



# ROOTS

NANA 143 IN CO-PRODUCTION WITH SET SAIL FILMS PRESENT A FILM BY TEA LUKAČ "ROOTS"  
CINEMATOGRAPHY BY SARA PRERADOVIĆ SOUND DESIGNER BOJAN PALIKUĆA • EDITOR NATAŠA PANTIĆ  
COLORIST GORAN TODORIĆ • PRODUCED BY ANDRIJANA SOFRANIĆ ŠUČUR • DIRECTED BY TEA LUKAČ



# ROOTS

A film by Tea Lukač

## Press notes



**Karlovy Vary  
International Film Festival**  
East of the West – Competition

Karlovy Vary International Film Festival 2021  
East of the West Competition  
\*\*world premiere\*\*

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## SHORT SYNOPSIS

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Sitting in the back of a moving car, different passengers go on the road on the edge of a vast forest. They carry tales about hornet's nests, petitions against nuclear waste, loneliness, carnival treats, folklore traditions, cemetery visits and roads leading home. The forest, serene in the sun, mysterious in the fog and wild on the river, frames the seven stories as they pass by. Containing elements of documentary, ethnography and fiction, *Roots* is a strangely wondrous and often exhilarating film.

*"Where ethnographic films tend towards description and objectivity, Tea Lukač's anthropological probe uses staged scenes in order to create a mosaic of stories, whether voiced or intimated. This conceptual debut comprises only a few dominant aesthetic elements, thus giving rise to a more focused study of the phenomena of memory, history and tradition. Emphasis is placed on the sensory experience which nonetheless never detracts from the authenticity of the scenes and recorded testimonies."*

- Sandra Hezinová, Karlovy Vary International Film Festival



*Still from ROOTS*

## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

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This is a deeply intimate film as it was shot in my hometown of Dvor in central Croatia. I left it when I was 6 years old due to war breaking out and unfortunately, as it often happens with wars, written and visual traces of culture and personal histories end up being gone and scattered, mine included. From toys I used to play with, photos of my family, places and people end up existing only in the cloud of hearsay – personal mythology never quite palpable, like a puzzle always missing a few pieces to be complete. What is left are just habits, rituals, oral tradition and luckily – people. That being said, although inevitably in the DNA of the place, ROOTS is not a film about war, but one about stories struggling not to be forgotten.

ROOTS is made out of long static shots of similar duration, filmed from the inside of a moving car. We see 7 different groups of passengers and stories they carry, arranged symbolically to follow a life span – from childhood to old age and final absence. As our passengers 'grow older', the stories become more serious and lively chit-chats are replaced with worrying about social issues, preserving tradition and reflections on life before finally coming full circle with return to childhood memories.



*Still from ROOTS – Rade Rakas*



*Still from ROOTS*

The content of the conversations is based on authentic stories, customs, rituals and culture of people who live in Dvor. Due to its rare practice, conversations about the events and life seem absurd and unreal, thus making passenger's conversations as such as well. The car never stops, on the contrary – it is always on the move and in motion. Focus is on repetition of the travel and rhythmic pauses. Visually, body and space are juxtaposed. People are the ones that are always still while the landscape is in constant movement.

Inspired by real wild taxi drivers from the area, although inevitably present, the driver is not an active character of the film. He is treated like an abstract figure, just a necessary means to make the vehicle move, or more specifically – creating a feeling that the vehicle moves by itself. Focus is on the passengers and the ride itself.

Surrounded by vast forest, nature and weather are a dominant element of the place. Uninhabited houses are scattered along the hills. The Rivers are crystal clear, fast and full of small cascades. Woods are dark green, hidden with fog, frighteningly quiet and still, especially during winter when wind, rain and fog prevail.

Combined with one-take scenes from the car, exterior shots of landscapes seen in harsh weather (fog, rain, wind) separate each journey, juxtaposing two spaces – indoor and outdoor, intimate and public one aiding to the conflict of transience and eternity.

Without a clear beginning or end, a dream-like world is created, both universal and isolated. While all stories are real, the framing is not quite, blurring the line between documentary, concept film, ethnography and fiction.

Our roots may be buried deep down but they are always with us, and even if cut they will outlive us. Like them, our ROOTS are not deprived of life, but from an unexpected place grew into a strangely wondrous and occasionally funny movie.

- Tea Lukač



*Still from ROOTS*

## BACKGROUND

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Dvor municipality consists of 64 villages and has around 5 570 inhabitants. After the Ottoman Empire retreated, Austro-Hungarian Empire gave the lands to people willing to keep the bordering area safe from further attacks. Formerly part of Yugoslavia, now Croatia, Dvor is located at the very border with Bosnia, with the river Una as a natural border. Although today the population is majorly of Serbian nationality (71,9%), specific geography and historical currents led to cultural mixing. During the military 'Operation Storm' (1995) most Serbs forcefully left their homes and were scattered around the world. Private history was largely destroyed by the armies passing by, erasing most of the material traces of their former lives. Only a few, mostly elderly, returned after the war ended. Today part of the European Union, Dvor is a perfect example of a 'dying town'. Of prevailing rural character, with little to no content and job opportunities, socially and economically life is more oriented towards the livelier Bosnian city Novi Grad, just across the river. This specific heritage makes Dvor a unique blend of cultures, habits and stories.



*Still from ROOTS*

## ABOUT THE FILMMAKER

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Working in diverse fields from film to video art, Tea Lukač has directed short fiction films, documentaries, music videos and showcased at art exhibitions. Tea's work thus far has traveled to film festivals worldwide, including Trieste, Jihlava and Dok.fest München. She acquired Master's degree with a documentary 'The Most Important Boy in the World' which premiered at IFF Beldocs in 2016 and won the awards for best music documentary at Doc'n'Rhytam IFF and best documentary at Balkan FF in Sweden 2017. Tea is a member of DokSerbia and an alumna of Ex Oriente. Her debut film, the conceptual documentary ROOTS is set to premiere at the East of the West selection of Karlovy Vary IFF.

Selected filmography:

*Roots*, 2021, 80', premiere at 55th KVIFF

*Belonging*, 2020, 50', Best camera Award at Beldocs IDFF



*Still from ROOTS - Tea Lukač (left) and Milka Korenjak*

# PRODUCTION COMPANIES

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## NANA 143

Serbia

ROOTS is produced by Andrijana Sofranić Šučur for Belgrade-based NANA 143 in co-production with Set Sail Films. Andrijana established NANA 143 in 2016. It focuses on producing auteur-driven films for both festival and theatrical distribution, and presents a meeting point for young artists with distinctive stories. Her first feature, *Mamonga*, premiered in 2019 at KVIFF.

In 2019, Andrijana established partner production company SET SAIL FILMS with two young producers, Marija Stojnić and Miloš Ivanović, joining forces with them on working fiction, animation and documentary films. Produced films and projects in development have, among others, been supported by MEDIA, Eurimages, Film center Serbia, Hubert Bals and DOHA film institute.



*Still from ROOTS – Jepsy Clar*

# CREDITS

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ROOTS | Serbia | 2021 | 80' | Documentary

Original title: Koreni  
Format: DCP  
Language: Serbo-Croatian

Director: Tea Lukač  
Director of Photography: Sara Preradović  
Editor: Nataša Pantić  
Sound Designer: Bojan Palikuća  
Producer: Andrijana Sofranić Šućur

With: Igor Bundalo, Natalija Knežević, Milka Grčić, Dušan Bundalo, Jepsy Clar, Sonja Šević, Anita Kolarec, Tea Lukač, Milka Korenjak, Nevenka Bela Zečević, Dušanka Resanović, Nikola Milićević, Mirko Sisan, Rade Rakas



*Still from ROOTS – (left to right) Mirko Sisan, Dušanka Resanović, Nevenka Bela Zečević, Nikola Milićević*

# CONTACTS

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Production

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*Still from ROOTS*