribute to her and to late Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish. Swinging back and forth between the speech of Obama, and the footage that Samia shot, al-Beik successfully created a paradox of existence.

Contrary to Obama's speech which demolishes the Palestinian existence, Samia's footage comes to confirm this existence through her living memories in her hometown Ramallah. This paradox is visible right from the beginning of the film through Jean-Luc Godard's words: "in 1948, the Israelis walked in the water to reach the Holy Land. The Palestinians walked in the water to drown.. shot, and the opposite shot".

Interview with Nidal al-Dibs Director of Black Stone

Mohammad has tried his hands on many professions so far. He has been working as a blacksmith, a carpenter, and a glue factory worker, Mohammad is still 15 years old.

Syrian filmmaker Nidal al-Dibs takes a close look at the living conditions of children in one of the poorest suburbs of Damascus through the story of Mohammad and his friends who dropped out of school to support their families. Like other children their age, they spend their spare time swimming, laughing, or playing games in a nearby cafe.

Yet, beyond these happy moments, heavy hours of hard work lay on the shoulders of these young men.

The film, which at some point seems like a plotted recreation of reality, tackles violence, drugs, gender issues, child labour with a special focus on the dilemma of illiteracy that is highly spread in these communities.

Point of View met Black Stone's director Nidal al-Dibs.



Like the paintings of Samia, the film is well crafted with various dimensions of meanings. You directly get the feeling that this is the production of not only a director, but an artist who involves multiple subjects in his work and invites the audience to an enjoyable process of analysis and re-thinking. Art, resistance, Godard, Palestine, and Mahmoud Darwish are only a few of the various elements composing this film. If you are interested in any of them, this film is highly recommended.



The film has introduced us to children from unstable familial and financial background. How did you find these children at first place, and how did you manage to work with them?

The preparation period was rather short, because we were lucky enough to find the kids in a short time. Breaking the ice has taken relevantly a longer period though. We tried to understand the children better, to gain their trust and give them the time they need to get accustomed to the camera. But as the children were very cooperative, it wasn't a long time before we started filming.

Working with kids was not that difficult, and I think it's because of the time we invested in getting to know them, gaining their trust and finding a common ground between us. We didn't ask them to do anything special, we just let them do their talking and be simply themselves. So they soon forgot about the camera. That has also a lot to do, as far as I believe, with avoiding any use



of special lighting, even the small microphones were rarely used during filming.

Directors usually use long silent shots when making simialr films. You haven't used any, what were the reasons behind that?

The camera was only there to film whatever was going on. It was almost unnoticable, because the film was based on the kids' spontaneous acts. We haven't asked them to make any certain poses. They stood or sat the way they wanted to, and we adjusted the camera according to that. We had to keep that spontaneous atmosphere even while editing. So you can say that the kids have decided when to cut and when to resume and the whole narration style was dependant on them. Even the sound tracks were of a minimal use, because our action plan was based on limiting the technological presence as much as possible. This technique we used is quite effective and conveys all the

messages that a director wants his audience to get when the issue has a visible entity by itself, such as the case of Black Stone, where the filmed issue forces its presence, even violently sometimes.

Some people were critical about taking these kids to some places they don't usually go to; Old Damascus and Mont Qassioun.

Actually, we haven't asked the kids to go anywhere with us, this is their lives, they are a group of productive individuals who decide to go out and have fun on a weekly basis, in order to entertain themselves and spend some of their savings.

All that we really did in this film was accompanying them wherever they went. When they went to Qassioun they took us through a road that we've never known before, it was their own little secret road. For them, this is their special day. A day in which they might decide to go to cinema, Old Damascus or just go about flirting some gals, this is what they do, maybe it's just that people don't want to believe that they do have their own social lives..

One of the kids protested against calling him „homeless“ in the film, but there were other scenes where we see them living a vagabond life, why was that?

The kids we've been filming are not homeless, they have only dropped out of school to work and support their families, and the word „homeless“ is quite irritable to them. In the film we only see a few homeless kids, such as Ahmed's brother who goes out of his home for a week, but then he comes back. These kids consider themselves as the bread winners of the family.

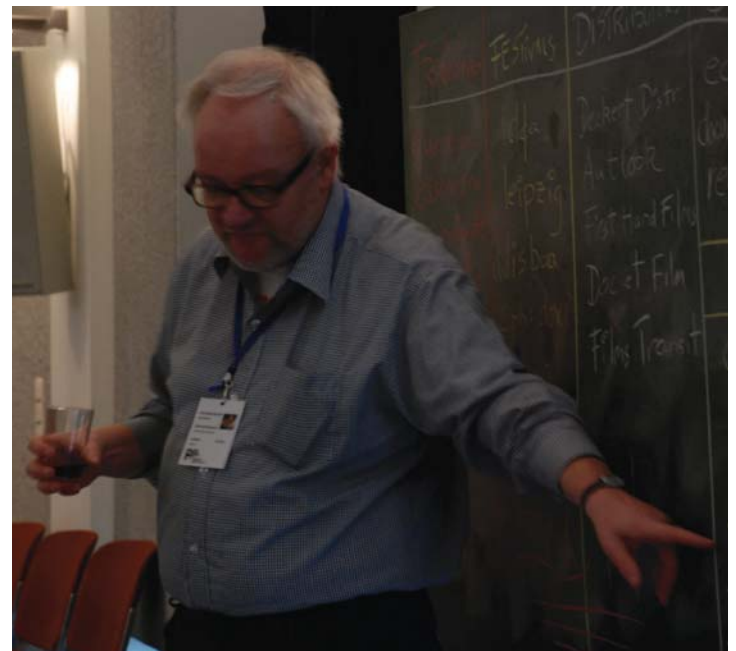
By Rama Jarmakani, Translated by Kinana Issa

Blog post by Tue Steen Muller

4 Polish documentaries and a Syrian. And again bravo to the organisers for putting an emphasis on the short documentary which is of course well targeted in a country with limited funding possibilities - where short film can be made - and for the rest of us, who have experienced this special art form disappear from public television to become a playground-like platform for young people, who want to experiment, develop their skills and find their own voice.

“Six Weeks” is a small masterpiece by Marcin Krawczyk. In 18 minutes he tells the story about a woman, who like many others decide not to keep her child because she does not think she can offer it a decent life. Visually it is strong, it is dealing with a tough subject in a respectful way. Polish short documentaries have a flow in storytelling, they have rythm, they go directly into the story... You can see the inspiration of old masters like Kieslowski and Lozinski. “Mother” (theme: family), “A Woman Sought” (theme: matchmaking), “Till it Hurts” (theme: mother and son) were the other Polish film in the programme, high quality, right to the point, made with invitations to laugh at our crazy life.

Syrian “Women's Talk” was a film that pleased the full cinema. It has three acts, the first one full of male chauvinistic remarks from old men, who think that women are well of now - they have electricity, it is warm in the kitchen, and we don't beat the women any longer...



the middle act responds to the first one, you see a quick edited MTV-style sequence of women working in all professions, with no dialogue. Which there is in the last sequence where women around the fireplace comment on the men. Layback! They laughed in the theatre, it was funny, but also for a foreigner a terrible comment on the position of women in modern Syria. There is along way to equality!

Filmkommentaren.dk

Aunt Hala by Lebanese director Sara Haidar



Sara Haidar's "Aunt Hala" has attracted over 250 viewers, who came to al-Kindi cinema theatre to watch the Lebanese director's film.

Point of View has asked some of the audience what they think about the film

Ranim- Student, English Literatruue

The film is quite good and humorous, but it could have been longer, so we could understand Aunt Hala's character.

Carl Nobrian-Fine Artists

The director restrained Aunt Hala who seemed to act according to Haidar's instructions. Therefore, it lost the spontaneity found in documentaries.

Thana Assassa

The black & white overlapping scenes of classical video footage with the new filmed materials was a good choice. The director has got us involved emotionally with Aunt Hala's character, a woman who has overcome her disability through adopting a new way of self expression.

I also liked the humorous approach of the film in dealing with the character's special needs, a case that is usually overlooked by society. I also liked the fact that this film has lightened up the subject and didn't deal with it as a tragic situation.

Ammar Al Bek- Film director

It's always good to shed light on the marginalized but Aunt Hala's personality could have been discussed more deeply, to introduce even further aspects of her character.

By By Amjad Dwyayer

If Fog Had Roots By Belgian director Donia Buffet

Emad Al Khatib-Photographer

While "If Fog Had Roots" is about the present, Buffet used an old camera for filming. This contrast was beautifully done in the film.

Maysaa-Secretary

A beautiful film that tackles a very important issue. It says that even after liberation, we are still not free, and that reflects on our characters as individuals.

Sali Simaan-Fire Arts students

The film was fine and the director presented us with some beautiful visual moments. Yet he couldn't keep his frames at the same level all through the film, what made the other scenes seem as if taken from different film.

Gaith Mahmoud- Scenography



The image was rather bad, the film was monotonous, and I couldn't see any skill in the images. The storytelling was vague and inconsistent.

By By Amjad Dwyayer