



Interview of the Month

JUST KIDS

*Interview with Alessandro Riconda
Film-maker*

INTERVIEWED BY VIBEKE THOMSEN, SHECANHECAN

London-based filmmaker Alessandro Riconda is developing the short film "Just Kids" to challenge gender stereotypes. The film inspired by the true story of Alicia – a 7-year old girl struggling to be accepted as the only girl in her football team - and her opponent Ben - a boy who struggles to live up to his mother's tough-guy expectations. The film's goal is to raise awareness about the dangers of gender stereotypes with the support of several charities and organizations that will use the film as part of their activities with families and schools.

1) How do you envision that "Just Kids" will encourage kids to challenge gender stereotypes?

Although the film is mainly aimed at adults, children are much more receptive than we think and they can understand complex subjects too. I think the film shows them that what adults say is not necessarily always correct and that different people can have different opinions. So, as an example, if a boy likes dolls there is nothing wrong with it. Someone may think they are not for boys, but that doesn't mean they are not allowed them!



2) Ben's mother is a conservative thinker who sees gender roles as fixed. Can "Just Kids" also challenge parents and help them move towards more progressive thinking around gender roles?

In my opinion, the goal of the film is to highlight the toxicity of gender roles and raise awareness around these themes that are often overlooked or misunderstood. We don't need to have roles in society that are based on our sex or gender. Being a man or a woman should not imply what we can or cannot do, or what we like or we don't like to do. Gender roles are cultural heritage, they might have had a meaning in the past, but today they have become an unnecessary obstacle that perpetuates systemic gender inequality (think of the gender pay gap, childcare being a "women's job", but also think of men getting tougher sentences compared to women when they commit the same crimes). The trouble is we assign a gender to many things that should be neutral and we do it unconsciously, so hopefully the film will help people pay more attention to this and understand why these stereotypes are harmful despite looking quite harmless.

3) What can our readers do to promote and make "Just Kids" a reality?

They can follow us and spread the word on Instagram and Twitter at @justkids_film. At the moment we are also running a crowdfunding campaign to make the film happen and we have cool rewards for anyone involved, such as appearing in the film as an extra, or including your own message to challenge stereotypes in the film (though a picture or a video we will include in the film credits).

Get involved at <https://alericonda.com/en/justkids>

About Alessandro Riconda

Alessandro is a London-based filmmaker.

His early work was broadcasted by BBC, FOX, MTV and Comedy Central, and he is best known for the short film "Shame and glasses" (<https://alericonda.com/en/shameandglasses/>), which was distributed by HBO Europe and MoMA New York, among many others, and it is still being shown at festivals and on TV channels around the world.

Alessandro is currently working as a freelance script editor and director's assistant for Film and HETV Drama while developing a slate of personal projects.

His credits include "Gomorra - The series", "The Peripheral", "Master of None", "Brave New World", "Disobedience" (dir. Sebastian Lelio) and "Military Wives" (dir. Peter Cattaneo).



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