

Filmmaking as a tool for youth engagement in politics and society:

From problems to happy ending?

(Work in progress)

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Provided the saying “a picture is worth a thousand words” is true, what is the power of a multitude of pictures any film contains? The power of motion picture has been known since the beginnings of cinematography and films have become important tools for articulating specific political positions and initiating particular policies. As a consequence of a remarkable development of film technology, particularly its digitalisation in the last three decades, film as a form of expression has become more available than ever before. This ‘democratisation’ of filmmaking is especially perceivable among the young who often voice their problems and needs in contemporary society and propose particular measures and solutions to them in a most impressive way exactly by making films. Furthermore, the role of filmmaking of the young gives a key contribution to their mutual interconnectedness in a globalised world. Today more than ever before young people from all over the world can identify one with another and learn about others by reciprocating their different experiences. What a great number of young filmmakers have in common is the opportunity to influence the conscience about certain issues in society by selecting particular topics and addressing them in their own creative ways. These include, for example, violence, discrimination against minorities and devastation of the environment. The representation of these and similar problems in films by young authors are an example of the young generation’s important engagement in articulating important social problems and ways of working out the respective public policies. The best confirmation for that are international film festivals of young authors which are held throughout a year in a number of countries. One of the biggest among them is *Four River Film Festival* which is to be held for the tenth time in the Croatian city of Karlovac, celebrating thus its jubilee. Several hundred films made by young authors from every continent have competed in the festival so far. A great number of presented works have been socially engaged and dealt with precisely abovementioned topics. As far as Croatian authors and their films are concerned, several of them have raised awareness of particular problems in their respective communities and stimulated adequate social and political engagement. By comparing individual films made by young people coming from different countries, this paper investigates the extent of their impact on detecting key social problems and the role of film as a medium by means of which public policies and politics in general can be influenced. The research question reads as follows: In what manner is film, both as art and as a medium, an effective instrument for young people to sensitise society and political institutions with respect to specific problems and ways to resolve them?

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Cultural policy is a part of public policies which always form within a single political system and society in order to respond to particular needs of society. Each public policy, including the cultural one, is based on detecting the specific problems and formulating specific objectives which solve these problems through its realisation. Public policies encompass different actors and users, but they are regularly linked to the government sector as a part of the political system which generates budget resources and manages these resources with the aim of solving specific problems. Cultural issues are without exception in the work description of each government, so cultural policy as a specific public policy can be analysed in its formulation and realisation of set objectives. Cultural policy of contemporary governments most frequently includes areas related to the book and publishing industry, libraries, museums, archives, music activity, visual arts and drama and audio-visual activities.

A part of audio-visual activities relates to the film as an art, medium, entertainment and industry, which is, of this scope and influence, very important in the implementation of cultural policy with the aim of meeting public interests. In addition, film is a field which, besides cultural policy, also belongs to education policy, especially when it is a matter of younger generations in society. In this, the youth today are equally important both as viewers of films and their analysts, and as film authors, who become with their creations in schools or clubs not only artists, but also social critics with respect to the topics with which they deal in their films. To make a film and show it to as wide audience as possible is very easy today, especially among new generations to whom the comprehensive digitisation has largely determined the way of life and work. The development of technology in the last quarter of the century made possible that today there are cameras and media in a single appliance. It is enough to determine what should be shot and show it wherever it is wanted, most often in social networks. Few things advanced in such a way as the film technology which today

makes possible almost an instantaneous exchange of media contents. Everybody who wants so can be an amateur reporter, cameraman and director of their works, in brief, a film author. And what is of equal importance, the author of contents which will draw attention at least in the environment which they are familiar with. However, how is the modern technology used today and with what objectives? Does it serve exclusively for entertainment, communication and facilitating life or it easily transforms in the means by which political and social problems can be influenced? The affirmative answer to this question is given exactly by the recent film opus of the youth, which can be traced in a range of world film festivals.

Croatia has a long tradition of cultural policy which encourages film creativity of the children and youth, and in Croatia over the last few years more and more film shows and festivals with an international sign have been organised where the works of young authors from the whole world have been shown. The youth today are the most numerous and most interested users of modern technology, and the films created by young authors are more and more socially committed. In this way, not only in Croatia, through encouraging film creativity of the youth through the government and – non-governmental sector, problems which are encountered by new generations are detected, and which gain the corresponding solutions as an incentive for the activation of the public policy creators exactly in their film works. The problems on which the youth make their films, as can be seen at specialised film festivals in Croatia and the world, relate to the various forms of violence (among age groups, within the family, in society...), then to the discrimination of different, unprotected groups in society (minorities, children, the elderly...), the abuse of institutions, political corruption, inequality in society and insufficient protection of human environment and nature. It is obvious that younger generations, more and more earlier in their lives, have become aware of key problems in society, but also more responsible in their need that these problems start to

be solved. The film creativity is one of the ways of identifying social problems and encouraging their solving. Regarding the youth as especially sensitive social group, what is particularly important is the work of the mentors of young film authors in schools and film clubs. Their work, advices and transfer of knowledge and skills optimally realise the essence of this segment of cultural policy as a public policy, and this is responsibility toward oneself and the environment in the revealing of solutions for a corresponding problem. For instance, there is a social consensus on the fight against violence, especially when we talk about the youth who are faced by this evil, independently of the place and type of the violence which occurs.

On the other hand, media contents and works of art which are available also to the youth largely contain violence no matter the fact that violence is often criticised in them and on the basis of such scenes calls for the fight against violence. Where is a borderline in this endeavour to stop the violence and – the necessity to show it exactly with this aim? Films are particularly suitable for this debate, because violence in them more often than not is a part of the story and the understanding of the motives of the characters. But, should also the films of the children and youth which deal with violence contain more explicit views of either verbal or physical violence in order to point to the evil of such acts? Or should the young filmmakers in their age use the different means of expression without the use of more drastic views? Is, specifically, the violence shown in films, even when their authors stand up against violence, actually its unconscious promotion? Young film authors often face with such doubts in their work and therefore the common work of the youth and their grown-up mentors is decisive for the final result of raising public consciousness to particular problems in society and encouraging their solution. Not, of course, all or the most part of the film opus of young authors which are shown and compete at specialised film festivals socially

committed works. But the films which are, provide a very valuable analytic material in the sense of noting the topics which over the last few years have dominated in such works, then the style peculiarities used by young filmmakers in order to realise their works and more or less open advocating of a particular way of responding to the mentioned social problems. In this way, cultural policy has a double role in the public interest: on the one hand, it promotes the artistic expression of the youth and, on the other, their critical relation to the reality.

Audio-visual activity in the context of public policies in Croatia

Organised film creativity of the children and youth in Croatia can be traced back in the continuity of more than five decades. What should be noted is the difference in relation to the age groups, so in Croatia today the film creativity is specially organised for the children in elementary schools (7-14 years of age) and the youth in secondary schools (15-18 years of age), even though until recently the joint film festivals of these two age groups were organised. Numerous young film authors which work today in secondary school film groups started to engage in the film in elementary schools, and not small number of them continue their work even in arts academies and colleges. When it comes to the films of the youth which have an element of social commitment, such films of this population have been significantly more frequent over the last decades and years, especially because of the comprehensive political and social changes witnessed by Croatia since 1990 up to today. It is exactly these changes, on the one hand, which got interested young filmmakers to treat them in their works and, on the other, made possible their free expression even through the art. Specifically, Croatia had, until the democratic changes in 1989/1990 which swept over all former socialist countries in Europe, an autocratic political system in which one party, the Communist one to be precise, had a monopoly in both politics and society.

Although the Yugoslav type of Communism, and Croatia until the state independence in 1991 as a part of the former Yugoslavia, was more liberal compared to the one in the Soviet Union and other member states of the Warsaw Pact, the freedom of expression – from the political one to the artistic one – was limited and in service of the ruling regime. This can be best traced through the main tendencies of the Yugoslav and Croatian cinematography since the end of World War II when the Communists won power in both Yugoslavia until 1991 and the dissolution of the Yugoslav federation through a years-long war. In the second half of the 1940s and during the 1950s the Croatian cinematography in the framework of the Yugoslav one was largely subjected to the censorship by the regime in the sense of the topics dealt with by film authors. As in the late 1950s and during the 1960s the discipline of the Communist regime subsided, and society became partly liberalised, so the cinematography gained more space for more free selection of topics and a critical relation to particular phenomena in society.

It is exactly the 1960s which in the Croatian cinematography were evaluated as the best decade in the history of the Croatian film and a decade of the author cinematography because of the emergence of a series of new film authors and their thematically and artistically important works, from feature through documentary to animated films. So, in 1961 the only Croatian film was awarded Oscar in 1961. It is a short animated film *Surogat* (eng. *Ersatz*) directed by Dušan Vukotić, one of the authors of the world celebrated Zagreb School of Animated Films. In the same decade, the film creativity of children and the youth begins to be more and more fostered, in the first place through schools, and the film art becomes a component part of the curricula in elementary and secondary schools. However, Yugoslavia in the early 1970s underwent through one of the greatest political crisis in its history.

These were the political demands of the then Croatian leadership for a greater autonomy in decision-making supported by a large part of the Croatian population. This movement called the Croatian Spring nevertheless experienced the breakdown, because the then Yugoslav leader Josip Broz Tito did not want to accept the politically more independent activity of particular Yugoslav republics, even though the new Constitution of 1974 transformed Yugoslavia into a slack federation. So, the 1970s in Croatia brought a new wave of repression felt also in the film works. Only after Tito's death in 1980 Yugoslavia irreversibly liberalised, and after the outbreak of the greatest political crisis in late 1980s linked to the conflict between the advocates of unitarisation and confederalisation, and approached its dissolution. This decade, exactly because of the broadening of liberties, brought a new enthusiasm in the Croatian cinematography and the cinematographies of other Yugoslav republics (Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia).

This impetus in film creativity in Croatia would be stopped by the war witnessed in the country from 1991 to 1995 after the proclamation of independence, because Serbia and part of the Serbian population, as in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina, did not want to agree to the dissolution of Yugoslavia into republics it was made up of until 1991. Only after the end of the war in 1995 the film production in Croatia significantly got underway and the new generations of children and youth, through schools and clubs, got an opportunity for more systematic film creativity. Until 2007 and the enactment of the Act on Audio-visual Activities, the production of films in Croatia exclusively depended on the decisions and funds of the Ministry of Culture. As the majority of European countries, Croatia also encouraged its film production and secure it by the state budget funds, because the incomes from the cinema market were not even closely enough for a comprehensive film creativity. On the other hand, Croatia today, in relation to the period until the proclamation of independence in 1991, with

respect to the scope of teaching contents on film art made a step backwards, because it limited these contents only to elementary schools by transforming them *de facto* into an optional programme. Therefore, the work of particular schools film groups and film clubs which bring together the children and youth became more important, and by the greater availability of contemporary film technology spread to the numerous places in the country.

The key change in the encouraging of film production in Croatia was brought by the mentioned Act on Audio-visual Activity drawn up according to the positive experience of particular European countries. The Act regulates the conduct, organising and funding of audio-visual activities as a basic component part of the contemporary culture, the encouraging of the Croatian audio-visual creativity and distribution, stimulating cinema shows and complementary activities, and especially the protection and study of the audio-visual heritage as well as showing Croatian audio-visual works in the country and abroad. Although the funds for it are secured from the state budget, the Act moved the audio-visual production from the state Ministry of Culture to the domain of the newly established public institution called Croatian Audio-visual Centre (*HAVC*), by which a special professional body started to deal with film or audio-visual activity, respectively, and not a part of the executive power anymore, and by that the current political nomenclature. In this way, this segment of public policy much more approached the public itself, and the main actor of the creation of a particular public policy became one public institution which work is based on a recognisable policy cycle, from agenda-setting and formulation of the policy, through adopting and implementing the policy to its evaluation. According to the Act, the *HAVC* prepares and implements the National programme of encouraging audio-visual activity by stimulating the execution, organisation and funding of the preparation, development, production, distribution and showing Croatian, European and world audio-visual works. The Centre, further, collects

and distributes funds for encouraging audio-visual activities through a public tender, then it stimulates, directs and organises foreign investment into the Croatian audio-visual activity, and determines the way and deadlines of the distribution of audio-visual works to which a subvention is assigned by a contract on the assignment of funds. Its task, according to the Act, is to represent Croatian audio-visual activities and creativity in international festivals and manifestations, then to encourage the participation of Croatian producers in European and international co-productions and to stimulate and organise domestic and international audio-visual festivals and manifestations. The Centre also conducts and organises publication activity, encourages the protection, showing and studying the audio-visual heritage and supports and organises expert and professional education in the area of audio-visual activities.

As for the children and the youth, HAVC organises and encourages audio-visual culture, supports and encourages the production of films by young authors and debutants, and promotes the values and encourage the measures significant for the protection of children and youth, gender equality, equality of races and national minorities. The Centre is governed by the governing council, while the workings and doing business of the Centre is conducted and organised by the director. The members of the Croatian audio-visual council are responsible for the enactment of the National programme of audio-visual activities of the Centre as the basic strategic document according to which the Centre operates. And while the majority of the members of the Governing council are nominated by the current minister of culture, the members of the Croatian audio-visual council are made up of the representatives of a series of professional associations (national television, film workers, directors, producers, cameramen, cinema showers, institutions of higher education from the field of audio-visual activities, national film archives and the umbrella association of film amateurs). In this way,

the Centre legally obtained the autonomy of working, because the projects which will be funded from available funds are proposed by special artistic consultants for each of audio-visual activity (feature-length and short feature film, documentary film, animated film, experimental film, film coproduction, television works and festival and promotive activities). As is noted in the Centre itself, the Croatian cinematography over the last ten years since the enactment the referent Act has started to adopt and promote European professional models and new production skills, along with the integration into the fund Eurimages and the Programme MEDIA and joining the regional and world networks of cooperation. Theoretically seen, the audio-visual activity in Croatia, as a public, cultural policy can be defined as a distributive policy within the typological pattern by Theodor J. Lowi (the remaining three are redistributive, regulation and constitutive policies), because the actor who decides on the public policy distributes the funds from the government to particular recipients, and these funds as new and exclusively specified-purpose funds, and the regulatory solutions presuppose the typical policy process.

Films and film festivals of children and youth: between art and commitment

And while the Croatian audio-visual centre (HAVC) as a central public institution in Croatia which deals with the encouraging of film production is mostly directed to the works of film professionals, film amateurs in Croatia are organised through the Croatian Film Association. The Croatian Film Association (HFS) acts as an umbrella association of non-professional film and video associations which in Croatia have operated in an organised manner since 1928. The Association gathers together cinema clubs (today, under the aegis of the Association there are 47 of them), film groups and individuals from the elementary school age through the secondary school age to students and grown-up members. In its operation, the

Association encourages – in a professional, material and organisational manner – the work of its collective and individual members. Specifically, the Association contributes to the education of the leaders and members of film associations, organises the representation and valorisation of film and video creativity of children, youth and grown-ups in the country and abroad, and takes care for the conservation and a systematic protection of the heritage of the film and video works of the unprofessional cinematography in Croatia. The Croatian Film Association has been a member of the World organisation of unprofessional cinematography (UNICA) since 1992, since 2004 has been a member of the International Federation of Film Societies – IFFS/FICC, and since 2015 a member of the European Children’s Film Association.

The Association has become over a decade of its operation a starting point of a series of different film activities. Today, the Association coordinates and supports the work of clubs and associations, supports the film and video production, collects and processes the collection of film and video works, publishes film magazines and books on film, co-organises the courses and workshops for children and grown-ups and the School of media culture as the most significant extra-institutional programme in the context of the development of media literacy. The Association also encourages and gives professional help in the realisation of media education in elementary and secondary schools, organises national festivals of unprofessional film in the framework of all age groups and distributes and shows the programme of film classics. Since 2000, the Association has operated also as a producer of professional films, focusing on short experimental and documentary film, and in this way in Croatia more than a hundred titles have been produced up to this day. In 2018, twenty years of organised film amateurism in Croatia will pass, because in 1928 the Croatian film enthusiast Maksimilijan Paspas established a cinema section in the Zagreb Photo-club, and

this was in the decade when the cinema amateur movement increasingly started to spread all over the world. The members of this cinema section since the early 1930s have performed in international tenders of amateur film. In 1934, the cinema section organises the first domestic public tender of the amateur film in Zagreb, and in 1935 the first international film performance when its members became united into a Cinema club Zagreb, which works even today. As for the film creativity of children and youth in Croatia, it started to develop in the second half of the 1950s (the first children film club was established in 1955 in Zagreb), and in subsequent years achieved the first international successes. Today, the centres of the film creativity of children and youth in Croatia, other than the capital of Zagreb, are the cities Zaprešić, Čakovec, Varaždin, Karlovac, Sesvete, Sisak, Koprivnica, Bjelovar, Kutina, Požega, Slatina, Slavonski Brod, Osijek, Vukovar, Rijeka, Pula, Zadar, Šibenik, Split, and Dubrovnik.

The Croatian film union is particularly responsible for the inclusion of film art in the school curriculum, and in 1999 it launched the mentioned School of media culture which is organised once a year for all teachers who in their educational institutions deal with film. In the School organised through a two-week teaching programme film experts teach lessons, and it is attended by teachers who listen to the specialised lessons on film art and technology, and numerous workshops in which the future managers of school clubs gain practical skills (workshops of feature film, documentary film, animated film, reports, editing, making, tonal engineering, screenplays). The previous work of the School of media culture is also visible through an increasing number of school film clubs and the number and quality of the films made in clubs. Annual festivals of Croatian film creations of children and youth in Croatia also serve for this purpose, which over the last few years have had an international sign. For young filmmakers of the elementary school age the Croatian Children's Film Festival is

organised, and for their colleagues of the secondary school age the Youth Film Festival. The Croatian Children's Film Festival is the only manifestation in Croatia dedicated exclusively to the film works of the elementary school children. Once a year, each time in another city in Croatia, the very best youngest Croatian film creators and their mentors from schools and extracurricular clubs gather together. The Festival in 2017 organises its fifty-fifth edition, which means that in Croatia a systematic evaluation of film creativity of children can be traced back to the early 1960s. Film groups, clubs, groups of children and individuals participate in the Festival, and according to the rule book of competition, each club, group or individual can register for the Festival an unlimited number of works in the framework of five competitors categories. These are: feature film, documentary film, animated film, TV report and a free-style film. In the category of free-style film experimental film, hybrid video works which contain several film types, video clips, dedicated films and other video works which cannot be classified in other four categories can be registered. Films can also be registered in a special category of the workshop film, which is made up of works which are created in various workshops, and the film for which the manager in advance prepares an elaborated story (screenplay) and scenes, and children make a film according to this material.

Selection commission is made up of three members and, after the review of the arrived works, makes a decision on the works which will be shown in the Festival. In the Festival itself, two prize-awarding committees decide on the best works. The first is made up of grown-up film professionals and the second one by children, and of late not only children from Croatia, but their age-fellows from abroad as well. The Festival, beside the competitor programme, has also an educational programme for children and professional lectures for their mentors from film art to children's right on the film.

The Croatian filmmakers of secondary school age gather each year in the Youth Film Festival. The Youth Film Festival represents the national festival of secondary school film and in this way a central place of the Croatian secondary school film creativity. Until 2007, the Festival was organised in different cities in Croatia, after which in the continuity has been organised in the city of Karlovac, thanks to the collaboration between Cinema club Karlovac and Croatia Film Association which since then have become equal organisers of this manifestation. Since 2008, in the Festival as a national film festival, Four River Film Festival is organised as an international festival of secondary school film intended for all young filmmakers who are students of secondary school or belong to this age group. According to the rules, in the Festival film clubs, groups of authors, students and individuals in the age between fourteen and twenty years can participate, whose films were created in Croatia. Films created in other countries can participate in the Festival. Each club, group, student or individual can register for the Festival an unlimited number of works in the framework of five categories. These are: feature film, documentary film, animated film, free-style film and work in progress. The latter category is intended for the unfinished film works in the stage of postproduction, from which five is selected for the participation in a separate workshop during the Festival.

The selection commission after the review of arrived works makes a decision on the works which will be shown in the Festivals, and on the participation in the workshop work in progress. Two prize-awarding committees decide on the best works in the Festivals. The first is a professional prize-awarding committee which gives prize to the best feature, documentary, animated and free-style films of Croatian and foreign authors, and makes a decision on the best film of the entire manifestation. The Youth prize-winning committee from Croatia and abroad decides on the prizes for the best acting performances, directing,

screenplays, editing and cameramen's work. This prize-winning committee also makes a decision on the film which will be awarded a special prize called the Yellow Flag, which is a particularity of the Festivals in Karlovac. Since 2010, in Karlovac the Yellow Flag has been given to the film authors which by their topics, stories and main characters most successfully speak on violence as a great social evil, especially among younger generations.

Young filmmakers, as has been shown by the previous editions of the festival, are most interested in the problem of violence in their closest environments, in the family, among the age-fellows, in school and in the streets, but equally impressive are their works on violence which reflects a continuous human need for domination or violence which can be seen among the current film offer in cinemas and on television. Before awarding the prize Yellow Flag, a traditional debate on the topic of fight against violence in society is organised. It is a debate of two groups of the youth who from different positions, experiences and deliberations and with the advancing of a series of arguments debate on a specific topic linked to violence in society. For instance, does the violence in the film encourage violence in reality, how to mark films in cinemas with predicates with respect to their contents, can films influence the protection and improvement of the minority rights and do contemporary technology and social networks encourage violence among the youth. Apart from the competitor's one, the Festivals in Karlovac also have a workshop, educational and international programme in which young Croatian filmmakers have the opportunity to exchange experiences with their age-fellows from abroad and work with them in films on the spot.

Young filmmakers and their works as critical references to society

Over the last ten years, Croatia has largely altered the institutional framework of encouraging film production in the framework of cultural policy as a public policy. The referential Act on audio-visual activity of 2007, based on which a year later the public institution Croatian Audio-visual Centre was established and started to work, is a key actor of these modifications. By its work and incentives several film manifestations were launched or improved, especially those intended for younger generations. Specifically, the Centre through the work of its artistic consultants for festival and promotional activities each year selects and funds the festivals in which film authors of the elementary school and secondary school age present themselves and compete. This year from 12 to 16 September in Karlovac the anniversary tenth Four River Film Festival will be organised (the title relates to the four rivers flowing through the city) as one of the greatest European and world film manifestations intended for the secondary school film. With more than six hundred film works registered from the whole world by which a record was broken last year, then with four thousand viewers of festival projections of mostly the youth and about two hundred international guests, the Festival and its concurrent one in which Croatian secondary school students participate are not only events relevant to the film and art, but also manifestations with socially committed creativity.

One aspect of this social commitment is realised through the mentioned prize Yellow Flag, which through the works by young filmmakers the fight against violence in society is promoted. In this way, the Festival increasingly becomes the place in which young artists with their film works point to problems in society, make the public sensitive for them and in this offer corresponding solutions, no matter whether it is a matter of works which arrive to

Karlovac from Croatia or the world. In this, topics which the young filmmakers from Croatia and the world choose in the realisation of their socially, and even politically committed works can be compared. The overview of the topics of the film works of the youth from the last year's 9th Four River Film Festival (Karlovac, 6-10 June 2016) is one of the indicators of current preoccupations of young filmmakers and certainly of future active citizens and voters in their neighbourhoods. As for Croatia, a particular part of the films deal with the topic of democratic transition, the war and post-war period and the situation of social and economic lack of prospects in a series of environments which exactly in the war for independence in the first half of the 1990s experienced the greatest sufferings, but, also a stagnation after the war because of the failure of the government at the national and local level in solving the existential issues of the population in these areas. The city of Karlovac itself and the region whose centre Karlovac is, in the war were among the worst suffered areas, but the proximity of Zagreb as the capital of Croatia, position on important roads and especially the launching of a series of cultural manifestations in whose centre are the youth, helped the sensitive post-conflictual stabilisation of society.

On the other hand, as is shown by the films of the youth from these cities and areas, the part of Croatia which suffered in the war still represents environments with no economic prospects with a large number of inhabitants dependent on state jobs and social transfers. These environments are largely devastated in a zoning way, and mostly the younger persons in a creative way propose their revitalisation. The example for this is *Urbex 3: Rušević Family* of the video-activist of the Petrinja Secondary School, which was awarded a prize in Karlovac in 2016 as the best Croatian free-style film, in which its authors in a sarcastic way propose how to restore buildings which were neglected for years in their city which suffered in the war and neglected in the peaceful period. Along these lines is also a prize-winning

free-style film *Abandoned Karlovac*, in which its young author point to the fact that Karlovac, despite the mentioned progresses, is still a city whose abandoned and neglected parts require the engagement of local authorities. Young Croatian filmmakers, judging by the last year's edition of the Festival, are increasingly interested in the issue of corruption in society whose degree in Croatia, in relation to the average of the European Union whose member state Croatia has been since 2013, is above average. Therefore, the special reward for the film *Anticorruption Atom* is not surprising, in which corruption is analysed from the school level to the level of the supreme authority in the country. Award in Karlovac was also deserved by the Croatian documentary film *I Regret Nothing*, which portrays a young dancer from a particular Croatian island who as a homosexual in a small neighbourhood is found between the need for realisation of his identity and rooted prejudices. Among other film topics which start from a particular social problem and try to funnel it into a corresponding solution, from last year's Festival the integration of foreigners into Croatian society (the film *Jeremy*), everyday life with an illness and disability (the film *I Don't See What the Problem Is*) and the issue of privacy in society (the film *The Right to Privacy*) should be pointed out. The award Yellow Flag was won last year in Karlovac by the Croatian feature film *Kagepac* which ironically deals with the relation toward bad students in school.

As for the films from foreign competition, the secondary school students dealt with universally understandable topics when it comes to the position of different disadvantaged groups in society. In this way, the award for the best foreign documentary film went to the Macedonian work *Faces* about inhabitants of one poor village with no real chances for a better life. The award for the best direction and screenplay came to the German feature film *Natan* in whose centre is a boy who revenges himself to his abusers, and the award for the best acting achievement to the Danish feature film *Wings for Sally*, in which a relation of a

brother to his severely ill sister and the fatality of child's imagination is shown. Among other socially committed topics, works on Holocaust (the American film *A Life of Changes*), crime among the youth (Kosovo film *5 Euros*), Palestinian issue (American film *Grip Tape Over a Wound*), loneliness in modern society (South-Korean film *Other*), social pressure and norms (British film *Society*) and the consequences of the recent economic crisis (Greek film *The Locksmith* and the Spanish film *The Silence*) should be emphasized. In brief, the films from the festival of the secondary school film in Karlovac in 2016, but also from earlier years, show that within the institutionally ordered and encouraged audio-visual creativity and international cooperation there is also a creative and relevant environment in which the youth can influence the detecting of the problems in society, their consciousness-raising in the public and proposing the sustainable solutions.

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