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# Liliom Ösvény

## Lily Lane

### Bence Fliegauf

**Producer** Ernő Mesterházy, Bence Fliegauf, Mónika Mécs, András Pires Muhi. **Production company** Fraktál Film (Budapest, Hungary). **Written and directed by** Bence Fliegauf. **Director of photography** Zoltán Lovasi. **Editor** Balázs Budai. **Music** Bence Fliegauf. **Sound design** Bence Fliegauf. **Sound** Tamás Beke. **Production design** Bence Fliegauf. **Costumes** Anna Kovalik. **With** Angéla Stefanovics (Rebeka), Bálint Sótónyi (Danny), Miklós Székely B. (father), Mária Gindert (Viola), Maja Balogh (Rebeka as a young girl), Bence Somkúti (Danny's friend).

DCP, colour. 91 min. Hungarian.

**Premiere** 13 February 2016, Berlinale Forum

**World sales** Films Boutique

To begin with, the camera glides over a miniature Lego city, as we hear a child humming in voiceover. Then we see a woman telling her son a fairy tale. Later, she chats with the child's father on the computer. They're talking about their separation, which she wants, but not on paper. In between, there are images from other times and situations: her rubbing lotion on to her heavily pregnant belly, stroking the unborn child or the image of a birch tree at night, its branches disappearing into the darkness.

The woman and the son drive to her mother's house on the edge of the city. Due to some unspecified illness, the mother hasn't lived there for some time. Memories take shape in black-and-white photos. The fairy tale continues, between snapshots of the physical intimacy between mother and son, in the swimming pool, under the duvet. Then they're off again, by car and by boat, this time seeking her father and her vanished childhood. This film is an associative expedition into self-constructed, fictitious and bygone worlds, in which each stream of consciousness flows into the other in perfect balance.

Anke Leweke

## When stories become independent

What happens if you don't read your kid stories from a book, but think up a story yourself? The characters become increasingly familiar. It's as if you've seen them before. It's as if you've met them before. It's as if you already know the story. A dizzying journey begins within you – so it's lucky you've got a kid to hold your hand. All your desires, all your fears and all your dreams are in this story. Kids hear a story differently. They listen on a much deeper level. This story can't be a lie and it can't be hollow, because kids soon get bored of that kind of thing. You need to stay focused; you need to tell it well. And the best and only way is if you tell your own story. Rebeka puts her son Danny to bed. She doesn't read a story from a book, but makes up her own. And hand in hand, they set off down Lily Lane.

Bence Fliegauf

## “We have to focus on not polluting the children's dreams”

How did you develop the screenplay?

**Bence Fliegauf:** I was inspired a lot by the adventures I lived through with my son. Once he pelted me with rotten plums and I tried to hit them with a nunchaku [Japanese martial arts weapon consisting of two sticks connected with a chain or rope -ed.]. Another time, we blew rainbow-coloured bubbles in the dark and took photographs of them while they twinkled like surreal planets in outer space. When my son was in his early childhood, he was highly interested in questions regarding the matter of life and death. He kept asking me the most complex and confusing questions all the time. What will happen to the dead pigeons? Where do grandma's thoughts go when she dies? I had to think over the answers carefully since I didn't want him to be deceived. Finally I made this movie that I see as an answer itself. I would also like to highlight the title, *Liliom Ösvény*, or 'Lily Lane', which is a real place in the Buda Hills near Budapest, where the story takes place. I like the sound of the words very much because they have a halo or an aura somehow. In my opinion, they perfectly express the surreal character of the movie.

What place do you think *Liliom Ösvény* has within your oeuvre?

This is a deeply ballad-like movie with a lot of water, darkness, thrills, and flames in it. I tried to capture the fleeting and dreamlike moments in my childhood that were beautiful and terrifying at the same time. That was the last time I had conflicting feelings like that, and I wanted *Liliom Ösvény* to evoke those slipped-away moments. The story suggests a special nostalgia for the atmosphere of the stormy soul of a child. Anyway, I don't think this attitude is far from my previous artistic concepts.

Why is it so important in your work to depict parent-child relationships or to juxtapose adults and children in this way?

The stakes are raised when you have children and things suddenly become deeper and sharper. Stories spring up, miracles and nightmares happen, sensuality intensifies – the boring reality of the adult is eliminated. You find everything there that is worth living for. Spending time with a child is the best way to improve your character. When certain events happen, like a divorce, a death, or moving into a new place, the dullness

of everyday life immediately comes crashing down. In these fragile situations roles can easily be mixed up. You try to hold on tight to each other, but you have to keep in mind that the chaos and the spectacular suffering of adulthood can be very harmful to a young person. They see us as a solution, as the path they have to follow. We have to focus on not polluting their dreams because the effects of our actions and of our thoughts are reflected in their eyes, in their touch and in how they lose their beautiful childish smile.

The film has a unique visual style. What was the initial concept?

When we fixed the details with our cinematographer, Zoltán Lovasi, we tried to develop an intimate but very diverse visual language. Evaluating the film now as a finished product, I think that we have more or less succeeded in creating what we were seeking.

Who will be able to see *Liliom Ösvény* once it's had its premiere in the Forum section of the Berlinale?

I'm not good at business and I don't know how or to whom to sell a movie. I'm just truly honoured when a cinemagoer chooses to buy a ticket to see my film. It would also be great to address people who love the Hans Christian Andersen fairy tales, The Cure's album *Disintegration* or Theodor Kittelsen's illustrations. I think people who fit these categories would certainly understand what *Liliom Ösvény* means.

Source: *Fraktál Film*



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**Bence Fliegauf** was born in 1974 in Budapest, Hungary. After training as a set designer, he initially worked as an assistant director, later as a director and editor for various Hungarian television stations. After several short films, in 2002 he made his first feature-length documentary, *Van élet a halál előtt?/Is There Life Before Death?*. Fliegauf lives in Budapest, where

he works as a writer and director, as well as a production and sound designer.

## Films

2001: *Hypnos* (15 min.), *Beszélő fejek/Talking Heads* (28 min.). 2002: *Van élet a halál előtt?/Is There Life Before Death?* (110 min.). 2003: *Rengeteg/Forest* (90 min., Berlinale Forum 2003). 2004: *Dealer* (160 min., Berlinale Forum 2004), *The Line* (9 min.). 2005: *Trance* (21 min.). 2007: *Milky Way* (82 min.). 2008: *Sparkling* (60 min.). 2010: *Méh/Womb* (111 min.). 2011: *Csak a szél/Just the Wind* (95 min., Berlinale Competition). 2016: *Liliom Ösvény / Lily Lane*.