

Pet: Greek Short Film by Chris Moraitis on Track for an Oscar Nomination

By Eleni Sakellis

The award-winning short film PET by Chris Moraitis (alias of Christos Liakouris) is one step closer to an Oscar nomination, according to Nektarios Kalogridis, Executive Producer of the film. He spoke to The National Herald about PET, “the first Oscar-qualifying Greek independent short film.” Kalogridis said, “We are thrilled the film has made it to this point considering the challenges... of making an independent film in Greece.”

After garnering attention on the film festival circuit, and racking up several awards and nominations, PET is in the running for a nomination for Best Short Film at the upcoming Academy Awards. Writer/director Moraitis also spoke to TNH about the film.

In his director’s statement he noted, “It is clear that the violence we suffer socially in recent years was the impetus for the creation of Pet, without, nevertheless, it being a film that focuses on current events. I committed to this story because it concerns me very strongly that a child can be emotionally damaged due to the treatment of his parents. I am also concerned about the consequences of materialism. The rat race— accumulating wealth and power,



Roberto Grosu as Dimitris with his pet guinea pig in the short film PET by Chris Moraitis (alias of Christos Liakouris).

that often leads to losing ourselves and our children. We lose living in the moment and subsequently we lose the future.”

The film focuses on a young boy who has just lost his grandmother. She was his primary caregiver and Dimitris is now alone except for his pet guinea pig. His apparently successful (in terms of career) parents discuss his future without consulting their son.

As the director noted, “Dim-

itris in order to survive, ‘cripples’ the most pure side of himself.”

Moraitis observed that the film “is about childhood and that moment that you are obliged to leave your innocence forever to survive in a cruel world.”

Though only about 11 minutes long, the film is profound in its comment on the family and society today. The parents, so concerned with their own wants, fail to recognize the

needs of their own son. The film poses some difficult questions about what it means to be a parent and what a tremendous responsibility it is to raise a child. It seems as if the parents in the film wanted a child merely as an accessory, another possession to show off their affluence as someone might buy a designer watch or handbag or an expensive car. The emotional disconnection between the parents themselves and between them

and their child is disturbing. Perhaps we’ve grown accustomed to sugar-coated fantasies about the nuclear family, the quaint portrait of domestic bliss with mom and dad and the kids sharing stories about their day around the kitchen table at dinner time. In this film, we see how far removed this family unit is from even functioning as a unit. There is a level of hostility in the parents’ interactions, a seething resentment barely

contained. At first, it isn’t even clear how they are related to each other and when it finally is clear, you hope somehow they will find a way to connect with their son.

Moraitis noted that Pet has participated in 40 international festivals, 30 of those in the US. Among the film festivals are the Cannes Film Festival- Short Film Corner, Las Vegas Film Festival, Los Angeles Greek Film Festival, and Australia Greek Film Festival.

Among Pet’s awards are Best Foreign Film at the Ridgewood Guilt International Film Festival (USA), Best Director at the Skyline International Film Festival (USA), Best New Director at the London Greek Film Festival (UK), and Best Short Film at the North Carolina Film Awards (USA).

Kalogridis said, “I’m really happy to help a filmmaker from Greece, who literally gave it all to make this film. And now he’s one step from being nominated, and possibly winning an Oscar!”

The two filmmakers met at the LA Greek Film Festival where both were screening their films this past June. Kalogridis observed, “Meeting Chris felt like I met a childhood friend and I’m really happy to help him in any way I can.”

More information about Pet is available at petshortfilm.com.