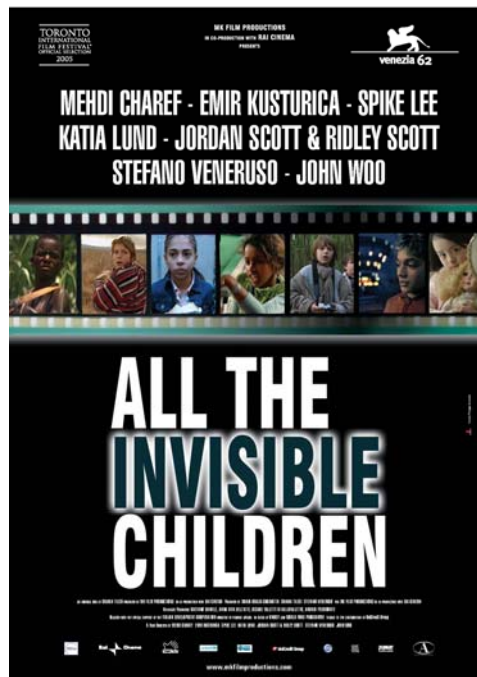


CINEMIEN Film & Video Distribution
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presenteert:

ALL THE INVISIBLE CHILDREN



Een film van / un film de:

Mehdi Charef, Emir Kusturica, Spike Lee, Katia Lund, Jordan Scott &
Ridley Scott, Stefano Veneruso en John Woo

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ALL THE INVISIBLE CHILDREN - Synopsis (NL)

All the invisible children bestaat uit zeven korte films geregisseerd door verschillende regisseurs. Centraal in deze films staat het lot van kinderen als gevolg van armoede, (burger-)oorlog en onderdrukking. Hoewel elke regisseur z'n eigen specifieke verhaal vertelt, ontstijgen de verhalen hun locale karakter en vormen zij te samen een universeel pleidooi voor de rechten van het kind.

All the invisible children was een groot succes op het 62^e filmfestival van Venetie en is winnaar van de prestigieuze Roberto Rossellini 2005 Award.

In *Tanza* vertelt regisseur Mehdi Charef het verhaal van een groepje vrijheidsstrijders in Afrika. De twaalfjarige Tanza, wiens hele familie is uitgemoord, krijgt een bom van de groepsleider met de opdracht deze in een vijandelijk dorp tot ontploffing te brengen. Maar Tanza heeft er geen idee van dat hij dit in een school moet doen, tussen kinderen net zo oud als hijzelf.

In *Blue Gypsy*, geregisseerd door Emir Kusturica, ziet de toekomst voor de jonge Uroš er niet bepaald rooskleurig uit. Hoewel zijn laatste dag in een Servische jeugdgevangenis er op zit, is de toekomst in de buitenwereld allesbehalve aantrekkelijk: armoede en onderdrukking heersen. Wanneer Uroš afgehaald wordt door zijn tirannieke vader, maakt de jongen een onverwachte keuze.

Spike Lee vertelt in *Jesus Children of America* het verhaal van de Afrikaans-Amerikaanse Blanca. Op het eerste gezicht een doodnormale puber in Brooklyn. Wat zij niet weet is dat haar ouders met hiv zijn geïnfecteerd en dat zij als 'AIDS-baby' is geboren. Na een incident op school komt zij achter deze vreselijke waarheid en neemt het verhaal een dramatische wending.

Bilu & Joao, geregisseerd door Katia Lund, gaat over het harde leven van twee zwerfkinderen in São Paulo. Met het handelen in afval proberen zij hun hoofd boven water te houden.

In *Jonathan* vertellen regisseurs Jordan Scott en Ridley Scott het verhaal van de Ierse oorlogsfotograaf Jonathan, gedesillusioneerd in het leven als gevolg van zijn traumatische werkverleden. In een hallucinatie ziet hij zichzelf als kind voor zich, temidden van zijn vriendjes, en probeert hij in het reine te komen met zijn vroegere dromen en verwachtingen van het leven.

In *Ciro*, geregisseerd door Stefano Veneruso, volgen we de dagelijkse beslommingen van straatkinderen Ciro en Bertucciello. Door armoede gedreven vervallen zij al snel in de kleine criminaliteit en komen zij in de handen van de Napolitaanse maffia. Lukt het de kinderen om zich hiervan te bevrijden?

Regisseur John Woo zet in *Song Song & Little Cat* de levens van twee Chinese meisjes tegenover elkaar, die totaal verschillend lijken. De één is rijk, de ander arm, maar beide zijn verschrikkelijk eenzaam. In dit afsluitende verhaal over hoop vinden beide kinderen troost bij elkaar.

ALL THE INVISIBLE CHILDREN

116 min. / 35 mm / Kleur / Dolby Digital / Verschillende talen gesproken, Nederlands ondertiteld / Frankrijk en Italië 2006

Nederlandse theatrale distributie: Cinemien

Belgische theatrale distributie: ABC Distribution

DVD uitbreng : Homescreeen

Tanza - Crew

Regie & Scenario	: Mehdi Charef
Director of Photography	: Phillippe Brelot
Editor	: Yannick Kergoat
Kostuumontwerper	: Martine Some en Aimé Parfait Bationo
Muziek	: Rokia Trore
Uitvoerend producent	: Bruno Hodebert
Art director	: Rasmane Tiendrebeogo

Tanza - Cast

Tanza	: Adama Bila
Kali	: Elysée Rouamba
Chief	: Rodrigue Ouattara
Doma	: Ahmed Ouedraogo
Arouna	: Harouna Ouedraogo

Blue Gypsy - Crew

Regie	: Emir Kusturica
Sreenplay	: Stribor Kusturica
Director of Photography	: Milorad Glusica
Editor	: Svetolik Mica Zajc
Kostuums	: Vesna Avramovic
Muziek	: Stribor Kusturica, Zoran Marijanovic e.a.
Executive Producer	: Emir Kusturica

Blue Gypsy - Cast

Uros	: Uros Milovanovic
Warder	: Dragan Zurovac
De dirigent	: Vladan Milojevic
Vader	: Advokat Goran R. Vracar
Moeder	: Mihona Vasic
Mita	: Mita Belic
Samir	: Dalibor Milenkovic
Sima	: Miroslav Cvetkovic

Jesus Children of America - Crew

Regie	: Spike Lee
Scenario	: Cinque Lee en Joie Lee
Director of Photography	: Cliff Charles
Editor	: Barry Alexander Brown
Kostuums	: Donna Berwick
Muziek	: Terence Blanchard
Producent	: Spike Lee en Mike Ellis

Jesus Children of America - Cast

Blanca	: Hannah Hodson
Sammy	: André Royo
Eneba	: Coati Mundi
Ms. Wright	: Hazelle Goodman
La' Queete	: Damaris Edwards
Cathy	: Keteya Ulmer
Patrice	: Ashley Evans
Tyrone	: Lavon Malik Green
Mrs. Carabrello	: Petra Quinones
Lourdes	: Natalia Roldan
Jeff	: Charles Socarides
Mike	: Robin Lord Taylor
Monifah	: Lanette Ware
Saneeka	: Philicia Wood
Rosie Perez	: As Ruth

Bilu & Joao - Credits

Regie	: Katia Lund
Scenario	: Katia Lund en Eduardo Tripa
Montage	: Estevan Santos
Kostuums	: André Simonetti
Muziek	: Antonio Pinto
Producenten	: Katia Lund, Caio Gullane, Ricardo Aidar e.a.

Bilu & Joao - Cast

Bilu	: Vera Fernandes
Joao	: Francisco Anawake de Freitas

Jonathan - Crew

Regie	: Jordan Scott & Ridley Scott
Scenario	: Jordan Scott
Montage	: Dayn Williams
Kostuums	: Greg Fay
Muziek	: Ramin Djawadi
Producers	: Sookie Foster, Frances McGivern

Jonathan - Cast

Jonathan	: David Thewlis
Jonathans vrouw	: Kelly MacDonald
James	: Jack Thompson
Jonathan als kind	: Jordan Clarke
Mark	: Joshua Light
Jonathan als puber	: Jake Ritzema
Goran	: Kemal Chakarto

Ciro - Crew

Regie	: Stefano Venruso
Scenario	: Diego de Silva & Stefano Veneruso
Montage	: Ugo de Rossi
Kostuums	: Maria Pennacchio
Geluid / son	: Igor Camo, Tom WeberCasting
Muziek	: Maurizio Capone
Producenten	: Studio Francesco Rapa
Uivoerend producenten	: Francesco Rapa, Raffaele Veneruso

Ciro - Cast

Ciro	: Danielle Vicorito
Bertucciello	: Emanuele Vicorito
Horlogekeeper	: Peppe Lanzetta
Man in auto	: Ernesto Mahieux
Man in grijs pak	: Giovanni Mauriello

Song Song and Little Cat - Crew

Regie	: John Woo
Scenario	: Li Qiang
Montage	: Robert Ferretti
Kostuums	: Liu Weifeng
Muziek	: Lin Hai
Producent	: Terence Chang
Uitvoerend producent	: Li Shaohung, Li Xiaowan

Song Song and Little Cat - Cast

Song Song	: Zhao Zicun
Little Cat	: Qi Ruyi
Grandpa	: Wang Bin
Song Songs moeder	: Jiang Wen Li
Song Songs vader	: You Yong
Snake Head	: Jiang Tong
Little Cats moeder	: Shen Chang
Docent	: Xu Jun

Tanza

Award-winning director Mehdi Charef has written and directed TANZA, the powerful and moving story of a twelve-year-old boy who joins an army of freedom fighters in Africa. He is ordered to detonate two bombs, but their target turns out to be a school, where children just like him will be arriving shortly...

Mehdi Charef was born in Maghnia, Algeria in 1952 and drew upon his early memories as a child living on the streets for his film.

"When this project came along I thought about it very deeply, and realized that I wanted to talk about my early life as a child. During that time, my father went to find work in France leaving me there with my mother and my brothers; we were like invisible children. France didn't recognise us, we were on the outskirts of French society, and some people were on the edge of existence."

Charef admits that inspiration for the film came from personal experience, and says: *"the story is about a child, who is fighting a war, and our war was to survive at a period in life where we were forgotten, and we had to draw attention to ourselves. Our culture had been destroyed, even to the point of being taught the history of France and nothing about our mother country; we had the impression that before their arrival Algeria didn't exist. We resisted of course, waiting for the moment when we were no longer invisible, when they would tell our story, and talk about our history and of our fathers. That is what interested me about this project, to look at why these children make war."*

When Charef was about 10 years-old his father finally sent for him and his family, and they continued growing up in the complex world of 'émigrés', in the ghettos and slums around Paris. Charef eventually trained as a mechanic and worked in a factory until his first novel was published in 1983.

Tanza is played with incredible realism by young African boy Bila Adama – a child Mehdi found when wandering the streets. Mehdi explains: *"I found all the children for the film in the streets. I love to wander looking for the right faces, and in any case, where we were, there were no casting agents,"* he laughs.

"So, we went into the streets and we found children whose parents could not pay school fees, or buy school books – they work for peanuts, or telephone cards mostly, and these were the children I took. What struck me about the six children we found was their amazing beauty. They have extraordinary faces. Their parents were very happy when we chose them; we worked with the children for a month and we made sure they were well paid so that it helped the parents. There was only one child lucky enough to have parents who worked, the other families just survived day to day. Strangely enough, the children had much more hope than their parents, I don't know why", he adds wistfully.

Although the country is never specified in the film, Charef and his team filmed in Burkina Faso.

"It is a country where there are no tourists, no ocean and nothing much to see", explains Mehdi, *"I like it very much; it is one of the rare countries in Africa where it is calm. There is no terrorism, no war, and it is very beautiful. They also speak French which helped enormously",* he adds with good humour.

This film will undoubtedly tug at our heart strings; Mehdi explains the impact he hopes the film will have:

"I just want people to know that these children exist; that there are children who continue to fight. Many of their parents were massacred and these children want their own identity. They are

nothing like the children of Europe who have everything. I believe, strongly, that this is a film that should be shown to children, perhaps even in schools. They are generally so protected against things in life that are considered too hard, I think we should be brave enough to show them those children."

Mehdi hopes his film will make a difference, and explains:

"I like to be autobiographical in my films or in my writing because I talk a lot about the Algeria of my childhood. This film has made me very happy because I was able to talk about other children. These children who went off to war were not old, and something else that really struck me was they never knew what it was to have presents. They thought going to war was a gift, they thought being given grenades and guns were presents and that is very troubling. That is one of the reason I made this film".

Blue Gypsy

Kusturica's segment, *BLUE GYPSY* tells the story of a young gypsy boy who has been in a detention centre three years. His family arrive with gifts for his ceremonial release from jail. But his violent deadbeat father as usual has no money and won't change his ways, so Uroš will decide of his own destiny once he will find himself cornered.

Kusturica spent most of his life in Bosnia but now lives in a small village in western Serbia that he has recently constructed from scratch, called Kustendorf.

"I lost my city during the war. This is why I wished to build my own village. I will organise there seminars for people who want to learn cinema, concerts, ceramics, painting. I dream of an open place with cultural diversity which sets up against globalisation".

He is one of the most celebrated filmmakers in Europe. He explains that he was attracted to this project because: *"I believe in practical human experiences, when they told me they were wanting to expose the kids that are hidden from the public eye, with many problems in the countries like mine, I was happy to be involved".*

He had the idea for his film a long time before MK Film Productions approached him. He had always wondered why people who spent most of their childhood and youth in prison often went on to re-offend in their adult life. He discovered that:

"Freedom for them means the opposite to what we expect. Which means when they run out of money and entertain going back to the prison, by committing a small crime, say robbing a car, they prefer, especially in the winter time, to go back to prison. I was amazed on how many social levels these people preferred prison to freedom and that's what led me to believe it was good to make, in my own way, what I called Blue Gypsy". He goes on to explain: *"We met with Chiara from MK Film Productions and she was very positive. It was probably the smoothest production communication I've had in my life".*

Emir Kusturica freely admits he is politically incorrect. His films on gypsies aim to rehabilitate a people he perceives to be persecuted and ignored in the eyes of the Westerners. He enjoys the confusion resulting from his interviews, declarations and articles. To get a clearer picture of him it has been said that it would be better to analyse his films and to read between the lines with some of his characters.

As Kusturica himself says:

"I am a Slav. In my contradictions, my will to see the world in black and white, in my humour, my abrupt changes of mood, but also in my comprehension of the history. I was born at the extremely painful border between the East and the West and I keep in memory the palpations of my parents".

So this film was: *"based on the experience of my son who made the script and on my experience of partly knowing these people, because I interviewed a lot of young criminals and one of them was who I based this film on".*

Emir describes how this experience was so different from his previous works, by saying: *"it is especially different because of its length, because I had to squeeze my ideas into less than 20 minutes, which I learned to do with commercials, but it was good to make a movie that is somehow going to show people things that they didn't know before. In other projects I usually do my own observations, my own obsessions – this is the first time since film school that I've done something like this. Someone gave me a key that I have now turned into a script".*

The young actor that plays the protagonist Uroš was found by Emir himself *"I am always thinking if some of those people I meet accidentally could be in a movie. The young boy was found through our prop master"*.

His central characters are often those who are marginalised by society, from gypsies, Jews and Muslims to the poor and disenfranchised or the crippled and amoral outlaws, to accidental dissidents and mystified children.

Music is another real passion of his and the music for the film was provided by Kusturica's own gypsy techno rock band, now officially known as the 'Emir Kusturica and the No Smoking Orchestra'. Emir joined the group in 1986 as a bass player. In 1994, during the conflicts, the group reformed in Belgrade with Stribor Kuturica (Emir's son) at the drums, keeping the lead singer Dr. Nele Karajlic at the helm. As Karajlic wryly comments: *"Emir likes to make a mess. I think the idea is when he makes a movie, whatever he's going to do, if it's got a wedding, a funeral, some party, anything – he always wants to make a lot of noise, both in sound and colour"*.

As with many of his films *Blue Gypsy* has his recognisable stamp of frenzied and raucous energy. But no matter how brutal his subject, his movies are full of joy and animated by screwball antics and above all there is always a riot of music. If there is a scene in a Kusturica movie without a brass band involved, there won't be long until one comes along.

The main issue he wanted to raise by making this movie was: *"the issue of the freedom and the perception of freedom that is absolutely from different angles"*.

What is important to Emir is the human being, who is always at the centre of his stories, as he says 'Do you cut the movie on the basis of the beat of modernity or the basis of the beat of your own heart?'

Jesus Children of America

Filmmaker Spike Lee has directed JESUS CHILDREN OF AMERICA, the moving and disturbing story of Blanca, a Brooklyn teenager whose daily routine is going to school and enjoying time with her friends despite the backdrop of utter squalor and poverty in which she lives with her parents. After a school incident, she finally realises that she is HIV positive from her drug addicted parents and the tale takes a dark and dramatic twist.

Born Shelton Lee in Atlanta in 1957 and raised in Brooklyn his slate of films has established him as one of the modern era's most provocative filmmakers.

Writer-director, actor, producer, author and educator, Spike Lee, revolutionized the role of black talent in cinema and was inspired to make this hard hitting film by a number of factors. He says:

"I am very concerned about children all over the world, and in particular I had been thinking a great deal about youngsters who have been born with HIV. This is a global problem, and I tried to imagine what it must be like for those children whose parents never told them. And what their day would be like when they discovered their illness. I was also delighted to be asked to become involved in this project, and honoured to be amongst all those other great filmmakers. I didn't hesitate in joining them."

Spike Lee collaborated on the script with his brother Cinqué and his sister Joie, with whom he has often worked in the past. *"I came up with the idea, but I was so busy at the time, I asked them to write the script,"* he offers.

Growing up with a stable home life, surrounded by his artistic family has certainly led to Lee's filmmaking becoming a collaborative family effort. His father Bill has contributed his skills as a jazz bassist and composer on numerous films. His brother David is a photographer, who has provided the stills for all of his films. Joie and Cinqué have also appeared frequently in Spike's films.

This family closeness has partly coloured his filmmaking style: stick by you and yours. Lee is keen in all his films to convey respect – for self, for others, for craft, for differences, for the past and for the future.

Vastly experienced across the spectrum of filmmaking, Lee felt he was able to convey his story in a relatively brief way. He explains: *"I have made a number of short films but I did not find this particularly challenging. Every time I work on a film it is a great experience, and we had a lot of fun on this. It is not a happy, cheery film, but I felt we had to talk about the subject matter. There is very much a message of hope at the end, where Blanca sees a way upward. I wanted to convey that there was light at the end of the tunnel. But its rough, AIDS is killing us."*

Lee talks about the casting of his movie:

"My sister Joie teaches young Hannah Hodson, who plays Blanca, drama at her school. And I have already worked with her in the Michael Jordan Nike commercial. The other members – I knew Rosie Perez would do the right thing, and Andre Royo is a great young actor. The other young 'actors' were just kids from the school. I especially wanted to help raise the awareness of HIV, particularly to kids", Lee continues, *"I think children are being abused and forgotten all around the world, and I hope this film brings recognition to the plight of children. That is why we made this film".*

Filmed entirely on location in Brooklyn, Lee explains: *"it is where I live; it is where I grew up. It is my home".*

Bilu & Joao

Katia was born and grew up in São Paulo, where her extraordinary film is set. BILU and JOÃO portrays a day in the life of two enterprising children struggling to live on the streets of São Paulo. They dream of overcoming their bleak urban landscape, but they will need to muster all their creativity to get out of the jam in which they find themselves.

Katia describes her choice of theme:

"I recently noticed an incredible increase in the amount of man-powered carts around my city. São Paulo has 20 million inhabitants, it is ultra modern and many people – children, old people, and healthy people, live by doing what seems like subhuman work. When I was a kid I was uncomfortable with this. This question stayed with me over the years and I would always feel myself in the position of these cart pullers..."

When I started research for the script", Katia continues, "I moved around the city with a 14 year-old boy as he collected his goods with his mother. He was at an awkward age and starting to become self conscious about his position in society, his clothes, his closeness to his mother.... Later in my research, I met him again and he was totally different. He had his own cart now. And it was a big cart. And he was taking money home to his mother so that she could rest and take care of the house. I was fascinated by his curiosity as he found things, like a CD ROM or a book or a bunch of copper. He had friendships with people along the way, who would save things for him or point out a great find. He also struggled with a heavy load through rain and potholes. When he entered the recycling shop to sell his materials, he was very alert. A buzz was in the air as things were bought and sold at a dizzying pace. Carts would run in and out at a steady and frenetic pace.

Essentially these children are practising a very dignified form of work that people are proud of when they realize that money can be made. Many cart pullers have learned to resist discrimination by creating fun dressing styles or decorating their carts so they look like cars or trucks. You know, in São Paulo (as in Los Angeles) having wheels means you exist. You are somebody. I could see this pride in the boy who helped me with the research for my script and I later found it in my actors".

Katia explains:

"We encountered Anawake (João) helping his mother collect paper near a market in the centre of the city and Verinha (Bilu) was found playing with her girlfriends on a row of recycling carts on a rundown city street. Both live and work near this nocturnal market where farmers bring their fruit when all the shops are closed. (So when I found the actors, I also found the biggest location for the film!) I saw João, Bilu and the location all on a tape recorded by a casting scout. I was immediately drawn to Anawake by the gentle look in his eyes. There was a sweetness about him. He is of mixed race... He has green eyes and of a golden colour. He is beautiful and fascinating. I loved Verinha's wit and resilience". On the tape the scout asks Anawake: "Do you think you can pull one of those big carts?" He beams proudly: "Of course. I have my own cart" and he borrows a cart to illustrate his point. He pulls it along and says to camera "this is my Ferrari!"

This Ferrari analogy led Katia to use such parallels in her film, as she says:

"The film itself is a race... The race is fun but also a matter of life or death. Bilu and João are creative, intelligent and enduring... So when the film ends, they have accomplished their mission: they are bringing home a few more bricks for their brother, who is slowly building the family's shelter. All is fine until the camera pulls back and enormous glass buildings come into frame, rising up and towering over the fragile favela where João and Bilu live. It seems a matter of time when those buildings will push the favela out of the way. So, my question is: If the kids are racing as fast as they can, using all the tools and intelligence at hand, can they keep up with the world? João

sees himself as the famous Ayrton Senna, a very skilful and gutsy driver who won many Formula 1 races in Brazil in his Ferrari... What happens when Bilu and João realize they do not have the tools to participate in the Formula 1 race of global economics? What happens when Bilu and João's house is uprooted and their faith is broken? Then, where will their energy, creativity and resilience go? Will they continue to work and dream and to be positive? That's the whole issue – if we don't start finding ways to find space for everyone, it's not going to be very pleasant for anyone".

"In the end, what I wanted to avoid was a European/American audience looking at this film and thinking – Oh, those poor third world children, isn't it dreadful what happens down there'. The children are paid in dollars and their recycling is part of an export economy. We all partake in the same economic system. Brazil is the top aluminium recycling country in the world, because recycling provides an informal economy that really works for people who cannot get employed and are resisting crime as a form of survival".

Katia was keen for the music to reflect the Brazilian theme of the film. *"Some of the music is live... There are these street poets who duel through improvised poetry, outwitting each other with humour, vulgar language, intelligent puns... it's a type of music called repente. I also wanted to combine very raw and rooted Brazilian instruments like the berimbau with scratches and more globalised music.*

Both co-exist in these kids' reality, which is layered with videogames, TV, advertising music. They understand all of it regardless of language".

Filming on location in São Paulo was a change for Katia, as *"almost all of my work is based in Rio and has been focused on the question of crime. This time I wanted to discuss the great dynamism of work – where there is hope".*

Ultimately Katia wanted this film to achieve: *"a fresh new look at the strength of these children and a life that many people are not aware of, or usually pity. What I wanted to avoid was pity. Regarding what she would like the audience to take away from this", she enthuses:*
"I would like them to remember the humour, the energy, the creativity and the incredible personality of some of these kids. All that we have to lose when trust is broken...."

Jonathan

Ridley Scott and his talented daughter Jordan have teamed to co-direct JONATHAN, the haunting film written by Jordan, depicting a photojournalist whose assignments have left him disillusioned with life and irrevocably damaged. Desperate to escape his torment he regresses into childhood to rediscover the essence of his past. The children he meets along the way challenge and inspire him to embrace his life once more.

Jordan Scott, working for the first time with her celebrated father, was inspired to write this story by the strengths and courage of children. She says:

"They have this unique ability to transform any situation and to make the best of even the worst circumstances". Jordan admits that her story contains a strong element of magic, and emphasizes: *"Childhood is magical, and sadly as you get older the magic fades and reality takes hold. It takes such a lot to lose that as a child".*

"I also think this film is about apathy", Jordan continues: *"It is so easy to ignore or turn away from everything that is really important, thinking your contribution doesn't matter, it is very easy to end up doing nothing. It is not to say he is apathetic, because this is about a man who has contributed so much, and yet he feels he plays a minor role in the world. He's witnessed so much pain that he is blinded by fear and cannot see a reason to go on. His decision is made on a much higher level. It would have been far easier for him to have said "I've had enough" and walked away, but in the end thanks to the children he meets, he chooses to continue and leaves for his next assignment".*

Jordan talks about her involvement with the project: *"A number of things attracted me. It wasn't just making that connection with childhood; I also felt it was very important to remind ourselves about what is going on out there. This film, with all its different stories and perspectives, hopefully has a greater chance to resonate with a range of very different people",* she offers.

The performances in the film and the actors who give them will doubtless make a big impact on the audience. Jordan, who cast them, says:

"The children were really great little actors; they had the most outstanding personalities; that is really what attracted me to them, - their personalities shone through. I have always loved David Thewlis and Kelly MacDonald as actors, I think they are amazing. They were both my dream choices and I still can't believe they said yes" she says enthusiastically: *"They both have such integrity as actors and their performances convey a true understanding of the characters they play. I was just really grateful they agreed to do it",* she laughs.

In addition to the tribute she pays to the magic of childhood, Jordan wanted this film to be an ode to the war photographer. She explains:

"It would have been impossible to convey, in fifteen minutes, what they go through, how important they are and how vital their work is. They are able to capture what cannot be put into words and communicate all this information on a completely different level.

Watching or reading a news report just does not have the same impact as seeing a picture that says it all. They are mostly unsung heroes, and living the life they do is a double-edged sword. In order to survive in a difficult environment sometimes your personality has to fragment, or part of yourself has to shut down. I wondered if many of them are faced with the choice to live their lives for themselves or for their job, and maybe they realize they cannot really have both. I hope Jonathan shows what it must be like having your foot in both worlds, that he is really torn as to which way he ultimately wants to go".

Jordan, whose career includes directing a succession of highly acclaimed music videos for cult bands such as Cut le Roc and commercials for Orange Telecom & Prada was delighted to have the opportunity of working with her father. *"It all went swimmingly",* she enthuses, *"in fact it went so well we did another project together soon afterwards".*

Jonathan is Jordan's story and she wrote the screenplay. She explains how the collaboration works:

"After I had written the script, Dad probably played more of a mentoring role. It certainly seemed to work quite easily and it all flowed rather well".

Jonathan has a lilting and haunting soundtrack written and performed by Ramin Djawadi. *"He is brilliant",* says Jordan, *"He took it to a whole different level. We did spend a long time deliberating over influences and how emotional each piece of music needed to be, because we didn't want it to be manipulative or sentimental. I do think what he has done is absolutely beautiful",* she adds.

Ciro

Director/Producer Stefano Veneruso has co-written and directed CIRO, the poignant story of a young boy living on a housing estate in Naples, built after the 1980's earthquake. The boy and a friend assault a man and steal his watch which has dire and desperate consequences.

Veneruso was born in Naples, and lived there until the age of twelve when his parents took him and his four siblings to live in Rome. His early life as a child in this volatile part of Italy inspired this story. He says:

"I grew up in this environment, and I know how difficult it is for a child to grow there. Every day was dangerous: I have seen people killed next to me, people doing drugs, robberies - I have seen terrible things that children should never see. And sadly things have not improved. In fact, things are far worse today mainly because of television and new media; the children want to be well dressed, they have to have money in their pocket, they have to spend, they have to be consumers, and I honestly don't see any hope. When you go there, it is frightening to see all these angry eyes; they will do anything to get out".

Although they share different personal childhood experiences, Stefano found himself sharing exactly the same point of view about the social issues connected with that particular geographical area with Diego De Silva, the co-writer of his segment's screenplay.

During his childhood, Veneruso was mentored and inspired by his late uncle Massimo Troisi, the renowned director, author and actor better known internationally for producing, co-directing and starring in the Academy Award winning film *'The Postman' (Il Postino)*. Veneruso attended both UCLA and the AFI in Los Angeles, and it was there that he met Chiara Tilesi, his producing partner on *'All the Invisible Children'*.

"My collaboration on this film began without hesitation", says Veneruso. "When Chiara called me within two seconds of coming up with the idea, I was immediately attracted to the project. It was a wonderful chance for me, not only to express my own idea, but also to work alongside such eminent directors".

When Stefano began casting for CIRO, he knew that the best performances would come from real children from the streets of Naples. He takes up the story:

"I did not feel that I could take middle class children and ask them to depict this kind of life. I saw almost 400 children, and the very first one I saw convinced me I had found my 'star'. He is very aware, very smart, very tough, and he was perfect.

If I may be forgiven for saying something great about my segment, it is the children".

Given their humble and difficult lives, were their heads turned by this experience and might they now seek an acting career? Stefano replies: *"I think it is their dream, yes, but they have no structure. So I made a deal with them. I send them a book once in a while, and I talk to them about it and they have to tell me something about it, with the promise that every time they explain something to me from that book, I will send them another."* Stefano's interest in these children will undoubtedly change their lives. *"I really hope so, but I have to say they are very nice kids, and every time I go there, which is whenever my schedule will allow, they are so enthusiastic and really want to do something to get them out of that bad environment".*

Veneruso has worked as an assistant director on major films such as *Gangs of New York* and *The Passion of the Christ* and has directed a number of short films including *'I'm Sophie and You?'*

In working alongside renowned cinematographer Vittorio Storaro (*Apocalypse Now*, *The Last Emperor*, *Dick Tracey*, etc.) Veneruso fulfilled a dream. He explains:

"While I was studying I read every book I could on Storaro and his amazing career so when I knew he was able to be involved in the project and work with me it really was the most exciting day of my life. He actually loved the whole idea behind the film and said that if he liked the script he would do it. So I set about finalising the screenplay, adding as many details as I could. I sent it to Vittorio, and soon after that we got to talk on the phone and he immediately said 'I will do it, let's go to Naples' that was a wonderful moment. And that particular day we were supposed to go together to Naples, we got in the car, I started driving and as we kept talking non stop about our collaboration and the project itself, we got so excited about it...that at the end I ended up driving till L'Aquila which is a town in the opposite side of where we were supposed to get to! When we realised that we just laughed about it and Vittorio said that it didn't really matter as we had to spend 3 days together to get to know each other anyway!

It was also quite difficult to tell the story in such a short time, but I am so happy today. Working with Vittorio produced the right images, the right atmosphere and just the right amount of tension to say what I wanted, even in a short time", enthuses Stefano.

"I don't pretend to change anything significantly", he adds, "but my hope and ambition for the project is that it will remind us of these problems, and remind us to do something. All of us can do something, and I hope people will go and see it".

Veneruso also directed the music video in which superstar Tina Turner performs alongside renowned Italian singer Elisa. *"This was another fantastic experience for me", says Stefano, "Elisa is one of the biggest singers in Italy and has written a great song which is amazingly performed by both artists. The video itself is very touching as it is inter-cut with images from each segment of the film".*

Song Song & Little Cat

John Woo has directed the powerful film *SONG SONG & LITTLE CAT* that follows the struggles of a penniless orphan, Little Cat, and wealthy but unhappy Song Song, and opens up the unexpected parallels between these two lives, previously unlinked.

Woo came to be involved in the project about two years ago, as he explains: *"While I was shooting Paycheck, my friend and producing partner Terence Chang told me about the idea for this project. I was really excited because I am always trying to do things to help children. Terence was a big proponent of this project for me. He insisted that it would be the best thing for me to do, to try to raise a voice for children all around the world. Then a year later MK Film Productions approached us with it again; the timing was right and we jumped at it".*

The film was shot in mainland China, which was a first for John. Of this experience he says effusively: *"It was a wonderful experience. The crew was so hard working. It was their first time working with me and learning my shooting style. But we had a great exchange of knowledge between us. We worked as a family, they did not treat me as a stranger, I was one of them and we were all very supportive of each other. Their beautiful work earned my deep respect. Everyone around the world is essentially the same. We all have the same passion to tell a good story".*

John was inspired to make this film by his love of children, *"It is easy to say that we love and care about children. We know that they need love and support, but do we really know their dreams? Some adults see children as different to them, but they have the same will and dignity. I wanted to really explore what goes on in their minds. Especially in China there are so many changes culturally and economically and I wonder what children are thinking about all of it. Everyone is aiming for a different purpose; people find it difficult to accept the changes and the children are the ones who suffer the consequences".*

He expands: *"I have always liked movies that focus on humanity. Although I am best known for making action films, in all my films I like to explore what is in people's hearts. This short film is a very personal one for me. It expresses exactly how I feel about children. It is not much different at its core than my other films but this time I am telling a true story for so many children".*

The collaboration between John and the screenwriter, Li Qiang started positively because they both wanted to convey the same message, as John says:

"We both wanted to say something encouraging and hopeful with this film. He (Li Qiang) came up with the beautiful idea of a doll representing the dreams of two little girls that brings them together. After talking with friends and observing people in China, I realised that they have so much hope for a bright future. The children in China especially have weathered the social changes with dignity".

John details how it relates to his personal experiences: *"This story was also a personal one for me and I see reflections of my own family in it. I have wonderful children but they have misunderstandings between themselves. What they need to know is that their greatest strength would be to love and accept each other".*

When casting his film, Woo originally wanted to use 'real girls' instead of actresses, *"But after we interviewed so many little girls we realised that would be impossible. The producers in Beijing, Li Shaohung and Li Xiaowan, found these two brilliant little girls whose own lives were, in reality, very close in circumstance to the characters they played. Zhao Zicun who plays Song Song had acting experience in television. She comes from a family who are well off financially. She is an*

elegant girl and very well composed. Qi Ru Yi who plays Little Cat has a raw talent. She actually comes from a poor family. She has had a hard life, but she is so strong. This film told their personal stories too and in that way they were able to be so simply real in their portrayal".

He elaborates: *"The two young girls were lovely and adorable. We had only a short period of time together but it seemed like we had been together for a long time. They called me Grandpa. We would play games together between takes and it was like I was playing with my own grandkids. When we were shooting emotional moments, there was no need for practice. We shot a lot of them in one take. They were so emotionally available and present. Everyone worked with love and we had high spirits. We all knew we were making something meaningful".*

"Song Song's mother is played by Jiang Wen Li, who is one of the top actresses in China. Grandpa is played by Wang Bin, who is another very popular and accomplished actor in China". John enthuses: *"All of their performances were very real and touching to me. I was so lucky to have them all".*

Woo found shooting a short film a liberating experience *"it wasn't a problem at all for me to express my message in a short film. I just shot what I feel. Time, budget, these are things that I have been trained to deal with over the years. When I was a young filmmaker I learned how to tell a story in one shot. On feature films there is so much preparation and planning, so many people making decisions. This short film allowed me to go back to my roots and shoot as I did in my years in Hong Kong. There were no politics or huge studios involved. I was just able to shoot from my heart. I was able to send so many different messages in a short time".*

Ultimately the message Woo wanted to get across was hope, he says: *"I wanted to express the hope of children everywhere. We know that we need to care for and love children, we know they need that. At the same time children also need to care for each other. These two little girls were really struggling but they find their own strength through courage and dignity. We talk about saving the children of the world, but really children save us. Their strength and love can change the world".*

All the Invisible Children - Press



Each of the segments that comprise this affecting omnibus work is a labour of love, told with all the compassion these remarkable filmmakers can bring to these all-too-common situations.

Piers Handling

Background

ALL THE INVISIBLE CHILDREN is the brainchild of Producer Chiara Tilesi. Together with Stefano Veneruso, her producing partner of MK Film Productions, they began developing the production of these seven short films directed by eight eminent directors. Each film tells its own unique story depicting the plight of children from a different region of the world. *"ALL THE INVISIBLE CHILDREN"* is produced by Maria Grazia Cucinotta, Chiara Tilesi and Stefano Veneruso for MK Film Productions and co-produced by RAI Cinema, along with Associate Producers Gaetano Daniele, Anna Rita Dell'Atte, Cesare Falletti di Villa Falletto and Andrea Piedimonte. 01 Distribution will distribute the film in Italy, whereas international sales are being handled by Adriana Chiesa Enterprises srl. In conjunction with the film, the Italian Development Cooperation Ministry of Foreign Affairs has launched an initiative named 'All the Invisible Children', giving its special support in favour of the United Nations' Agencies, **UNICEF** (United Nations Children Fund) and **WFP** (World Food Programme).

Following, is an aperçu of the directors who realized this extraordinary film and a glimpse of their work: **MEHDI CHAREF**'s troubling story **Tanza** is named after its hero, a twelve-year-old boy who joins an army of freedom fighters; **EMIR KUSTURICA**'s uplifting segment tells the heartbreaking tale of a young gypsy boy; **SPIKE LEE**'s powerful film **Jesus Children of America** tells of the struggle of a Brooklyn teenager who realizes that she is the HIV-positive daughter of drug-addicted parents; **KATIA LUND**'s poignant contribution entitled **BILU & JOÃO**, portrays a day in the life of two enterprising children struggling on the streets of São Paulo; **JORDAN SCOTT and RIDLEY SCOTT** have co-directed the hypnotic **Jonathan**, written by Jordan Scott, depicting a photojournalist whose desperate need to escape his personal torment allows him to regress back to his childhood; **STEFANO VENERUSO** has co-written and directed **Ciro**, a story about a young boy living between crime and play in the run down housing estates of Naples; and **JOHN WOO**'s moving film **Song Song & Little Cat** follows the special bond between the penniless orphan, Little Cat, and the wealthy yet troubled Song Song.

This unique project brings together these incredible talents from very different parts of the world to create a feature with a strong image and a powerful message.

Producer Chiara Tilesi discusses the thinking behind the project:

"The title says it all: 'All the Invisible Children'; our aim is to bring ignored children's issues into public awareness and consciousness, if nothing else, to make them more visible. Cinema, like music and other art forms, is a perfect medium to raise the bar of awareness, empathy, compassion and understanding. We all felt that this was an opportunity that needed to be seized. I am so glad we did, and I thank all our participants very sincerely."

The film, which will premiere at the Venice Film Festival in September 2005, took over four years to make and as Chiara Tilesi explains, funding was not easy.

"Securing the finance was actually quite difficult considering the complexity and size of the project. It took four years of hard work and we knocked on many doors. However, as this film transcends the entertainment industry, we brought together several 'worlds'. In the end though, thanks to the energy and inspiration of the directors and solid and

committed production teamwork, we succeeded in securing finance. Another aspect that seems to be worth mentioning, is the one of global production organization and logistics; dealing with eight different directors in seven different countries sometimes even simultaneously, has been quite challenging for our entire team. Thanks to the quality and stature of the directors and their producers' work though, I can say that being on every set has been for me a great professional experience and a true learning opportunity".

Each director has been given total creative freedom, with the back up of the producers who were there to help every step of the way. Chiara explains:

"When I first thought about doing this film it was essential that each of the directors be allowed to choose their theme and have the freedom to develop their idea. It would have been absurd to try and impose themes onto them -if they are not portraying something close to their hearts, it would not have the same resonance. We discussed the main aim of the film, which was to underline those aspects of children that most of the times are invisible; and they are invisible because nobody knows about them. The only preset concept was that we were looking for stories about the plight of children from their own countries. Miraculously, all the directors came up with completely different themes."

The stories are varied and disparate, but they all have one thing in common. They are stories that have touched the filmmakers. Producer Maria Grazia Cucinotta says:

"I liked the idea of being able to give an important message for children through cinema", and on the challenge of producing which is a step away from her usual role as an actress she found it gave her a greater understanding of the job. On working with Stefano Veneruso, whose film she also acts in, she enthused:

"it's not the first time that I have worked with Stefano, who each time through his simplicity and sensitivity, he is able to extract from the actor what the character requires and make it alive in the magic world of cinema in the most real way".

Producing partner Stefano Veneruso also directed the music video, which features a song written by top Italian singer **ELISA** and performed alongside the legendary **TINA TURNER**. *"Elisa read all the screenplays of the film," says Veneruso, "and came on board at a very early stage. With her producer **CATERINA CASELLI**, they did a great deal to help the project. We always had in mind a duet for the lead track to remind us of the unity of the piece, and we all loved the idea of Tina Turner. So, we sent her the song which she fell in love with, she was fascinated by the subject of the film, and the rest is history", he adds happily.*

TINA TURNER AND ELISA

AN EXCEPTIONAL DUET FOR ALL THE INVISIBLE CHILDREN

Tina Turner and **Elisa** support the "All the Invisible Children" cause singing **Teach me again**. The song, a project by **Caterina Caselli Sugar**, is released by **Sugar**. Elisa, author of the song, is also the artistic producer. All profits from the recording of *Teach me again* will be allocated by the artists and Sugar, which also renounces the publishing proceeds, to the All the Invisible Children fund for the benefit of children projects with the special support of the Italian Development Cooperation of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in favour of *UNICEF* and WFP. The music video "Teach me again", directed by **Stefano Veneruso** with cinematographer **Vittorio Storaro**, is produced by MK Film Productions. **Caterina Caselli** declares: "In my professional career I have worked on Italian and International productions, but this project, involving the greatest names of today's cinema industry, has involved myself in a particular way for its goal and uniqueness. Moreover, this project offered Elisa not only one more opportunity to test her skills as an artistic producer but also the chance to sing a duet with Tina Turner. Their meeting in Zurich on June 1st 2005, was serious, professional and magic at the same time."



All the Invisible Children

A film and a project in Venice supported by ITALIAN DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS in favour of UNICEF and WFP

The rights of millions of children and adolescents are denied by exploitation and war. Three hundred million children in the world suffer from hunger. Over 100 million have never been at school. The film *All the Invisible Children*, which is being shown at the 62nd Venice *Biennale del Cinema* (Biennale Film Festival), is dedicated to all of them.

The initiative is being supported by the Italian Development Cooperation Ministry of Foreign Affairs in favour of the United Nations agencies UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund) and WFP (World Food Programme) which work all over the world to protect children, as a priceless opportunity to let people hear the voices, stories and hopes of these children.

The film project has been put together by eight major directors – Medhi Charef, Emir Kusturica, Spike Lee, Katia Lund, Jordan Scott and Ridley Scott, Stefano Veneruso and John Woo – who have donated their names and immense creative talent to the “invisible children”.

High profile music stars have also made a valuable contribution with the song *Teach Me Again*, written, composed and produced by Elisa, performed by Tina Turner and Elisa, released by Caterina Caselli for Sugar.

Tanza, Ciro, Uroš, Bilu, João, Song Song are some of the children portrayed. Their stories speak for millions of their peers who in the world are denied the right to a name and a face: stories of violated rights, malnutrition and poverty, and also stories of children determined to seek a better future, stories that are played out far from the film set amid the emptiness of indifference.

This faceless, nameless childhood is the subject of the film based on an original idea of Chiara Tilesi, produced by Maria Grazia Cucinotta, Chiara Tilesi and Stefano Veneruso for MK Film Productions in co-production with RaiCinema, distributed in Italy by 01 Distribution and sold worldwide by Adriana Chiesa Enterprises.

The great sensitivity shown by the directors, their total commitment to the project, their international fame and the prestige that surrounds them are the best guarantee of success for a film that aims above all to enhance the world's understanding of the “invisible children” by reaching an international audience. The film will also lend concrete support to a project in favor of children and designed to fight child malnutrition in Africa.

Italian Cooperation for Development of Ministry of Foreign Affairs. *Italian Cooperation* is an integral part of Italian foreign policy, it carries out activities in support of developing countries and it is active in about 100 countries with programmes based on two main principles:

- ↳ to guarantee respect for the value of human life and dignity for all;
- ↳ to combat poverty in support of sustainable development for all people. *Italian*

Cooperation works to build a more equitable world in which everybody may express themselves freely and seek to achieve their potential; it has an important and difficult mission that involves all those who work with it, professionally and personally: to collaborate to create resources and opportunities.

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Each year, we give food to an average of 90 million poor people to meet their nutritional needs, including 56 million hungry children, in at least 80 of the world's poorest countries. WFP --We Feed People.

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UNICEF – the United Nations Children’s Fund. For every child Health, Education, Equality, Protection: this is the mandate of UNICEF, the United Nations agency specializing in protecting and promoting the rights and quality of life of children and adolescents around the world. UNICEF operates in 157 countries through programmes on the ground addressing the health and survival of children, education, vaccination, the fight against HIV/AIDS and protection against exploitation and abuse, and promoting children’s rights.

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