

ENGAGE

OPENING DOORS TO EUROPEAN COLLABORATION FOR PRODUCERS, SCREENWRITERS & WRITER/DIRECTORS

2012



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Future-proofing new filmmakers

ENGAGE 2012 saw the programme pass the 120 participants mark in its fifth year, with another 23 filmmakers attending from all corners of Europe. The nine-month training programme continues to develop to meet the needs of a changing world and filmmaking environment.

In his look back at ENGAGE 2012, Professor Robin MacPherson, Screen Academy Scotland Director, reflects that, at its heart, ENGAGE remains all about storytelling even while it strives to prepare participants for the changes taking place in the industry. ENGAGE aims to 'future proof' a new generation of filmmakers to allow them to recognize and take advantage of the opportunities around them.

The core format of three project development workshops in the four partner countries, plus online support, is still the cornerstone of the ENGAGE programme, and we provide some highlights from each of the workshops on pages 8-11.

Elsewhere in this brochure, we look at the projects undertaken by our 23 participants from around Europe - from ambitious transmedia projects such as *U.S.E. United States of Europe* and *Rammstein* to the cheeky comedy *Waiting for Alexi*.

We also catch up with five of our alumni, and talk to them about the progress of their projects and how ENGAGE helped them along the way. They also pass on some wise words of advice to future ENGAGE participants.



ENGAGE 2012:

Pooling talent, ideas and innovative approaches

ENGAGE is a training initiative for screenwriters, directors and producers. Launched in 2008, it aims to foster creative collaborations and spark innovation across borders – pooling talent, ideas and innovative approaches to co-production.

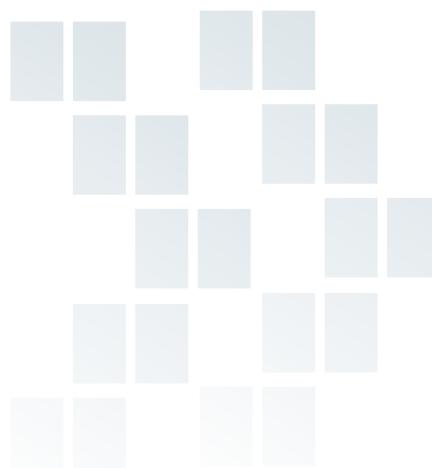
Three institutions were involved in the launch of ENGAGE: Screen Academy Scotland at Edinburgh Napier University, Scotland; National Film School at Dún Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology (IADT), Ireland and Baltic Film and Media School at Tallinn University, Estonia. In 2009 they were joined by the School of Art and Design at Aalto University, Helsinki Finland. In 2011 we trialled ENGAGE Plus, which added an international component to the programme in collaboration with partner institutions in Canada and China.

ENGAGE PARTNERS

Screen Academy Scotland in Edinburgh, Scotland is one of only two dual-status Skillset Film & Media Academies in the UK. A collaboration between Edinburgh Napier University and Edinburgh College of Art, Screen Academy is recognised as a UK centre of excellence in film practice education. Established in 2005, it has helped over 200 writers, directors, producers and animators to make their mark on the page, set and screen. Having added a broadcast and interactive focus in 2008, it now offers an integrated suite of programmes, ranging from undergraduate film, photography, journalism and television to specialist postgraduate programmes in screenwriting, production and direction.

“Being able to navigate my way through conflicting advice and evaluating which advice to listen and which to discard has probably been the skill I developed the most thanks to the way the workshops were conceived.”

Jasmina Kallay



“I was very surprised to see how much effort the industry experts had put in analysing our material and to help us find answers to our questions.”

Annalisa Schmuckli

National Film School at Dún Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology (IADT), Ireland is a centre of excellence for education and training in film, animation, broadcasting and digital media. Launched in 2003, it provides creative, technical and academic education of an international standard and is the only Irish full member of CILECT, the International Association of Film and Television Schools. IADT offers a broad range of undergraduate and postgraduate courses that encompass film and television production, animation, screenwriting, design for stage and screen, model making and broadcast production.

Baltic Film and Media School at Tallinn University, Estonia is an international higher education provider at BA and MA levels. It offers hands-on university degree courses in Film Arts, Crossmedia Production, and Audiovisual Media. With over 400 students from more than 20 countries worldwide, BFM is one of Europe's largest – and Northern Europe's only – English-language film and media school.

School of Arts, Design and Architecture at Aalto University, Helsinki Finland has been a leader in art and design education for over 138 years. Housing the Department of Film, Television and Scenography, it is an international postgraduate university institution with students from over 50 countries. The university offers Doctorate, Masters and Bachelor degrees in a wide range of disciplines including fine art, design, new media, art education, visual culture, film and television. The school is a pioneer in research and in developing interdisciplinary study programmes.

Connecting Europe's new generation of storytellers

Professor Robin MacPherson, Director of Screen Academy Scotland, talks about how storytelling is still at the heart of ENGAGE

2012 saw ENGAGE complete its fifth cycle with the total number of participants since we began in 2008 passing the 120 mark. This year was notable in other respects too: it was the first in our three-year framework agreement with MEDIA; we received a further vote of confidence in the form of increased funding from the national film agencies in our four partner countries – Scotland, Ireland, Estonia and Finland; and we welcomed a deliberately larger proportion of participants from other EU countries, furthering our ambition to reach every corner of the EU with an emphasis on the smaller nations.

The core format of three project development workshops in the four partner countries supplemented by online support remains firmly at the heart of the ENGAGE programme. But this year we set out to go even further with our participants and their projects, extending our support beyond the final September workshop in Helsinki/Tallinn to help the most advanced projects to get closer to the marketplace and thus closer to their intended screen audience. We are also supporting a number of ENGAGE alumni to attend the Berlin Film Festival and other events where they can pitch themselves and their projects to commissioners, buyers and sales agent and network with other young talent.

As in previous years, some of the most accomplished practitioners in Europe's screen industries lent their wisdom and experience to the task of nurturing, challenging and strengthening our participants' skills and their projects. ENGAGE participants benefited from masterclasses, one-to-one sessions or panel discussions with, amongst others, producers Julie Baines (UK) and Michael Garland (Ireland); screenwriter Juha Lehtola (Finland); producer, writer and director Peeter Urbla (Estonia) and producer / marketing consultant Mia Bays (UK). (See Workshops on pages 8-11 for more detailed information. The list of guest speakers is available in full on pages 52 to 53.)

Every country is of course different and faces a unique set of circumstances. Yet at the same time many of the issues and opportunities facing the next generation of filmmakers are common across Europe (and beyond). Changing business and financing models, with new distribution platforms, though not yet always offering predictable revenue streams; signs of more cross-border TV drama e.g. from Denmark to the UK; pressures on broadcasters to play safe with commissioning; changes in the regulatory environment impacting on incentives - all these and more featured in the formal discussions and in the breaks during ENGAGE 2012.



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MEASURE OF SUCCESS

Preparing our participants for the increasing pace of change in the audiovisual industries is a big part of what we aim to do. The success of individual projects is one important test of our success, but so is the 'future proofing' of participants and their ability to adapt and change, constructing a portfolio of projects that allows those suited to the particular opportunities available at any given time. In that sense, helping our participants and alumni to develop an ability to 'read' the market and longer-term trends is as important as helping them shape the 'product'.

At its heart, though, ENGAGE remains about storytelling, about connecting the storyteller (whether writer, producer or director) to people who want to help them tell their story and to those who will discover they want to see and hear it. Whether that is on a phone, a 3D cinema screen, a tablet or a plane matters much less than the compelling nature of the content and the skill with which it is made.

Thanks to the support of MEDIA, our film fund partners, the partner schools, their staff and the industry practitioners who together make up its chemistry, ENGAGE continues to evolve and, like them, we hope to continue making an impact on Europe's screens for years to come.

"At its heart, though, ENGAGE remains about storytelling, about connecting the storyteller (whether writer, producer or director) to people who want to help them tell their story and to those who will discover they want to see and hear it."

Professor Robin MacPherson
DIRECTOR, SCREEN ACADEMY SCOTLAND

Incubating ideas

Highlights of the workshops attended by ENGAGE 2012 participants

Dublin, Ireland

The National Film School at IADT
4-day workshop (April 2012)

Having been gently eased into the whirlwind of their first workshop thanks to a helpful introduction by ENGAGE alumna Rioghnaigh Ní Ghrioghair (one of the winners of the previous year's ENGAGE prize), ENGAGE 2012 participants were encouraged to get to know each other and find out more about their respective projects through small group sessions and a 'speed-dating' event. Though daunting at first, this ice-breaker is always a highlight of the workshop, which also included case studies on two recent Irish feature films, fiction *Death of a Superhero* and documentary *Anton Corbijn Inside Out*.

KEY EVENTS

Case study & screening:

Death of a Superhero (Ireland/Germany, 2012)
Presentation: Michael Garland / Producer

Michael Garland entered the film industry as Financial Controller for Palace Productions, the Palace Group's film production division working on such projects as Neil Jordan's *The Company of Wolves* and *The Crying Game*, and Michael Caton-Jones's *Scandal*.

In 1995 he produced *This is the Sea*, starring Richard Harris and Gabriel Byrne. He established Grand Pictures with Paul Donovan in early 2000. The company produced the award-winning TV series *Paths to Freedom*

and *Fergus's Wedding* and *Spin the Bottle*, which also won best feature at the Boston Irish Film Festival. In 2006, Michael co-produced *Puffball*, directed by Nicolas Roeg and starring Miranda Richardson, Kelly Reilly and Donald Sutherland. He then produced *The Race*, an Irish/German co-production starring Colm Meaney and Susan Lynch.

Case study & screening:

Anton Corbijn Inside Out

(Netherlands / Belgium / Ireland, 2012)

Presentation: Morgan Bushe / Co-Producer, Alan Maher / Irish Film Board Representative

Morgan Bushe is one of the owners of Dublin-based Fastnet Films, whose film and documentary output since 2009 has enjoyed considerable awards success. His notable productions include *The Other Side of Sleep* (Directors' Fortnight), *Colony* (TIFF premiere, First Appearance award at IDFA), *Nothing Personal* (six awards at Locarno, nominated for two European Film Awards) and *Circus Fantasticus* (winner of nine Slovenian Film Awards, shortlisted for Best Foreign Film Oscar®). Morgan discussed his role as co-producer of *Anton Corbijn Inside Out*, which had recently premiered at the Berlinale. He was joined by Alan Maher, Production Executive at the Irish Film Board with particular responsibility for documentary and very low-budget filmmaking.



"I would definitely recommend ENGAGE highly to anyone interested in international collaboration."

Annalisa Schmuckli

Edinburgh, Scotland

Screen Academy Scotland
at Edinburgh Napier University
4-day workshop (June 2012)

The second workshop provided an opportunity for the teams to focus further on the development of their project through small group sessions and project surgeries. These were complimented by an intensive pitching workshop, a masterclass on sales and distribution for micro-budget films and access to two screenings at the Edinburgh International Film Festival: a preview of experimental documentary *Future My Love* (see below) and the premiere of opening film *Killer Joe*.

KEY EVENTS

Workshop: Pitching

Tutor: Julian Friedmann / Screenwriter and Literary Agent

Pitching and presentation skills are crucial elements of success in any filmmaker's career. Through this hands-on workshop, participants learn to overcome their fear of pitching and to convey the essence of their project. Julian Friedmann is Joint Managing Director of Blake Friedmann Literary Agency in London. He was the first UK Coordinator of MEDIA 1's EAVE producer-training programme and lectures on the business of screenwriting and on pitching.

Development, sales and distribution for micro-budget films

Presentation: Mia Bays / Producer

Mia Bays founded Missing In Action Films in 2003. She worked in some of the top sales, distribution and exhibition companies in the UK before becoming a producer in 2004 and was formerly Head of Distribution at The Film Consortium. As an experienced marketing and distribution consultant who has overseen the production, marketing and distribution of numerous UK micro-budget features, Mia's tips have particular relevance for ENGAGE participants.

Panel discussion & screening:

'Co-producing with Scotland'

& *Future My Love* (UK/Sweden, 2012)

Guest speakers: Maja Borg / Director, Sonja Henrici / Producer, Robbie Allen / Executive Producer, Creative Scotland

Only days before its world premiere at the Edinburgh International Film Festival, director Maja Borg and producer Sonja Henrici offered participants a candid discussion of *Future My Love*'s development journey, from its beginnings as a short film to the intricacies of co-production funding for first time feature filmmakers.

DID YOU KNOW:

So far ENGAGE has involved 84 trainers, from as far afield as Australia and the US to neighbouring countries such as France, Czech Republic and Latvia.

"The one-to-one feedback sessions with all the industry professionals and course mentors was truly valuable and made all the difference in developing my project to the next level."

Jasmina Kallay



Caption here

Helsinki, Finland and Tallinn, Estonia

School of Arts, Design and Architecture at Aalto University, Helsinki and Baltic Film and Media School at Tallinn University
6-day workshop (September 2012)

The final workshop, which coincided with the grand opening of BFM's new purpose-built premises on Tallinn University's main campus, saw participants receive detailed feedback on their projects from ENGAGE staff and international industry experts. On the final day of ENGAGE 2012, a total of 16 projects were pitched to a distinguished panel of key representatives of the national film boards of Estonia, Finland, Ireland, Scotland and Denmark.

Four projects were awarded prizes - find out more on page 12.

KEY EVENTS

Panel presentation:

Hours before its official public unveiling, the brand new BFM building played host to a lively discussion on current opportunities for co-production and support in Europe. Cine-Regio General Secretary Charlotte Applgegreen was joined by Steen Bille, Feature Film Commissioner for the Danish Film Institute, Jan Erik Holst, Executive Editor at the Norwegian Film Institute and Bernd Günther-Nahm, Executive Director at the FilmFörderung Hamburg Schleswig-Holstein.

The Dangers of Developing **Presentation:** Juha Lehtola

This ominous-sounding presentation provided fascinating - and often humorous - insight into the mechanics and psychology of TV script development by one of Finland's most

experienced writers. During his distinguished career, Juha Lehtola has achieved great success in both theatre and television: his plays, television series and TV films have won numerous awards in Finland and on the international stage.

Project Surgeries

Alongside sessions with ENGAGE staff, these one-to-one sessions with industry experts enabled participants to receive feedback on their projects ahead of the final pitching session. Each project benefited from a minimum of three sessions with the following: From Estonia: writer / director / producer Peeter Urbla; from Finland: producers Liisa Penttilä and Markus Selin, screenwriters Jan Forsström and Matti Kinnunen; and from the USA: screenwriter and Fulbright Scholar, John Bernstein.

The Big Pitch

(See full list of panellists and awards on page X)

Prizes

Four projects were awarded cash prizes totalling €8,000

For the fourth consecutive year, ENGAGE was able to provide cash prizes to encourage several projects's further development. The third and final workshop of ENGAGE 2012 culminated in a pitching forum, in which participants presented their projects to a panel of five national film funds representatives.

The panel consisted of:

Robbie Allen
Portfolio Manager, Creative Scotland

Steen Bille
Film Commissioner (Feature Films),
Danish Film Institute

Karlo Funk
Head of Production, Estonian Film Foundation

Joonas Louhivuori
Film Commissioner, Finnish Film Foundation

Andrew Meehan
Head of Development, Irish Film Board

Four projects were awarded cash prizes totalling €8,000. For the second year running, the Jüri Sillart prize was also awarded to the project with best visuals, in memory of our friend and colleague who passed away in 2011.

Each project was awarded €2,000

Catherine

(Finland, Lithuania, Poland)

Annalisa Schmuckli (Producer / Writer)
Magdalena Rychla (Producer)
Maria Lappalainen (Writer / Director)
Laura Kazbaraite (Writer / Director)
See page 20

Darkness on the Edge of Town

(Ireland, Scotland)

Patrick Ryan (Writer / Director)
Lisa Mackintosh (Producer)
See page 22

Gate of Heaven

(Finland)

Katja Lautamatti (Writer / Director)
See page 30

Rammstein

(Germany)

Selim Pekin Güngör (Writer)
See page 36

Jüri Sillart prize 2012:

Darkness on the Edge of Town

(Patrick Ryan, Ireland)
See page 22

Project Showreel

Learn about the projects in ENGAGE 2012 and meet the people behind them

ENGAGE 2012 saw our 23 participants, hailing from nine European nations, collaborate on a range of projects. This section showcases their work.

PRODUCERS

Ashley Black	Scotland	<i>Kratlandia</i>
Rosalie Faithfull	Scotland	<i>Brothers, Dead to Me</i>
Tommy Fitzpatrick	Ireland	<i>Fable</i>
Bianca Herold	Scotland / Germany	<i>Fable</i>
Heli Jürisson	Estonia	<i>Brothers</i>
Heli Luik	Estonia	<i>U.S.E. United States of Europe</i>
Lisa Mackintosh	Scotland	<i>Darkness on the Edge of Town, U.S.E. United States of Europe</i>
Magdalena Rychla	Poland	<i>Sulina, Catherine</i>
Annalisa Schmuckli	Finland	<i>Catherine, Thank You for Waiting</i>

SCREENWRITERS

Christine Bonner	Scotland	<i>Fable, Brothers</i>
Helen Flanagan	Ireland	<i>Dead to Me</i>
Jasmina Kallay	Ireland	<i>U.S.E. United States of Europe</i>
Patricia Kelly	Ireland	<i>Life in the Dead</i>
Selim Pekin Güngör	Germany	<i>Rammstein</i>
Helen Schasmin	Estonia	<i>Kratlandia</i>

WRITER/ DIRECTORS

Laura Kazbaraite	Lithuania	<i>Thank You for Waiting, Catherine</i>
Kaur Kokk	Estonia	<i>The Baron, the Priest and the Prophet</i>
Maria Lappalainen	Finland	<i>Final Stop, Catherine</i>
Katja Lautamatti	Finland	<i>Gate of Heaven</i>
Mari-Kaisu Mononen	Finland	<i>Bleeding Eyes</i>
Diana Munteanu	Romania	<i>Sulina</i>
Patrick Ryan	Ireland	<i>Darkness on the Edge of Town</i>
Barbara Vekarić	Croatia	<i>Waiting for Alexi</i>

The Baron, the Priest and the Prophet

WRITER/DIRECTOR: Kaur Kokk

SYNOPSIS

A mystical tragedy set in 18th-century Estonia, the film is composed of folklore and historical facts. In a time of plague and famine, the population of Estonia has dropped to 150,000 people. After more than 400 years of slavery, the nation is soon to be extinct.

It is the archetypical story of the redeemer, in this case a 17-year-old girl who miraculously heals from a fatal disease. She speaks of having died, been to hell and given the opportunity to come back to tell the tale. In blurry visions reminiscent of Dante's *Divine Comedy* or Hieronymus Bosch's *The Last Judgment*, she describes the local baron, priest and half of the villagers being tortured in hell. "All men are equal under the sun," she says. "War and diseases of death are brought upon us because of our vices."

These are strong words for a starving people about to lose all hope. Her growing popularity among the villagers brings her into conflict with the local priest and the baron, precipitating a fight over local political and social control, a fight for one's beliefs, a fight for freedom.

STATUS

In development

“...an opportunity to communicate with like-minded people from other countries...”

“The most important part of ENGAGE for me was the opportunity to communicate with like-minded people from other countries - to get to know other young, up-and-coming filmmakers from Europe; to exchange our experiences, hopes and dreams.”

Kaur Kokk

WRITER / DIRECTOR / ESTONIA

After spending his teenage years in the underground music scene, Kaur enrolled at the Baltic Film and Media School and graduated with a BA in Filmmaking. He is currently pursuing an MA.

Kaur has written and directed several short films, numerous TV commercials and a couple of short documentaries.



ENGAGE 2012 BY NUMBERS:

29 participants - 10 nationalities

Bleeding eyes

WRITER/DIRECTOR: Mari-Kaisu Mononen

SYNOPSIS

Bleeding Eyes is a melodramatic comedy for teenagers and adults - anyone who's ever been terrified by the thought of being replaced by someone who's better than them. Henna is a young high-school queen bee in a small town in Northern Finland. She's been looking forward to her 18th birthday, the day she thinks her life will properly start. Nothing goes according to plan though, because Henna becomes guilty of a severe case of girl envy. There's a new girl at school, Silja, whom Henna becomes so jealous of that it borders on obsessive infatuation. Silja seems to outshine Henna in every way. Henna, having been there first, starts with the upper hand and manages to turn other girls against Silja. But she loses her status when she falls victim to her own jealousy: spying on Silja, she literally falls over her binoculars and temporarily loses her eyesight, together with her newly gained independence.

STATUS

- 3rd draft
- Seeking development funds

Mari-Kaisu Mononen

WRITER / DIRECTOR / FINLAND

Mari-Kaisu completed her BA and MA from ELO Film School Helsinki (Aalto University) in directing in May 2012. She has written and directed several short films and is currently focusing on her feature-length project, *Bleeding Eyes*. She also teaches camera work and editing.



“...provided
structure to the
writing process...”

“**ENGAGE** provided structure to the writing process of the second draft of my script. I received lots of valuable feedback that helped me to develop my story further.”



ENGAGE 2012 BY NUMBERS:

5 feature film case studies
(1 animation, 1 documentary, 3 fiction)

Brothers

WRITER:

Christine Bonner (based on an original idea by Karl-Jakob Jürna)

PRODUCERS: Heli Jürisson,
Rosalie Faithfull

SYNOPSIS

In the aftermath of WWII, a young Estonian man is trained by the British Secret Service to become a spy in his own homeland, now occupied by the Soviet Union. Little does he know he is just a pawn in a game between two superpowers, on a mission that is destined to fail.

STATUS

- In development (treatment available)
- Seeking co-production partners and development funding
- Looking for an emerging director



Heli Jürisson

PRODUCER / ESTONIA

Heli is currently studying film and television production at the Baltic Film and Media School, though she's keen to keep writing. Over the last few years, she has worked as a Producer or Production Assistant on several short films, music videos and commercial projects and she hopes to carry on doing so, taking on gradually more ambitious projects. Heli believes that hard work will get you everywhere.

“...a big clash of ideas and energy. Only the good kind, of course...”

“**ENGAGE** has been just a big, sometimes overwhelming, clash of ideas and energy. Only the good kind, of course. **ENGAGE** has helped me develop what was just an idea for a TV-series into the beginnings of a great story and I cannot be more thankful for that.”

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C Bonner

WRITER / IRELAND

» See **Fable** (page 26)

Rosalie Faithfull PRODUCER / SCOTLAND

Rosalie is most interested in the story, whether the plot will please or disappoint, before she notices the camera work or even the acting. Her focus is the same when she picks up an outline or treatment for the first time.

She likes to write stories but also gets satisfaction out of organising and pulling together projects, and facilitating creativity in others. Rosalie knew she wanted to be a producer and began to work in television. It was while working on a long-running drama that she began to understand the term 'Creative Producer' and the importance of the development stage of a film or television project. She then completed a Creative Producing Masters degree at Screen Academy Scotland, where she had the chance to work alongside writers and develop treatments for the first time.

Rosalie is inspired by anyone who works hard;



“...a great introduction to European co-production.”

“I came on Engage without a specific project in mind and participating meant I was able to get involved in two teams and help develop a television mini-series as well as a feature film. The programme opened me up to the advantages and difficulties of international co-production for the first time. It's a great introduction to European co-production.”

Catherine

WRITERS:

Annalisa Schmuckli, Maria Lappalainen

DIRECTORS:

Laura Kazbaraite, Maria Lappalainen

PRODUCERS:

Annalisa Schmuckli, Magdalena Rychla

SYNOPSIS

Catherine, a story of passion and power, is a TV drama series based on the true life of 16th-century Polish princess Catherine Jagellon. Her incredible journey of becoming the Duchess of Finland, finding love and eventually rising to the throne of Sweden takes us on a voyage through Renaissance Europe and its royalty's private chambers, where love and politics are inseparably intertwined.

STATUS

- Seeking co-production partners and development funding
- Series bible available

"ENGAGE has had a huge impact on my project. I came to the first workshop with a one-page idea for a feature film; I came out of the last workshop with a 30-page series bible for a TV series. The feedback I received from the mentors and other participants was priceless and helped me to steer the project into the right direction. Finding three amazing co-developers for *Catherine* really gave the project a good push – and my own confidence as a filmmaker, too. I now feel much more confident about stepping into the "real world" after I finish my studies, and for *Catherine* I definitely feel that the wheels have started rolling and good things lie ahead."

Annalisa Schmuckli

PRODUCER / FINLAND



Annalisa is currently in her 5th year of Film and TV Production at ELO Film School Helsinki (Aalto University). She obtained her BA in 2011 and now continuing on the MA Programme. For the past six years she has also been working as a freelancer in the Finnish film industry in a number of feature film productions, including international co-productions.

Besides producing, Annalisa has great passion for screenwriting and is currently developing feature and short film projects as producer-screenwriter, as well as the TV series *Catherine*. She believes that with hard work even the most ambitious and "craziest" goals can be achieved but it all begins with having the courage to dream big.



Magdalena Rychla

PRODUCER / POLAND

» See *Sulina* (page 38)



Maria Lappalainen

WRITER / DIRECTOR / FINLAND

» See *Final Stop* (page 28)



Laura Kazbaraite

WRITER / DIRECTOR / LITHUANIA

» See *Thank You for Waiting* (page 40)

CONTACT:

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"Priceless feedback... a huge impact on my project."

Darkness on the Edge of Town

WRITER/DIRECTOR: Patrick Ryan
PRODUCER: Lisa Mackintosh

Additional collaborators:
DOP: Tommy Fitzgerald
EDITOR: Conor Fitzpatrick

SYNOPSIS

Darkness on the Edge of Town tells the story of Cleo Callahan, a teenage sharpshooter who decides to avenge the death of her estranged sister after she is found murdered in a public bathroom. Unknown to Cleo, her best and only friend Robin O'Riley is the killer she's hunting.

STATUS

- Final draft
- Shooting May / June 2013



Patrick Ryan

WRITER / DIRECTOR / IRELAND

Patrick graduated from the National Film School IADT in 2010, receiving a First Class Honours in Drama Direction. His graduation film *Glassjaw*, which he wrote, directed and produced, was nominated for Best Editing at the Grand Off World Film Awards in Poland, as well as a Royal Television Society Student Award for Best Short Drama. In 2011, Patrick received an Honours Masters in Screenwriting from the NFS, and also wrote, directed and produced the short *Nemesis*. In 2012 he adapted and directed the short *All Her Children Fought*, and is currently in pre-production with his debut feature film, *Darkness on the Edge of Town*. In August 2012 he was selected for the BBC writersroom, and is currently in talks with them about a number of projects.

“...great being surrounded by storytellers from all over Europe...”

“ENGAGE has benefited me in a number of ways. The intense feedback from a host of industry professionals is invaluable; in a number of days you get input and opinions that would usually take years to gather. I have no doubt my project benefited hugely from it. It also improved my pitching skills to the point where I had no problem talking openly about my script and ideas. It was great being surrounded by storytellers from all over Europe, and the family we quickly formed was perfect for improving our individual stories.”

Lisa Mackintosh
 PRODUCER / SCOTLAND

An MA graduate from Screen Academy Scotland, Lisa's background is in Animation and Computer Generated Media, and her key interests lie in developing strong character-driven, original narratives with unique voices and challenging content. Lisa's previous experience includes co-writing and producing several student films and ongoing work placements with Kudos Film & Television and BBC Three.



“ENGAGE allowed me to... establish meaningful, career-developing connections...”

“The ENGAGE program has allowed me to extend my professional network and establish meaningful, career-developing connections with my European contemporaries and advanced my knowledge and understanding of pan-European collaboration.”

CONTACT:
 XXXX to come

CONTACT:
www.kmhfilm.com / dora.nedeczky@kmhfilm.com

Dead to Me

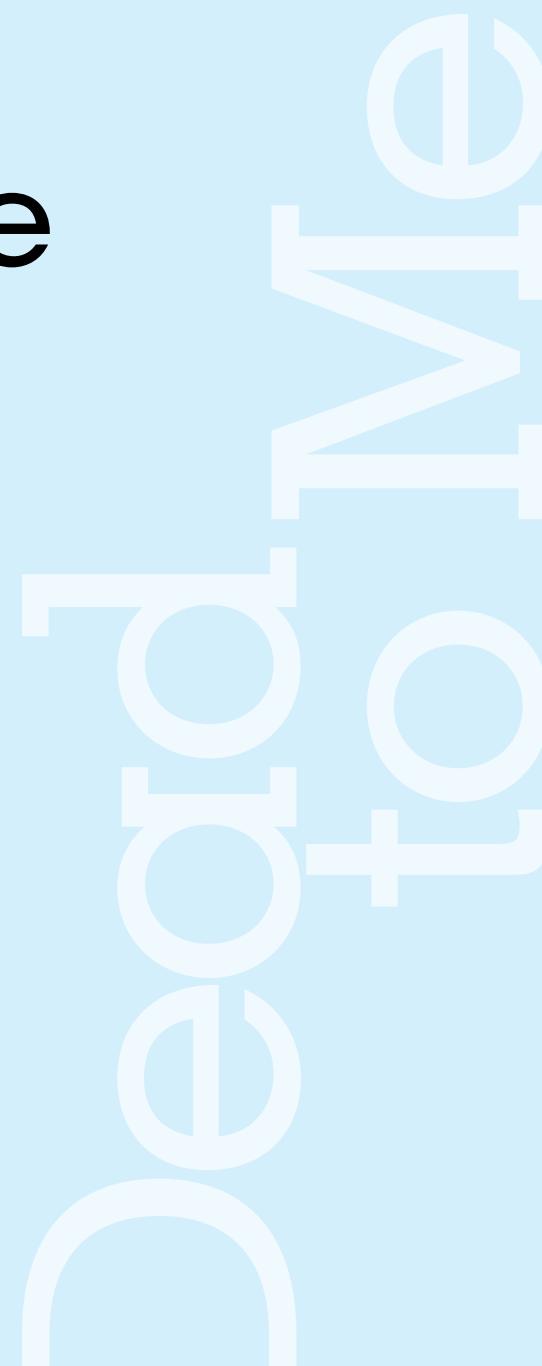
WRITER/DIRECTOR: Helen Flanagan

SYNOPSIS

Dead to Me is a black comedy about a funeral director with a depressed wife, a dissipated brother, a business to save and only a few months to live.

STATUS

- Seeking development funds
- Treatment available



Helen Flanagan

WRITER / IRELAND

Helen is a Dublin-based Screenwriter, and her work draws heavily from her experiences growing up in Co. Louth. Over the past five years she's had extensive training in screenwriting, and she graduated with a Masters in Screenwriting from the National Film School at IADT in 2012. That same year, Helen's first short film *An Cat* was awarded funding through Filmbase and TG4, while her feature film, *Dead to Me*, was shortlisted for the pitching award at the Galway Film Fleadh.



“...an exciting and completely new experience.”

CONTACT:
helenflanagan@me.com

“Coming to ENGAGE after finishing my masters in screenwriting gave me a fantastic opportunity to jump straight back into developing a new screenplay almost immediately. Working with ENGAGE participants from all over Europe is a fantastic way to get new points of view on a project, and this type of multi-faceted input would otherwise be totally unavailable to me as a writer. The experience made developing the project an exciting and completely new experience.”

Fable

WRITER: Christine Bonner
PRODUCERS: Tommy Fitzpatrick,
 Bianca Herold

SYNOPSIS

Struggling to deal with the sudden death of her mentally ill brother, psychologist Jen Fleming becomes captivated by a charismatic, manipulative patient named Malachi Henderson. As her life quickly unravels before her eyes, Jen becomes lost in Malachi's cruel fantasy world where terrifying creatures lurk in the shadows, and soon she is unable to distinguish between what is real and what is not. Fighting to save her own sanity, Jen must confront Malachi and his troubled past, one which is linked to her dead brother. But what she finds is unlike anything she could ever have imagined.

STATUS

- 2nd draft
- Seeking development funds and co-production partners

Christine Bonner

WRITER / SCOTLAND

Christine remembers the emotions she experienced from watching certain films as a child, emotions that have stayed with her all her life. She always knew she wanted to be a writer, and has been inspired by her many travels and life experiences. Christine took the next step and began her journey as a screenwriter whilst on maternity leave in 2010. She enrolled in screenwriting night classes with Edinburgh University, which gave her the confidence boost and belief in herself that this was the career for her. Since then she's never looked back. Christine graduated from Screen Academy Scotland in 2012 with an MA in Screenwriting and she's currently based in Edinburgh. Her ambition is matched only by her dedication to tell compelling stories that challenge our perceptions and ideas about ourselves and the world we inhabit.

“...a wonderful learning experience...”

CONTACT:
Cbonner1@hotmail.co.uk



Tommy Fitzpatrick

PRODUCER / IRELAND

After graduating with a degree in Graphic Design from Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT), Tommy made the move from the south of Ireland to Dublin where he graduated from the National Film School at IADT in 2010, with a First in Film Production and Documentary Direction.

Small Change, his graduation film as a producer, has gone on to win numerous awards both nationally and internationally, including the Irish Film & Television Academy Award for Best Short Film. It was also accepted to screen at the 2011 Sundance Film Festival, which both the director and Tommy attended. Since then he has worked on numerous shorts as producer.

“...really enlightened me as to what it means to produce a feature...”

“ENGAGE has really enlightened me as to what it means to produce a feature project. I've also made some invaluable industry contacts, and great new friends, from different countries, which will prove invaluable in future co-production opportunities.”

CONTACT:
Cbonner1@hotmail.co.uk



Bianca Herold

PRODUCER / GERMANY / SCOTLAND

Bianca moved from Germany to Scotland in 2006 to study “Design for Digital Media” at the Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen. After graduating with distinction, she worked with the advertising company Publicis Frankfurt and as Assistant Digital Artist for Ink.Digital on the Oscar®-nominated feature *The Illusionist*, directed by Sylvain Chomet.

Bianca continued onto her MA in Art and Design, exploring Motion Capture Technologies and Gaming Culture as part of her thesis, before joining the Screen Academy Scotland for its MA programme in Screen Project Development. There, she focused on feature film and transmedia projects.

During her time at the academy Bianca

“...a great inspirational source...”

“The ENGAGE programme enhanced my imagination and evolved my skill-set as a creative producer far beyond my expectations. It has been a great inspirational source and learning environment.”

CONTACT:
herold.bianca@gmail.com



Final Stop

WRITER / DIRECTOR: Maria Lappalainen

SYNOPSIS

Sandro, a Chechen war veteran suffering from severe war trauma, drives a bus in Helsinki and sees violence everywhere. He has isolated himself to a cell of his own nightmares. Rescuing and protecting Arja, a woman battered and harassed by her violent ex-husband, makes Sandro feel needed again. Her traumas are similar to his - they understand each other; they fall in love. On the verge of this new beginning, Sandro's past comes back to haunt him: terrorists are planning an attack during a Caucasus peace conference organised in Helsinki. One of the terrorists is Marisat - Sandro's dearest, closest friend and war comrade, to whom he owes his life.

STATUS

- The project has secured development funding from the Finnish Film Foundation.
- Seeking producer(s).

Maria Lappalainen

WRITER / DIRECTOR / FINLAND

Maria graduated with an MA in Feature Film Direction from the Russian State University of Cinematography (VGIK) in 1998. She has more than 15 years of experience in the industry, working in many roles including production managing Finnish and Russian feature film and television. She has directed several short fiction films and documentaries.

Her latest feature-length documentary, *Fight for a River*, was broadcast on national broadcaster YLE1 in 2010 and received 5-star reviews in many newspapers. Maria is due to graduate from Aalto University with an MA in Screenwriting.



“Meeting other writers and getting feedback from your project is always useful.”



ENGAGE 2012 BY NUMBERS:

20 projects developed

Gate of Heaven

WRITER / DIRECTOR:
Katja Lautamatti

SYNOPSIS

Gate of Heaven is a 60-minute documentary about people who want miracles. The main characters are Aulikki and Seppo, Finnish trance mediums. They met in the early eighties on a Finnish cruiser. Aulikki was a bartender; Seppo played the synthesizer in the evenings. In the film we follow the ageing mediums on their journey through United States. Travelling in their motorhome they meet the colourful people of the American New Age and spiritualist scene and end up in Hawaii. The spirits travel along.

STATUS

- In development
(treatment available)
- Seeking production partners and development funding

Katja Lautamatti

WRITER / DIRECTOR / FINLAND

Katja Lautamatti studied Documentary Film Directing at ELO Film School Helsinki (Aalto University), Cultural Anthropology and Fine Arts. Besides directing films she has enjoyed working as co-producer and artist in collective film projects.



“I accessed a great amount of information on co-production and co-financing in Europe...”

“*ENGAGE* allowed me to make contact with likeminded young directors; I am sure these contacts will last and look forward to later collaborations. Fellow participants' feedback and insight helped me develop my project to the next level. Watching people develop and work on their projects during the workshops was also a great learning experience. In addition, during the workshops, I accessed a great amount of information on co-production and co-financing in Europe.”

Kratlandia

WRITER: Helen Schasmin

PRODUCER: Ashley Black

SYNOPSIS

An Estonian myth comes alive and turns lives around him into an enthralling adventure in the Highlands of Scotland. This is a story about three children who try to find and fight for the rightest distinction in their young lives. Their adventures in Kratlandia take a spin with a mystical being called Kratt whose extraordinary skills make the skies fall, earth shiver and love feel unspeakably strong; and all of that just can not be left unexplored.

STATUS

- In development (treatment available)
- Seeking co-production partners and development funding



Helen Schasmin

WRITER / ESTONIA

Helen is a final-year student at the Baltic Film and Media School (BFM), specialising in screenwriting. During her time at BFM Helen developed a keen interest in theoretical aspects of film-making and the systems that surround filmmaking practice, inspired by her previous studies in philosophy at the University of Tartu. Helen always feels the need to explore a thesis, its antithesis and synthesis - to find conclusions and get to the essence of an idea, whether it's in a film or in other aspects of life.

This also informs her passion for deep and dark dramas, but to make sure she strikes a balance between all that metaphysical and non-metaphysical, theoretical and practical thinking, Helen happily indulges in comedies, too.

“... the most inspiring and motivational programme...”

I learned how to engage with other ambitious emerging filmmakers. Besides having fun and getting to know fellow participants, I found the courage to dive into a world of different ideas and have been really energised by the process. ENGAGE was the most inspiring and motivational programme I have ever been part of.”

“...a great opportunity for new and emerging producers...”

Ashley Black **PRODUCER / SCOTLAND**

Ashley is an independent film producer based in Scotland. Since graduating from the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama in Glasgow in 2009, she has been working with various small independent production companies such as Brocken Spectre, Edge City Films and DigiCult across various projects up and down the UK. Ashley is currently working with new emerging writers and directors such as John Rooney (*High Times*/STV) and Mark Buchanan (*The Search* - short film), while carrying on working with Helen Schasmin on the development of Kratlandia.



“I came to ENGAGE as a producer without a specific project, which gave me the opportunity to approach the development of other participants' projects with a fresh outlook.

Throughout the process, I was able to witness at first hand how participants' ideas evolved and developed into stronger projects. ENGAGE is a great opportunity for new and emerging producers who want to develop their contacts and learn more about co-production. It's also a great way to keep abreast of the funds and schemes available in and outside the UK.”

Life in the Dead

WRITER / DIRECTOR: Patricia Kelly

SYNOPSIS

Life in the Dead is a mystery thriller set in a fishing village on a small Irish island. A local trawler fails to return to shore one night and the community comes together to support the grieving families. But one of the village's inhabitants, reclusive widow Allie Mayo, is convinced the tragedy was not an accident and sets about to uncover the island's secrets, at any cost.

STATUS

- In development
(treatment available)

Patricia Kelly

WRITER / IRELAND

Patricia is currently concentrating on learning as much about the craft of screenwriting as possible. Her primary goal is pretty simple: she wants to write the best screenplay anyone has ever written.



“...hugely helpful...”

“It has been hugely helpful to get feedback on a project’s viability (particularly from producers) at such an early stage and it was terrific to learn so much about the co-production process, benefits and pitfalls.”



ENGAGE 2012 BY NUMBERS:

176 individual project surgeries
(almost 80 hours of one-to-one meetings)

Rammstein

WRITER: Selim Pekin Güngör

Additional Collaborator:

PRODUCER: Malte Can
(Hofmann & Voges)

SYNOPSIS

This military hospital series is set in Rammstein, in the south of Germany, which holds the biggest US & NATO installation and military hospital outside of the US. It is a strategic transit point for wounded soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan and is home to thousands of military personnel and their families. We follow a group of highly trained young specialist doctors dealing with the everyday casualties flown in from war zones and the effect this has on their private lives. Tonally, *Rammstein* moves between *ER* and *Generation Kill*.

STATUS

- 2nd draft series bible
- Optioned
- Seeking development funds, broadcast and co-production partners

Selim Pekin Güngör

WRITER / DIRECTOR / GERMANY

Selim was born and grew up in Berlin. His studies include Literature and Linguistics in Istanbul and Media and Communication Sciences in the UK. After graduating he started working in Film and TV Production, commuting mostly between Turkey and Germany. Selim moved back to London in 2009 to complete an MA in Screenwriting at the London Film School. He participated in several international talent campuses and development schemes at festivals such as Sarajevo, Clermont-Ferrand, Moscow and the Berlinale. Currently, he is working in the development of traditional and transmedia narratives across film, TV and digital formats, mainly in Germany and the UK.

“The networking value of ENGAGE is BIG...”

“I applied to ENGAGE with a one-page idea and developed it with the help of my peers and tutors to a 2nd draft of a series bible. A German production company has since picked it up and optioned it and I am now developing it even further. I can strongly recommend ENGAGE to everyone at the beginning of their careers, but you should apply with a clear goal in mind to make sure you make the most of the programme. The networking value of ENGAGE is BIG, so I would definitely recommend it for that as well as the project development support you get.”

Sulina

WRITER / DIRECTOR: Diana Munteanu
PRODUCER: (ENGAGE) Magdalena Rychła
ADDITIONAL PRODUCERS:
 Daniel Burlac (Efenat Film, Romania);
 Wojciech Szczudło
 (Kalejdoskop Studio, Poland)

SYNOPSIS

Sulina is a small port city in the beautiful scenery of the Danube Delta, where the river meets the sea. Once considered one of Europe's most prosperous ports, a cultural capital with inhabitants from over 25 different nationalities, this small town has dramatically changed over the last few years. The natural landscape may have remained the same for several hundred years, but time has left its mark upon the people. This observational documentary charts the special kind of relationship people develop with the city they inhabit. In many ways, the city is a reflection, a mirror of their own lives and of themselves, a diary and a witness to the passing of time.

STATUS

- In development
 (teaser and treatment available)
- Seeking co-production partners
 and production funds



Diana Munteanu

WRITER / DIRECTOR / ROMANIA

Copy to come.

“...to come”

Magdalena Rychła PRODUCER / POLAND

Magda is a young producer with experience in TV production and regional film funding. She is currently studying the Creative Producer Programme at Wajda School, after graduating in Film and TV Production from Silesian University in 2012.

Magda works for the Silesia Film Institute as a Film Production Specialist. As well as working with Diana Munteanu on Sulina, Magda has also been working on the development of another ENGAGE project: the historical TV-series *Catherine*. She is also developing her own feature film, *Detective Kefir on Skeleton's Trail*.



“...a great influence on my career...”

“ENGAGE gave me a unique opportunity to meet incredible people with whom I will carry on working. I look forward to developing great projects with them in the future. The professional advice I was given during the programme was really useful – not only for the projects we were working on but also in terms of my professional development. Being able to take part in this European programme has been a great influence on my career, not least thanks to the co-production knowledge gathered during all three workshops.”

Thank You for Waiting

WRITERS: Laura Kazbaraite,
(non ENGAGE) Alberto Battocchi

DIRECTOR: Laura Kazbaraite

PRODUCERS: Annalisa Schmuckli,
Heli Jürisson

SYNOPSIS

The early 1990s brought many changes to the socio-economic fabric of European countries - and it also turned the daily life of a small call shop in Padua, Italy head over heels. Lorenzo, a 30-something call shop manager, gets entangled with the contrasting destinies of the customers, resulting in a life-changing experience for all of them. *Thank You for Waiting* is a story about coming of age for a grown-up and finding love on the other end of the line.

STATUS

- Seeking development funding
- Treatment available

"ENGAGE provided a unique opportunity to meet a wide range of industry professionals, get valuable feedback for my film and more knowledge about the industry. After each workshop I came home with loads of inspiration and many (sometimes even too many!) new ideas. I am very thankful to have met a bunch of creative and passionate ENGAGE participants and to have worked on two projects, both of which are progressing really well."

"...loads of
inspiration..."



Heli Jürisson

PRODUCER / ESTONIA

» See *Brothers* (page 18)



Annalisa Schmuckly

PRODUCER / FINLAND

» See *Catherine* (page 20)

CONTACT:
info@lauravisual.com
www.lauravisual.com

Laura Kazbaraite

WRITER / DIRECTOR / LITHUANIA



Laura began her professional career as a journalist and cinema critic working for various magazines, newspapers and radio programmes in Lithuania and Spain. Filmmaking and cinema have been her passions since early childhood and in her mid-20s she decided to make it her main occupation. She moved to London, studied at the London Film Academy and started to work on film sets.

Working as a Script Supervisor and Assistant Director for feature and short films gave Laura the chance to learn from those, who she most wanted to become - Directors. When she gained more directing skills, she started to immerse herself in her own creativity.

After writing-directing short films she now feels she has the courage and ambition to move forward and, at the moment, she is developing several international feature films.

On ENGAGE she has been involved in two projects: *Thank You for Waiting* and *Catherine*. Back in Lithuania she is working on the pre-production of another feature film - *Good Morning August* - with an attached production company.

U.S.E: United States of Europe

WRITER: Jasmina Kallay
PRODUCERS: Lisa Mackintosh,
 Heli Luik
PRODUCTION COMPANY:
 Ripple World Pictures, Ireland

SYNOPSIS

United States of Europe is a crime thriller TV series with transmedia components set in Brussels, in the EU Parliament. The future of the Euro hinges on fast-tracking Turkey into the EU, but when three teenage boys go missing, kidnapped by Islamic terrorists, the stability of the EU itself is under threat. Europol Forensic Linguist Lexi Kulin investigates, but what she discovers puts her in great danger.

STATUS

- Producers Ripple World Pictures are seeking European co-production partners and development funding.
- Series bible available
- Pilot available (3rd draft); currently writing second episode



Jasmina Kallay

WRITER / IRELAND / CROATIA

Jasmina is a screenwriter and script editor who also ghostwrites fiction. After a BA in Film Studies at the American University of Paris, Jasmina completed an MA in Screenwriting at the National Film School at IADT, and continued on to a PhD in Interactive Screenwriting at University College Dublin. Her interest in interactive media led her to write for beActive media (Dublin) on a number of teen transmedia projects. Jasmina's feature thriller *Honoured*, having secured funds from the Irish Film Board, is now in pre-production. *U.S.E.: United States of Europe*, the crime thriller TV/transmedia series she brought to ENGAGE, now has a production company attached (Ripple World Pictures, Ireland) and she will continue to develop it further. The British Film Institute has commissioned Jasmina to write a book about the impact of gaming and digital culture on contemporary cinema.

“...I've made some lasting professional connections.”

The nature of being a writer means you spend a lot of time writing, on your own, and you don't get as many opportunities to network and meet fellow writers or producers. So to have a programme that gives you access to both and lets you meet industry professionals was great. I've also been lucky in that I've made some lasting professional connections. In terms of my project, the intensity of the workshops and the deadlines meant that I had a structured way of developing the writing, so that by the end the project was at a far more polished level than if I had been working on it on my own.”

CONTACT:
www.jasminakallay.com

Lisa Mackintosh
 PRODUCER/SCOTLAND
 » See *Darkness on the Edge of Town* (page 22)

Heli Luik PRODUCER / ESTONIA

Heli is currently in her third year of a BA in Film Production at the Baltic Film and Media School, and she's been a very busy bee. She has worked in a wide variety of genres, producing three shorts: a children's story, a sci-fi and a thriller. In addition, Heli has worked as 1st Assistant Director on two feature-length Estonian films and a number of shorts. As a Production Assistant, she has over ten short films and a couple of television series under her belt - and she's taken on some acting work, too.



“ENGAGE gave me access to great people, most importantly. The programme also broadened my mind in terms of co-production.”

CONTACT:
hellusbakter@gmail.com

Waiting for Alexi

WRITER / DIRECTOR: Barbara Vekarić

PRODUCERS: (non ENGAGE) Marina Andree Skop,
Darija Kulenovic Gudan

SYNOPSIS

A comedy about a dysfunctional family with too many children, too much alcohol and not enough sex. In a small Croatian village, during the final days of the summer season, the Antunovics are preparing for the wedding of their daughter Alexi and her prosperous German fiancé. In the meantime, the mother is looking for a wife for her peeping-tom son, while their 17-year-old nymphomaniac daughter is trying to lure a 15-year-old boy into her bed. Just outside the village, Alexi and her maid of honour get lost while looking for a shopping centre and pick up a hitchhiker.

STATUS

- Awarded development funds from the Croatian Audiovisual Centre
- Seeking co-production partners

Barbara Vekarić

WRITER / DIRECTOR / CROATIA

Barbara was born in Dubrovnik, Croatia. She graduated from the Academy of Dramatic Arts (MA in Film Directing, BA in Film and TV Directing) and Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb (majoring in Comparative Literature). Barbara has written and directed several shorts that have screened at numerous national and international film festivals. She has affection for comedy, especially the one that develops from bizarre micro situations.

She is currently developing her first feature film, *Waiting for Alexi*, for which she obtained development support from the Croatian Audiovisual Centre



“...gathers highly professional writers and filmmakers...”

“Engage gathers highly professional writers and filmmakers who encourage your development as a filmmaker and help you develop your project.”



ENGAGE 2012 BY NUMBERS:

40 trainers - 7 nationalities

ENGAGE alumni tell their own stories

Meet some ENGAGE alumni who are achieving great things, and get advice on making the most of the opportunities presented by the programme.

Henning Kamm

PRODUCER / GERMANY / ENGAGE 2009 **CONTACT:** www.detalfilm.de

“Be proactive, get involved.”

Henning Kamm came on board the ENGAGE ship in 2009, the very year that Wagah, a short he'd recently produced, took the international festival circuit by storm. He has remained busy ever since...

DETAiLFILM, the company Henning set up with fellow producer Fabian Gasmia, is currently in production with its 7th feature, their first two having enjoyed theatrical releases in early 2012. Since its premiere within the prestigious Panorama section at the 2012 Berlinale, Sharqiya, their first minority co-production, went on to enjoy festival and awards success worldwide.

The company is growing organically, moving on to higher budgets and bigger directors while staying true to its motto: "international stories for a worldwide audience".

Henning, who aside from ENGAGE also took part in L'Atelier (a MEDIA-funded, one-year training scheme for producers, run by La fémis and Filmakademie Ludwigsburg), has embraced the world of international co-production. Having worked in Pakistan,

Kosovo, Israel, Liberia, Hungary, Poland, Italy, Brasil and Bosnia, he sees himself very much as a European filmmaker working in an international framework.

Could you tell us what motivated you to take part in ENGAGE back in 2009?

After a wonderful recommendation by a friend it seemed like a great way to expand my international network and gain some further insight into filmmaking.

Did you find what you were looking for?

Yep, very much so.

How would you advise ENGAGE participants to prepare for and make the most of the programme?

Be pro-active, get involved, do research on the people you will meet and follow the leads that open up. Reflect on what you have learned and analyse what was difficult and where you had the biggest challenges. Working together with so many different, talented people is also a great way to get to know yourself better.



Maija Hirvonen
WRITER / DIRECTOR / FINLAND
CONTACT: www.tuffifilms.com



Jenni Toivoniemi
PRODUCER / FINLAND

“Communicate, share your ideas, keep in touch.”

Maija Hirvonen first pitched the idea for her film Cat Trap to fellow Finn Jenni Toivoniemi at the inaugural ENGAGE 2010 workshop in Dublin.

Cat Trap is a 38-minute documentary about an old lady who works as a voluntary pet detective. People who have lost their cats can turn to her and she will find a way to get them back. Her well-trained eye spots suffering animals in places where nobody else seems to notice anything; instinct leads her into the strangest situations. This is a film about a passionate, almost obsessive need to help and do good.

Over the course of the programme and the following two years, they continued to develop the project and the film was completed in December 2012. Cat Trap was produced by TuffiFilms with funds from the Finnish Film Foundation, Finnish broadcaster YLE and AVEK, The Promotion Centre for Audiovisual Culture.

We caught up with Maija and Jenni to find out more about their experience.

How did this particular project see the light of day?

(Maija) The subject - how to find a lost animal - had been in my mind since I began my film studies. I thought it could be a small story with big emotional impact. A few years later I met a lady who had basically lived through all the things I wanted to include in the film (and much more)

and I wrote a treatment based on her interviews. I pitched the idea to Jenni at the ENGAGE speed dating session and she was the first person who recognised that this was a story worth telling.

(Jenni) Even though Maija and I both studied at Aalto University, we hadn't met prior to taking part in ENGAGE. When Maija first pitched the idea for Cat Trap to me, I'd recently started a production company, Tuffi Films, with three other people, and this seemed a very suitable project for us. I loved Maija's thinking and humour, and on top of that both I and producer Elli Toivoniemi are cat owners and have a sweet spot for all the other crazy cat ladies of the world.

It's been a good ride and a good learning experience... We originally hoped to co-produce the project with at least one other European country. We took it to a few forums (such as the mini meet market at the Sheffield Documentary Film Festival) and did attract some interest from international markets but the feedback from most territories seemed to be that, though this was a great film, it was of a kind that could not be financed or produced there - though broadcasters were looking forward to buying it once completed!

We got positive responses from national funding sources (see above), which was really encouraging and I'm glad we were able to make this film with national funding. Hopefully audiences in other - perhaps more conservative - countries will also get a chance to see it.



Robert Manson
WRITER / DIRECTOR / IRELAND
ENGAGE 2010

What motivated you to take part in ENGAGE back in 2010?

(Maija) I heard about the programme from previous participants. I wanted to test what kind of feedback my idea would elicit and to get to pitch in front of a jury.

Did you find what you were looking for?

(Maija) Yes, I found my producer for a start! I also got great distribution contacts and an overview of international co-production (and how hard it they can be). Also, the collegiality among participants was good - and still is, two years on.

How would you advise ENGAGE participants to prepare for and make the most of the programme?

(Maija) Communicate, share your ideas, keep in touch: during the workshops I saw people who had never met each other working together to develop great film ideas out of nothing.

ENGAGE 2010 participant Robert Manson's film, *Dublin Berlin*, is about an Irish musician, Oisín, who loses himself in the bohemia of Berlin after failing to face up to the personal struggles in his life. The film touches on a number of themes that Robert feels are quite pertinent right now; loss, emigration, identity and culture. He wanted to consider the access that a new language and space can offer to characters looking for escape.

This will be Robert's first production outside of Ireland, and shooting is scheduled to start in April 2013.

Are you looking forward to working on a film outside of Ireland?

I think this puts me in an ideal position to capture the familiarity and the strangeness of a new place, and Berlin is the perfect location for this film.

How close are you to starting principal photography?

I have been developing *Dublin Berlin* throughout 2012. We began pre-production in the summer, with the aim of shooting in August. We'd managed to raise all necessary funding but, at the last minute, some of it was cut so we had to call the shoot to a halt.

It came as a shock but there was relief, too, as we weren't fully prepared. All our pre-production had been conducted from an office in Dublin, but we need to be in Berlin in person.

We're planning to start shooting in April 2013. I have identified some support structures that would help us get to where we need to be, such as the MEDIA-funded NIPKOW, for example, which would give us a real boost. Two or three months of development in Berlin through discussions, research, script consolidation and perhaps the introduction of another producer would reinforce this ambitious project.

"Communication is the key to working internationally."

You turned to crowd-funding for this film. Can you tell us about your experience?

I think crowd-funding is a great concept that can provide a very accessible platform for your friends, family and supporters to make a direct impact on your projects, but as a phenomenon it may be petering out due to oversaturation. There are only so many requests for funding people are able or willing to respond to.

Still, if you are thinking of doing going down that route, all I can say is best of luck. Each project only really has one shot at a crowd-funding campaign so it's important to invest enough time to do it properly.

Your project is, by the very nature of the story, international. How have you approached this international dimension?

There are myriad challenges working on a 'low-to-no' budget film, especially an international one but, as many ENGAGE contributors have pointed out, communication is the key to working internationally: establishing strong relationships with key contacts in each of the cities you'll be working in is paramount.

What has had the most impact on your career as a filmmaker so far?

In 2008, *The Silver Bow*, my graduation film won the RDS Taylor Art award, which comes with a cash prize of €20,000. I believe it is the most generous and inclusive bursary for emerging student artists in Ireland; it is unique in its recognition of and support for artists at the cusp of a professional career. This had profound effects on my life and my career, giving me the opportunity to take the time to reevaluate my approach; to experiment with new techniques and to produce new work. Thanks to the award, I was able to devote time

and resources to promoting myself and my work, both at home and abroad; to travel to international festivals where *The Silver Bow* was programmed which, in turn, enabled me to form relationships with my European counterparts. The award also provided the finance to produce a new short, *Rickshaw Rick*.

What motivated you to take part in ENGAGE back in 2010?

I wanted to find out what the standard of work from my European peers was like.

Did you find what you were looking for?

I certainly did. The programme was intense and I found the process incredibly stimulating. It was great to share ideas; to receive and give creative feedback on a number of different personal projects, and to be exposed to case studies in each country. I developed my pitching skills and met a number of inspiring filmmakers from all around Europe whom I am glad to say I am still in contact with. The selection of industry guests was of a very high standard; it was great to discuss my project with them and to hear of their own experiences.

How would you advise ENGAGE participants to prepare for and make the most of the programme?

Bring as much material as possible: short films, treatments for a number of features, collections of character studies and bios. Make it easy for other participants to understand what your work is and how you approach your projects. This also goes for potential mentors and tutors: make it easy for them to see exactly where you're coming from; where you want to go with your ideas. Create a concise introduction to your work for their expert guidance, judgments and suggestions.



Wafa'a Halawi
WRITER / DIRECTOR / FRANCE / LEBANON

"Working on an international level is the only way to go."

Wafa'a Halawi, who took part in ENGAGE in 2010, discussed her experience of developing her first feature with this year's participants. Her energy, candour and dedication made for a fantastically stimulating session. Here are some of the insights she shared, gained since she first started the development journey for Cello - a journey that has taken her halfway across the world and back, and on which she is constantly learning to adapt.

What was your professional and educational experience by the time you took part in ENGAGE?

I studied Communication Arts at the Lebanese American University with an emphasis in film. After my BA, I did a one-year filmmaking course at the New York Film Academy, was lucky to win all the directing pitches and started working as a first Assistant Director in London. I was 1st AD on four feature films. Meanwhile, I had directed three shorts, a few commercials and corporate films. I then did my MA in film at the University College London and started teaching film at the Lebanese American University in Beirut. I directed 3 dance films that were selected at international festivals and opened a few festivals as well. Of course, I had started developing Cello too.

You've been developing Cello for a few years now and your collaboration currently spans three different continents. Did you expect this?

The Lebanese film industry is both booming and finding its feet. The biggest challenge is that there is no cinema fund whatsoever, so the money stems mainly from sponsors. As a French citizen, I was lucky to get French producers on board; I also have a Brazilian producer. Obviously my aim is to reach an international audience, not just a Lebanese one (the size of our population would not make this a very attractive prospect for financiers!).

Working on an international level is the only way to go - both in terms of funding and in terms of audiences.

You are very determined and have attracted a lot of interest for your project, yet things can take time when developing a feature. Have you encountered specific obstacles to getting your first feature funded?

There are so many obstacles! But the most important thing is to keep going. When I started working on Cello, I never thought that it would take so long. There is so much competition and so much challenge; it is easy to be put off by people who only see the drawbacks of a situation, so you have to truly believe in your story.

Also, I am a woman and look younger than I am, which can be difficult. Some people see these as a negative points, and will say: "you're a first-time feature director, it's hard to get funded!" Well of course, but we all have to start somewhere.

Could you tell us what motivated you to take part in ENGAGE back

The programme offered everything I was looking for at that stage of development. I was eager to get advice, as there are no available workshops in Lebanon. Also my friend Basil Khalil, an ENGAGE alumnus from 2008, had strongly recommended the programme. And he was so right!

Did you find what you were looking for?

Absolutely. And even more. I don't think we realised how lucky we were to be part of ENGAGE. We had professionals dedicating their time and energy to our projects; we were listened to and supported. We were able to attend sessions

by filmmakers and leaders in our industry. We met filmmakers with whom we feel we have a common experience and this is very important because they are the people we would most probably like to work with.

I have formed very strong bonds with many Engagers from my promotion, and this is something that will stay throughout my career. Also, ENGAGE is probably the programme that recognizes and values its participants the most. The follow up and support, way after the program ends, is truly unique. I still feel that if I need a hand at any point, and ENGAGE can help, it will not fail to do so.

How did winning an ENGAGE prize affect your project's chances?

Thanks to the prize my project won at the end of ENGAGE 2010, I have found a mentor for my script and have now completed a 4th draft. I was able to go to Cannes and find my team of co-producers. Taking part in ENGAGE, having the luck to have a great jury for our pitch; to meet Christine Vachon; to win a prize... all this really kick-started the entire development of my project. And on top of that, ENGAGE invited me again to one of the workshops to talk about the development of my film. It is not an understatement that such a program has actually changed my life.

How would you advise ENGAGE participants to prepare for and make the most of the programme?

I think it really helps to come with a specific idea and to believe that it will become a film. Not only will this give you the self-discipline to keep working on it, it will also make everyone else believe in it.

ENGAGE 2012 guest speakers

We wish to thank the following industry practitioners for sharing their insight, experience and advice with our participants:

Robbie Allen / Portfolio Manager (Screen) / Creative Scotland
Panel discussion: co-producing with Scotland (Edinburgh);
Pitching Panel (Tallinn)

Julie Baines / Producer / Dan Films
One-to-one consultations (Edinburgh)

Mia Bays / Owner / Missing in Action Films
Development, Sales and Distribution for low and micro-budget features (Edinburgh)

John Bernstein / Independent Screenwriter and Associate Professor of Film / Boston College of Communication
One-to-one consultations (project development) (Helsinki)

Steen Bille / Film Commissioner / Danish Film Institute
Panel discussion: co-production opportunities in Northern Europe; Pitching panel (Tallinn)

Maja Borg / Documentary Director
Case study presentation / screening: *Future My Love* (Edinburgh)

Morgan Bushe / Founder / Fastnet Films
Case study presentation/screening: *Anton Corbijn Inside Out* (Dublin)

Applegreen Charlotte / Secretary General / Cine-Regio
Panel discussion: co-production opportunities in Northern Europe (Tallinn)

Jan Forsström / Screenwriter
One-to-one consultations (Helsinki)

Julian Friedmann / Co-Director / Blake Friedmann Literary Agency
Pitching training workshop (Edinburgh)

Chris Fujiwara / Creative Director / Edinburgh International Film Festival
Film Festivals presentation (Edinburgh)

Karlo Funk / Head of Production / Estonian Film Foundation
Pitching panel (Tallinn)

Michael Garland / Producer / Grand Pictures
Case study presentation/screening: *Death of a Superhero* (Dublin)

Sonja Henrici / Head of Development / Scottish Documentary Institute
Case study presentation/screening: *Future My Love* (Edinburgh)

Jan Erik Holst / Executive Editor / Norwegian Film Institute
Panel discussion: co-production opportunities in Northern Europe (Tallinn)

Dirk Hoyer / Transmedia research doctorate / Aalto / BFM
One-to-one consultations (Helsinki)

Matti Kinnunen / Screenwriter
One-to-one consultations (Helsinki)

Juha Lehtola / Screenwriter
TV Writing masterclass: *The Dangers of Developing* (Helsinki)

Joona Louhivuori / Film Commissioner / Finnish Film Foundation (SES)
Pitching panel (Tallinn)

Alan Maher / Production Executive / Irish Film Board
Case study presentation/screening: *Death of a Superhero* (Dublin)

Andrew Meehan / formerly Head of Developmen / Irish Film Board
Pitching panel (Tallinn)

Bernd-Günther Nahm / Executive Director / Filmförderun Hamburg Schleswig-Holstein
Panel discussion: co-production opportunities in Northern Europe (Tallinn)

Petteri Pasanen / Producer / Anima Vitae
Case study presentation/screening: *Niko 2* (Helsinki)

Lisa Penttilä / Producer, Edith Film
One-to-one consultations (Helsinki)

Markus Selin / Producer / Solar Films
One-to-one consultations (Helsinki)

Edith Sepp / Estonian Ministry of Culture
Mentoring, project development, one-to-one consultations (Dublin, Edinburgh, Helsinki)

Piret Tibbo-Hüdgins / Producer / AllFilm
Mentoring, project development, one-to-one consultations (Dublin, Edinburgh, Helsinki)

Peeter Urbla / Writer, Director / Producer / ExitFilm
One-to-one consultations (Helsinki)

Thank you

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