

Merle

Merle was produced by KROYouth based in Netherlands. Eleven year old Merle loves to sculpture wood. She developed this passion when she was only 9 years old, when she followed a workshop at her school by a sculptor named Marco. From that day on her passion for creating wooden sculptures was born. In this documentary Merle gets her first official assignment. She has to make a wooden sculpture for the hospital in her city. Merle is quite familiar with this hospital. A year ago she stayed during a period of 4 weeks in this hospital. She wants to show her gratitude by making a beautiful sculpture for the hospital's children's department. Feeling free is Merle's motto. In the hospital she didn't feel free. "My sculpture has to relate to freedom" she says.

Merle was one of the PRIX JEUNESSE INTERNATIONALE 2010 finalists in the 7-11 non-fiction category.

International experts' opinions

Almost all the international experts appreciated the program very much. They all liked the character of the girl who was the protagonist of the program. "I think that *Merle* was so excellent, because she was just such a great kid. Again, this is a story of a girl who just did that by herself. I think for kids seeing somebody that is like them on screen doing something real is very impressive, a very intense thing" (female expert, USA).

The international experts enjoyed different aspects of the girl. Most of them admired her creativity: "I am an art teacher and I was highly impressed! I was highly impressed by this girl and the artwork that she has done. I have seen a lot of art from children, but this was really impressive. I believe that it fits the target group. I have a ten-year-old. I think she would be amazed to see that" (female expert, Germany). They also loved the honesty of the girl. "She is very honest about: 'Oh, I don't like all the girls in my school but this one is my friend.' She is very confident in the way she was telling her instructor, the guy with the chainsaw. She was like: 'don't do it that way.' She knew what she wanted, which I think is not a very common thing for an eleven-year-old girl" (female expert, USA).

The experts believed that the program would be liked by both girls and boys, as one of them explained: "She is a special girl, obviously she is very talented; but people make films about very talented people. The question is: do children go with it when you see a very talented child, or do they reject it? I suspect they go with it if you make it very well, as this one, because they showed the process. That is what boys would love to watch; the boys would



Figure 1: Merle, the protagonist of the program.



Figure 2: The program is about her journey towards making a sculptor.

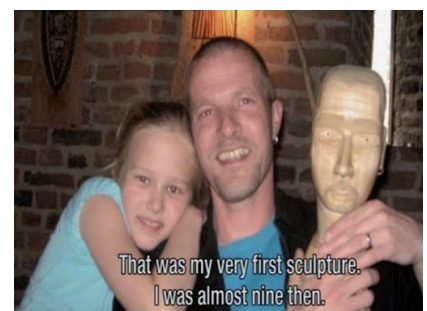


Figure 3: Her first sculptor is the head of her dad.



Figure 4: She loves playing volleyball.



Figure 5: She works very hard on her sculpture.



Figure 6: The program has an appeal for both boys and girls.

love to see how she did what she did. They did it lovingly; they actually slowly watched her curve. Girls will watch things about boys. Boys will watch stuff about chainsaws: clever piece of marketing. You look at the story and think: how do we get everybody to watch, and yes, make sure we pull our audience with us by letting them see the process” (male expert, UK).

Many international experts thought the girl could be a role model for children as well as adults and were interested in the way she handled a dangerous tool. “I just think that every time that I would see – most of us won’t allow our children to do certain things – but when you have a child who does a particular type of work and you have to use something that you would consider a grown-up tool or instrument and how they handle it, it is just very interesting to see that they are very serious and they can manage themselves” (female expert, Jamaica).

Some international experts tried to contextualize the program in their own country and really appreciated the character of the girl. “For us and in our country, Turkish children can be very jealous about this environment, and they could find her very lucky, since she can choose the tree and can make every grown up help her: great equipment and trucks. They carried a fantastic workshop, cool equipment and dress. In Turkey – no way. If you have good talent to make sculptures, if you have intention to make these kinds of artistic things, you have to be more grownup. You can find this kind of support. But this is a very good way to show that wherever you are: Holland, Africa, Turkey or in Israel, there are ways to deal with these kinds of challenges. I would be very grateful to be able to air this kind of documentary dealing with different cultures and showing hope and ability to carry things through when you want to achieve something” (female expert, Turkey).



Figure 7: She made the sculptor for the hospital.



Figure 8: She is determined to go to NZ for further training.

Screenshots from Merle © KROYouth

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