



67<sup>th</sup> Internationale  
Filmfestspiele  
Berlin  
Generation

world premiere

little  
harbour

PIATA LOĎ

film by Iveta Grófová

Slovak Republic / Czech Republic  
2017 — Fiction — 85 min.

## synopsis

**A story inspired by true events about two children whose innocent play will change their lives forever.**

**Ten years-old and living with a mother who is not yet ready to be a Mum, Jarká is pushed by her desire to love and form a family to the point where she finds herself giving shelter to two abandoned twin babies.**



**This is the story of a child's adventure. It's an insight into the world of adults through the eyes of children and a glance into the world of children that adults cannot see. It's a story of children who feel more safe in the streets rather than at home. It's about children looking for sturdy lifeboats that cross between the world of fantasy and the harsh reality of life.**

**Jarka is one of these children. She lives with her mother who is not yet ready to be a Mum. Pushed by her desire for love and to form a fully functional family, Jarka finds herself substituting as a "mother" of two babies.**

**Jarka forms a "family" with a boy named Kristian, and together they hide from the adults in an abandoned garden shed. They play family as they believe it should look like. In the shed, Jarka and Kristian create their own pure world and form a tight bond, which they will carry throughout their lives.**



Little Harbour is based on the successful book **THE FIFTH BOAT** by Monika Kompaníková, which became the Slovak Book of the Year in 2010.

Second feature film by director Iveta Grófová; whose debut, **Made in Ash**, was nominated as the Slovak entry for the Best Foreign Language Oscar in 2012.







**director**  
**Iveta Grófová**

**Award-winning director and graduate of Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava, Slovakia. Her feature debut MADE IN ASH (2012) was internationally premiered at IFF Karlovy Vary as the opening film of East of the West competition and was selected as the Slovak entry for the Best Foreign Language Film at the Oscars. This was followed by successful screenings and awards at many festivals, such as Thessaloniki IFF, FilmFestival Cottbus, Torino Film Festival and numerous others. Iveta Grófová also directed a short story DISCO BOJ**

**(2013) as a part of cinema feature film Slovakia 2.0 and several documentaries for televisions, such as BLUES FOR SOLO MOTHERS (2014) – a time-lapse documentary about unemployed single mothers attempting to return to the job market after their maternity leave – and MONIKA KOMPANÍKOVÁ'S CRUISE DIARY – a documentary road movie of the author of the novel which is being adapted by Iveta's upcoming second feature LITTLE HARBOUR. In 2010, she opened a production company Hulapa film focusing mainly on development and production of her author-driven films.**



*"When reading the book, I found within an immensely powerful coming-of-age story. I was instantly drawn to the unique visual palette that was expressed in the text and knew immediately that this was a story I had to tell. After my debut film, I wished to create a new film with appealing visual imagery and the world of children provides that perfect arena."*

**Iveta Grófová**



## interview with director Iveta Grófová

**LITTLE HARBOUR IS BASED ON A NOVEL BY AWARDED SLOVAK AUTHOR MONIKA KOMPANÍKOVÁ. WHAT DID YOU FIND INTERESTING ABOUT THE NOVEL AND WHY DID YOU CHOOSE TO ADAPT IT INTO A FILM?**

The book was inspired by true events which had taken place in the Czech Republic. There was an article in the paper about a girl who had stolen a baby in a stroller and started caring for him like she was his mother. That was the book's central motif, and I found it as fascinating as the book author. She had spun it into a strong and compelling story, which I tried to adapt into a film. I consulted the script with Monika Kompaníková and I found her input very precious and valuable.

**THE BOOK DISCUSSES A VARIETY OF SUBJECTS. WHICH OF THESE DID YOU SELECT AS THE CENTRAL THEME OF THE FILM?**

Indeed, the book works with many themes and even with several timelines. For the purposes of the film it was

necessary to make the narrative simpler. Together with scriptwriter Marek Leščák we decided to focus on the story of the ten-year-old Jarka and her younger friend Kristian. Their adventure is a sincere attempt to correct the adult world and create what, in their own eyes, is a perfect family. I also liked the notion of a family burden which is continuously passed on from parents to children until someone finally attempts to come to terms with it, thereby healing the family trauma. And Jarka tries to do just that. She copes with her family's trauma in her own, unique and hopeful way. That's why I think Little Harbour is a film not just for children but for families.

**THE FILM IS AN INTENSE VISUAL EXPERIENCE. THIS IS THANKS TO YOUR COLLABORATION WITH THE TALENTED YOUNG CINEMATOGRAPHER DENISA BURANOVÁ. HOW DID YOUR VISION DEVELOP?**

The book itself has very specific, poetic atmosphere that we wanted to bring onto the big screen. We both find the visual aspect of the film very important. Therefore, Denisa and I worked also as art directors of the project. We really put a lot of effort into it, from selecting the locations to the tiniest details in setting and props.

**LITTLE JARKA IS PORTRAYED BY TEN-YEAR-OLD VANESSA, WHO HAD NO PRIOR EXPERIENCE WITH ACTING. HOW DID YOU MAKE SURE THAT SHE LOOKS NATURAL, APPEARING IN EVERY SINGLE SCENE?**

The most important thing was to find a gifted girl who is a natural talent. The role required a child capable of adding deeper psychology in her acting expression. I also wanted someone with a spark and energy so that she would be interesting for the viewers. This is what I found in Vanessa. →



→ She had passed several auditions before eventually being cast. Naturally, the shooting itself was difficult. The hardest part was keeping the children motivated so that they could enjoy and look forward to shooting. When something became too repetitive for them, it was difficult to keep them focused and motivated.

WITH ONE EXCEPTION (THE CZECH ACTRESS JOHANNA TESAŘOVÁ) YOU ONLY WORKED WITH NON-ACTORS. WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER TO BE THE MERITS OF THAT APPROACH?

I have wanted for the film characters to look like the characters from the book. That is why I cast the young singer Katka Kamencová as Jarka's mother Lucia. Even though she had no prior acting experience, she had a charisma which allowed her to embody the character from the book.

THROUGHOUT FILMING, YOU WERE FREQUENTLY IN CONSULTATION WITH

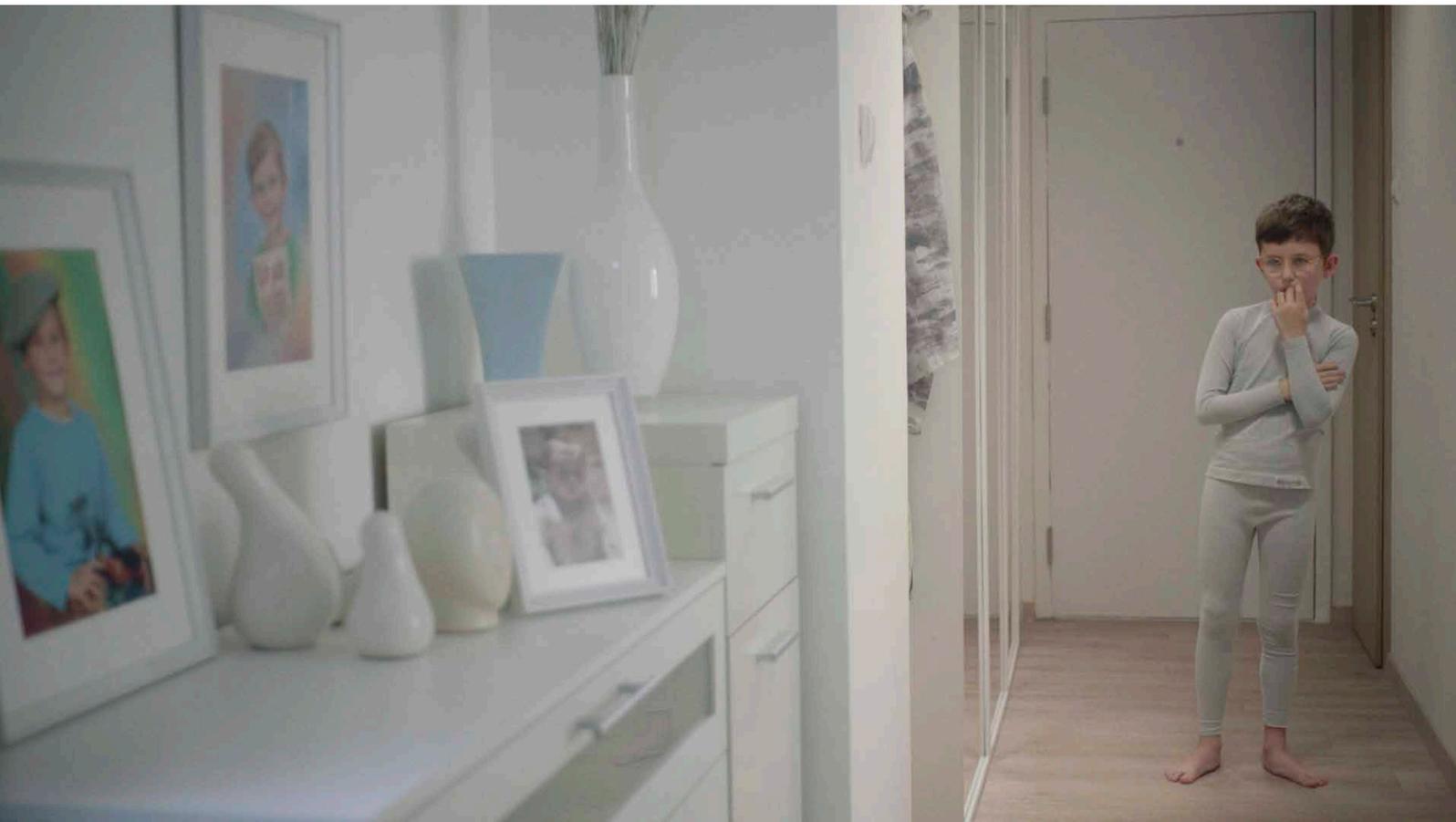
PSYCHOLOGIST ZLATICA BARTÍKOVÁ.

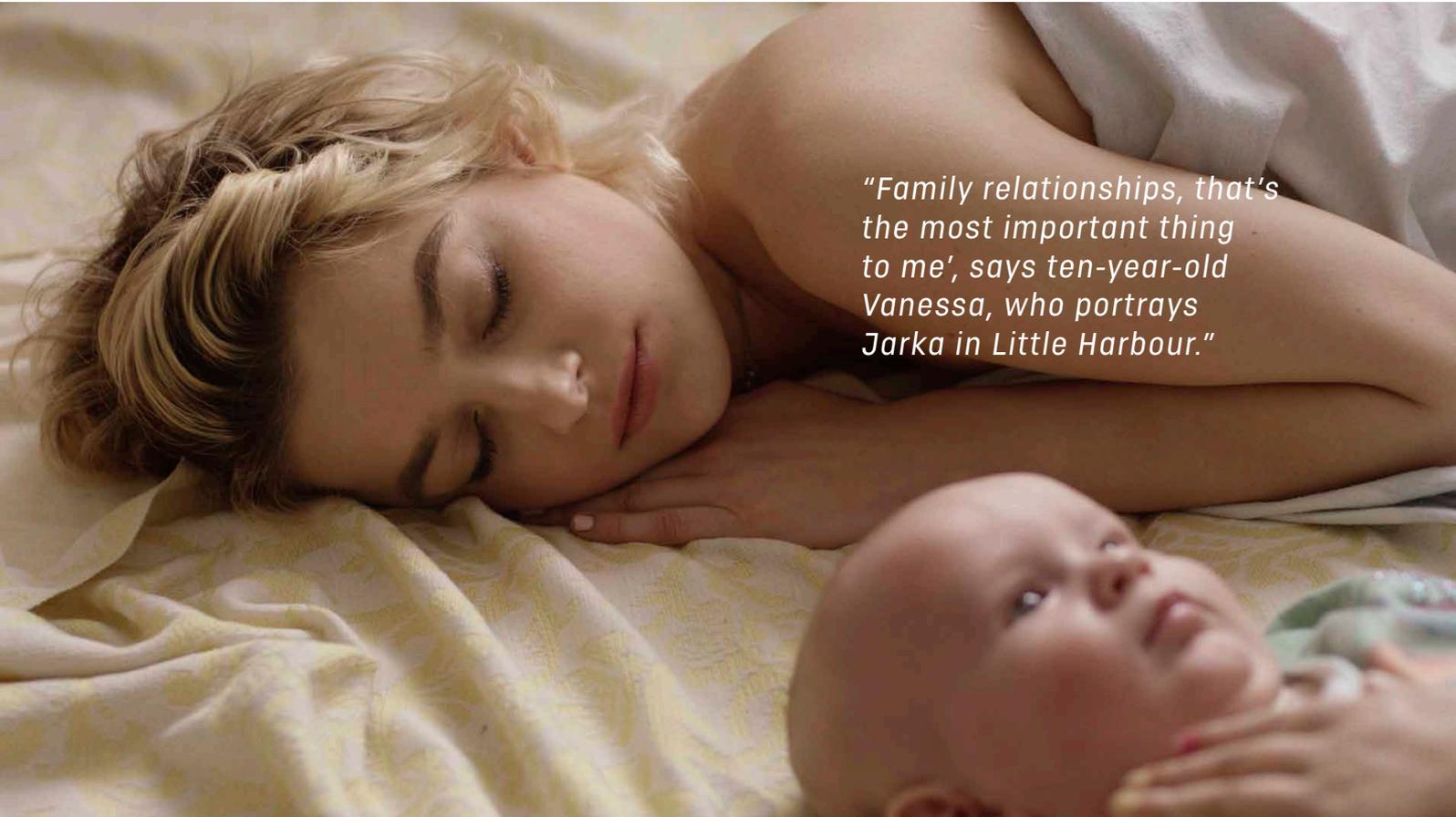
WHY WAS THIS IMPORTANT TO YOU?

Given the subject matter of the film I felt I needed inspiration from someone who viewed the story from a different perspective than me. In this case the opinion of a psychologist was very valuable and interesting.

LITTLE HARBOUR DEALS WITH A NUMBER OF STRONG THEMES. DO YOU BELIEVE THAT A FEATURE FILM CAN INSPIRE AND PROVOKE WIDER PUBLIC DEBATE ABOUT SUCH THEMES?

Whether or not a film delivers a strong message largely depends on the creators, their talents and the energy they are willing to put into the project, as well as on the circumstances which accompany the creative process and distribution. I think there is always a chance that a film will touch upon something that the viewers respond to, that helps them grow, or that stirs public debate. That's why filmmaking is so rewarding.





*"Family relationships, that's the most important thing to me", says ten-year-old Vanessa, who portrays Jarka in Little Harbour."*



**WHAT DID YOU FEEL DURING THE FILM SHOOTING?  
HOW WAS THE EXPERIENCE FOR YOU?**

Mostly, I think, I learnt to be patient. Also, because I had to communicate with a lot with people. Filming is not as easy as it seems. It's hard work. In that respect, my view of filmmaking has changed. I did many things I didn't want to do, but I had to do them because it wouldn't have worked otherwise. For example, when the ants were crawling over me – that was really unpleasant! Also, there were the scenes in the shed – it looked very nasty in there. But the most difficult thing was having to do a scene over and over until we got it right.

**DO YOU KNOW WHAT LITTLE HARBOUR IS ABOUT?**

In the film, my mother doesn't pay any attention to me. I have to look after myself, and she just doesn't care, which isn't good. Once I start caring for the babies, I find out how difficult it is to raise a child, when I'm a child myself.

**WHY IS IT IMPORTANT THAT MOTHERS  
PAY ATTENTION TO THEIR CHILDREN?**

Because it's much better when your mother spends her time with you. When you're home alone and you don't know where your mum is, anything can happen.

**IN THE FILM, JARKA DEMONSTRATES GREAT  
COURAGE WHEN SHE STARTS CARING FOR THE  
BABIES. HOW DID YOU VIEW THAT SITUATION?**

She wanted to save the babies. She couldn't leave them to die. Even though her mother didn't care about her, Jarka wanted to be better, to be a good, caring mother to the babies.



## cast

JARKA  
KRISTIAN  
MOTHER LUCIA  
GRANDMA IRENA  
KRISTIAN'S FATHER  
KRISTIAN'S MOTHER  
MOTHER TO TWIN BABIES

Vanessa Szamuhelová  
Matúš Bačišin  
Katarína Kamencová  
Johanna Tesařová  
Zoltán Schneider  
Ági Gubik  
Martina Slúková

## crew

DIRECTOR  
SCRIPT  
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY  
MUSIC  
SOUND DESIGN

EDITING  
ART DIRECTORS

COSTUMES  
MAKE-UP  
PRODUCTION MANAGERS

Iveta Grófová  
Marek Leščák and Iveta Grófová  
Denisa Buranová  
Matej Hlaváč  
Matej Hlaváč  
Tobiáš Potočný  
Anton Fabian  
Denisa Buranová  
Iveta Grófová  
Iva Němcová  
Martina Čerňáková  
Michala Frimmerová  
Kristína Majorošová  
Daša Parížková

## producers

**Katarína Krnáčová / Iveta Grófová** (Hulapa film, Bratislava, Slovak Republic)  
**Jiří Konečný** (endorfilm, Praha, Czech Republic)

## co-producers

**Péter Reich, Iván Angelusz** (Katapult Film, Budapest, Hungary)  
**Tibor Búza** (Rozhlas a televízia Slovenska, Bratislava, Slovakia)

### CONTACT

Iveta Grófová – Director & Producer  
+421 902 824 855  
ivetagrofova@gmail.com

Katarína Krnáčová – Producer  
+421 905 384 615  
katarina.krnacova@gmail.com

### WORLD SALES

Laurent Daniélou  
LOCO FILMS  
42 Rue Sedaine 75011 Paris  
+33 6 64 20 91 60  
www.loco-films.com

### PRESS CONTACT

Teresa Althen  
+33 7 86 12 89 67  
+49 157 81 44 30 40  
international@loco-films.com

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