



Karlovy Vary
International Film Festival
East of the West – Films in Competition

MONUMENT TO MICHAEL JACKSON

Spomenik Majklu Džeksonu

Genre: Dark comedy
TRT: 95:00
DCP
Aspect ratio: 2.35:1
Sound: 5.1
Fps: 24

Written and directed: Darko Lungulov
(*“Here and There”*, Tribeca 2009 Winner of Best NY Narrative Award)

Producers: Snežana Penev, Darko Lungulov

Produced by: Papa Films /This &That, SERBIA; Av medien Penrose/Penrose film,
GERMANY; Dream factory/Aka film, MACEDONIA; Propeler film, CROATIA

Supported by: Ministry of culture Republic of Serbia, Eurimages, Film Center Serbia,
Macedonian film fund, MFG Filmförderung Baden-Württemberg, HAVC, Province of
Vojvodina film fund, City of Belgrade film fund, Media, Municipality of Velika Plana, SEE
Cinema Network, Hotel Palisad

WORLD SALES

Films Boutique
Köpenicker Strasse 184
10997 Berlin, Germany
Tel: +49 30 69537850
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TAG LINE: "IT TAKES A HERO TO BUILD A MONUMENT"

3 LINE SYNOPSIS

In a dying Serbian town an old communist-era monument is removed from the Square. In order to save his town and seduce his estranged wife again, daydreamer Marko comes up with the idea to replace it with a monument to Michael Jackson. His absurd idea attracts supporters and enemies alike.

5 LINE SYNOPSIS

In a dying town in Serbia, an old communist-era monument is removed from the Square. Marko, daydreamer, is on the verge of divorce from the love of his life, Ljubinka. She is disappointed in him and the life in Serbian small-town. Out of despair, he comes up with the idea to replace the communist-era statue with a monument to Michael Jackson in order to save his dying town and seduce his wife again. Marko convinces his close friends to help him. But the town's mayor has his own plans and uses right-wing group "Clean Serbia" to crash Marko's dream.

2 PARAGRAPH SYNOPSIS

In a dying town in Serbia, an old communist-era monument is removed from the Square. Marko, daydreamer, is on the verge of divorce from the love of his life, Ljubinka. She is disappointed in him and the life in Serbian small-town. Out of despair, he comes up with the idea to replace the communist-era statue with a monument to Michael Jackson in order to save his dying town and seduce his wife again. Marko convinces his close friends to help him. But the town's mayor has his own plans and uses right-wing group "Clean Serbia" to crash Marko's dream.

Desperate, Marko falsifies Michael Jackson's letter and convinces the mayor and everybody else that Jackson will come to the monument's unveiling. The town is now revitalized and its citizens full of hope while Marko regains the love of his wife. But on the big day, the death of real Michael Jackson's is announced without him knowing it. The group "Clean Serbia" creates the chaos. The insane turn of events unexpectedly leads to the fulfillment of Marko's plan, but in an absurd and darkly ironic fashion.

Darko Lungulov, director “Monument To Michael Jackson”, bio and filmography

Darko Lungulov, originally from Serbia, moved to New York City where he obtained BFA in film and video from City College of New York. From 1997 to 2003 he has worked as director of documentaries at the production company Spiral Pictures / Ross Institute .

Darko's documentary “Escape” won the Audience Award at 2004 Hamptons International Film Festival and was screened at numerous documentary festivals since (IDFA Amsterdam, Leipzig, Go East Film Festival).

In 2009, Darko's debut feature film Here and There won the Best NY Narrative Award at Tribeca festival - its world premiere. The film have received critical acclaim from The Hollywood Reporter, Variety, The New York Times, had its European premiere at Karlovy Vary “Variety Critics Choice” and subsequently won 20 awards at more than 50 International festivals around the world, most notably: Best Directing Award “Golden Reflection” at Cinema Tous Ecrans Festival, Switzerland , Best Director of Foreign film award at Fort Lauderdale International Film Festival, Best Foreign Film Award at Orlando International Festival, Special Jury award at Skip City festival, Japan.

Here and There was theatrically distributed in USA, Germany, Switzerland, Hungary, Greece and sold to total of 21 territories. It is still showing on SHOWTIME channel (USA) for over two years, now.

FIPRESCI Serbia, voted Darko Lungulov for Best Director in 2009 and Here and There was voted by Serbian Film Academy for foreign language Oscar candidate from Serbia.

Dark comedy, “Monument to Michael Jackson” is Darko's second feature film which is scheduled for world premiere at Karlovy Vary International Festival in July this year. The script for the film was awarded at Script Corner of Manaki Film Festival, Macedonia.

Darko is also in post- production of *Andjela*, segment of six-part film *Equals*, a humanitarian project dealing with children's human rights.

In 2010 Darko served as juror at Tribeca Festival. He is also a Film Consultant for RocketHub, a New York based global crowd-funding platform (<http://www.rokethub.com>) and a president of advisory board of BelDocs - Belgrade International Documentary Film Festival.

Selected filmography:

Equals, 2015 (6-parts film, stories dealing with children's human rights – segment "Andjela")

In post-production

Monument to Michael Jackson, 2014

completed, scheduled for world premiere at Karlovy Vary Festival, July 2014

Here and There , 2009

Awards

Tribeca International Film Festival 2009, New York, USA, World Premiere

*Best New York Narrative Award

Cinema Tous Ecrans Festival, Switzerland

*Best Directing Award "Golden Reflection" - Darko Lungulov - Reflet d'Or pour la meilleure réalisation

*International Critics Award -Prix FIPRESCI de la Critique internationale

*TITRA Award to distributor-Prix Titra Film SA Encouragement à la distribution cinema

*Mention Speciale du Jury des Jeunes

Fort Lauderdale International Film Festival 2009, USA

*Best Director of Foreign film - Darko Lungulov

*Best Actor in Foreign Film - David Thornton

*Spirit of Independence Award

Orlando International Festival, USA *Best Foreign Film Award

Karlovy Vary 2009 – Variety Critics Choice Selection "Europe Now"

Skip City Festival, Japan – Asian Premiere *Special Jury Award

Hoboken International Film Festival 2009, USA *David Thornton – Best Actor Award

Festival International du Film d'ARRAS, France *Mirjana Karanovic – Special Mention

Bursa Silk Road Festival, Turkey *Mirjana Karanovic – Special Mention

Thesaloniki International Film Festival, Greece *2nd Best film by the votes of audience

Ourense International Festival 2010, Spain *Young Jury Special Mention Award

SERBIA

Film Critics International Federation, Serbia - Darko Lungulov - Best Director in 2009

Film Critics International Federation, Serbia - Mirjana Karanović for the Best Actress in 2009, for role in Here and There

Voted for Serbian Oscar candidate by Serbian Film Academy

Cinema City Festival 2009

*Mirjana Karanovic –Best Female Role Award

SOFEST 2009, Sopot,

Darko Lungulov - Best Director Award

Mirjana Karanovic – Best Actress Award

Nis Actors Film Festival, SERBIA

*Mirjana Karanovic FIPRESCI Award – Film Critics of Serbia – Best Female Role Award

*Special Award for Extraordinary Achievement of Foreign actor to David Thornton

*Special Award for Extraordinary Acting Achievement to Mirjana Karanovic_

“2005” short film, 2005,

'METAFOREIGN', Video Shorts Screening, Northside Open Studios, New York, 2011
Pasadena Museum of California Art, 2007
ATA Gallery, San Francisco 2007
BELEF 2005 Belgrade Summer Festival

Escape documentary, 2004

Hamptons International Film Festival 2004 - AUDIENCE AWARD,
International Documentary Festival Amsterdam, 2004
2005 Belgrade International Film Festival,
Citizens Without Boundaries, Malmoe, Sweden,
2005, Zivot=Life, 1st Belgrade Regional Doc Fest, Serbia – Opening Night
Go East 2006 – Festival of Central and East European Film, Wiesbaden,
Santiago de Chile International Film Festival 2006, Chile

SNEZANA PENEV, Producer “Monument To Michael Jackson”

Snezana Penev graduated Film Production at the Academy of Arts in Belgrade. She received her Master’s Degree in Marketing and Advertising at the Faculty of Drama Arts and became a member of the International Advertising Association. She became a graduate of the EAVE Producers program in 2011.

Snežana has produced many internationally acclaimed fiction films and documentaries. She has recently produced “MONUMENT TO MICHAEL JACKSON” supported by Euroimages and Media as well as “BATTERY MAN”, a feature documentary sold to over 10 worldwide broadcasters. Snežana is currently in production of “IN THE DARK”, a feature documentary supported by the Jan Vrijman Fund and “A GOOD WIFE” a directorial debut film by Mirjana Karanović.

Darko Lungulov, "Monument to Michael Jackson" - director/writer
- Interview for the MFG magazine

– Why did you want to make this film?

I wanted to make this film to address the dark issues by telling a bizarre, quirky story rather than a dark one. That allowed me to deal with those issues in a subtle, slightly comical, yet still very emotional way.

It is a dark comedy, where the lead character is a common man who dies for his uncommon goal.

Both, the character and the goal got transcendent in a process, and they become something much bigger, something historic and monumental.

In the last twenty years Serbia has repeatedly lost wars, changed its name, borders, flags and anthems. Its citizens are not clear any more who the good guys and who were the bad guys in the recent bloody civil wars. Furthermore, various demons fed during those years: xenophobia, racism, homophobia, and extreme right-wing nationalism are alive and healthier than ever.

On the other side, the World War II heroes of the socialist Yugoslavia are not politically correct anymore. Their monuments are being removed.

Ironically, the recent civil wars did not leave behind any new heroes to celebrate. So in such world, crazy idea of building monuments to Hollywood movie characters and pop icons seems perfectly normal.

In my film, the innocent monument to Michael Jackson brings the demons to the surface while simultaneously it helps to create a new hero.

-What was the biggest challenge during filming this movie?

The biggest challenge during filming was to orchestrate the big fighting scene while the helicopter was flying above it all. This final scene lasts few minutes on screen, but it has to be filmed over six days. It involved flying military helicopter, stuntman hanging and falling from helicopter to the ground, special anti-riot police brigade fighting with bunch of wild hooligans, 300 extras, boy band on the stage singing and dancing, brass band playing, actors on the ground and in the helicopter and all that happening simultaneously.

-What was the stylistic approach to filming "Monument to Michael Jackson"?

Together with DP Mathias Schöningh I was working on developing the stylistic approach for this film that will have the look that serves the story the best. We were working together on my previous film, "Here and There", and this time. early on we agreed that this film requires different approach, that this will not be "hand-held" free-wheeling style we utilized on "Here & There".

Early on we agreed in a feeling that "Monument to Michael Jackson" is in a way a "Balkan Western" where the main hero sacrifices for the community. We watched a lot of Western films of Sergio Leone and Sam Peckinpah while discussing the style. So we went for a feel and look that we called between our selves "nostalgic-Western Balkan" feel. We decided to shoot it 2.35:1 aspect ratio, the widest possible and the most "Western" aspect ratio. Also, while searching for locations we tried and succeeded to find the one that has a charm of Mexican small town, run-down but full of earthy colors.

The production team was put together mostly from people that worked together on my previous film: DP Mathias Schöningh, producers Felix Eisele, Katja Siegel, Julia Kleinhenz and Snezana Penev, composer Dejan Pejovic, costume designer Zora Mojsilovic, colorist Moritz Peters - we all worked together already and it was a great joy to reunite on Monument to Michael Jackson.

Darko Lungulov, *Monument to Michael Jackson*

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

The Monument to Michael Jackson" is a comedy inspired by bizarre trend happening recently in small towns of Serbia and Balkans: people building monuments to Hollywood and pop-icons (Rocky, Tarzan, Bruce Lee...).

Marko, an optimistic daydreamer, has a simple plan: he wants to breathe life into his dying Serbian hometown by building a monument to Michael Jackson.

Background: In the last twenty years Serbia has repeatedly lost wars, changed its name, borders, flags and anthems. The World War II heroes of the socialist Yugoslavia are not politically correct anymore. Their monuments are being removed. Ironically, the recent bloody civil wars did not leave behind any new heroes to celebrate. So, in such hero-less world, it is only rational that people would resort to crazy idea of building monuments to "safe", lifeless heroes, such as Hollywood movie characters (Rocky, Tarzan, Bruce Lee). Ironically, the innocent monument to Michael Jackson would stir everything up and unexpectedly bring ever present demons up to the surface. Paradoxically it will help to create a new hero. Marko is a tragic-comic, Don Quixote-like character that sticks to his idealism to the very end. It is a dark comedy, where the lead character is a common man who dies for trivial idea. Both, the character and the idea got transcendent in a process, and at the end, they become something much bigger, something historic and monumental.

LIST OF CREW MEMBERS

Name	Position	Nationality
Darko Lungulov	Director/Writer/Producer	Serbian
Snezana Penev	Producer	Serbian
Felix Eisele	Co-Producer (GER)	German
Katja Siegel	Co-Producer (GER)	German
Julia Kleinhenz	Co-Producer (GER)	German
Bernhard Stegmann	Co-Producer (GER)	German
Ognen Antov	Co-Producer (MKD)	Macedonian
Aneta Lesnikovska	Co-Producer (MKD)	Macedonian
Boris Matic	Co-Producer (Croatia)	Croatia
Mike Downey	Executive Producer	UK
Mathias Schoeningh	Director of photography	German
Kiril Spaseski	Production Designer	Macedonian
Dejan Urosevic	Editor	Serbian
Zora Mojsilovic	Costume Designer	Serbian
Dejan Pejovic	Composer	Serbian
Suzana Peric	Music Editor	Croatian
Igor Popovski	Sound recordist	Macedonian
Hrvoje Stefotic	Sound Designer	Croatian

LIST OF CAST MEMBERS

Name	Role	Nationality
Boris Milivojevic	MARKO	Serbian
Natasa Tapuskovic	LJUBINKA	Serbian
Dragan Bjelogrljic	DUSAN	Macedonian
Toni Mihajlovski	DOKI	Serbian
Branislav Trifunovic	DRAGAN	Serbian
Mirjana Karanovic	DARINKA	Serbian
Ljubomir Bandovic	PRIEST	Serbian
Marko Janketic	LUKA	Serbian
Emilija Terzic	JELENA	Serbian
Srdjan Miletic	TYCOON	Serbian

PAPA FILMS - COMPANY PROFILE

Papa Films is the production company based in Belgrade, Serbia. It was founded in 2009 by Darko Lungulov, director and Snezana Penev, producer.

The aim of Papa Films is to produce and distribute films that bring the spirit of independent filmmaking to the region.

FILMS

“Monument to Michael Jackson” – completed, scheduled for premiere at Karlovy Vary festival, July 2014

Director and Scriptwriter: Darko Lungulov

Producer: Snezana Penev

“Here and There” 2009

(Tribeca Festival Award and 15 other International Awards, sold to 21 territories)

Director and Scriptwriter: Darko Lungulov

Contact:

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THIS & THAT PRODUCTIONS – COMPANY PROFILE

This and That was founded in 2008, by young producers and filmmakers to make both creative projects after their own heart and offer production services to local and foreign productions. A little bit of this, and a little bit of that. Traveling to festivals with their award-winning films, they gathered a group of like-minded people. The long-term aim is to create a haven for people with energy and ideas and help their visions get made.

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