



FESTIVAL DE CANNES

OFFICIAL SELECTION

COMPETITION

A Mobra Films Production

**4 months
3 weeks &
2 days** a film by Cristian Mungiu

Romania - 2007 - running time: 113 minutes

International Press

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Synopsis

Otilia and Găbița share the same room in a student dormitory. They are colleagues at the University in this small town in Romania, during the last years of communism. Otilia rents a room in a cheap hotel. In the afternoon, they are going to meet a certain Mr. Bebe. Găbița is pregnant, abortion is illegal and neither of them have passed through something like this before.

4 months, 3 weeks & 2 days belongs to a larger project called: **Tales from the Golden Age** – a subjective history of communism in Romania told through its urban legends. The project's aim is to talk about that period with no direct reference to communism but only through different stories focused on personal options in a time of misfortunes that people had to live like normal times.

4 months, 3 weeks & 2 days is the first film of the series.

Cast and Crew

Otilia - Anamaria Marinca
Găbița - Laura Vasiliu
Domnu' Bebe - Vlad Ivanov
Adi - Alex Potocean
Doamna Radu - Luminița Gheorghiu
DI. Radu - Adi Caraleanu

Recepționistă Unirea - Liliana Mocanu
Recepționista de Seară - Tania Popa
Recepționist Unirea - Teo Corban
Recepționistă Tineretului - Cerasela Iosifescu
Benzinarul - Doru Ana
Mama Domnului Bebe - Eugenia Bosânceanu
DI. Rusu - Ioan Sabdaru
Marie-Jeanne Rusu - Cristina Buburuz
Adela Racoviceanu - Mărioara Sterian
Dr. Racoviceanu - Emil Coșeru
Doamna Aldea - Georgeta Păduraru Burdujan
Dr. Aldea - Geo Dobre
Dora - Mădălina Ghițescu
Mihaela - Cătălina Harabagiu
Carmen - Sânziana Tarță
Daniela - Mihaela Alexandru
Ahmed - Hazim E'Layan
Soldat - Monica Alexandrescu
Soldat - Simona Stoicescu
Bărbatul din stație - Alexandru Conovaru
Portarul - Ion Grosu
Chelnerul - Traian Tudorică State
Medicinistul - Cristian Ciuzan
Milițian - Iancu Daniel
Milițian - Robert Emanuel
Marcu - Constantin Bojog
Medicinista - Cristina Iosif
Mireasa - Adina Cristescu
Bișnițarul - Călin Puia
Tatăl Găbiței - Costică Babii

Written and Directed by Cristian Mungiu

Director of Photography: Oleg Mutu
Production designer: Mihaela Poenaru
Editor: Dana Bunescu
Sound: Titi Fleancu, Dana Bunescu
Cristian Tarnovețchi
Mix: Cristinel Șirli
Costume designer: Dana Istrate
Make-up and Hair: Ioana Angelescu, Lidia Ivanov

UPM: Alina Țapardel
Executive producer: Florentina Onea
Assistant producer: Philippe Avril / Unlimited
Associate producer: Dan Burlac
Produced by: Oleg Mutu, Cristian Mungiu
for Mobra Films
Co-produced by: Saga Film, Alex Teodorescu

With the support of:
The Romanian National Center for Cinematography
The Hubert Bals Fund of the Rotterdam Film Festival

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Mindshare Media
BV McCann Erickson
Romanian Television
The Anonimul Foundation

Post-production services and DI: Abis Studio

Notes from the director

The story: The screenplay starts from the kind of personal experience that people usually don't share with others. Something unexpected happened with the people who came in contact with my story: once they heard it, they had a personal story of this kind to share. All of a sudden, everybody had something to say about this topic. I was amazed to discover how common yet hidden such stories are. Talking to people, I learned the most horrible of stories. I didn't use them in the film – I just followed the story I knew best – but they helped me understand how widespread the phenomenon was.

The screenplay: I wrote the first draft in July 2006. It was much longer than the final version – it had some 160 pages and described in more detail the morning of the girls in the student dorms. It also included the visit of Găbița's father – the only scene that was shot and dropped in the editing. I decided to sacrifice a good scene - with a lot of hints regarding parental influence on the way the characters decide - in favor of narrative coherence. Meanwhile, Otilia had imposed herself with authority as the main character. I kept re-writing during the shooting, especially dialogues, but not only. I always re-write scenes once I know the location and have read through the dialogue with the actors. I kept adding substance to the core of the film - the scenes with Mr. Bebe - and gave free rein to the thriller rhythm of the last part.

The historical context: In 1966, a law banning abortion was imposed in Romania. The effect was immediate: up to the early seventies, there were several huge generations of children, a few times more numerous than the generations before 1966. The average number of children in a classroom increased from 28 to 36. The number of classes in schools increased from 2 or 3 to 9 or 10. When I entered school, there were seven Christians in my class – there were not enough names to go around. Women quickly started to resort to illegal abortions. By the end of communism, reliable sources say that more than 500,000 women had died as a result. In that context, abortion lost any moral connotation and was rather perceived as an act of rebellion and resistance against the regime. After 1989, one of the first measures taken in the free country was to legalize abortion again. The consequence was almost one million abortions in the first year – a number far greater than in any country in Europe. Even today, abortion is still used as a method of contraception in Romania, with more than 300, 000 cases being reported annually.

The casting: I had only one actor in mind when I was writing: Vlad Ivanov - the actor who plays Mr. Bebe. I had worked with him on a commercial one year before and was amazed by his strength and attention to detail. During the casting, I double-checked my opinion about him as Mr. Bebe by seeing other actors, but this served only to strengthen my conviction that I was right. During the shoot he was capable of delivering up to 10 pages of dialogue without dropping a single word, with exactly the intonation, tone of voice, pauses and gestures that we had agreed upon.

I considered working with Laura Vasiliu - who plays Găbița - for my first feature, **Occident**, but for somehow funny reasons this didn't happen. Later, we worked on commercials together and I realized she was capable of generating a lot of emotion. I had doubts at the beginning because she was not quite young enough for the role but she was so convincing that she soon dispelled them. A week before the shoot I was still missing my main character and running out of solutions: it seemed I had seen every Romanian actress between the ages of 18 and 28 and still hadn't found my character. Then I decided to bring Anamaria Marinca from London. After winning a Bafta award for her first film, she had moved to England. For our low budget, it was a bit eccentric to pay for a very expensive plane ticket just for a casting session but I decided it was worth trying. We met late at night, as soon as she arrived from the airport, and I was disappointed - Anamaria as a person was not my character. Next day we read scenes together: the transformation was amazing. My character was talking through Anamaria's mouth, as if she was possessed. She was great – the whole film rests on her shoulders.

Acting: I insist that actors know the lines by heart in absolute detail. I give them the chance to make their comments on the dialogue when we rehearse. I act for them. If I can't speak a line convincingly, it means there is something wrong with that line and I drop it. Once they know the text, I start dropping letters from their pronunciation to make the dialogue sound as much as possible like negligent spoken language. Sound people detest me – I encourage my actors to whisper if it helps them deliver the lines more naturally than to act with a strong voice that can be easily recorded. If I am absolutely pleased about anything in my film, it is the acting. A comment I received after the first informal screening of the film was also the best compliment for me so far: somebody mentioned that if you listen to the characters in the film from another room, they sound like people talking in home videos.

The setting: I only shoot locations; I don't like sets. I also like the background to tell its story. I like locations so much that I like to show everything. Most of the shots in the film show 180, 270, or even 360 degrees of the location. Anyone who has ever been on a shoot can appreciate what a mess this can lead to. Any location has a base, a generator, light, a lot of cables, the director's monitor and so on. When you decide to make a circle with the camera, a whole crew of tens of people has to run behind the camera during the shot, and moreover, has to do this in silence. Sometimes, it's comic to watch. Since we decided to shoot mostly one shot per scene, we had scenes where the camera followed the actor for more than 100 meters, starting from a street and finally entering an apartment. It's terribly difficult but the effect is so natural – it was worth doing it.

The props: I tried to make a film about my characters and about my story and not about the period. I wanted the period to be always just the context and not the subject of the film. I tried to respect and re-create realities as much as I could but not to push stereotypes and landmarks of late communist times in front of the camera. Objects of that period are all there in the film but in the foreground: the bus that ran on bomb-like gas cylinders; Lăstun, the local Romanian car that was often compared to an iron; the trash bins; the book-lined walls. The habits from those times are also there: the pack of Kent cigarettes was much more important than the money you paid for it and you couldn't solve anything without it.

Shooting a period film: The eighties are already 'period'. Towns have changed dramatically since then. There are seven times more cars in Bucharest, the town is crowded with brightly-coloured advertising and most of the buildings have air conditioning, satellite dishes, metal window frames and so on. In the late eighties there was no light on the streets, just two hours of programming on the sole TV channel, very little gasoline for cars, and a very bleak and gray atmosphere overall. This explains the grading of the film.

The film's aesthetics: Before shooting, I discussed with Oleg Mutu, my partner and cinematographer, what style would best serve the story. We decided to keep things as sober as possible and to drop as much as possible everything that could be seen as staged or conventional. We didn't use a tripod but neither did we use a steady-cam. We didn't use dollies or cranes. We decided to shoot one shot per scene and to allow the actors to use the space behind the camera. We never panned or tilted to see an actor's face – many lines come from off camera or actors with their heads out of the frame. We made a strategy of shooting people from behind. We dropped, little by little, everything that could be considered too 'nice' or too staged, including the beautiful snow falling at the end of the last shot. We tried to focus on capturing emotion and truth.

Cristian Mungiu

Writer / Director / Producer

Biography

Cristian Mungiu was born in Iași, Romania. He studied English literature at the University of Iași and Film Directing at the University of Film in Bucharest. He worked as a teacher and a journalist for written press, radio and television until 1994. During his film studies, he worked as an assistant director for foreign productions shot in Romania. After his graduation, in 1998, he made several shorts. His first feature, "Occident", was premiered in Director's Fortnight in Cannes in 2002 and was later screened in over 50 festivals worldwide. He co-founded Mobra Films in 2003.

FILMS

4 months, 3 weeks & 2 days

(4 luni, 3 săptămâni și 2 zile) - feature.

Writer / Director / Producer.

Hubert Bals 2006 grant for project development.

Tales from The Golden Age

(Amintiri din Epoca de Aur) - series of fiction films.

Writer / Co-Director / Producer.

In production.

Turkey Girl

(Curcanii nu zboară) - short.

Writer / Director / Producer

Included in the omnibus film **Lost and Found**

Premiered at Berlinale, 2005.

Occident - feature.

Writer / Director

Selected at Cannes 2002, Quinzaine des Realisateurs.

Supported by Hubert Bals

Over 10 international awards including FIPRESCI award in Sofia Film Festival and Audience Award in Tessaloniky Film Festival.

HBO Best Romanian Screenplay Award in 2000 with Slum / Cartier.

RKO Pictures International Screenplay Competition finalist with Slum.

ANAMARIA MARINCA

She graduated from the University of Fine Arts, Music and Drama "George Enescu", Iași.

FILMS

Youth Without Youth - Francis Ford Coppola (2007)

TV

Sex Traffic - David Yates (2004)

Best Actress awards:

BAFTA, Royal Television Society Awards, 2005

45th Festival de Television de Monte Carlo, 2005

VLAD IVANOV

He graduated from the Academy Of Theatre And Film, Bucharest.

FILMS

Le Père Goriot - Jean-Daniel Verhaeghe (2004)

Les Percutés - Gerard Cuq (2002)

Nature Morte - Patrick Malakian (2000)

The Embassy - Gustavo Marino

LAURA VASILIU

She graduated from The National University of Theatre and Cinema Arts, Bucharest.

FILMS

Second Hand - Dan Pița

Bless you, Prison - Nicolae Mărgineanu (2002)

Callas Forever - Franco Zeffirelli (2002)

LUMINIȚA GHEORGHIU

FILMS

A fost sau n-a fost? (12:08 East of Bucharest)

- Corneliu Porumboiu

(Camera D'Or - Cannes Film Festival, 2006)

Moartea domnului Lăzărescu

(**The Death of Mister Lăzărescu**) - Cristi Puiu

(Best Film, Un Certain Regard - Cannes Film Festival, 2005)

Lost and Found - Co-Directed by Cristian Mungiu (2005)

Le Temps du loup (The Time of the Wolf)

- Michael Haneke (2003)

Marfa și banii (Stuff and Dough) - Cristi Puiu (2001)

(Directors' Fortnight - Cannes Film Festival, 2001)

Code inconnu - Michael Haneke (2000)

Train de vie - Radu Mihăileanu (1999)

Prea târziu (Too Late) - Lucian Pintilie (1996)

Moromeții - Stere Gulea (1988)

AWARDS

Los Angeles Film Critics Association Awards -

Best Supporting Actress for **Moartea domnului**

Lăzărescu (The Death of Mister Lăzărescu) (2005)

OLEG MUTU

Director of Photography

Born in 1972 in Chişinău, he graduated from the University of Theatre & Film, Bucharest, Romania, Cinematography department.

Moartea Domnului Lăzărescu

(The Death of Mr. Lăzărescu) - Cristi Puiu

Best Film, Un Certain Regard - Cannes Film Festival, 2005

Cigarettes and Coffee - Cristi Puiu

Golden Bear, Best Short Film - Berlin Film Festival, 2004

Occident - Cristian Mungiu

Fipresci Award, Directors' Fortnight - Cannes Film Festival, 2002

DANA BUNESCU

Editor / Sound Designer

Born in Craiova in 1969, she graduated from the Academy of Theatre and Film, Bucharest – Editing and sound section.

California Dreamin' - Cristi Nemescu

Un Certain Regard - Cannes Film Festival, 2007

Moartea Domnului Lăzărescu

(The Death of Mr. Lăzărescu) - Cristi Puiu

Best Film, Un Certain Regard - Cannes Film Festival, 2005

Cigarettes and Coffee - Cristi Puiu

Golden Bear, Best Short Film - Berlin Film Festival, 2004