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EIGHT POSTCARDS FROM UTOPIA

by Radu Jude

77
Locarno Film Festival
FUORI CONCORSO
OFFICIAL SELECTION



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Romania
71' | Documentary, Politics

SYNOPSIS

Eight Postcards from Utopia is a found-footage documentary assembled exclusively out of post-socialist Romanian advertisements. Drawing from the debris of Romania's long transition period, the film speaks about love and death, the human body and its frailty, the natural and the supernatural and of course, socialism and capitalism.

Bouncing between found poetry and an outdated encyclopedia, between trash art and *Summa theologiae*, *EIGHT POSTCARDS* sees Radu Jude teaming up with philosopher Christian Ferencz-Flatz to make another hilarious and unforgiving take down of meta capitalist mythology.

DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Radu Jude is a Romanian director and screenwriter. His feature debut *The Happiest Girl in the World* (2009) was selected for more than 50 international film festivals. Titles such as *Everybody in Our Family* (2012), *Aferim!* (2015), *Scarred Hearts* (2016), *I Do Not Care If We Go Down in History as Barbarians* (2018), *Uppercase Print* (2020) followed and won multiple awards worldwide. In 2021, *Bad Luck Banging or Loony Porn* won the Golden Bear in Berlinale 2021. His latest feature, *Do Not Expect Too Much from the End of the World*, has recently won the Special Jury Prize at the Locarno Film Festival and is the Romanian entry for the Academy Awards' International Feature Film category.

Christian Ferencz-Flatz is a philosopher, currently affiliated as a researcher at the Alexandru Dragomir Institute for Philosophy in Bucharest. He teaches at the National University of Theatre and Film in Bucharest. His research concerns phenomenology, critical theory, the philosophy of history, film- and media philosophy. With Julian Hanich, he edited the journal issue *Studia Phaenomenologica XVI: Film and Phenomenology* (2016). His latest monographs include: *Critical Theory and Phenomenology. Polemics, Appropriations, Perspectives* (Springer, 2023) and *Filmul ca situație socială / Film as a Social Situation* (Tact, 2018). He published numerous essays and research articles in philosophical and film scholarly journals and translated into Romanian key theoretical works by Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, Walter Benjamin, Theodor W. Adorno and Siegfried Kracauer. He is currently developing a research project devoted to post-socialist advertising.



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DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

This experimental film is assembled exclusively out of Romanian advertisements produced during the post-socialist transition period. Having served a country newly emerged out of an economy of shortage as introduction to contemporary commodity culture, these ads all seem to communicate with one another despite their striking differences in style and product: they all depict a coherent fantasy world of fulfilled desires. Exploring the various facets of this utopian dream world with the toolkit of montage, the film turns the fictional and often ludicrous medium of advertising clips into a magnifying glass for the society's desires, beliefs, hopes and fears.

The film's structure is episodic, split into short chapters, each focusing on a specific aspect of the advertised utopian world. The first chapter retells the national history from its origins to the present by using its depictions in post-socialist advertisements. The second chapter is devoted to money, the lifeblood of capitalist economy, but also an ever-present object of fascination in advertisements. The third chapter assembles images of labs, scientists and scientific explanations from ads in order to lay bare the advertisements' pretence at rationality. The fourth chapter explores the advertisements' infatuation with the supernatural. The fifth chapter follows a human biography, from birth to death as depicted in ads. The sixth chapter is devoted to the language games of advertisements, while the seventh chapter deals with their body language and their gestures. The eighth chapter deals with representations of gender and their mutual relationship in ads. And the concluding epilogue uses images of

nature from commercials to voice ecological concerns and reflect on the impending apocalypse.

DIRECTOR'S FILMOGRAPHY

Do Not Expect Too Much from the End of the World (2023)

Bad Luck Banging or Loony Porn / Babardeală cu bucluc sau porno balamuc (2021)

Uppercase Print / Tipografic Majuscul (2020)

The Exit of the Trains / ieșirea trenurilor din gară (2020)

“I Do Not Care If We Go Down in History as Barbarians” / “Îmi este indiferent dacă în istorie vom intra ca barbari” (2018)

The Dead Nation / Țara moartă (2017)

Scarred Hearts / Inimi cicatrizate (2016)

Aferim! (2015)

Everybody in Our Family / Toată lumea din familia noastră (2012)

The Happiest Girl in the World / Cea mai fericită fată din lume (2009)

MAIN CREDITS

Title: EIGHT POSTCARDS FROM UTOPIA

Original title: OPT ILUSTRATE DIN LUMEA IDEALĂ

Directed by: Radu Jude & Christian Ferencz-Flatz

Written by: Radu Jude & Christian Ferencz-Flatz

Produced by: Saga Film

Producers: Alexandru Teodorescu

Country of production: Romania

Editing by: Cătălin Cristuțiu

Sound by: Ștefan Ruxandra

Sound mix by: Alexandru Dumitru

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