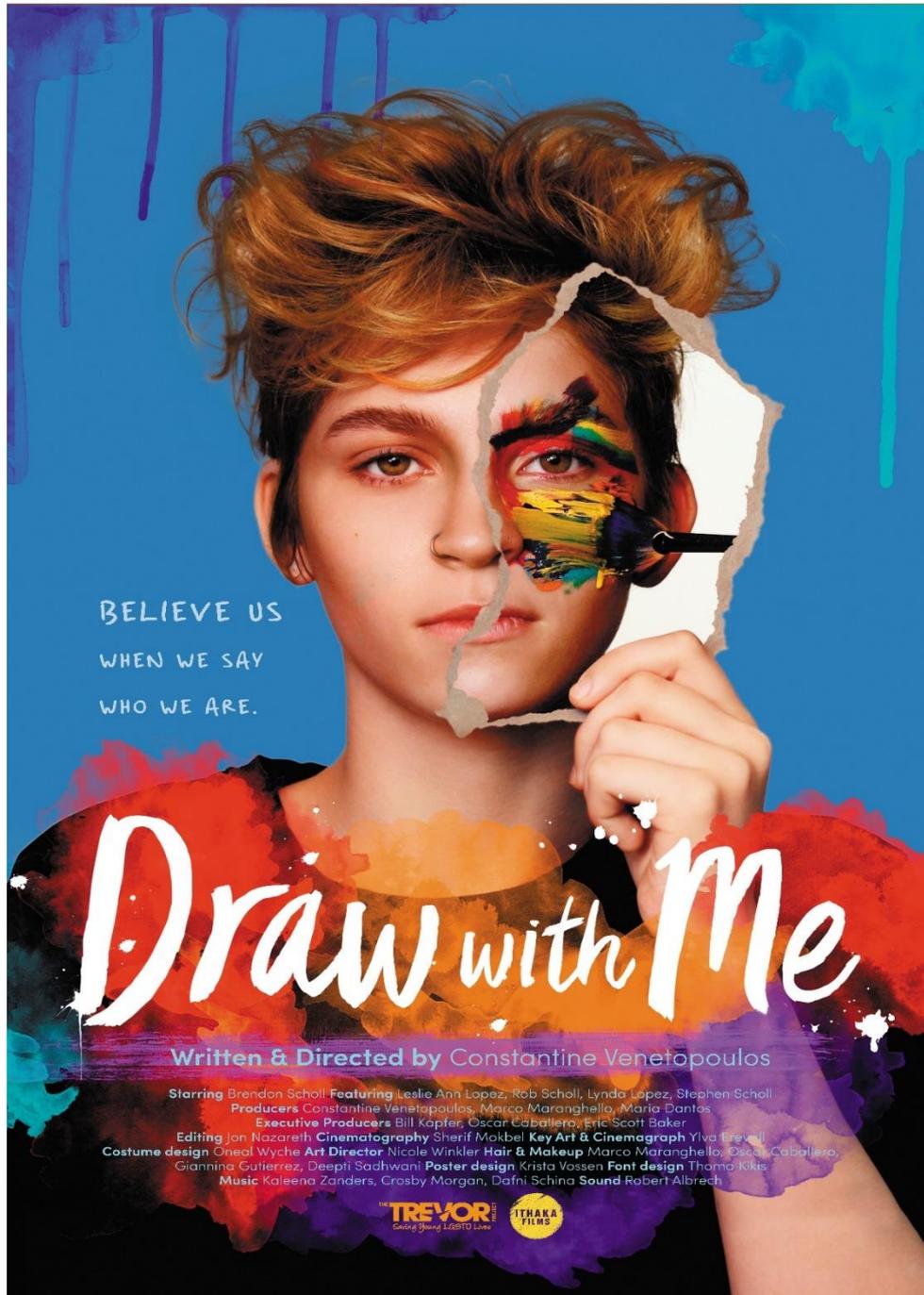


**PSARO
LOCO**

MEDIA LITERACY PROJECT | LABS

EDUCATIONAL KIT



BELIEVE US
WHEN WE SAY
WHO WE ARE.

Draw with Me

Written & Directed by Constantine Venetopoulos

Starring **Brendan Scholl** Featuring **Leslie Ann Lopez, Rob Scholl, Lynda Lopez, Stephen Scholl**

Producers **Constantine Venetopoulos, Marco Maranghello, Maria Dantos**

Executive Producers **Bill Kopfer, Oscar Caballero, Eric Scott Baker**

Editing **Jon Nazareth** Cinematography **Sherif Mokbel** Key Art & Cinemagraph **Ylva Frey**

Costume design **Oneal Wyche** Art Director **Nicole Winkler** Hair & Makeup **Marco Maranghello, Oscar Caballero,**

Giannina Gutierrez, Deepthi Sachwani Poster design **Krista Vossen** Font design **Thoma Kikis**

Music **Kaleena Zanders, Crosby Morgan, Dafni Schina** Sound **Robert Albrecht**

THE TREVOR PROJECT
Supporting Young LGBTQIA+ Lives

STRABA FILMS

"Draw with me" by Constantine Venetopoulos

<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt8523024/>

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GENERAL INFORMATION

Born in Athens in 1980 – the third generation of a shipping family – Constantine Venetopoulos graduated with a master's degree in marketing from Cass Business School in London, embracing the family heritage on cruise ships while maintaining his passion for poetry, literature and cinema. He has published two novels, and his films have premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival, among others. He has directed the treble ballerina of the American Ballet Theater, Luciana Paris and actors Bill Skarsgård, Emma Hepburn Ferrer and Ian Alexander, among others. He is the founder of the Kuntaur Film Festival of a children's film festival in the homonymous village of West Africa, which has no access to electricity, where he shares the cinematic experience with the local youth using portable generators, and he is the artistic director of The Lamin Koto Super-School Prototype, for which 2020 was a landmark year, as the installation of a photographic suspension of huge scale took place in collaboration with the Social platform INSIDE OUT by French artist JR. Constantine was named the face of Greece by JR in an educational edition of PHAIDON in 2020 and is a regular speaker in Tedx talks. Constantine Venetopoulos has been a writer, filmmaker and human rights advocate since 2010, he is fluent in German, English and Greek, while among his future plans is the reduction of the gap between initiatives with social impact and cinema. He is currently working, among other projects, on a film that will record the world's first project of a disabled person in space.

TITLE

“Draw with me”

COUNTRY

America 2020

TYPE OF MOVIE

Documentary

THEMES

Coming of Age, Family, Conflict, Diversity, Identity, Human Rights, LGBTQIA+

DURATION

18 λεπτά

LANGUAGE

English with Greek Subtitles

AUDIENCE

For ages 14 and over

SCRIPT / DIRECTOR: Constantine Venetopoulos **PRODUCTION :** [ITHAKA FILMS](#)
PRODUCED: Constantine Venetopoulos, Marco Maranghello **EXECUTIVE**
PRODUCERS: Bill Kapfer , Oscar Caballero, Eric Scott Baker, Emma Doxiadi,
Aristotle Tziampiris **CINEMATOGRAPHY:** Sherif Mokbel **EDITOR:** Jon Nazareth **KEY**
ART/ CINEMAGRAPH: YIVA Erevall **SOUND ENGINEER:** Robert Albrecht **ASSISTANT**
CINEMATOGRAPHER: Nick Snow **COSTUME DESIGNER:** o'Neal Wyche **ART**
DIRECTOR: Nicole Winkler **PRODUCTION ASSISTANT:** Adit Singh **FONT DESIGN:**
Thoma Kikis, Magda Hindia **POSTER DESIGN:** Krista Vossen **MUSIC :** Crosby
Morgan, Kaleena Zanders, Dafni Schina **STARRING:** Jennifer Lopez, Leslie Ann
Lopez, Lynda Lopez, Brendon Scholl

Synopsis

The short documentary "Draw with Me" by Constantine Venetopoulos tells the story of the talented teenage artist Brenton Sol who identifies themselves as transgender with gender dysphoria, whose art has been a vital outlet for self-expression. From his public manifestation and subsequent suicide attempt to his elevation as an advocate, this portrait of Brenton Sol and his family outlines what they experienced and surpassed during a touching journey of acceptance.

The documentary not only presents the social implications but also talks about grief, the search for identity and the acceptance of diversity. In this context, the documentary proposes a universal perspective.

Trailer

"The film is important and timely in it's story and message and can have a huge impact on those of us who watch and experience what Brendon and their family is going through in this time of acceptance and admission," Jennifer Lopez



FILM ANALYSIS

Cinematic Context

THE SHORT FORMAT

According to international standards, a short film is a **short film of less than 60 minutes**. At the beginning of the history of cinema, this form was used by the pioneers of cinema to explore the many possibilities offered by the technology and the different techniques of this new art. Given its great accessibility and adaptability (it can be used in many genres: documentaries, fiction, animation, etc.) the short form is always very popular and responds quite well to the need of the directors to achieve a specific narrative composition.

Often, a unique and distinctive idea is the narrative axis around which all the action of the film is focused. This idea thus becomes a powerful **synthesis and at the same time a dramaturgical trick**. The short film has a special complexity and can in no way be considered as a subordinate form because it **has to tell a story in a very short time, developing at the same time the characters and the subject it touches on**.

Of course, the advent of digital technology, with all its advantages in terms of usability and cost reduction, favored the production of this form of expression. The short film is often seen as an important stage in the artistic career of young filmmakers. The "short" sections are becoming more and more important in the major festivals (Berlin, Cannes, Venice) while the festivals that focus exclusively on this cinematic form, the most famous of which is of course [Clermont-Ferrand](#), have developed impressively all over the world.

Documentary

The documentary can make extensive use of interviews: all protagonists answer questions about their lives and experiences. But this is not the only way to record reality. Another method used by many contemporary filmmakers is the technique of observation. Documentaries using this technique avoid narratives or interviews, but instead, real-life scenes are presented as they unfold. The result is a kind of recounting that presents something instead of narrating it. Viewers, in this way, are invited to draw their own conclusions from the film.

Documentaries narrate reality by mixing images and sounds, but images can be interpreted in many ways, depending on cultural background, personality, mood, etc.

Get to know in detail the [types of documentary in Psaroloco educational kit "Let's Become Real"](#)

Why documentaries?

The documentary can contribute to the educational development of young people and to the understanding of the world. Integrating the use of documentary into teaching and learning can contribute to the development of critical and independent thinking among young people and can be used in a range of topics.

CINEMA AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Today, cinema is used as a tool for the purpose of raising awareness of issues of **equality, justice and freedom**, as well as an educational tool to raise the awareness of pupils and all citizens on issues of sustainable development.

Feature and short fiction films, animated films, documentaries, visual arts and sound experiments on sustainable development issues now have a strong presence in many special retrospectives and international festivals.

Sustainable Development Goals served by the educational kit

Objective 4: Quality education

Education releases the spirit unlocks the imagination and is the foundation of self-respect . It is the key to prosperity and leads to a world of opportunity making it possible for everyone to contribute to a progressive healthy society. Learning benefits all people and must be available to all.

Objective 5: Gender equality

Gender discrimination undermines the foundations of society and devalues us all. It is not only a human rights problem It is also a huge waste of global human resources. Together we can eliminate prejudice and work for equal rights and respect for all.

Objective 16: Peace Justice and Strong Ties

Compassion and a strong moral compass are key elements for any democratic society. Nevertheless, harassment, injustice and abuse continue to exist unchecked and destroy the foundations of our civilisation. We must ensure our strong institutions, international standards of justice and our commitment to peace throughout the world.

AN INTROSPECTIVE GLANCE

The director Constantine Venetopoulos, among others, noted:

«(...) What I really think drew me in the film is Brenton's confidence, that he knew what they was at such a young age and was ready to use his experience as a tool to help other young people who struggled with their identity and their public manifestation. I thought "I wish I had someone like Brenton to talk to when I struggled as a child to go out and say openly who I am"»

In 2018, Stonewall published its findings on trans life in Britain with [LGBT in Britain \(Trans Report\)](#). With the report highlighting the urgent need to focus on the needs of trans people in **building equality and inclusion**. While at the same time, it clearly demonstrates the hatred and discrimination they face every day.

However, despite the urgent need for change, many aspects of transphobia are still accepted and unquestioned within ourselves. And while several films have tried to play a positive role in the social change that has been required in recent years. The actual experience of trans people around the world often remains largely invisible.

However, **when voice is given to individual journeys through documentaries and films, the result can be powerful, informative and transformative**. We need even more people to share their stories, experiences and knowledge in questioning outdated conditions and opinions. And fortunately, many young people have more confidence to raise their voices, express their opinion and share their journey.

And with the hope for a better future, we watch the talented teenage artist Brenton who shares his journey to appear as transgender along with their family members in Constantine Venetopoulos' **urgent, timely and beautiful** short film "Paint with me".

The director **Constantine Venetopoulos** tries to avoid stereotypes. Overall, his films could be considered to belong to postmodern cinema as they combine realism with the humanistic dimension. They reflect the reality of social change. A form of expression both on a verbal and aesthetic level with an innovative and free nature. It is based on everyday situations and presents a sociological interest that allows the viewer to identify. **A director with social action, his work has a pedagogical dimension, using a narrative that plays with empathy .**

TERMINOLOGY

LGBTQ+ – sometimes abbreviated as LGBT or LGBTQ – means lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer, and also includes other sexual identities (such as intersex or asexual).

Although attitudes towards LGBTQ+ have improved over time, nearly half of LGBTQ+ students – including 64% of transgender students – have been bullied related to their sexuality at school, while 96% of LGBTQ+ students see homophobic, biphobic and transphobic abuse online.

Meanwhile, an ever-increasing number of young people are adopting queer identities, a previously derogatory term claimed by LGBTQ+ individuals – particularly the young LGBTQ+ – who did not identify with traditional gender identity and sexual orientation labels. **Continuing to build understanding and empathy around these issues is vital.**

Transgender people are people whose gender identity is different from the gender assigned to them at birth and wish to present their gender identity in a different way from the gender assigned to them and legally recorded at birth.

This category includes those individuals who feel that they should or prefer or choose, either through clothing, expression, behavioral ways, way of speaking or through interventions in the body, to present themselves and define themselves in a different way than you expect based on the gender role attributed to them at birth.

It includes, among other things, people who do not identify themselves with the labels "male" or "woman" transsexual and interstitial(s).

In: Galanou M. (2014), p. 26 it is noted that **instead of the term "transgender" the term trans is preferred as international, more user-friendly and briefer.**

Transgenderness: an umbrella term for people whose gender identity, gender expression or behaviour is not in line with that usually associated with the gender assigned to them at birth.

A transgender man is a person who was recorded as a "woman" at birth, but his gender identity is either "masculine" or within a spectrum of masculinity.

A transgender woman is a person who was recorded as a "man" at birth, but her gender identity is either "feminine" or within a femininity spectrum.

To clarify key terms related to issues of sexual orientation and gender identity as a basic source, the relevant Glossary of the Council of Europe was used and translated.

Expressive means

"Paint with Me" is an extremely lyrical **short documentary and dense in meanings about the adventure** of a child who was born into a female body, with a female name and evolved into a gender fluid boy – a Hellenistic boy with gender fluidity. He follows all the stages in this so-called transition, the painful but also liberating transformation, which resembles an existential journey towards self-knowledge and personal fulfillment. After the transition, the child is now called with a neutral pronoun of sex, gender neutral pronoun.

The film also follows the family journey of acceptance, the drama and conflicts, the painful moments, the suicidal tendencies, the complex and pressing social and political context. Their involvement with art proved to be redemptive.

The short documentary "Draw with me" is a great opportunity for high school and high school students **to discuss gender expression, identity and how we are all absolutely unique** while spreading as a valuable educational tool of life around the world.

The director Constantine Venetopoulos films with **sensitivity and dignity**.

As far as his own perspective is concerned, he uses footage that reflects his desire not to limit the subject to just one of its dimensions. He successfully manages to present a social critique, building a narrative based on finely structured characters, their situation and everyday atmosphere.

The film opens up a wide range of studies in the field of cinematic analysis from a sociological perspective. Through his documentary he explores human relationships by transcending stigmatization, with careful analysis of the individual's existence. In his effort to touch a **universal dimension**, his work aims to encourage the viewer to abandon the role of passive viewer and adopt a critical and balanced perception of the world in which we live.

The director's directorial approach is imperceptible, almost invisible. He doesn't want stylistic choices to overshadow the story. It tells the real story, builds a complex narrative that emphasizes the personal experience of Brendon and his family .

The film's support by leading international cultural organizations such as the BAM in New York, which highlight new trends and create debates on key issues, shows how important a film that speaks of the value of finding one's own way in life is considered.

Recognition

The film "Draw With Me" was created in collaboration with The Trevor Project –the leading suicide prevention line for young people in the LGBTQ community– and with the support of the Onassis Foundation. It wrote its history by appearing at the **United Nations** at an honorary event celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall riots, and has been presented in schools around the world, including the New York Department of Education, and has been used as promotional material of diversity by organizations such as Estée Lauder and JP Morgan.

During the international Coming Out Day, on October 11, 2020, it was screened at an awards event in support of the LGBTQ+ movement, attended by Joe Biden, during which Brendon Sol was awarded the Revry Visibility Award, which he received from the hands of Jennifer Lopez.

The impact of the documentary on the struggles of the LGBTQ community has been enormous.

In the film, Brenton Sol's aunt, Jennifer Lopez, participates in a special introduction, where she explains why this film is so apt and more relevant than ever: "The film is important and timeless both as a story and as a message and has a huge impact on all of us who see and experience everything that his family is going through in a period of admittance and acceptance."

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

Courses (optional) :

Social Sciences, Literature, Art, Sex Education, Informatics

INITIAL ACTIVITY

Teaching Objective: In this activity, students will explore the subject of the film and learn to critically analyze the characters and the narration of the film.

Bearing in mind the synopsis why do you think the film gained international attention with its release?

Do you find it difficult to balance your school life and your social life? What are some of the challenges you face in this regard?

Discussion points

- How would you describe the film? Is there anything that stood out? Why do you think the filmmaker chose this aesthetic?
- How would you characterize the end of the film? Do you think the film ends with a hopeful or bad note? Why is this valuable?
- **See the excerpt** (16:26 – 16:50) at the end of the film. What do you think Brenton has learned? Is that what you expected from Brenton at the beginning of the film?

Expansion activities

- Divide students into two groups and discuss LGBTQ+ laws around the world.
- A group should investigate the countries where homosexuality is still illegal and how this is reflected in its laws.
- The other group may investigate activists or organizations trying to make these countries safer places for LGBTQ+ people.
- Imagine the characters in 10 years. Choose any character and write a biography of what their life includes in the intervening years.

Movie Reviews

Gather your ideas into a review and share with [Psaroloco Media Literacy](https://www.psaroloco.org/).

You could include a summary of the story, mention other movies that look like them, describe what you particularly liked or didn't like, and give it the star rating.

ACTIVITY II

CHARACTER AND GENDER

Teaching Objective: Students will discover the relationships between the characters. This activity will also give us the opportunity to deal with gender representation and stereotypes.

STEP 1

We divide students into groups. Each group focuses on one character in selected clips or in the entire film. The selected passages correspond to different moments of history that mark a change (self-affirmation, friendship, acceptance, difficulties, success, influence..). We ask the students to associate each character with emotions, mood, colors, clothes, objects, music, etc.

- **Brendon Scholl** (00:29-00:33) (01:44-01:48) (02:14-02:35) (02:41 – 03:00){03:30-03:39}(06:42 – 07:06)(07:33-07:52)(08:11-08:21)(09:02-09:44)(10:54-11:02)(11:27-11:44)(12:49-13:09)
- **Leslie An Lopez _Mom** (03:13 – 03:29)(03:40 – 03:52) (05:22-05:39)(07:08-07:22)(07:53-08:10)(10:44-10:52)(11:03-11:26)(11:45-12:48)(13:39-13:54)(14:09-14:44)(15:12-15:17)(16:14-16:25)
- **Rob Scholl_ Dad** (02:00- 02:12) (04:03 – 04:13) (04:48 – 05:03) (07:23- 07:32) (13:19-13:28) (13:19 – 13:28) (13:55- 14:08)(15:18-15:24)
- **Lynda Lopez _ Aunt** (01:24-01:44) (5:40- 06:42) (09:45- 09:57)(14:45-15:11)(15:25-16:32)
- **Jennifer Lopez_ Aunt** (08:21 – 08:45)

STEP 2

The students describe Brenton's relationship with the character they work with. They can exchange thoughts on the impact of the character on Brenton's story They can discuss the evolution of the relationship.

STEP 3

All students discuss what they found and we expand the discussion on gender representation in society.

Do you think that some characters are related to emotions, mood, ambitions that are traditionally related to the male or female gender? What is the evolution? How Brenton reacts to gender stereotypes;

ACTIVITY III

TOPIC ANALYSIS: FAMILY AND RELATIONSHIPS OF LOVE REPORT

Teaching objective: Students will explore the theme of the film and how country, culture and other aspects of the modern world affect relationships.

The purpose of this activity is to work on written expression and artistic visual expression and to create an exhibition.

STEP 1

We divide the students into groups and share the poster of the film with them printed or digitally. We ask the students to observe the poster. You should be able to locate the director's name, actors, title of the film etc. Visual and graphic elements that represent the genre or theme of the film.

We ask questions such as:

- What is the important element of the poster text?
- Which visual elements stand out on the poster?
- Based on the poster, what is the theme of the film?
- What is the target audience of the film (youth, adults, teachers, etc.)?

We take notes from the comments on the board and encourage discussion. In the end, we summarize the key points and emphasize the impact that the posters of the film have on the audience.

Each group of students draws a poster. They use artistic visual expression to create their own poster for the film. They can either choose pictures of the film., or paint or create a collage. Each poster is related to the message it wishes to convey. Each group displays its posters and justifies its choices.

STEP 2

We discuss in class the presence of art in the film and ask the students to explain its role.

Next, we explain the importance of art in the world and coordinate a discussion about art as a means of reference to gender equality (SDGs 5) and the acceptance of diversity. The students will report what they know about the subject. What is discrimination based on sex? What experiences and difficulties do they face?

Give your own title to the film.

STEP 3

We divide students into groups and ask them to search for images and stories online about the topic in the 20th century 1) in their country 2) in the world.

Ask the students to think - to search the internet for famous faces that have been imprinted in literature, in the cinema, and so on. They will have to choose 1-2 personalities and design a rough narrative. They can prepare additional material (presentation with narration, film excerpts, music, posters, pictures and book covers, etc.)

STEP 4 (OPTION 1)

Next, we divide the class into groups and ask them to find similarities and differences between the stories we have found and ask them why they think it is considered a matter of concern? They are trying to find all the elements that give these stories a universal character. We have a conversation with the whole class.

STEP 4 (OPTION 2)

We ask them to observe the family background in the film and discuss in groups the relationships and interactions in the family. How do they see these relationships, gender, the social environment?

- In this activity we want to create an exhibition on gender equality (SDGS 5) on the internet using an online content platform and creating a virtual museum where students can upload images and stories. QR codes are generated that point to blog posts. Each group is assigned a room area where they can place the printed QR codes.
- We open the exhibition to the school community where students help visitors and present their work. We can also ask students to create an informational handout for the exhibition using an online drawing tool.

STEP 5

Students evaluate their individual and group tasks in groups throughout the duration of the activity using a form or assessment column.

ACTIVITY IV

PERSONAL AND CULTURAL IDENTITY

Teaching objective: In this activity students become familiar with the type of documentary, about the role and impact of art with cultural connotation in films.

STEP 1

We ask students to create a short documentary inspired by the title: "Paint with me"

The goal is for students to understand the **sense of identity and the relationship** with what gives us the feeling of belonging to a culture or subculture.

STEP 2

Students use cinematic language to convey their ideas and perception and create an illustrated script of their short film. The students, in collaboration, identify and discuss objects (up to five) that they can include, which attribute what it means to be a teenager to one's own culture. Students can also search online for blogs with videos and suggestions for drawing a list of shots, musical resources, illustrations, etc.

STEP 3

Teams should take into account various questions and choices when designing, shooting and editing their films, setting, character aspects and other cinematic tools such as music, narrative and non-narrative sound, narration, lighting, colors, camera movement, shots and angles and so on. The experience of each team can influence how simple or ambitious the film project should be. The films are shot with a mobile phone, laptop or video camera, according to the teacher's advice.

STEP 4

Students can be encouraged to curate their films within the school.
Send your film to the [Psaroloco Media Literacy Project](#) to be included in the official competition program of the Psaroloco Children's and Adolescent International Film Festival.

SOURCES - FURTHER READING

Ithaka FilmS | The Trevor Project | Onassis | Psaroloco εκπαιδευτικό kit "Ας Γίνουμε Αληθινοί" |

Glossary of the Council of Europe_ | Unece | The Sustainable Development Goals And LGBT Inclusion

Research Centre for Equality Issues (KETHI) | Stonewall's School Report 2017 | Glossary of the organisation LGBTQ+ Stonewall.

Gate.ngo | Colour youth | Eff | naftemporiki.gr | Varietyn | Mitu | Mononews | Moveit mag | Joinradio

This training kit is published as part of the Psaroloco Media Literacy Project's free educational resources.

The recommended age group is 14+. You should watch the movie and related clips before handing over the activities to the class to make sure the content is right for your students.

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Got Comments?

We love to hear how teachers have used our resources.

Contact us at the psaroloco.project@gmail.com

Find more lesson plans at

[www. psaroloco.org](http://www.psaroloco.org)



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