

HOME

"We are all homesick for something."



HOME / DOMOV, CZ, CZECH/ENGLISH, ENGLISH SUBTITELS, 56 MINUTES.
FORMAT 16 MM, 8 MM AND DVCAM, 4:3 LETTERBOX, STEREO.

HOME

DIRECTORS CUT

"I would of course be incredibly happy if we could find a place where we could both live our lives. I just don't know which country that could be." - mum

OPENING NIGHT 7. 2. 2008, 19:30, BIOOKO
FILM SHOWINGS: 8.2 -10.2 AT 19:30, BIOOKO

www.homethefilm.com

"The author's essay about the painful search for her roots has enraptured me with the sincerity with which all the characters of the family drama have joined the filming. After their fatal lapse they are meeting in front of the camera, their reunion has a psychotherapeutic impact, and not only for the film's author. I appreciate the cinematographic craft and the dramaturgic approach of the film, which I have intensely lived through along with its heroes."

Olga Sommerová, documentarian

"At first glance, the fascinating gesture of courage of all those participating (the thirty three year old director is filming her divorced parents and their joint regression into a not very harmonious past) may be determined by the essentially artistic nature of all its protagonists. Nevertheless their sincerity and willingness to uncover even the most intimate levels of their private and shared lives is altogether startling."

Saša Gedeon, director

"The film "HOME" is a tremendously exciting and impressive film about the loss and the search of a home. An intimate story of a split family brings up a fundamental theme of the human identity. "HOME" is a powerful and unforgettable film."

Helena Třeštková, documentarian

The film was developed in workshop at East European Forum 2002, organized by the Institute of Documentary Film.

The film was created with the support of The Czech Republic State Film Fund.

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Státní fond ČR
pro podporu a rozvoj
české kinematografie



NORWEGIAN EMBASSY

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BIOOKO
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KAMPAGROUP

Chez Marcel





DIRECTOR: Margareta Hruza

PHOTOGRAPHERS: Petr Koblavský a Jakub Šimůnek

EDITORS: Lucie Haladová, Tonička Janková

DRAMATURGY OF EDITING: Josef Valušiak

MUSIC: Dominik Renč

PRODUCERS: Pavel Strnad, Negativ a Margareta Hruza

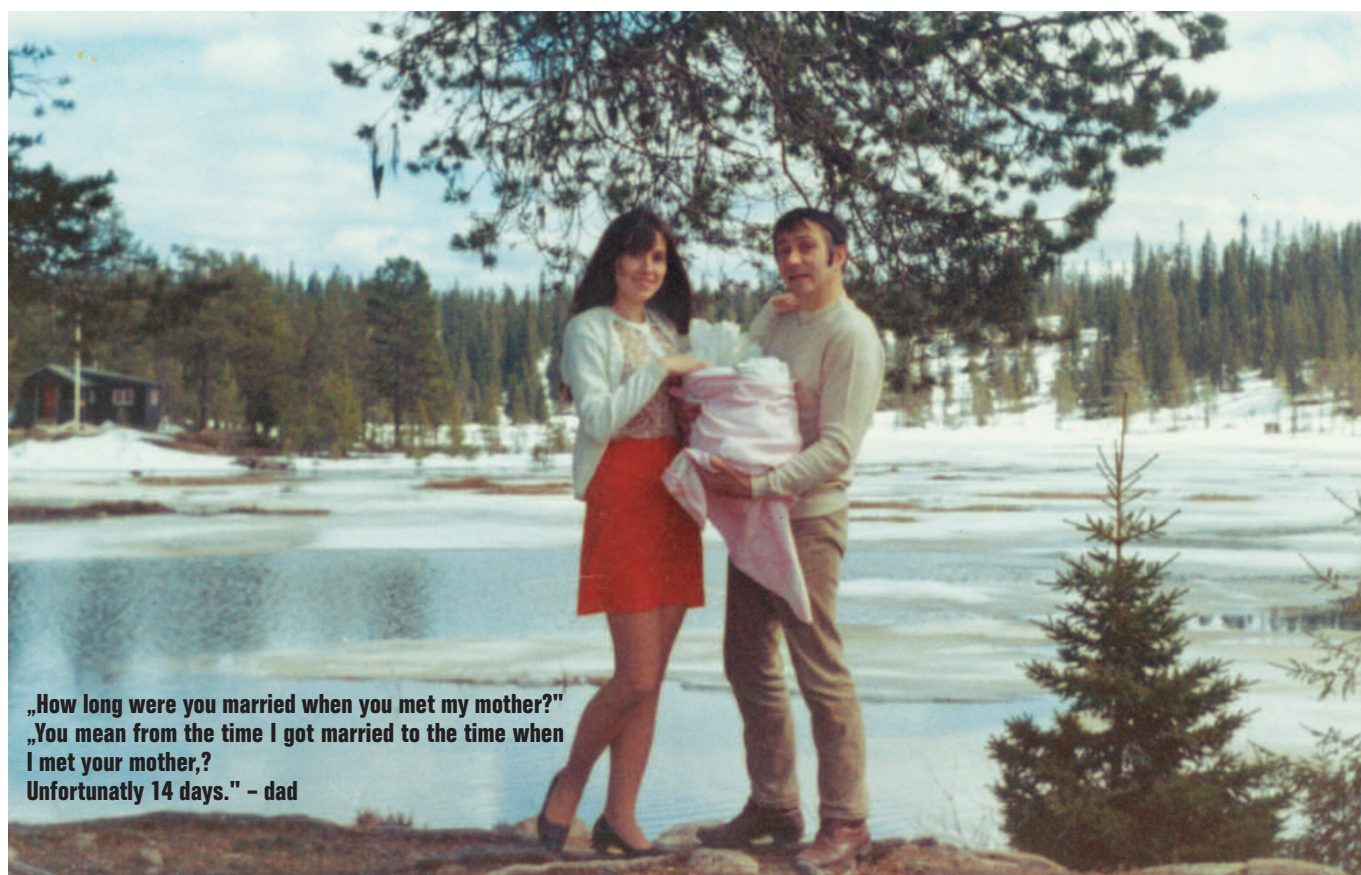
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ABOUT THE MOVIE

The movie Home is a personal witness of the effects of emigration. In 1968, while the Russian tanks are rolling in on Prague, 18 year old pregnant Madla is running away with her married lover, stage designer, Lubos Hurza, to Oslo, Norway, where their daughter, Margareta, is born. During some hard working years they reach great success in the theater business and they build the house of their dreams. On the height of fame, beauty and success, the mother decides to send her 14 year old daughter away from the family. From that moment on they are never to live together as a family again.

Margareta is following the path of disintegration of her own family, and through the help of intimate confessions she is searching for answers to finding her lost home in Los Angeles, Prague and Oslo. Through her childhood memories we see a sketch of the family life she grew up in, a family life neglected by parents who never had time because of their high ambitions. Through dialogs she evokes memories of turning points in her family life, and she is trying with this to cure her homesickness, a longing for a home which hasn't existed for 20 years.

Margareta Hruza with her Czech origins, a Norwegian citizenship and many years of studies in USA, can be considered a world citizen, but her situation has made an irreversible mark on her. That is why she confronts her parents and brings them together in a challenging situation in her original home country, Norway. Old pictures, photographs and furniture are all playing a part in bringing out painful memories, and it is just these items that can bring out the old pain, trauma and longing. And perhaps also understanding and mutual forgiveness.

The documentary film Home is not just a personal film. It also tells of the general trauma of emigration, which had an irreversible effect on many Czechs who ran away from the august invasion in 1968. In general the film also witnesses a general trend among many of feeling misplaced in today's globalization. Sometimes it is necessary to return to ones roots in order to come in terms with oneself and once lifestyle.

The film Home is a directors cut from the film Night Talks, which Margareta Hruza shot in 2005 for ARTE Television and YLE. The documentary film received support of the Czech Republic State Film Fund and was developed in the workshop of East European Forum 2003, organized by the Institute of Documentary Film.



„Já bych byla strašně šťastná, kdybychom spolu našly místo, kde bychom mohly obě žít své vlastní životy. Jenom nevím, v které zemi by to mohlo být.“ – máma

INTERVIEW WITH THE DIRECTOR

Margareta Hruza (1969) was born in a family of Czech emigrants in Oslo, Norway. She grew up in a world of theater as both her parents are stage designers. At the age of 14 she left to USA, where she studied political science and anthropology at the Iowa State University. In 1990, instead of taking the opportunity to study shamans and their healing techniques in Nigeria, she decided to move to Prague, where she worked two years at the Ministry of Environment as a project coordinator. Afterwards she did her post gradual studies at the University of Wisconsin in Madison. In 1995 she was on her way to Hong Kong to get married. On her way she stopped in Prague and cancelled her wedding plans in favor for entering FAMU. She graduated with a master in fiction film direction in 2004. During her studies she shot several short films and documentaries, and she published several articles on film theory in Film and Doba. In her first full length documentary film, Home, she is taking an intimate road uncovering the history of her family.

Your mother decided to send you from Norway to USA when you were only 14. Why?

That is something I try to find out in the movie. She told me several reasons, but she never mentioned that her own mother was sent away from her home when she was 14. I found that out much later. I have heard that in a family fate has a tendency to repeat itself, at least until one confronts the problem and tries to do something about it, or at least try to understand why it happens. The rest you will find out from watching the film.

How is the story of your family developing and why did you decide to describe the process in a film?

I felt that the story of my family was not developing. I felt that we were trapped in a circle. I couldn't understand why my mother was sporadically calling me and saying she was missing me so much, but at the same time when I wanted to visit her in America she was very much against it. She was making up all kinds of excuses for why it didn't suit her just then. This went on for years. It is almost unbelievable, but the reason she didn't want me to come was always because of some guy she had just met. She was disguising her age from them and she would have been embarrassed if she would have had to introduce me as her daughter. I was also tormented by the fact that my father completely stopped living from the time that my mother left him. He was just sitting at home, drinking and feeling sorry for himself. It was like he was a shadow of himself, and I felt that I had lost my father.

The film is a very intimate and at the same time a very open story – how did you manage to persuade your parents to cooperate with the making of the film?

My mother is a fascinating person, who managed to build something great, and then to leave it all for some incomprehensible reasons. She had everything that a woman could dream of – a big house, money, lovers, admirers, career and youth. She threw all that behind her and she went into something completely unknown. I wanted to understand her and her reasons for doing so. One night, over a bottle of wine, I wrote a portrait of her as an assignment at FAMU, and professor Jires liked it very much. The school didn't have money to produce it, so I threw the story in the cupboard and I took it out again when I heard of the pitching forum in Jihlava. I was successful there with the story, and ARTE and YLE liked it so much that they committed themselves to buy the film even before production. That was the impulse I was waiting for. I jumped right into work. Mother didn't want at first to take any part in the film, but father persuaded her over the phone. He was laughing and he was really looking forward to the fact that I was going to film her, that was at a time when he had no idea that he was also going to be a part of the movie. Every time I turned the camera at him and asked him something, he was startled. In the end it was actually more difficult to shoot with him. It took months, years, before he became more relaxed in front of the camera. I was shooting a couple of days at a time and then would take half a year pause, waiting for money or the next impulse that could lead us together and we would shoot again.

Would you call this a self-therapy film?

To some degree, yes, although I didn't think of it like that when I wrote the story. Originally it was a portrait of my mother, a portrait of a mysterious woman who fascinated me and impressed me. I missed her terribly and yet I didn't really know her, and I didn't know how to come close to her. Then when I started to shoot her I gradually changed my view of her. To this day I don't know who she really is. I think she doesn't know herself either. I take it as a success that I have managed to uncover her in parts. In the original filming there were more themes, but some of it was too painful for me to be able to use. I can't say I understand everything that has been between my mother and me, but I manage better now to keep her a little off my body. Before she was doing just as she wanted with me, making me feel like an emotional jojo. Now I can watch her from a more reserved distance, and at the same time I don't feel that I am cold to her.

Personal therapy-films are not always functional for viewers who have not taken part in the film. How do you think your film is interesting for the general viewer?

Although my film is very personal, I realized from reactions from the viewers, that there are several people who find aspects of their own family in my film. I also hope that the film has a value in itself. I am thinking of the film structure, the editing, photographic work and so on.

Do you think that your story is in some ways typical story for Czech emigrants?

Most of the children of Czech emigrants have felt some form of loneliness, and longing for the missing extended family and for experiencing the home country of their parents. It is a deep feeling of being torn away from your roots, a feeling of misplacement. Although you might never have been in the country of your parents, you have a longing to understand what your parents are missing so much. During puberty I was trying to free myself from this and I was acting as much as possible as a typical Norwegian girl. My mother didn't like my try of independence, and so she sent me away rather than have to watch me making my own decisions. Because of this I completely lost any connection to any one country, and that is not a good feeling. I am still missing something that could feel like a home country. When I return to Norway, which I miss terribly much, I don't feel at home there anymore because Norway has changed a lot during the years I have been gone. I feel terribly lonely there because there is nothing left there of our family history, of the house, or anything we had. That is probably the same feeling that many Czech emigrants experience when they return to the Czech Republic. In the end most of them commute between several countries and they don't feel truly home anywhere. It is a strange feeling, and I think that it is hard for a person to feel true happiness when one is separated from ones roots.

How did your parents react to the finished film?

I don't know if they liked the film, they haven't said anything like that, but they watched it and they accepted that this is my view.

How did your relationships changed after the shooting?

I think that thanks to the filming and all the uncomfortable questions and constant repetition to painful topics, our relationships have received fresh air. I think we are calmer now when we see each other, than before. Last year we spent four weeks together at the Norwegian coast line. It is true that we did argue, but it was in a normal manner. I think my parent's relationship is much calmer now. Before they could fight as dogs, but they didn't do that in front of the staff because they knew very well that I would bring out the camera. Father is still very much in love with my mother. When she appears, he lights up and is no longer lethargic. Mother takes him more like a brother, her closest person with whom she can confess everything. She calls him every time she has something to tell that she is proud of. She calls him at any time of day, sometimes at 3 in the morning, because she knows that he will be willing to listen to her for hours.

What is your current relationship in the family?

I have a little child and soon there will be two, so that is the greatest change in the family. My mother, who is now grandmother, has surprised us greatly. When she was a young mother she didn't like children very much. She could tolerate them only if they behaved like grown-ups. Children were afraid of her, and that suited her well because she didn't desire their company in any way. One can not even compare the change that has happened in her in the later years. Everyone who knows her is very surprised over how she has a sentiment from little children now. I would be very happy if she would visit us more often, especially now, but I can not persuade her to return to us. She sees Prague the way she remembers it from the 50s. She is holding on to her negative memories. She also feels that in America she can stay young forever. I think she will return to us once she is too old to take care of herself.



FILMOGRAPHY

Documents

HOME, 16mm, 8mm a DVCAM, '56, 2008 - Negativ / Margareta Hruza

NIGHT TALKS, 16 mm, DVCAM, '56, 2004 - Negativ / ARTE and YLE TV

THE 12 BRAVE, Documentary series for Febio Production

MAP MAKERS: Mister.Háj, DVCAM, '10, 2005

SHOEMAKER FOR CHILDREN: Mister Kubát, DVCAM, '10, 2005

RITE OF PASSAGE, Video, '8, 1996 - Margareta Hruza

Short Fiction Film

WEDDING GIFTS, 35 mm, '15, 2000 - FAMU

IN PASSING, 35 mm, '8, 1998 - FAMU

JOHNNY BE GOOD, 16 mm, '5, 1996 - Margareta Hruza

Recognition

WEDDING GIFTS, 2002, Best film and directing at International Film Festival Short Films, Umebertide, Italy

WEDDING GIFTS, 2001, Festival FAMU

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