

little  
**Field**  
A STOP MOTION DOCUMENTARY



Little Fiel premiered at DOC NYC on November 14, 2017.

Screenings in 2018 to date:

The African Film Festival, Dallas, TX	June 29
Manifesto Film Festival, Amsterdam, Netherlands	May 23
Oregon Documentary Film Festival, OR	May 11
DocLands Film Festival, CA	May 6
Harlem International Film Festival, NYC	May 6
Montclair Film Festival, NJ	May 4 & May 5
Africa World Documentary Film Festival, South Africa	April 30 & May 4
Indy Film Festival, IN	April 28 & May 1
Kansas City Film Fest, MO	April 14
Rincón International Film Festival, Puerto Rico	April 10
Florida Film Festival, Maitland, FL	April 10 & April 14
Ann Arbor Film Festival, MI	March 24
Black Maria Film Festival, Hoboken, NJ	March 14
Vancouver International Women in Film Festival, Canada	March 10
Africa World Documentary Film Festival in Barbados	March 11
DC Independent Film Festival, Washington, DC	February 17
Africa World Documentary Film Festival in St. Louis, MO	February 11





Synopsis

Guns are not killers. They are pieces of metal that can be reassembled into anything, including a little boy, a bird or a rose. Just as they make them, we can unmake them, one by one.

“Little Fiel” is a stop motion animation/documentary about unending civil wars. It is loosely based on the life story of Mozambican artist Fiel dos Santos who grew up during the 16-year civil war - another proxy war equipped and sustained by foreign super powers. Fiel created eight figures representing his father, mother, five brothers and sister from dismantled Civil war guns. Three New York artists turned them into puppets and created an immersive stop-motion animation, inspired by Fiel’s memories. “Little Fiel” tells a universal story of peaceful people who have been coerced, conscripted and enticed into killing each other.





Fiel dos Santos

Fiel was 3 years old when the civil war started and 19 when it ended. With his father and two elder brothers gone, mother having died from cancer and two remaining brothers fighting on opposite sides, Fiel found himself living alone in his dilapidated house at the age of 14. That's when he started exchanging drawings for food.

Today Fiel is one of the most prominent artists of guns into art movement known for sculptures of living creatures: people and animals. He is one of four sculptors of the Tree of Life, commissioned and then installed in the British Museum.

We can learn a lot from a small African country! Mozambique is known for one of the most horrific civil wars in recorded history: ravaging the country for 16 years between 1977 to 1992. It is also known for its incredible success with reconciliation. There were no war trials. War survivors were advised to forgive and to reconcile with one another, the only reference to justice was the emphasis placed on "you shall not take revenge upon your fellow man."



Fiel made 8 figures for this animation from guns. We brought them to New York from Mozambique, cut them into pieces, created custom armature to turn them into puppets, and then animated them in stop motion.

Each figure is about 2.2 feet tall and weighs about 15 pounds.







# Director's Statement

## Director's Statement

I grew up in the USSR. As Svetlana Alexievich said about Russian people in her 2015 Nobel lecture, "We are people of war. We have always been at war or been preparing for war. We all think in terms of war." Russia, my birth country and the USA my adopted home land, have always backed, financed and equipped other countries' civil wars and therefore bear responsibility for millions of killed and displaced people. Civil wars are wars among civilians coerced, conscripted and enticed into killing each other. Until foreign powers focus on pulling the fighting sides apart rather than equipping and arming just one of them, civil wars will continue to bring pain, destruction and death.

## Production Notes

When I met Fiel in Mozambique in 2009, I was very moved and at the same time very disturbed by his sculptures. They were such a brutally true image of what war was doing to otherwise peaceful people. I felt it would be even truer if those gun sculptures could be animated. We brought Fiel to New York in February, 2010. In a friend's garage, Fiel welded together a sculpture of a little boy, a small version of himself, from the gun parts he had brought from Mozambique. With it, we created a 3-minute animation sample that allowed us to apply and receive the New York State Council of Arts grant. Next year, in 2011 we went to Mozambique to pick up 7 sculptures that Fiel made for us, representing the remaining members of his family. We rented a studio in Bed Stuy, built a huge well from papier-mâché, and after working for 3 months, we had ourselves 7 minutes of stop motion animation, 4 of which ended up in the final film. In the next few years I simplified the script, focusing on what was emotionally the most important: Fiel's memories about how his family and childhood were taken away from him by war and violence. In 2015, we traveled to Mozambique for the third time to shoot exteriors of Fiel's hometown. We spent summers of 2016 and 2017, animating and doing post production. The film premiered at DOC NYC on November 14<sup>th</sup> 2017.

I do not believe that art can turn violence into beauty, but I believe only art can deal with complexities and nuances of war: both its brutality and promise of social change. Art is uniquely suited to commemorate human suffering and provide hope to the ones who have endured it. People (especially, children) affected by war, change physically. Memories of war and violence metamorphose (in our case, literally) into limbs that they have to carry for the rest of their lives, even if these horrific relics are not visible to the naked eye. But as we learn from Fiel and other Mozambican artists, it is possible to break the mold and turn a gun into a rose, and despair into hope.



Bios

Born in St. Petersburg, Russia **Irina Patkanian (Writer/Director)** makes "creative" documentaries confronting fact with fiction, history with poetry, film with theater - to discover in discrete human circumstance of war, of birth, of language, of love the mysterious ways of making meaning. Her work has been supported by grants from American Association of University Women, New York State Council of the Arts, Tow, Blaustein, Troy and Jerome Foundations; and residencies at the MacDowell Colony, Obermann Center, and William J. Fulbright fellowship program. Irina teaches filmmaking at Brooklyn College/CUNY. She is currently working on a documentary film opera "Iphigenia: Story of a Refugee."

**Gus Ford (DP/Animator)** is a cinematographer and photographer, based in Redding, CT. His videos and mini-documentaries about artists have been exhibited at Queens Museum's biennial and at the Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum. Gus shot award winning documentaries in Russia, Mozambique, Greece and Cuba. Most recently, he was Director of Photography on music documentary about T. Rex "Children of the Revolution," produced by BMG. He is currently shooting film for a documentary film opera "Iphigenia: Story of a Refugee."

**Chris Langer (Animator)** is a multimedia artist and a co-founder of Operation:CMYK, a Brooklyn based arts company that incorporates cutting-edge interactivity and multimedia in their work – whether developing Webby-award winning websites, creating innovative platforms for multiuser content networks, or mounting interactive installations at events like DUMBO Arts Festival. Chris exhibited work at Monkey Town, Irondale Center, Lincoln Center, Baryshnikov Arts Center, NYU's ITP and Nucleo d'Arte in Maputo, Mozambique.

**Adam Silverman (Composer)** is one of America's fastest-rising composers. His works have been commissioned and performed by The New York City Opera, The Brooklyn Symphony, The Albany Symphony Chamber Orchestra, Real Time Opera, The Yale Philharmonic, and others. His works have been performed at venues including Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall, Kennedy Center, Library of Congress, and The Metropolitan Museum. Since 1998, he has directed the Minimum Security Composers Collective, a group of which he is a co-founder.







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