

Cannes 2021 Official Selection

PA VEND (Displaced)

A Film by
Samir Karahoda

Producer
Eroll Bilibani

Cast
Jeton Mazreku / Ermegan Kazazi / Rifat Rifati

Editing
Enis Saraçi

Cinematography
Samir Karahoda

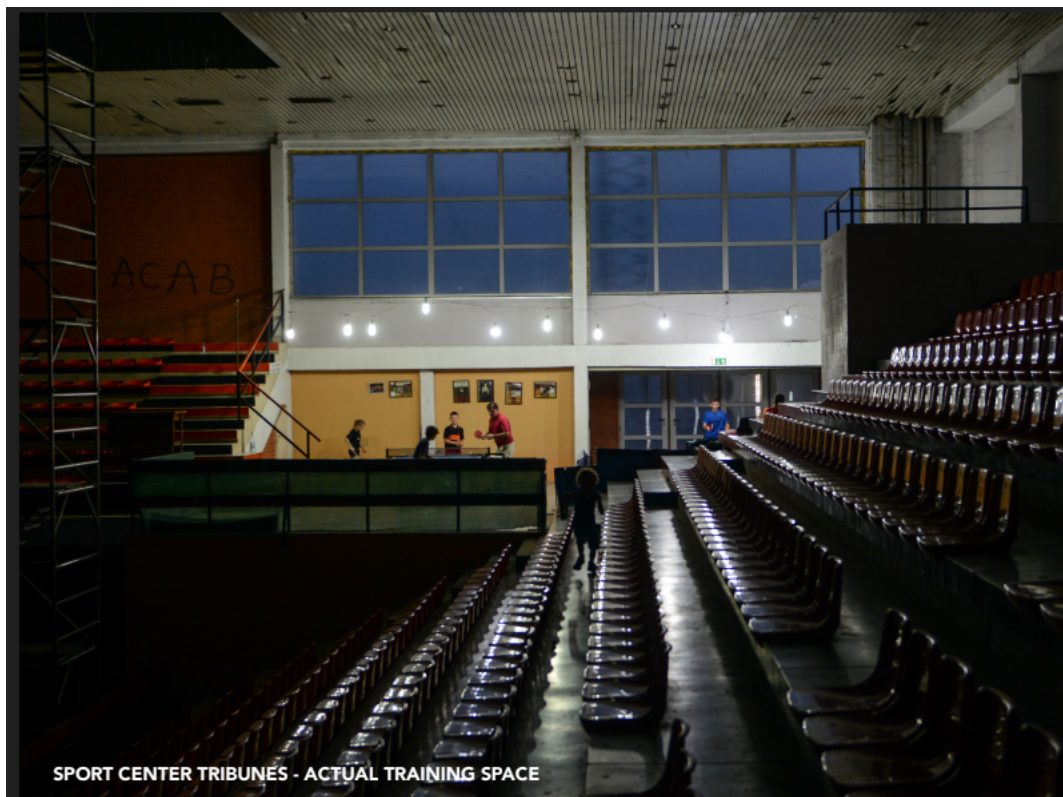
Sound Design/Composer
Memli Kelmendi

For Press Inquiries Contact
Kathleen McInnis, See-Through Films
k.mcinnis@see-throughfilms.com
+1 310 733 9805

For Sales Inquiries Contact
Ben Vandendaele, Radiator IP Sales
ben@radiatorsales.eu

Short Synopsis – (34 words)

In post-war Kosovo, driven by the ambition of keeping their beloved sport alive, two local players wander from one obscure location to another carrying with them the only possession of the club: their tables.



Directors' Statement – SAMIR KARAHODA

PA VEND tells the story of a post-war Kosovo ping pong club, the 'Lidhja e Prizrenit' (League of Prizren) and its journey to present day, through the lives of its two main protagonists and the coach of the club. The film takes the form of doku-fiction, for which we recreated actual events with real characters, combining real footage from the present. The 'Ping Pong Federation' was the first Kosovo sports federation to be internationally recognized after the end of the Kosovo War in the late 1990s. In the years since, other sporting federations were accepted, concluding with a national football team which was admitted to FIFA in 2016. I should also mention that the Football Federation was forced to play its matches in neighboring Albania due to the lack of a stadium with international standards.

Every day, new talents in Kosovo emerge. Kosovo has Olympic champions, World and European champions. But instead of investing in the development of sports infrastructure and the future of our youth, the government only brags about the international successes of Kosovo's athletes. No competing sport in our country meets minimum conditions or infrastructural standards to hold international matches. In this respect, Kosovo has been left unprepared.

Our approach to this story gives us room to express concerns in our society such as migration, alienation and a general sense of hopelessness that pervades our lives and which we fight as much as we can. The story begins sometime in 2003. Then as now, these youngsters and their coaches practice in difficult conditions even though some of them represent Kosovo in international competitions and have won medals in various European championships. *Displaced* is a tribute to all the athletes who, with enthusiasm and a quiet perseverance, manage to overcome the problem of lack of space, and represent their country by contributing more to the state than the state contributes to them.

Despite their success, the 'Ping Pong Federation' is still ignored by the local and central authorities, a condition that shows no sign of changing anytime soon.

I hope and believe that this film will help us draw attention to the dreams of these young people and embolden the state to lend them a hand.

--Samir Karahoda, Director PA VEND (Displaced)

The Producers Note – EROLL BILIBANI

On a late winter day in 2018, a ping-pong conversation between Jeton and Samir in a local gloomy and smoky tavern sparked the idea for our initial 'Table Stories', that ended up as a 'Displaced', the first film from Kosovo to be selected for the official competition of Cannes Film Festival.

Following the confirmation of support by the Kosovo Film Centre (QKK), we decided to pitch the film concept at DOK Short n' Sweet 2019 organized by DokLeipzig in front of an international panel of buyers and distributors and an engaged audience of producers. We partnered again with our friend and collaborator Ben from Radiator IP Sales to start working on pre-sales and worldwide distribution of the film.

As we were building a team around the film with the idea to start shooting in early 2020 and finalize the shooting sometime in autumn of the same year. But then, the pandemic created a global stalemate and an uncertainty of how the events will unfold.

In the summer of 2020, the conditions improved, allowing us to conduct the location scouting and be prepared for shooting in September. The energy of the young ping-pong players and the enthusiasm of our key cast created a beautiful mood on each and every shooting day. Despite the fact that we worked with a cast that has never appeared in film, the filming sessions were so rewarding, and with their contribution, we managed to plan our filming sessions a few moments before the cameras were rolling. And everything went perfectly well until the moment when Samir told us that there will be no film if we don't have snow. Snow was a key moment in transmitting the essence of the story.

And that was only one factor. The other one was the availability of the camera. We had to wait for the days when the camera was available, gather the cast, organize the transport of all kids, and displace the tennis tables to the most unusual locations.

And then, an early, almost spring morning, I called Samir and told him 'be careful what you wish for because the stars might just align to fulfill your wishes'. That morning the skies started pouring snow, having so much snowfall that our tractor scene became the most cinematic moment of the entire film, and gave Samir the scene he was dreaming of.

This is my second collaboration with Samir, after having worked as a producer on Samir's first documentary 'In Between', which also marked the first Kosovo film competing for one of the bears of Berlinale. After the confirmation from Cannes, I consider Samir as the 'Ice-Breaker' for Kosovo cinematography on a big stage.

--Eroll Bilibani, Producer PA VEND (Displaced)

The Actors

Jeton Mazreku, born in Prizren in 1973, started playing Ping-Pong when he was 13 years old. When the war in former Yugoslavia started, Jeton was drafted in to the army, forcing him to flee for Germany until the end of the war in Kosovo in 1999. During his stay as a refugee in Germany he worked as a house painter, which became his profession and source of living upon his return. He also worked as an interpreter for German KFOR. He played as a professional Ping-Pong player until 2010, when he quit. Today, his son Olis, is following his fathers' footsteps at 'Lidhja e Prizrenit' Ping-Pong club.

Ermegan Kazazi is a Prizren native who started playing table tennis in 2001. He worked for Catholic Relief Services immediately after the war for 2 years and later worked for 2 years at a highway construction company. Most of his adult life he worked as a bartender, while his passion for the game of ping-pong got him to be ranked among 11 best players of Kosovo. Ermegan was born and raised in one of the landmark houses in Prizren, known to be a home for many years to legendary actor from former Yugoslavia, Bekim Fehmiu.

The Film Team

Samir Karahoda

Director / Cinematographer

Began working as a photographer in 1992. In 2003 he completed his photography studies at the Academy of Fine Arts at Mimar Sinan University in Istanbul. In addition to his work as a photographer, he is also a cinematographer, tutor and curator of the short film program at the DokuFest, Documentary and Short Film Festival in Prizren. His documentary short film "In Between" was his directorial debut, which in 2019 had its world premiere at the Berlinale as the first Kosovar film to compete at this festival. In Between was also a candidate for European Film Academy Award.

Displaced is his second short film which will have its premiere at Official Competition at Cannes Film Festival.

Eroll Bilibani

Producer

Eroll Bilibani is a film producer who develops educational programs in which cinema and storytelling are tools to better understand complex issues and to promote the social development of the young people. He produced the debut film of Samir Karahoda 'In Between' and was the executive producer of the BAFTA-winning short film "Home" in 2017. In 2014, the New Europe 100, an initiative of Google, Res Publica, Visegrad Fund and the Financial Times, listed Eroll as one of the 100 people who inspired change in Central and Eastern Europe.

Enis Saraçi

Editor

Enis Saraçi, a Kosovan editor, has been cutting films since 2011. He is the editor of award-winning films such as 'In between' a short film by Samir Karahoda, premiered at the 'Berlinale 2019'. His recent work, the feature film 'Hive' by Blerta Basholli, was the first film in Sundance history to win all three main awards. Currently, Saraçi is finishing his Master's degree in the Montage program at the FAMU Academy in Prague.

Memli Kelmendi

composer, conductor and producer.

Postgraduate studies in conducting (vocal and instrumental) in Kosovo and for Film Composition and Music Production - Sound Engineering in North Macedonia. He is currently attending Doctoral Studies for Choir Conducting in Skopje. Known as a film composer, sound designer, he composed for long feature films, short films, theater and documentaries. He was Sound Designer of Samir Karahoda's film "In Between", with Kosovo appearing for the first time at the Berlinale Film Festival, 2019. His choral compositions appear on the CD of the EVOC Ensemble and the Sottovoce Ensemble, France. As a composer and conductor, Memli Kelmendi has been presented in many countries around the world. He is member of World Choir Council - INTERLULTUR which represents Kosovo for the first time.

CREDITS

A Film by
Samir Karahoda

Producer
Eroll Bilibani

Cast
Jeton Mazreku / Ermegan Kazazi / Rifat Rifati

Editing
Enis Saraçi

Cinematography
Samir Karahoda

Sound Design/Composer
Memli Kelmendi

Sound Operator
Gëzim Rama

Script Consultant
Zgjim Terziqi

Sound Assistant
Agron Demolli

Foley
Bledion Kelmendi

Production Logistics
Vigan Bytyqi

Casting
Alba Çakalli

Production Assistant
Idriz Morina

Still Photographer
Elmedina Arapi

Administration
Arlind Kirajtani

Graphic Designer:
Albian Gatica

Distribution
Radiator IP Sales
Ben Vandendaele

Rentals
Ikone Studio

Camera Assistants
Jetmir Zeneli
Sami Shahini
Bujar Hoxha

Lights and Grip
Albion Selitaj
Arlind Brajshori
Berat Hajdari

Translations and text editors
Miranda Karjagdiu
Delphine Leccas
Thomas Logoreci
Audrianna Maki

Subtitles
Thomas Logoreci
Iris Elezi

Publicist
Kathleen McInnis

Cast
Jeton Mazreku / Ermegan Kazazi / Rifat Rifati

Levent Bütüç / Petrit Nuha - Peca / Hasan Xhemaj
Nait Hadra / Dion Boshnjaku / Armend Shehu

Players

"Lidhja e Prizrenit" Ping Pong Club / Kreshnik Mahmuti
Fatih Karabaxhaku / Blend Hajdari / Taibe Ruli
Maide Hulaj / Shaban Qela / Eren Kaqaniku / En Gashi
Berkani Bajmak / Fisnik Mahmuti / Eron Karabaxhaku
Dardan Imami / Ariola Hajdari / Eroll Boshnjaku
Rahman Shala / Besim Hajdari / Fation Hajdari
Erind Kele / Agron Gjurgji / Olis Mazreku / Fitor Bujari
Ron Kolloni / Dionisa Bobaj / Diona Bobaj / Fujzulla Berisha

Music:

"S'KA KURGJO"

Performed by Shpat Deda

"PUNË SKA"

Performed by Offchestra

THANK YOU

Imri Musliu and Valon Ajazaj (Royal Palace) / Diab Kodra (Auto Pjesë 'KODRA')
Lendita Goxha Bllaca (SHFMU 'Lekë Dukagjini')
Edon Muqaj, Beni Kizolli, Osman Krasniqi (Komuna e Prizrenit)
Nexhdet Mrasori, Ersan Sunduri, Nexhmi Krasniqi (Policia e Kosoves)
Qendra Sportive "Sezai Surroi", Prizren / Kino Armata.

Besim Hajdari / Lorenc Vuçaj / Bari Kovaqi / Don Shan Zefi / Katedralja e Zonjës Ndhimtare
Arian Bekqeli / Arben Bekqeli / Ilijaz Traka / Burim Zhëllta / Buron Karahoda / Edin Arapi /
Lis Dorambari / Gjeni Imami / Adhurim Krasniqi / Shpat Deda / Nita Deda / Sezgin Curri /
Eroll Shporta / Neil Young / Blerta Zeqiri / Veton Nurkollari / Pamela Cohn / Tue Steen
Müller / Brigid O'Shea / Daniel Vadocky / Wouter Jansen / Jasmin Basic / Roland
Spahiu / Melissa Lindgren / Sven Schwarz / Jing Hasse / Ariel Shaban / Simon Ellis / Alexei
Dmitriev / Mikhail Zheleznykov / Wim Vanacker / Ramadan Krasniqi / Armend
Shala / Cinema redaction ARTE - Dr. Catherine Colas / Sari Volanen - YLE / Arta&Taulant Tuli
/ Šimon Špidla / DokuFest Team /
Family: Nora and Miron Karahoda

Supported by:

QKK – Kosovo Film Centre
Municipality of Prishtina
Municipality of Prizren
Mabetex Group
ARTE / ZDF
YLE
DokuFest

Distribution: RADIATOR IP SALES