

HONEYLAND

Directed By **Ljubomir Stefanov and Tamara Kotevska**



2019 / Macedonia / Turkish with English Subtitles / 85 mins



LOGLINE

When a nomadic family move in and break Honeyland's basic rule, the last female wild beekeeper in Europe must save the bees and restore natural balance.

SHORT SYNOPSIS

Nestled in an isolated mountain region deep within the Balkans, Hatidze Muratova lives with her ailing mother in a village without roads, electricity or running water. She's the last in a long line of wild beekeepers, eking out a living farming honey in small batches to be sold in the closest city – a mere four hours' walk away. Hatidze's peaceful existence is thrown into upheaval by the arrival of an itinerant family, with their roaring engines, seven rambunctious children and herd of cattle. Hatidze optimistically meets the promise of change with an open heart, it doesn't take long however, before a conflict evolves that exposes the fundamental tension between nature and humanity, harmony and discord, exploitation and sustainability.

The debut feature from documentarians Ljubomir Stefanov and Tamara Kotevska, HONEYLAND is made with the widescreen sweep of an epic, yet clearly built from an intimate collaboration between filmmakers and subject. With a surprising sense of humor, it's a tough and tender portrait of the delicate balance between humankind and nature, a glimpse at a fast disappearing way of life, and an unforgettable testament to one extraordinary woman's resilience.

LONGER SYNOPSIS

Nestled in an isolated mountain region deep within the Balkans, Hatidze Muratova lives with her ailing mother in a village without roads, electricity or running water. She's the last in a long line of Macedonian wild beekeepers, eking out a living farming honey in small batches to be sold in the closest city – a mere four hours' walk away. Hatidze's peaceful existence is thrown into upheaval by the arrival of an itinerant family, with their roaring engines, seven rambunctious children and herd of cattle. Hatidze optimistically meets the promise of change with an open heart, offering up her affections, her brandy and her tried-and-true beekeeping advice.

It doesn't take long however, before Hussein, the itinerant family's patriarch, senses opportunity and develops an interest in selling his own honey. Hussein has seven young mouths to feed and nowhere to graze his cattle, and he soon casts Hatidze's advice aside in his hunt for profit. This causes a breach in the natural order that provokes a conflict with Hatidze that exposes the fundamental tension between nature and humanity, harmony and discord, exploitation and sustainability. Even as the family provides a much-needed respite from Hatidze's isolation and loneliness, her very means of survival are threatened.

The debut feature from documentarians Ljubo Stefanov and Tamara Kotevska HONEYLAND was shot over three years by a skeleton crew committed to an intimate collaboration between filmmakers and subject. HONEYLAND is made with the widescreen sweep of an epic, visually ambitious and driven by an unexpectedly dramatic narrative and a surprising sense of humor. It's a tough and tender portrait of the delicate balance between humankind and nature, a glimpse at a fast disappearing way of life, and an unforgettable testament to one extraordinary woman's resilience.

DIRECTORS' STATEMENT

The HONEYLAND story began long before humans ever lived in the region, but our narrative starts with its last two remaining inhabitants: Hatidze and her mother Nazife. Just as worker bees spend their entire lives taking care of the queen bee which never leaves the hive, Hatidze has committed her own life to the care of her blind and paralyzed mother, unable to leave their ramshackle hut. The film is set in an unearthly lan, unattached to a specific time and geography, unreachable by regular roads, and yet, only 20 km away from the nearest modern city.

The families here use an ancient Turkish vernacular, so the film is driven by visual narration rather than dialogue, the characters are understood through their body language and their relationships, and their emotions. This visual and visceral communication draws the audience closer to the protagonists, and more importantly - closer to nature. Engendering the feeling that we as humans are but one species among many, equally affected by the circumstances around us.

The Nagoya Protocol - a United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) - came into force at the end of 1993 and established global guidelines on access to natural resources. Its objective was the promotion of fair and equitable sharing of benefits for both providers - i.e. land, plants, animals - and users - i.e. humans - of resources. Genetic diversity, or biodiversity, enables populations to adapt to changing environments and a changing climate, contributing to the conservation and sustainability of resources. The "honey crisis" in this film illustrates the risk of ignoring these protocols and upsetting the respect for biodiversity.

Hatidze's story is a microcosm for a the wider idea of how closely intertwined nature and humanity are, and how much we stand to lose if we ignore this fundamental connection.

KEY CREW BIOS

Ljubo Stefanov / Co-Director

Born 1975 in Skopje. Over 20 years of experience in development and production of communication concepts and documentaries related to environmental issues and human development. Working for clients such UN agencies, Euronatur, Swisscontact etc. Previous films include "The Noisy Neighbours" (2005) and "Lake of Apples" (2017)

Tamara Kotevska / Co-Director

Born on 9th of August, 1993, in Prilep, Macedonia. Tamara won the Best Balkan Film award at the Tirana International Documentary Film Festival with her graduation documentary *Students* (49'), supported by Trice Films and the Faculty of Dramatic Arts- Skopje.

Her first professional environmental documentary *Lake of Apples* (27'), supported by UNDP (as writer and co-director) played at the International Nature Namur Festival, the Prix de l'environnement (2017) award in France, an Honorable mention at the Innsbruck Film Festival in Austria (2017), and the Perseus award at T-Festival in Brno, Czech Republic (2017).

Atanas Georgiev / Producer / Editor

Atanas Georgiev was born in 1977 in Skopje, Macedonia, in what was at that time Yugoslavia. He is owner of Trice Films and Film Trick production companies from Macedonia, a subsidiary and association of fx3x.com

He makes his living by editing feature films, but then he spends his money on documentaries he believes in. His debut *Cash & Marry*, which cost him many years of hard work and pulmonary embolism, has won many international awards and recognition.

Foltin / Music

FULL CREDITS

FEATURING

HATIDZE MURATOVA
NAZIFE MURATOVA
HUSSEIN SAM
LJUTVIE SAM
MUSTAFA SAM
MUZAFER SAM
VELI SAM
ALI SAM
ALIT SAM
GAMZE SAM
LJUTVISH SAM
SAFET JAVOROVAC

DIRECTED BY

LJUBO STEFANOV & TAMARA KOTEVSKA

CINEMATOGRAPHERS

FEJMI DAUT
SAMIR LJUMA

PRODUCER AND EDITOR

ATANAS GEORGIEV

SOUND DESIGNER

RANA EID

MUSIC

FOLTIN

PRODUCER

LJUBO STEFANOV

ASSOCIATE PRODUCERS

MARJANA SHUSHLEVSKA
KORNELIJA RISTOVSKA

ADDITIONAL CINEMATOGRAPHER

KRISTIJAN KARADZOVSKI

ADDITIONAL EDITOR

BLAGOJA NEDELKOVSKI

DIALOGUE EDITOR

VANESSA KANAAN

FOLEY ARTIST

LAMA SAWAYA

FOLEY RECORDING

FRANÇOIS YAZBECK

RE-RECORDING MIXER
FLORENT LAVALLÉE

AUDIO POST-PRODUCTION
DB-HAL STUDIOS - BEIRUT

COLOR GRADING
VLADIMIR IVANOVSKI

EDITOR ASSISTANTS
MARTIN IVANOV
DEJAN SMILESKI

GRAPHIC DESIGNER
ANDREJ MARJANOVIC

MUSIC PRODUCER
IVICA JANKULOVSKI

FOLTIN ARE
BRANISLAV NIKOLOV
GOCE JOVANOVSKI
PECE TRAJKOVSKI

TRANSLATING
BATUHAN IBRAHIM
EMINE HALIL
SENADA IBRAIMOVA
ALEKSANDAR TAKOVSKI
MAGDA ORIGJANSKA
MARIJANA KOTEVSKA

LEGAL ADVISOR
DIMITAR PANCHEVSKI

EDITING FACILITY
FILMTRICK

COR GRADING
FX3X

MUSIC RECORDING
ALSHAR

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PERFORMED BY PHOENIX AND THE DREAM
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WRITTEN AND PERFORMED BY FOLTIN

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