

ABOUT ONE'S SELF AND THE OTHERS



ABOUT ONE'S SELF AND THE OTHER	PROJECT FACT SHEET
Production company	Saga Film
Producer	Alexandru Teodorescu
Original title	"Despre sine si celalat"
Romanian Co-producer	Anthropoesis / Ionut Piturescu
English title	"About one's self and the others"
Director	Ionut Piturescu
Writer	Ionut Piturescu
Story based on	Original
Genre	Creative documentary/ anthropological study
Length	90 min
Format	Digital
Language	Romanian
Stage of development	Development/ pre-production
Music/ Composer	TBD
Intended release	Autumn 2016
Country of origin	Romania
Estimated production budget	279,000 euro
Secured funding	229,125 euro (Romanian Film Centre / MEDIA – Creative Europe development funds) / Producer's investment)
Co-producers	TBC
Sales agent	TBC
Sound	Dolby Digital
B-W/ Colour	Colour
Broadcast format	HD, digibeta
Principal shoot	Autumn/ winter 2015 ; spring 2016
Production company contact details	8, Dimitrie Racovita st., Bucharest, 02993, Romania, tel: 004 021 31 33 60/ fax 004 021 317 33 64 www.sagafilm.ro
Producer contact details	alexteodorescu@sagafilm.ro

THE STORY

“About one’s self and the other” is a character driven creative documentary that explores the culture and identity of the Aromanians. They represent a transnational community that plays an important role in Southeast Europe. They are a part of the cultural, economical and political elite of many countries in the Balkans, but they have a huge problem: they still haven’t decided which nationality they belong to.

The delay of this decision condemns them to a way of “existing without the right to exist”.

We follow the main characters of the film, two men in their 40s called Spiru and Todi, on a journey in Southeast Europe in order to celebrate the destiny of Andrei Saguna, the first Aromanian ever to be canonized as a saint. This pilgrimage allows them to explore the fluid relationship between one’s self and the others at a personal level by their contrasting personalities, as well as on a collective level, through the relationship with other regional entities. This identity search throbs in a Balkan mystery not yet elucidated.

One man does not give up the struggle not to let die a hidden cultural synthesis: “the European citizens avant la lettre” also called “the Balkan cameleons”. He fights and searches for any peaceful way to save the Aromanian Vlach culture that interweaved for centuries the nomadism and the urbanity, the Orient and the Occident using the Balkan mountains treads. Grabova (1700m), one of the last historical settlements of the Aromanian Vlachs, resisted in the core of the Albanian mountains as the unaccessible secret of a once flourishing urban network. From metropolis to shadow, the story of Grabova is the story of Balkan diversity, regarding as much the Aromanian Vlachs just as many other cultures that share the South-East of Europe.

THE CONTEXT

Remanence of the Eastern Roman Empire, ravaged by the neighbouring wars, the Aromanian Vlachs hid on the top of the mountains, became semi-nomadic

pastoralists, caravan pathfinders and guardians, huge sheep-flock owners and famous traders. They scattered around the whole Balkan region and got adapted to all harshness, continuously living among the heights. During the last millennium, this little known culture, along its way of life, developed urban networks close to the peaks of the mountains and interconnected for centuries the South-East of Europe, from Istanbul to Venice and from Wien to Egypt.

Many writers, qualified as experts in Balkan and European awarenesss, referred to the Aromanian Vlachs in a quite surprising way for such a rarely acknowledged topic. They were named “the cameleons of the Balkans” , because they were very knowledgeable about, capable to adapte to and ready



to identify themselves with any of the other Balkan cultures and languages. As well they were called “the European citizens avant la lettre” , because they had no national obsessions, always polyglots and willing to integrate into the cultures where they were

settling or travelling through. This qualities did not help the Aromanian Vlachs no to get butchered by the local national states, nor become more than a mysterious culture, heard of by very few.

THE CHARACTERS

This former urban networks are located around the very borders between Greece, Republic of Macedonia and Albania, a mosaic of extraordinary culture and reinforced conflicts.



Our film characters link and carry the Balkan subconsciousness. They integrate regional

traditions and atavisms containing paradoxal Potentials. Oftenly they are reffered in the same time as a handy political dynamite while simultaneously aiming and capable to fulfill the role of intercultural mediators.

Our intention is to tell the story of this synthetical Balkan culture through some strong characters as Todi (main protagonist and leader of the community) in counterpoint with his friend Spiru, a skeptical, experienced, older guy, that expresses his criticism towards the way in which the present transformed the past.



Along Spiru and Todi, the film will unveil a special atmosphere of interconnected “pastoral families” comprising quite colorful characters: Dhori (ingenious carver and philosopher), Nasi (fresh graduate as priest after for 40 years he was a shepherd that was taking care of his flocka along a cliffs’ hidden monastery), Adam (skilled hunter and antique coins collector). All these impressive characters are closely followed, together with their families, living the infusions of modernity without giving up their tribal archaic cultural matrix.

Inspite his former life as a brigand, we can follow, the main protagonist, Todi, as he stands for his culture and home universe. He searches for environment friendly solutions to escape of getting digested by the Balkan not so friendly environment. Recently he started to work at the project of an ecological water plant using the surrounding mountain rivers.

Todi is involved not only in a material and environmental construction, but as well in a so called „identity construction”. He is exploring now his whole universe

in terms of questioning and understanding the past and present so that he would be able to find ways to define himself in the future. He got involved in politics, but also in construction businesses to be able to rebuild his home



settlement, in cheese businesses in order to help the sheep herding tradition of his community, he started to inquire archeology, history and religion, he went to study a second humanistic university, he started to

write and compose. But the most important is that he started to gather people around him trying to put up collective questions and searches for answers. Somehow he is a collective character, refusing to get manipulated by any of the former or present identitary stereotypes, clichés and ideologies and continuously trying to search for the better.



We will discover him being “obsessed” with Grabova’s cultural patrimony and how much his life changed when he heard that the

architectural remains of the former urban network’s churches, academy, library and printing press could be taken into consideration by the UNESCO patrimony protection.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

The film camera will participate to Todi's strives and quests for solutions in a world that is always challenging him to relate in most surprising ways nature and culture, friends and enemies, strangers and kinship.

The camera will try to avoid interviewing, aiming to get as close as possible to an observational film. In the same time we will try to be empathic with each and every situation, paying attention to what the characters are willing and capable to transmit and alternating the moments when we prefer to be distant with the ones when we prefer to be sensitive and subjective.

One of the most offering visual approaches will be the manner in which the characters and the story merge into the extremely beautiful and diverse landscape. The small gestures of these people will be captured minutiously especially the ones in which they sink into and identify themselves with their home mountains and environment.



COMPANY PROFILE

Saga Film is a production company based in Bucharest, Romania, founded in 2000 by Alexandru Teodorescu.

In 2007, it co-produced the Palme d'Or winner "**4 months, 3 weeks and 2 days**", directed by Cristian Mungiu.

In 2010, Saga Film produced the debut feature "**Outbound**", directed by Bogdan Apetri, after a story by Cristian Mungiu and Ioana Uricaru. The film premiered at Locarno IFF.

In 2013, Saga Film produced "**The unsaved**", directed by Moldovian director Igor Cobileanski, with a script by Romanian golden boy director and writer Corneliu Porumboiu. The film was nominated for 11 awards by the Romanian Film Industry and was Moldova's proposal for "Best Foreign Language Film", Oscar category in 2014.

Saga Film also produced the short films "**The walk**" (directed by Mihaela Popescu), which premiered at Locarno IFF in 2013, "**Kazimir**" (directed by Dorian Boguta), winner of Best debut award at Brest IFF in 2014.

At the moment, Saga Film develops 2 feature films and 2 documentaries, all of them having received state funding from the Romanian national centre of Cinematography.

PRODUCER'S PROFILE

Alexandru Teodorescu is a graduate of the University of Cinematography and TV MEDIA Bucharest. He co-produced the 2007 Palme d'Or winner "**4 months, 3 weeks and 2 days**", directed by Cristian Mungiu and the documentary "**La nouvelle vague du cinema roumain**" (2008), produced by De Films en Aiguille and directed by Marius Doicov and Vincent Guyottot. He was the producer of the feature films "**Outbound**" (2010) and "**The unsaved**" (2013), as well as the shorts: "**The Yellow Smiley Face**" (2008) directed by Constantin Popescu, rewarded with the prize for best short film at Belgrade Film Festival and the second audience award at Trieste Film Festival, "**The**

Walk” (2013) and “**Kazimir**” (2014). Since the year 2000 he has produced over 600 commercials, and acted as executive director at Saga Film.

WRITER AND DIRECTOR’S PROFILE

Ionut Piturescu is a documentary film director coming from a social anthropology background. His documentary short film, “**Quest**” (2010) was a Silver Eye nominee at East Silver Market in 2010 and has brought Ionut the “Best short film” award in Cannes, Quinzaine des Realisateurs, 2010.

“About one’s self and the others” will be his first feature documentary.