



Dark themes go places


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Film is a medium that preserves life's nuances for the future. It stimulates our senses in ways no other medium can, giving a unique, multilayered experience. Even a small-scale project can speak directly to people's hearts when made with devotion to the filmmaking craft. The desire to capture a glimpse of the world through someone else's eyes drove two groups of students to international recognition.

Every year, the students in the MA in Film at the University of Malta (UM) have two weeks to shoot a short film and edit it, though it takes months of preparation to produce it. They took on all the challenges of film production: scriptwriting, sound and set design, casting, and finally the actual filming and postproduction. 'For most of us, it was the first experience [in film]. So to get things right from the first try was quite tough. Especially in the filming days, you were not sure if you were pumped up from the adrenaline, or because you were having fun,' says Edmond Camilleri, sound director in the 'Dream Big Little Cowboy' team.

This year's students tackled difficult and bleak topics – and were rewarded for this choice. In 'Dream Big Little Cowboy', we get to see the world through the eyes of the

young protagonist, James. With a combination of horror, fantastic colours, and comedic elements, the film takes us on a wild chase through the night as we explore themes of childhood, fear of the unknown, and coming of age. The darker 'Delfina' offers us an intimate look into a dysfunctional family.

The films did not stop at their premiere at the UM's Valletta Campus. They were screened in front of renowned critics and film lovers at the prestigious Rome Film Festival, within the section *Alice nella Città*. 'Delfina' scored immensely well, and at the annual *Kino Duel* International Film Festival in Minsk, it won second place in both the first-film category and student-film category, where it was praised for the acting, dramaturgy, soundtrack, and editing. Some students are already involved in new film projects, and will use their experience to support next year's film students. 

The MA in Film Studies is offered through the Faculty of Arts and is sponsored by the Malta Film Commission. For more information, see <https://bit.ly/32a1tJM> or contact the course coordinator at gloria.lauri-lucente@um.edu.mt.