

# ΣΤΟ ΛΥΚΟ

- Sto Lyko -

- To the Wolf -

A FILM BY ARAN HUGHES & CHRISTINA KOUTSO Spyrou

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**YEAR OF PRODUCTION:** 2013

**COUNTRY OF PRODUCTION:** Greece / France / UK

**FORMAT:** DIGITAL HD

**ASPECT RATIO:** 2.35:1

**SCREENING FORMAT:** DCP / Quicktime Pro Res / Dolby Digital 5.1

**LENGTH:** 74min.

**LANGUAGE:** Greek

**SUBTITLES:** English / Greek

**WEBSITE:** [www.tothewolffilm.com](http://www.tothewolffilm.com)

**EMAIL:** [info@tothewolffilm.com](mailto:info@tothewolffilm.com)

**DIRECTORS:** Aran Hughes & Christina Koutsospyrou | ++0044786249663

**PRODUCTION COMPANY:** LINEL FILMS | [www.linelfilms.com](http://www.linelfilms.com)

**FESTIVAL CONTACT:** [pascale@pascaleramonda.com](mailto:pascale@pascaleramonda.com)

**FILM TRAILER**



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## LOG LINE

'*Sto Lyko*' (*To the Wolf*) is a stark exploration of the struggle of two shepherd families struggling to survive in the wilderness of the Greek mountains at a time of deep national crisis.

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## SYNOPSIS

Set over four days of unrelenting wind and rain in a remote village high up in the Nafpaktia mountains in western Greece, the film follows the lives of two shepherd families struggling for survival. The village, forsaken by god and man, has seen better days. Paxnis, the seasoned old shepherd with no hope left, had already foreseen the dire straits the country would be facing and is slowly sinking into despair. Giorgos, unable to sell his goats, is weighed down by mounting debts and drinks to forget. Combining documentary and fiction with an all-local cast, 'To the Wolf' is both the reality and an unsettling allegory of modern-day Greece.

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## DIRECTORS STATEMENT

*To the Wolf* was not conceived as a response to the Greek crisis. Our initial intention was to present a study of everyday life in a remote Greek village. However, as filming began, the impact of the deepening financial problems was magnified by widespread media coverage and our focus began to shift. We started zooming in on the effect of this new political poverty on an already marginalised section of society, while still maintaining our intention to present an intimate portrait of rural life.

In Greece, people frequently talk about returning to the villages their ancestors once abandoned for a brighter future. Making this film, it occurred to us that perhaps rather than documenting a past way of life, we were now witnessing a vision of the future.



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## DIRECTORS BIO NOTES

Aran Hughes is a filmmaker born in London in 1983. After attending London University of the Arts, he began to make films. Completing three shorts, his work progressed from scripted fiction to a looser documentary crossover style. In 2010, he began working on his first feature length project, 'To the Wolf', a docu-realist exploration of remote shepherd life in the Greek mountains.

Christina Koutsospyrou is a visual artist born in Athens, Greece in 1980. She studied at the London College of Communication, where alongside other work, she developed a long-standing passion for photography and film. In 2010 she returned to her country of origin and began working on her first film project in collaboration with Aran Hughes, a docu-realist piece based on the lives of two shepherd families.

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## DIRECTOR'S FILMOGRAPHY

Aran Hughes

Pride of Dover (short) / 2010 / drama / 11 mins / HD

No Destination (short) / 2009 / drama / 8 mins / HD

My Polska (short) / 2008 / drama / 12 mins / HD

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## FULL CREDIT LIST

**DIRECTORS:** Aran Hughes & Christina Koutsospyrou

**PRODUCERS:** Aran Hughes & Christina Koutsospyrou & Thodoris Prodromidis

**CINEMATOGRAPHY & EDITING:** Aran Hughes & Christina Koutsospyrou

**SOUND MIXING:** Kostas Filaktidis

**SOUND DESIGN:** Nikos Konstantinou

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## MAIN CAST

Giorgos Katsaros, Ilias Katsaros, Spiridoula Katsarou, Adam Paxnis, Kiki Paxni, Vasiliki Spiropoulou



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## THE ROAD TO THE WOLF

Interview by **Manolis Kranakis** for [www.FLIX.gr](http://www.FLIX.gr) ([link](#))

**Set over four days of unrelenting wind and rain in a remote village high up in the Nafpaktia mountains in western Greece, “To The Wolf” combining documentary and fiction with an all-local cast, follows the lives of two shepherd families struggling to survive through times of crisis. “To The Wolf” is the debut feature film of Aran Hughes and Christina Koutsospyrou.**

### **How did you come up with the idea of “To the Wolf”?**

We are not sure we if we ever really came up with the idea for “To the Wolf”, at least not in the traditional sense. Originally the film was planned to be about this very old traditional coffee house in the village. But from there we kept meeting people that interested us and we would end up visiting them or finding them out with their animals and we began to take an interest and focus on them. So it worked a bit like a casting, and once we had found our main characters, an idea of what the film could be started to take shape. But right up until the end of shooting this was never concrete or definite in our minds. It was really led by the characters how eager they were to be involved, and us having to constantly respond to what was being filmed.

### **“Greece is finished. It’s dead!” says one of the villagers. Is “To The Wolf” a film about the Greek financial crisis?**

In our minds the film was about shepherds and the poverty in which they live. The crisis was only to serve as a reminder to what had been felt by these people for centuries if not millennia. It was however an interesting time to be exploring the subject. Paxnis, the shepherd you mention, really had foreseen this crisis. From the moment we met him he was going around telling everybody he felt that great poverty and hunger were coming. And this was before anything had really unfolded. Also, the film was shot in three stages over two years and the decline in fortunes each time we returned was a marked one, so it was impossible for the film not to become engulfed by it and therefore reflecting the crisis.



**How would you describe “To The Wolf” in terms of being a mixture of documentary and fiction?**

The foundations of the film are definitely documentary, however it was always our intention for the film to appear as a piece of docu-realism or ethno-fiction. There was a small amount of acting involved but largely what you see is the characters being themselves in their true condition. It was in the editing process that we feel we gave the film a sense of fiction. The structure for instance, the idea of it being set over four consecutive days, is obviously a fictional construct considering we shot it over four months in total. In addition the cinematography was intentionally static and slow rather than handheld or kinetic in anyway. This felt very unusual for this kind of film. Although, saying that, we are not really sure what kind of film this is. The more one delves into the divide between documentary and fiction the harder it becomes to define. For us the magic of filmmaking is selling the audience a trick that they willingly, wholeheartedly accept. The closer we can get to making this convincing, the better the magic trick. So, this was always in our minds.

**The faces of your real life actors seem to tell stories on their own. How did you choose them?**

We were definitely drawn to those kinds of people. The father and son were known to us before filming began and they were the first characters we wanted to concentrate on. We liked the fact they had this continuity and somehow represented a past and a future, both visually and conceptually. The mother began to feature more prominently as we progressed and became so important in explaining the dynamic of the family. The old shepherd Paxnis and his wife Kiki, we met at the end of the first shoot. We knew that when we returned we would have to include them in the film. They represented a different element, a more tragicomic one and were also an incredibly striking pair. Vasilio, who plays their friend, was important too. She added such a calming and abstract presence to the film.

**How did you persuade the villagers to contribute to your film?**

It wasn't a matter of persuasion. Most people were happy to be involved and excited with the attention. Christina's family connection with the village also meant we weren't complete strangers. Generally though the openness of the people was the key element. They were so eager to invite us in to their lives and to give us their stories. With the main characters it was slightly different, we went beyond that. We developed more of a collaborative relationship and became very close to each other.



**How difficult was it to shoot the film during a period of unrelenting wind and rain? What were the technical challenges of the shooting?**

We were generally wet and cold most of the time, but it never stopped the shepherds and we were determined to reflect that. Technically, being just the two of us, it was very challenging. The most difficult aspect was time. We were essentially intervening in someone's daily routine and they would rarely stop or wait for us so we had to be very quick and shoot as much as possible when we could. For all the successful footage that we did manage to get there was more, so much more, that we didn't. It is interesting because this method breeds a certain originality. Since there is hardly any time to set up or compose the action, it becomes much harder to reference other directors ideas or even your own. It becomes an intuitive process.

**There's a powerful beauty in the melancholic images of the everyday rural life and the remote scenery of the Greek village. How did you manage to capture the essence of it?**

It was really a question of the right light and weather conditions, on a sunny day these scenes would look so different. What we tried to capture in the cinematography was a poetic stillness in the landscapes and a kind of oppressive darkness in the interiors.

**What does the official selection of the film in Berlinale's Forum mean to you, since "To the Wolf" is an independent production and your first feature film?**

After all the time, work and effort we have put in, this is the most gratifying moment. We are hoping it will open new doors and also set a path that enables us to go forward with this style of work. It has given us the confidence that any debuting directors would need in order to continue in the film world. It's a deep dive but definitely a worthwhile one.

## ΤΕΛΟΣ

