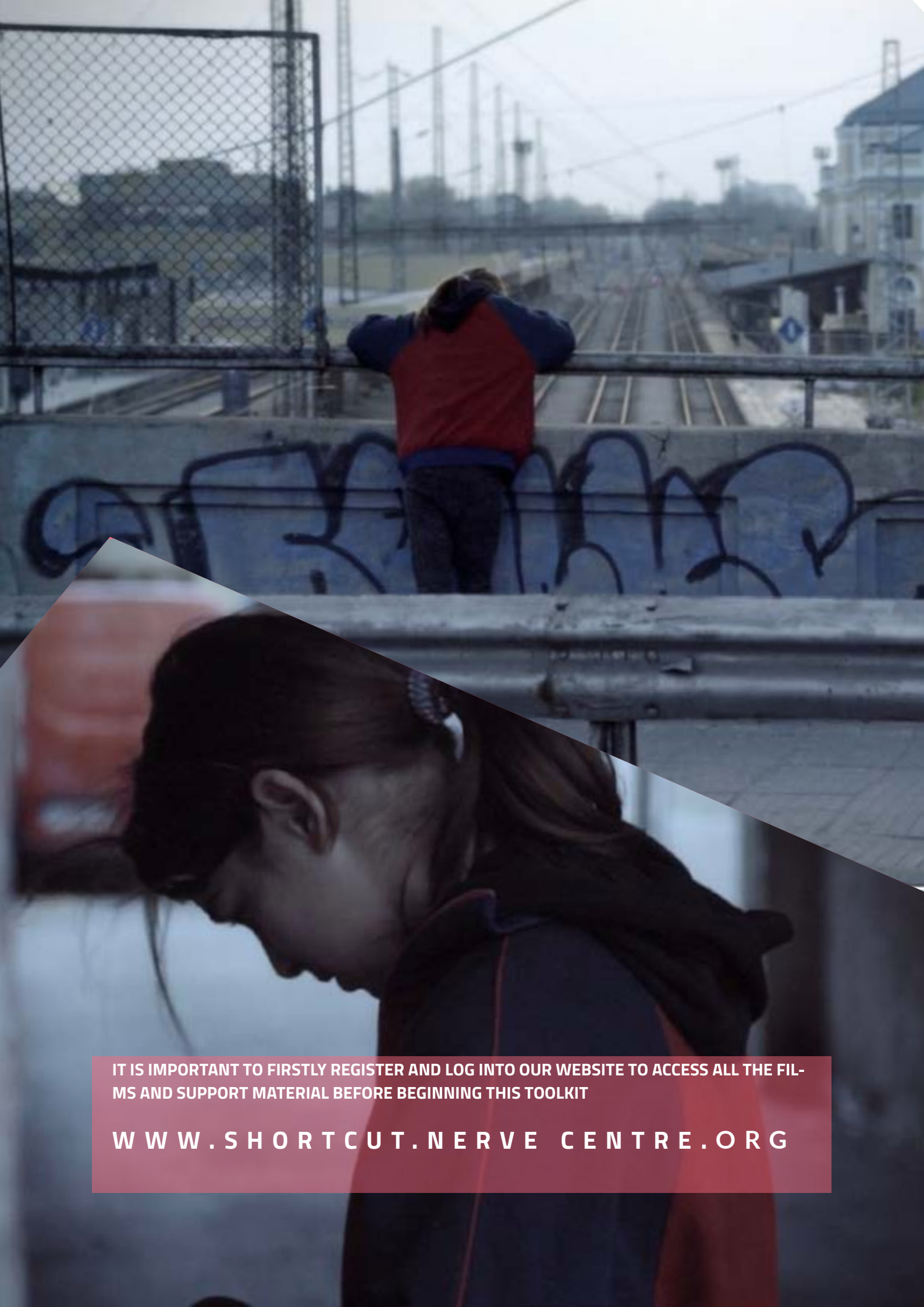


**NINA**

**HRISTO SIMEONOV (2019)**





IT IS IMPORTANT TO FIRSTLY REGISTER AND LOG INTO OUR WEBSITE TO ACCESS ALL THE FILMS AND SUPPORT MATERIAL BEFORE BEGINNING THIS TOOLKIT

[WWW.SHORTCUT.NERVECENTRE.ORG](http://WWW.SHORTCUT.NERVECENTRE.ORG)

## TITLE

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NINA (2019), Dir. Hristo Simeonov

## TOPIC

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## INCLUSION

## THEMES

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Social inclusion vs. social exclusion, stereotypes, prejudice, Roma community, coming-of-age in a hostile environment, absent family, communication mistakes

## MAIN OBJECTIVES

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**Social education** will reflect on social inclusion of marginalised groups. They will find out when interpersonal contact can reduce prejudice between majority and minority group members and what makes it counterproductive. They will practise unprejudiced observation of their environment.

**Creative education** will introduce students to experimental filmmaking techniques as well as the idea of the short film. Creative practice will include exercises in making one-minute films and focusing on our role in the city space and community.

## SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

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- reconsider stereotypical approach to representatives of minority groups
- learn about the conditions under which contact between two groups can promote tolerance and acceptance
- practise an empathetic observation of others as a way towards social inclusion

## METHODS

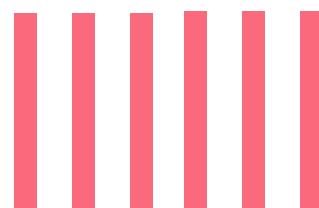
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- Film Analysis
- Discussion
- Workshop (Social context)
- Creative Exercises - Photography & Filmmaking

## MATERIALS

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- whiteboard/flipchart
- Phone/tablet/camera or camera with recording function, computer and editing software (e.g. one of the free programs such as YouTube video editor, iMovie or DaVinci Resolve)
- Phone stand or tripod or camera tripod



## CLASS TIME

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2 x 45 minutes plus time to discuss homework

## LESSON STRUCTURE

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The following lesson plan is based on an experiential learning scheme known as the Kolb's cycle. Particular stages of the scheme lead students from film experience to accumulation of knowledge and training of competences.

## LESSON PLAN

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### INTRODUCTION STAGE

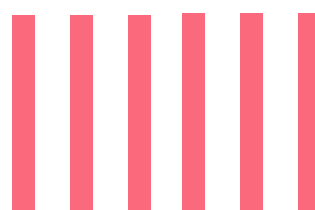
### OPENING ACTIVITY

Before the screening, the teacher could choose to introduce the film with the following fixed image.

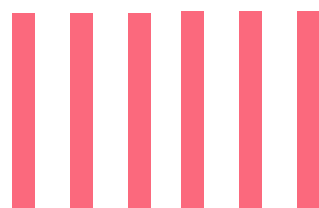
## STEP BY STEP INSTRUCTIONS

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1. *Before the lesson begins have the film paused at Timecode 00:21 to 1:38.*
2. With reference to the film still below and ask the students to describe what they see in the frame: composition.
  - Where is the camera
  - How do the colours feel?
  - What light is used?
  - What else do they notice?
  - What might the story be?
3. Now ask the students to turn their backs to the screen. **They are only to listen to the following excerpt with the students: from Timecode 00:21 to 1:38.** without the image .
  - What can they hear?
  - What different sounds can they hear?
  - Are these sounds common to them, do they hear them in their everyday life, on the way to school, on holidays?
  - What do they feel while listening?
  - Can they imagine the story of the film only by listening to these seconds?



OPENING ACTIVITY STILL IMAGE



## EXPERIENCE STAGE

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### 1. FILM SCREENING - Watch the film as a class

After a short talk with the pupils, watch the film *NINA* together with the class. Restart and watch the film from the beginning or switch to the film file.

## REFLECTION STAGE

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After watching the entire film, begin a discussion where the students have the chance to vent emotions to strengthen their understanding of the plot and exchange interpretations of the films' message. What are the pupils' first impressions of the film?

### Discussion questions:

- Who might Nina be?
- What is a movie about?
- How does it make you feel?
- What does the character do during the day? What does she think? What does she feel? What kind of girl is she?
- What do you think has happened to her?
- Why does the story end like this? Why do you think the director decided to end the film this way?
- What do you think about the restaurant scene? What is happening here?
- Why is the woman helping Nina? What is her approach to Nina?
- What are they talking about? Is it a positive conversation?
- What is Nina's reaction? Why is she stealing the wallet?
- Why do you think she doesn't want to go to her parents?
- Why does their communication end up so badly?
- What would have had to happen for Nina to take her chance?
- Do you feel the dog is significant? Why?
- Why does Nina go back to the older man?

## THEORY AND APPLICATION STAGES

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In the second lesson you will discuss the topic of inclusion of vulnerable social groups. Begin with an analysis of a film language that will introduce students to the topic, as well as contribute to a better understanding of filmic means of expression.

### ACTIVITY 2

### FILM ANALYSIS

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#### CONTRASTING FEELINGS AND BEHAVIOURS - WHAT IS SAID AND UNSAID

We would like to start the theoretical discussion with a short scene analysis, i.e. the introductory scene with Nina and the wallet (00:00 - 01:24). This scene could 'trigger' stereotypes and also unconscious bias, but there is an important hint as for Nina's situation, where there is some window for empathy.



### STEP BY STEP INSTRUCTIONS

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This analysis will prompt the students to a closer reading of the story and how Nina is seen in the film. The students will consider Nina's life situation and true feelings through analysing the scene and what it represents for understanding Nina by considering how the actions of the character on screen can reveal about what she could be thinking and feeling internally.



1. **Watch the clip - timecode - 00:00- 01:24**

2. After watching the clip begin a class discussion. The students will firstly examine what the students feel about her behaviour-

- How she is behaving:
- How do they feel about this behaviour?
- What impression do they have about her?
- Why do they think she is stealing?
- What do they predict for her situation?

3. The second part of the discussion will focus on what the students think **she is feeling on the inside?**

4. Prompt the students for words to describe how Nina could be **thinking and feeling on the 'inside'**.

5. Discuss with the students how each of these film elements 'shows' the audience a deeper narrative to what is actually unseen outside of the film frame. How does this provide the audience with more background information to what is outside the frame - what is unseen - to reveal more about Nina?

- How she may truly be feeling
- Her motivations
- The loneliness of her situation
- Relationships with others (the older man, the public, her family, the helpful lady)

6. Conclude the discussion by asking students: how do stereotypes/unconscious biases arise and why do they form? How are stereotypes/unconscious bias are created and why prejudices are formed.

**This analysis exercise is to bring awareness of 'Nina's life/situation', to deepen an awareness and create an empathic understanding and response from the students. It also deepens knowledge of the life and history of Roma.**

## **SUMMARY - WHAT IS SAID AND UNSAID**

Cinema is, by definition, an art of the visible, given that the film camera generates - just like a photograph - an image of the world similar to what we can see with our own eyes but cinematic art also expands to the art of the invisible. This is also defined as what is seen and what is unseen, what the film shows and and what the film doesn't show, what is seen inside the frame and what is outside the frame.

This scene analysis is an exercise to gather film language knowledge from the opening scene timecode 00:00- 01:24 mins and the restaurant scene at timecode 11.40 - 16.03 mins. In both these scenes the director Hristo Simeonov has deliberately given focus to cinema exposition:



Cinema exposition is the emotive use of film language to establish with what is seen and unseen in relation to the young protagonist character of Nina and her story being told. Throughout the film, suggestion is favoured over direct explanation. The viewer is asked to construct a fuller picture of the story from scant pieces of narrative information.

What is seen or said in the frame in establishing the story about her, her situation and her world:

- the camera (framing, movement, composition)
- the sounds (her silence/dialogue)
- the characters (behaviour, dress, dialogue)
- the story (the location, relationships, 'work')

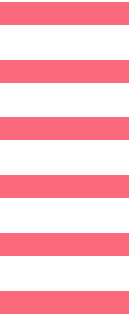
Cinema exposition is how a director 'shows' or suggests (visual & audio) more information about the narrative without fully 'telling'. It is often what is unseen that gives the audience more narrative information, this is a greater storytelling device. This is the art of cinema.

In *Nina* Simeonov uses silent, wordless gestures, handheld filming techniques, paused close up moments to convey the sometimes emotional weight of the situation. There is little verbal exposition throughout the film, Simeonov uses pure cinema techniques to establish a creative dynamic between what can and what cannot be seen, as well as between what the film actively shows and hides.

The idea for Lumiere Minute is inspired from the international cinema education programme “Le cinéma, cent ans de jeunesse / Cinema, hundred years of youth” where young people are making their first steps in cinema throughout the world. This practical experience “connects them to one of the most fundamental approaches to making cinema” and to the first cinematographers - people with an inexhaustible curiosity and imagination that has made them work with a new tool, which was cinema at that time.

### STEP BY STEP INSTRUCTIONS

1. **Collective work.** First of all, you can watch with all the class some Lumiere Minutes from all over the world here: <https://www.cinemacentansdejeunesse.org/en/lumiere-minutes.html>. In this way students will discover new places but also how these Minutes are shot; this will further arouse their curiosity about making their short films in the same way.
2. **Individual work.** Each student chooses the place and the subject - what is going to be filmed in his/her shot; he/she also decides the specific moment to start filming the short film. The camera records from one position without being moved, but can be placed on or in a moving object (car, elevator, train, subway, tram, etc.), and the sound is recorded directly at the source; the camera or telephone should be . Then, 60 seconds later, clock in hand, the student has to stop filming as if the film is over, just as the Lumiere brothers’ cameramen have done in the past. Thus, every minute captured is the result of both a choice made and a dose of surprise that can enter the frame, as always when we capture reality.
3. **Collective work.** Watch all the Lumiere Minutes in class. To complete the exercise, each student gives a name to his/her short film that could be discussed with the others. Observe and discuss: the frame, the light and everything else that the students would remark.





## SOCIAL WORKSHOP

The social workshop on the film *Nina* is intended to be an opportunity for the participating youth to (better) get to know a selected group that, due to their lifestyle, needs, socioeconomic status, ethnicity or age, is less active and visible in their environment. Additionally, at this stage you are invited to reconsider your environment and look at it from the point of view of social inclusion. What is done to ensure equal participation of all residents in the local social and cultural life? What are the needs that are considered in the process? Can it be done better? Find out!

As we have already learned from Allport's contact hypothesis described in the ppt presentation, overcoming prejudice involves frequent contact with multiple representatives of a given group, which occurs in a friendly atmosphere. A single, random encounter runs the risk of triggering stereotypes and reinforcing mutual distrust. If you however decide to invite someone to support your project during your social workshop, remember about the circumstances that will be crucial - equal status of all participants, common goals and willingness to cooperate. If you wonder what activities might work in this context choose art or sports, which provide ample room for integration. Think of a meeting to learn a selected craft or a selected song from mentors representing a chosen ethnic group. Plan a joint creative activity, during which you will develop some art project, e.g. a collage or a series of gifs on a chosen theme.

An alternative idea would be to rely on the expertise of your local community groups or centres (libraries, small local museums, local activity groups, cultural associations, etc.) if some function in your neighbourhood. These might be the places where people from different backgrounds meet and integrate. Check what you can do together. Maybe there are already some inclusive events that you can participate in? Maybe the experts from the community centre could help you to plan such an inclusive event in your school or rather to prepare such a planning session, since remember - inclusive events should be planned by all members of a given community together WITH them rather than FOR them. Check if they can guide you towards groups or events that you haven't thought of before. Ask how you can learn more about the life and culture of marginalised groups. Are there stories that you could familiarise yourself with? Art that documents their experience? Blogs or social media profiles that you should check?



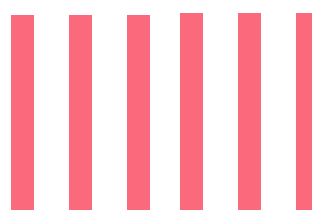
IMAGE Facebook Grupy Pedagogów Ulicy UNO

## STEP BY STEP INSTRUCTIONS

1. Discuss with the students certain professions and people that they don't consider popular (the choice could be linked to the previous filmmaking task), for instance people working on the bus station, train station, popular bakery, local market...
2. Before making their empowering portrait which will show their personality, work, thoughts and ideas, it is very important to choose a person who will agree to be filmed. The creative task here is related very much to observing through the eye of the camera, thus the protagonist of this documentary essay should be in confidence with the filmmaker.
3. It is up to him / her to experiment with the shoots, filming the daily work of the chosen person: it will be interesting for the spectator to see some shoots in which we witness continuous action, telling us details not only about the work but also about her/his personality.
4. Like in the Lumiere Minute exercise, choosing the concrete point of view, the position of the camera and the moment of shooting will be very important and it will undoubtedly bring surprising events into the frame.
5. Of course, doing a portrait of someone could also include some questions, in this particular case about their place and life in the city/neighbourhood, about their profession and the way it defines them, about the past and the present, the places where they feel welcome and those they try to avoid. The questions must be well prepared but the young filmmakers are invited also to use their intuition and find different ways to approach what they see and hear in order to create the portrait.

### Interview Question Suggestions

- Ask them about their life in the city/neighbourhood, try to understand their world and empower them through your questions.
  - What do they need to feel welcome?
  - Where do they feel welcome?
  - What places do they like in the neighbourhood and which do they avoid?
  - Why?
  - Where are they invisible?
  - How can a place become safer, more friendly?
  - How can their needs be met?
6. In the end the material should be edited in a short portrait film (5 to 8 minutes) which will give a very precise idea of the encounter with the persons chosen by the students.



### Technical shooting tips for the students:

- If you are shooting with a phone, hold it horizontally (shoot in 16:9 or 4:3 format) - this is your style, see which suits you best of the space, you might find these settings in each phone
- If using natural light - some that light at sunrise and before sunset of the sun are best for photos or shooting. If you can, plan your photos around this time (you can see the exact times with a quick check on Google)
- Be careful with the „contre jour“ effect, use it to your advantage (to create an aesthetic silhouette shot or if you want to keep the anonymity of the character)
- If you shoot with a phone and „by hand“, the shot will wobble too much, use a tripod, if you have one, or prop the phone on a surface/support yourself somewhere to create a fulcrum that will make the frame more stable.
- Assemble the captured footage into a montage program your computer has a basic one (Windows Movie Maker; imovie), you can also download free phone apps to edit the footage directly to it (e.g. KineMaster or VidCreator).

