



BLUE BANKS



Lavinia, a single mother, is trying to make a living for her and her son, in a poor Romanian village. When she gets work in Marseille, she has to leave him behind. While she's away, he grows into a man.



A never ending winter

Lavinia has recently separated from her boyfriend, Marian. She lives with her 13 year old son, Dani, in an abandoned house that belongs to her distanced father. The place is mostly a mess. Dani is a silent boy. His silence makes him weird for the community and even for his mother.

Lavinia asks the mayor for an extra job at the village pig farm, motivating she wants to built a bathroom in the decrepit house she now lives in. As most of the things she wants, she gets the job. However she miscalculates. When Lavinia realises the costs for the bathroom are way more expensive, she doesn't lose hope, but she loses focus. She buys a flat TV. Lavinia hates silence.

A much awaited spring

Lavinia divides herself between night shifts at the oil park and day hours at the pig farm. Even though work is exhausting, she never loses her spirits.

Every once in a while Marian and Dani spend time together, without Lavinia having much to do about it. Dani finds comfort in Marian, as in an older friend.

The plan to leave and work abroad has been growing inside Lavinia's mind for a long time now - an opportunity to renovate her house, to build a bathroom, maybe even a new floor. Without Dani agreeing, Lavinia leaves her son with his biological father Florin, while working in Marseille.





A coming of age summer

Dani is left alone with a father that's mostly a stranger, in a town close to his village. Florin is the only father he knows how to be, an authoritative figure, stricter than Lavinia ever was. Dani's dreaming nature begins to shift towards an adaptability pragmatism.

Dani begins to spend his days back and forth between the town and the village. Meanwhile he receives videos from Lavinia. Marseille proves to work out for her - at least that's the image she projects. She even seems to have found a man from the same village. She plans to bring Dani with her to France and try to live there. In the village Dani spends more and more time with Marian.

An autumn of acceptance

When Marian dies of a second stroke, Lavinia is forced to return home. She finds her son washing Marian's lifeless body along with the men. Even though her intentions were to return to Marseille, she decides to stay for a while.

With the money she raised, she manages to build the bathroom and begins construction on a first floor, despite the workers fear the land will not hold.



Character description // Lavinia

Blue Banks talks about a woman who doesn't find her good enough, always in a race to get the next best thing under bluer skies in the West.

Lavinia's destiny is not a regular woman's destiny. She is larger than life, a ceaseless female Sisyphus. Just like Sisyphus she doesn't succeed to free herself from the burden of her destiny. But there are moments when we can imagine her happy.

She is an atypical woman for the community she lives in. But at the same time she is a product of that community and its values, no matter how far away she

wants to run away from them. Here is where her inner conflict lies. She never loses her spirits, she's ambitious, humorous, proud and impulsive

But

Her ambition and pride are her hybris. Her cursory and changeable goals stop her from seeing things that are just in front of her. Such as her son. Such as moments of bliss. The universal mirage of "the better" has taken over Lavinia.

Her impulse makes her constantly miscalculate.





A mix of Cabiria (directed by Federico Fellini) & Rosetta (directed by the Dardenne brothers)



Character description // Dani

Dani is at an age where he's passing the threshold between childhood and adolescence. For the first two parts of the story he is more silent, he is strange for those around him that mostly have an extrovert attitude, but once he is left alone for the summer, he goes through his coming of age story and grows to be his own man. A young man Lavinia doesn't recognise, but who could now potentially live by himself.

The film will be shot chronologically, in the course of four seasons, so the physical changes in Dani's growing up will also contribute to the feeling of change.





Camera & lenses

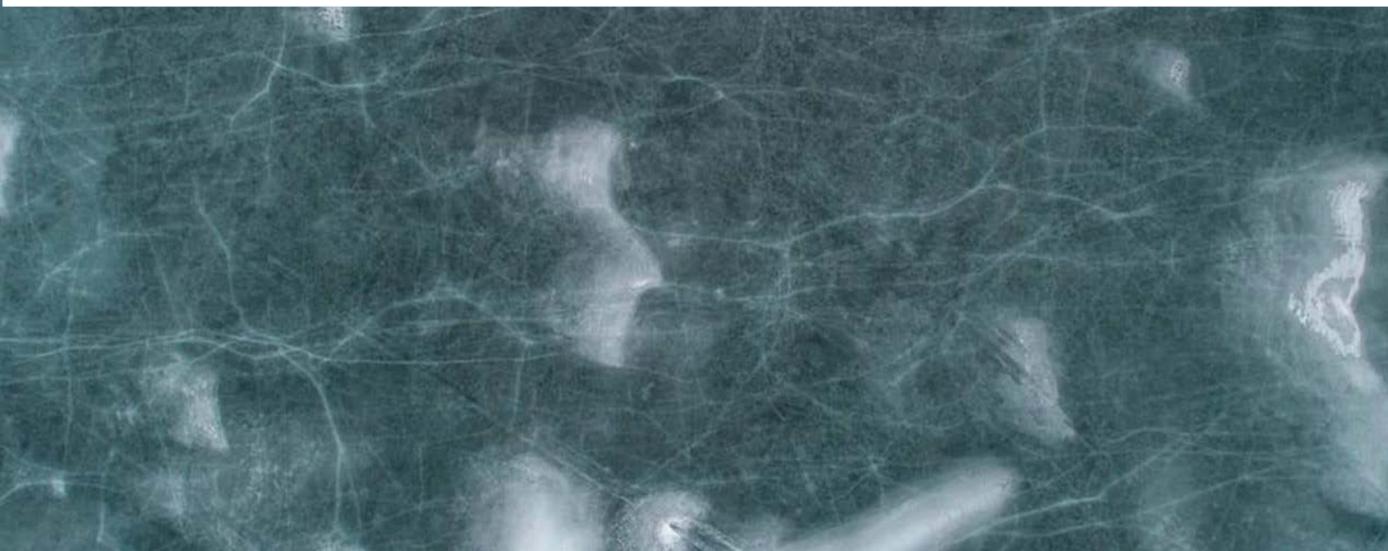
Cinemascope and social realism hardly seem made for each other. There aren't many films that manage to mix these two, but one that has stayed in my mind is "Il momento della verita" (Francesco Rosi). I would like to use the anamorphic lenses for the beautiful landscapes of the South and at the same time to be able to give it a twist and convey the raw realism of Lavinia's world by combining it with hand held camera. I believe that by using handheld camera in a cinemascope format I will also be able to convey strong close-ups of Lavinia, that on such a wide screen makes faces look larger than life - and Lavinia is larger than life.





Textures of nature

Nature and the changing rhythms of the weather will create an atmospheric film that can challenge the viewer in a visceral way. One which is at once visual, auditory, metaphorical, poetic and political. The natural elements in the film (an enraged bull that has escaped a farm nearby, the raw and rough animal market, a lost deer on the field, the death of Marian) are not meant to act as symbolic elements precisely because they are uncontrollable and unpredictable. Nature represents also a form of chaos and imbalance.





Lighting



About the director

Andreea Bortun is a Romanian filmmaker and playwright, an alumna of BARD College Berlin and UNATC Bucharest. Her work blends visual poetry and anthropology to explore origins, female point of view and nature.

Her recent documentaries embody an intersectional female gaze and give a voice to women from the rural, ethnic Roma or not. The films Andreea wrote or

directed were screened at various film festivals such as Toronto IFF or Karlovy Vary IFF. She had her debut in theatre with a show directed by Neil LaBute. Andreea received national development funding for her debut feature "Blue Banks".

She is currently preparing her new short also funded by the Romanian CNC.



Director's statement

One of the things that I became interested in while researching and developing this story is the relation between the fantasies people create in their own minds and how those fantasies manage to crush their realities. This is connected to the way in which the spirit of the rural is changing. With the influence of media and labour migration, women in even the most remote parts of the world begin to mimic Western ways of living, thinking and desiring. This usually ends up creating conflicts with their own reality.

The main inspiration for this project has been the Romanian South and its women, the place where I was born and raised and also the place I kept running away from till very recently. When I started the research I found myself in a very conflictual position:

on one side as someone that belongs to that world and needs to protect it and on the other as somebody who looked down on it, looking at it with prejudice. I believe this is a conflict that comes from a lack of fully understanding the other: whether be it the western perception on its immigrants, its lack of exercise sometimes in imagining their homes, the families they left behind.

I believe this division comes from a fear of the unknown. If these people's lives would be more visible, on screen, in the press, the hate speech and the division between the urban and the rural, between the immigrant and its hosts, would maybe not be as present.



Contact

andreea@ideoideis.ro