

A feature documentary by Greta Stocklassa
Czech Republic | 87' | 2019



KIRUNA

A BRAND NEW WORLD

PRESS KIT



World premiere
Visions du Réel 2019 - International Feature Film Competition



Doc Alliance Award 2019 nominee

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CONTENTS

SYNOPSIS 5

SCREENINGS VISIONS DU RÉEL 2019 6

FESTIVALS & AWARDS 6

THE PROTAGONISTS 7

THE DIRECTOR 9

THE PRODUCERS 12

INTERVIEW WITH THE DIRECTOR 16

BACKGROUND INFORMATION KIRUNA 21

CREDITS 22





SYNOPSIS



What if you got the chance to build a new society from scratch, what would it look like?

Located more than 200 km above the polar circle, the Swedish mining town Kiruna is built on the world's largest and most modern iron ore mining tunnel, which created a significant income for the Swedish government. However, due to the mining the city has started to collapse and in order to save the industry, the city council together with the mining company LKAB have decided to move the town and its citizens 3 kilometres to the east. In doing so, the town has turned a potential disaster into a great opportunity. The new Kiruna will be an even more progressive, even better society for the future. But is it even possible to plan an ideal world?

On the backdrop of a moving city, the citizens of the New Kiruna are fighting their own battles. We follow the teacher Timo, a local activist against the moving, the teenage Sami girl Maja who is discovering her family roots and cultural heritage as well as Abdalrahman, a teenage boy from Yemen, who came to the town as a refugee and slowly realizes that it takes more than just a paper to become a Swede.

The seemingly very different characters are facing the same questions as the city is looking for its place. They are starting their personal search for identity, values and a greater future. KIRUNA - A BRAND NEW WORLD is a portrait of a utopian and dystopian town as well as a hard-hitting reflection of today's society.

Screenings Visions du Réel 2019

Tuesday

April 9

16:00

Grande Salle

world premiere followed by a discussion

Wednesday

April 10

11:45

Grande Salle



FESTIVALS & AWARDS

Kiruna - A Brand New World is part of the **2019 DocAlliance Selection** and previously participated in Eurodoc, the IDFAcademy Summer School and the Agora/DocMarket at the Thessaloniki International Film Festival, where it **won the prize for Best Doc in Progress in 2017**. It also recently **won the Sheffield Doc/Fest Award** for Best Project at Czech Docs, as part of the 2019 East Doc Platform.

The project was pitched at Docu Talents at Karlovy Vary, North Pitch Below Zero at Tromso IFF and Dok.elevator at Nordisk Panorama.



THE PROTAGONISTS



ABDALRAHMAN

Abdalahman (17) is a charismatic curly haired boy from Yemen. He always has headphones hanging around his neck and a phone in his hand. He came to Kiruna (like many other refugees) from Yemen in November 2015. Although he arrived alone, together with other lonely men of various ages they have formed a new family, through which they help each other. He would like to stay in Kiruna and has applied for asylum as soon as he arrived, but considering the large quantity of refugees, he is still waiting for his final interview.



MAJA

At first glance, Maja seems like an ordinary teenage girl longing for freedom and a life in a big city. While waiting for her high school graduation, she passes time going to parties and surfing the Internet. But she feels something is missing in her life. When she learns about her Sami origin, her new

personal journey begins. She begins to learn the language, studies the cultural heritage and integrates with Sami youth and discovers a story seldom told, a story filled with oppression and conflicts. For Maja, her hometown Kiruna becomes something completely different; a colonised area. The Sami's fight for rights becomes Maja's personal fight.



TIMO

Timo is a history and social science teacher at a local high school. He is the most visible opponent of the town's transformation. He collects the evidence of the bad influence of the mining on the citizens and their properties and presents them regularly to the local city council. He wants to mobilize people to resist the change and move of the city and he is showing people the risk and negative effect of the change. Timo is our guide in the film and through him and his young students we are exploring all Kiruna's secrets, citizens and their attitudes. How long will his activism last when his majority of the citizens do not object to change?

THE DIRECTOR



GRETA STOCKLASSA (1993)

Greta was born in 1993 in Opočno, Czech Republic. She comes from Czech-Swedish family. At the beginning, she lived in Prague, then the family moved to Stockholm in 2005. In 2013 she started studying in Prague at documentary department FAMU. Identity is the main theme through her films. Her “The Still Life of Vera” was premiered at Short Joy at IDFF Jihlava and screened at Vision du Reel, Neisse Film Fest or DOK.Fest München. In 2015 she made it to the short list of student film prize Magnesia Award (Czech Lions).

She works with stylization and fine formal visualization. Her films are at the edge of document, fiction and experiment.

FILMOGRAPHY

- Kiruna - překrásný nový svět / Kiruna - A Brand New World (2019)
- Tik tak / Tic Toc (2017)
- Pohledy na Věru Bechyňovou / The Still Life of Vera (2015)
- Středně šedá / Medium grey (2015)
- Emma má mámu / Mum and Emma. Emma and mum. (2014)
- Nebe v síti / The sky in a net (2014)
- Nemocnice / Hospital - chapter I. (2014)

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

This film is very personal. I have lived divided between two homes, two identities. I was born in the Czech Republic, growing up in a Czech-Swedish family, spending seven years in Sweden. I never really fitted into either of these worlds. The main characters in the film are living similar lives. Their identities are endangered and their homes will disappear soon. As well as the whole city. Is it really that easy and profitable to leave and destroy your home for good as we are told by the mining company together with the local government? Is Kiruna a place no one cares for?

Kiruna is a place where destruction and the ideal world of a prosperous society meet. It is placed at the edge of civilization, beyond the polar circle, in an unfriendly minimalistic landscape. According to the original plans, the meaning of the place was strictly utilitarian. All basic services are for meant for iron extraction; the rest is only secondary. Yet, people are trying to live meaningful lives, have families, build houses, mown lawns... They are building their homes there. There is a very clear ultimatum floating above that all.

Despite the fact that similar situations such as in Kiruna have already occurred in history, for example in Most, Czech Republic, this case is unique. The city has used its difficult situation and made it into a sensation. The newspapers from all around the world has started writing about the little city above the polar circle, with its 15 000 inhabitants, which is to become the most modern city in the world. But how do the people that live there feel about the relocation? What does Kiruna mean for them and how do they imagine their ideal city? Are they in charge of their own lives or are they just victims of a predetermined cycle?





THE PRODUCERS



ANALOG VISION is a film production company based in Prague, Czech Republic, and founded by producers Veronika Kührová and Michal Kráčmer. The fusion brings a company, which focuses on creating and distributing films of young authors from the Central Europe, developing new audio-visual forms and producing genre films targeting the worldwide market.

Its current line-up contains three projects in distribution: experimental archive feature documentary **MY UNKNOWN SOLDIER** about invasion into Czechoslovakia in 1968 (dir. Anna Kryvenko, CZ-SK-LV co-production, supported by Eurimages; DOK Leipzig, Jihlava IDFF, Trieste IFF, ZagrebDox - Special Mention, DOK.fest München, Beldocs, Docs Against Gravity), family drama **DAVID** (dir. Jan Těšitel - IFF Karlovy Vary, FNC Montréal, IFF Warsaw), feature documentary **KIRUNA - A BRAND NEW WORLD** and DE-CZ war documentary **BOY OF WAR** (dir. Igor Kosenko, Cyprien Delmas-Clement, supported by Jihlava Film Fund) and two projects currently in post production: short fiction **INVERSION** (dir. Lucia Kajánková) and feature **THE PRAGUE ORGY** (dir. Irena Pavlásková, CZ-SK co-production, participated at Venice Gap-Financing Market, based on a book by Philip Roth). There are two films in production: short experimental documentary **TAUROPHILIA** (dir. Francesco Montagner) and Serbian-Czech co-production **UNDER OUR WINDOWS** (dir. Slobodanka Radun). There are several projects in development, such as a queer love-story **THE UGLY MANDARINE** (dir. Piaoyu Xie, Midpoint Feature Launch 2018, CoCo Pitch 2018) or a post-war drama **BLOODY EASTER** (dir. Jan Bušta, EAVE, Midpoint Feature Launch, Equinox).



VERONIKA KÜHROVÁ (1985)

Veronika is a graduate of Film Studies at MUni (2008) and Production Department at FAMU in Prague. Her graduate project DAVID (2015, dir. Jan Těšitel) was screened at more than 25 international festivals, receiving several prizes. During her studies, she worked on student films of a Hungarian director György Kristóf or a Montenegrin director Ivan Marinović. Her experience was received on school projects (where she has produced more than 50 short films) and working at Axman Production or Bionaut Films. She took part in Producer's Workshop 2015 in Cannes, EURODOC 2017, IDFAcademy 2017 and Midpoint Feature Launch 2018, became an Emerging Producer 2018 and Berlinale Talent 2018. She received an APA Prize (Producers' Association CZ) in 2015 for her film DAVID.

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MICHAL KRÁČMER (1988)

A graduate of Economic theories at the Charles University and Film and TV production studies at FAMU. As a producer he led the development of the debut movie “Kids from the East” of award-winning director Aramisova, with which they won 3 main awards at Agora Crossroads by Thessaloniki IFF (GR) and went through various prestigious workshops incl. Torino Film Lab. He was awarded as a Promising Producer at Baltic Event by Black Nights Tallinn IFF (2014, EST) and Promotion Prize of the GWFF for talented producer at Cottbus IFF (2015, DE). As a producer he attended various workshops like MIDPOINT, MAIA, SOFA, ARCHIDOC, TRANS ATLANTIC PARTNERS or Producers Network at Cannes IFF (2015) and Berlinale Talents (2017).

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INTERVIEW WITH THE DIRECTOR

Author: Martin Svoboda for the Institute of Documentary Film
First published on February 6, 2019

Is it more of a procedural film or do you explore personal stories?

At first, I was interested in the relocation itself but it soon turned out that to shoot the entire process would not be possible because it's planned out over many years. We couldn't hope that we'd be able to capture a significant part of the move during our shoot. Relocation has become a sort of metaphor used when we followed the stories of our protagonists. A metaphor for digging a hole under their feet, for exploring what the future might bring. Kiruna is a town beyond the Arctic circle, at the end of the world, it's a remote microcosm of Sweden.

If the relocation is only a metaphor, to what degree and how far did you depart from it?

We soon got pretty far away - and Kiruna's move is only one of several motifs and symbols. In this uprooted place, we follow a Yemeni refugee and a girl who's half-Sami - the Sami are a native people and often have tense relationships with Swedes. Our third protagonist, Timo, is the only one who's actively involved in the relocation itself - he publicly opposes the move. All three are trying to find their identity in a place that's gradually losing its own. Their stories intersect in a local school - Timo's a teacher and the other two protagonists are students.

Did you find out anything surprising?

I'd expected there to be more protests but Timo was really one of the few people who voiced their negative view of the move. Others mostly just shrugged and accepted the decision as something they had to come to terms with. The locals don't really feel sentimental about their town, unlike Czechs probably would. I soon understood that they feel as much connection to the mines as to the town itself, they accept it's a symbiosis and they're ready to sacrifice a lot for it. It speaks volumes about their values and priorities. Personally, I couldn't quite come to terms with the general atmosphere but I adapted to it in the storytelling.

How long did the shoot last?

I completed the initial research in 2014. In 2015, I spent two months living with a local family. I was there alone to get to know the place as much as possible. We started shooting in winter 2016. The initial footage was used for

my B.A. thesis film at FAMU. We took roughly nine trips with the crew, each lasting around ten days. These intensive trips take a lot of precise planning and we often had to reenact situations we missed – e.g., Maja’s visit with her grandfather, a representative of the old generation.

How often did you have to resort to stylization and staging?

For the most part, we were reacting to events that really happened or were about to happen, and we adapted them. A few times we guided our protagonists to go somewhere they otherwise might not go because it could lead to an interesting meeting or a make a meaningful point. We created a cinematic shortcut for reality in this way. But first we consulted all of these scenes with them and explained their purpose. We’d never force them to be in situations that would make them uncomfortable or that would have a meaning that wasn’t clear to them.

From what you said, do you take more of a “cinematic” rather than a “journalistic” approach to the film?

It’s “cinematic” for sure. We use elements of film language that are common in fiction narrative. We use photogenic features of the environment and put a lot of care into the visual style. We shoot mostly using tripods, long scenes with long shots that capture the environment. In the audio track, we stay close to the protagonists using lav mics. We need to be convincing in capturing the local atmosphere because the viewers must understand it in order to understand our subjects and the community as a whole.

This approach seems more common at FAMU today. In the past, style usually took a back seat within the more utilitarian approach. Released last year, *Central Bus Station* has the visual style of international rather than Czech films.

It’s one of many current trends that’s been slowly making its way to FAMU as well. Everybody has a different view. Mr Vachek, for instance, sees my approach as something a bit suspect, vapid. On the other hand, Martin Mareček has been supportive. Their crucial concern is whether this story holds a sufficiently strong conflict.

Do you see yourself following in the tradition of longitudinal observation as represented by Helena Třeštíková?

Save for the multiple-year shoot, our approach has nothing in common with Helena Třeštíková’s work. It isn’t even a pure observation because that would require spending the entire time with the protagonists, which is not really possible when you shoot abroad. That’s why we had to work out something a little different and utilize other devices that, according to some, are not part of the observation style.

I wouldn't be able to work like Ms Třeštíková, mainly because she works on multiple projects at the same time. Over the past four years, I've been completely immersed in this whole project and it's taken up all my brain power. Just like I've entered the lives of our protagonists, they've entered mine. How could I work on several films like that and really get below the surface? I can't even imagine. This entire process has been pretty demanding mentally - I've established relationships with people who put their trust in me and I've felt obligated to give them all my energy. I think we'll keep in touch even after the shoot.

That actually makes you similar to Třeštíková. She also speaks about strong relationships with her protagonists. It's a bit controversial. Documentary filmmakers have a primary obligation to the viewers and the medium, not to the subjects. You don't agree?

That's really complicated. Firstly, obligation to the viewers and to the medium sounds rather abstract and one-sided - it can't exist unless you first establish a relationship with the subjects along with all obligations arising from it. And for me, subjects are mainly real people who have a direct and profound relationship with me. I feel an obligation to the protagonists, viewers come second.

Did you meet with people who are in charge of the relocation?

I met with the chief urban planner but it isn't my main focus. It wouldn't be very interesting because the mining and construction companies are very cautious when it comes to the media. Even if they wanted to talk, we'd hardly get anything beyond a PR statement. Also, they aren't eager to talk because these are state-run companies so that all of their budgets are secure - the less noise there is, the better.

How much material do you have?

We're now in the editing stage. We'll start again in January and still have a lot of work left. We have roughly 80 hours, which is just right. We didn't try to shoot as much footage as possible. We were trying to be reasonable so that each shot had some kind of purpose. Also, before we can work with the material, I have to subtitle it for my colleagues and editor because I'm the only Swedish speaker.

How do you get along with your editor?

I work with editor Hana Dvořáčková, my classmate at FAMU. I'd say we have a healthy working relationship. Sometimes we agree on stuff, other times we disagree and then we look for the best possible solution. Sometimes we take turns editing, for instance, I might prepare a rough edit and then we discuss the details.

Does Hana Dvořáková have any creative ambitions? Recently I asked several editors the same question for a piece I was writing, and it seems that they all see themselves as more than just technical professionals.

I can't speak for her but I think that she isn't as radical as some of the other editors and she keeps a certain distance. But I don't doubt that she really cared about the material and I can't even imagine editing with anybody else. A personal, creative relationship with the material probably comes naturally even if you don't try. Perhaps that's how it should be because if an editor harbors a priori creative ambitions and fails to connect with the director, then you have two clashing visions battling it out in the editing room. The director gets something they didn't want and then has to fight to make the editor redo it. It's definitely important for the editor to be personally invested in the project but strong egos can create problems. That's why I think that Hanka's restraint is a good middle-of-the-road solution. I've learned a lot from our collaboration and some of her methods have helped me a lot.

What about cinematography?

You said that visual style was really important to you.

Our cinematographer Standa Adam deserves the most credit for the film's visual style and for making the film so much better for it. Our relationship was rather dynamic at first. When it was just me, sound designer Pavel Jan and Standa Adam going on shoot trips in Kiruna, Pavel was often the one who had to restore some kind of peace. Standa and I are both really stubborn and have big egos but some of our conflicts worked to help us find the best possible solution. Pavel, on the other hand, was a great help in approaching our protagonists. He's able to make use of the fact that sound designers are really close to people during a shoot. They are also literally close to the protagonists when they attach their lav mics. That allowed him to have a close relationship with them. He was able to suggest how to proceed and what we could ask from them. Toward the end, our three-member crew finally had good chemistry and we're good friends now.

Do you have any ties to Sweden?

My father is Swedish. We moved to Sweden when I was eleven and I lived there until high-school graduation. My father and my sister still live there. Our home is not in the north where you find Kiruna, but I've definitely benefited from my affinity with the environment, especially in establishing new contacts. I'm sure it was easier knowing the language and the culture. At the same time, I have a sufficient distance to be able to judge Swedish society without being completely biased. It gives me a great vantage point. Sweden is really close to my heart but it's still fascinating to me. A perfect culture with a dark underbelly...

Sweden has a reputation for being nearly perfect but it has a really high suicide rate.

That's a stereotype that is partly rooted in the cold weather and long periods without sunshine that people struggle with. But it's largely a myth. And sure, there's something to the dark underbelly of this seemingly perfect society. People who are used to a well-run system, lose some of their skills and instincts, like the ability to improvise, for instance. Swedes seem to live like according to a manual and any problems are conveniently swept under the rug. But what happens if the manual is wrong? Or if there is no manual for a given situation? I like exploring these issues and examine them in Kiruna as well. None of this would have probably crossed my mind if I'd stayed in Sweden. All of this started to come into focus once I had something to compare it to. And that bit of a critical distance makes me appreciate Sweden more.

How is the film doing in terms of funding?

At FAMU I received a modest contribution of fifty thousand koruna, which is, of course, insufficient for making the film. Later we received money from the Czech Film Fund - we'd applied for production support and, surprisingly, succeeded the first time. There's no money from Sweden. We wanted to try applying but it turned out to be unfeasible. Although I have a Swedish passport and the story was Swedish, we were treated as a foreign project, which involves way too many conditions and regulations. When it comes to filmmaking, Swedes are very much focused on their local pond.

What about Czech TV?

We've had an offer but the amount was too low. If we'd tried to adjust the project to suit the requirements of their funding support, we'd have lost out and probably shut off some distribution channels that way.

I'm not surprised you've secured support from the Fund. Its former chair Přemysl Martinek once told me they didn't get enough international stories and that they got sick and tired of the same old local stories.

Yes, we've received the entire application amount. Our application might have been too modest. Anyway, I definitely believe it would be a shame to work only within the Czech context and documentary filmmakers will benefit from looking for stories other than the local ones. The subject should be universal and it should speak to something more general - not just a random event that just happened somewhere. Sure, there's nothing wrong with it if somebody focuses on local issues but I'm generally in favor of a greater openness to the outside world. I see more and more of my peers interested in non-local stories and our FAMU department is also increasingly more encouraging in this respect.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION KIRUNA

The city of Kiruna lies more than 200 km above the Arctic Circle. It is the northernmost city of Sweden and the cradle of Swedish steel. The city has been built like an anthill above a two-billion-year-old iron ore deposit, the largest in the world. It is four kilometers long, 80m in diameter wide and stretches so deep into the ground that its end is nowhere in sight. It is a dream of every mining company. Refrigerators, cars, steel constructions - all that is given to the world by Kiruna.

The turnaround has come in 2004. The city has started sinking. The iron deposit is inclined towards the city and the deeper the mining the more undermined the city becomes. The politicians and the LKAB mining company must act quickly - either relocating the mining or the city.

Kiruna and LKAB has always lived in symbiosis. Approximately one fifth of the city's inhabitants are employed in LKAB. The existence of the whole city of Kiruna is dependent on the mine. There would be no jobs without the mine and people would leave the city. The schools would close down as well as the libraries, shops and in the end the whole city would disappear. Without the city and the manpower, the mine would come to an end as well.

And so came the news that astonished the whole world. Kiruna is going to be moved three kilometers to the East. The place where the New Kiruna is going to stand in a few years, is an immense grey plain with two dilapidated towers on the border, a remains of a mine, that has been closed down in the 70s. The weather is approximately ten degrees lower than in the center of Kiruna. The whole place feels dead, but there are already cranes working almost 24 hours a day. The goal is to have the new city ready by the end of 2020.



CREDITS

KIRUNA - A BRAND NEW WORLD

Original title:	Kiruna - překrásný nový svět
Length:	87'
Year:	2019
Country:	Czech Republic
Format:	HD
Language:	Swedish, Arabic, Sami
Director:	Greta Stocklassa
Director of Photography:	Stanislav Adam
Editor:	Hana Dvořáčková
Sound Designer,	
Music Composer:	Pavel Jan
Editing Consultant:	Ivo Trajkov
Production:	Analog Vision
Producers:	Veronika Kührová, Michal Kráčmer
Executive Producer:	Greta Stocklassa
Co-producer:	Ondřej Šejnoha (FAMU) Tomáš Srovnal (PFX)

FILMTALENT

Zlín Foundation:	Čestmír Vančura Markéta Pášmová Milan Krupička
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design by KLIMSZ