



# DIGITAL PRODUCTION CHALLENGE II

Seven projects were up for analysis at DPC II this year, including one series, 2 documentaries and 4 feature films. “*We selected these projects on some level because they are very different, so we can extract as much as an educational experience and learning from them*”, said the presenter of the pitching session, Paul Miller.

The first one to present his project was **Louis Beaudemont**, producer of ***A Hawk as Big as a Horse***. Directed by Aleksandra (Sasha) Gulak, the film follows Lydia, a bigender ornithologist who lives in the suburbs of Moscow, Russia. She uses her feminine identity as a way to achieve and fulfill her deepest desires and dreams, recreating the ambience of David Lynch's ***Twin Peaks*** series at her home, where she lives with Vassilissa, her wife.

Already in the final stage of production, there are a few shots yet to be made this spring. Currently supported by the Sundance Institute, Garage Museum and SCAM (French authors union), the project should be released next year in film festivals. A campaign with digital art merchandising is already planned.

***A Hawk as Big as a Horse*** was made using various formats, both super 8mm film, digital dsc camera, standard definition video camera and even a thermal camera (toy) for some aspects of the design.

The next in line was UK producer Karen Taylor, who presented a “*very light budget sci-fi feature film*” called ***The Zenith***, about a young woman who, after a family tragedy, embarks on a soul search journey and discovers the existence of extraterrestrial life that holds the answers that she desperately seeks.

Taylor seeks a total budget of £ 120 000 , that already has in mind Covid-19 regulations in the UK. The shoot will take 2 weeks in districts of northwest England, which will serve as a place to recreate Angus in Scotland. The director is James Edward Kirk and they are planning to use a Blackmagic Pocket Camera 4K on a 2:1 aspect ratio.

“*There will be no tech vehicles. We have to carry cameras, sound equipment in backpacks, documentary style (...) We’ll be shooting with an extremely reduced crew, 9*

or 10 members. The majority of the film is just with one protagonist. We are going to live in a bubble, the crew, sharing accommodation, protecting ourselves from this covid nightmare”, says the producer, adding that the majority of the budget consists of in-kind deals.

A small cash budget is still required to achieve, around 40 000 pounds, and crowdfunding is essential for contingencies. There will be 2 crowdfunding campaigns: first at Indiegogo and then on Kickstarter. The distribution plan involves a VOD release of the movie.

The first documentary project presented in DPC II was delivered by producer Anna Huth. Directed by Marcin Koszalka, who already has credits as DoP, **Museum of Races** tells the story of polish citizens who lived in the mountains and cooperated with the Nazis in World War II. “*Politically it’s a difficult film, full of controversies (...) the Highlanders are considered in Poland a symbol of patriotism.*”, said the producer before adding some technical aspects of the film, that she defined as “*an experimental documentary*” with different construction layers: archival footage, photos, 35 mm material already shot with an Arriflex 235, and other digital modern documentary footage that will be shot with 2 cameras.

Philippe Ros showed some differences in the decision tree, suggesting in the part of the film capture the use of film on 35 mm, with negative film processing, 4k Scan and 4K DI and 4k DCP. The final workflow included the use of DSLR Black Magic pocket and Digital Cinema, which brings to a 4 DI and 4K DCP post.

The budget is around € 135 000, that includes 15 shooting days, a television video format, but also a festival format. The film will be screened and exhibited with additional materials, “*like people greeting in the train station, either polish or german, coming during the World War*”. It’s also planned some merchandise to show highlanders as “golden people”, kind of the “mascot” they have become over the years.

The 4th project presented was “**Piaffe**”. Producer Kristof Garega made the presentation revealing that the movie follows Ewa, a submissive woman completely dependent on her sibling, Zara. When Zara suffers the rejection of her lover, she ends up in a mental institution and Ewa is left for the first time alone. She’s forced to continue Zara’s job as a foley artist and begins to create sounds for a film featuring a horse. That’s when a horse begins to grow out of Ewa’s body and that will bring her an empowering force. She starts following the lover who rejected Zara, entering in an affair with him, in which she experiences a sexual coming of age.

Defined as a “visceral thriller” punctuated with surreal nuances, Kristof and director Ann Oren plan to shoot on 16 mm film to create a specific look, like she did for her short film, **Passage**.

**Piaffe** was described as a low-budget film with a budget around €650 000. Acclaimed crew and cast members are committed already with the production that had her first funding approved by the German ministry of culture. Therefore, around 50% of the budget is already in place, but the financial process didn't go as planned: *"We are now co-producing additionally with NRW, so it's a film from Germany and Netherlands. Their funding decisions will be announced one month before the shooting starts, which confronts us with the difficult situation of not knowing the actual budget. We are working around the situation to be as flexible as possible, preparing to work with that budget, but also with less because we are determined to shoot this by the end of July and August."*

A German and polish distributor are already on board, and there's some work done with a visual artist to develop ideas on how to distribute **Piaffe** artwork.

Berlin based producer Nadja Smith presented the 90 minutes project of the documentary **Big Oil Vs The Law**, that follows 4 persons in 4 continents who lead legal processes against oil and fossil fuel companies. *"As we believe in the power of the story rather than reporting facts and numbers we are focusing on the very personal and emotional stories of our protagonists"*, said Nadja, revealing that this collaborative documentary will be shot by four local teams in Peru, New York, Philippines and in the Netherlands. *"This is where the stories are happening and our protagonists live"*.

The head director of the film is Mette Reitzel. She's based in London, as the editor, John Mister, known for **The Divide** (2016) and **Ping Pong** (2012). Siri Klug is working as a consultant DoP. So far, Nadja and her production company, Inselfilm, has only a co-production partner from the Netherlands: Rinkel Film from Reinier Selen & Julia Rombout.

The plan is that the documentary - in an early stage, even though there's already 80 hours of footage - will be released in international festivals, broadcasters, theaters and VOD. The financing partners during the development phase were mostly private sponsors and NGO's, but they are aiming to apply for European Film Funds, approach broadcasters and involve distributors. *"The goal is to empower people to act , to activate their individual potential. Not regarding concrete actions, but creating awareness of what's going on"*.

In this project, Philippe Ros focused on the importance of harmonization of the different media from archive footage and the use of Eva-1 as main camera (4K DI and 4K DCP), and a Canon 10C-1D or the 5D and 7D series (4K DI and 4K DCP).

Portuguese Luis Campos presented his feature film debut, ***Dirty Land***, already granted for development by ICA and selected for EAVE Producers Workshop last year. Campos is developing the project with his own company, Matiné, in a co-production with BRO Cinema, where he works too.

***Dirty Land*** is a drama set in the north of Portugal and it tells the story of a twelve years old boy that lives alone with his father, a lumper/fisherman. In the house next door lives a mother with two teenage daughters. The boy is in love with the youngest. When the girl that he loves feels attracted to another boy, the kid feels that he needs to start following more and more his father, which is a very conservative, misogynist, rude man. The kid thinks that by doing that he will become more successful, regaining the attention of the girl, but by replicating his father's behavior, contrary to what he was expecting, he will slowly start getting the girl more distant from him. When he witnesses an attempt of sexual harassment from his father towards the older girl that lives next door, everything that he had for granted will never go back to normal. The routine that he had with the girls next door will never be the same.

The project is aimed for international co-production, mainly in post-production. Campos was also granted production support for a short film that he will shoot later this year, and hopefully it will help him to test part of the crew, cameras and the workflow that he will try to bring to his feature film.

Philippe Ros suggested the use of Arri Alexa or Panavision Dxl 2 to this project (4K DI and 4K DCP).

“*Last, but not least*”, as Paul Miller said, Greta Akcijonaite from Vilnius presented ***Troll Farm***, a five episodes series. Already with funding from Lithuania national film fund, the plan is to shoot in 2022.

The director will be Ernestas Jankauskas, who has already done two feature films. The series follows Anna, who works for a worldwide cosmetic company. She's been wrongly accused and fired from there and wants revenge. She buys an abandoned farm, where she pretends to grow apple trees and raise chickens but indeed, she creates a troll farm, and the fake personality of Judith. She plans bringing shady corporations down, like the one she got fired from. The revenge develops in 5 episodes and the plot also includes her family relations and how she's becoming a monster.

Greta's production company already has experience in co-production series with other countries, like Sweden and Norway, but this will be the first series developed by them.

The plan is to shoot in eight weeks. With that in mind, they chose an experienced DoP from the UK, “*who knows how to work with little equipment and low budget*”. Most of the technical choices are made by him and the director, that included the use of Alexa Mini LF, Arri Alexa LF and/or Arri Alexa Mini (UHD DI).

