

AUTO KAR

A film by **Sylvia Szkiładź**

Original title | Autokar
English title | Autokar
Directors | Sylwia Szkiładź
Producers | Ozù Productions, Amopix, Vivi Film & Novanima
Production | 2025
Visa number | 160 698
Isan number | 0000-0005-889B-0000-3-0000-0000-S
Duration | 17'
Nationality | Belgian and French
Genre | Animation
Others | Magic realism, docu-fiction
Animation techniques | 2D computer
Projection speed | 25fps
Language | Polish, French
Subtitles | French, English (UK)
Sound | 5.1
Cadre | 1,85:1
Rating | All audiences

An animated shortfilm by Sylwia Szkiładź

produced by OZÙ PRODUCTIONS, AMOPIX,
VIVI FILM et NOVANIMA

Coproduced by RTBF (Belgian television)
and Shelter Prod

With the support of
the Cinema and Audiovisual Center
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and the Flanders Audiovisual Fund (VAF)

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and the support of ALCA
the Dordogne department
the Polish Ministry of Culture
SACD - aide à l'écriture



SYNOPSIS

In the 1990s, 8 years-old Agata leaves Poland for Belgium. Anxious about her journey, the little girl writes a letter to her father back home, but her pencil falls out and gets lost on the bus. Forced to overcome her shyness, she crawls between the seats in search of the pencil, plunging into a fantastic world populated by strange half-human, half-animal passengers. At the tender age of 8, her eyes transform the reality of migration into an initiatory experience.



DIRECTOR'S NOTE OF INTENT

in 1994, I left my family and my home in north-eastern Poland to join my mother. I was eight and a half years old and it was an important transitional period in my life, during which I learned a lot and grew up. Whenever the opportunity arose, I would travel by bus between the two countries. During these many journeys, I met people who shared their stories, their longings and their memories with me, while maintaining a sense of humour. The emotions I felt during these crossings and the long hours spent observing the landscape inspired me to create this project.

The subject of uprooting transcends time and borders; it is universal. I think it is important to talk about human experiences, about lived experiences, to remember that behind the word immigration there are human beings, journeys that change lives, perceptions of the world. In the case of the main character in this film, Agata, I want her to discover herself by meeting the passengers. I want these encounters to teach her something for the future. I have been thinking about telling this story for a while, and although today the theme resonates with current events, I have not chosen to stick to it. I started from the observation that there are few written or filmed accounts of this Polish migration to Western Europe in the 1990s.

Thirty years later, these stories remain alive, not only for me but also for the rest of the Polish community who built their lives elsewhere. The feelings of that era are still very much present. I became even more aware of this when recording testimonies for this project, in order to gather information from people who, like me, left Poland as children in the 1990s. These children, now adults, all have vivid memories of their journeys. In my opinion, it is necessary to work on remembering European migrations, and to do so by anchoring this history precisely in real geographical locations.

I wanted to portray as accurately as possible and as closely as possible the link between collective memory and the experiences embodied by my characters.

The story takes place mainly on the bus, a moving closed space. The narrative possibilities seem very rich to me; the interior of the vehicle can be a place where the child's imagination comes to life, where what we see through the window allows us to travel into the past, into memories. The bus is a place where we are together and alone at the same time.

The child's point of view inspires me because she's still free from the pragmatic reasoning of adults. She has the precious ability to let her imagination come to life and her feelings take shape. The child in this story develops an abundant daydreaming ability in order to appropriate a world outside the family circle, that of adults in transition, which she discovers and which eludes her.

I am very interested in the theme of the difference between children and adults. It is by identifying with Agata that we can follow her in this story. She immerses us in a world between realism and dreamlike fantasy, with characters that are half-human, half-animal. If they have hybrid forms, it is to externalise the anxieties but also the creative vision of adults from the child's point of view. Fantasy in everyday life is a way of poetically transcribing vague feelings, vague discomfort or hidden terrors. In the case of Agata, I would like to explore the anxieties associated with travelling, meeting people outside her family circle, the fear of travelling alone, the sadness of leaving her family and home, etc. This series of encounters is like an initiatory journey that will lead her, at the end of the trip, to have a more reassuring view of these adults in transition.

The marvellous passengers become human again once they reach their destination, when Agata is reunited with her mother. This ending is a way of conveying that the child has grown up, as her view of adults becomes more peaceful. Furthermore, this final image reminds us that despite their fantastical qualities, these people are human and vulnerable.

In this journey between two worlds, in this way of staging the characters, AUTOKAR clearly takes on the tone of a fairy tale and a road movie.

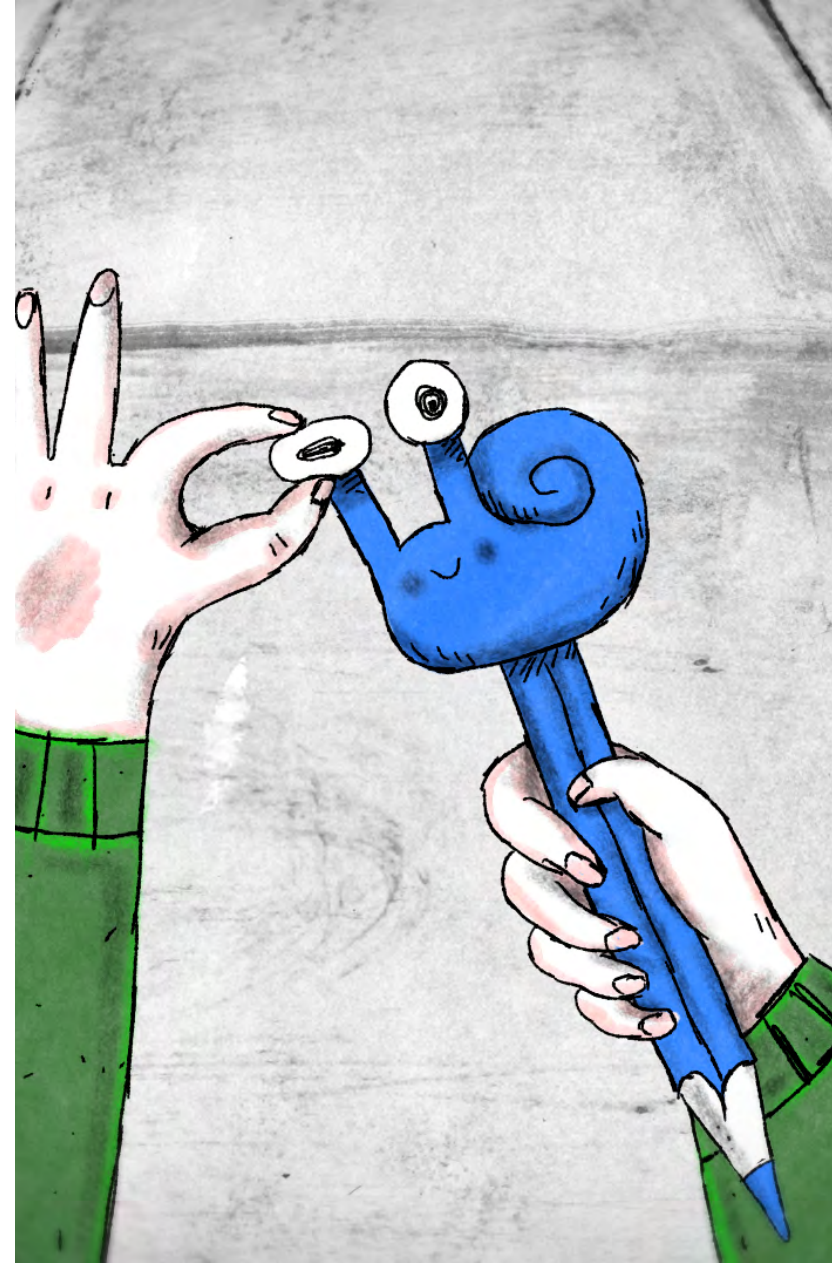


SYLWIA SZKIŁADŹ

BIOGRAPHY

Sylwia Szkiładź is a director of short animated films. She was born in 1987 in Podlaskie (in Poland), which she left at the age of 8 with her parents to live in Brussels. However, Podlaskie was and remains one of her most important artistic inspirations.

Her film productions include: *'Limaçon et caricoles'* (2012) co-directed with Nim Gamboa, *'La Soupe aux fraises'* (2014) and *'Le Renard minuscule'* (2015) co-directed with Aline Quertain. She works freelance on various forms of animation: video clips co-directed with Jessica Poon *'The Skeleton band'*, *'The Midnight Secret socks party'*, animations created with Marion Sellenet for the series *'Les Chroniques végétales'*. She shares her knowledge and experience of animation with children and adults by organising workshops in centres and schools.



CONVERSATION WITH...

SYLWIA SZKIŁADŹ

What was it about this story or concept that connected with you and compelled you to direct the film?

The idea of distancing myself from this story -so close to me- by fictionalizing it felt liberating. The emotions I experienced during the many trips I took between Poland and Belgium since the age of eight, throughout the '90s, were always intense. I felt the need to revisit them in order to reclaim them as an adult.

In the little girl, there is a part of me, but also echoes of many others I've met who have gone through the experience of being uprooted.

What did you learn through the experience of making this film, either production-wise, filmmaking-wise, creatively, or about the subject matter?

Putting certain emotions into words -especially those tied to the experience of being uprooted- is never easy. Animation gave me a different medium through which to express them.

I believe the topic of economic migration is often trivialized in today's world, yet it lies at the heart of many identity-related questions we grapple with.

I had never made a 2D film on this subject before, so the process was a real learning experience. Collaborating with a team helped me gain distance from a deeply personal story and transform it into a fictional one.

Can you describe how you developed your visual approach to the film? Why did you settle on this style/technique?

From a child's perspective, everything feels exaggerated: details take on symbolic weight, proportions shift, and the bus itself transforms into a space that can feel creepy at times and endearing at others.

Through the eyes of this little girl, migration becomes an initiatory journey -and animation offers the perfect medium to bring that vision to life.

The color palette imposed itself on me: the gray of concrete contrasted with the flashy hues inspired by 1990s Poland, creating an aesthetic all its own. It was a vivid sensation of contrast that demanded to be expressed.

How did you balance realism and fantasy in Autokar, that is, how did you decide which parts of the journey remain ?

I wanted the film to have multiple layers of meaning. Each one speaks to a different part of us. The little girl's perspective on migration helped me explore exaggeration and subjectivity. With the editor, we called certain sequences "mental" -symbolic layers that speak to the unconscious. They emerged from the intensity of her emotions. I tried to plant that language from the very beginning, so viewers would grow familiar with it. These images carry symbolic resonance, and I wanted them to linger beyond the film - to stay with us in life.

ABOUT THE PRODUCERS



OZÙ PRODUCTIONS is a belgian production company born in January 2020. Its founders are Jérémie Mazurek, animation director and co-founder of the animation studio L'Enclume and Christophe Beaujean, scriptwriter.

Driven by a common urge to support the authors until the realization of their projects, we now want to offer them a production environment which meets their specific needs.



Founded in 2002, the Amopix production studio specialises in mixing real plans and motion designs for advertising and corporate purposes. Since 2011, the studio has also included animation in its programme to realise series, documentary, short and feature film projects.

Our teams work with passion and are put together to suit the individual projects and requirements. Our new studios, which opened at the end of 2016, offer space for up to 20 people to work in graphic design, editing or calibration.

ABOUT THE PRODUCERS



VIVI FILM

Vivi Film, founded by Viviane Vanfleteren, is an independent Belgian film production company with over 32 years of experience. The company's animation credits include 'The Triplets of Belleville' and 'The Secret of Kells', which were both selected as Academy Award® Nominees. Viviane won in 2009, together with her coproducers from Les Armateurs and Cartoon Saloon, the Cartoon Movie Tribute Award for European producer of the year.

With Veerle Appelmans attached as producer, Vivi Film is focusing on high profile European animation coproductions. Today Vivi Film has various animation projects in different stages of development, financing, production and distribution.

novanima

Novanima is an independent production company that has been producing animated films and creative documentaries since 2006. The company is animated by Marc Faye, Magali Hériat, Aliénor Pauly, Emeline Martin, Chia-Yu Chung et Julien Rougier.

We highlight the original treatments of the films we accompany with a sensitivity for hybrid forms that mix real shots, animations and archives. Our editorial line focuses on films on art, history and society and we remain open to other themes depending on the project.

DISTRIBUTOR

Miyu Distribution

Luce Grosjean

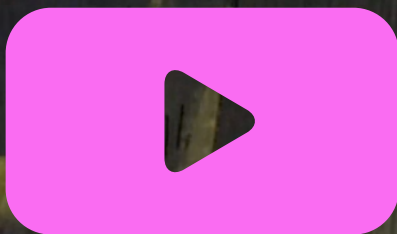
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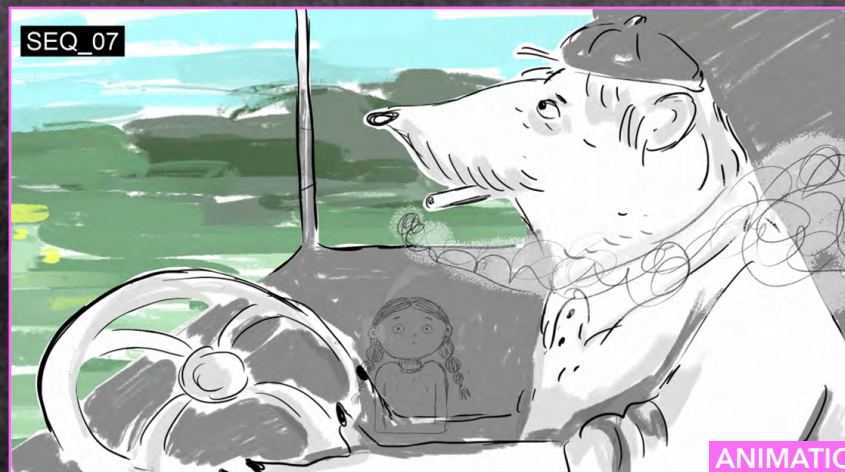
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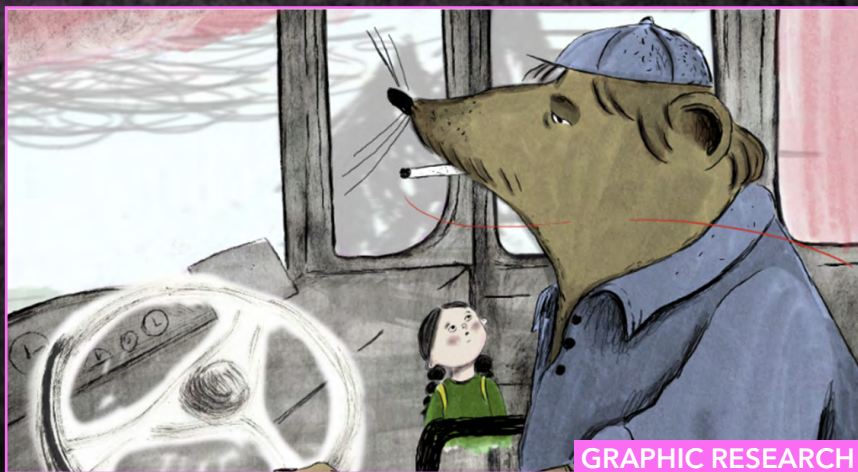
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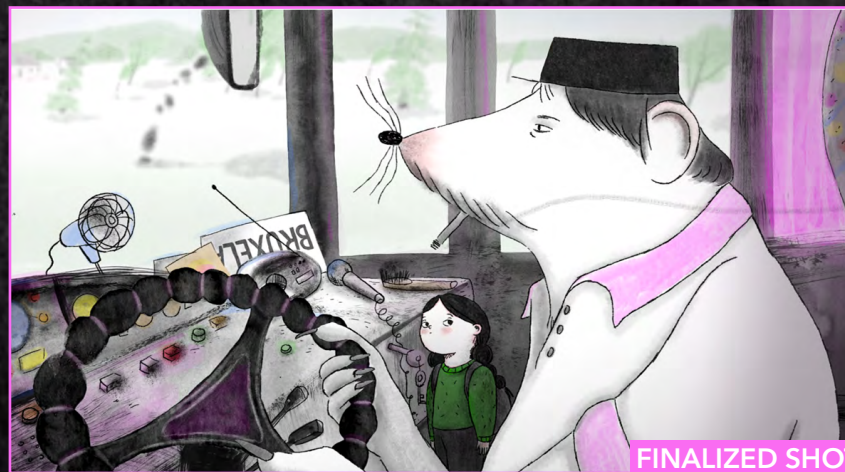
STORYBOARD



ANIMATIC

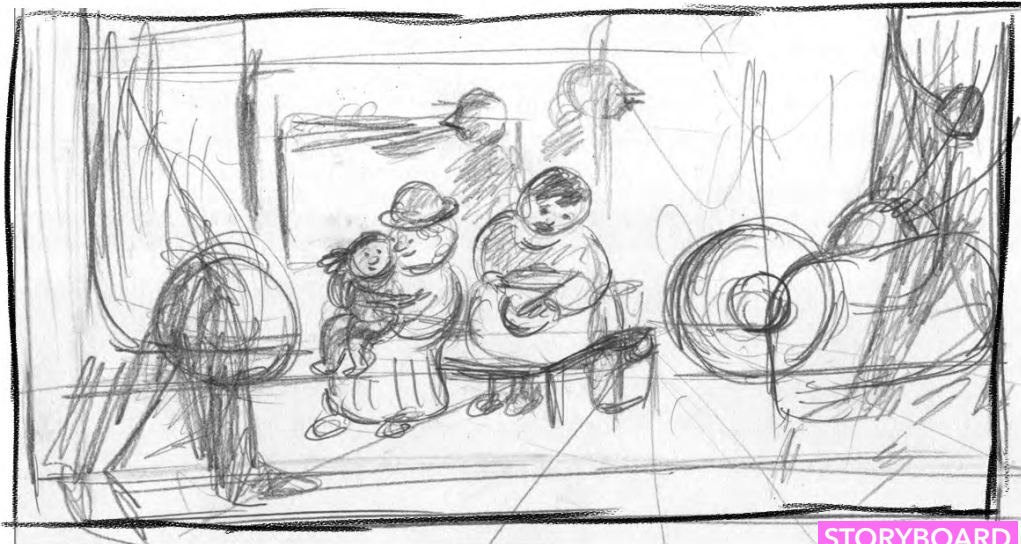


GRAPHIC RESEARCH



FINALIZED SHOT

BEHIND THE SCENES



STORYBOARD



ANIMATION



BACKGROUND



FINALIZED SHOT



BARBARA DRAZKOV

MUSIC COMPOSER



MARIA CONTERNO

MUSIC RECORDER

**MICHAŁ JANKOWSKI
PAWEŁ ŁUCZAK**

VOICES RECORDERS

CAMILLE SCHAUER

VOICES EDITOR



SARAH TEMSTET

ADDITIONAL MUSIC



FLORIAN FABRE

FOLEY ARTIST

**DAMIEN FAVREAU
FABIEN GIRARD**

SOUND & MUSIC MIXERS

ANTONIN VIVET

SOUND EDITOR



TRANSMISJA Z KIESZENI

ADDITIONAL MUSIC

MUSIC & SOUND DESIGN

CASTING & VOICES

Natalia Wolska : Agata

Henryk Niebudek : The Grandfather

Elżbieta Gaertner : The Grandmother
& The Owl

Marcin Pempuś : The Driver

Lidia Sadowa : The Bat

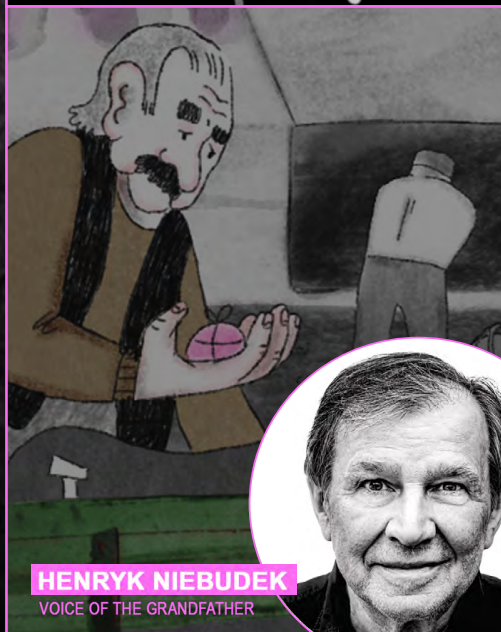
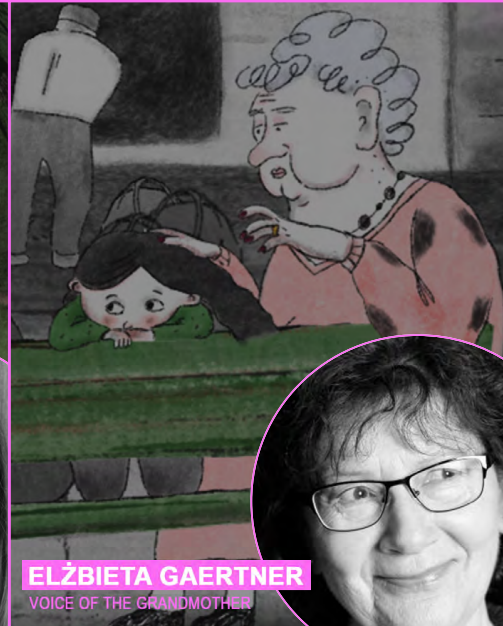
Barbara Jonak : The She-Wolf &
the Mouse

Mariusz Ostrowski : The Bear

Konrad Beta : The Father

Anna Seniuk : The Sparrow Lady

Additional voices : **Ewa Borysewicz**,
Michał Jankowski





ANIMATORS

GASPAR CHABAUD

RONNI SHALEV

EVE DE ROECK

ANNE ESCOT

PIERRE LEBRUN

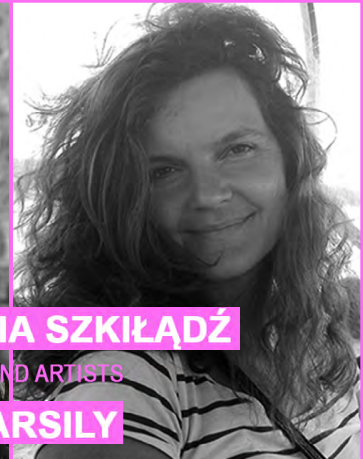
AGATHE SOLLIER



SYLVIA SZKIŁADŹ

BACKGROUND ARTISTS

NOÉMIE MARSILY



LEAD COMPOSITING

MATHIEU PERRIER



EDITOR

JÉRÔME ERHART



IMAGE

