



Croatian documentary *Srbenka* wins Doc Alliance Selection Award 2018 at Cannes Film Festival

Srbenka by director Nebojša Slijepčević won Doc Alliance Selection Award 2018, traditionally awarded by seven key European festivals. The winning film boldly opens the war traumas that are still alive in former Yugoslavia and addresses the still existent animosity between Croats and Serbs. During the rehearsals of a drama about the murder of a twelve-year-old girl in 1991, which is the starting point of the film, the conflicts and unresolved wrongs between the two nations come alive again. On Saturday, May 12, the director received the DAS Award at Cannes FF and gave DAFilms.com an exclusive [video interview](#).

Drama as therapy

Srbenka by Nebojša Slijepčević follows the repercussions of the war almost twenty five years after it ended. In the winter of 1991, the war between Serbia and Croatia was under way and a Serbian girl Aleksandra was murdered in Zagreb, Croatia. One generation later, Serbs are still perceived as enemies in Croatia. Theatre director Oliver Frlić decided for a stage adaptation of the murder. The rehearsals soon turn into collective therapy while old wounds open. Slijepčević's film thus shows one of the crucial functions of art: to revisit painful themes that are still alive in society and interpret them. *"This is kind of a war catharsis on what happened in the Balkans, its absurdities and contradictions. It shows that the more we know – i.e. the more we want to know the truth – the more we get lost. It's one of those films where the main question to the viewer is not 'what's this about' but 'what's happening here?'"*, says one of the jury members, Francisco Ferreira.

You can watch the previous short film directed by Nebojša Slijepčević, [Real Man's Film](#), at DAFilms.com.

The director says about the film: *"The main character of "Srbenka", 12 years old Nina, remembers the exact moment when she found out that she was Serbian. She was seven at the time, and she thought she was Croatian. Nina was born in Croatia, six years after the war has ended. She lived her whole life in Croatia, and all of her friends were Croatian. And when she has found out that she was Serbian, she cried. It became the most important moment of her childhood, the one she will remember her whole life. When Nina has told me that story, I was shocked, and deeply moved. I knew I have to make a film about that. How is it possible that a child feels so bad because of her nationality? What does that say about our society? What are we teaching the next generations, generations born long after the war has ended? What can we do to break the circle of hate and intolerance?"* The film received a world premiere at the Swiss festival Visions du Réel in the main competition section where it won a Special



Mention. The festival's artistic director Emilie Bujès has said about the film: "*Srbenka is rather impressive in that it succeeds in going (very) far beyond the documentation of an artistic process – which is a recurring and rarely interesting cinematic format – to follow a troupe's rehearsals that turn into collective psychotherapy.*" The jury members have agreed that *Srbenka* "is a very important and at the same time very universal story about personal and collective injustices that we all carry with ourselves as heavy burdens, and about an attempt to express this feeling aloud with limited and yet powerful artistic means."

Trailer of *Srbenka*:

<https://youtu.be/HJkfoPM3mOI>

Video interview with director Nebojša Slijepčević:

<https://youtu.be/jp-Viye-CB0>

Doc Alliance goes to Cannes

Doc Alliance Selection Award is awarded since 2008 by seven documentary festivals: CPH:DOX, Doclisboa, Docs Against Gravity FF, DOK Leipzig, FIDMarseille, Ji.hlava IDFF, Visions du Réel. Each of the festivals nominates one film for the award and one film critic from their country for the jury. Along with the documentary portal DAFilms.com, the award is a key project of the Alliance aiming to develop cooperation among film festivals.

For the first time, the Doc Alliance Selection Award was presented at Cannes FF, along with a presentation of five upcoming documentary films.

The following films were nominated for Doc Alliance Selection Award 2018:

Doel (director: Frederik Sølberg)

Nominated by CPH:DOX

Granny Project (director: Bálint Révész)

Nominated by DOK Leipzig

The Limits of Work (director: Apolena Rychlíková)

Nominated by Ji.hlava IDFF

Inside (director: Camila Rodríguez Triana)

Nominated by Doclisboa

Instant Dreams (director: Willem Baptist)

Nominated by Docs Against Gravity FF

Southern Belle (director: Nicolas Peduzzi)

Nominated by FID Marseille

Doc Alliance in Cannes

The winning film of Doc Alliance Selection Award was announced on May 12, 2018 at Cannes FF in the presence of Doc Alliance festival directors, jury members and the professional public. The director received the prize of 5000 euro as a support for his upcoming films.



The jury of the 11th edition of Doc Alliance Selection Award comprised Swiss journalist from 24 heures daily Boris Senff, Polish critic writing for Gazeta Prawna Jakub Demianczuk, Danish editor of the Politiken daily Kristoffer Hegnsvad, FIPRESCI jury member and Portuguese representative of Expresso daily Francisco Ferreira, Czech film copyright expert Ivan David, French film journalist writing for Répliques magazine Erwan Floch'lay and German film critic writing for taz.de Denis Vetter.

Presentation of new documentaries in development and production

Besides presenting the DAS Award, Doc Alliance introduced another novelty in Cannes: the Doc Alliance goes to Cannes presentation of five promising documentary projects in the stage of development or production. By this new initiative, the Alliance festivals that have nominated the individual films want to point out upcoming documentaries and discover talented filmmakers who have a chance to present their work at the prestigious Cannes Film Festival.

Presented projects:

Distant Love Affairs and Imaginary Homelands (director: Catarina Vasconcelos)

Motorboats (director: Yuri Ancarani)

Scars (director: Agnieszka Zwiefka)

Last Night I Saw You Smiling (director: Kavich Neang)

Dubček: All Men Become Brothers (director: Robert Kirchhoff)

About DAFilms.com

DAFilms.com is one of the oldest online VOD platforms in the world as it was founded already in 2006. Its mission is to promote Czech and international documentary cinema and create a unique publicly accessible video library which now includes over 1700 hand-picked films. The portal is programmed by seven prestigious European documentary festivals. The Czech representative is Ji.hlava IFFF which founded the portal more than 10 years ago.

Doc Alliance includes seven documentary film festivals

[CPH:DOX](#), [Doclisboa](#), [Docs Against Gravity FF](#), [DOK Leipzig](#), [FIDMarseille](#), [Ji.hlava IFFF](#), [Visions du Réel](#)

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