

BALTIC FILM PRODUCTION

The Press Kit

PIT No. 8

by Marianna Kaat
09.03.2012

Contacts, Technical data, Festivals, Synopsis, Director's Statement, CV & Filmography, Credits

Producer:	Co-producer:	Sales North America:	Sales all other territories:
MARIANNA KAAT Baltic Film Production P.O. BOX 4752 13517 Tallinn, Estonia Phone: +372 502 7509 E-mail: info@bfp.ee www.bfp.ee	OLENA FETISOVA Interfilm Production Studio Prospect Tychyny 2-78 02098 Kiev, Ukraine Phone:+38 067 233 54 60 interfilm@voliacable.com www.interfilm.biz	ERIC DICKINGER EBS World Entertainment 3000 Olympic Boulevard Santa Monica, CA 90404 310.449.4065 sales@ebsla.com www.ebsla.com	HEINO DECKERT Deckert Distribution GmbH Marienplatz 1 D-04103 Leipzig, Germany +49 (0) 341 215 66 38 info@deckert-distribution.com www.deckert-distribution.com

Original title: Auk nr 8
Title in English: Pit No. 8
Title in French: La Fosse no 8
Title in Russian: Шахта №8
Title in German: Grube nr 8
Director and writer: Marianna Kaat
Camera: Rein Kotov, ESC
Sound: Ivo Felt
Music: Timo Steiner
Additional music: DakhaBrakha
Editor: Max Golomidov
Producer: Marianna Kaat
Co-producer: Olena Fetisova / Interfilm Production Studio (Ukraine)
Produced by: Baltic Film Production

This film was supported by a grant from Sundance Documentary Film Program
MEDIA Programme of the European Union
Estonian Film Foundation /Raimo Jõerand/
Ministry of Culture of Estonia /Meelis Muhu/
Cultural Endowment of Estonia

95 min / 58 min., HD, 16:9 (1:1.85), Stereo
Exhibition formats: HDCAM 1080/50i, Digital Beta PAL, DCP, Blu Ray

Subjects: Human Interest, Children & Youth, Family & Families, Relationships, Labour & Working People, Poverty
International Premier: April 2011

Prizes:

National Award "Lavr 2011", Russia 2011; Special Jury Prize – Watch Docs Documentary Film Festival, Warsaw 2011; Special Jury Prize – Minsk International Film Festival Listapad, Belarus 2011; Silver Nanook for the Best Feature Documentary - International Documentary Film Festival Flahertiana, Perm, Russia 2011; Charles E. Guggenheim Emerging Artist Award & The Nicholas School Environmental Award - Full Frame Documentary Film Festival, Durham, USA 2011; Movies That Matter Special Mention - ZagrebDox 2011, Croatia. Special Mention - 14th Tallinn Black Nights FF, Tridens Baltic Feature Film Competition; Film of the year 2010 - Estonian Cultural Endowment

Official selections at other festivals:

One World Romania DFF, Bucharest; Cape Winelands FF, South Africa; Crossing Europe FF, Linz, Austria; Hot Docs, Toronto; DOXA, Vancouver; Cronograf, Chisinau; Krakow FF, Poland; Pärnu IFF, Estonia; IFF Baltijos Banga, Nida, Lithuania; Lume IFF, Brazil; Aye-Aye IFF, Nancy-Lorraine, France; DocuWest, Colorado, USA; Vilnius DFF; 1001 DFF, Istanbul; 6th DOCSDF, Mexico City; Ad Hoc: Inconvenient Films, Vilnius; FF Cottbus, Germany; 6th Pravo Ljudski FF, Sarajevo; 14th Olympia IFF, Greece; Tales from Planet Earth, Madison, WI, USA; Sebastopol DFF, CA, USA; Millenium Film Festival, Brussels; Zlin Film Festival (FILMFEST s.r.o.), Zlin, Czech Republic; MakeDox 2012, Skopje, Macedonia.

Suggested links:

www.pitnumber8.com

www.facebook.com/Pitnumber8

www.bfp.ee

To stream or upload the film:

http://onlinefilm.org/en_EN/film/48972

Upload the film for Facebook:

http://cb-player.com/en_EN/48972/fb

Trailer on Youtube:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s7Cy2J71I0A>

Interview with the director Marianna Kaat:

http://stillinmotion.typepad.com/still_in_motion/2011/11/interview-marianna-kaat-director-pit-no-8.html

Press:

In Italian

<http://www.internazionale.it/superblog/francesca-spinelli/2012/05/11/la-primavera-calda-di-kiev/>

In French

<http://fr.myeurop.info/2012/04/28/le-calvaire-des-enfants-dans-les-mines-ukrainiennes-5312>

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Synopsis (30 words)

This documentary film profiles fifteen-year-old Yura and his sisters who escaped their alcoholic parents. However, to pay the bills he must mine for coal in abandoned pits near his Ukrainian hometown.

Synopsis (34 words)

Fifteen-year-old Yura puts his dreams on hold in an emotionally riveting struggle to provide for his sisters the only way possible: illegally, and perilously, mining the remaining scraps in a once-thriving Ukrainian coal town.

Synopsis (43 words)

Fifteen-year-old Yura, the grandson of once powerful Soviet plant director, puts his dreams on hold in an emotionally riveting struggle to provide for his sisters the only way possible: illegally, and perilously, mining the remaining scraps in a once-thriving Ukrainian coal town Snizhne.

Synopsis (107 words)

In the heart of Ukrainian coal-mining region everybody digs – retirees, unemployed miners and even the children. Years ago, the town's desperate residents decided to start mining illegally; they excavate everywhere: in abandoned mines, under the basements of demolished buildings, in the neighborhood woods and leisure parks, as well as in their own vegetable gardens.

The story focuses on the Sikanov family, which has three children. Fifteen-year-old Yura, the grandson of once powerful Soviet plant director, puts his dreams on hold in an emotionally riveting struggle to provide for his sisters the only way possible: illegally, and perilously, mining the remaining scraps in a once-thriving Ukrainian coal town.

Synopsis (long)

THE PLACE – the mining town Snizhne (meaning “*snowy*”) is a coal-mining centre in Eastern Ukraine, in the Donetsk Basin coalfield. In Soviet times, the miners of the Donetsk region were acclaimed as heroes and seen as epitomizing the backbone of the country's industrial might. After the collapse of the Soviet Union and during the painful transition to capitalism, many mines were closed down, and thousands of people found themselves without any future. In order to survive, the miners had to start mining coal illegally. They excavated everywhere: in abandoned mines, under the basements of demolished buildings, in the neighbourhood woods and leisure parks, as well as in their own vegetable gardens. The story is set in one of the districts of Snizhne city. In accordance with the serial number of state mine in the area, in Soviet times it was named Pit No. 8.

Film was shot for two and a half years in the Donetsk region where the lately elected President of Ukraine Viktor Yanukovich spend his troubled childhood and where he started his political career.

THE TIME – our days

THE CHARACTERS – fifteen-year-old **Yura Sikanov** is the main character. Yura's grandfather was a celebrity in the Donbass region – he was the director of the chemical engineering industry plant – and Yura and his two sisters are very proud of that. After the disintegration of the USSR, their grandfather died first, then their father, and thus, the story of the lives of the Sikanov family was derailed. Like so many of the other inhabitants of Snizhne, Yura started to work in “the holes” when he was 12. His wages, though small, became an important part of his family's income, where stepfather and mom are alcoholics and he has to look after his two sisters **Julia**, 11 and **Ulyana**, 18.

The story starts by describing the environment and the characters. How it was then and how it is now. Now, it is pretty much chaos.

The three children have just moved out of their alcoholic mother's home to live on their own. In order to manage, Yura has to work in a mining pit. Life's no walk in the park - there are pits everywhere and houses are in danger of caving in. When Yura has money, he can take his sister and friends to a restaurant in the city, buy toys and clothes for his younger sister, and help her with assignments for school. He can manage. Yura's friend **Dima**, 16, manages the household for his grandmother and sister.

He bought them a goat and a pig and supports them.

Yura and Dima wish they could find their own pit, where there would be no middlemen and all of the income would be theirs. Dima dreams of a motorcycle.

In general, the sun shines and life goes on. The youth seem to be doing fine. And thus, the spring and summer pass.

The first act shows their everyday life and the struggles that they must overcome. The conflict is society's hypocrisy, which is embodied by the school, with its exemplary facade, the corrupt commissions, the state NATO policy, and the overflowing Victory Day celebrations that have the effect of an absurd party during a plague. This is contrasted with the children's everyday life, which is anything but normal. The main conflict in the film is society's demands versus harsh reality. And Yura is the battlefield for this conflict. He wants to get by and live a decent life, but he is inhibited by his young age, inexperience, harsh society, and the large amount of hypocrisy flourishing in society. The structure is built up on this conflict and its variations.

The children try to get by in life and move towards realizing their dreams. Their memories of a grandfather, who they've barely met, help them. As does Yura's goodness. But they are inhibited by harsh reality, which forces them to work themselves to pieces instead of going to school.

What Yura wants most of all, is to run his own cafe somewhere far from home. But responsibility for his two sisters and the looming economic crisis push his dreams into the distant future. He begins to attend culinary school, but is again forced to go to work in the hole. As a result, he is expelled from school for non-attendance. He can't link work and school. But even work isn't stable. All sorts of control checks could unexpectedly close down the illegal mines at any moment. And the pits may cave in, as can the houses on top of them.

In the autumn, the problems grow. There is a power struggle between the children. The older sister doesn't want to depend on Yura and she starts solving her problems on her own. But this makes her situation even

harder. Ulya doesn't even have heating coal and when she becomes ill; she only makes it to the hospital at the very last moment ...fortunately.

Yura and Julia try to make a new start. Their grandfather's reputation and help from the film crew bring promise of buying them a new home. Yura goes to a new school. They make up with Ulya. Everything seems to be moving uphill.

But in the spring, it becomes clear that little has changed. Yura receives an ultimatum from school (again, based on his grandfather's reputation) but he still devotes more of himself to helping Julia than to his own problems at school. Fortunately, Julia manages, but Yura is terribly tired. The only thing that seems to be reliable in this world is to find a free hole for a joint, illegal coal-mining venture, which would let him to be independent "entrepreneur". But the oncoming economic crisis influences the results of Yura and Dima's quest. The boys, hoping to start a "business" of their own, go down into different holes, but, alas, they find no vacant hole where they could get coal for sale. The world economic crisis has affected literally everyone in this territory, not skirting the small district of Pit No. 8. The demand for coal has gone sharply down and the majority of "the pits" have been closed down. Many people, including the film's main characters, have lost their source of income. How will they survive? Nobody cares.

Ulya has also lost her job in a grocery store, but relations with her remain cold. Nothing comes of a life together. Thoughts of an orphanage haunt them... and there seems to be no way out.

The third act shows that society did intervene: their alcoholic mother is relieved of her parental custody and the children are separated. Julia goes to an orphanage, Yura is sent to a boarding school. Their house becomes empty. Is this a sad ending, or a happy one?

The last meeting with the children was on Victory Day. Society celebrated a 60-year-old war victory. Is it still worth it? Do today's children have anything to gain from this? Does it give them the strength they need to live their lives? Or is all of this just as much help as their honorable grandfather, who they've barely even met...

In the final episode, two boys, Yura and Dima, are riding a scooter. They rush through the streets of Snizhne and eventually break out beyond the city into the distance, leaving behind Pit No. 8, the city and the steppe. And ahead - it's only the wind and hope in their eyes. Which of the boys will be able to pursue his dreams remains unknown.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

I have started with quite another story. Our prime character was a senior citizen, who had his own illegal mine, but who did not want to pay more bribes to the militia and so has doomed himself to war with the authorities. Unfortunately, when we were ready to go ahead with principal shooting, we learned that he died of lung cancer. At the time, we have already received some money for our production and, therefore, there was no turning back. Since we, together with my Ukrainian co-producer, have already visited Snezhnoye and knew many local people, I was absolutely certain that we shall find a sought-for story and interesting characters - it just required some extra time. However, I must frankly admit that I haven't even thought of the children-protagonists, or rather - I did not imagine that the children can work in these mines. On our first visit with the film crew, I warned the team that - most likely - at this time we won't find "our hero" yet, but fate ordered otherwise. Already on the spot, while talking to people, I've learned about the 15-year-old boy who was working at illegal mine. We went looking for him, but he was not at home. And, somewhere on the second day of our stay, when we were filming a street that caved in because of tunnels dug under it, a boy on a bicycle approached and it turned out that this is the very same Jura, whom we were looking for. Well, and once I've talked to him, there was no way back. Jura's grandpa was the director of a large manufacturing plant in Soviet times - that is, he was kind of equal to a celestial person, and his grandson, to feed his family, is working today - in the period of capitalism - in some illegal mine - no documentary filmmaker would have passed by such a character.

Already in the first evening of our acquaintance with the children, Jura, so seriously looking into our eyes, has asked - have you got there all people so nice? And after a pause, he sighed and added with regret - we have none of such kind. We did not even understand what he meant, because we had just talked with him on that day, just wanted to know how he lives, what he thinks about, how he works and studies, and just patted him on the back a little. That is, I want to say that for these children the norm is that it is necessary to cope with life all alone, that the interest of adults may be only of formal or punitive nature. So, I've tried

to show cinematically this separation of the two worlds - the world of abandoned children and the adult world. In the film you can see only glimpses of the adult generation – voice of the absent mother, teachers, minors are just a background of the totally adult life of the kids.

Simply for reasons of ethics, I could not always show this reality the way it is, and indeed, without doubt, our abilities were limited by all possible obstacles and restrictions. Every our arrival was previously known both to the city authorities and criminal structures, and we were followed, our movements tracked, militia was warned, criminal leaders were warned etc.; and yet we must have been thinking about the safety of children, so that they would not get hurt after our departure. We went there often, but just as often we had to leave, and the children continued to live their own lives.

Throughout the period of filming, all the time, we were engaged in "social" work. I simply could not just watch and enjoy what a wonderful material all by itself is falling into my filmmaker hands. I was taking care of these children and I continue to participate in their lives. How could I have foreseen this? Sure, I couldn't - these children, as my own ones, were sent to me from the God, I think so. Now, I am somehow responsible for them. For me, the main problem here is that we live in different countries and it is difficult to deal with child guidance at such a distance. But they know for sure that they can contact me at any time and I'll help them as I can.

After screening the film at different international festivals a lot of people expressed their will to help children and specially orphanage where one of sisters Julia is now living. With the Canadian charity organization I Will Association we are developing special educational programs for abandonment children of Snizhne among others computer classes with full educational support and scholarship programs for most talented children of the orphanage who will be able to continue their education after primary school. Donetsk region Prosecutor's Office filed a few criminal cases on the fact of operation of child labour. According to unofficial reports at the moment all illegal mines of area are closed. However, I'm not sure that it is forever.

DIRECTOR'S BIO

Award-winning director **Marianna Kaat** was born and lives in Estonia, Tallinn. She graduated from the St.Petersburg State Theatre Arts Academy in Russia in 1986 with a PhD. Until 1991 she worked as a script editor and a director for Eesti Telefilm and thereafter as the acquisition manager for Estonian Television. In 1998 she founded her own production company Baltic Film Production and since then has successfully produced and directed documentary films for the international market which have won numerous national and international awards. Marianna's company produces also features and TV series.

Marianna is the member of European Documentary Network (EDN); she is also the member of Estonian Producer's Union, Estonian Film Union and Estonian Journalists Union. She was awarded the name of *The European Trailblazer*, one of the seven documentary filmmakers from different regions of the world at MIPDOC 2009 in Cannes.

Brief Filmography, documentaries:

Working Title: Wunderkind (2012)

Pit No 8 (2011) *National Award "Lavr 2011"*, Russia 2011; *Special Jury Prize – Watch Docs Documentary Film Festival*, Warsaw 2011; *Jury Special Mention – Minsk International Film Festival "Listapad"*, Belarus 2011; *Silver Nanook for the Best Feature Documentary - International Documentary Film Festival Flahertiana*, Perm, Russia 2011; *Charles E. Guggenheim Emerging Artist Award & The Nicholas School Environmental Award*, Full Frame Documentary Film Festival, USA 2011; *Special Mention*, 14th Tallinn Black Nights FF, Estonia; *Film of the year 2010* by Estonian Cultural Endowment; *Movies That Matter Special Mention*, ZagrebDox 2011, Croatia

The Last Phantoms (2006) *Best Documentary Prize*, IFF Novoje Kino XXI Century, Russia);

In Your Own Words (1990), *Ecumenical Jury Award*, International Documentary Film Festival Message to Man, St. Petersburg, Russia

Now Not Only Off-shore (1989) *Grand Prize*, International Female Directors Film Festival, Florence, Italy.

Producer's Filmography:

2012 **Working Title: Wunderkind** (Documentary, 57 min)

2011 **PIT No. 8** (Documentary, 95 min), Producer & Director. Baltic Film Production in co-production with Interfilm Production Studio, Ukraine. *Charles E. Guggenheim Emerging Artist Award & The Nicholas School Environmental Award*, Full Frame Documentary Film Festival, USA 2011; *Special Mention* at 14th Tallinn

Black Nights FF, Tridens Baltic Feature Film Competition; *Film of the year 2010* by Estonian Cultural Endowment; *Movies That Matter Special Mention*, ZagrebDox 2011, Croatia

2010 **LOBOTOMY** (Documentary, 57/90 min), Producer. Baltic Film Production in co-production with Free Pro Video Institute, Germany; Bramafilm, Belarus; Belsat, Poland; Dir.: Y.Khashchavatski. *Special Prize of the Jury* and *the Public Sympathy Prize* at the International Documentary Film Festival CRONOGRAF, Chisinau, Moldova 2011; *Best Baltic Documentary* at International Film Festival Arsenals, Riga 2011

2008 **BOUND BY BLOOD** (Short fiction, 22 min), Producer. Baltic Film Production; Dir.: K.Davidjants

2008 **AN AWESOME TALE** (Feature film, 88 min.), Co-producer. Interfilm Production Studio (Ukraine) in co-production with Baltic Film Production and Exitfilm (Estonia). *Best Children's Film 2009*, Ukrainian State Film Award ; *Grand Prix* at X "Art Amphora" Balkans Festival for Films and Television Programs for Children and Youth, Bansko, Bulgaria, 2009

2007 **KALINOVSKI SQUARE** (Documentary, 58/73/87 min) Producer, Baltic Film Production; Dir.: Y.Khashchavatski. *Alpe Adria Cinema prize as the BEST DOCUMENTARY*, 19th Trieste Film Festival 2008; *The Award Ion Vatamanu "For love of truth and freedom"*, 7-th International Documentary Film Festival CRONOGRAF, Chisinau 2008; *Best Documentary by Novoje Kino.21 Vek*, N.Novgorod, Russia 2007.

2006 **THE LAST PHANTOMS** (Documentary, 58 min), Producer & Director. Baltic Film Production in co-production with Illume Ltd., Finland and NPS, Netherlands. *Best Documentary Prize at the IFF Novoje Kino XXI Century*, Russia.

2004-2005 **AUH SHOW** (TV-game show 26 X 45 min), Producer and format writer. Baltic Film Production for Kanal 2

2003 **POST FACTUM. MEIE VALIK** (Documentary series 4 X 30 min), Producer & Director. Baltic Film Production for ETV; commissioned by EU

1998-2002 **LOOMAKLIINIK** (Documentary series 120 X 25 min), Producer & Director. Baltic Film Production for Kanal 2 and ETV

1991 **WITH YOUR OWN WORDS** (Documentary, 52 min), Director. Eesti Telefilm. *Ecumenical Jury Award*, International Documentary Film Festival Message to Man, St. Petersburg, Russia.

1989 **NOW NOT ONLY OFF-SHORE** (Documentary, 30 min), Director. Eesti Telefilm. *Grand Prize*, International Female Directors Film Festival, Florence, Italy.

CREDITS

OPENING CREDITS:

BALTIC FILM PRODUCTION
in co-production with INTERFILM PRODUCTION STUDIO
present

a film by	MARIANNA KAAT
Cinematographer	REIN KOTOV E.S.C.
Composer	TIMO STEINER
Editor	MAX GOLOMIDOV
Sound designer	IVO FELT
Co-producer	OLENA FETISOVA
Producer & Director	MARIANNA KAAT
Title:	PIT NO. 8

END CREDITS:

Participants	YURA SIKANOV JULIA SIKANOVA
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ULYANA SIKANOVA
DIMA OPRISHCHENKO
LJUBOV SIVOHINA
GENNADI VERTELA
SERGEI VLASIK
SASHA JASINSKI
VADIM DYMOV

Script & director MARIANNA KAAT
Cinematographer REIN KOTOV E.S.C.
Composer TIMO STEINER
Sound designer IVO FELT
Editor MAX GOLOMIDOV
Cameramen MEELIS VEEREMETS
OLEG ZORIN

Coordinator in Ukraine VOLODIMYR KOZYR
Technical coordinator KASPAR KALLAS
Post Production Supervisor KAUR KALLAS
Post-production assistant SILVI LÜLL
Script Supervisor RAIMO JÖERAND
Translators MARGARITA TALSON
LILI PILT

VERONIKA EINBERG
Stills photographer JANA HANSIVAROVA
Production Accountant KONSTANTIN VANDERFLIT
Transportation Coordinator SERGEI JAZYKOV
Driver ALEXANDR LOSJEV
Cherry-picker by NIKOLAI AKULENKO
Camera Equipment by ALLFILM OÜ
Sound mix by HARMO KALLASTE
Sound studio AATOMIK STUUDIOD OÜ
Titles & Animation by ANDREI BONTSHUK
DARJA KORNIENKO
Special effects by MTÜ VASTIK SIPSİK
Color grading by MAX GOLOMIDOV
REIN KOTOV
Post-production support by DIGITAL SPUTNIK OÜ
Co-producer OLENA FETISOVA
Produced by MARIANNA KAAT

Many thanks to Tatjana Ustimenko, Jelena Petrukhina, Valentina Postnova, Dmitri Ljubchenko, Cara Mertes, Rahdi Taylor, Uldis Cekulis, Igor Gonchar, Diana Yanson, Tarmo Rajaleid, Eduard Vaselo.

Music

"Oy, u Kyevi" by Dakha Brakha. From the album "Yagudky". Performers: Nina Garenetska, Oleksandra Kleynis, Iryna Kovalenko, Olena Tsybulska, Marko Halanevych. © 2007 by Centre of Contemporary Arts "DAKH".

"Sho z-pod duba" by Dakha Brakha. From the album "Yagudky". Performers: Nina Garenetska, Oleksandra Kleynis, Iryna Kovalenko, Olena Tsybulska, Marko Halanevych. © 2007 by Centre of Contemporary Arts "DAKH".

"Vesna Chilly" by Dakha Brakha. From the album "Yagudky". Performers: Nina Garenetska, Oleksandra Kleynis, Iryna Kovalenko, Olena Tsybulska, Marko Halanevych. © 2007 by Centre of Contemporary Arts "DAKH".

"Yagudky" " by Dakha Brakha. From the album "Yagudky". Performers: Nina Garenetska, Oleksandra Kleynis, Iryna Kovalenko, Olena Tsybulska, Marko Halanevych. © 2007 by Centre of Contemporary Arts "DAKH".

"Nad Dunaem" by Dakha Brakha. From the album "Na mezhi". Recorded by Guta Records © 2008 by Centre of Contemporary Arts "DAKH".

"Zima" by Centr. From the album "Kacheli". © 2008 LQA Records

This film was supported by a grant from Sundance Documentary Film Program
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MEDIA Programme of the European Union
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Cultural Endowment of Estonia

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