

Goejûn! Liiw fôlkjens!

Om te begjinnen wol ik de organisaasje fan dit European Minority Film Festival lokwinskje mei de tsiende jierdei. Sa'n festival in kear organisearje as eksperimint is te dwaan, mar dat ek noch tsien jier folhâlde, en better wurde, dat is echt in lokwinsk wurdich. Dêrom ús lokwinsken. Gratuliire / Auguri / Zorionak !

These were a few phrases in West-Frisian, I will continue in English. There is yet another reason to congratulate the Northfrisian community. In the village of Struckum my eyes and camera struck the great sight of the first bilingual roadsigns of Nordfräschlönj. You are about to realise, what is already normal in the Basque Country and Wales, but, I must admit, you are well ahead of Fryslân in the Netherlands. Once again my congratulations!

And now, let's talk about movies. In ten years of European Minority Film Festival we have seen winners from Wales (2 times), Sápmi (once), the Basque Country (once) and last but not least a Soderjysk movie from just across the border. That movies from these four nations have been awarded is no coincidence.

Wales and Euskal Herria both have invested seriously in the production of drama, giving a new generation of moviemakers and actors the opportunity to learn the profession and develop themselves. Denmark is extremely succesfull when it comes to export Danish drama. These days drama in Danish is commercially very profitable. For me this is the ultimate proof that it is not necessary to make a movie in a big language in order to be succesfull....

The Sámi are trying to develop their own film culture with a movie network, several festivals and a filmfund. The first step was to develop and produce 7 short movies in the Sami language. On Thursday we saw one of them; Aile ja Ahkku from Silja Somby. There is so much film activity in the Finnmark these days that the Norwegian press already nicknamed the Sámi cultural center of Kautokeino as Kautowood. I'm looking forward to see more movies from Kautowood, a town with 3.000 people and 100.000 reindeer....

Fortunately some of these ideas recently convinced the Frisian government, because last week they published the decision to start a Frisian filmplatform, for filmmakers, festival organizers and everybody with ideas to start or participate in a movie. The next step should be the creation of a Frisian film fund, for financial incentives to develop ideas and storylines into a script and to find other sources of money. As far as I'm concerned Northfriesland and this festival could connect very well with this filmplatform, especially now that Schleswig-Holstein signed an agreement of collaboration with Friesland.

I know that some of you are quite busy to develop professional theatre in Northfriesland. Once you do that, the step towards creating a movie is not that big anymore, especially not if you are in touch with other people, who might be interested to participate in such a project. I certainly hope to see a feature film in Fräsch / Ferring or Friisk in one of the next editions of this festival.

But now it is time to talk about the festival of this week. The movies in competition gave the jury a hard time, but in the end and after several discussions we managed to reach a decision.

Let me introduce this years jury to you:

* *Miren Aperribay* is a movie producer from Donostia-San Sebastian one of the European Capitals of Culture of this year. Unfortunately she is unable to be with us tonight.

* *Elin Fredstedt* is professor of literature and a real 'border person' from Slesvig. She is both fluent in Danish and German, but her mothertongue is Soderjysk.

* *Antonello Zanda* is the director of the *Babel Film Festival* in Casteddu/Cagliari on Sardegna. Like this festival Babel is organized every second year, the next edition will be in 2017. Babel is therefore a great partner for the European Minority Film Festival. Babel is a bit different, because it also shows documentaries and short movies in minority languages from all over the world.

* I am Onno Falkena. I'm a journalist and expert in minority languages from Ljouwert/Leeuwarden, in Westfräschlönj, and I work for Omrop Fryslân, the only public broadcaster in the Frisian language.

I will say something about the movies in chronological order:

I will start with Dan Y Wenallt – Under Milkwood from Wales. To be honest; I have never seen anything like this before. I was amazed, flabbergasted, impressed and almost overwhelmed by this piece of art, combined with the literary masterpiece of Dylan Thomas in Cymraeg. According to the jury this movie by Kevin Ellin – the winner of 2014 – is a category of its own. It is fantasy, illusionary, full of images and dreams which easily could carry you away, if you let them. But some of the jurymembers missed the narrative, the clear storyline in this extraordinary movie.

Sonata per a violoncel from Catalunya is about pain, music, ambitions and the limits of a sick human body. There is a lot of tension and drama in this movie, combined with powerfull and impressive classical music. The movie is a homage to everyone who is struggling with the mysterious disease called fibromyalgia. A highly original and important theme. Some of the jury members considered the movie to be a bit distant. The movie simply didn't manage to glue us to the screen in the way some of the other movies did. The music experts in the jury also noticed that the main character tried to play Dvorak

with two fingers on the violon-cello, something which is virtually impossible, and this doesn't add to the credibility of the movie.

Loreak / Flowers from the Basque Country is an important and original, movie, circling around three women, whose lives are affected by the mysterious flowers they keep receiving. The performance of the three leading actresses in the movie is impressive. The directors almost appear to get under the skin as these three *emakumeak*. The movie is about feelings, loneliness and the difficulty to cope with loss. It is the kind of movie which makes you think and discuss afterwards, which is a great compliment for the makers. From our point of view it is therefore completely justified that this movie is the official Spanish entry for the Oscars in the category Best Foreign Language Film.

This brings us to 'Bak', the Frisian entry at this festival. 'Bak' is one of the most successful Frisian thrillers in recent years, which inspired Auke de Witte and his team to make their first feature movie. The movie was also produced as a tv series, and this is visible. The novel centers on the thoughts of leading character Sjerp Bak, an older journalist. Bak is an outstanding performance of Frisian actor Joop Wittermans. In the beginning of the movie Bak kills a man, but still you keep to like him, and that is what makes the movie so interesting. It this happens to this man, could it happen to me?

'Bak' was made as a co-production of professionals, newcomers in the business and amateurs. Considering that, the achievement of Bak is remarkable. The movie has been made with great care and eye for detail and was shot at the right places, like the boat where the journalist lives, the newspaper newsroom and the city council of the Frisian capital. As a journalist I also learned something from this movie: never sleep with a christiandemocrat politician.

That brings us, last but not least to *Amama*, the second Basque movie in competition. 'Amama' is about a conflict of generations in a Basque farming family, as it is observed by the silent grandmother Amama. The movie touches a very important theme, because thousands of farmers all over Europe are struggling with succession and thousands of children of farmers too.

Earlier this year *Amama* was shown in West-Fryslân with Frisian subtitles, as a project of European Capital of Culture Donostia-San Sebastián. Some people in the audience were moved to tears. They knew someone, in their own family, or in their village, who was exactly like farmer 'Tomas', a great role of Kandido Uranga. It makes this movie at the same time very Basque and very universal, which is a compliment for the directors and the actors.

The story unfolds in a very interesting way, in a calm repetitive rhythm, with flashbacks like shots from 8 mm camera, nightmares and the never ending tasks which need to be done at the farm, preferably without any discussion, and this drives daughter Amaia crazy. One feels the tensions rise and a conflict is inevitable.

I also would like to mention the sounds and the music of the movie, which obviously have been recorded, composed and edited with great care. Sound is sometimes underestimated, but is of utmost importance.

The film's cast is an interesting mix of professional actors and amateurs. The 'Amama' in the film, Ampario Badiola, makes a very convincing debut on the screen at the age of 80. We also would like to mention the performance of father Tomas and son Gaizki, father and son in the movie, and also in real life; Kandido Uranga and Manu Uranga. It was a choice of the directors which worked very well. We are very happy that the two of you are here, because Amama is the winner of the 6th European Minority Film Festival!

Zorionak!

Husum/Hüsem, 26 November 2016

Miren Aperribay

Elin Fredstedt

Onno Falkena (Head of Jury)

Antonello Zanda