

Interview with Katja Colja



By Sarah Hurtes
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Ms Colja, you are the director of the upcoming feature film "How Things Fall" (original title: "Kako Se Stvari Odvijajo"), an intimate drama about an elderly couple who go through certain events that result in the breakdown of their relationship, but at the same time bring them closer together again. Can you share more information about this project?

Katja Colja: The story unfolds in Trieste, which is located in Italy and is only a short drive from the Slovenian border, which is why there is a Slovenian minority living in the Italian town. The



story centres on this 60-year-old couple. Rosa and Boris live under the same roof, without trespassing on each other's territory even though they have been living together for years. The area around Trieste is notable for the coexistence of different languages and cultures. In the film this is highlighted through the couple itself. Rosa is Italian, while Boris is Slovenian. The couple goes through a traumatic event that will call into question their sense of identity and existence: losing a daughter.

*© Director Katja Colja with actor Lunetta Savino shooting
"How Things Fall" – Minimum Fax Media srl and Casablanca Film Production*

This all sounds somewhat personal. Is it inspired by real-life events?

K.C.: The story has a connection with my family and upbringing. I am Slovenian from Trieste. I have learned from my mother that there can be a renaissance after a death. That is what

happened to her when she lost my father at the age of 60. I learned from her that a women of 60 can still like herself. She is now 70 and has had a big transformation, which has been quite unusual to witness as a daughter. In the film, Rosa is living-proof that anyone at any age can rediscover a love for their own body, themselves and others, while the film's father-daughter relationship is based on my personal experiences with my own father.

What type of relationship was that?

K.C.: *Bellissimo!* It was a loving relationship. My father respected the daughter that I was. I was a blessed child.

Did you already want to make films as a child?

K.C.: I started taking photos from a young age. That is how it all began. I love portraying emotions through images, all this while feeling inspired by the Eastern European films I'd gobble up during my upbringing. I have always loved watching movies, in particular French and Italian ones.

What is the difference between Italian and Slovenian cinema?

K.C.: In general I could say that the Eastern European cinema is much more poetic and nostalgic. Italian films are not as melancholy; they are rather light-hearted. Every cinema reflects the soul of a people, but also has the strength to break down the borders created by people's minds. Slovenian or Italian, for me cinema strikes an emotional chord and has the ability to reach anyone and everyone, when it depicts truth – when you know that what you are seeing on screen is happening in real life. That is my vision as a film director.



© Director Katja Colja and actor Boris Cavazza shooting "How Things Fall" – Minimum Fax Media srl and Casablanca Film Production

This brings us to that tiring yet necessary question. How is it being a female director?

K.C.: Being a female director is very tough. It is hard to be in a place where everybody else is a man. The film "How Things Fall" centres mainly on the woman from the couple. It is a very soft and delicate narrative. So I deliberately have a lot of women in my crew. My producer Marica Stocchi is a woman, my set designer is a woman, my assistant director is a woman, the make-up artist is a woman, the costume designer is a woman.

I saw that you worked with the renowned Italian directors Vittorio and Paolo Taviani

K.C.: Those were beautiful experiences. Both men gave me great lessons on life, both on a personal and on a professional level. I feel lucky to have had the chance to work with such old established directors. Unfortunately they now belong to a past generation. The introduction of the digital revolution in the industry has changed many things. Compared to the past, now processes are quicker and immediate. The way we now make films has changed but we must not forget our roots. We shouldn't be afraid of where we come from. Making a film means experiencing magical moments; for a moment you give life to a small hidden part of you. On this journey I have accepted the tragic conflict between life, which changes continuously, and the form that sets it into something unchangeable.

How do you suggest we reconcile the past and the present?

K.C.: Working with different generations is one element. In "How Things Fall", the crew's age range goes from 25 to 55. It's very important to respect everyone's roles. Do not be afraid to make mistakes and do not be afraid of fragility-