THE TRAVELLING FESTIVAL - SOFIA

SAVE THE DATE

15-18 DECEMBER, SOFIA 2016

TAGGED IN A CHANGING WORLD
TAGGED IN A CHANGING WORLD – THROUGH THE LENSES OF “MAMA EUROPA”

Representation of identities in visual image.

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AN INTRODUCTION...

- Mama Europa:
  - a creative documentary
  - Identity – borders – history: 3 significant themes that influence people’s imaginary of Europe and Yugoslavia

- Different characters identify themselves and interpret the history in their own very distinctive way in order to answer on:
  - How the Balkans have been represented?
  - What they might become?
  - How that bears on how they might represent themselves?

- Use it as a source of meaning of construction
WHAT?

- Open up a discussion about how history and politics play a decisive role in the process of the cultural construction of identities
HOW?

- Trace in visual image all those identity markers that have defined the collective identity of the Balkans
- Deconstruction of the markers
WHY?

- Visual image:
  - positioning power on the viewer’s imagination
  - function as a state’s soft power tool
  - young artist’s work offers a new dynamic
SOME THEORY... - IDENTITY

- Contested notion that represents various multiple narratives
- Dynamic notion that encompasses various categories, characteristics and meanings
- Built on a multiple repertoire of options
- The importance of the past experience
- Determination of future collective social practices
- The relational framework of opposites
- Understanding reality is dependent on how this is located in a social setting and a history (Kress and van Leeuwen)
- The Balkans were in need to define and redefine their identities according to the historical and socio-political developments, each time, in their region
SOME THEORY... - IDENTITY MARKERS

- Time and differentiation
  - Ethno-national tensions VS liberty, progress, democracy

- Time and place
  - Re-invention of the Balkan identity within the enlargement discourse
    - E.g. after the WWII:
      - “Balkans” → “South East Europe”
    - E.g. With the EU integration:
      - “Western Balkans” → “European”

- Sense of belonging
- Grab of distinctiveness
- Social action
- Consolidation of cultural symbols
- Interrelationship of several forms of identities

(Richard Jenkins, Montserrat Guibernau, Gerard Delanty, Maria Todorova)
JUMPING INTO THE FILM – INTRODUCING MAMA EUROPA (1)

- A production of the Petra Pan Film Slovenia & PPFP FYR of Macedonia (Petra Seliskar –Ljubljana) and Brand Ferro (Skopje)
- Debut in 21 June 2013 in FYR of Macedonia in the “Makedox” Festival
- Participation in several regional and international film festivals, out of which it was awarded with the Peace Award in 2014 at the Gothenburg Indie Film Fest.
- Their aim is to produce a high quality innovative films with sense of humor, going beyond the norms of documentary films.
- Mama Europa” is the documentation of the travelling life of the two directors who are also partners in life and they have a little child of five years old at the time of making the film, Terra, who is the main character of this film.
- Petra explains in a press interview that she has always wanted to make a film about their lives through the borders, as her husband had always to face the issue of applying for visa.
- It raises questions and trigger the debate for deep political questions but with a sense of honesty and simplicity – this is thanks to Terra who became spontaneously part of the documentary of their road trip and consequently Petra had to change the structure of the film.
The film has a unique approach thanks to making a kid as the main character.

Terra is among the most important characters of the documentary who even changed the structure of it and forced the director to enhance it with forms of animation.

By filming Terra who puts colors on the concepts and the things and expresses herself through her drawings, the director had the opportunity to fulfill her goal and “make a film avoiding the Balkan frustrations which would have been another fairy tale” (Mama Europa, “Press kit”, http://mamaeuropa.info/press/)
Mama Europa takes a look at Europe through the eyes of a six-year-old child from the Balkans, Terra. Born in the Balkans, but raised as a citizen of the world by her Cuban-Macedonian father and Slovenian mother, little Terra quickly learned about borders. She goes on a journey through former Yugoslavia with her family, encountering numerous remarkable characters with interesting stories, and tells us her innocent but intelligent, and already experienced view of the continent that is not at all as united as it would apparently like to be. Look at Europe through the eyes of a small child from the Balkans:

- “There is nothing more important than planet Earth”
JUMPING INTO THE FILM - METHODOLOGY

- Main characters
- Main themes touched upon
  - Identity
  - Borders
  - History
- Stories told
JUMPING INTO THE FILM – SCREENING AND ANALYSIS

- BRANKO PARIC
  Born at Izola (northwest Slovenia)
  Had an Italian mother originated from Friuli
  And a father from Montenegro

4 individuals – 4 different interpretations:
- For the responsible of the army, Branko was not a Montenegrin because his surname did not fit to.
- For Branko’s aunt he was definitely a Croatian as they used to live there.
- For his dad his identity was dependent on his mother’s origins.
- While his mother finally stresses the collective identity of Yugoslavia, even though Yugoslavia did not exist anymore as a state with a common collective identity
- For Branko himself these kinds of markers are of no use.

The story said by Branko Paric indicates the difficulties for someone coming from the Balkans to determine his own identity. His story is important for highlighting the dynamic of identity and how its various interpretations allow us to treat the notion of identity as a project of subjectivity and active resistance by the individuals.
BORIS PAHOR
98-years-old writer
identifyiES himself as a Slovenian originated from Savudria,
Savudria today is part of the westernmost county of Croatia, Istrian County.

Significance of language to create a sense of common belonging
Distinction between constructing one identity and imposing one identity
An interplay between the past and the present

(screening time: 43.36 – 49.34)
BORIS PAHOR - CONCLUSION

- Language and ethnic cultural symbols prevail and have a special and crucial role in the identification process.
- Historical facts and moments that he experienced affected significantly his present memories.
- Time and differentiation are crucial for defining one’s identity.
- Emphasis on the role of history in the identity construction project.
JUMPING INTO THE FILM-SCREENING AND ANALYSIS

- Anarcho-punk band Bernays Propaganda
  FYR of Macedonia
traveled to Greece in order to perform
challenging the notion of the nation and the roles of the borders

Dichotomy ‘us’ – ‘them’ (citizens – governments)
Negative function of the borders
Traumatic experience of crossing the borders when she was a kid

(screening time: 1.07.34-1.08.53)
PUNK BANKD - CONCLUSION

- Disconnects the idea of identity from the competing status of national or European and suggests the need for a supra-ethnic ideology and perhaps the creation of a cosmopolitanism identity
- Identity is totally disengaged from the tangible elements of nationality and borders
Terra
Slovenian mother
Macedonian father
Cuban grandfather
The central thing that Terra learns is what a border is
During her travelling across former Yugoslavia with her parents, starting from Italy via Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, FYROM and Greece, she meets different characters

World citizen
idea of planet Earth
she understands Europe as a continent with different countries and borders and the map she is drawing would not be neither correct nor nice if it should be done in any different way.

(screening time: 37.19-39.20 & 1.16-1.18.35 & 1.18.53-1.19.41)
The notion of planet earth stands here for universalism and unity which could become the main ideas for the representation of one`s identity.
SUM UP - CONCLUSION

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- Understanding reality is dependent on how this is located in a social setting and a history
- The Balkans were redefining their identities according to the historical and socio-political developments, each time, in their region