

Gypsy Business

“Ciganska Posla”

A documentary film

V2.0

Production:

Brojka Production (CRO)

Associate producers:

Kontraplan produkcija (CRO), Pozitiv (SLO),
Kontakt Europa (CRO)

Director:

Kristijan Kaurić (CRO)

Authors:

Kristijan Kaurić (CRO), Jadran Boban
(CRO), Nina Vujičić (CRO)

Producer:

Kristijan Kaurić (CRO)

Collaborators:

Petar Orešković (CRO), Lovro Rumiha
(CRO), Julia Laggner (A), Jernej Černalogar
(SLO), Domagoj Kontak(CRO)

Camera operators:

Jadran Boban (CRO), Kristijan Kaurić
(CRO), Lovro Rumiha (CRO), Žiga Jan
(SWK), Jerner Cernalogar (SLO)

Interviews:

Nina Vujičić (CRO), Jadran Boban (CRO),
Kristijan Kaurić (CRO), Julia Laggner (A)

Editors:

Jelena Modrić (CRO), Kristijan Kaurić
(CRO), Jadran Boban (CRO)

SYNOPSIS

SHORT:

"Gypsy Business" is an ironic documentary film about Alena, a young Roma actress from Slovakia, who was involved in a big European cultural project ... that went wrong.

They was supposed to spread a positive vision of the Roma culture heritage integrated in a modern and open Europe, but found out that prejudice is still buried beneath.

LONG:

The film follows the story of Alena Sprenerova (32), a professional Roma actress from Kosice (Slovakia). She is having just an usual work day, in the morning preparing her daughter (14) for school and going to the theatre rehearsal. While doing so she tells us about the situation of Roma people in the contemporary European reality and how hard it is for Roma culture to present it self in a right way. It's all about stereotypes.

After the rehearsal she is sitting in the theater cantina, drinking coffee with friends. In there we met Milan (42) and Janko (23), also actors from Romatan theatre. They tell us of the characteristics of the Roma theatre which is very traditional with lots of music, laughter and tears. It's an example of the real Roma culture.

They tell us how "Romanovela" didn't get it right. We find out that all of them participated few year ago in a big European project. They all acted in the play "Romanovela" on a 3 month tour across the half of Europe. The goal was integrating Roma culture in modern Europe, a noble intention of spreading the positive view on multicultural and multiracial relations. A great idea, in theory.

During three months long theatrical tour, throughout different European countries, the group of seventeen people, artists and the crew of the play, formed a little artificial nomad tribe. But after a while, left to themselves, without a proper tour management they start to face many frustrations and disappointments. They feel used by someone's private interests and discriminated. As most of them come from East European countries, or, in the case of our main characters, are Roma, they are often treated as second class citizens. We can all see how they all realize that this project idea in theory is actually falling apart in reality.

A year and a half after the tour we meet them again in Kosice. Alena and the others are watching back what it all meant. What sentiments and thoughts are they left

with after this project? Was the tour successful in representing Roma culture? Why the idea in theory didn't live up in reality?

Do the Roma people actually have any perspective to participate in European artistic life? Could it be true that, as Alena bitterly says, "*it seems that our profession is to be a Roma, not the artists.*"

TREATMENT

Gypsy Business consists of three acts which trace the story of Alena, a professional Roma actress involved in a multicultural project that has for a goal better integration of the Roma cultural heritage in contemporary Europe.

Act 1: The great idea

A typical Roma ghetto and a Roma theatre. We are in Kosice, Slovakia. The first section identifies the concepts, generalizations, prejudices and stereotypes of the Roma culture and also brings the vision of a big European project that wants to present it to the wide European audience.

Length: cca 7-10 minutes

Act 2: Like a rolling stone ...

In this section we follow Alena and the people involved in the play during their tour almost two years ago – from Slovakia, Hungary and Romania to Austria, Slovenia and Italy, and we find out the personal stories of the ensemble and how they got involved in this project. Also how it all went wrong during the tour ...

Length: cca 25-30 minutes

Act 3: All that was left behind

We are again in Kosice with Alena and the other Roma actors trying to find out what and why went wrong. The questions remains. Were the expectations of the project fulfilled? Did the play reached the audience? What was left behind to our performers?

Length: 10-15 minutes

ABOUT THE CHARACTERS

The actors and the crew from the play are gathered from all around Europe and wider. The Roma actors, Alena, Milan and Janko are from Slovakia, the musical director Santiago is from Argentina, the musicians are from Hungary, other actors are from Romania and Czech Republic, the technicians are from Slovenia, Germany, Romania, and the production is from Austria.

First they had to overcome their own stereotypical preconceptions. For example Claudia, actress from Romania, was afraid to face Roma actors at the beginning of the rehearsals, because of the prejudice that she had about the Roma people.

VISUAL STYLE

Gypsy Business is composed of two main materials; the first part was shoot during the tour almost a year an a half ago; and the second part recorded those days.

The new material is leading the way, introducing us to Alena and her present situation. She lives with her mother and her daughter in a small flat, making ends meets. The big European Cultural project on witch she worked for nearly three years will be introduced as her memories, she will return with us in those moments of stress but also excitement for traveling half Europe.

Those two materials are very different in style and cinematography. The materials from the tour is very informal, sometimes we are walking with them down the street, sometimes they forget about the camera during personal arguing and sometimes they are complaining directly to the camera. We have shoots from the preparation of the stage, the theatrical play, the reaction of the public, the adventures and problems of the crew while traveling across half of the Europe, the arguing, the laughs and the tears.

The camera is always in move, showing us the dynamic life of touring around Europe. Also its very vivid in presenting the problems, there is no prepared script or light composites ... The new material is more calm, representing her state of mind that now is peaceful.

MUSIC

The music is very important and representative for the Roma people. Therefore it plays a big role in this documentary. We will use the soundtrack that was made for the theatrical play along with the typical Roma music and its modern interpretations.

MOTIVATION

The great thing about documentary films is that you can't foresee exactly what will happen while making it. At first when the producers of the "Romanovela" project approach me to make a documentary film I had a totally different idea of what the movie would be about. The whole idea of the project sounded very intriguing and I thought it will be a positive vision of the differences of people.

For more then two months we have lived with the artists of the play, during the European tour, and that put the movie in a totally different direction. The problems, the frustrations, the falling appart opened a new horizons for our movie since we have now the responsibility to show the real picture of what happened and how we were outwit. It would be great to have a positive view of the Roma Culture integration but the truth is that the people who were supposed to spread that positive vision become the victims of it.

It took me a while to find the best way of telling this story since there was a lot of characters and background information, if I wanted to tell the story from the point of interest of the European project, more from the above I would get lost, actually I got lost the first time ... So I changed it drastically. The story should is told through a character, just one person, Alena is the ideal person for being our "driver" since its representative for the Roma people but also an professional actress that have traveled a lot and seen places. She is an incredibly strong woman, professional and punctual, but also very open hearted as a real Roma are. Becoming a friend with her is important to me since I had some stereotypes about Roma myself at the beginning.

In Zagreb, where I was live, the Roma are not fully integrated in society. They mostly live on the edge of the city, usually you see them at crossroads begging for a few coins or playing music in the downtown. The Roma culture isn't represented in the cultural life of Zagreb, there are some concerts of international Roma musicians that are very popular. But why the other Roma cultural heritage isn't any popular? We are able to take the things we like out of life and ignore the others. It's a very easy way. We have a chance to fight back with this movie. To show the hypocrites of several European institutions, production partners and NGO's that wrapped up their personal interests in fake altruism for the Roma people.

THE SCRIPT**ACT 1.1 - THE GHETTO****GHETO – KOSICE(SK) – EXT. MOR.**

The sun is rising over the trash cans. Beautiful Roma woman Alena (31) and her daughter (13) are walking through muddy street filled with garbage. We are in the biggest ghetto in Košice where one of the biggest conflicts between Roma and Slovaks took place after the end of World War II because the Roma were deported there from the city. Alena tells us that while little Roma children are playing around them. She greets people that are eying the camera suspiciously. She tells us how hard it is to present the Roma culture to the "white people" if it's closed in the ghetto, and that the projects designed to present the Roma culture to a wide spectrum of people should be supported. Because the Europe doesn't really know the real Roma culture which they are seeing only through a prism of prejudice.

We arrive to a house and an old Roma woman standing in front of it is overjoyed to see Alena and her daughter. Daughter's friend from school joins them there. Alena goes with them to the school.

IN FRONT OF THE SCHOOL – KOSICE(SK) – EXT. DAY

Alena sees her daughter and her friend to school. Most of the kids there are non-Roma. Some of the children are watching them from far, some are saying hello. Alena tells us of the integration of Roma children in schools, and how she wishes her daughter to finish not only elementary school and high school, but also maybe college for it's the only way for greater Roma integration.

She continues to walk the streets of town, saying she has to hurry to work. We arrive at the big theatre house. She enters and gets ready...

THEATRE - KOSICE(SK) – EXT/INT. DAY

We find out that Alena is a professional actress, working in Roma theatre for ten years, the first and biggest professional Roma theatre in Slovakia.

In there we meet Milan (42) and Janko (23), also actors from Roma theatre. They tell us of the characteristics of the Roma theatre which is very traditional with lots of music, laughter and tears. To them it's an example of the real Roma culture.

We find out that all of them participated a year ago in a big European project for integrating Roma culture in modern Europe called „Roma&Gadja“. They all acted in a play on a 3 month tour across the half of Europe.

Alena, Milan and Janko are trying to tell us exactly what the goals of the project were, what was it all for. Each of them tells a different story... Milan thinks the project was meant for Europeans to get to know Roma culture. Janko thinks it was for the Romas in other countries that were coming to the show... they can't come to an arrangement.

SFX – FAST TRAVELING FROM KOSICE(SK) TO WIENNE(A)

ACT 1. 2 - BECOMING FORMAL

OFFICE – WIENNA(A) _ INT. DAY

We are in Vienna, it is fall and the streets are filled with dead leaves. We enter the office space of an organization that participated in the project „Romas&Gadjas“ (Gadjas are what the Romas are calling all non-Romas).

We meet Edith (45), project leader, who tells us about the goals and of the project, about one good and positive idea they followed and about the attempts to make Europe see the problems in Roma-Gadja relationships that are filled with stereotypes and prejudice.

She shows us the photographs and video clips from play rehearsals and preparations. She tells us of the play, the crown jewel of the project they had been working on for almost 3 years. They organized a big co production with seven countries, and everyone participated in their own way.

They gathered over 20 creative young people that went on a tour in an attempt to spread the positive vision of coexistence of Romas in modern European society.

SFX – FAST TRAVELING

ACT 2.1 – THE FAMILY LUNCH

KOSICE CITY – EXT. DAY

Back to Kosice. We follow Alena leaving the theatre. She walks trough a clean, nice, Gadjan neighborhood. Children on bicycles are riding by, young people are

sitting in cafes, American music is playing. We arrive to one building, and Alena enters.

ALENA'S FLAT – KOSICE – INT. DAY

We are in Alena's small apartment where she lives with her mother (55), her sister (18) and her daughter (13). All are sitting at the table, getting ready to eat.

Alena's mother has made a traditional Roma dish, and she tells us a little about it... soon we are talking about Roma culture and what it means to them. We are getting to know Alena's family.

After lunch we are sitting in living room and drinking coffee. Alena take a bag out of the closet. She starts pulling different objects out of it, mementos of the tour. Trough them she tells the story about the tour. First she pulls out a bunch of photographs of the company from the tour and introduces each member. Here we follow up with our own filmed material from the tour as we slowly enter that other world (which will also be visually different, more raw...)

In the bag is also a road map of Europe, animated to better represent all the travels. Alena's voice-over is taking us trough the tour.

ACT 2.2 –LIKE A ROLLING STONE ...

SFX TOUR – EDIT + V/O ALENA + FOTO ARCHIVE – LIKE A FLASHBACK

We are following the 3 month tour across the half of Europe. Different people meeting and becoming friends based on same interests or affinities, music that binds them all...

We are getting to know the characters trough different situations. Some of them we know from before (Alena, Milan, Janko, Edith...)

During the tour organization is slowly falling apart and the company is left to wander the Europe like a small artificial nomadic tribe. Lousy conditions lead to lousy mood in the company, and soon they start fighting among themselves.

Everybody has an opinion, we find out what people want from each other, what are the characteristics they notice in one another...

But in those conditions people are starting to grow even closer. Alena starts a relationship with young Slovenian technician Jero (21). A relationship that grew with the tour, a relationship in which they found comfort, a relationship in which

the found each other, half-way in the middle, between their worlds. (Romas – Gadjas)

ALENA'S FLAT – KOSICE – INT. DAY

We are standing on apartment's balcony. Alena went out for a cigarette and she tells us of Jere and their relationship. She tells us of her ex-husband and how Romas see single mothers. Is she missing the life of housewife? More time to spend with her daughter and family, because a life of actress is often a life on a road, always on the move. What the life in theatre means to her and how has it shaped her as a person, because she's anything but a typical Roma woman (on the other hand, she's a typical Roma woman to us).

We get back to the tour.

SFX TOUR – EDIT + V/O ALENA + FOTO ARCHIVE – LIKE A FLASHBACK

Time passed by, and the problems only grew...

In eve of final show the company was on the verge of collapse. Milan, after a big fight with Edith, was threatening to quit the show because the production owed him money. Other members of the company were also complaining about many problems they encountered on tour, which culminated with unacceptable lodging for the last couple of nights.

Still, Milan agrees to do that final show because he's a professional and doesn't want to put others on the spot. In final moment they come to an arrangement and successfully do the show.

Tour ends with a small party and a lot of Roma music.

ALENA'S FLAT – KOSICE – INT. DAY

We are back in Alena's apartment, and she's closing the bag. She puts it back in the closet, which is filled with other stuff. There is a bitter smile on her face... but she has to get ready for tonight's celebration.

ACT 3.1 – WHAT WAS LEFT BEHIND ... - VIENNA WALTZ

SFX – FAST TRAVELING

We are editing trough opinions of people about the show and the project. After a couple of different opinions, we are back in Vienna, where it all started.

WIENNA – EXT. NIGHT

It's dusk and Edith is taking us to a lovely theatre café in Vienna. There she explains the results of the project. She pulls out some papers...

What did they get, what did actors get? What are the results of project, are the expectations fulfilled? Do they think they managed to integrate Roma culture? What does the project mean to democratic Europe? Would they enter such a project again?

Their view of the end and the whole project.

ACT 3.2 – WHAT WAS LEFT BEHIND ... - GYPSY PARTY

SFX – FAST TRAVELING

KOSICE – EXT. NIGHT

Scenery. It's evening in suburbs of Košice where the big ghetto lies. There are cheers and music coming from corners of badly lit and forsaken quarter.

Alena and her family are walking through the shadows. They arrive to a building and they enter, all looking their best.

GYPSY PARTY - KOSICE – EXT. NIGHT

There is a gypsy party in the building. Children are playing in the background, musicians are playing joyfully.

Milan and Janko are also there, maybe Ana Lasić, or others. Maybe Jero? Anyone we can gather...

We talk to all of them about the project and its results, did it manage to bring Roma culture closer to Europe, did they themselves, as actor, managed to get some new gigs or opportunities in light of the project... What is the reality of Roma culture in united Europe, how can they even impose their culture if they have no country of their own... Who fights for them? Uni-T and this project they've been working on?

Milan explains what does the term "Gypsy business" mean (since that term doesn't exist in Austria and other countries, it will be explained through prejudice).

After that whole big journey, great expectations and great ideas about Roma integration, basically, nothing's changed....

What did it all mean to Alena?

THE END

PRODUCTION STATUS

We started the research and preproduction for the tour in august 2005.

The first part of the production was covering the European Tour of the theatrical play from September 2005 - January 2006. During the tour we have shuted over 30h of materials that are in the editing process, cleaning up and making a rough cut out of it.

We started the second part of the production after almost a year of break since the originally producer (UNI-T) didn't fulfilled the contract. After trying and re-trying we have abandoned the idea of a co production with them and started again from the start. We need to find some co-producers or sponsors to make the additional shooting, editing and finishing of the movie.

We need to shot additional materials.

- Kosice (Slovakia) - 5 days of shooting
- Wienne (Austria) - 2 day of shooting
- Graz (Austria) - 1 days of shooting
- Ana, Jero (Slovenia) - 1 day of shooting

The production of the additional materials will be over till November 2007.

Preparation for edit will take a month, till the end of 2007.

Editing will be done by the end March 2008.

Post production and finishing will be done till April 2008.

Estimated time for premiere would be spring 2008.

The format is HDV//miniDV and the length of the documentary is 52min.

CONTACT INFO:

Producer & Director:
Kristijan Kaurić
mobile: +385 91 52 00 398
e-mail: kris@brojka.hr

Production Company:
Brojka Productions
Odranska 6
10000 Zagreb
CROATIA / HRVATSKA
tel/fax: +385 1 61 90 289
web: www.brojka.hr
e-mail: studio@brojka.hr

PHOTO GALLERY

