

Fairfield student-director working on a sequel

Baginska won a David Lynch award to study filmmaking at MUM.

By **WILLIAM SMITH**
wsmith@thehawkeye.com

FAIRFIELD — Agnes Baginska never imagined her film career would take her all the way from Australia to Fairfield.

A native of Poland with an enduring love for theater, Baginska recently made her mark with the short film “Milkmaid.” The movie tells the story a young girl who becomes a medium for the forces of nature and seeks out revenge for a crime committed against it.

The movie made such an impression it won the David Lynch M.A. in Film Scholarship Award, which granted Baginska a spot in the David Lynch film program. Though Baginska was living in Australia at the time, she was happy to uproot her life and move to Fairfield to enroll in the program. Acclaimed director Lynch picked the film himself, which was a huge honor for Baginska.

“I came here to do my master’s in film,” she said. “It’s a one-year

program, and then I’ll be graduating.”

The David Lynch master’s program, which opened quietly in the fall of 2013 at Maharishi University of Management, includes a two-day stay at Lynch’s home studio in the Hollywood Hills.

“I’m a bit of a vagabond,” Baginska said with a laugh. “I lived in Australia for six years, and I was traveling for 12 years before that, living in the U.K. (United Kingdom).”

Baginska, a graduate of the School of Theatre at UCLA and the Sydney Film School in Australia, was more interested in acting before falling into the director’s chair.

She worked for production companies in Australia, New Zealand and Europe, before directing two shorts and a feature-length documentary.

Not one to rest on her laurels, Baginska is gearing up for another short — the sequel to the award-winning “Milkmaid.” Titled “Last Tree Standing,” the movie will be a dark fairytale set against a dystopian background following the story of a tree/man who tries to restore the forest, despite the threat of a hostile human territory.



Submitted photo

Agnes Baginska’s first film, “Milkmaid” impressed director David Lynch, who awarded her a scholarship.

While “Milkmaid” was based on an old Slavic folk tale about a forest witch, the sequel is about Milkmaid’s descendant — a male woodland spirit.

“The idea came to me while I was meditating,” Baginska said. “It was just an image. There was no story. When I talked to David (Lynch) a few days later, I asked, ‘What do you do when you catch

this big fish, this big idea, but the water is murky?’”

All Baginska needs now is the money to fund it. Filming is set for April, but she needs about \$14,000 to pull the project together. She’s already written the script and hopes to have the movie done by the end of the year.

“That will be used to buy materials and prosthetics,” Baginska said. “If I can’t raise the money, I could go to my old contacts and ask them to work for free, but I don’t want to do that.”

Like a lot of up-and-coming filmmakers, Baginska is using the Internet to fund her project. Her Kickstarter page went live Friday afternoon, and those who pledge will get a digital version of “Milkmaid.” She has not posted the movie online, as a concession to film festivals that don’t like that.

Baginska soon will be casting for the film, and is looking for local talent. To donate money, visit <https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/1194187220/last-tree-standing-a-david-lynch-main-film-thesis>. To audition for the cast or crew, visit Baginska’s Facebook page at www.facebook.com/baginska.