



Locarno Film Festival
Official Selection

◆ STEAKHOUSE ◆

a short film by **Špela Čadež**

Slovenia / Germany / France

9:30 min


2021

production **Finta Film**

co-production **Fabian&Fred, RTV Slovenija,**
Miyu Productions

OPEN



A close-up photograph of a person's hand, with fingers slightly spread, hovering just above a black, ribbed grill pan. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be a kitchen setting. The lighting is soft, highlighting the texture of the skin and the ridges on the pan.

"This mature and refined work is indeed an impeccable animation, frightening and humorous at the same time, presenting a deceptively simple yet relevant story, brightened up by a deliciously biting feminist touch." **Locarno selection committee**

SYNOPSIS

The steak has been marinating for a few days now. The pan is heated. Franc's stomach is rumbling. But Liza's co-workers surprise her with a birthday party. Will she be home on time?

TRAILER

<https://vimeo.com/562888496>



CREW

Director

Špela Čadež

Animation

Zarja Menart, Anka Kočever,
Špela Čadež, Clémentine Robach

Screenplay

Gregor Zorc

Editor

Iva Kraljević

Music

Tomaž Grom, Olfamož

Voices

Maruša Majer, Marko Mandić

Visual Postproduction

Thomas Schmidl

Sound design

Johanna Wienert

Producers:

Tina Smrekar, Špela Čadež / Finta Film

Co-producers

Fabian&Fred / RTV Slovenija / Miyu
Productions / RTV Slovenija

TREATMENT

A middle-aged man (Franc) takes great pleasure in preparing his favourite food — a steak. His workflow is meticulous. Every movement is elaborate, error-free. On the other side of the city we see a woman (Liza) hurrying somewhere. It is obvious that she is late. When the steak is already apparently grilled, Franc does not take it off the stove. He lets it burn. Heavy smoke swells from the pan and slowly fills the entire apartment. When the steak is completely burned and the apartment is thoroughly covered in smoke, the door opens and Liza enters. With fast movements, she extinguishes the damage, but the anger growing in Franc cannot be extinguished so easily.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

In my new short animated film "Steakhouse" I address the challenging topic of dispute resolution between four walls. Psychological violence is something invisible.

It remains hidden among us, seldom leaves the anonymity and appears in the open only in its most terrible form. Concealment is its greatest strength. It leaves no bruises, fractures, blood, but devastated souls. Souls wandering in mazes of depression, self-destruction, low self-esteem and fighting for a spark of human dignity. From a legal perspective, psychological violence is extremely difficult, as there is almost no evidence. People who are exposed to it remain in most cases alone, without help, obliged to silence and left to the will of their perpetrators.

This topic seems extremely interesting to me for further exploration of the multiplane collage technique that I used in my previous film "Nighthawk". Due to its pronounced fluidity, the multiplane technique can also very cunningly create different illusions of space and hypnotic transitions between them. This allows the story to be narrated in a unique way that is only possible in the world of animated film. The central part, in

which the protagonist grills the steak, is in this regard particularly fitting. The smoke that is then released fills the room, making our eyes water and giving us a reality that can very well flirt with an illusion. In this manner also the sound of the film has been built, with sizzling, humming and crackling of the kitchen utensils.

With this film I want to invade the privacy of a couple. I want to observe the mechanisms through which their lives run. Where is the border between normal and abnormal? I wonder why someone allows him- or herself to become a victim and why does the other need this sacrifice? Is it possible that the hangman and his victim are happy in their relationship? Above all, I want to immerse myself in the atmosphere of a closed apartment, unspoken words and constant fear.

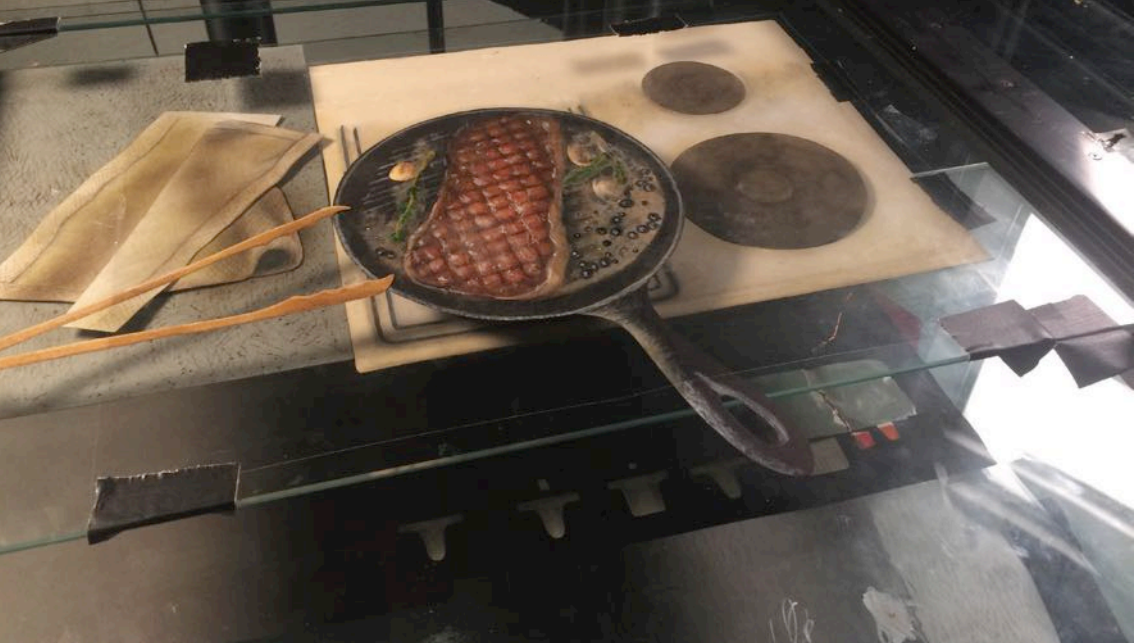
"With its play of light and shadow, the blur and the unusual vagueness of the space, the multiplane technique can be extremely effective to enter the psychological state of the main characters." Špela Čadež:

STUDIO FINTA

Finta Film is specialized in producing stop motion animated films, mainly puppet animation and cut-out multiplane techniques. Combining diverse painting and illustrating techniques such as painting or scratching on cell and paper have been characteristic for recent multiplane productions. The studio has produced several commissions, with the most noted Orange is the New Black recap for Netflix.

Description of animation technique

The aesthetic in Steakhouse was created with the use of a multiplane camera set up, achieving motion in animation with the help of oil-painted cell and paper cut-outs. Following the footsteps of the Russian master Yuriy Norshteyn, Čadež already used the multiplane technique on her previous film, Nighthawk and developed its use further in Steakhouse. Čadež is inclined to combining traditional and experimental techniques to solve creative challenges in the film and search for the inherent visual representation of the storyline and its characters.





ŠPELA ČADEŽ

Špela Čadež is animation director and co-founder of Finta Studio in Ljubljana, Slovenia. Her films have received 100+ awards at festivals worldwide and were screened in competition selections such as the Sundance Film Festival, Clermont Ferrand and Annecy. A passionate advocate for the analogue, Čadež has impressed with films in puppet and cut-out animation techniques.

In 2018 Špela was invited to become a member of the American Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

FILMOGRAPHY

Steakhouse, animated film, Slovenia, Germany, France, 2021

OINTB Unraveled, Netflix, commission work, 2017

Nighthawk, animated film, Slovenia, Croatia, 2016

Boles, animated film, Germany, Slovenia, 2013

Last Minute, animated film, co-dir. Marina Rosset, Germany, 2010

Marathon, animated film, co-dir. Izabela Plucinska, Germany, 2008

Lovesick, animated film, Germany, Slovenia, 2007

Zasukanec, animated film, Germany, Slovenia, 2004





MUSIC

Rhythm and music play an important role in the film, giving the viewer insight into Franc's functioning and dictating his preparation for the special event. The main theme in the film comes from Olfamož, a Slovenian improvisational band collective composed by and around the multiinstrumentalist Andrej Fon. Musicians from different scenes, freejazz, alter-rock and neofolk, mix genres from noise through Afrobeat to postrock. The music was selected by the director's longtime collaborator Tomaž Grom, who understands music as a medium of communication rather than aesthetic pleasure, moving easily between free improvisation and predetermined structures. Tomaž Grom also composed the final song, performed by Irena Tomažin Zagoričnik, a devotee explorer of the voice as an instrument.

A man and a woman are seated at a table in a restaurant, dining. The man is on the left, wearing a dark suit and tie, looking down at his plate. The woman is on the right, wearing a yellow dress, looking towards the man. The table is set with white plates, glasses of red wine, and a bottle of water. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

TECHNICAL INFORMATION

Title: STEAKHOUSE

Duration: 9:30 min

Year: 2021

Directed by: Špela Čadež

Countries: Slovenia, Germany, France

Language: Slovene

Subtitles: English, French, German, Spanish

Animation Technique: Multiplan stop motion cut-out

Format: DCP | color | 1:1,85 | 24 FPS

Audio: 5.1

CONTACT

Producer: Finta Film

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Co-producer: Fabian&Fred

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Co-producer: Miyu

Olivier Catherin
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Director:

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Trailer: <https://vimeo.com/562888496>

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