

FESTIVAL ENQUIRIES

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A MOMENT IN THE REEDS

A FILM BY MIKKO MAKELA

SYNOPSIS

Having moved to Paris for university, Leevi returns to his native Finland for the summer to help his estranged father renovate the family lake house so it can be sold. Tareq, a recent asylum seeker from Syria, has been hired to help with the work, and when Leevi's father has to return to town on business, the two young men establish a connection and spend a few days discovering one another during the Finnish midsummer.

ABOUT THE FILM

A response to the dearth of queer narratives in Finnish cinema, *A Moment in the Reeds* is among the first queer feature films ever made in the country. Viewing Finland from the perspectives both of an immigrant and an emigrant, the film casts the long-marginalised voices of sexual and ethnic minorities centre-stage in a story about the search for freedom, acceptance and a place to call home.

DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Mikko Makela is a London-based filmmaker who, feeling compelled to fill the queer void in Finnish cinema, decided to return to his native Finland to make his debut feature. Since studying English Literature and French at Nottingham University and University College London, in London Mikko has directed music videos and fashion films alongside working as an editor in drama and commercials. Having also studied Drama at City Literary Institute, he was earlier this year seen acting on the stage in the Arcola Queer Collective's revival of Mae West's 'The Drag' as well as making an appearance in John Cameron Mitchell's film 'How to Talk to Girls at Parties'.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

There has been a real lack of queer narratives in Finnish cinema, and that is why I initially set out to make this film - to fill the queer void, so to speak. However, I didn't simply want to address sexual diversity in the film but also highlight the limits of modern Finland as a multicultural society, and address the pockets of

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racism (and homophobia) that still very much exist in a society which likes to think of itself as fairly progressive.

I wanted to make a film that was Finnish and un-Finnish at the same time, a film that contained multiple perspectives onto my native country. Importantly, I wanted to stage this opening up of traditional Finnish society by these characters usually relegated to its margins, in the most iconic of Finnish milieus, the summery lakeside. My main objective in making the film was to challenge Finland into acknowledging the diversity that exists within it - to confront the homogeneity of the mainstream with the difference that has been marginalised as "un-Finnish" for so long.

More than I expected when setting out to make it, the film became a testament to my own reappraisal of my native country: it is simultaneously a love-letter and a critique; a re-discovery and exploration of many of those aspects of Finnish culture and society which I vehemently rejected growing up and by leaving the country myself.

At its heart, the film is about two people who have fled their native countries - one of course in far more privileged circumstances than the other - for a freer, safer life elsewhere. Beyond addressing the topic of queer migration from hostile environments to safer spaces, it was important to me to explore the contemporary experience of a Syrian refugee coming to Finland and to raise awareness of the various difficulties faced by him in a society that has traditionally not been very diverse or open-minded.

The two characters view Finland very differently, Leevi's privilege evident in his having been able to reject this relatively liberal society that for Tareq (the first Syrian gay character in cinema) appears as a place where he can finally live freely, and it was the tension inherent in this unexpected and problematic crossing of paths that I wanted to explore.

To take a wider view, I would like to think that the film can be seen as representing most things antithetical to Trumpism and Brexitism: open borders, freedom of movement, international solidarity, and not only tolerance but respect for ethnic, sexual and religious diversity.



THE CAST

JANNE PUUSTINEN (LEEVI)

A multi-tasker in the theatre, having graduated as a theatre director from Metropolia University, Janne works as an actor, director, writer and drama instructor. In addition to numerous stage roles (Metropolia theatre, Kuopio City theatre), he has made appearances in several Finnish films and TV shows.

BOODI KABBANI (TAREQ)

Boodi Kabbani is a Syrian artist who has done theatrical work in Syria, Lebanon and Finland. Kabbani worked in theatre production and talent management before emigrating to Finland in 2014. In Finland, he joined Saimaan Teatteri (touring the country in summer 2016 with their comedy 'The Wedding'), has worked in scenography and has run integration-themed audience related workshops in collaboration with Viirus Teater.

MIKA MELENDER (JOUKO)

A Helsinki-based actor, Mika has recently appeared in The Happiest Day in the Life of Olli Mäki (2016), Virality (2016) and the TV series Black Widows.



THE CREW

JAMES WATSON (PRODUCER)

The other half of Wild Beast Productions, James has produced a number of music videos, shot fashion and art promos, as well as directing 'The Ladies in Waiting', a documentary on student drag queens. As a journalist and documentary filmmaker he has interviewed the likes of John Waters, Boy George and many other queer artists. He is currently developing his debut feature film.

JARNO PIMPERI (PRODUCER)

Jarno is a freelance actor, producer and director in Helsinki, best known for his stage work in the Helsinki Gay Theatre (HGT) Association. Jarno has also acted in several Finnish film and TV shows as well as directing and producing the short film 'The Tidbit', celebrating HGT's 10th anniversary.

IIKKA SALMINEN (DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY)

Iikka Salminen is a Helsinki-based cinematographer who has worked in the industry since 2012 gaining experience in various productions while getting his BA in cinematography. His work has been seen at film festivals world-wide and on national television.



“A MOMENT IN THE REEDS”
A FILM BY MIKKO MAKELA

A WILD BEAST PRODUCTION

WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY
MIKKO MAKELA

PRODUCED BY
MIKKO MAKELA
JAMES ROBERT WATSON
JARNO PIMPERI

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER
WILLIAM R. CARTER

ASSOCIATE PRODUCERS
STUART MALCOLM HONEY
ELINA ERVASTI-MÄKELÄ
ERKKI MÄKELÄ

STARRING
JANNE PUUSTINEN
BOODI KABBANI
MIKA MELENDER
VIRPI RAUTSIALA

ADDITIONAL DIALOGUE BY
THE CAST

POEM BY
JANNE PUUSTINEN

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY
IIKKA SALMINEN

1ST ASSISTANT CAMERA
JANNE HÄKKINEN
JENNI RIUTTA

SOUND RECORDIST
JAAKKO KAUTTO

MUSIC BY
SEBASTIAN KAUDERER
LUKE RICHARDS

FILM EDITING BY
MIKKO MAKELA

ADDITIONAL EDITOR
JOJO ERHOLTZ

COLOURIST
ANDRÉAS BERNSTRÖM

DIT
NICOLE EDWARDS

SUPERVISING SOUND EDITOR &
RE-RECORDING MIXER
ENOS DESJARDINS

DIALOGUE & SOUND EDITOR
ARTTU VOLANTO

SOUND FX EDITOR
DARIO SWADE

FOLEY ARTIST & EDITOR
ANNA MAGDALINO

FOLEY ARTIST
NICK COLE-HAMILTON

ADR RECORDIST
SAMI SARHAMAA

STYLIST
KATI SILO

1ST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
JARNO PIMPERI

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
ROSE JUUTI

