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A film inspired
by the book
The Little Prince
– Antoine
de St Exupéry

THE MIRACLE OF THE LITTLE PRINCE

A FILM
BY
**MARJOLEINE
BOONSTRA**



PRESS

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Opening August 28th in New York at Film Forum

THE MIRACLE OF THE LITTLE PRINCE

A film inspired by the book
The Little Prince - Antoine de Saint Exupéry



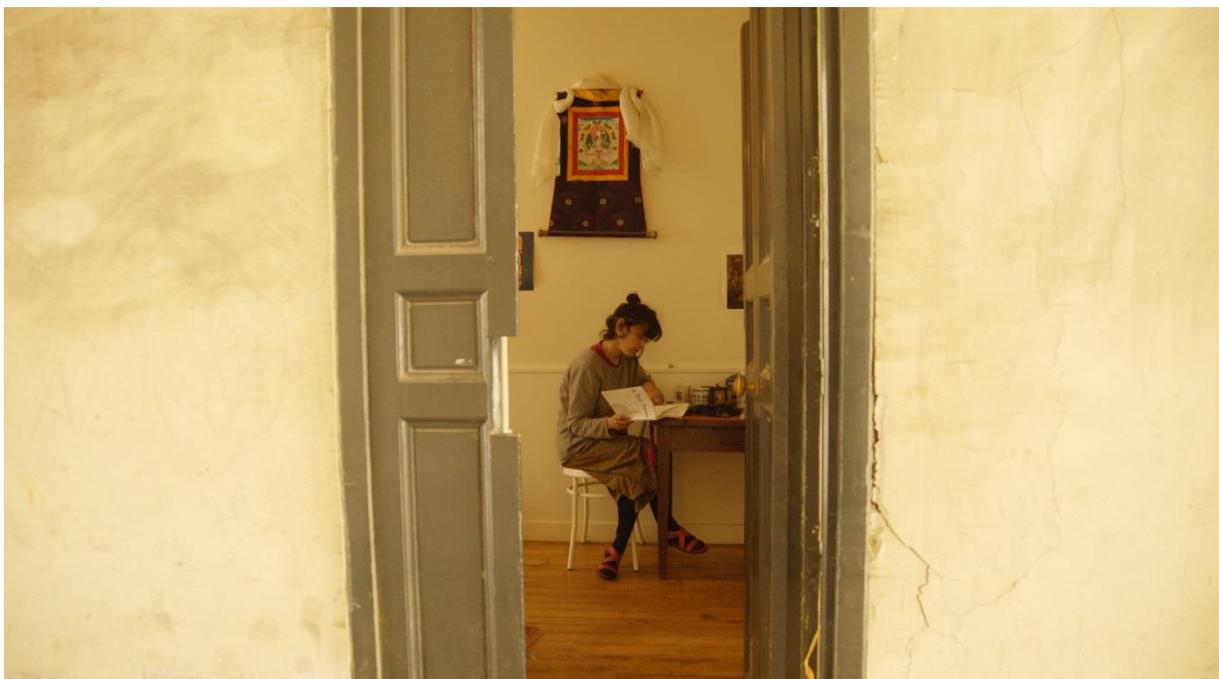
A Pieter van Huystee Film Production

The Netherlands | 89 minutes | 2018 | 16x9 | 5.1 Surround Sound

CREDITS

Director	Marjoleine Boonstra
Research	Lies Janssen
Script	Marjoleine Boonstra / Lies Janssen / Pieter van Huijstee
Cinematography	Marjoleine Boonstra
Camera Assistant	Stef van Wijk
Sound	Kees de Groot
Editing	Menno Boerema NCE
Composers	Harry de Wit / Mari Boine / Svein Schultz
Sound Design	Marc Lizier
Grading	Michiel Rummens
Finishing	Jan Jaap Kuiper
Datahandling	Witse Eisma
Line Producers	Marty de Jong / Lotte Gerding / Céline Baggen
Indie Film AS	Carsten Aanonsen / Sarah Winge-Sørensen
Producer	Pieter van Huijstee
Production Coordinator NTR	Astrid Prickaerts
Commissioning Editor NTR	Oscar van der Kroon / Marloes Blokker / Diana Tromp

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THE MIRACLE OF THE LITTLE PRINCE

LOGLINE

A documentary about the passionate translators of the book *The Little Prince* by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, who fight for the preservation of their endangered languages. Next to the Bible, *The Little Prince* is the most translated book in the world. It can be read in over 300 languages. Why do people from very diverse cultures precisely choose this book to keep their languages and cultures alive?

SYNOPSIS

The Little Prince, Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's celebrated philosophical children's book about friendship, love and respect, is one of the world's most widely translated literary works. In *The Miracle of the Little Prince*, Marjoleine Boonstra visits the people who have translated this little masterpiece from French into Tibetan, Tamazight (North Africa), Sámi (northern Finland and Scandinavia) and Nawat (El Salvador). All of these languages are under threat.

Passionately enthusiastic language researchers, teachers and translators talk about how the observations of an alien prince on earth are interpreted in their own culture. They also recall the first time they read the book, and, naturally enough, discuss the linguistic challenges they faced – how do you translate “water faucet” if there's no such term in your world? This original approach and the exquisite, calm cinematography allow for the telling of personal stories that are as bizarre, human and painful as the experiences of the titular prince. It's a film that inspires wonder – a testimony to the imagination and the solace and liberation it offers.

–IDFA Summary



BACKGROUND

The Little Prince has been translated worldwide in more than three hundred languages and every year new translations are added. It touches something essential in people's hearts – in all cultures and in the furthest corners of the earth. In the book the little prince leaves his home, a star where he feels lonely. On a quest for friendship and love he travels from planet to planet. He meets people and animals, asks why they do the things they do and he never judges. Everybody in the book is lonely, such as the king who rules from his throne but has no subjects, or the conceited man who wants to be praised to high heavens, or the lamplighter who performs such a vital job. The little prince keeps moving on, in search of people he understands and who understand him so that they may be friends. Eventually he ends up on earth where a clever fox, and a snake as angel of death, help him to find what he seeks. In his innocence the little prince has stolen the hearts of millions of readers all over the world.

The film explores deeply the theme of friendship that is central to *The Little Prince*. In the film the translators form a duo with a dear friend who, just like themselves, have locked the little prince in their hearts. They are putting their lives in the service of language and culture. These duos reinforce each other's stories and presence. The story of Kerttu Vuolab, for instance, is very personal and emotional. The Moroccan Lahbib Fouad, the translator of *The Little Prince* into Tamazight, is a dedicated but also introvert and sometimes stubborn personality. His friend, the poet Omar Taous, is exuberance itself and he manages to seduce Lahbib to candour in no time. That kind of cross-fertilization makes the film all that livelier.

Each of the stories place different accents but taken all together they form an exchange of landscapes, languages and cultures. Together, in the spirit of the little prince, they form a warm, humane plea asking you to wonder what really matters in the world and in life. The film feeds a growing awareness that the care for and the preservation of what makes you feel at home is essential for your existence as a human being, essential for life on this planet.

In the film we let our main characters take us to their world. We take on the role of the little prince, who greets everybody full of curiosity and asks people at which station in their life they have arrived, and why they do what they do. Such as Omar, who imbues us with his love for the desert as the dromedaries roar off the delusions of the day on their way home. How terrific is it not when we can shed the materialistic cocoon in which we have satisfactorily shut ourselves in, so that we can, by breaking the shell, experience the desert like a newly-born bird. So that we can place ourselves in the language and the life of our main characters. So that we don't just visit the landscape, but really be there.

The first dimension consists of images in the sky, inspired by the thoughts of Antoine de Saint-Exupéry. They are accompanied by quotations from *The Little Prince*, read by the main characters of the film in their own language. Music in which resonate the sounds of the cultures that are in danger. A dimension that provokes wonderment and emotional confusion. At first you cannot do anything but let it come over you like a giant wave. As the film progresses the significance and understanding of what you hear and see increases. Not everything will immediately be translated.

The second dimension is making the acquaintance of the dedicated translators who convey the necessity of translation through their personal stories. If the language survives, then they will. We meet them in the landscape with which their language and culture is connected.

The third dimension is formed by the books of *The Little Prince* in Jean-Marc Probst's library. We will be landing there two or three times in the film. The wealth of books, languages and alphabets.

The fourth dimension I would like to introduce is looking. Images of people looking at you. People staring into the lens long, concentrated and unembarrassed; moving portraits that seem to look right through you. You look at them, but they look back even harder. The visual translation of the attitude of the little prince, his curiosity and his almost childlike amazement. What do they see and what do you see?

What the dimensions have in common is, just like the little prince does so well, touching your heart. I love aesthetic, technically perfect images of maximum quality and there will be plenty of them in this film. However, I will not shy away from less polished images, but make full use of coincidence when it happens. If you hobble along with your camera on a sledge in a temperature of 25° below zero you will not make perfect shots, but you can communicate the feeling of such a journey in freezing cold.



MARJOLEINE BOONSTRA - DIRECTOR

Marjoleine Boonstra is a Dutch film director and photographer with over 25 years of experience. Her documentaries always circle around the theme: what keeps mankind alive. In 2015, her first feature film KURAI KURAI - TALES ON THE WIND premiered. She combines a poetic visual approach with a compassionate view on the world, which make her documentaries striking and touching.

