

Interview:

1. The feature-length documentary "Experimentl Pitesti" started to run worldwide, in which countries outside Romania and what was the feedback received?

So far we have gone with the film to America (Beverly Hills, Indiana, New York, Chicago, Las Vegas, Pittsburg, San Francisco, San Jose, Denver), Canada (Toronto, Winnipeg, Regina, Calgary, Alberta), Europe (Uk, Bulgaria, Hungary, Lithuania, Portugal, Italy, Spain). This year we went to Mexico for a month where we presented the film in schools, universities and film festivals. The feature film was received with great interest by both young people and the general public. Most of the locations where we have projected have already invited us for the second time.

2. Tell us about Romania. Where the film was presented

In Romania, we started the distribution of the feature film in February this year. The Romanian tour started in Sighet, at the Memorial to the Victims of Communism and the Resistance in Romania. We then projected in Iași, Bacău, Suceava, Târgu Neamț, Piatra Neamț, Timișoara, Bacău, Pitești, Oradea, Craiova, Constanța, Sibiu, Cluj, Bucharest, in villages, in unconventional locations and everywhere we were called. In some cities we came several times, at the request of the public. The film was received with great interest, appreciation, good thoughts and empathy, both among young people (we also went to high schools) and among the general public.

3. Although the film is artistic, has it been evaluated by historians?

The feature film was recorded at the National Cinematography Center in Romania where, at the time of cataloging the film, a team of people with expertise in the field, namely historians and film critics, was formed. The film was placed in the <<historical film>> category and received +15 as the age allowed for viewing, especially for the visual material to reach high schools and universities.

Moreover, at our screenings there were historians and, above all, people who went through communist horrors. Mr. Toma Filaret, a retired teacher, mentioned publicly in Suceava, during our screening, that he was at one point in the cell with Eugen Țurcanu and that the film accurately reproduces the details from reality. At the projection in Pitesti, we were honored with the presence of Mr. Sergiu Rizescu, who was imprisoned in Pitesti, today an honorary citizen of the city and the President of the Association of Former Political Detainees from Romania. He spoke publicly to thank for making this film and to confirm the authenticity of the information presented in the feature film.

It should be mentioned that the "Pitesti Experiment" was carried out after 4 years of research in archives, discussions with survivors and a very close relationship with their relatives. Mr. Andi Daschievici, history teacher, son of Radu Daschievici also imprisoned in Pitesti, was with us for years. Mr. Lucian Merisca, journalist, son of Constantin Merisca (also imprisoned in Pitesti), was also with us offering information, books and the cover that his father used in prison. We received more historical objects that belonged to the young people imprisoned in Pitesti and we presented them during our screenings around the country and also at the "Galateca" Art Gallery in Bucharest. We are preparing a film museum that will include objects that belonged to the young people imprisoned in Pitesti, props from "The Pitesti Experiment", materials published over the years about the film, art objects inspired by the experiment.

4. You have been working on this film for 12 years. Did you receive support from the Romanian state?

I can say that in all these years I have knocked on all possible doors, from the Romanian Presidency to private companies. I contacted cultural centers, ministries, associations and foundations... and unfortunately I did not receive financial support from any entity, which is why this project took 12 years of work... My team and I have not yet been remunerated for this cultural-educational effort.

5. It is the last film in which Caramitru was present as an actor. How was the relationship with this famous actor and how did you convince him to act?

Caramitru knew very well what happened in Pitesti between 1949-1951. He had books about Pitesti experiment in his own office and I found out many years after I filmed with him, that unfortunately he had relatives who went through the experiment too. In 2015, I went with a mass media news about the film and the script to the secretary of the National Theater in Bucharest and kindly asked to send my materials to Mr. Caramitru. It is important to have the right secretary and Mr. Caramitru had such a secretary, whom I thank even today. Caramitru called me after reading the materials I have sent. We met for the first time in Iasi, the night before the filming, I went to see if he was well accommodated or if he needed anything else. He was having dinner and seeing me so small, he stopped eating, gave me his spoon and plate and told me to eat: "You need energy to do great things". That's how our collaboration began, I'll never forget how during the filming breaks he recited poems to us from Mihai Eminescu or Mihai Codreanu..or shared with us what it was like at the Hollywood filming and compared us to the crews there: "... only in Hollywood have I seen work like you do here". He kissed us all at the end of filming, thanked us and told me that he contributed to this project wholeheartedly, voluntarily, that I don't have to pay him and that he can't wait to see the film. Every three months I went to show him the new version of the editing..and he wanted the film to come out as soon as possible..and I said that the editing was not ok and that we had to work more..and that's how 7 years passed. A month before he passed, I went to his office to discuss the premiere. He was smiling and very excited. He told me that we had to do "a show premiere".

At the moment the film does not have a premiere yet because the premiere of this feature film must take place in the "Ion Caramitru" hall at the National Theater in Bucharest and we are still waiting for approvals in this regard.

6. Where does this film fit in Romanian cinematography

This is the first and only film about the phenomenon of re-education, a document- film that shares a true story based on the testimonies of families of those who suffered physical and mental torture between 1948-1952. It is a film of national and international interest because it reveals a truth about the re-education phenomenon that happened in Romania, in all the countries under the USSR and is still happening today, unfortunately. It is a testament film, a voice of those who were tortured during communism, of those who have not yet found justice...and it is a film that deals with a subject kept hidden for decades, a film made to reveal a history from which the whole society must learn. It is a manifesto film that comes with information about communism, education, freedom of thought. It is a film of moral responsibility meant to stand against oblivion.

7. Where are the next screenings and when will the film hit mainstream theaters ?

This is an independent film made with bare hands. We went so far with the film where we found open doors. We also expect support from mainstream cinemas. In 2024, when Romania will celebrate 35 years since the fall of communism, screening will occur in the UK, Germany, France, Austria, Greece, Moldova, Norway and other cinemas in Europe.

From January 2024 we are preparing for the tour in the United States of America. For mass distribution, we need an international film distributor and we hope to find one by the end of this year.

8. What are the chances that the film will be seen on the Netflix or HBO platforms?

We are waiting with interest for the gates to open in this regard especially because the public is demanding to see the film internationally on these platforms as well.