



LA JUNGLE

WHERE IS EVERYONE

A DOCUMENTARY FILM OF YVES DIMANT AND DANI VELÁZQUEZ

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I. THE JUNGLE BOOK:

Kipling's Nightmare

Up to 10,000 people were living there at one point.

The Jungle at Calais was the biggest refugee settlement in Western Europe. Actually, it wasn't even a proper refugee camp. It wasn't built by NGOs nor did they manage the site. Political institutions ignored the place.

Forgotten or neglected by those responsible for protecting the lives and human rights of refugees, the burning question at The Jungle was always: "Where is everyone?"

A reference to Rudyard Kipling's "Jungle Book" is inevitable. When Kipling wrote his novel in 1894, he could not imagine a better civilisation than the British Empire and was convinced of colonialism as the only solution to India's medieval mentality and moral values. 120 years later, Mowgli knocks at the doors of the United Kingdom, at the French border in Calais, attempting to escape the Jungle as Kipling suggested. But the great Empires remain closed and deaf to his desperate call. Once more, Mowgli is abandoned, shouting back through history for all to hear: "Sorry, Mr. Kipling, governments in the UK and France have lost their legitimacy along with their dignity, if they ever had any. You were wrong, Mr. Kipling, your worst nightmare has come true."



The French coastal town of Calais is a strategic crossing point for travel and cargo between England and Europe. It also stands as the dangerous connection to the UK for thousands of desperate women, men and children seeking refuge from war. Risking it all in the hazardous crossing, the journey is the last stretch of their flight to safety, and many have lost their lives in the attempt.

"La Jungle" tells the story of these people, on the run from war-torn countries, enduring inhumane living conditions in the Calais camp while they sought ways to leave the suffering behind. It is also the story of those who decided to go to the Jungle and give a helping hand in this terrible situation. Both refugees and volunteers seemed equally abandoned at the beginning.

But a new community emerged, without borders or prejudice, in a joint effort of humanity empowered by the lonely struggle to survive in a European reality too cruel to be true in our day and age.

A brief history of the Calais Jungle:

From January to October 2016, the city of Calais witnessed an extraordinary influx of refugees, mostly escaping the war in Syria that started in 2011.

From an initial 3,000, the camp grew to 10,000 refugees. At first, governments denied any help and only reacted, though very slowly, due to pressure from civil society. The situation was already critical, basic needs were not covered, and accommodation was not provided. After a controversial media campaign, governments just abandoned the camp.

They left the refugees, the volunteers and the citizens of Calais under police control. There was never any political engagement to find solutions. In the end, the decision was taken to evacuate the camp, which meant destroying people's places with no consideration for their future.

This documentary film records the facts and shows the truth about the Jungle in a dangerous context of rising nationalism and terrorism in Europe. Bringing us face to face with contemporary political surrealism through the sceptical reflections of refugees and volunteers and the amazing force of civil mobilisation, this film emerges as a painful present-day reminder of the history of Europe's prevailing arrogance towards the rest of the world. As one of the film's main characters, Zimako, asks: "Is there a willingness [to act] on the part of French government?" Do they want to put an end to this suffering? Or are we ready to admit we don't care? Which means we've lost all ethics as a society. If silence and blindness is the answer, we can't expect anything to change. Maybe it's time we listen to those voices reminding us that Humanity is in crisis!

2. HUMANITY IN CRISIS:

An Activist Project by co-directors Yves Dimant and Dani Velázquez

“Humanity is in crisis — and there is no exit from that crisis other than the solidarity of humans,” said the sociologist and thinker Zygmunt Bauman about the present refugee crisis. Many people in Europe have come to the same conclusion.

We decided we had to do something. Every day we watched the TV and read the newspapers in disbelief. Europe had done it again. Again the rulers turned their backs on those most in need. Hadn't the Old World learned its lesson from World War II, or from the recent war in Yugoslavia?



Every day it became more unbearable to see thousands of men, women and children trapped between the war in their countries and the European borders. In addition, the political extreme right wing was gradually growing in numbers, and rejection of refugees was on the rise throughout Europe. We felt powerless, but this feeling turned rapidly into the will to carry out a specific action. From Barcelona, where we both live, we had heard about anonymous citizens deciding to take the initiative and become volunteers to make up for government's lack of action. That idea captivated us. If they could, we could

too. We started thinking about how we could be of help and quickly came to a conclusion: “We are a journalist and a photographer with audio-visual experience”. We agreed that our job should be to document what was going on. We understood that this was a way to prevent these situations from ever happening again. It was a message of hope, too. We can take responsibility and action. We can refuse to be part of system that does not reflect us. Every one of us is the key to the solution!

Determined to take the step, we began to study the reality of refugee camps in Europe. We saw there were many in Greece, but were surprised to learn about a settlement in the heart of Western Europe, in the French city of Calais. Our initial surprise turned to shock as we gathered more information on the subject. This was not a large camp, with only a few thousand refugees, but most surprising of all was precisely its location. It was hard to believe that Europe would allow refugees to live in such poor conditions within its territory, although it is common practice on its external borders.

Without giving it much thought, we decided to take our cameras and see for ourselves what this camp was like. We wanted to put Europe in front of a mirror and see what image was projected. We wanted to make European citizens reflect on the responsibility of guaranteeing a safe haven to those who need it most. Europe is currently experiencing a political and moral crisis that has placed us all at a crossroads. We believe that the path we take will determine us as a society and as a culture.

A year and two trips to Calais later, we had enough material to tell the story of this camp, one of the most shameful European disgraces in recent times and a demonstration that we all have a chance to do things right.

3. WHERE IS EVERYONE?

Spontaneous Writing, a co-working process by Boris de Visscher, creative producer.

In March 2016 I joined Yves and Dani at the Jungle in Calais, but I could only stay for one day. As I was riding away, I felt terrible. I was like Everyone, already gone and closing my eyes on this dramatic situation. So I decided to join the project, spontaneously, which is the normal thing to do once you've seen the Jungle.

The first time I saw the rushes, I was amazed by the authenticity and power flowing from the interviews. I was inspired by this energy and proposed to write a script that reflected the incredible engagement of those anonymous heroes. We began to organise the rushes, in an opposite writing process common in documentary-making, starting from the content to develop the structure. After many hours of selection, we managed to have some control over the material. We designed a map of interviews that quickly became the first script. We were excited and moved by the way the story could be told by so many different characters, with different backgrounds and ways of expressing themselves. At the very heart of the film, there is an issue and a message at hand. Refugees and Volunteers are asking for justice, dignity and help.



Yves and Dani were outsiders when compared to the few camera teams that had been inside the Jungle for just a few hours. They were part of the Jungle, living with the people 24/24 for 10 days, sharing their daily life. Refugees and volunteers knew them and told their stories openly.

Knowing that nobody trusted official media anymore after the misuse of interviews and images of the camp, makes their approach unique. When Yves and Dani went back for a second stay of 10 days at the camp, in October 2016, eviction was imminent. Chaos was rampant, and the regular media showed up again. As a journalist, Dani felt this contradiction of the reward for people's distress and wanted to use it in the film. So they literally put their camera in front of the TV teams, which brings us a vigorous reflection on how we relate to the media in the face of human tragedy.

Yves, with his experience in still photography, has an unconventional and very powerful eye. He builds a relationship with his subjects, keeping in mind that he's a documentalist, filming reality without losing control of aesthetic details. The additional still photographs in B&W and the rare aerial views of the camp (courtesy of DronePress) enhance the dramatic tone, mark the breaks between sequences and give the situation a scale.

At that time we were already working with the support of the editor, Roger Comella, who did a wonderful job between the two trips to the Jungle in pointing out what was needed to make the film a powerful and intelligible audio-visual story. Sound plays a crucial role in supporting this unreal atmosphere of another world within the 'normal'. Musician Claes Magnet joined our project and his questions were vital to finding the right sound for the film. What is the best sound to describe this tragedy? What is the best sound to tell the story of all these people fleeing their countries only to be shamelessly neglected by European governments when they arrive? After watching images from the film, he composed several pieces of music in answer to these questions, describing this drama as a long and unreal nightmare. His music, haunting and poignant, is present throughout the film, binding it together.

Finally, a beautiful dialogue emerges between refugees and volunteers sharing the same conditions in the Jungle, with an 'inconvenient question' looming over the entire film: *Where is Everyone?*

4. THIS IS JUST THE BEGINNING:

Documenting History, an idea created by Yves Dimant and Dani Velázquez.

The film starts in Paris. Holly is an English girl living in the French capital. Tired of governments' lack of action, she decides to take the initiative and go to help in Calais, just a few hours away.

With her we begin our journey towards the largest refugee camp in Western Europe. We arrive with Holly at a warehouse where many of the volunteers in Calais live. There we meet some of the volunteers who will accompany us throughout the documentary. We also see how they work in the kitchen, where they prepare food for more than 2,000 people daily, and the clothing store that supplies the refugees.

Time to head for the Calais Jungle. Seeing the first images, it's hard to believe that we are only 50 kilometres from the British coast and less than three hours away by car from Paris. As we listen in to some of the stories of refugees in the camp, we hear from Muhammad, who was forced to flee his country because he was wanted for his political views. Or from Hessian, a young engineering student who had to leave Pakistan to escape the daily threat of death.



Little by little, as its hidden stories unravel before our eyes, we learn about how hard life is in the Jungle. Zimako is a refugee who decided to create a school in the camp all by himself. He tells us that the school receives no help at all from public administrations.

To understand the Jungle camp, you have to understand the nature of the city of Calais. It is a transport hub connecting the UK to the rest of the continent. All the refugees in Calais are there because they want to cross over to the UK. Zimako takes us back to see

refugees trying to make it to England by hitchhiking, or hiding in trucks, or on the train that crosses the Channel via the Eurotunnel. This is an extremely dangerous journey that takes us to the next part of the documentary.

Refugees live in danger, and danger leads to deaths. Zimako goes with us to visit the Calais cemetery, where some of the refugees who died while trying to cross over to the UK are buried. Faced by the drama in all its silent cruelty, we are witnesses to what the lack of European political action entails.

Suddenly, the “peace” of the countryside is broken by the massive arrival of the media. The French Government has announced the dismantling of the camp.

5. HUMAN RESOURCES AND TECHNICAL DETAILS

Yves Dimant: Director & DOP

Bachelor's degree in Image and Photography and Master's degree in Documentary Photography (IDEP-Barcelona).

Photography has taught me the way I want to look at the world. As a photographer, the world has led me to video where I can explore my abilities to the fullest. The camera is just a good excuse to face reality and learn from it.

Boris De Visscher: Creative Producer

Bachelor's degree in Audio-visual Arts Techniques (NARAFI-Brussels).

I've been involved in very different projects, in camera departments and in creative producing, from no-budget to international productions. I've expanded my technical skills with production and postproduction experiences as digital media invaded the industry, changing the standards forever. 'No' is not an option for me!

Roger Comella: Film Editor

Graduate in Film Directing at C.E.C.C.(Centro de Estudios Cinematográficos de Cataluña). Travelled to Cuba to attend the E.I.C.T.V (Escuela Internacional de Cine y Televisión) for workshops in script-writing and directing actors.

Co-director and co-scriptwriter of the critical social documentary "200KM". Selected for the 51st San Sebastian International Film Festival, and Golden Gate winner of the best documentary script at the San Francisco Film Festival.

Dani Velázquez: Director & Research

Bachelor's degree in Geography (UAB-Barcelona) and Master's degree in Journalism (Blanquerna-Barcelona).

Currently working in the cinema industry as Assistant Director (AD). Geography gave me a cultural background; journalism gave me the will to tell stories; and cinema gave me the knowledge to turn them into an audio-visual reality.

Béatrice Fainzang: Executive Producer (France)

Master's degree in Geography (Paris I Panthéon Sorbonne) and Master's degree in Journalism (IJBA-Bordeaux).

I work as a journalist in Paris for several French media outlets, and make documentaries. Taking time to listen and observe in order to reveal reality, that's the vision of our profession I've experienced in the field.

Claes Magnet: Sound Design

Pianist and composer who combined his studies in music with a title in Audio-visual and Event Direction. Currently works as a jazz pianist in several bands, and as a music composer in audio-visual projects.



TECHNICAL DETAILS:

Title : « **La Jungle** » - ENG/FR/ESP - 2017

Duration : ~ 60 minutes

Genre : Documentary

Format : Colour/B&W - 16/9 ProRes 4 :2 :2, - Stereo V.O. ENG subtitled (ENG/FR/ESP)

LINKS:

<https://www.verkami.com/projects/15988-la-jungla-de-calais>

<https://www.facebook.com/LaJunglaEIDocumental/?ref=ts&fref=ts>

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6. CROWDFUNDED EXPECTATIONS AND EVOLVING MEDIA

In September 2016, a participatory platform was launched on Verkami in order to fund the second trip to Calais and postproduction of the documentary. In 6 weeks we were able to collect about 3,500 €, from 103 donators. This support was great for project continuity, though not enough to complete the full post-production process, as it just about covered production costs.

Since we believe in the importance of a professional outlook and a broad dissemination spectrum, we are still looking for a financial partner. This documentary is meant to reach a large (European) audience and aims to bring about awareness of a humanitarian emergency crisis that has not finished yet, even if everyone in the Jungle camp was evicted. The situation is actually even worse now because refugees scattered or were sent to different places and we don't know where they are. Most importantly, we don't know whether they have survived and under what circumstances.

Our donors expect their support to help in making this documentary film a reality. They are outraged European citizens demanding government action together with refugees and volunteers. This is the purpose of the film. To fulfil our goal, we are now seeking European producers and dissemination channels to join us and make it happen. Our present focus is on Spain, France, UK and Belgium.

The media environment is changing very quickly. From classic distribution (Documentary Festivals, Film Theatre, Television) to the new 'Evolving Media' and interactive Internet possibilities, there seems to be a large amount of crucial choices to be made. A combination of all these media channels might be the best option, but we need professional expertise and organised distribution to help us answer these questions. We believe there is huge potential in our project, if handled by the right person.

Co-production with an experienced partner who has the ability to provide our project with a rational view on the sector will add the dynamics needed to obtain visibility, complete our efforts and reach our goal of bringing this tragic story to European audiences as told by the refugees and volunteers themselves.

We thank you in advance for your attention, in hopes of future collaboration.

The Jungle Team.



