

Short documentary “Lucky to be here”. Josef and Selma — Ballet Dancers from the Theatre Vanemuine

The main subject of the thesis is documentary filmmaking. The thesis consists of theoretical and practical parts. The theoretical parts focus on moral problems in the documentary field and the representation of truth in documentary films. As a result of the practical part, I created a short documentary film “Lucky to be here”.

The theoretical part is sectioned into four themes. The first one examines the need for moral consideration before and during a documentary project. The second part describes the obligations to the subjects of the film. Later, are described the obligations to the viewer of the film. And finally, the presentation of truth in documentary film is further discussed.

The filmmaker should never put the subject in harm's way and with the viewer lies the obligation to honour the viewers' trust. Most important is to not abuse one's power position where a filmmaker almost always stands.

Documentary filmmaking is an art form that depicts truth. At its core is a representation of truth — it consists of real-life events and people. Since it is so, the viewer of the documentary presumes that what is seen on the screen is the truth not just one version of the truth. The filmmaker must honour the trust that the viewer has in the director to depict an accurate version of the truth while keeping in mind that the depiction of truth in documentary filmmaking is an artistic version of the truth.

Practical work, the documentary film “Lucky to be here” focuses on competition in the ballet world. Josef Jagger and Selma Strandberg, ballet dancers in the Vanemuine Theatre in Estonia are the main subjects. Josef is from England and Selma is from Sweden. Neither of them planned to move to Estonia but they followed their careers. As did many of their colleagues, the majority of whom are not Estonians. The examples of Josef and Selma are ones of many in the ballet world. High competition makes dancers travel far from home, often in their teenage years.

“Lucky to be here” gives a glimpse to behind the scenes of the life of a ballet dancer.

The creation of this thesis is my way of further investing an interest in filmmaking and giving myself a proper introduction to the documentary field while telling a heartwarming story of ballet dancers.