Hanna Zarzycka, "Entry on: Swimming Pool by Alexandra Hetmerova", peer-reviewed by Elżbieta Olechowska and Lisa Maurice. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2018). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/474. Entry version as of November 21, 2026.

Alexandra Hetmerova

Swimming Pool

Czech Republic (2010)

TAGS: Centaur(s)





We are still trying to obtain permission for posting the original cover.

General information	
Title of the work	Swimming Pool
Studio/Production Company	FAMU
Country of the First Edition	Czech Republic
Country/countries of popularity	Worldwide
Original Language	English
First Edition Date	2010
First Edition Details	*Swimming Pool*. Animated and directed by Alexandra Hetmerová, sound designer: Jan Sleska, film editor: Adam Patyk, production: Barbora Prikaska, Prague: FAMU Production, 2010, 6:34 min.
Running time	6:34 min
Available Onllne	vimeo.com (accessed: August 17, 2018)

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.

Awards	2010 – Best animation – International Student Film Festival in Pisek, Czech Republic; 2010 – Special mention on Anim´est Romania; 2010 – Award for academic films – Anifest Rozafa, Albania; 2010 – Special mention for animation FAMUFEST –- Prague, Czech Republic; 2010 – Second award from audiences on Festival Anilogue – Budapest, Hungary; 2010 – Special mention for student animation on festival Etiuda Anima – Kraków, Poland; 2010 – 3rd prize for student animation Xiamen International Animation Festival – China; 2010 – Cinemaiubit International Student Film Festival – best animation award; 2011 – ANIMA 2011 – Brussels, Belgium – Anima 2011 Award for Best Student Short Film; 2011 – Monstra festival Lisboa, Portugal – Best Short – Audience Award; 2011 – 2rd Stortford film festival – Rhodes, United Kingdom – Best animation; 2011 – Supertoon – Brač, Croatia – Special mention; 2011 – Student award – Golden Dinosaur – CICDAF 2011 – China; 2011 – Honorable mention – Gradual films – Ottawa International Animation festival – Ottawa, Ontario, Canada; 2011 – Diploma in category Best student film – International Animation festival Tindirindis – Vilnius, Lithuania; 2011 – Honorable mention – Student films – Animateka Ljubljana, Slovenia; 2011 – Golden Goats for Best Animated Film for Young People – 29th IYAFF Ale Kino! – Poznań, Poland.
Genre	Animated films, Magic realist fiction, Mythological fiction, Short films
Target Audience	Crossover
Author of the Entry	Hanna Zarzycka, University of Warsaw, hanna.zarzycka@student.uw.edu.pl
Peer-reviewer of the Entry	Elżbieta Olechowska, University of Warsaw, elzbieta.olechowska@gmail.com Lisa Maurice, Bar-Ilan University, lisa.maurice@biu.ac.il

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Creators



Alexandra Hetmerova , b. 1986
(Director)

Alexandra Hetmerová was born on the 30th of April 1986 in Kroměříž, Czech Republic. In 2005 she graduated from the Secondary Graphic Art School in Jihlava. She got her Bachelor's degree-Course in Animation at Film and TV School of The Academy of Performing Arts in Prague in 2009. That same year she completed an internship at the Estonian Academy of Art in Tallinn, at the department of Animation. In 2013 she completed her MA in Animation at the Film and TV School of The Academy of Performing Arts in Prague (see here, accessed: September 6, 2017).

Bio prepared by Hanna Zarzycka, University of Warsaw,
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Additional information

Summary

This short animation has an interesting take on reception of antiquity because we see it just in the end. It all starts with a man looking at the local swimming pool from his apartment block. He sees people playing and having great time but it seems to irritate him. He desperately looks at his watch, looking for something to happen. As the day ends, the public swimming pool is being closed. Suddenly, the happiness shows up on a strange man's face. He grabs a towel and leaves his house in the dark. He sneaks up to the pool but as he's about to go in, he sees that the locker is open. Someone must have gotten in before him but because there's nobody around, he decides to take a swim. After just a moment he realizes he's not alone. He meets a woman whose idea was also to swim alone in the moonlight. Surprised and a bit uncertain about the whole situation, they start to get along and play together in the pool. Suddenly, we see a picture-perfect pirouette session performed by strangers. They swim beautifully together to a Johann Strauss' waltz. The idyll is ruined by the watchman who interrupts them and orders them to leave the estate immediately. However, what he sees is something he did not expect. It turns out that the man is actually a Centaur and the lady is a Mermaid. The watchman screams terrified and runs away. The couple decide to dive into the swimming pool together again.

Analysis

Both, the Centaurs and the mermaids have dual connotations, positive and negative. Mythology shows bad Centaurs, like Ixion's children who are wild and brutal. But we also have good ones, who are civilized and intelligent like Chiron or Pholus. The Mermaids identified with mythological Sirens as well lend themselves to ambivalent interpretation. At the beginning, they are simply creatures who entice with their deadly beautiful voices but today the culture portraits them as positive characters. Both, the Centaurs and the mermaids are similar to human beings because of their human faces. The animation shows how we portray others based on their external appearance and how judgemental and stereotypical people are. Luckily, love always wins, as it happens also in this case. The use of the two hybrid creatures to highlight our attitude towards diversity. Both are dangerous and potentially hostile to mortals in classical mythology, but here they are gentle, romantic and very human; they hide their difference discreetly, not wanting to upset or scare anybody. The

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	movie uses inventively classical motives to provoke the viewers' reflection on the universal issue of tolerance and discrimination suggesting that ignorance may be at the root of the problem.
Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	Centaur(s)
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Diversity Friendship Humanity Love Respect Values
Further Reading	shortoftheweek.com (accesed: August 17, 2018).

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