



THE SHUTKA BOOK OF RECORDS

A film by Aleksandar Manić




Somewhere in the Balkans, on the verge of Europe, there is a unique place, undisclosed to the eyes of the world - Shutka, the alleged world capital of the Roma. This film captures the unbelievable story of a town that thrives on achieving records in songfests, goose fights, dog fights, and vampire hunts, in wearing Sunday best, exterminating evil Genies and competing in disciplines no one would ever have dreamed of. Meet the champions no one has ever heard about, but no one will ever forget.



Director's Statement

“Shutka is unlike any other place I have ever visited. The fear of evil genies and vampires, a deeply rooted superstition is as present in the everyday life of Shutka as drinking Turkish coffee in the morning. But for me, the most remarkable phenomenon about Shutka is the omnipresent everyday struggle of its inhabitants to be a ‘champion’, in no matter what. The Roma here greet each other by saying, ‘Good morning, champ’, and they try daily to overcome their hardships by competing in the most unlikely disciplines. I was often unsure about when they were taking themselves seriously, or when they were laughing at themselves, perhaps laughing at life. This is yet another reason why I like to call my film *anthropological documentary comedy*. It is a film about people who crave to make the best out of their lives under the given conditions by trying to be best at what they do - whether this is exterminating genies, hunting down vampires, training geese to fight or collecting obsolete Turkish music on abraded audio tapes. For me their quest for victory has a deeply touching and moral dimension which highlights a particular human condition – the capacity for happiness however hard the living conditions may be. Shutka, called ‘Happy Valley’ by its inhabitants, has been indexed by the UNHCR as one of the poorest places in Europe.”



Why we think that

The Shutka Book of Records

is an innovative film:

The Shutka Book of Records (Shutka) was shot in Macedonia and it is concerned with the bizarre microcosm of Shutka, the unofficial world capital of the Roma people. Unlike most documentaries about the Roma, *Shutka* is not a solemn, anthropological, 'correct' film which would pride itself with representing the Roma 'authentically' – in the common sense of the word. The authenticity in this film is the authenticity of the spirit, of the soul of Shutka. What we are presented with is an exercise in self-representation which dares to cross the line between reality and fiction, pride and self-righteousness.

Manic allowed the protagonists to express their own ideas and profoundly shape the film through individual input and performance. One has to say 'performance' since the film is constructed as a mosaic, with many of its pieces being like little sketches – not far from real life situations but at times blatantly overacted. While capturing a number of events and situations with a "fly-on-the-wall" approach, others are obviously staged. Yet it is often the most fantastic absurdity, the quirkiest scene, that turns out to be true.

It is captivating to see the protagonists enjoying themselves so much and at the same time intriguing to constantly trace the line between reality and fiction. Whilst we understand that a lot in the film might be 'false,' the value of *Shutka* lies in that the spectator nevertheless reaches a better understanding of the culture and the Roma philosophy of life. The director himself claims that everything shown in the film is true.

Various press articles have stated that this film does not patronize the Roma like many others by portraying them as a marginalized ethnic minority living in dirt and miserable conditions, but is the first of its kind to show them as 'champions of life' and illuminates their true nature of survivors.

The low living standards and problems of the society are by no means downplayed or overlooked. It becomes clear that many inhabitants of Shutka would in fact rather be somewhere else. Nevertheless, instead of dwelling on the misery, *Shutka* focuses on how the inhabitants of the city live and react to their surrounding. This is one of the reasons why *The Shutka Book of Records* has been awarded the Amnesty International Award at the LIFFE for the best human rights film in 2005.

As to the reception of *The Shutka Book of Records*, it has to be mentioned that it was the first non-fiction film to be released in Macedonian cinemas. The film caused a nationwide, heated debate. Whatever the arguments are, the fact that *The Shutka Book of Records* managed to put an ethnic minority onto central stage of the Macedonian national media is valuable in itself. A secondary beneficial effect is that Roma people had an incentive to go to the cinema and reflect on how their culture is being portrayed.

Not only the press, but also Roma communities throughout the Balkans claim that this is the best film to have ever been made about them.

Zuzana Zabkova
(festival coordinator)



Technical details:

Title: The Shutka Book of Records

Lenght: 78 minutes

Format: 35mm, color/B&W

Aspect Ratio: 1:1,66

Speed: 25 frames/sec

Sound: Dolby SR

Year of Production: 2005

Genre: Documentary

Alternative formats:

Lenght: 60 minutes

Carrier: DigiBeta or BetaSP

Aspect Ratio: 16:9, anamorphic

Available formats:

DigiBeta: 60 min and 78 min versions
(letterbox or anamorph)

BetaSP: 60 min and 78 min versions
(letterbox or anamorph)

HDCam: 78 min (16:9 anamorph)

D5: 78 min (16:9 anamorph)

Produced by: Aleksandar Manić, Judita Křížová,
Marjan Vujović | Written and Directed by:
Aleksandar Manić | Camera: Dominik Miškovský
Sound: Juraj Žák | Editing: Aleksandar Manić &
Ivana Davidová



THE FILM'S MAKERS



Dr. Koljo - star

Juraj – sound operator

Dominik - DOP

Marjan - producer

Aleksandar – director/producer

Karel – camera assistant

Ramche - driver

Safet - AD

Aleksandar Manić

Writer/Producer/Director

Aleksandar has been a successful documentary film maker for fifteen years, and has made films for both cinema and television.

He is a graduate (summa cum laude) of the prestigious FAMU Film Academy in Prague. Selected filmography:

Shooting Days - Emir Kusturica directs Underground (1997)

The Walls of Kosovo - a province at war (1998)

The Orphans of Enver Hodsha (1999)

The Dredger – Revolution in Serbia (2000)

The Shutka Book of Records (2005)

Juraj Žák

Sound

Juraj has recorded sound and undertaken mixing for over 600 documentaries, TV shows and feature films in the Czech Republic and Slovakia over the course of his career.

Judita Křížová

Co-producer

Having worked on assignments for ABC News, the BBC as well as all Czech television stations, Ms. Krízová was known as a very experienced writer, producer and director. Ms. Krízová, an award winning film maker, produced and directed numerous independent documentaries and was a graduate (cum laude) of the FAMU film academy in Prague. She died tragically in a car accident in 2005. This film is dedicated to her memory.

Ivana Davidová

Co-editor

Ivana has gained a reputation as a highly respected film editor in the Czech Republic over the past 40 years. She has edited over 500 documentaries and feature films and has received two nominations for the Czech Lion as best editor for *Lea*, a film that also received a Golden Globe nomination, and for *King of Thieves*. A number of films she has edited have received international awards. Ivana teaches editing at the Prague Film Academy, FAMU.

Dominik Miškovský

DOP

Despite his young age, Dominik is a highly experienced DOP. He has stood behind the camera for a number of documentaries, music videos and especially commercials, which he also directs. He is one of this year's Young Guns Award winners.

Rotterdam IFF INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE
La Rochelle IFF, France
Norwegian Short and Documentary Film Festival
Palic International Film Festival, Serbia
Encounters' South African International Documentary Festival
Yugoslav Feature Film Festival (national competition, Novi Sad)
Zagreb INTL Documentary Film Festival, Croatia
Leeds International Film Festival, GB
Cottbus Film Festival of Eastern European Cinema, Germany
Ljubljana International Film Festival, Slovenia
Bratislava International Film Festival, Slovakia
Kerala International Film Festival, India
Alpe Adria International Film Festival (Trieste), Italy
Tromso International Film Festival, Norway
One World International Doc Film Festival, Prague, Czech Republic
Sofia International Film Festival, Bulgaria
Vilnius Spring IFF, Lithuania
DocAviv IDFF, Israel

SELECTED FESTIVALS

Istanbul International Film Festival, Turkey
Contact Doc IFF, Ukraine
San Francisco International Film Festival, USA
Tribeca IFF, New York
River Runs International FF, USA
Wisconsin IFF, USA
Minneapolis IFF, USA
Full Frame IFF, USA
Madrid IDFF, Spain
Planete Doc Review Warsaw IDFF, Poland
Cracow IDFF, Poland
Nisa Intl Film Festival, Germany
Ecofilms Rhodes IFF, Greece
Taipei Intl Film Festival, Taiwan
Mission of Man IDFF, Russia
Yerevan Intl Film Festival, Armenia
Revelation Perth International Film Festival, Australia
Rooftop Films IFF, New York
Pärnu IFF, Estonia
Dokufest Prizren IDFF, Kosova
Plzen, Czech national competition, OPENING FILM
Nish, the national actor's film festival, Serbia, CLOSING FILM
Belo Horizonte IFF, Brazil
Ismailia IDFF, Egypt
Arsenals IFF, Riga, Latvia
Rio de Janeiro Int. Film Festival, Brazil
International Atlantic Film Festival, Canada
Rencontres Internat. Du Film Documentaire, Montreal, Canada
Ourense IDFF, Spain
Cork International Film Festival, Ireland
Verzio Film Fest, Budapest, Hungary
Montreal Intl. Documentary Film Festival, Canada

SELECTED AWARDS LIST:



Golden Arena Novi Sad (Serbian national competition), Critic's Award for best feature film from Serbia & Monte Negro
Golden Arena Audience Award, best feature from Serbia & Monte Negro, 2005
Amnesty International Film Award, 2005, Ljubljana IFF
Egypt International Documentary & Short Film Festival, Ismailia, Grand Prize for best film of festival, 2006
Cinema Magazine Award, 2006
Golden Deer, 1st prize at the IDFF Ecofilm Rhodes, 2006
Golden Wheel Grand Prix for best film, Intl Roma Film Festival, Skopje, 2006
Calpurnia Prize for Best Documentary, Intl Independant Film Festival of Ourense, Spain, 2006
International DFF One World, Pilsen Audience Award, 2006
Dokumenta Madrid, Audience Award for best Non-Spanish film, 2006
Verzió Film Fest, Budapest – Audience Award, 2006
Docreview Warsaw IDFF, 2nd Audience Award, 2006
Czech Film Association – honorary diploma for directing and camera, 2006
Pärnu Intl Documentary Film Festival – honorable mention, 2006
Honorary diploma for directing and camera from the Czech Film and TV Association, 2006
Berlin Balkanblackbox festival – special mention, 2006

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