



#FILMARBETAREIDALARNA

MARIJA RATKOVIĆ VIDAKOVIĆ



An international film producer and filmfestival director from Croatia who moved to Dalarna for new film adventures.

This time we meet former film festival director and film producer Marija Ratković Vidaković who's also currently working on her new documentary "IKEA for YU" which deals with Marija's process of her maturation and formation of her own identity, unburdened by family's taboos and collective heritage. Read more about her process in the article, but first, let's get to know a little bit more about Marija.

TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF, WHO ARE YOU? AND WHAT DO YOU WORK WITH?

I'm Croatian film producer who recently moved to Sweden, to Ludvika, to be more specific. Most of my experience is based in the framework of short and documentary film. I'm also specialised in working with youth filmmakers and discovering new talents – namely, I was director of Four River Film Festival – international festival of youth film for more than 10 years. For last couple of years, before moving to Sweden, I was managing director of Croatian Film Association, which had its part in each and every segment of Croatian film industry: we have been running art cinema, production and film publishing department, youth and children film festivals and different projects and workshops with aim of developing media literacy.

WHY DO YOU WORK IN THE TV/FILM INDUSTRY?

When I was 14 years old and started high school, I became a member of youth film club. We had very good media teacher, who helped us develop not only in terms of filmmaking



than life in general. And he involved us in “teaching process” as well – older members were always helping and teaching younger members. I think also because of that (as a younger member I was “receiver of knowledge” and as older one “giver”) part of my career is connected to working with future filmmakers. Even though I had quite successful projects back then, I wasn’t braver enough to try to enroll film academy. But after a few years (which I spent studying German and Spanish, volunteering at film festivals and being very active in our youth film club), when I was 22 I realized film is my real profession and I enrolled Production studies at Academy of Dramatic Arts in Zagreb. It took me few more years to gain courage and to try myself as director as well.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR FIRST FILM?

I made my first film while being in high school. It was short documentary about multitalented friend of mine, who was animator, violinist and graphic artist. What I found fascinating back then (and I still think that now) is the fact how documentary film develops in front of your eyes, you as a director grow along with your protagonist and road you are both taking is pretty unpredictable. I would say that most important part of documentary filmmaking is not director’s filmmaking skills than his/her ability to build the relationship with his protagonist, especially when it comes to trust. Trust is crucial.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR LATEST PROJECT?

It’s feature documentary “IKEA for YU”, currently in phase of postproduction, made with support from Film i Dalarna, Croatian Audiovisual Center och

Creative Europe – Media program. Since it involves whole my family and more than 6 years of working, I have to tell it was one of the most exhausting projects in my life, not only in terms of filmmaking. Through it I’ve learnt a lot, not only as a filmmaker (both as producer and director, since it’s my first film as a director), then as a person as well. Sometimes it seemed that each action in film had its reaction in real life and vice versa. Anyway, the film tells a story about me, my family and how does one, not only political, then family idea as well, shape one’s identity: namely, I was born in Yugoslavia, but I lived in Croatia for most of my life. On the other hand, my family still lives (in) Yugoslavia and its system of values. Whole film is process of my maturation and formation of my own identity, unburdened by family’s taboos and collective heritage. At some point I decide for a new beginning in Sweden – but is “far north” my last station? Who knows.

TELL US ABOUT A FILM PROJECT THAT MEANS A LOT TO YOU?

Except my feature documentary I was already talking about, one of the most important projects for me was documentary about girl who was growing up in children’s home. Nevertheless, she has grown upon that situation and she is now very successful young woman, both career and personal wise. Back then she was in primary school trying to solve personal issues and move on. I found her story very inspiring and when I see her now, I feel so touched.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR WORST FILM RECORDING?

Working with your own family is not the easiest



thing. Making film about them and being director, producer and sometimes DoP at the same time was certainly not favourite part of my film career. What is important for the film? What is important for me as the protagonist? What is important for me in real life? Where is the actual limit, line I should not cross both as director and child/wife/sister/mother in this case (since I was filming my parents, my brother, my husband and my son). I sometimes felt like I'm doing it all wrong and like this film is never ending story. I suppose this is all part of creative process and it seems like I finally see light at the end of the tunnel.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR BEST FILM RECORNING?

I think I still haven't experienced one. I mean, as a filmmaker I have never felt "Great, this is exactly what I was planning to do". Maybe I'm too harsh to myself, but that's the truth.

DO YOU HAVE A FILM LIVE-HACK TO SHARE WITH US?

I've already mentioned the bond director and protagonists should have – although I've said it in terms of documentary filmmaking, you can apply it to fiction film as well, with your actors, of course. When it comes to production, producer must be aware that is he/she is at the same time the most and the less important person on the set. Less in terms he is not the one who should have problems – on the contrary, he is the problem solver – mechanical engineer and project manager of the whole film machine. In that way, he is the most important.

WHAT'S HAPPENS NEXT?

I don't know to be honest. I hope some interesting film projects in Dalarna. I really like it here and I hope I will find my place under the Dalarna's sun.

