

THESSALONIKI 2020 Agora

## MML Collective • Directors of *Tracking Satyrs*

“An atypical film such as ours, questioning freedom and played by social outcasts, does not really fit the profile of industry cinema”

by [VASSILIS ECONOMOU](#)



Blending elements of fiction and reality, the experimental work *Tracking Satyrs*, directed by the **MML Collective**, was the big winner of the €50,000 [Eurimages](#) Lab Project Award in the [Thessaloniki International Film Festival's Agora Works in Progress](#) (read the [news](#)). The story, inspired by the myth of Apollo losing his herd of cows and his agreement with a group of satyrs to help him find them, is an update on Sophocles' satiric drama *Ichneutae*, reenacted in today's Poland. Formed in 2008, the MML Collective — comprising Polish brothers novelist and screenwriter **Michał Mądracki**, filmmaker and film critic **Maciej Mądracki**, and Swiss

filmmaker and graphic artist **Gilles Lepore** — look at ideologies, fantasies and myths and their work has been show in contemporary art exhibitions and institutions. *Tracking Satyrs* is produced by **Beata Rzeźniczek** for Warsaw-based company **Madants**, in co-production with Switzerland's **Prince Film**. Cineuropa talked to them about the creative part of their project and how difficult it is to shoot something daring today.

**Cineuropa: For *Tracking Satyrs*, you drive your inspiration from a Greek myth in order to tell a really contemporary story. Could you offer us some more information regarding your project?**

**MML Collective:** Intertwining an ancient myth with our present day has given us the opportunity to look at our contemporary era from a timeless perspective. This approach invited us to revisit the mythological representation inspired by our time, to create a hybrid visual world with an unconventional casting. A kind of shifted counter-model where we are amused by undoing the norms of today's society.

**How would you characterize *Tracking Satyrs* in relation to modern society? What issues are you trying to showcase?**

The narrative of Sophocles is peopled by extraordinary characters and definitely dealing with the idea of freedom. We didn't want to stop at a single interpretation of this concept and tried to find, in today's Poland, several characters and situations which feature a tension with the desire for freedom or for liberation. This led us to represent a certain margin of society and to develop topics such as gender identities, feminism, migration and the rejection of the norm.

**Was it difficult to shoot something so edgy in today's Poland? What were some of the difficulties you faced?**

An atypical film such as ours, questioning freedom and played by social outcasts, does not really fit the profile of industry cinema. Facing this reality, we were obliged to adapt to the circumstances — we were shooting the film gradually, piece by piece, when we had just enough to do it. To give an example: we started filming in 2019, and at that time, besides the actors and the three of us, we had only a DOP, a make-up artist and two volunteers in the crew. Besides economic troubles, we were very lucky and had a great time working with our actors and with everyone involved in the project, and more generally, we were happy to organise the shoot in Poland, where the magic of cinema is still alive and it's possible to realise the impossible.

**How helpful will the Eurimages Lab Project Award be for you? What are the next steps?**

This award will allow us to move forward with serenity. It will be a decisive help in organising the last part of the shooting, which must take place indoors, including 3 days in the studio. After that, there will be a lot of work to do on the soundtrack, in post-production, and our budget is still under construction.

**What was your experience at Thessaloniki's Agora, and what else are you looking for now?**

We are grateful to Thessaloniki's Agora team for our selection. Being part of such a variety of innovative projects reinforced our desire to find new cinematographic languages. Our interactions with the participants were also very positive, although it was a little frustrating to meet only through a computer screen due to the outbreak. So, what else are we looking for now? To go to Thessaloniki in the near future, enter a film theatre and experience very daring films!

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Cineuropa is the first European portal dedicated to cinema and audiovisual in 4 languages. With daily news, interviews, data bases, in-depth investigations into the audiovisual industry, Cineuropa aims at promoting the European film industry throughout the world. Welcome to a platform where professionals can meet and exchange information and ideas.

