

DISCOVERY FILM FESTIVAL

Scotland's International Film Festival
for Young Audiences



Teachers' Resource Pack: **Aller & Retour**

First Level | Created by Matthew Pound

Discovery Film Festival | Mon 2 – Wed 18 November 2026

DCA

Dundee Contemporary Arts

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ONE CITY, MANY DISCOVERIES



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Introduction

Discovery Learning Resources give you exciting classroom activities to enhance Curriculum for Excellence delivery.

They are created by classroom teachers and education professionals.

Each resource aims to:

- support and extend working with film in the classroom
- help prepare teachers for a class visit to a Discovery Film Festival film and to extend the impact of that visit for delivery of CfE
- develop confidence in Moving Image Education approaches and working with 21st Century Literacy/moving image texts

Each resource is free and available to download from:

<https://www.dca.org.uk/discovery-film-festival-resources/>

Aller & Retour

Dir: Lucia Bulgheroni & Michele Greco

Italy 2025 / 9m18s

Aller & Retour

Synopsis:

On the first day of winter, two little stoats must learn to adapt to their new surroundings, shedding their summer coats for their winter ones. But what happens when, in addition to the difficulty of learning to change, human intervention also complicates things?

Advisory note:

Minor threat.

Teacher's notes:

Age and stage recommendations, including CfE objectives:

The film is suitable for ages 7 and above. This pack is aimed at First Level Learners. This film is recommended for P4. The following CfE Experiences and Outcomes are covered in this pack:

Literacy and English: **LIT 1-01a, LIT 1-07a, LIT 1-09a, LIT 1-14a**

Art and Design: **EXA 1-02a, EXA 1-03a, EXA 1-05a, EXA 1-16a**

Health and Wellbeing: **HWB 1-01a**

Technologies: **TCH 1-04b**

Teacher quote:

This is a fabulous short film which tackles the typical coming-of-age story in a nice fantasy setting with superb animation. The contrast between the styles of the puppet stoats and the 3D human are very striking. From a teaching perspective this short movie allows for great discussion to be had around relationships and has good scope for research on stoats as well.



Before watching the film:

Activity 1: Trailer Analysis – Literacy

Watch the trailer for *Aller & Retour* and see how much you can deduce before watching the main film. You can also use the poster attached to help spark some discussion. (**Appendix A**)

Trailer link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HFR085AYxus>

Use the questions below to help create discussion on what you think the movie will be about:

1. Who do you think Aller & Retour are?
2. What animals do you think they are?
3. What kind of threats do you think they face?
4. Where does the story take place and what language was on the sign?
5. Do you think the Aller & Retour are young animals? Justify your thoughts.
6. What special power does the snow seem to grant?





Activity 2: **Stoat Research – Technology**

Aller and Retour are both stoats. They are a part of the mustelid family like otters and weasels. Find out more on the habits and nature of stoats.

Create a fact file about Stoats using the questions below as a guide:

Lifespan:

- How long do stoats usually live?
- Do they live longer in the wild or in captivity?

Diet:

- What do stoats like to eat?
- Are they hunters or scavengers?

Habitats:

- Where do stoats live?
- What kinds of places do they like to make their homes?

Appearance:

Can you draw an accurate stoat diagram? Make sure to include facts around them about:

- Size
 - Fur colour
 - Tail
 - How they change in winter
-

Activity 2: **Expressive Arts – Collage Art**

The short film has a few notable characters each with their own distinct look. Your task is try and recreate that look using nothing but scrap paper. Pick one of the three pictures included and try and recreate it using scrap paper chunks.

Tips:

- Tear paper to make soft fur. Perhaps bunch it into balls.
- Cut different shapes for ears, tails and legs.
- Layer pieces to make your animal stand out.
- Add a simple background using leftover paper.

Appendix B, C, D



Activity 4: **Film analysis – Literacy**

The film's central themes are about growth and weaves in messages about personal development, empathy, self-awareness and community acceptance. Draw out these themes by using the questions below as conversation starters or as a stimulus for longer written replies.

Questions:

1. The young stoats awaken hungry and unfamiliar with the cold, what does this suggest about how they have lived up until now?
 2. How does the filmmaker show Aller's thoughts compared to the rest of the movie? Why animate it differently?
 3. How do you think Retour feels before and after attempting to give themselves a winter coat and failing? Why do you think they didn't succeed like their sibling?
 4. How does the change in lighting and soundtrack when Retour leaves signify that something is wrong? Is it effective?
 5. Describe the ways in which the hunter is animated. What techniques make them stand out and evoke feelings of danger?
 6. What does the danger of the hunter draw out from Retour and other forest animals? Why did it help them find courage?
 7. At the end of the story all the animals are friendly to each other. What message do you think the filmmakers are trying to send about community and self-acceptance?
-

Activity 5: **Stop-Motion Animation – Technology**

The film is mainly stop-motion with puppets, paper and 3D modelling used to bring it all together. Try and make your own short film using stop motion animation.

On an iPad use the animate app or the Aardman animate app to try and create your own stop motion film. Get some toy animals and try and recreate the story or change the ending.

Tips:

- Small movements between pictures make it look more fluid.
- Be careful to not touch the puppets or toys between shots.
- Film in a location with controllable lighting (e.g. a classroom rather than outdoors)

Appendix A



Appendix A



Direzione Generale
CINEMA e
AUDIOVISIVO

FILM
COMMISSION
VALLEE
D'AOSTE



FANTASMAGORIE STUDIO
presents

Aller & Retour

an animated short by
LUCIA BULGHERONI e
MICHELE GRECO

Press office
Giulia Paganucci
ufficio.produzione@fantasmagoriestudio.it



Appendix A

CAST & CREW

Regista	Lucia Bulgheroni, Michele Greco
Story	Michele Greco, Guenda Certo
Script	Michele Greco, Guenda Certo
Production Company	Fantasmagorie Studio
Executive Producer	Robin Studio
DOP	Valerio Baldari
Production Director	Mario Kreill Cirillo
Production Assistant	Roberto Romano, Giulia Paganucci
Line Producer	Ilaria Caputo
Animation Supervisor	Niccolò Gioia (Robin Studio)
Stop-motion Animators	Niccolò Gioia, Giacomo Pierro, Chiara Pagliarin
3D Animator	Miriam Slaviero
Character Design	Lara Hosking
Set Design	Christian Avanzini, Sara Rotondi
Puppet e Costume Maker	Ying Xia
3D Modeling	Ying Xia
Storyboard	Maria Sofia Funaro, Giovanna Mastantuoni
Music	Stefano Barone e Mauro Di Bella
Sound design	Tecla Zorzi
Color Correction	Stefano Ceccon
Editing	Michele Greco, Lucia, Bulgheroni, Niccolò Gioia
Visual Post-production Supervisor	Niccolò Gioia
Compositing	Niccolò Gioia, Stefano Ceccon
Titles Design	Niccolò Gioia
Consulting	23 Zero Tre
Accountant	Roberto Romano
Ensurance	Studio M di Massimo Forges Davanzati



With the contribution of MIC DGCA Selective Fund on Film Production and of Film Commission Vallée d'Aoste



Appendix A

CONCEPT



Aller & Retour was born from the desire to portray change as both a rupture and a moment of growth: an initially uncomfortable transition that pushes us out of our comfort zone, yet ultimately becomes an opportunity for transformation. To explore this theme, we chose the imagery of fairy tales and animation—tools capable of making emotions, fears, and small acts of courage feel universal.

The story follows two stoat cubs who, after losing their mother, must face their first winter alone, including the seasonal change of their fur that allows them to blend into their surroundings. Their journey is a coming-of-age tale set in nature, where challenges become stages of growth. Through their experience, we explore themes now commonly framed as life skills: self-awareness, emotional management, empathy, and adaptability. We aim to allow the audience to recognize themselves in this journey and to find, within the characters' trials, opportunities for personal growth.



Appendix A

STORY



On the first day of winter, the young stoats Aller and Retour leave their den in search of food, finding themselves in a snow-covered valley. Their dark coats make them immediately visible to predators, especially a golden eagle owl watching them from above. As they search for a way to adapt to this new environment, they witness the seasonal camouflage of young hares: Aller manages to imitate the transformation, while Retour fails and is mocked, leaving him feeling isolated and out of place.

When Aller is caught in a hunter's trap, Retour finally finds the courage to step out into the open and face the winter without his brother's protection. With the help of unexpected allies, he discovers a newfound confidence in himself and in the surrounding landscape, learning that change does not mean losing something, but building new possibilities.



Appendix A

DIRECTORS' NOTE



Aller & Retour is a stop-motion short film about change as an opportunity for growth. It tells the story of two young stoats who, after losing their mother, must face their first winter alone. The transformation of their coats becomes a metaphor for personal development, while themes of empathy, self-awareness, and evolution run through this coming-of-age story set in nature. Their acceptance by a family of hares introduces the value of community and the overcoming of differences.

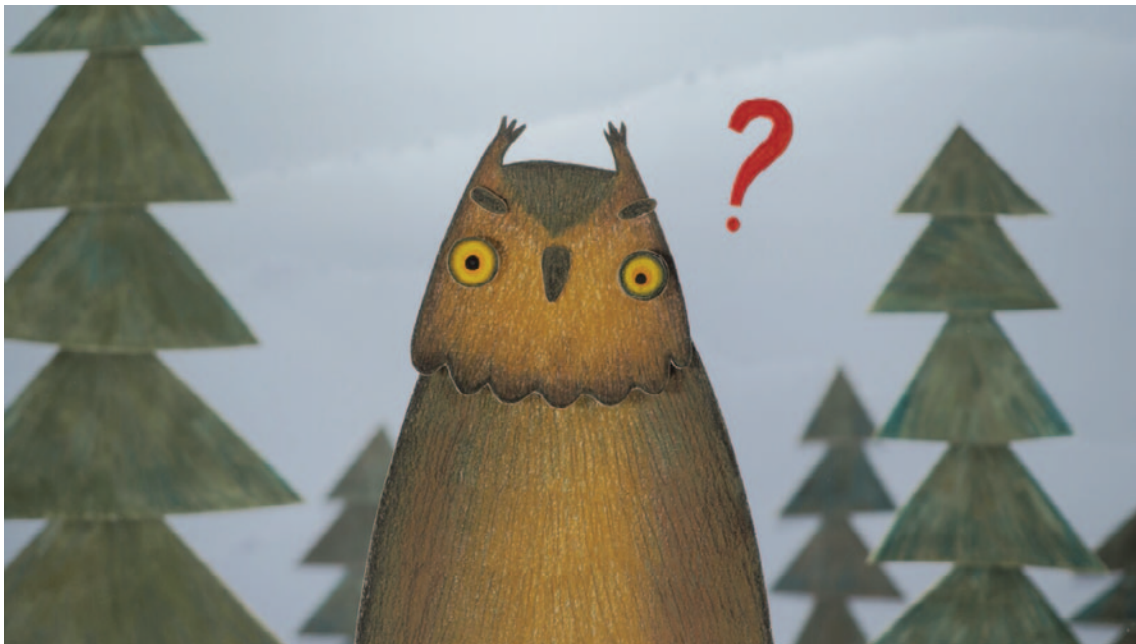
Animation makes it easier to engage with children while also evoking a sense of nostalgia in adults. The characters remain true to their animal nature, and the absence of dialogue gives the film a universal quality, relying instead on gestures, music, and expressions. The score and sound design follow the emotional arc, moving from playful tones to the tension of danger.

Sets and characters made of felt create a tactile world where fairy tale and experimentation coexist. A threatening owl and a faceless hunter introduce a sense of real danger, the latter portrayed as a silhouette foreign to the natural landscape. Aller et Retour speaks to a broad audience, inviting viewers to revisit key moments of growth through a lens that is both innocent and aware.



Appendix A

ANIMATION TECHNIQUE



The animation style of *Aller & Retour* stems from the need to tell the story physically and immediately. **Stop-motion with puppet animation** allows for realistic movement, keeping the protagonists close to their animal nature while ensuring precise control over gestures and expressions—essential in the absence of dialogue. This is complemented by a brief **cut-out sequence**, used to distinguish reality from Aller's thoughts: the scene in which he imagines a plan to steal food from the trap and escape back to the den is animated with a simpler, more graphic technique, ideal for conveying the spontaneity and naïve logic of the young stoat.

The use of felt for both sets and characters responds to the goal of creating a tactile world that reads clearly on camera and aligns with the theme of seasonal camouflage. In contrast, the choice of **3D for the hunter** arises from the intention to introduce an element deliberately “external” to the habitat. His digital modeling and movement—separate from the stop-motion—make him perceptibly alien, reinforcing the contrast with the natural world crafted through puppets and felt.



Appendix A

DIRECTORS

Lucia Bulgheroni is an Italian animation director. While studying film at the Istituto Europeo di Design in Milan, she began exploring stop-motion and quickly fell in love with it, discovering its expressive potential. After a period working in advertising—where she regularly combined live action and stop-motion—she completed a Master's degree in Animation Directing at the National Film & Television School in London. Her main interest lies in exploring themes related to philosophy, psychology, and the subconscious—abstract subjects that find in animation an ideal medium for visual expression.

With her short film *Inanimate*, she won major awards at the Cannes Film Festival (Cinéfondation), Annecy, the BAFTA Student Film Awards, the Nastro d'Argento, and many other festivals. Her second short, *Chromosoma X* (2021), also received numerous accolades and nominations. Her most recent work, *SeMe* (2023), is still in distribution and widely appreciated at festivals, marking her first exploration of live-action techniques.



Michele Greco was born in Naples in 1994. He moved to Rome to study Film and Stop-Motion Animation, later specializing in Dramaturgy and Screenwriting at the Accademia Nazionale d'Arte Drammatica Silvio D'Amico. During his studies, he wrote, directed, and produced the live-action short films *Natalie* (2016) and *Cotechino con lenticchie* (2019), and made his debut as an animator with the stop-motion short *Lars, una Pulce Assillante* (2020).

In the following years, he worked in various animation and VFX studios, first as a Production Assistant and later as a 3D Animator. In 2024, he collaborated with the comics collective BandaBendata, writing the screenplays for the anthology *Leaves*. He is currently working with Lucia Bulgheroni at Fantasmagorie Studio on the animated short film *Aller & Retour*, for which he serves as director and screenwriter.



Appendix A





Appendix B



Appendix C





Appendix D





Evaluating this resource

We hope that you found this resource useful and appropriate. Please do send us any film reviews, letters from your pupils, documentation of classwork and your feedback by e-mailing **olivia.knight@dca.org.uk**

Would you make a good Discovery Film Festival Case Study?

We are seeking a number of simple Case Studies in how teachers have used or are using Discovery films in the classroom across Curriculum for Excellence and across the Levels.

Any case studies that we develop would be intended for presentation on GLOW, the Creativity Portal and on Discovery Film Festival websites. We have a simple template to be completed and are keen to have classwork and documentation included. If you would like to be a Discovery Case Study please e-mail **olivia.knight@dca.org.uk**