



Rajko Grlić jedan je od najznačajnijih hrvatskih filmskih redatelja. Sve granice odavno je nadržastao - one regionalne, zemljopisne, političke, mentalne... Najnagrađivaniji je domaći autor. Priznanja je, od Cannesa nadalje, dobivao za režiju, scenarije, produkciju.

Rajko Grlić is one of Croatia's most prominent film directors. He outgrew all borders and limits a long time ago - regional, geographical, political and mental... He is Croatia's most award-winning filmmaker. From the Cannes Film Festival to other festivals, he has won awards for directing, screenwriting, and production.

RAJKO GRLIĆ

KAMERA TRAZI
DUBINSKU LJEPOTU

THE CAMERA SEEKS
TO CAPTURE INNER
BEAUTY

Piše/By [_ Dubravka Belas](#) Fotografije/Photos [_ Vanja Šolin](#)



Posljednji, dvanaesti igrani film *Ustav Republike Hrvatske*, redatelja Rajka Grlića, još je prije premijernog prikazivanja u Hrvatskoj dobio nagrade na nekoliko svjetskih festivala, od kojih su najznačajnije Grand Prix Amerika na Montreal World Film Festivalu i najnovija nagrada za najbolji film na Međunarodnom filmskom festivalu u Santa Barbari. Njegovi se filmovi vrte na svim kontinentima, na redovitom kinorepertoaru. Retrospektive je, osim u Parizu, San Franciscu, Amsterdamu, imao u još desetak gradova diljem svijeta. Već je njegov prvi amaterski film *Cigla* dobio više od dvadeset nagrada, a priznanjima je okrunjeno i dvadesetak njegovih dokumentarnih filmova, te televizijske serije u kojima je surađivao. Filmovi *Bravo Maestro*, *Samo jednom se ljubi*, *U raljama života*, *Ljubavni život Budimira Trajkovića*, serija *Grlom u jagode*, samo su najpoznatiji otisci jedne iznimne umjetničke osobnosti. Diplomiravši na Filmskoj akademiji u Pragu, istraživao je i stjecao nova iskustva i na Sveučilištu Columbia u New Yorku, te na Odsjeku za televiziju i film Kalifornijskog sveučilišta u Los Angelesu. Za svoj interaktivni CD ROM *Kako snimiti vlastiti film*, dobio je osam međunarodnih nagrada, među kojima i Grand Prix za najbolji multimedijalni projekt na Njujorškome filmskom festivalu. Nekoliko je godina predavao filmsku režiju na zagrebačkoj Akademiji dramske umjetnosti, a već je godinama *eminent scholar* na Sveučilištu Athens u Ohiju, gdje predaje filmsku režiju. Profesionalan i točan, ugodan sugovornik, nimalo *zvijezda*, strpljivo i tečno objašnjava kako je sve počelo - Kao što svaka ozbiljna familija mora imati jednog šašavog strica, tako sam i ja imao jednog. Pravi veliki svjetski čovjek, znanstvenik, vodio je u Ženevi laboratorij Ujedinjenih naroda, i otkrio metodu kojom se može odrediti godinu i lokaciju u kojoj je droga nastala, puno je putovao. Imao je čudan hobi: volio je film i pravio male, šašave filmove. Njegov najpoznatiji film zove se *Luk i voda*. Doslovno, jedna glavica luka sljemenskim potokom plovi nekih pet minuta... takve je stvari radio. Tako je jednom za Božić iz Ženeve donio jednu *Bell & Howell* kameru, koju još imam, kojom sam snimio pet-šest amaterskih filmova. I tako je počela moja igra filmom. Kad vam je 16, 17 godina, obično pišete pjesme o nekoj uzaludnoj ljubavi u nadi

da će neka cura to jednog dana pročitati... Vjerojatno s istim nakanama čovjek snima filmove, a meni je to omogućila ta mala kamera. Prvi mi se film zvao *Cigla*, i govorio je o običaju koji je bio tu na Gornjem gradu, da fakini, kad vide ljubavni par, tu ciglu prodaju mladiću, a on je, u strahu da ne izbije tučnjava, kupuje; napravio sam takvih pet-šest pričica, počeo ići po festivalima, dobivati nagrade. Jedna takva nagrada za amaterski film odvela me i u Prag. Bio je to Festival amaterskog filma Hrvatske sredinom šezdesetih i uz prvu je nagradu išla stipendija za studij na Filmskoj akademiji u Pragu, s uvjetom polaganja prijamnog ispita, što nije bilo nimalo lako. Nagradu sam dijelio s Lordanom Zafranovićem, upoznali smo se na sceni, otišli u Prag, položili prijamni ispit koji je trajao dva tjedna i obojica postali studenti Praške akademije.

■ **Odrastali ste u to relativno bezbrižno i sigurno doba s kamerom u ruci. Što Vas je osobito zanimalo, koje ste filmove voljeli gledati u kinima?**

- To je bilo vrijeme kad je kinematografija, prava, službena, državna kinematografija bila velika, ali je usporedno živjela i *underground* kinematografija. To su bile šezdesete, svuda u svijetu radili su se ti *underground* filmovi, eksperimentalna kinematografija. Položio sam ispit za amatera u Kino klubu Zagreb, gdje su se razni doktori, filozofi, inženjeri, poput doktora Pasinija, igrali filmom i filmskom formom, a ja sam, kao klinac, to pijao poput spužve. To je bio neki moj filmski svijet. U kinima sam gledao sve: to je bilo doba kad sam se zaljubio u Talijane, od Viscontija do Antonionija, to je polako i vrijeme kad počinje francuski novi val. Osim toga, uvijek sam strašno volio vesterne, to mi je bila velika slabost i sretan sam što sam jednom u životu uspio napraviti vestern. To su bili filmovi s kojima sam ja rastao, europski film, on je tada bio intelektualno jači (pubertet zahtijeva jače doze inteligencije, smije se). A onda sam otišao u Prag i zapravo ozbiljno počeo gledati film.

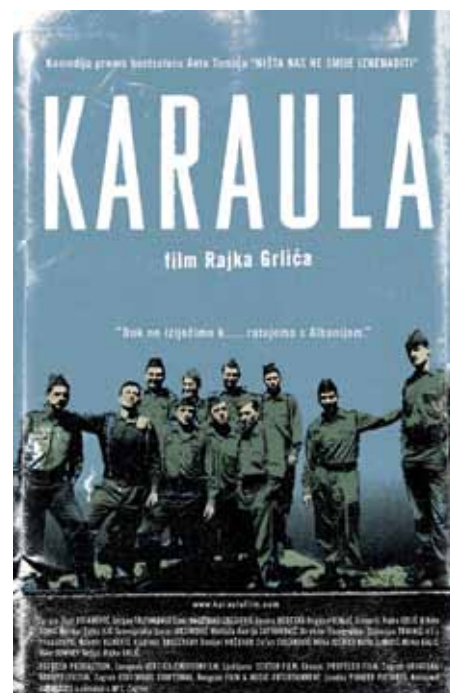
■ **Pola godine provodite u Americi, pola godine u Hrvatskoj. Što Vam nedostaje od Amerike kad ste u Zagrebu, a što od Zagreba u Americi?**

- To je kao i s hranom... Mi smo ispočetka odavde nosili hranu, jer činilo nam se da se nikako ne možemo naviknuti na američku. Onda smo ustanovili da nam tamošnja hrana prija mnogo više nego

ova koju donesemo i obrnuto. Mi ovdje živimo ovdašnji život, a ondje živimo život koji je ondje. To su dva prilično različita svijeta, ali vjerojatno čovjek u sebi ima nekoliko ličnosti pa je dobro i da hrani nekoliko ličnosti, nekoliko života paralelno. Osim toga, kad vam se jedan život učini malo zasićen samim sobom, strašna je povlastica imati mogućnost uskočiti u neki drugi.

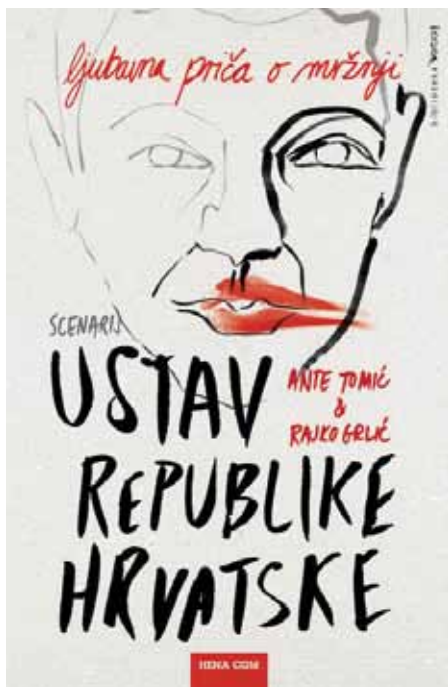
■ **Kako ste počeli predavati? Što Vam znači rad sa studentima, kako mjerite uspjeh u tome?**

- Čim sam se vratio iz Praga, zamolili su me da vodim predavanja iz režije i montaže, ali ubrzo sam otišao u film. Akademija je tada imala stav da se čovjek mora opredijeliti, hoće li raditi filmove ili će



predavati. Meni se to činilo apsurdnim, ali filmovi su mi bili draži. Drugi sam put na zagrebačkoj Akademiji predavao '88./'89. kad je Krešo Golik odlazio u mirovinu i inzistirao na tome da samo ja preuzmem njegovu klasu. Radio sam to dvije godine. Nisam nikada pokušao biti samo profesor, mislim da je to na filmu pogubno, jer onda čovjek počne raditi svoje filmove preko studenata. Ja radim svoje filmove, a sa studentima radim njihove filmove i sve što ih pokušavam naučiti, pokušavam radom na njihovim filmovima. Sada s četiri studenta, iz Irana, Turske, Kolumbije i Amerike, pripremam igrani film u kojemu će svaki ispričati jednu dionicu. To ćemo raditi godinu dana, to je moj *Masterclass*.

Kad ne snimam filmove, uzmem studente i s njima radim malo veće projekte, a kad snimam, uzmem nekoliko studenata i dovedem ih na snimanje. Njima je to najkorisniji oblik škole, jer tada su prvi put na profesionalnom setu, uđu u nešto što nalikuje na stvarni svijet. Vodio sam ih na snimanje u Njemačku, u Češku, dvaput u Zagreb. Moja pozicija u Ohiju je takva da to mogu miješati. Predajem zato što mi je to dodir sa stvarnošću. Ti su momci i cure kojima predajem u poslijediplomskoj klasi, što znači da su stariji od 25 godina, i više nisu samo djeca očarana kamerom, nego ljudi koji su odlučili da film bude njihov život. Od njih učim neki potpuno novi pogled na svijet. Imam povlasticu čuti potpuno drugačije viđenje svijeta i filma



od moga vlastitoga. I taj je stalni *reality check* strašno zdrav, bez njega je teško praviti filmove. Jer čovjek lako odleti... tako da oni meni daju isto toliko, ako ne i više, od onoga što ja dajem njima. Kad sam prvi put došao na Columbiju u New York, 1985. godine, dekan Columbije bio je moj dekan iz Praga, Daniel František, i rekao mi je: znaš, uspjeh se škole u Americi ne mjeri po tome koliko nastavnici misle da su dobri, nego samo po tome što su studenti napravili, što su snimili, koje su nagrade dobili. Dakle, postoje prilično jasna mjerila. Prije dvije, tri godine moja je učenica, kojoj sam držao *Masterclass*, pobijedila na festivalu u San Sebastianu. Kad vam se to dogodi, znate da niste

uzalud nešto radili. U Americi, njima je veoma teško nakon škole ući u film. Oni dođu ulaze, ali upitno je na kojoj je to razini, ulaze li kao dvanaesti organizator ili kao šesti pomoćnik režije, što je već put k nekoj režiji. Pokušavam s njima raditi veće forme jer to im omogućuje brži iskorak. Kratkim filmovima ima na tisuće i u tome se izgube. Ako uspiju s većom formom, imaju jači domet i mogu s tom formom i nastaviti.

■ Što Vam danas znači Zagreb?

- Zagreb je moj rodni grad, nekakva lokacija moje obitelji. Svaka druga kuća ima neki komadić uspomene na nekoga tko je tu živio. To je moje rodno mjesto, od njega ne možete pobjeći, niti ga možete promijeniti. Ja volim taj miris Zagreba, i tu se osjećam dobro. Idealne je veličine, gradić na rubu Europe, beskonačno ugodan za život, u kojemu manje-više sve znate, a ipak se možete sakriti. Tako da je ova mjera, koja nikako da dođe do tih milijun stanovnika, meni strašno draga mjera za jedan grad. To je moj dom iz kojega odlazim i vraćam se, iz kojega su moji generacijama odlazili i vraćali se. Prije nekoliko stoljeća izabrali su Zagreb i ostavili u njemu neke tragove. Julius Hühn, litograf i prvi fotograf, na primjer, bez kojega se ne bi znalo kako je izgledao Zagreb 19. stoljeća, moj je šukundjed. Mnogi su u mojoj obitelji ostavljali nekakve male tragove svog postojanja u ovom gradu, a ja sam samo jedan od njih - koji svojim filmovima pokušava ostaviti mali kamen pokraj puta. Od mojih dvanaest filmova, devet se događa u Zagrebu.

■ Što je ono najbolje što ste dobili u nasljeđe od svojih roditelja, majke Eve, novinarku i spisateljicu, te oca Danka Grlića, humanističkog filozofa i pisca?

- Veselje. Veselje kojim se prihvaća život, otvorenost i potreba za nekim druženjima i razmjenama, bijeg od mržnje, zatvorenosti, skučenosti. Ta otvorenost i ta glad za životom, a pogotovo taj smijeh, taj srednjoeuropski smijeh koji je tako drugačiji od ostalih, taj *polugalgenhumor*, taj švejkovski humor, kao otpor prema sudbini, nešto je što mi je golem dar moje obitelji.

■ Koliko je Vašu umjetnost odredila sudbina Vaše obitelji; oni potresi, smrti, ratovi, prevrati, ljudski i materijalni gubici što sustižu ljude koji žive u *zanimljivim vremenima*?

- Kad imate takvu obiteljsku povijest, ne

možete od nje pobjeći: ja nikad nisam radio film baziran na faktografiji moje obitelji, ali ta turbulencija, ta strašna jakost struje i promjena i vrtlozi života koji se ovdje svako malo događaju, te su sudbine tako čudno vrtjele da mi to jednostavno omogućuje da svojim junacima dam hrabriji iskorak nego što bih inače to radio. Jer vidio sam što se sve može dogoditi čovjeku na ovim prostorima. Mnogo sam puta razmišljao o snimanju filma po knjizi svoje majke, po njezinoj autobiografiji *Sjećanja*, ali nisam nikad imao hrabrosti ući u nešto što mislim da je financijski nesvladivo.

■ Jedan od recenzenata Vašeg *Ustava Republike Hrvatske* piše da ste *islepli granitno gnijezdo čovjekoljublja*, drugi ga smatra *najhrabrijim hrvatskim filmom novog milenija koji budi nadu u bolje sutra bez mržnje*, treći ga naziva *najboljim filmom snimljenim u samostalnoj Hrvatskoj...* Odradili ste velik i dobar posao, jeste li odahnuili ili žalite što je ta priča dovršena, kao kad pročitate zadnju stranicu dobre knjige?

- Odahnuo sam, jer put je bio dug, ali ovaj put ne mogu reći da je bio težak. Imao sam ponudu produkcije Interfilma iz Zagreba, htjeli su raditi sa mnom, složili smo se da to radimo, skupili novac ili ne, što redatelju daje golemu lakoću da će snimiti film. Ante Tomić, pisac, koscenarist i ja tri smo godine tekst, polako, nikamo nam se nije žurilo - mi smo u godinama kad nam se više nikamo ne žuri - polako smo ga slagali, počeli s produkcijom. Skupio sam glumačku ekipu koja je bila fantastična za igru s njima, što je redatelju najvažnija stvar. Imao sam produkciju koja me je pratila, sjajnu mladu ekipu s kojom sam prvi put radio, radili smo u nekome miru i tišini, u ta se tri mjeseca nije čuo ni jedan povišen glas - sve je išlo beskonačno mirno, svi su imali apsolutnu koncentraciju, to je bio takav film koji je zahtijevao taj mir. Onda smo čekali da se filmu nešto dogodi; imali smo španjolskog agenta koji je vrebao kamo će ga staviti, stavio ga je u Montreal i dogodio mu se Grand Prix. S tim pečatom ide lakše i ovdje i po svijetu.

■ Koliko treba otklona da biste počeli novu priču, novi film?

- Kad završite film, imate dugu fazu kad se pitate ima li uopće smisla uskočiti u neku tako kompliciranu mašineriju. Ležite u krevetu i razmišljate, ima li smisla ustati još jedanput i sve to ponovno obaviti,

animirati stotine ljudi, razgovarati s nekoliko stotina ljudi, to je dugi, dugi proces, ako me zanima snimati filmove ovdje. Jer ovdje me boli, u Americi me ne boli, ondje još i sad gledam taj život nekako sa strane, bez obzira na to koliko sam dugo ondje, ne tiče me se toliko. Ovdje me svaka glupost boli, a dok vas ne boli, o tome nema smisla govoriti.

■ **Kako to da ste se u odabiru Glogovca za ulogu Profesora koristili tehnikom *contracastinga*?**

- Nekad morate ići raznim logikama. Birate karaktere: dobar glumac, to naučite s vremenom, mora biti ličnost. Tehnike su nešto što svako bistro biće lako nauči. Ako iza te tehnike ne leži kompletno, kompleksno, duboko, mračno, teško

po svojem izgledu, po svojem moralnom ljudskom habitusu odgovarali i mogli glumiti taj lik, ali to nije rezultiralo onim što sam tražio.

■ **Jesu li se naljutili na Vas?**

- Jesu, sigurno, strašno je ozbiljnom glumcu reći: hvala, nemoj se ljutiti, ja sam izabrao drugoga...to je najgora rečenica.

■ **Jednom ste rekli da volite *krasti dušu* glumcima. Što ste time mislili?**

- Imate dva osnovna načina u radu s glumcem, da imate napisan tekst i pokušate glumca pretvoriti u vaš lik, oblikovati ga potpuno na njegovu tijelu kao da na neku žičanu konstrukciju nanosite gips i pokušavate napraviti to glumačko tijelo. Drugi je način da pisani lik što više prilagodite karakteru glumca, ponudite mu

svjetove, ne mogu mijenjati ništa veliko. Oni su za sitne, male promjene. Film može pružiti neku emotivnu vezanost za nekoga koga inače ne biste nikad pogledali. Ono što film može učiniti za vas jest, kad jednom sretnete takav lik, da ga gledate s malo više razumijevanja, ništa više. A ako nekoga pogledate s malo više razumijevanja, to je golemo što jedan film može napraviti. Filmovi su poput sukusa naših života, u tim likovima negdje prepoznajemo sebe ili nekoga koga znamo, i onda možemo saznati o njemu nešto više i gledati ga s više razumijevanja. Čim vi nekoga tako gledate, on za vas prestaje biti zbirna imenica, postaje pojedinačna osoba. Čim on dobije ime i prezime, postaje netko tko vas zanima i tu se otvara mogućnost komunikacije. Svakako je uloga kulture postavljati pitanja, otvarati pitanja koja čovjek u sebi ne artikulira dovoljno jasno. Ta pitanja ne moraju biti samo politička, ona mogu biti ljudska pitanja, estetska. Umjetničko djelo nešto je što nas zaustavi i postavi pitanje na koje vi u komunikaciji morate nečim odgovoriti. To je najviše što umjetničko djelo može učiniti. To su dobro upakirana pitanja pružena preko stvarnih ljudi, stvarnih života, nešto opipljivo. Što se manje čini kao pitanje, time je jače.

■ **Karl Gustav Jung upozoravao je da ni glad, ni potresi, ni mikrobi, ni karcinomi, nisu takva opasnost kao što je čovjek čovjeku. Može li kultura dati odgovor na to?**

- Može. Kultura je jedino po čemu postoje ovakvi mali narodi, male zemlje. To je nešto što najprirodnije i najlakše liječi rane, jer mi smo još i danas u ranama otprije 25 ili 50 godina. Jedina medicina koja tu ima ikakve izgleda jest ljudski razgovor, a to je kultura. U Južnoj Africi, nakon silnih nesreća, godina mržnje i ubijanja, nadbiskup Desmond Tutu uveo je razgovore po četvrtima. U njima je spojio žrtve i krvnike, te policajce i te ljude koje su tukli i ubijali. Danima su ih tjerali da jedni drugima izgovore sve što imaju. To čišćenje jest važno. U Pragu gdje sam studirao, ispred Akademije na Vltavi bili su drveni kavez i, po nekom tadašnjem češkom zakonu, kad se iz ribnjaka, iz mulja izvade šarani, morali su pet tjedana plivati u rijeci, čistiti se od mulja i tu ih se dopremalo da se očiste od mulja. Jedini kavez za čišćenje mulja kod nas može biti kultura... Platforma za dijalog jest kultura.



dokučivo ljudsko biće, nemate što tražiti, kamera će proći kroz njega. Masa divnih, prelijepih cura na platnu izgleda potpuno prazno. Ta površna ljepota ništa ne pomaže. Kamera traži dubinsku ljepotu. I onda pokušate to naći, probate prizore, na tisuću načina doći do toga ima li neko lice ono što tražite. Mi smo za dvoje glumaca pisali - za Dejana Aćimovića i Kseniju Marinković, jer prije sam radio s njima i znao sam tko su oni i što mogu, a za Profesora sam godinu dana tražio i neke fantastične glumce mučio po tri ili četiri puta, vraćao ih, nehumano to radio, premda sam se stalno ispričavao, da bih došao, da bih vidio postoji li to u njima. To su bili manje-više ljudi koji su

da bude ono što jest, a ja ću dodati ono što meni treba. Čini mi se da mi je druga metoda bliža, jer onda dobijem čovjeka koji glumi iz sebe, a samo mu malim fine-sama, fizičkim ili jezičnim, dodajemo miris karaktera. Ali karakter je, zapravo, on. Radio sam s Rodom Steigerom, velikim glumcem školovanim u Actors Studiju, čija je metoda da uroni u lik i ponaša se kao lik i na setu i izvan njega. On 24 sata nosi isti kostim, govori s vama kao lik. On je ušao u lik i više nije ništa drugo.

■ **Može li *Ustav*, ljubavna priča o mržnji, u ovim turbulentnim vremenima išta promijeniti nabolje? Ima li kultura misiju?**

- Ne vjerujem da filmovi mogu mijenjati

■ **Davno ste u trenutku razočaranja zapisali u bilježnicu intrigantan naslov: sto najboljih filmova koje nikad neću snimiti. Četiri od njih, jedan uspješniji od drugoga, morali ste u međuvremenu prekriti. Ostalo je još mnogo priča, podloga, za koji sljedeći film?**

- Ne znam, vidjet ćemo hoće li se dogoditi. Bilježnica ima već tristo stranica... vidjet ćemo. Ante Tomić i ja nešto šuš-kamo, možda se dogodi. Možda se i ne dogodi. ▶

Rajko Grlić's most recent (and twelfth) feature film, *The Constitution of the Republic of Croatia*, even before its premiere in Croatia, won prizes at several worldwide festivals, the most significant of which were the American Grand Prix at the Montreal World Film Festival and the latest Best Film Award at the International Film Festival in Santa Barbara. His films are shown on all continents, playing regularly in cinemas. Besides Paris, San Francisco and Amsterdam, he has had retrospective screenings in about a dozen cities around the world. His first amateur film, *The Brick*, has won more than twenty awards, and about twenty of his documentaries, as well as television series have also won awards. Films like, *Bravo Maestro*, *You Only Love Once (Samo jednom se ljubi)*, *In the Jaws of Life*, *Budimir Trajković's Love Life*; and television series, like, *The Unpicked Strawberries*, are just some imprints of an exceptional artistic personality.

Graduating from the Film Academy in Prague, he explored and gained new experiences at Columbia University in New York, as well as from the Department of Television and Film at the University of California in Los Angeles. He won eight international awards for his interactive CD-ROM, *How to Make Your Movie*, one of which was the Grand Prix Award for Best Multimedia Project at the New York Film Festival. He taught film directing at the Zagreb Academy of Dramatic Art, and has been an eminent scholar at Athens University in Ohio for years, where he teaches film directing. Professional and punctual, easy to talk to, and without the pretentiousness of a star, he patiently and readily explains how it all began.

- Every family has a crazy uncle, and mine was no exception. He was a worldly man, a scientist; he ran a UN laboratory in Geneva and discovered a method that could determine the year a drug was produced as

well as its location. He also travelled a lot. He had a strange hobby: he loved movies and he made small, silly movies. His most well-known movie was called *Onion and Water*. In the movie, an onion bulb literally floats on a creek on the slopes of Sljeme for about five minutes - this is the kind of stuff he made! Once, he brought a *Bell&Howell* camera from Geneva for Christmas, which I still have, and with it, I made five or six amateur movies. Thus, I began playing around with film-making. When you're 16 or 17, you usually write poems about unrequited love, hoping that a girl will read them some day. One makes movies probably with the same motive, and this small camera made it possible for me. My first movie was called *The Brick*, which was about pranksters hanging around in Zagreb's Upper Town; they would play practical jokes on young couples, convincing the young men to buy a brick, which they did out of fear of being beaten up. I made up five or six stories like that, then I started frequenting festivals and getting awards. One of these amateur film awards took me to Prague. It was Croatia's Amateur Film Festival in the mid-1960s, and the first prize also included a scholarship to study at the Film Academy in Prague, provided that you first passed the admission exam. The award was given to both me and Lordan Zafranović; we met on stage, travelled to Prague together, passed the admission exam, which lasted two weeks, and we both became students at the Prague Academy.

■ **You grew up during relatively carefree and safe times, with a camera in your hand; what was of particular interest to you? What kind of movies did you want to see in cinemas?**

- This was a time when cinematography, real, official, state-sponsored cinematography, was big, but there was also a parallel, underground cinematography. Those were the 1960s, when there were underground movies and experimental cinematography was everywhere in the world. I passed the amateur exam at the Zagreb Cinema Club, where doctors, philosophers and engineers, like Dr. Pasini, played with film and the cinematic form. Being a kid, I soaked it up like a sponge. This was a sort of cinematic world for me. I watched all kinds of movies at the cinema. This was when I fell in love with the Italians, from Visconti to Antonioni; this was also the time when the French

New Wave was starting. In addition to all this, I have always had a great fondness for westerns; this was a big soft spot of mine and I am happy to have been able to make a western at least once. These were the movies that I grew up with. The European film industry was intellectually stronger back then (puberty requires a stronger dose of intelligence, he laughs). And then, I went to Prague and started watching movies religiously.

■ **You spend half a year in America, and half a year in Croatia. What do you miss about America when you're in Zagreb, and what do you miss about Zagreb when you're in America?**

- It's the same as with food...In the beginning, we brought food with us



from Croatia because we had a feeling that we wouldn't be able to get used to American food. Then, we realized that we enjoyed the food there much more than the food we had brought with us and vice versa. We live a Croatian life here and an American life there. These are two quite different worlds, but we have several personalities inside us, so it is good to feed those various personalities, to live several parallel lives. Besides, when you get sick and tired of one life, it's a real privilege to be able to switch over to another life.

■ **How did you start teaching? What does working with students mean to you. How do you measure your success in this area?**

- As soon as I returned from Prague, they asked me to hold lectures in film directing and editing, but I soon went into film-making. At the time, the Academy had a policy whereby it was necessary to choose one or the other - film-making or teaching. I thought it was absurd, but I preferred making movies. The second time I taught at the Zagreb Academy was in 1988/1989, when Krešo Golik retired and insisted that I take over his class. I did it for two years. I never tried to be just a professor because I believed it to be a disastrous choice for a film-maker, since you then start making movies through your students. I do my own movies, and with students, I do their movies, and everything I try to teach them, I try to teach

occasions. My position in Ohio allows me to mix things up. I teach because it keeps me in touch with reality. The young men and women I teach are in postgraduate classes, which means they are older than 25, so they are no longer just kids fascinated by the camera; rather, they are adults who have decided to dedicate their lives to movies. I get to see a completely different perspective through them. I am privileged to be exposed to a view of the world completely different from my own. And this reality check is incredibly healthy; it is difficult to make films without it. Because one tends to fly off so easily... so, they are giving me just as much, if not more, than what I'm giving them.

to be the twelfth organizer and another to be the sixth directing assistant, which can be considered a path towards a directing career. I try to do larger formats with them, since it allows them to progress faster. There are thousands of shorter films, and they get lost in this branch. If they succeed with a larger format, they have a farther reach within the industry and can continue with the format.

■ **What does Zagreb mean to you today?**

- Zagreb is my birthplace; it's my family's habitat. Every other house reminds me of someone who used to live there. This is the place where I was born; I can't escape it or change it. I love the smell of Zagreb, and this is where I feel good. Its size is ideal: a smaller town on the edge of Europe. It's incredibly cozy; it's where you know pretty much everyone, but you can still maintain your privacy. So, its size, a population of less than a million, is what I really like about the city. This is my home, the one that I often leave, but still return to over and over again as other members of my family have done for generations. Several centuries ago, they chose Zagreb and left their traces in it. Julius Hühn, lithographer and Zagreb's first photographer, without whom we would not know what Zagreb looked like in the 19th century, was my great-great-grandfather. Many in my family have left small imprints of their existence in the city, and I am merely one of them - each of my movies is like a small stone left at the side of the road. Out of my twelve movies, nine are set in Zagreb.

■ **What was the best thing that you inherited from your parents, your mother Eva, journalist and author, and your father, Danko Grlić, humanist philosopher and writer?**

- Joy. The joy with which I accept life, the openness and need for socializing, the need to flee from hatred, closed-mindedness, restriction. This openness and lust for life, and laughter, especially Central European laughter which is so different from other kinds of laughter; this half-gallows humor, this Švejkian humor, is a kind of resistance to fate - this is a great gift from my family to me.

■ **To what extent was your art defined by the fate of your family, by all those turmoils, deaths, wars, upheavals, human and material losses which fall upon people living in interesting times?**



them while working on their movies. At the moment, I am working on a feature film with students from Iran, Turkey, Columbia and America. Each of the four are working on telling his or her own story. The project will take about a year; this is my Masterclass. When I'm not shooting a movie, I take on larger projects with my students, and when I'm shooting, I take a few students with me to the set. For them, this is the most useful form of education because this is their first visit to a professional set, and they have a chance to experience something resembling the real world. I've taken them to sets in Germany, the Czech Republic, and to Zagreb on two

When I first came to Columbia in New York in 1985, the dean at Columbia was my dean from Prague, Daniel František, who told me: *You know, in America, the success of a school is not measured by how good the teachers think they are, but by the achievements of students, by the movies they make, the awards they win.* So, there are quite clear standards. Two or three years ago, a student who was in my Masterclass was a winner at the San Sebastian Festival. When this sort of thing happens, you know that what you have done was not in vain. Students have a hard time getting into film-making after school in America. They do, but the question is at which level? It's one thing

When you have a family history like mine, you can't escape it. I've never made a movie based on the life of my family, but the turbulence, the changes, the powerful currents of life, which happen every now and then, which have spun our destinies in such a strange way that it allows me to give my characters a much more courageous storyline than I otherwise would have been able to. I have often considered the idea of making a movie based on my mother's memoir, *Memories*, but I never had the courage to start such a project because I believe it would be financially unfeasible.

■ **One of the reviewers of your movie, The Constitution of the Republic of Croatia, writes that you have weaved a granite nest of philanthropy; another considers it the most courageous Croatian film of the new millennium, stirring up hope for a better future without hatred. Having done a huge and high-quality job, have you breathed a sigh of relief, or are you sad that the story has come to an end, like when you read the last page of a good book?**

- I took a sigh of relief because it was a long journey, but I can't say that it was difficult this time. I got an offer from the Interfilm Production Company from Zagreb. They wanted to work with me, and we agreed that we would work together on this whether we managed to raise the money for it or not, which made it very easy for the director to shoot the movie. Ante Tomić, author and co-screenwriter worked with me on the text for three years, slowly. We were in no rush - we were both at an age where we were in no hurry to get anywhere. We composed the screenplay, bit by bit, and then, started the production. I gathered a team of actors who were fantastic to work with, which is the most important thing for a director. I had a production team that followed me, an amazing young team that I worked with for the first time. We worked in a quiet and peaceful atmosphere over those three months and not a single voice was raised. Everything moved along incredibly calmly. We were all absolutely focused as this was the kind of movie which required this kind of calmness. Then, we waited for something to happen with the movie; we had a Spanish agent who was undecided as to where to send the movie, but he finally sent it to Montreal,

which resulted in the Grand Prix.

This quality stamp of approval made it easier for the movie to be received both in Croatia and around the world.

■ **How much downtime do you need to start a new story, a new movie?**

- When you finish a movie, you enter a long phase when you wonder whether it makes sense at all to embark on such a complicated journey. You lie in your bed and wonder, does it make sense to get up and do this all over again? Do I have the strength to motivate hundreds of people, talk to hundreds of people? This is generally a long, long process. Making movies here brings me pain, while in America it doesn't, since I still look at that life from the sidelines, regardless of all

are many stunning girls whose expressions are completely blank onscreen.

They have no presence. This superficial beauty does not help them at all. The camera requires a deeper beauty. So you try to find it; you rehearse scenes; you try a thousand ways to find out if a face has what you're looking for. We wrote our screenplay for two actors - for Dejan Aćimović and Ksenija Marinković, since I had worked with them before and I knew who they were and what they could do. I spent a year searching for the Professor, torturing some fantastic actors three or four times, asking them to return. I was really brutal, apologizing the whole time, in order to get to it, to see if they had it. These were people, more or less, who by



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the time I've spent there. It doesn't affect me as much. Here, every bit of nonsense brings me pain, but without pain, there is no point in telling a story.

■ **Why did you choose to cast Glogovac against type for the role of the Professor?**

- Sometimes you need to use different methods. You choose characters: a good actor, as you discover in time, must have a personality. Techniques are something that any bright person can easily grasp. But if there is no complete, complex, deep, dark, hard-to-understand human being behind the casting technique, then you don't have anything to work with; the camera will go right through them. There

their appearance, by their moral, human makeup, were a match and could have played the character, but it did not lead me to what I was looking for.

■ **Were they angry with you?**

- I'm sure they were. It is a terrible thing to say to an actor: *thank you, don't be mad, but I chose someone else...*' This is the worst phrase you can utter.

■ **You once said that you liked to steal an actor's soul. What did you mean by that?**

- There are two basic ways of working with an actor: first, you take the written text and try to turn the actor into your character, shape him completely as if you were putting plaster on a wire structure,

and sculpting the actual body. The other method is to tweak the written character to match the actor's personality as closely as possible, to offer the actor the possibility of being what he is, and you add what you need on top of that. I think the second method is closer to my heart because I get a man who plays himself, and we only add the scent of the character through subtle changes, whether physical or linguistic. But he is, in essence, the character himself. I worked with Rod Steiger, a great actor trained at the Actors Studio; his method was to dive into the character and act as the character both on and off the set. He wore the same costume 24 hours a day; he talked to you like his character. He merged with the character and was no longer his normal self.

■ **Can *The Constitution*, a love story about hatred, change anything for the better in these turbulent times. Does culture have a mission?**

- I don't believe that movies can change worlds; they can't change anything big. They are meant for small, subtle changes. A movie can make you emotionally bond with someone you otherwise wouldn't have noticed. What a movie can do for you is that. When you encounter a person like that, you look at him or her with a little more understanding, nothing more. And if you look at someone with a little more understanding, that is a huge thing for that movie to do. Movies are like the quintessence of our lives; somewhere in those characters, we recognize ourselves or someone we know, and then, we are given the opportunity of finding out more about them so that we can understand them better. As soon as you look at someone like this, that person is no longer a part of the collective; he or she becomes an individual. As soon as you learn these characters' first and last names, they become someone you're interested in, thus opening up the possibility for communication. The role of culture is, by all means, to ask questions, raise questions that one does not articulate clearly enough for oneself. These questions need not be just political, they can also be humanistic or aesthetic. A work of art is something that stops you in your tracks and asks you a question that you need to answer in the course of the communication. This is the most a work

of art can do. These are well-presented questions, raised by real people, with real lives, something tangible. The smaller a question seems, the stronger its impact.

■ **Karl Gustav Jung warned that neither famine nor earthquakes, microbes nor cancer are as dangerous as man is towards his own kind. Can culture provide an answer?**

- It can. Culture is the only thing through which such small nations, small countries exist. It is the most natural and best thing to heal wounds, and we're still wounded from what happened 25 or 50 years ago. The only medicine is human dialogue, that is, culture. In South Africa, after tremendous misfortunes, years of

■ **A long time ago, in a moment of disappointment, you wrote down an intriguing title in your notebook: *The One Hundred Best Movies I Will Never Make*. In the meantime, you had to strike four movies off the list, each one more successful than the next. Many stories, their foundations, have remained. Perhaps for the next movie?**

- I don't know. We'll see what happens. The notebook already has three hundred pages... We'll see. Ante Tomić and I are working on something that might happen. But then again, maybe it won't. ■



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hatred and killing, Bishop Desmond Tutu introduced conversations into neighborhoods, bringing together the victims and the executioners, the police officers and the people who they beat and killed. For days, they made them tell each other all they had to say. This catharsis was important. In Prague, where I was a student, there were wooden cages on the Vltava River in front of the Academy because according to Czech law in force at the time, when carp were taken out of the muddy ponds, they had to swim in the river for five weeks to remove the mud, so they were brought to these cages to be cleaned of the mud. For us, the only mud-cleaning cage can be culture. Culture is the platform for dialogue.

01 **Scena iz filma *Ustav Republike Hrvatske***
A scene from *The Constitution of the Republic of Croatia*

02 **Scena iz filma *Neka ostane među nama***
A scene from *Just Between Us*

03 **Scena iz filma *Neka ostane među nama***
A scene from *Just Between Us*

04 **Snimanje filma *Karaula***
Shooting of *The Border Post*