



BIG SCREEN COMPETITION  
**INTERNATIONAL  
FILM FESTIVAL  
ROTTERDAM**  
2019



**NORDIC DOCUMENTARY  
COMPETITION**  
Göteborg Film Festival

MOMENTO FILM presents

# Transnistra

a feature documentary by ANNA EBORN

Digital Press Kit



**World premiere:**

International Film Festival Rotterdam 2019,  
Big Screen Competition

**A Co-production between:**

Sweden, Denmark and Belgium  
2019, 96 min, Color, Shot on 16mm

**Languages:**

Russian, Romanian, Ukrainian  
with English subtitles

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## LOGLINE

Atmospherically shot on 16mm film, *Transnistria* is an intimate and vital account of love and friendship in a complex, contradictory world. Award-winning director Anna Eborn (*Pine Ridge*) intimately follows a group of young people as they move from a sweltering, carefree summer through an unforgiving winter in the self-proclaimed state of Transnistria, where the national flag still holds the hammer and sickle.

## SYNOPSIS

The latest film from award-winning director Anna Eborn (*Pine Ridge, Lida*), TRANSNISTRA is set in the self-appointed nation Transnistria (*Priednestrovia*), a narrow strip of land adjacent to Ukraine, where, against an unforgiving landscape of Soviet heritage, a group of 16-year olds search for safety, freedom and meaning. A naturalistic and humane documentary feature, TRANSNISTRA charts a narrative from a sweltering, carefree summer through an unforgiving winter, as each of the film's disparate characters learn to understand each other's hopes and needs.

The film's focus largely falls on Tanya, a headstrong and caring young woman who spends her time among a ragtag group of young males, each of whom seem to be in love with her, and while treating her as one of their own, alternately vie for her affections and wisdom. Having not completed their school studies and unable to find work, the small crew spend their time exploring abandoned construction

sites, often scaling structures with a daredevil sensibility and a youthful carelessness. As they descend to great lakes and spots of overgrown natural beauty, they discuss their hopes and dreams in good humour, soaking in the sun and each other.

Transnistria is not however, an idyllic environment for young people and the past of the former communist state hangs heavy in the air. As Tanya attempts to engineer a future for herself outside of the country, these lovestruck young men begin to contemplate their own future which seems to offer frighteningly limited possibilities.

Atmospherically shot on 16mm film throughout 2017 and 2018, TRANSNISTRA is an intimate and vital account of young people on the margins, as well as a universal story of love, youth culture and coming-of-age in a complex, contradictory world.



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## ABOUT TRANSNISTRIA

As the Soviet Union broke apart and Moldova gained its independence, a thin sliver of land in the east of the country known as Transnistria, approximately 125 by twenty miles, sought to break away. For over 25 years the people of Transnistria have lived in “a frozen conflict” zone, members of a state that, for most of the world, simply does not exist. Some Transnistrians claim that theirs is a completely new country without a past; others insist it is a continuation of the Soviet Union.

Despite its lack of official recognition, Transnistria is now a presidential republic, has its own legislative and executive authority, state border and army, constitution, flag, and anthem. Transnistrians have their own currency and passports, valid nowhere except in Transnistria. Although Russian political, economic and cultural influence is dominant, Transnistria is a melting pot of different ethnicities and languages, a conglomerate of cultures that remains unique, even if invisible on our maps.

## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

My latest movie takes place in Transnistria, also known as Pridnestroiva - a young and not yet recognized country situated in the north of Moldova bordering Ukraine and formed in the early 1990s as a result of the fall of the Soviet Union. I asked myself how the generation born in the nineties might feel about growing up in a Soviet inspired system that the surrounding countries turned their backs to.

Going there, I realized that even if some traditions are as old as the monuments of Lenin, the young people in Transnistria today are much more influenced by modern Russia than the old Soviet state: they listen to modern Russian pop and some are even fans of Putin. And even though some don't seem to care about the political situation at all, almost everyone I met was proud to be a Transnistrian.

During my first research I met a very special group of friends. The dynamics of the group, five boys and one girl, were extremely fascinating. I wanted them to be the centre of the movie. Through them I want to catch the search for

first love, with seventeen-year-old Tanya right in the middle of it all.

The group spends most of their time outside, by the river trying to learn how to swim or climbing the facades of abandoned buildings, throwing stones through open holes in walls where windows were never installed. They are moving inside an unfinished architecture where the narration was cancelled, interrupted or put on hold. Contradictorily enough, the friends feel safe in these seemingly unsafe places, where one can get seriously hurt quite easily. This lack of structure and the ever changing mood of a young person's heart inspired me towards a narration with a free architecture and order.

During summer the friends hang out without being interrupted by grown-ups and the arrival of their own adulthood is postponed. But the further we go into the movie and months pass by, the friends are confronted by society. Each in their own way, they are measured by the adult work to see to which extent they fit the norms of society.

— Anna Eborn, January 2019







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## PRODUCER'S NOTE

With films like *Pine Ridge* and *Lida*, director Anna Eborn has developed a strong and uncompromising yet intimate and poetic voice that takes viewers on unforgettable journeys to places and worlds that we rarely meet.

In her new film *Transnistria*, beautifully shot on 16mm, Anna Eborn invites us to Transnistria, a country that does not officially exist. Amongst old Lenin statues, rundown Soviet buildings and deserted highways, the film delves into a intense drama about love and friendship within a group of young friends who explore boundaries in an attempt to hold on to their childhood. But as time goes by, the reality of growing up in a country where options often are limited to either joining the army, becoming a criminal or just leaving scatters the group into different paths.

With a respectful tone and a timeless artistic expression director Anna Eborn lets the group of friends guide the viewer into an isolated world stuck in between countries, borders and time, but yet affected by the globalized and politicized world.

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## ANNA EBORN

Anna Eborn was born in 1983 in Sweden. Her debut feature length and self edited documentary, Pine Ridge, was selected in the Official Selection at the Venice International Film Festival 2013 and won best Nordic documentary at the International Film festival in Gothenburg in 2014. Further films include Epifania, a hybrid/fiction which premiered at the Busan International Film Festival in 2016 and the feature-length documentary Lida, which premiered in competition at CPH:DOX 2017 and in the international competition at Visions du Reel 2017. Her new film Transnistra is celebrating its world premiere as part of the Big Screen Competition at the 2019 International Film Festival Rotterdam (IFFR).

### FILMOGRAPHY

2017 ..... Lida (Documentary)  
2016..... Epifanía (Hybrid/Fiction feature)  
2014.....Zmiivka (Documentary short)  
2013..... Pine Ridge (Documentary)  
2010/11.....Baba (Documentary short)



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## **DAVID HERDIES – PRODUCER**

David Herdies is a Swedish producer, director and the founder of Memento Film. Herdies has produced over 20 feature documentaries and short films that have been screened and awarded at festivals around the world. Among his prior films are MADRE by Simón Mesa Soto (Official Short Film Competition, Cannes 2016), FRAGILITY by Ahang Bashi (Gothenburg Best Feature, Guldbagge for Best Newcomer, 2017), OUAGA GIRLS by Theresa Traore Dahlberg (IDFA 2017 & 60+ festivals), HAMADA by Eloy Dominguez Serén (First Appearance IDFA, 2018) and HORIZON (Berlinale 2018 - Panorama). Herdies is a member of the EAVE, EURODOC & ACE networks and was Sweden's Producer on the Move at Cannes Film Festival 2018.

## **MICHAEL KROTKIEWSKI – PRODUCER**

Michael Krotkiewski is a Swedish producer, director and since 2015 in Memento Film. With a degree in film-directing from Stockholm Academy of Dramatic Arts he has produced several films of which the feature doc HAMADA and the short docs I DREAMED ABOUT POL POT and 9 SCENES OF VIOLENCE all competed at IDFA. He produced the two short films YELLOW BRICK ROAD (premiered at Jihlava 2015) and RUST (winner Gold Mikeldi award at Zinebi). In 2018 he co-produced MY HEART BELONGS TO DADDY (Amanda for best documentary 2018). Krotkiewski is a member of the EURODOC network and is selected for EAVE 2019.

## **KATJA ADOMEIT – CO-PRODUCER**

Katja Adomeit has produced the feature films THE WEIGHT OF ELEPHANTS & LOVING PIA by Daniel Borgman, (Berlinale 2013 & 2017) and PINE RIDGE (Venice FF 2013) & LIDA, by Anna Eborn, as well as WOLF AND SHEEP by Shahrbanoo Sadat, which won the main award at Director's Fortnight and TEAM HURRICANE by Annika Berg, which has been selected for Venice Critics Week 2017. Katja also co-produced Ruben Östlund's FORCE MAJEURE and THE SQUARE in Coproduction Office Denmark. For Cannes 2013 Screendaily selected Katja as Future Leaders: producers 2013. Katja was selected Producer on the move Cannes 2015 and will premiere in 2019 TRANSNISTRA by Anna Eborn, THE ORPHANAGE by Shahrbanoo Sadat and RESIN by Daniel Borgman as well as the dance film BATTLE.

## **HANNE PHLYPO – CO-PRODUCER**

Hanne Phlypo is a Belgian producer and founder of Clin d'oeil films. The company focuses on creative documentaries and author-driven film with a clear preference for films with a social or political statement by innovative filmmakers. Among her prior films are BY THE NAME OF TANIA (selected for the Generation 14+ at Berlinale 2019), WAITING FOR AUGUST (Nominated for EFA, Best International Documentary Awards Hot Docs), SAMUEL IN THE CLOUDS (Gold Hugo at Chicago International Filmfestival), A FAMILY AFFAIR (Nominated for European Films Awards), HOUSES WITH SMALL WINDOWS (Nominated for EFA) and MANU (IDFA 2018). Hanne is a member of EURODOC and FLANDERS DOC and has been teaching at the Belgian Film School INSAS.

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Director .....ANNA EBORN  
Producers.....DAVID HERDIES, MOMENTO FILM  
MICHAEL KROTKIEWSKI, MOMENTO FILM  
Co-producers.....KATJA ADOMEIT, ADOMEIT FILM  
HANNE PHLYPO, CLIN D'OEIL FILMS  
Original Music.....WALTER HUS  
Cinematographer.....VIRGINIE SURDEJ  
Editor.....ANNA EBORN  
Sound Designer.....THOMAS JAEGER  
Sound Editors.....TED KROTKIEWSKI  
MORTEN DALSGAARD  
Cast.....TANYA, TOLYA, SASHA, BURULYA,  
DENIS, DIMA, VALENTINA & VANYA

