



Karlovy Vary
International Film Festival
East of the West – Competition

present

FALLING

Directed by Marina Stepanska

Original title: STRIMHOLOV

Winner of Meeting Point – Coming soon - at Vilnius IFF - Kino Pavasaris (2017)

Festivals & Sales: **TatoFilm**

Contacts: o.yershova@gmail.com; phone: +90 5373008702



Technical specifications:

2017 | 105 min | DCP | color | aspect ratio – 1:2,35| sound - 5.1 | Ukraine

Language: Ukrainian, English

MAIN CREW:

Writer & director	Marina Stepanska
DoP	Sebastian Thaler
Art designer	Juliya Balan
Sound designer	Serhiy Stepansky
Composer	Mykyta Moiseiev
Editor	Borys Peter

CAST

Anton - Andriy Seletskiy
Katya - Dasha Plahtiy
Grandfather - Oleg Mosiychuk

Producers

Olena Yershova, Volodymyr Filippov, Alla Ovsianikova

Production companies:

InsightMedia – Tato Film (Ukraine)



Log Line

A fragile love story set in the young generation of today's post-revolutionary Ukraine.

Short synopsis

FALLING is a story about the post-revolutionary generation of young Ukrainian people looking for their place in a modern Ukraine. It follows two bewildered people who meet at a crucial moment of their existence and experience few days of happiness together.

Long synopsis

FALLING is a story about the post-revolutionary generation of young Ukrainian people looking for their place in a modern Ukraine. It follows two bewildered people who meet at a crucial moment of their existence and experience few days of happiness together. The story set exactly one year after Maidan and expresses feelings of generation which have no idea who they are anymore or what their identity is, so the only way is to be right here, right now.

Anton, a grown-up prodigy composer who couldn't handle his obsession with music, returns to Ukraine after a long drug and alcohol addiction treatment. The country is in a state of undeclared war, society seeks heroes. Katia, an ordinary girl living on the outskirts of Kyiv, is planning to leave to Berlin with her boyfriend, a German photographer. An unexpected encounter between Katia and Anton changes everything.

Biography of the director Marina Stepanska

In 2004 graduated from the Karpenko-Kary Kiev National University of Film and TV. Later she worked at the experimental theatre “School”, studying method of fitting non-actors to the stage and frame. She also studied storytelling on Robert McKee’s Story Seminar and developed a creative documentary within “Archidoc”, worksop run by “La Femis” for European documentary filmmakers. In 2015 she made a short «Man's Work» which won the Best Ukrainian Short at Odessa IFF (Odessa) and the Prize for the best actor's ensemble at Molodist IFF (Kyiv). FALLING is her directorial debut



Filmography:

As a director

2017 **Falling.** Fiction feature, (105). Director, screenwriter.

2015 **Man's work.** Short, (15'). Director, screenwriter. Co-produced Ukraine-Austria.

2013 **Holidays.** Short, (31'). Screenwriter, director, editor.

2004 **To Hear.** Short, (12) Screenwriter, director.

As a scriptwriter

2015 **Falling. (105').**

2014 **No news from Jesus.** Short (10').

2013 **Man's work.** Short (15'). Winner of the Pitch Page by European Short Film Centre, the catalogue was published specially for the market in Cannes 2013.

2012 **Violin.** short, (25'). Produced by National Ukrainian film Studio (dir. Olesya Morgunets).

2008 **The Day when B. died.** Short (10').

2007 **Bride.** short, (20'). 1st award for the best script of National film festival "Open Night".

2004 **Send Off.** short, (18'). 1st award for the best script of National film festival "Open Night".

Biography/filmography of DoP Sebastian Thaler (Austria)

Born and based in Vienna, Austria. Graduated from Film Academy of Vienna (master in cinematography under the guidance of Walter Kindler and Michael Haneke). Worked as camera assistant with Ed Lachman on several projects and as a camera operator on documentaries and feature films with his father Wolfgang Thaler (DoP of “Import/Export”, “Paradise Trilogy” by Ulrich Seidl as well as films by Michael Glawogger).

Awards:

DIAGONALE 2017

(AT) won Best Cinematography feature film (with Wolfgang Thaler) for **Ugly**

88th OSCAR ACADEMY AWARDS

(USA) nominee: best live action short **Alles wird gut/Everything will OK**

MICHAEL BALLHAUS AWARD

(First steps 2015, Germany) nomination: best cinematography for **Alles wird gut/Everything will OK**

42ND STUDENTS ACADEMY AWARD

(USA) award: best foreign film (“Bronze medal”) **Alles wird gut/Everything will OK**

AUSTRIAN FILM AWARDS 2017

(AT) winner: Best Short **Alles wird gut/Everything will OK**

36th FILMFESTIVAL MAX OPHULS-PREIS (Germany 2015)

best medium-length film **Alles wird gut/Everything will OK**

ODESSA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL 2015

(UA) winner: Best Ukrainian Short **Mans Work**



Director's Note

A story about love that happened to small people in times of big change in the country. It's not the plot that matters in this story, but rather the emergence of a world (consisting mainly of "life intervals", pauses and reactions to the events) inside another world (the objective one) and its subsequent collapse.

It is an attempt to capture a certain truth about life that is impossible to retell, that often lurks in the ordinary, the unconscious "here and now" and only gets revealed in unexpected conjunctions of things, unlinkable at first sight, or through distancing from the subject. The external world is absurd, it consists of incompatible things and communication breakdowns, whereas the internal world, the world of love between these two "unheroic characters" is harmonic, it allows for communication to happen on all levels.

It is also a story about the impossibility of such love in the long term and the imminence of treason that leads to the death of one of the characters. The subplot of the film is also the story of a man betraying his gift: it doesn't matter whether it's in the name of a duty, survival and out of cowardice – in any case it means death on a certain level.

Media about the FALLING:

<http://cineuropa.org/id.aspx?t=event&l=en&did=326766>

<http://www.screendaily.com/news/polands-the-last-family-wins-in-vilnius/5116653.article>

<http://life.pravda.com.ua/culture/2017/04/6/223556/>

<http://tmginfo.net/2017/01/top-10-ukrainskikh-filmiv-2017-roku/>

Production companies:

Today InsightMedia is the undisputed leader not only in Ukraine but also at the European level. Films produced by our team constantly screen and win honors at international film festivals. InsightMedia produced 10 feature films and more over 40 shorts, documentaries, animated and television films and series. Now we continue to work in creation of Ukrainian cinema, our producers take an active part in the reform of national cinema.

Among the films produced by InsightMedia are Firecrosser by Mykhailo Illenko and The Nest of the Turtledove by Taras Tkachenko.

Our producers are the members of The Ukrainian Film Academy.

Tato Film is a production and sales company that operates both in Ukraine and in Turkey created by Olena Yershova who has produced 5 fiction feature films and 2 feature documentary that gathered more then 80 prizes around the world. Tato Film produces feature "Volcano" that will be presented at works in progress in Karlovy Vary IFF - first feature by Roman Bondarchuk, director of "Ukrainian Sheriffs" (Special Jury award at IDFA 2015 and Oscar Entry from Ukraine 2016)

Tato Film also acts as a sales agent for few films, including “House of Others” (Georgia - Croatia - Spain - Russia) that got already 20 awards

Interview

Karlovy Vary 2017

Cineuropa: You studied method of fitting non-actors to stage and frame. Why this particular method intrigued you and how did you utilize it so far in your works?

Marina Stepanska: When I’ve graduated from film school in early 2000s there was the only job for filmmakers in Ukraine - directing television series or music clips. So I took it and got disappointed very fast in this kind of performing art. It’s just boring to construct a dead truth. So I run a small school theatre with a partner and we started researching different methods. There were mostly non-professional actors in our school so I would say that people gave me a lot in terms of finding a way to capture life and translate it into images.

Later, I worked as an assistant on a movie which exploited non-professional actors a lot and found what I call “a method”. This method has advantages – you can see how the biography is beginning to emerge through a face and you can never “act” this magic moment and disadvantages – non-professional actor is very limited, you cannot force him or her to play somebody except himself or herself, the result is always pity in this case, and you should construct the circumstances for non-professional actor. He cannot exist in a decoration, he needs something real around. So this method is always about constructing life around somebody, not just a picture. And it needs a lot of resources.

Anyway, I used this approach in *Falling* but rather a method of constructing a real life from real details with actors in frame. These actors have biographies partly similar to the characters but being actors, they can change nuances, they can work with themselves as a tools. Now, I believe much less in so-called director’s manipulation of reality especially involving non-professional actors and exploiting them. I haven’t seen yet a result capable of convincing me that it is worth doing it. I mean if you have a picture in your mind, take actors and depict everything with them, if you want investigate life – take non-professional actors but don’t try to depict your ideas of life with them. You should have respect for reality because it always overtakes you.

You studied storytelling on Robert McKee’s Story Seminar and trained under Valdis Oskarsdottir. How did your perception of film and cinema changed after these encounters and how did it influence your works?

After passing Robert McKee’s Story Seminar, I have a good tool in case my script needs doctoring. Valdis taught me a difference between looking, seeing and watching.

What the process of getting ready your film was like given the situation in your country?

The film and the situation in the country are ahead of each other. Sometimes, I thought that we captured some moods in the city, sometimes, I couldn’t believe that it is happening in the reality.

How did *Falling* come about and what were the impulses that formed your story?

This film is about my friends and me who lived in Kiev in 2013, not all of us are living there anymore. The strongest feeling what I had those times was of confusion. It was a big dissonance between what I was supposed to feel and what I really felt. I just was sitting in the kitchen, that's a sacred place in our every home, reading a lot of news and opinions about the fate of the country and I felt that I'm thinking about the fate of just one person. This person absorbed my pain, my limits and my moments of joy. I came up with a story about 26-years old man because I knew that kind of person but recently, I've realized that if it would be woman nothing would have change.

***Falling* looks like a generational statement. Is that so?**

It's not my definition, a journalist mentioned it. It needs to be loud to become a statement, *Falling* is the opposite. It's a quiet film without such ambition, I guess.

Why did you chose as a spatial and temporal framework for you story the post-revolutionary Ukraine?

There were no films about my Kiev for long time, so it was just simply a first desire to talk about ourselves in our place in our language. We were lucky that Kiev became a spot in these times that revealed ourselves for us a lot. Eventually I just have a strong myopia maybe that explains my topics.

Did you capitalize on your experience of working on documentaries in your fiction feature debut?

Documentaries gives you skill to notice tiny traces of life changing. That what I'm interested in so far.

Sebastian Thaler, the son of Ulrich Seidl's DoP Wolfgang Thaler did lense your feature-length debut. How did that happen?

Sebastian Thaler worked as a second camera operator with his father **Wolfgang Thaler**, on Seidl's film as well, on the set of *Ugly* where I met him. I did some job for them. We became close friends, Sebastian proposed to shoot my second short *Man's Work* thus we were strong duo on the set of *Falling* already. His camera appreciates a lot what I appreciate – human face, so I think we will work together again.

What other projects are you working on?

It will be a comedy about woman. Or a tragedy about woman. It depends on funding which comes first. It's tied to other territories so a lot depends from possibilities of producers.

Link for the trailer

<https://vimeo.com/194998897>

Contacts:

Tato Film

Mobile / WhatsApp / Viber: [+905373008702](tel:+905373008702)

E-mail: o.yershova@gmail.com

Insightmedia

Mobile / WhatsApp / Viber: [+380503274906](tel:+380503274906)

E-mail: info@insightmedia.com.ua

