

# Defrance wins awards in New York and Paris (update)

**At the New York Short Film Festival, Silvia Defrance has won an award in the category of editing for *Candy Darling*, an experimental film combining live action and animation. Defrance's film was also a winner in Paris, where it was awarded as Best Experimental Film at the European Independent Film Festival (ECU).**



Silvia Defrance is very pleased winning the editing award in New York: 'I really love editing and I think it is a very rewarding process, certainly in the case of *Candy Darling*, where I had to make a synthesis of live action and animation. Sometimes it can be very difficult, for instance you risk to lose an overall view on things working on particular sequences for a long time. I needed a lot of digital compositing and special effects to obtain the images the way I wanted them to be. So the editing process turned out quite complex: the characters were put in a surreal setting that was filled in digitally later on. So I edited images that were partly blue screen and I fitted in the animation in a later stage. But because all moving elements in a sequence have an influence on the pace of the following sequences, this created a problem. Since we missed the moving animated elements in the first editing stage, we could not really take them into account and sometimes adding an animation ruined a previously made cut in the live action edit. Every single added animated element could be responsible for this: the canemen, the chickens, the wind of the vacuum cleaner... And with animation you don't have hours of footage to choose from so you don't have a lot of flexibility in the final edit. It was very interesting as a creative experiment but not ideal if you like to improvise.'



*Silvia Defrance*

*Candy Darling* is not a classical example of storytelling but more of a visual experience. 'There is an abstract feel to it although we see human characters (used as archetypes) in

interaction with hybrid figures like the canemen. These canemen are the combination of live action heads with 3D collars on 'real' sticks. Moreover, the setting of the film is totally out of this world. When you see the opening sequences, you immediately feel that something is not right. On the one hand you have the digitally processed images with a glossy look referring to the esthetics of a publicity movie and the other hand there is this dark soundtrack that does not correspond with the images. The character of *Candy Darling* is symbolic for someone who is perceived as submissive and compliant but who evolves towards a state of awareness and selfconsciousness.'

Presenting this experimental crossover film has not been very easy. 'So far I have done everything myself, even production and distribution. *Candy Darling* does not fit easily into a category, both in terms of the subject and of the duration (26 minutes, ed.). For instance, in a short film program you take up a lot of space with your half hour movie. Only once you are faced with the reality of international competition you truly understand how hard it is to find your spot. There are a lot of possible angles to this film: fiction, animation, experimental movie, fine art... but the downside to it is that it is harder to profile. So in a way I knew it was going to be difficult to 'sell' it but I really wanted to stay true to my objective.'



*Candy Darling*

The experience of making *Candy Darling* will certainly have an impact on Defrance's next production. 'I prefer to engage in a smaller, less complex project now. I will definitely work with a producer to be able to concentrate on the creative process. I would like to take a step back from the digital way of working and to use more 'manual' techniques. Right now I am drawn to textures and to the tactility of images. So for my next project I would like to digitally process manually drawn layers.'

On March 13th, *Candy Darling* was shown on the opening night of the European Independent Film Festival. The jury awarded the film in the category 'European Experimental Film'.

*Candy Darling* will tour other international festivals and will also be on display as part of the travelling exhibition Out Of Control Goes Wide, which premiered in cultural centre Ter Dilft in Bornem (B) on March 18th.

## Links

[European Independent Film Festival, Paris](#)