

KVIFF Eastern Promises Book of Projects 2021



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Discover New Talents at KVIFF Eastern Promises 2021

Dear Film Industry Professionals, thank you for picking up the Book of Projects – a compilation of various projects that are still in the making and that we at KVIFF believe have strong potential in the upcoming years. This catalogue presents a selection of 29 film projects which are now in development, production or post-production and are expected to be duly noted by the international film community. The projects will be introduced by filmmakers and producers at several events throughout our online Industry Days. Under the flag of KVIFF Eastern Promises, we are introducing: Works in Development – Feature Launch, Works in Progress and First Cut+.

Works in Development – Feature Launch

Wednesday, July 28, 2 pm – 3:30 pm CET

Works in Development – Feature Launch is a presentation of nine selected projects that have been developed within the MIDPOINT Feature Launch program, a unique training and networking platform for emerging talents from Central and Eastern Europe that is aimed at scouting the most talented filmmakers and producers of the future. It focuses on creative teams who are developing their first or second feature film.

The program has been conducted in partnership with the Karlovy Vary IFF, When East Meets West and the Trieste FF.

The projects are in the development stage and are looking for further co-production partners as well as potential markets and sales opportunities.

The best project of the program receives the KVIFF & MIDPOINT Development Award of 10,000 EUR.

One-on-one meetings will be held online between the days of July 28–August 31. The WYTH online platform will make it easy for you to schedule mutually available time slots and enable you to meet virtually, yet directly.

Works in Progress

Tuesday, August 10, 2 pm – 3:15 pm CET

Wednesday, August 11, 2 pm – 3:15 pm CET

Thursday, August 12, 2 pm – 3:15 pm CET

A presentation of twelve selected films from the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the Balkans, the former Soviet Union, the Middle East and North Africa that are currently in late stage of production or post-production. For the very first time this year, the presentation will merge fiction and documentary films. The grand majority of these films don't have international sales yet. There are two cash awards of 5,000 EUR each, one sponsored by TRT and the other by KVIFF. Both awards will be designated by the jury regardless of the project's post-production needs. In addition to that, one project will be awarded a Post-production Development Award which consists of the post-production services package that will allow the producers to finish the film.

First Cut+

Tuesday, August 3, 2 pm – 4:30 pm CET

Eight feature films in post-production stage, predominantly from countries with a low production capacity and with a focus on Central & Eastern Europe. The project with the most unique artistic approach and international potential will receive the TRT prize of 5,000 EUR. In addition to that, one project will receive Sub-Ti Award for Subtitling Services and last but not least, the L'Avventura Studio, WOLF Consultants and Tiramisu joined forces for First Cut+ Award consisting of various promotional services for one project.

Works in Development – Feature Launch



MIDPOINT
INSTITUTE

WE
MW

TRISTE
FILM
FESTIVAL

ALPE
ADRIA
CINEMA

KVIFF & MIDPOINT Development Award Jury



Arnaud Gourmelen

Born in Paris, Arnaud Gourmelen began working for the programming departments of film festivals (Brest, Biarritz, Pantin film festivals). In 2005, he became Head of Programming of the Angers Film Festival - Premiers Plans - where he continued to discover new filmmakers from all over Europe through competitions dedicated to student films, first short films and debut long features. In addition, he has curated many retrospectives dedicated to Aki Kaurismäki, Pier Paolo Pasolini, Jean-Luc Godard, Barbet Schroeder, Nanni Moretti, Luis Buñuel, Alan Clarke, Jean-Pierre Meville, Agnès Varda, Andreï Zvyagintsev, John Boorman and others. From 2011 to 2018, he worked as a programmer on the selection committee of the Directors' Fortnight (Cannes Film Festival). In addition to the Angers festival, he now works as an international consultant and program delegate for several international festivals (Karlovy Vary, Brussels and Zurich) and also organizes the Angers Workshop every summer.



Danijel Hočevar

Film producer and CEO of Vertigo, a Ljubljana (Slovenia)-based production company with a distinctive track record and extensive working experience on international co-productions and narrow budget films, including *Small Body* (2021, Cannes FF Critics' Week) by Laura Samani, *Reconciliation* (2021, CPH: DOX Next Wave Competition) by Marija Zidar, *Otac / Father* (2020, Berlinale Panorama Audience Award) by Srđan Golubovic, *God Exists, Her Name is Petrunya* (2019, Berlinale Competition: Ecumenical Award and Lux Film Prize 2019) by Teona Mitevaska, *Half-Sister* (2019, Karlovy Vary IFF Main Competition), *Nightlife* (2016, Karlovy Vary IFF's Best Director Award), *Slovenian Girl* (2009, Toronto IFF) and *Spare Parts* (2003, Berlinale Competition), all directed by Damjan Kozole, *An Episode in the Life of an Iron Picker* (2013, two Berlinale Silver Bears) by Danis Tanovic, *Circles* (2013, Sundance FF World Cinema Competition's Jury Prize) by S. Golubovic, *Alexandrians* (2011, Trieste Film Festival Best Documentary) by Metod Pevec, and *Bread and Milk* (2001, Venice FF's Lion of the Future Award) by Jan Cvitkovic.

Danijel has been selected as Variety's Ten Producers to Watch, is a member of EFA, and the president of the Association of Slovenian Film Producers. Since 2005, he's been actively involved as a tutor with several European training initiatives such as MIDPOINT Institute, EAVE, Nipkow Program, and Maia Workshops. He is also a member of the selection committee of the When East Meets West co-production market in Trieste.



Karla Stojáková

Film producer Karla Stojáková was born in the Czech Republic in 1978. She graduated from the Production Department at FAMU (Film and TV Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague) and has been the head of the Production Department at FAMU since 2018.

In 2000, she founded AXMAN PRODUCTIONS – an independent film production company based in the heart of Prague. In 2013, she co-founded the film production house FILM KOLEKTIV.

Karla is the founder of FILMASIA – the first film festival of Asian cinema in the Czech Republic. She was selected as Producer on the Move at Cannes IFF 2006 and is a board member and vice-president of ACE Producers and a member of APA (Czech Producers' Association).

MIDPOINT Feature Launch Script Consultant Trainees



Olga Michalik

Olga Michalik is a film editor with a background in psychology, gardening and building. She was born in Poland, travelled around Europe, and eventually settled in Slovenia, where she completed a BA in film editing (2017) at the Academy of Theatre, Radio, Film and Television. She has edited short films, trailers and advertising. She is proud of editing a feature documentary on the struggles of the Assyrian community in Iraq and Turkey and her work with a charity supporting the survivors of domestic violence.

She has received recognition for her short scripts on a local level (Grossmann Award, Kratka Scena). Her feature film script was chosen for participation in a year-long development workshop organized by the Directors Guild of Slovenia.

She is currently editing a feature documentary and writing her master's thesis on narrative therapy and editing in road movies.



Mikuláš Novotný

Mikuláš Novotný co-founded Background Films in 2012, debuting as a producer of Tomasz Mielnik's spiritual comedy *Journey to Rome* and the short documentary *Resort*, which both competed at Karlovy Vary IFF 2015. He graduated in Producing (FAMU) and Theory of Interactive Media (Masaryk University). He is an EAVE Producers Workshop graduate (2018) and Czech EFP Producer on *The Move* (2020). He has since produced Czech New Wave legend Karel Vachek's six-hour film essay *Communism and the Net or the End of Representative Democracy* (IFF Rotterdam 2020), as well as numerous shorts of exceptional emerging authors from the Czech film and visual-arts environment. Mikuláš is currently co-producing Jan P. Matuszynski's *Leave No Traces* and developing a slate of feature films including Mielnik's ambitious period comedy *Gregorius, The Chosen One*.



Eliza Subotowicz

Eliza Subotowicz is a writer-director from Poland. She earned her MA in English from the University of Warsaw and MFA in Film Directing from Columbia University in NYC. Her thesis short *Ben* was awarded by the Directors Guild of America in 2009. Her subsequent short *Mercy* won Best Short Award at Durban IFF in 2013 and was featured at more than 30 festivals around the world (Palm Springs Short-Fest, Melbourne, Raindance and Cottbus, among others). Currently, she's developing her first feature film. Eliza also has more than ten years of experience working as a film festival programmer, industry consultant and senior coordinator of film-related events, most notably for the Warsaw Film Festival and New Horizons Association in Poland, and the Doha Film Institute in Qatar. She works as a script analyst and reader for international film funds. She's now preparing an international development workshop in Italy devoted to women filmmakers while also developing her skills as a script consultant and mentor.

ALIYA



Film synopsis

Aliya, an 18-year-old recent immigrant from Ukraine, finds meaning in her recently discovered Jewish identity and feelings of patriotism towards Israel, her newly adopted country. Wishing to blend in, she volunteers to join the military and trains to become a drill instructor in order to help transform Israel's youth into toughened soldiers. After weeks of intense physical and psychological training at a desert base, her company receives seventy-two hours leave before their final exam. Aliya returns to her family in Tel Aviv, where her mother confronts her for her choices. Determined to have fun, she heads into the city for a night out but ends up being assaulted by her date. After a turbulent and unsettling weekend at home, Aliya must return to the military base but struggles to complete her course as she re-evaluates her values, beliefs, and place in Israeli society.

Company's profile

Transfax Film Productions, established in 1989 by Marek Rozenbaum, specializes in the co-production and production of feature films and production services in Israel. In addition to 67 feature films, Transfax has produced over 40 documentaries for Israeli Television, 7 dramas and over 80 television commercials and programs. Transfax features have screened in festivals such as Cannes & Venice, have won numerous awards and have been screened internationally.

Match&Spark is a talent management and production company based in Warsaw established by Anna Rozalska & Tarik Hachoud. It co-produced the feature documentary *In the Name of Honor* alongside US based RatPac, and the feature documentary *Who Will Write Our History*, directed by Roberta Grossman and produced alongside Executive Producer Nancy Spielberg. It is also currently developing Sundance World Cinema Directing Award winner's Michał Marczak feature.

Author's statement

In many ways, *ALIYA* is an autobiographical film. I left Israel at the age of 21, days after completing my mandatory service in the Army. The reasons I left are complex, yet they primarily have to do with my disenchantment with many of the social and political values and beliefs I was brought up with. Inversely, Aliya, who as a teen discovered that she was Jewish, immigrated to Israel with her entire family to join the military. During the days depicted in the film, she is confronted with the reality of her choices. Social realist, visual, and personal, *ALIYA* is a coming of age story, yet it is one that also encapsulates the narrative of an entire country, in which interpersonal relationships are metaphors for violence between nations and people. It is a personal story and a strong reflection of my values related to identity, nationalism, religion, hierarchies, authority, and power.

Israel, Russia, Poland

This film is director's feature debut.

director **Dekel Berenson**
 scriptwriter **Dekel Berenson**,
 Co-writer: **Greer Ellison**
 producer **Marek Rozenbaum**,
Alexander Rodnyansky, Paul Wesley,
 Co-Producers: **Anna Rozalska**,
Aleksandra Aleksander
 language **Hebrew, Russian**
 genre **drama**
 estimated budget **2.000.000 EUR**
 release date **2023**

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Producer's statement

As a producer and fourth generation filmmaker, I consider it part of my obligation to spot emerging talent. Dekel tells sensitive stories, and his talent is to make it interesting and relevant for us to observe the human being at odds with its environment. When I read the script, I was taken by the balance between plot and theme. *ALIYA* is a statement about systemic violence and simultaneously a rumination on identity. The story shows us how a culture of violence bleeds into one's identity, how violence is normalized into who we are. This is a powerful message for today's global audiences. I believe this is a film not just for Israeli audiences. I believe its message of militarized youth, identity, and violence, rendered with Dekel's nuanced and sensitive approach, will resound on a global stage. Alexander Rodnyansky

Bijuterie / Bižuterija



Film synopsis

Violeta (60) sits under the bright lights of a TV interview. Her intense eyes flare as her mind reels back to: 1985, Kaunas, Lithuania. Violeta (20), now a young mother, sells cheap jewellery at a flea market to make ends meet. She tricks a charming young "businessman" into buying a fake gold watch, unaware that this is Balys, the right-hand-man of the most feared gang in town. Balys realizes her trick, but instead of retribution, he asks for a date. Violeta quickly finds herself in a passionate love affair that leads her out of her miserable life with her abusive first husband and into luxury, passion, and extravagance at the centre of the most dangerous criminal organization in Lithuania's history. Back in the present, 60-year-old Violeta, a widowed mother of three, struggles to maintain her cool demeanour against the flood of memories. In her mind, this is only the beginning of the final act.

Company's profile

COMETOS is a Lithuanian independent production and post-production company with mastering services covering the entire Baltic region. Following the motto of "making films that are impossible to make," the company focuses on feature film production to develop the voices of a new generation of writers and directors, with a particular focus on genre films. In 2021, COMETOS produced the first Lithuanian feature horror film *Pensivė* entirely through independent funding. We actively seek collaborators outside typical funding systems, allowing for more active and unrestricted development of stories and talent. Before founding COMETOS, Emilija was a producer with ACME Film on commercial and arthouse feature films.

Author's statement

The story of *Bijuterie* is inspired by a real person. When you meet the actual "Violeta" at her shabby hotel outside Bologna, it is hard to imagine that this petite, soft-spoken woman had a front-row seat to the most violent era in Lithuania's modern history. She was the mistress, wife, and eventual widow of one of Lithuania's leading organized crime figures. Her sheer strength of character is what makes this story so powerful. In the film, we follow two versions of Violeta: the resilient 60-year-old émigré and the wild young firecracker. However, as past and present interweave, we see that there is more to her story than she would have us believe. Violeta came from nothing but was determined to have it all: love, family, power, and respect. She lost everything. Now, sharing her story with the world is her last chance to take control and create the myth as she wants it to be remembered.

Lithuania, Italy

director **Tomas Vengris**
 scriptwriter **Birute Kapustinskaite**
 producer **Emilija Sluskonyte, Marica Stocchi**
 language **Lithuanian**
 genre **crime, drama**
 estimated budget **2.390.000 EUR**
 release date **2026**

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Producer's statement

Bijuterie is an important, challenging film based on true events that shook Lithuania, starting with the final years of the USSR and continuing into the "wild capitalism" of post-independence. The often ignored criminal world of the Soviet 1980s has seen little attention on screen domestically or internationally. This colourful underworld is absurd by today's standards, with its contraband butter and illegal flea markets. Our female protagonist, who despite society's constrictions is determined to find power without losing her womanhood, portrays a struggle that is no less important today than it was 40 years ago. The project's high budget, which is due to the time period and the turbulent nature of the events, requires a complex co-production structure and experienced international collaborators. With these in place, we know we can make this film as it is meant to be seen.



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The Bomber / Spridzinātājs



Film synopsis

The far-right organization 'Thundercross' fails to blow up the Victory Monument dedicated to the Soviet Army in Riga, Latvia. A premature explosion accidentally kills two of its members, but their leader Cross escapes. His teenage daughter Austra wakes up to find her life turned upside-down. Her father is named the most wanted criminal in the country and suspected in the murder of Austra's best friend's father. She cracks under pressure at school, alienates from her mother and comes under scrutiny by the investigator Ingrid, who must catch Cross at whatever cost. When Austra gets into trouble with the police, she starts a dangerous game with Ingrid while giving food to her father to help him survive in the woods. Finally, Austra learns the reality about Cross and is left with a choice between unconditional love, inevitable truth or control over her own destiny.

Company's profile

Film Office Latvia is a Latvian film production company working on the production of documentaries, feature fictions and service productions. It is building cooperation between young talents and experienced professionals in developing and producing film projects with the potential for international co-production and release. The company is operated by producer Inese Boka-Grūbe (EAVE 2017, Producers on the Move 2019), whose latest minority co-production *Natural Light* (dir. Dénes Nagy, Hungary, Latvia, France, Germany) was selected by the Berlin International Film Festival 2021 and received the Silver Bear Award for Best Director. The film project *The Bomber* is a co-production with the Latvian film production company Mistrus Media.

Author's statement

Inspired by true events, this is a story of two generations. While parents want to fix the past by any means, their children are faced with the tragic consequences. In 1997, we were teenagers – just like our protagonist, Austra, when members of 'Thundercross' tried to blow up the Victory Monument. Today we are the same age as Austra's father Cross when he committed the attack. While telling this story, we use our own 13 and 33 year-old insights as we explore the complexity of this topic and provide both perspectives simultaneously. We are most concerned with the choices for the future that were made despite the cruel realities of the 90's – a 'wild' world that still echoes in the present-day societies of post-Soviet space.

Latvia

This film is director's feature debut.

director **Pauls Kesteris**
 scriptwriter **Gatis Murnieks**
 producer **Inese Boka-Grūbe**
 language **Latvian**
 genre **crime drama**
 estimated budget **1.200.000 EUR**
 release date **2024**

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Producer's statement

In view of the existing threat from right-wing extremism in Europe, *The Bomber* is envisaged as a crime drama that will address issues of nationalism, radicalization, right-wing extremism and the passing on of ideas to the next generation. The film will allow us to address an audience of young adults and also resonate with older audiences across Europe who are interested in contemporary European history. We are looking for co-production partners from Germany, Poland, Czech Republic and the Nordic countries. Development of the project is currently financed by the MEDIA Sub-programme of Creative Europe, the National Film Centre of Latvia and the State Culture Capital Foundation.

Brothers / Braća



Film synopsis

After living in Denmark for twenty years, famous writer Niko Boskovic comes back to his birthplace, the village Grahovo, visiting his younger brother Masan, the village priest, with whom he has a complicated relationship. Masan never forgave Niko for having to stay and take care of the property and their father. On the way to Grahovo, Niko accidentally kills a man with his car. Horrified and shocked, he throws the body down the cliff and runs. Eventually, he tells his brother the truth. Despite being a religious and moral man, Masan decides to help his brother in hiding the crime. In the meantime, the peasants prepare a big party in Niko's honour. Hiding the crime jointly opens the Pandora's box of suppressed emotions. Suddenly roles are changing. In trying to protect his brother, the inferior Masan takes over the position of leader.

Company's profile

Cut-Up d.o.o. is a production company based in Montenegro dedicated to projects with strong visions and brave ideas. Its goal is to support a new generation of authors and make their ideas more visible on the international market. Cut-Up was established in 2013 as the initiative of several producers that felt the urge to raise the level of Montenegrin cinematography.

Cut-Up's present line-up is the feature film *Sirin* directed by Senad S'ahmanovic^o (co-production Montenegro, Albania, Croatia, Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, France), as well as the documentary *Last Nomads* directed by Petar Glomazic^o and Biljana Tutorov (co-production Montenegro, Serbia, Croatia, Canada). The company's minority co-production *Son* by Ines Tanovic was the opening film at Sarajevo FF in 2019. Connecting with new countries and territories for film co-production is one of our company's challenges and a long-term vision.

Author's statement

The hardest part is when you surprise yourself. When you find out that you are not the person you thought you were, and you try to reconnect. Reconnection is often a more complex and important thing than connection, as the path is familiar and you have to crush some of your beliefs. In this story, reconnection develops between two brothers. Two distant, alienated and diametrically opposed brothers, who love each other in spite of everything. The tragic accident that happens at the very beginning is a call to accept this extraordinary situation that evolves in a seemingly organized world.

Montenegro

This film is director's feature debut.

director **Bojan Stijović**

scriptwriter **Stefan Bošković**

producer **Veliša Popović**

language **Montenegrin**

genre **drama**

estimated budget **715.000 EUR**

release date **Summer 2023**

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Producer's statement

This is our second feature film written by Stefan Bošković, winner of the European Union Prize for Literature, and first-time collaboration with Bojan Stijović, one of the prominent younger directors whose short films with cold but clear and strong tones in portraying the inner conditions of characters caught my attention.

Since the first draft, I have associated the juxtaposition of Grahovo's land with characters: the cold and harsh rocks and dry abandoned lands with the inner turmoil of the brothers, and the sun-bathed golden grass and fertile soil with Jelena's wish to become pregnant and bring life to a deserted place that once had historic significance.

Our goal is to premiere *Brothers* at festivals that can highlight the participation of first-time directors, such as Karlovy Vary and San Sebastian, but also to focus on regional cooperation and the Sarajevo Film Festival.

Head Nurse / Sestra Hana



Film synopsis

During a one-day shift in a regional Czech hospital, different characters will sooner or later encounter Hana, the head nurse. Sometimes she is a random bystander, sometimes welcomed help, and sometimes an unshakable authority that cannot be defied. The elements of comedy and absurdity alternate in rapid succession, thus creating daily dramas that test everyone's sanity: an agile young doctor is outdone by a tough maintenance worker, an experienced economic deputy drafts his patients like sports stars to avoid the hospital's rising debt, a famous actor from a popular hospital-based soap opera merges with his character, and a young idealistic intern is confronted with the true essence of the work she has chosen.

Company's profile

Last Films is an independent film production company founded by producer Kamila Dohnalová in 2019. Last Films focuses on stories that reflect current societal issues and reveal hidden features of our everyday life. It believes in the urgency of delivering these projects to the audience at present and in the format of a highly fictionalized universe. Following Kamila's previous producer's work – SXSW-selected *Figurant* (2019, CZ/FR) featuring Denis Lavant, Oscar-shortlisted animated *Happy End* (2015) and Sundance-awarded *Peacock* (2015), Last Films brings to life international coproductions and projects that appeal to festivals worldwide. In addition to *Head Nurse*, the company is in the development stage of several short projects such as the animated romance *Hurikán* (CZ/FR/SK) or the coming-of-age drama *Fugue* (FR/MT/CZ).

Author's statement

Head Nurse is an ensemble slice-of-life drama based on the unity of place, time and story. The narrative's mosaic structure gives the audience a perspective of a tragicomic hyperbole, heavily relying on the absurdity created in our universe's micro-situations. The multiple storylines spanning across the hospital's hierarchy reflect the current pitfalls of the healthcare system. The hospital is portrayed as a microcosm similar to the structure of our society. It is an arena in which people's conflicting motivations and egos collide; where a successful solution to a problem usually only creates a new one. The location is decisive – we leave the scene with a different character than the one we entered with. The hospital as a system or physical building has already fallen apart and only the people themselves now carry out public service.

Czech Republic

This film is director's feature debut.

director **Jan Vejnar**
 scriptwriter **Jan Vejnar, Václav Hašek**
 producer **Kamila Dohnalová**
 language **Czech**
 genre **drama**
 estimated budget **1.100.000 EUR**
 release date **2023**

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Producer's statement

Head Nurse is an extraordinary drama from a totally ordinary day in a European hospital. As in the case of our previous collaboration, the short mystery drama *Figurant* (2019), Jan Vejnar again proves his distinctive scriptwriter's and director's approach, which combines heavy social critique with humour. Together with scriptwriter Václav Hašek, they are both deeply familiar with the medical environment but they stayed professionally distanced. The characters they have created are based upon extensive research and they are relatable – the audience can pity, hate and love them, usually at the same time. The ensemble nature of the film provides the perfect opportunity for international coproduction to cast well-established names together with fresh faces that will appeal to both the festival audience and broadcasters. The project has received Czech Film Fund script development support.

Leave the Door Open / Ostavi vrata otvorena



Film synopsis

Four different families arrive at an over-crowded furniture store in Zagreb, all hoping that by rearranging their homes in the Scandinavian style they will also rearrange their lives. Unconsciously, they are also hoping to escape their Balkan identity and the uncertainty it brings. However, the claustrophobic store is a breeding ground for collective anxiety that makes some characters hysterical. The complex family relationships turn out to be entangled and, as hidden frustrations and family secrets surface, all the characters get into arguments, some of which end brutally. Some of them silently cry while others get lost, run, and hide from one another and change their lives. Suddenly, they are interrupted by the same event - a man has lost consciousness in the store lobby. By listening in through a public announcement system, they are faced with their realities and must make radical decisions.

Company's profile

Eclectica is a film & TV production company from Zagreb, Croatia. Since 2015, it has produced a dozen short films: *Red Light* (BG/HR) won 15+ awards and was sold to Sundance TV, *Pommel* (UK/HR) received BIFA nomination for the Best British Short in 2018, and *The Flood* (SI/HR) competed at the ISFF Clermont-Ferrand 2019. Eclectica's feature slate consists of *The Uncle* by A. Mardešić and D. Kapac, which has recently been shot in Zagreb, *Honey Bunny* by I. Jelinović was awarded at Sofia Meetings and Connecting Cottbus 2020, and *Celebration* by B. Anković is an adaptation of the Croatian novel of the decade. *The Wedding* is a new potential box office hit by I. Šeregi and *The Secretaries* by S. Čapin was awarded at the "Pack&Pitch" programme of Sarajevo FF. The company is currently distributing a high-end docu-series called *The Age of Untruth*, produced for public TV and directed by N. Slijepčević & J. Gamulin.

Author's statement

We follow four different post-transitional Croatian families through a day they spend in an IKEA-ish store, offering us a kaleidoscopic image of human destinies. Our collective fantasy about having a perfect family often traps us in unhealthy structures. This is especially relevant for the Balkans – suffering from serious war trauma tends to make us subconsciously hold on to everything that seems like stability. By having their dreams crushed, our characters learn that a family should be an institution that we choose consciously by keeping the door open and accepting our inevitable loneliness. However, the unattainable fantasy of a perfect family, which later breaks our hearts as adults, is a necessary incubator for us to grow up in. These family frustrations passed on from generation to generation are a crucial element to understanding and defining our future families.

Croatia

This film is director's feature debut.

director **Judita Gamulin**
 scriptwriter **Judita Gamulin**
 producer **Rea Rajčić**
 language **English**
 genre **drama**
 estimated budget **763.000 EUR**
 release date **December 2023**

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Rea Rajčić Producer
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Producer's statement

I would often pitch *Leave the Door Open* to an international industry audience, and the idea would regularly provoke laughter and a lot of personal examples of that one crucial fight in Ikea that apparently everyone has. For me this project is a real treat from a professional standpoint – dealing with complex interpersonal relationships in a setting familiar to filmgoers throughout the world, with a high concept plot that revolves around a highly relatable experience and a director who has impressive precision in her portrayals of family relations. *Leave the Door Open* has been supported by HAVC for script and project development and, prior to the MIDPOINT Feature Launch, it has participated in First Films First workshop by the Goethe Institute. While waiting for production support from HAVC, we are looking for co-producers, sales agents and distributors.

No Reverse / Bez rikverca



Film synopsis

In his youth, while working as a truck driver transporting coffins across the former Yugoslavia for a funeral home in a small Montenegrin town, the 62-year-old Slavko experienced some of the most significant and beautiful moments of his life. Now, thirty years after the Yugoslav civil war, he still works for the same business. Facing a deadly disease, he decides to embark on a trip one more time, a journey that should reveal to him if anything – including himself – has changed over the years. On that journey, he is accompanied by Petar, his new neighbour with an unusual personality and an even more unusual past. Slavko travels to rediscover his memories and settle accounts; this trip is his “farewell tour”. However, the journey doesn’t quite unfold as he imagined, as new truths come to light and Slavko unexpectedly opens up new opportunities for his unlikely friend Petar.

Company's profile

In the short time since its foundation in 2016, Bitter Frames Production has produced the short films *A Head Full of Joy*, *The Visit* and *Obrad*. Our short films have been screened at numerous international film festivals including the Drama International Short Film Festival, Brussels Short Film Festival, Motovun Film Festival, Alicante Film Festival, Camerimage, Bel-docs, and others. We are currently producing a new short film *The Bark*, directed by Branislav Milatović. The company is developing a network of partners in Europe. We are co-producers on the feature film *Guardians of the Formula* (in production) by renowned Serbian director Dragan Bjelogrić. The company's first feature film *No Reverse* is supported for development by the Film Centre of Montenegro.

Author's statement

The road movie genre is our framework to tell an intimate story about the friendship between two lonely people, offering the most inspiring space for building and balancing relationships, as the journey itself opens the possibility for characters to expose their true nature. In a way, this narrative allows us to develop the main elements freed from the cause-and-effect principle and focus on the characters themselves. The nature of the main protagonists Slavko and Petar and the situation in which they find themselves will be based particularly on the way they both approach friendship and shared intimacy. In this dichotomy between the two characters, we see the most interesting and exciting space for building and nuancing the conceptual landscape of the film.

Montenegro

This film is director's feature debut.

director **Branislav Milatović**
 scriptwriter **Milo Masoničić**
 producer **Miljan Vučelić**
 language **Montenegrin**
 genre **road-movie, dramedy**
 estimated budget **615.000 EUR**
 release date **2024**

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Producer's statement

Branislav Milatović has presented himself to the international film scene with his short films *All of That*, *A Head Full of Joy* and *Obrad*, in which he has also explored alienated and lonely characters. I think that the uniqueness of his directorial style is reflected in his authentic, subtle storytelling and dedicated work on the performance of his actors. The narrative format of a road movie that he's chosen for his debut is of particular interest to me, as it offers organic opportunities for regional co-production. Moreover, the characters are accompanied by a dose of mystery and intrigue that makes them attractive, while their feeling of loneliness and alienation culminates throughout the film. For the main role, an agreement has been reached with Slavko Štimac, a renowned actor in the former Yugoslavia. We believe that there is a major interest in this type of film, especially in the Balkan film market.

Thinking David



Film synopsis

Identifying as gay in the Jewish community in Prague, seventeen-year-old David cannot imagine ever finding acceptance from his community. While exploring his Jewish identity in Israel, his sexuality becomes something that he is no longer willing to hide. As David begins to publicly identify as queer, he struggles with the relationship between his family and friends. His random sexual encounters, first relationship, and attempts to make up for lost time back home in the Czech Republic prove to be more difficult and painful than he expected. After a series of mistakes, David comes to terms with both of his identities and finds his place within his community of family and friends, thus beginning his adulthood...

Company's profile

Helium Film is a production company founded in 2019 by Pavla Klimešová and Barbora Bargarová and later joined by Mária Můřovská. Each of the producers has different experience within the film industry, allowing the team to complement their approach to production. They are united by the motivation to work with young creators and make quality films with international reach and co-productions. Currently, the company is developing the animated series *No Happily Ever After* about supernatural creatures who have lost their purpose in the 21st century, which won the CEE Animation Forum Award; the family adventure feature *Divine Lighting* by Barbora Chalupová about the incredible life and struggles of Prokop Diviš, the inventor of the lighting rod, as well as the *The Traveler*, a short film with Geoffrey Rush in the leading role by director Veronika Jelšiková about what happens to your dreams after you move to the afterlife.

Author's statement

A child molester, drug addict, charlatan and mass murderer – these are the only four queer main characters in the history of Czech cinema. The plot about a young boy coming out in the Jewish community might be tempting to portray in an overly dramatic way. This, however, is not my intention. It is not my experience, nor is it an experience or thesis that I would want to convey to the audience. Instead, I have decided to tell a story about a boy who is learning how to live his life without any doubts or remorse. The story of a boy who learns how not to repeat his ancestors' mistakes by making different ones. I want to see David's experience through his eyes and thoughts. His stubborn feeling that he understands himself best stands in the way of really examining all the possibilities of being a part of both the Jewish and LGBT community; however, his story can help the young queer audience.

Czech Republic

director **Šimon Holý**
 scriptwriter **Šimon Holý**
 producer **Pavla Klimešová**
 language **Czech, English**
 genre **coming of age**
 estimated budget **2.000.000 EUR**
 release date **2024**

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Pavla Klimešová Producer
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Producer's statement

After producing the documentary blockbuster *Caught in the Net*, which hit the local box office with more than 553,000 admissions and managed to open up social debate about child abuse online, I realised that it is essential for me to work on projects that have a broader social impact. With homophobia and antisemitism rising throughout all of Europe and the world, I feel that it is necessary to open up the subject of self-acceptance, tolerance and the question of identity.

I've participated in documentaries that have dealt with topics of religion and the LGBTQ+ community. *Thinking David* deals with both these topics in a fictional setting, which makes it a new and exciting challenge for me.

Šimon and I have known each other since 2013 and have collaborated on several projects together. When Šimon approached me with the project, I knew immediately that I wanted to be part of the film.

What It Feels Like For a Girl / Tüdrukune



Film synopsis

After getting fired from a high-end job, Lilian (39), a powerhouse woman, spends the night partying and meets Mona (24), a sensual self-aware beauty. For the first time, Lilian desires a woman but is hesitant to pursue her. She is offered to lead the campaign of the first female prime ministerial candidate of Estonia and, feeling useful again, she dares to secretly date Mona. Once Mona appears at Lilian's door with all her belongings, their relationship quickly moves from glamorous dates to everyday routine. Lilian, under pressure due to the dirty political games, gets hot-headed at work and controlling at home. When Mona leaves without a hint and her candidate loses the election on the same day as she turns 40, Lilian's world is crushed. Slowly, she starts picking up the pieces and Lilian finally realizes she has to tell Mona how she feels – no more games, no more secrets.

Company's profile

Tandem Film is a film production company led by two producers – Maie Rosmann and Maario Masing. Working in the industry for over a decade, they joined forces in 2016 to form a tandem whose second feature film *Phantom Owl Forest* generated the most admissions at cinemas in Estonia of all the films premiered in 2018, and the film was sold to several countries all over the world. Focusing on passionate humane stories and using a green production mind-set, Tandem Film is currently developing several feature films, full-length documentaries and is engaged in multiple international co-productions.

Author's statement

This is a story of my generation of women. Growing up with all the prospects of an independent country, the possibilities of liberalism came to us in the shadows of the rigid ideas of the Soviet Union. The need to build a façade became a necessity, and becoming a hyper-independent woman was a suffocating ideal. I am interested in changing this narrative. I am interested in people not being stuck in the stories that no longer serve them in their lives – hence *What It Feels Like For a Girl* is a sexually charged film about a woman's awakening. It's a film about breaking new grounds and at its center are women's bodies, experiences, fears, possibilities and self-actualization. If nothing changes, nothing changes.

Estonia

This film is director's feature debut.

director **Maria Reinup**
 scriptwriter **Maria Reinup**
 producer **Maario Masing**
 language **Estonian**
 genre **drama**
 estimated budget **1.125.000 EUR**
 release date **2024**

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Producer's statement

What It Feels Like For a Girl is one of the hottest novels published in Estonia in a while. It stirred up public debate, all of its re-prints were quickly sold out and the translations of the book will be released internationally. Politics, dirty and sexy simultaneously, have been the playground of men for a long time, and their inherent power play creates the perfect setting to explore equality and women's position in the society. These modern topics and the question of where one anchors their worth are internationally appealing and familiar to everyone. Writer-director Maria's passion for examining the female perspective in her previous work gives me the confidence that the film will also be emotionally engaging. The project was supported by the Estonian Film Institute in the development stage and we are seeking a co-producer and an international sales agent.

Works in Progress



Works in Progress Jury



Martina Bleis

Martina Bleis is the head and project curator of the Berlinale Co-Production Market. In addition to her MA in applied cultural studies, she is also a graduate of the EAVE Producers Workshop. She has been one of the founding members of the Berlinale Co-Production Market team since 2004. She also consults as programme and pitching advisor at the East West co-production market Connecting Cottbus since 2011, and she often serves as a curatorial advisor, mentor, moderator or jury member at other international training and co-production initiatives and festivals.



Yohann Comte

Yohann Comte is the cofounder of Charades, a sales and co-production company based in Paris. Before founding the company in 2017 with partners from Wild Bunch, Studiocanal and Asuna, Yohann was Deputy Head of International Sales at Gaumont. With Charades, Yohann sold Cannes Competition *Leto*, Critic's Week winners *Diamantino* and *I Lost My Body*, Academy award nominee Japanese animation *Mirai*, Venice 2020 surprise Danish action thriller *Shorta* and Shudder's biggest hit *Host*. At Charades, Yohann coproduced *Revenge* by Coralie Fargeat, the French hit comedy *The Shiny Shrimps*, and Nikolaj Coster-Waldau's starrer *Suicide Tourist*. He also served as executive producer on arthouse shocker *Swallow* and Venice 2020 competition title *The World To Come*.



Michaela Patriková

Michaela is a highly experienced Sound Editor and ADR Supervisor. She has worked on a number of award-winning feature films and prestigious TV projects. Michaela is one of the key members of the Soundsquare team. Some of the projects she has been involved in include: *The Painted Bird* (V. Marhoul), *The Man with Hare Ears* (M. Šulík), TV series *Das Boot Seasons 2 and 3* (SKY), *Shadowplay* (Canal+), *Wasteland* (HBO). Some of the projects at this year's festival include the film *Zátopek* (D.Ondříček), main competition selection *The Bird Atlas* (Olmo Omerzu), where Michaela worked as a Sound Editor, and festival section 'East of the West' nominee - *Intensive Life Unit* (A.Komrzý), with Michaela as Sound Designer.



Uldis Cekulis

Uldis Cekulis created the independent production company VFS FILMS 22 years ago. In 2007, he was named among the seven filmmakers to receive the International Trailblazer award at MIPDOC in Cannes. He has worked on almost 50 creative documentaries and author-driven prime time TV docu-series both as a producer and sometimes as a cameraman. Most of his produced films have travelled around the world, and many have received prestigious awards, such as the Shanghai IFF Golden Goblet (*Bridges of Time* by Audrius Stonys and Kristine Briede) or the Karlovy Vary IFF Crystal Globe (*Immortal*, by Ksenia Okhapkina). His coproduced Italian-Latvian docu-feature *The Rossellinis* by Alessandro Rossellini premiered at the 77th Venice IFF.



Esra Demirkiran

Esra Demirkiran is Festival Coordinator at TRT Cinema (TRT is Turkey's public broadcaster). She is a coordinator of 12 Punto, Turkey's largest script development and co-production platform for Turkish and international feature films. For almost a decade, she worked as a news editor and executive-produced several flagship programs and documentaries for Turkey's Haberturk news network. Prior to her journalism experience, Esra was the Board President and Co-Director of NISI MASA, a Paris based European cinema network. In the past, besides working as a film critic and festival-distribution consultant for award winning Turkish feature films, she has contributed to the planning and organization of various Turkey-based film festivals such as the Festival on Wheels and Istanbul. She studied Sociology at the Middle East Technical University and holds an MA degree in Film & TV from Istanbul Bilgi University.

A Long Break / Didi Shesveneba



Film synopsis

After 13 years, Tsitsi (31) initiates a reunion with his former classmates for a seemingly harmless reason: they haven't seen each other since graduation and the reason for the gathering is to remember their school days and have a drink. However, Tsitsi has a secret motivation: he wants to punish his former classmate, Guga (31), who used to make life difficult for the entire class at school. Several male classmates gather at the school to drink and talk. As their time together progresses, Tsitsi gets drunk and tries to accomplish his goal.

Director's biography

David Pirtskhalava was born on April 13, 1987 in Tbilisi, Georgia. In 2011 he graduated from The Shota Rustaveli Theatre and Film Georgia State University, with a Master's Degree in Film and Television Dramaturgy. In 2016, he graduated from Temur Chkheidze's Contemporary Theatrical Art Development Centre, where he specialized in Theatre Dramaturgy. He is the author of several full-length and short film scripts. As a director, David has shot two short films: In 2015 his short film *Mama* won the "Pardi di Domani" international section at the Locarno International Film Festival and was awarded the Golden Leopard. In 2018, his next work *Sashleli*, premiered at Locarno as well. In total, both films have been selected for over 50 film festivals and achieved some notable success.

Producer's biography

Born in 1992, Tiko Nadirashvili is a Tbilisi-based film producer. Starting her art-related career as a theatre actress, she switched her field to filmmaking. In 2019, she won two production grants from the GNFC and OSGF for documentary and fiction film projects. She is equally interested in fiction, crossover, documentary, and series production. Since 2019, Tiko has been working as a producer and the head of development at Millimeter Film - one of the biggest production houses in the Caucasus region with its production base in Tbilisi, Georgia. Tiko is Atelier Ludwigsburg Paris 2020/21 alumna. In the framework of the program, she produced a short film in collaboration with the Film Academy Baden-Württemberg, La Femis, and ARTE France. Tiko is a board member of Atelier Network as well.

120 min, Georgia

This is the film's final distribution title. This film is director's feature debut.

director **Davit Pirtskhalava**
 producer **Suliko Tsulukidze, Tiko Nadirashvili, Tedo Dolidze**
 camera **Shalva Sokurashvili**
 music **Nodar Nozadze, Nika Paniashvili**
 cast **Shako Mirianashvili, Giorgi Sharvashidze, Sandro Kalandadze, Gaga Shishinashvili, Goga Kobalia, Davit Chitaia, Giorgi Mazavrishvili, Gigi Rekhviashvili, Mariam Pirtskhalava, Bidzina Nijaradze, Zviad Pirtskhalava**
 language **Georgian**
 genre **drama**
 release date **14.02.2022**
 what's missing **post-production funding, international sales, distribution funding**

Millimeter Film

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Author's statement

School serves as the first space for people to engage in social interaction. I was born and raised in the suburbs of Tbilisi, where I also went to school, where bullying, abuse, beating, and ridiculing people was almost the daily norm. On many occasions, I found myself to have been the victim, and many times I also became the bully myself. This was, of course, unintended. The environment offered us certain conditions as children, and we unconsciously accepted them. After reflecting, I came up with this idea: What if former classmates were to meet each other after a long break to remember their childhood and party, even if none of them have any good things to remember? What if the victim were to invite the bully and orchestrate a process similar to a court ruled by the thirst for vengeance?

An Owl, a Garden and the Writer



Film synopsis

On the backdrop of Iran's recent political history, in an intimate setting, *An Owl, a Garden and the Writer* invites us to a poetic revelation of one of Iran's most prominent writers, Mahmoud Dowlatabadi. Having been inspired by the way Mahmoud creates a fictional universe within their daily lives, his daughter, through her lens, portrays the imaginary world of her father in a parallel narrative line, blurring the lines of perceived reality for the audience. The film opens doors to the secret garden of Mahmoud's life and draws a unique portrait of a novelist who has adopted a solitary routine outside the hassles of today's Iranian society.

Director's biography

Sara is an Iranian multimedia visual artist. Her life was transformed at a young age when the Islamic Revolution changed the political landscape in Iran and by the Iran-Iraq War, which she experienced through the eyes of a child. These memories influenced her practice as a visual artist and filmmaker, which can be seen as a meeting point between the microcosm of the personal and the macrocosm of the political. After receiving her BFA from Azad Art University (Tehran), she spent the next decade living and exhibiting in Tokyo, Paris and New York. While in New York, she obtained her MFA from Hunter College and, for her thesis, she directed and produced a short documentary about her family.

Producer's biography

Amir Naderi is one of the most influential figures of 20th-century Iranian cinema. He first came into the international spotlight with films that are now known as international cinema classics – *The Runner*, and *Water, Wind, Dust* – which are considered to be among the most influential films of the past quarter century. His film *Sound Barrier* (2005) premiered at Tribeca Film Festival and won the Roberto Rossellini Prize at Rome Film Festival. *Vegas: Based On a True Story* (2008) won the CinemaAvenire Best Film in Competition Prize and the SIGNIS Award. Amir Naderi's recent releases include *Monte* (2017) (recipient of the Jaeger-LeCoultre Glory to the Filmmaker Award at the 73rd Venice International Film Festival).

75 min, Iran, France

This is the film's working title and may change.

This film is director's feature debut.

director **Sara Dolatabadi**
 scriptwriter **Sara Dolatabadi**
 producer **Amir Naderi, Sara Dolatabadi, Farhad Mohammadi (associate producer)**
 camera **Sara Dolatabadi**
 language **Persian**
 genre **creative documentary**
 release date **30.10.2022**
 what's missing **funding, co-production, sales agent, distributors**



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Author's statement

Growing up, I was part of a stream of war, constant scrutiny from the authorities, and the censorship and prohibition of Mahmoud's books. Despite his popularity, I looked up to him above all not as a writer, but as a father. Experiencing life this way can bring families closer together while also causing tension. My film explores reimagining family dynamics, a man admired by his daughter, a public figure who fought for what he believed in, but whose presence was perhaps missing in my life. By doing so, I document the intertwined story of an exceptional public figure through a personal journey of rediscovering family ties through three generations with all its pain, triumph, conflict, sorrow and revelation.

And His Brothers / I ego bratya



Film synopsis

Each person is individual and we – the residents of modern cities – know this. But there are places like Ossetia where this is not the case. This is the story of those who live on Ossetian land and uphold traditions – to be a warrior, to lead a clan, to obey the father. The story of five characters who are ultimately a single whole – the Ossetian people. Ossetia is a small Orthodox enclave surrounded by Muslim republics and the high Caucasus mountains. This film, in many ways, is an attempt to find God. Because there, in the mountains, where a person is too small and unprotected, you can't live without Him.

Director's biography

Aleksandra Likhacheva finished her first studies as an artist and graduated in 2011 from the Gerasimov Institute of Cinematography (VGIK) as a film director. She is a member of the non-fiction and television film guild. Her short films have been shown and received awards at numerous Russian and international film festivals. She is now in pre-production of her debut feature *Kretsul* (Eurimages co-production development award winner at TIFF).

Filmography:

2011 – *Katya Krenalinova* (short), director, premiered at the IDFA Competition for student documentary.

2014 – *Long.Black.Cloud Is Coming Down* (57'), director, premiered at Artdocfest (competition).

Producer's biography

Anna Shalashina was born on February 22, 1989. She graduated from the Linguistics Department of Lomonosov Moscow State University in 2011 and finished an MBA program at Kingston University (London) three years later. Her dissertation on film co-production was nominated for Best MBA Project of 2014. Member of EAVE (B'EST) since 2014. Filmography:

2014 – *Tsili* (France, Russia, Israel), a feature film by Amos Gitai, premiered at Venice Film Festival.

2018 – *Donkey* (Russia, Switzerland), a documentary by Anatoly Vasiliev, premiered at Rotterdam International Film Festival.

2019 – *Froth* (Russia, Qatar), a documentary by Ilya Povolotskiy, premiered at IDFA (first appearance competition, jury special mention).

85 min, Russia, Germany, Belgium

This is the film's final distribution title. This film is director's feature debut.

director **Aleksandra Likhacheva**
 producer **Anna Shalashina, Polina Schlicht (Monumental Pictures), Jurgen Buedts (Las Belgas)**
 camera **Evgeny Rodin**
 language **Russian**
 genre **documentary**
 release date **20.03.2023**
 what's missing **international sales, additional financing**

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Author's statement

Our film is one exact phrase spoken in passing about the present, about accumulated pain, about deep matters. Spoken in the midst of silence or in a gust of wind. Here she was and she was swept away. And there she was picked up by the one who shares your blood, who is of the same faith and was born on the same land as you. Ossetia is a place where all the talk is about God; otherwise, it's just silence. I want to tell you that the ability to overcome stands behind the ringing silence of my characters. Their whole life is like climbing a mountain to pray and make a sacrifice. And more often than not, the victim himself is the one being sacrificed.

There are a number of political reasons for keeping silent, and I think this is wrong in relation to Ossetia and what its people have experienced.

Aurora / Hajnal



Film synopsis

Eszter has been dealing with the death of her child for a year now. Her marriage has suffered from this trauma, which she and her husband seem unable to overcome. Eszter befriends a young boy, the son of an émigré who has returned to his mother's Budapest to deal with his own loss. Through this budding relationship, the woman can hide her underlying trauma. During her experiences with the boy, she slowly recaptures her hopeful ideals. In contrast, her marriage and the relationship with her husband forces her to gradually face the past. Through all these impulses, she reconsiders how and in which direction she can move forward.

Director's biography

Attila Dávid is a director from Transylvania who graduated from the University of Theatre and Film Arts in Budapest. His graduation film *Jakab* has been awarded with the Best Promising Talent Award at Friss Hús International Film Festival Budapest.

Producer's biography

Genovéva Petrovits works as a producer and cultural manager in Budapest. She also produces fictional and documentary projects. The company's latest feature documentary has been awarded the Best Hungarian Documentary Film at Verzio International Documentary Film Festival.

70 min, Hungary, Romania

This is the film's working title and may change.

This film is director's feature debut.

director **Attila Dávid**
 scriptwriter **Attila Dávid**
 producer **Attila Dávid, Genovéva Petrovits**
 camera **Mátyás Gyuricza**
 music **József Iszlai**
 cast **Niké Kurta, Levente Orbán, Péter Katona**
 language **Hungarian**
 genre **drama**
 release date **01.04.2022**
 what's missing **international sales, additional post-production funding**

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Author's statement

Before I was born, my parents had a child that they lost. My birth was also a difficult one, which nearly left my father a widower. This trauma that my parents had to endure greatly affected my childhood, and I was an only child for a long while. Within the family, we couldn't talk about these things. In 2019, when grandpa fell ill, I decided to create a life interview with all the members of my immediate family. From these discussions, I learned that my grandparents were also affected by child loss, and this made its mark on our family throughout the generations. My mother's and grandmother's perspective moved me the most. This was the moment I decided I wanted to make a film about this. My goal was to be able to broaden our own experience with that of others. I wanted to create a film with a personal tone while keeping it familiar to all.

Boney Piles / Terykony



Film synopsis

Nastya was ten when a missile fired by Russian terrorists on New Year's Eve changed her life forever. It took her father's life and destroyed their house. Nastya's school is only in 500 meters from the front line. War has become commonplace. Just a part of the landscape. The only means for Nastya's family to survive is the scrap metal they scavenge while under fire. Senya is seven years old. He is a first-grader. In the seven years of his life, he has seen seven years of war and not a day of peace. Senya likes to climb on the boney pile to watch the sunset. His stepfather dig graves to earn money for a new suit and backpack for Senya. This is a film about the children who live in the war zone in Ukraine.

Director's biography

Taras Tomenko is a Ukrainian film director.
 Education:
 • Faculty of Philology, Kyiv State University. TG Shevchenko (1997);
 • Kyiv State Institute of Theater Arts. I. Karpenko-Kary (2001).
 Filmography:
House of the Word feature (in production)
 2017 *House of the Word* full-length documentary
 2011 *Her Last Hope* documentary
 2007 *Moms* documentary
 2006 *Lisa* documentary; Awards: Best Film and Best Cinematography Awards in the Professional Non-Game Video category at the Open Night Festival (2006)
 2004 *Driven Earth* short feature film
 2004 *Discovering Ukraine* documentary television series (39 series)
 2001 *Tir* short feature film; awards: New York Film School Prize at the 2001 Berlin International Film Festival
 1999 *The Slaughterhouse* short feature film

Producer's biography

Inner Wars (2020), *The Deadman's Path* (2020), *Eastman* (2020), *Fogs* (2020), *Chervonyi No Frontline* (2020), *Taras. Return* (2019), *Anton and Red Chimera* (2019), *When the Trees Fall* (2018), *Falling* (2017), *Red* (2017), *Women in War* (2017), *The Gateway* (2017), *Frost* (2017), *Travel* (2017), *Ukrainian Symbolism. Flag* (2016), *The Nest of the Turtledove* (2016), *The Traitor* (2016), *Ukrainian Symbolism. Emblem* (2016), *Ukrainian Symbolism. Hymn* (2016), *Laces* (2016), *Oleksandr Dovzhenko. Odessa Debut* (2014), *Apart* (2014), *Expedition* (2014), *The Structure of Coffee, or Paragraph ..!* (2013), *The One Who Passed Through the Fire* (2011), *Gold of Koljata* (2006), TV movie *Police Academy* (2004), TV series *Umbrella Sky*

70 min, Ukraine

This is the film's working title and may change.

director **Taras Tomenko**
 scriptwriter **Taras Tomenko**
 producer **Volodymyr Filippov**
 camera **Misha Lubarsky**
 language **Ukrainian, Russian**
 genre **documentary**
 release date **25.08.2022**
 what's missing **sales agent, distributors**

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Author's statement

As a director I refuse to "direct" reality or manipulate the heroes in the frame. The situation in the frontline zone is changing daily and it is difficult to predict developments at this time. All drama is dictated by war. The small mining town of Toretsk has been trembling from shelling for seven years. According to official statistics, about 10,000 children live in the war zone in Ukraine. It is necessary to document the fate of these children, as their example can tell us more about the situation of the children of war in general. Nastya's school is 500 meters from the front line, although a simple bullet can cover three times that distance. Too much pain and grief has passed through their hearts.

Destiny



Film synopsis

Sahar is an 18-year-old girl living in a remote village in Northern Iran. Two years ago, her mother died unexpectedly of cancer. Since then, Sahar has lived alone with her cognitively impaired father Rahim and taken on her mother's care for him. The traditional family demands that she should give up her own future dream and take care of her father. Sahar's wish is to study. She wants to make her mother's dream come true and be a doctor and help people, especially against the cancer that took her mother's life away. Sahar is torn: Should she listen to her uncle and humbly take on the role of her mother? Or should she help her aunt find a new wife for her father? Can she completely escape this pressure of expectations and go after her dreams?

Director's biography

Yaser Talebi was born in Sari in northern Iran in 1982. The director and screenwriter travels and explores his hometown to meet people again and again and explore the culture, history and nature of this special region on film. He is a member of the Iranian Documentary Filmmakers Association. His work already includes over eleven feature length documentaries. His last documentary film *Beloved*, produced by Elaheh Nobakht, was the most successful Iranian documentary film and has been selected for more than 60 international film festivals such as:

- IDFA 2018 - Mid Length Competition - Among Top 10 of Best Audience Award
- 69th Berlin Film Festival - Culinary Cinema
- Hot Doc 2019 - Best Audience Film

Producer's biography

Elaheh Nobakht is a pioneering woman in the Iranian cinema industry. She has produced six feature films and three short films. She produced *Beloved*, the most successful Iranian documentary, which has been selected and chosen for the international competition section of more than 65 international film festivals such as IDFA, Berlinale Film Festival, Hot Docs, etc. She is also the international distributor of the documentary film *Finding Farideh*, which was the Iranian Cinema's official entry for the 2020 Oscars.

85 min, Iran

This film has sales company attached. This is the film's working title and may change.

director **Yaser Talebi**
 scriptwriter **Yaser Talebi**
 producer **Elaheh Nobakht**
 camera **Yaser Talebi**
 language **Persian**
 genre **documentary**
 release date **30.12.2021**
 what's missing **post-production**

Eli Image

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Author's statement

Sahar is caught in the dilemma of having to live with her father or opposing everything in order to pursue her own dreams independently. The paradox surrounding Sahar is representative of the social conflict between traditional social values and modern life in Iran and of many other young women worldwide. We avoid subjective interpretations as our camera directly observes Sahar's life, struggles, thoughts and wishes for her future by capturing the images of her warm relationship with her father, her arguments with her aunt, her endeavours to be successful in school, and her disapproval of her father's remarriage, as she does not want another woman to bear the same dreadful fate.

Faggots, Friends



Film synopsis

Four Warsaw-based queer performers go about their everyday lives – they perform, spend time with friends and lovers, protest and offer each other support, facing an increasingly hostile environment for LGBTQ+ communities in Poland.

Director's biography

Alex Baczyński-Jenkins (Poland/UK) works with choreography, performance and film. His film works were presented at Kunsthalle Basel and Riga Biennial. Recipient of the 2018 Frieze Artist Award. Nominated for the Future Generation Art Prize in 2021 by the Pinchuk Art Centre. Finalist of the Polityka Passport Award in visual arts in 2018. His works have been presented in contexts including the Venice Biennale, David Roberts Art Foundation, Whitechapel Gallery, Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw, Chisenhale Gallery in London, and the Swiss Institute Contemporary Art in New York. He is co-founder of the Kem artist-run collective in Warsaw.

Producer's biography

Ivo Krankowski is a writer-director, film producer and founder of La Camera Independent. He studied film directing at Central Saint Martins in London. Since 2019 he has been Pawel Pawlikowski's literary collaborator. He is currently involved as a creative producer for Netflix original films in Poland. Marta Łachacz's producing credits include *Deep Love* by Jan P. Matuszyński, *Hycel* by Daria Woszek and *16.03.* by Natalia Siwicka. Her production coordinator credits include *Dolce Fine Giornata* by J. Borcuch.

90 min, Poland

This is the film's working title and may change.

This film is director's feature debut.

director **Alex Baczyński-Jenkins**
scriptwriter **Alex Baczyński-Jenkins, Krzysztof Bagiński**

producer **Ivo Krankowski, Marta Łachacz**

camera **Krzysztof Bagiński**

cast **Filip Rutkowski, Agata Grabowska, Dawid Nickel, Billy Morgan**

language **Polish, English**

genre **documentary**

release date **01.05.2022**

what's missing **additional shooting, additional financing (80,000 Euro budget gap)**

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Author's statement

In my work I focus on relationships, feelings and community. This film documents the everyday lives of queer friends and performers in Warsaw at this critical moment in time of gaining visibility and being declared enemies of the state. The film approaches vulnerable and intimate minor events against their political backdrop. The film is therefore embedded in current events, e.g. pride in Białystok (2019), presidential elections (2020), and homophobic vans and billboards.

I believe this film will be about something essential – interpersonal relations and friendships, as well as documenting the life of the LGBTQ+ community at this particular moment, which is so crucial for the fight against discrimination.

Through a cinematic language of tenderness and empathetic associative editing, *Faggots, Friends* becomes an ode to friendship and queer life.

In the Name of the Mother and of the Father / In numele mamei si al tatalui



Film synopsis

After almost 30 years, my parents decided to separate. Trying to cope with the loss of the family and the pain and shame that came along with it, they each found relief in different forms of spirituality. Despite this, their past love for each other made room for fear, revolt and despair. The film follows the relationship between my mother and father for a year and a half after their decision to break up and my conversations with each of them during this painful period.

Director's biography

Tudor Platon is a Romanian director of photography known for films like *The Christmas Gift* (Academy Awards shortlisted), *4:15 P.M. The End of the World* (nominated for the Palme d'Or for Best Short Film) or *Thou Shalt Not Kill* (awarded at IndiesLisboa IFF). He directed the documentary *House of Dolls*, which premiered in 2020 at Sarajevo Film Festival and was selected for Transilvania IFF, Zagreb Dox, Astra IFF, and Biografilm FF. *In the Name of the Mother and of the Father* is the continuation of an extensive series of very personal works related to his own family.

Producer's biography

Carla Fotea has been involved in films such as *Bad Luck Banging or Loony Porn* (Radu Jude, Golden Bear 2021), *House of Dolls* (Tudor Platon, Sarajevo 2020), *Uppercase Print* (Radu Jude, Berlinale Forum 2020), *Ivana the Terrible* (Ivana Mladenovic, Special Jury Prize Locarno 2019) and other upcoming films.

Ada Solomon has produced over 60 titles such as: *Bad Luck Banging or Loony Porn* (Radu Jude, Golden Bear 2021), *I Do Not Care If We Go Down in History as Barbarians* (Radu Jude, Crystal Globe Best Film KVIFF 2018), *Aferim!* (Radu Jude, Silver Bear 2015), *Child's Pose* (Calin Netzer, Golden Bear 2013). EFA Deputy Chairwoman, Executive President of EWA, winner of Prix Eurimages, EFA Awards 2013.

100 min, Romania

This is the film's working title and may change.

director **Tudor Platon**
 scriptwriter **Tudor Platon**
 producer **Carla Fotea, Ada Solomon**
 camera **Tudor Platon**
 cast **Raluca Platon, Vasile Platon, Tudor Platon**
 language **Romanian**
 genre **documentary**
 release date **01.07.2022**
 what's missing **sales agent, co-production, festivals, post-production funding, TV & streaming funding**

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Author's statement

The news that my parents are separating didn't come as much of a surprise, as there had been fights and talks of a divorce ever since I was a child. But no one anticipated the pain this would cause our entire family. That's why I started to film my parents. For more than a year, I tried to be there for them, involuntarily taking sides, sometimes making it better, sometimes worse. In the Name of the Mother and of the Father is about the different shapes love can take and what is left of a family when love is gone.

Lucky Girl / Ya, Nina



Film synopsis

Lucky Girl is a realistic drama featuring a sudden change in the life of a young woman Nina after being diagnosed with osteosarcoma and losing her arm. The storyline brings the main character from the highest peak of her successful life to the darkest place one can possibly reach. She faces personal crisis, has to fight her deepest fears, and re-evaluate her life. Finally, she needs to learn how to live in her new circumstances and build herself up as a new person.

Director's biography

2019 *Homeward*, feature film by Nariman Aliev, Marysia Nikitiuk as co-writer, premiered at 72th Cannes IFF, Un Certain Regard section.
 2018 *When The Trees Fall* premiered at 68th International Berlin Film Festival, Panorama section, Marysia Nikitiuk as script-writer and director
 2018 *When the Trees Fall* awarded at Cine-days Film Festival in Macedonia with Best Director award
 2018 *When the Trees Fall* awarded with Ukrainian Film Critics Award Discovery of the Year, Warsaw IFF, Tallinn Black Nights IFF, IFF of India (Goa), Transilvania IFF
 2016 *When the Trees Fall* awarded with ScripTeast Kieslowski award for the Best Script from Eastern Europe at Cannes.

Producer's biography

Yanina Sokolova is a Ukrainian journalist, TV presenter, actress and producer. She works as the host of several successful political shows and leads a well established channel on YouTube. She is a media-ambassador for "He for She" at UN Women Ukraine and the founder of the "Varto Zhyty" foundation for cancer patients. Her career includes numerous titles as an actress in films, TV series and theatre.
 In 2018, Yanina produced the documentary *We Are Soldiers* (Svitlana Smirnova) about war in Eastern Ukraine. *Lucky girl* is based on Yanina's personal story.
 Julia Sinkevych is a film producer, co-founder of the Ukrainian Film Academy, and member of the European Film Academy. From 2010 till 2020, Julia worked as general producer of Odesa IFF. Previously, she worked for the distribution and production company Art-house Traffic. She co-produced the documentary film *Close Relations* (Vitaliy Mansky, 2016) and *Heatsingers* (Nadia Parfan, 2019).

115 min, Ukraine

This is the film's final distribution title.

director **Marysia Nikitiuk**
 producer **Yanina Sokolova, Julia Sinkevych**
 camera **Sergey Michalchik**
 music **Anton Baibakov**
 cast **Ksenya Khyjnyak, Olexiy Tritenko, Igor Koltovskoy, Maxim Panchenko**
 language **Ukrainian**
 website **yanina.life/film**
 genre **drama**
 release date **13.03.2022**
 what's missing **sales agent, post-production funding, festivals**

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Author's statement

After famous Ukrainian journalist Yanina Sokolova survived cancer, she decided to share her dramatic story with world. When she asked me to write a script on this topic, my best friend and psychotherapist had just died from cancer. She was a person with extreme life energy. Paradoxically, the maximum level of vitality is revealed only in the face of death.
 To write this script, I interviewed more than 30 cancer patients, their relatives and doctors. I was impressed by the vital energy of cancer patients, their attention to detail and the need to live every moment consciously and carefully. I have combined Sokolova's story with the stories of other people I've interviewed in order to write an ode to life and the enormous energy a person can carry within him or herself.

Tina & Megi



Film synopsis

2021, Tbilisi. During the coronavirus pandemic. Tina, a young woman, moves in with Megi (27) while waiting for her boyfriend Beka to come back to Tbilisi. They want to move together. But when Beka finally returns, he has other plans. His family is against this relationship because Tina was married and cheated on her husband with Beka. He leaves Tina.

Tina has no money, has never worked, and is shunned by everyone. Knowing no other place to go, she stays with Megi. They become friends. Megi shows Tina the advantages of living a self-determined life. They drink, they party, and Tina has new sexual experiences, even with Megi. But Megi still has a plan to emigrate. It's time for Tina to learn to fly.

Director's biography

Born in Tbilisi, Georgia, 1986. After graduating from high school, I studied at Tbilisi State University, Faculty of Exact and Natural Sciences, Institute of Applied Mathematics and Computer Sciences, Major in Informatics. 2008 - Prior to 2012, I studied at Shota Rustaveli Theatre and Film Georgian State University, Faculty of Film and TV, Major in Directing. After the diploma work *The Most Precious* (2012), I made another short film *Three Steps* (2017), which premiered at Rotterdam Film Festival and was later shown at 20 other festivals and received 10 awards. *Tradition* premiered at Clermont Ferrand. My debut feature film *Otar's Death* will premiere in August 2021 at Karlovy Vary IFF.

Producer's biography

Eva Blondiau graduated from film school in Cologne in 2012 with *The Swing of the Coffin Maker*. Her film was invited to more than 100 festivals and won over 40 awards, including a Student Oscar. In 2013, she founded the production company COLOR OF MAY with business partner Elmar Imanov and produced the short, *Torn*, which premiered in the Directors' Fortnight at Cannes in 2014. They co-produced Soso Bliadze's short *Three Steps* and V. Glasunova/L. Lakomy's feature documentary *Long Echo* as well as Boris Khlebnikov's *Arrhythmia*. Imanov's feature debut *End of Season* won the FIPRESCI Prize in Rotterdam 2019.

85 min, Georgia, Germany

This is the film's working title and may change.

director **Ioseb "Soso" Bliadze**
 scriptwriter **Tamar Mumladze, Ioseb "Soso" Bliadze**
 producer **Eva Blondiau**
 camera **Dimirti Dekanosidze**
 language **Georgian**
 genre **drama**
 release date **01.02.2022**
 what's missing **post-production funding, international sales, festivals, editing and post-production**

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Ioseb "Soso" Bliadze Director, Scriptwriter

Author's statement

Georgia is still a patriarchal country. Young women "belong" first to their father, then to their husband. Education is secondary. This makes it difficult for young women to strive for independence, partly because they are ostracized if they want to make their own decisions. Choosing an independent and self-determined life is therefore often a decision against the family. Although there are also modern families in the capital Tbilisi, Tina's story is not a rarity. The limitations I experienced due to COVID made the limitations these women must face even more clear. And the fact that I have a daughter now made this topic very urgent to me. I wanted to tell the story as authentically as possible and co-wrote it with Taki Mumladze.



Tamar "Taki" Mumladze Scriptwriter

Unwanted / Nich'ya



Film synopsis

After having an unwanted baby, 14-year-old Vika faces health issues, rejection by friends and community, and betrayal by the person who was her only hope for love. She decides to remove the main obstacle standing between her and a normal life.

Director's biography

Lena was born and raised in Tyumen. After completing a degree in linguistics and cross-cultural communication, she moved to Moscow to pursue her career in directing and acting. After graduating from the Moscow School of New Cinema, Lena worked as a script supervisor and assistant director. She wrote and directed several short films that were featured at multiple Russian and international festivals, and garnered recognition and awards. For example, *Type 8* (2018): KineNova IFF, Macedonia - official selection; Poitiers IFF, France - official selection; Angers IFF, France - official selection. *Silent Mode* (2017): Thessaloniki Short FF, Greece - official selection; Lublin IFF, Poland - official selection; English Riviera IFF, United Kingdom - Jury's Special Mention Award.

Producer's biography

Natalia Drozd was born in 1977 in Leningrad, USSR. In 2000 she graduated from the Law faculty of St Petersburg State University. Natalia has been working as a production lawyer for 10 years at CTB Film Company, which is one of Russia's most prolific and successful producers of theatrical motion pictures. In 2009 Natalia Drozd started her career as a producer within CTB. Natalia graduated from EAVE workshop in 2011. From 2012 to 2015 Natalia was a Russian organiser of B'EST producers' workshop. Since 2017 Natalia has also been active as an independent producer. In spring 2020 she founded her own production company Forest Film. Natalia was one of the organizers and experts of EAVE ON DEMAND in Moscow 2020. She is also a mentor at the EWA program 2021.

110 min, Russia

This film is director's feature debut.
This is the film's final distribution title.

director **Lena Lanskih**
producer **Natalia Drozd, Sergey Selyanov**
camera **Mikhail Weitsenfeld**
language **Russian**
genre **drama**
release date **01.11.2021**
what's missing **festivals, sales agent**

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Author's statement

Vika has a baby at the age of 14. Her sudden motherhood burdens her, and she feels discarded by the world around her. She tries to find the strength to cope with her new reality – but the pressure is too strong. At first glance, our film is about the desperate pursuit of freedom. But below the surface lies another, deeper meaning: all of Vika's actions are dictated by her desire to feel loved – a desire she cannot fulfil in the world that confines her. Lovelessness is passed down through generations, and predetermines Vika's attitude towards her baby daughter.

Victim / Obet'



Film synopsis

Irina is a single mother, a Ukrainian woman living in a small Czech town. Her whole world comes crashing down when she discovers that her teenage son Igor has been assaulted and nearly killed. After Igor regains consciousness, he alleges that the attackers were Roma. Irina's fight for justice mobilises the whole society. As the hostility towards the Roma is on the rise, Igor decides to tell Irina what really happened to him that night. The audience will follow a story through Irina's eyes as she gradually uncovers the truth and must face all the consequences of her decision.

Director's biography

Michal Blaško studied film and television directing at the Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava and FAMO Pisek. His short films have premiered at the most prestigious film festivals around the world and have won several awards. His bachelor short film *Atlantis*, 2003 was premiered at the Cinéfondation in Cannes. Besides garnering awards on the festival circuit, it also won a Czech Lion for Best Student Film, and ARTE bought the film for its schedules. In addition to successful short films, Michal has extensive experience as a director of TV series, e.g. *Professor T.* - Czech Lion nomination, or the upcoming miniseries based on the script by Štěpán Hulík - *Suspicion*. *Victim* is his feature film debut.

Producer's biography

While still in university, Jakub founded the Visegrad Film Forum, an international film platform. In 2015, he co-founded the production company nutprodukcja. The company prefers projects that connect Slovakia with other countries, as evidenced by our regular attendance at markets and workshops (*Victim*, *Caravan* / Cannes L'Atelier, *Tonny*, *Shelly*, and *the Spirit* / Junior Coproduction Market at Cinekid). Nutprodukcja recently produced the feature debut *By a Sharp Knife* (2019, IFF Cottbus - Special Prize for the director), and co-produced *Spoor* (2017, Silver Bear Prize at IFF Berlinale), the feature documentary *Circus Rwanda* (2018, KV-IFF), and the short-animated film *Overboard!* (2019, Cinekid).

90 min, Slovak Republic, Czech Republic, Germany

This is the film's final distribution title. This film is director's feature debut.

director **Michal Blaško**
 producer **Jakub Viktorín, Pavla Janoušková Kubečková**
 camera **Adam Mach**
 cast **Vita Smachelyuk, Gleb Kuchuk, Alena Mihulová, Claudia Dudová, Gabriela Mičová, Inna Zhulina, Igor Chmela, Viktor Zavadil**
 language **Czech, Ukrainian**
 website **nutprodukcja.sk/project/obet/**
 genre **drama**
 release date **20.05.2022**
 what's missing **sales agent, festivals, international distribution, partners**

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Author's statement

In all of my previous films, I have been careful to make the characters appear authentic, relatable and human. For me, the point is for the audience to identify with their experience of the situation and understand, in this case, the extent of the problem that Igor and Irina have got themselves into and the tragedy of the consequences they must bear.

Both storylines, i.e. the mother-son storyline and the individual-society storyline, are intimately connected and feed into each other. By painting a detailed emotional portrait of Irina, I would like to expose the society for which she becomes a temporary mascot, until she eventually ends up as a caricature of herself. Irina becomes a victim in the matter of her love for her son and her best intentions to find and punish his attackers.

First Cut+



TRT

First Cut+ Jury



Michael Arnon

Born and raised in San Francisco, CA, Michael studied political science, French literature, media and culture in Berkeley and Paris. Michael worked for Paris-based sales agents Celluloid Dreams, Le Pacte and Coproduction Office before partnering with Gordon Spragg and Laurin Dietrich at WOLF. Launched in early 2010, WOLF is a Berlin-based boutique PR and marketing firm specialised in helping filmmakers effectively communicate and achieve their vision. WOLF's approach encompasses the entire production cycle: from overcoming initial obstacles to getting a new project noticed to preparing completed films for launch at major international film festivals.



Laurin Dietrich

Laurin Dietrich studied Cultural Anthropology, Literature and Communication in Berlin and Paris and worked for Paris-based international sales agent Celluloid Dreams in sales and acquisitions before partnering with Gordon Spragg and Michael Arnon at WOLF. Launched in early 2010, WOLF is a Berlin-based boutique PR and marketing firm specialised in helping filmmakers effectively communicate and achieve their vision. WOLF's approach encompasses the entire production cycle: from overcoming initial obstacles to getting a new project noticed to preparing completed films for launch at major international film festivals.



Boris Pagnet

When I was a student I ran a small art house cinema near Paris for Village Roadshow, and then started to work in a multiplex for Pathé. After that I worked for an independent distribution company as head of theatrical sales, then for three years in the marketing department of SND (*Twilight*, *The Hurt Locker*, etc). I worked for five years as the head of marketing of Le Pacte, an independent distributor (Moretti, Kore Eda, Jarmusch, etc). Since 2017, I've worked as a marketing consultant and trailer editor for both independent and major companies such as Art-House, Condor, Rouge Distribution, Fox, Pathé, etc. I also run masterclasses and marketing workshops for Esis, Ina, Femis, Eave (Luxemburg), CEEA Trebon Animation Film Festival (Czech Republic), and the Namur International Film Festival (Belgium).



Esra Demirkiran

Esra Demirkiran is Festival Coordinator at TRT Cinema (TRT is Turkey's public broadcaster). She is a coordinator of 12 Punto, Turkey's largest script development and co-production platform for Turkish and international feature films. For almost a decade, she worked as a news editor and executive-produced several flagship programs and documentaries for Turkey's Haberturk news network. Prior to her journalism experience, Esra was the Board President and Co-Director of NISI MASA, a Paris based European cinema network. In the past, besides working as a film critic and festival-distribution consultant for award winning Turkish feature films, she has contributed to the planning and organization of various Turkey-based film festivals such as the Festival on Wheels and Istanbul. She studied Sociology at the Middle East Technical University and holds an MA degree in Film & TV from Istanbul Bilgi University.



Alexis Hamaide

Alexis Hamaide worked as Marketing Manager for the Paris-based international sales agency Playtime (ex-Films Distribution) between 2012 and 2019. He supervised the international marketing strategies for A-list festival films such as François Ozon's *By the Grace of God*, *120 BPM* (Robin Campillo) and *Son of Saul* (Laszlo Nemes) among others. In October 2019, Alexis teamed up with Viviana Andriani and Gabriele De Bortoli to set up L'Avventura Studio, a digital creative agency specialized in arthouse films. Alexis holds a master's degree in Cultural Management from Paris-Dauphine (2018), a Story Development certificate from UCLA and a Master of Arts in Media and Communications from Goldsmiths (London).



Federico Spoletti

Born and raised in Italy, Federico Spoletti is co-founder and Managing Director of SUB-TI, an international subtitling company based in London, which provides audiovisual translation services all over the world. SUB-TI works with more than 40 languages and focuses especially on subtitling for international film festivals. Amongst SUB-TI's clients are the Venice Film Festival, the Zurich Film Festival, the British Film Institute (BFI) in London, or the MoMA in New York. Federico is also co-founder of SUB-TI ACCESS, a company involved in cultural accessibility for the hearing and visually impaired, specializing in subtitles for the deaf and audio description for the blind. In 2011, Federico Spoletti launched FRED Film Radio - The Festival Insider. FRED is a web-based radio network which boasts 29 channels, broadcasting in 25 languages, with thematic channels dedicated to specific cinema content such as film education and the film industry. A media partner of many film festivals around the globe, FRED Film Radio was awarded a European grant within the Creative Europe framework for "FRED at School", a project aiming to promote film literacy among secondary school students throughout Europe.

The Hatcher / Matecznik



Film synopsis

After being released from a juvenile detention centre, Karol lives alone in an apartment. Tracked by an ankle bracelet, Karol cannot leave and has no contact with the outside world. A woman, Marta, arrives every day to take care of him and help him re-adjust to normal life. Marta makes sure that Karol is obeying the rules and learning to be a better person. But, as the relationship between them deepens, Marta's lessons grow increasingly unconventional, and Karol begins to wonder who is taking care of who.

Director's biography

Grzegorz Mołda - born in Włoszczowa in 1993, lives in Warsaw, Poland. He left his studies in cultural anthropology in Cracow in order to begin his education at film directing school in Gdynia. His diploma film *Time To Go* premiered at the 70th Festival de Cannes, Short Films Competition. The film was shown at many other international festivals. *The Hatcher* is his first feature film. In 2019, he took part in the TFL Script Lab with the feature film project *Only Lola*.

Producer's biography

Izabela Igel is an EAVE and Wajda School graduate and film producer with a background in television and advertising production, and has worked for some of Poland's top companies (TVN, Endemol Neovision); she moved on to focus on film marketing (distribution and festivals) before joining Alter Ego Pictures (production company) in 2011. In 2016, she opened her own company Harine Films. Her first feature *Floating Sky-scrapers* directed by Tomasz Wasilewski premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival and went on to win the top prize in the East of the West competition at Karlovy Vary IFF, as well as a number of awards for best film, best director and best actor at film festivals in Poland and abroad. Izabela also serves as a trainer for several institutions: Story Lab, Wajda School, and Full Circle Lab

80 min, Poland

This is the film's final distribution title. This film is director's feature debut.

director **Grzegorz Mołda**
 scriptwriter **Grzegorz Mołda, Monika Powalisz**
 producer **Izabela Igel**
 camera **Constanze Schmitt**
 cast **Agnieszka Kryst, Michał Zieliński**
 language **Polish**
 genre **drama**
 release date **14.03.2022**
 what's missing **sales agent, festivals, distributors**

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Author's statement

The idea for *The Hatcher* was born while reflecting on parenting and education. I was wondering what it really meant to "educate someone" in terms of family, or even in a broader social context – how systems and authorities "educate" us as citizens. I wanted to take a look at this by telling an intimate story of human relationships.

A Hope / Bir Umut



Film synopsis

Umut, a stage actor trying to break into film, lives with his wife Asiye, a director at their theatre company. One day, his estranged mother, whom he has not seen in 20 years, suddenly shows up in the city for treatment of her serious illness. While Umut tries to keep his mother's visit and his troubled past hidden from Asiye, he soon learns Asiye has been keeping an even bigger secret from him.

Director's biography

Ümit Köreken was born in Turkey. He wrote and directed the Turkish-German co-production feature film *Blue Bicycle*. The film participated in more than thirty national and international film festivals, including the Berlin Film Festival, and won many awards including Best Film and Best Director. He is married and has two children. Completed Films: 2021 *A Hope* / Feature Film / Director Turkish German Slovenia TRT Co-Production, 2019 *Muhammed Ali* / Documentary / Co-Director Turkish German Co-Production 2016 *Blue Bicycle* / Feature Film / Director Turkish German Qatar TRT Co-Production 66th Berlinale Generation Section 53rd Antalya International Film Festival Best Film, Best Director and Best Script

Producer's biography

Nursen Çetin Köreken was born in Bulgaria. She studied Turkish Language and Literature and Tourism and Hotel Management at university. She continues to study a master's degree in film design. She wrote and produced the Turkish-German co-production feature film *Blue Bicycle*. The film participated in more than thirty national and international film festivals, including the Berlin Film Festival, winning many awards, including Best Film. Completed Films: 2021 *A Hope* / Feature Film / Producer Turkish German Slovenian TRT Co-Production 2019, *Muhammed Ali* / Documentary / Co-Director Turkish German Co-Production 2016 *Blue Bicycle* / Feature Film / Producer Turkish German Qatari TRT Co-Production, 66th Berlinale Generation Section, 53rd Antalya International Film Festival Best Film, Best Director and Best Script

93min, Turkey, Germany, Slovenia

This is the film's working title and may change.

director **Ümit Köreken**
 scriptwriter **Ümit Köreken, Nursen Çetin Köreken**
 producer **Nursen Çetin Köreken, Ümit Köreken, Ufuk Genç, Ales Pavlin, Andrej Stritof, TRT**
 camera **İbrahim Çaltılı**
 music **Cafer Ozan Türkyılmaz**
 cast **Baran Şükrü Babacan, Eylem Yıldız, Funda Eskioğlu**
 language **Turkish**
 website **dramayapim.com/bir-umut-a-hope/**
 genre **psychological drama, family drama**
 release date **01.11.2021**
 what's missing **sales agent, PR agency, additional post-production funding**

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Author's statement

A Hope is a coming-of-age story. The emotions of people in their adulthood are shaped by the pain, sadness, resentments, happiness and hopes they experience in their childhood. I aimed to establish a structure that would leave the judgement of the current condition of modern man, "who has formed ideas", up to the viewer. The story takes place in a high tempo with strong tension from the first scene to the last. This tempo is achieved through the use of an over-the-shoulder camera that breathes and follows the characters step by step. The film, on a scale of 1:85:1, will bring the audience and the characters closer to each other. A modern and practical lighting setup supporting this form was used. The musical universe of the movie also has a structure that corresponds to the dynamics of the character and story.

Metamorphoses / Metamorfoze



Film synopsis

In the heat of a summer day, door-to-door vacuum saleswoman Draginja discovers a dead body that resembles her. In the heat of a summer day, a midwife called Draginja hires a fake husband and borrows a baby from the maternity ward to show off in front of her old friends. In the heat of a summer day, Draginja roams the city streets befriending anyone she encounters, hoping to recover her lost memory. In the heat of a summer day, through three different life possibilities, a middle-aged woman tries to shed her skin.

Director's biography

Dušan Zorić and Matija Gluščević studied film directing at the Faculty of Dramatic Arts in Belgrade. Their films have been screened at a great number of international festivals, winning several awards. Dušan's documentary *Love* had its world premiere at Visions du Réel in 2017 and was also selected for Sarajevo Film Festival, among others. His latest short *Foreign Body* (2018) had its world premiere at the Venice Film Festival (Orizzonti). Matija's documentary *Utopia* (2016) was screened at Pula FF and Belgrade Documentary and Short FF. His short fiction *Loop* had its world premiere at the 70th Locarno Film Festival.

Producer's biography

Non-Aligned Films is a Belgrade-based production company that has produced Ognjen Glavonić's *Zivan Makes a Punk Festival* (Cinéma du Réel) and Stefan Ivancić's shorts *1973* (Visions du Réel) and *Moonless Summer* (Cannes-Cinéfondation). The company's filmography includes Ognjen Glavonić's *Depth Two* (Berlinale-Forum) and *The Load* (Cannes Quinzaine des réalisateurs), and the co-production by Ivan Salatić *You Have the Night* (Venice Film Festival, Critics' Week).

80 min, Serbia, Croatia

This is the film's working title and may change.

This film is director's feature debut.

director **Dušan Zorić, Matija**

Gluščević

scriptwriter **Dušan Zorić, Matija**

Gluščević

producer **Čarna Vučinić**

camera **Aleksa Radunović, Marko**

Kažić

cast **Ksenija Marinković, Boris**

Isaković, Jasna Đuričić, Goran

Bogdan, Isidora Simijonović

language **Serbian**

website

nonalignedfilms.com/metamorphoses/

genre **drama**

release date **05.05.2022**

what's missing **post-production,**

additional shooting

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Author's statement

The question of identity is an important one for every person, but it's often a terrible and painful experience. The very idea of confronting oneself seems frightening. The answer to the question of 'who are we?' and 'what can we be?' is largely influenced by the perception others have of us, and thus how we experience ourselves. Overcoming these limitations means being free. The journey of exploring within ourselves is the path of heroes, and that's why Draginja eventually becomes one. *Metamorphoses* is not only a film about changing but also about accepting and re-establishing oneself. Draginja metamorphoses into her fullness by accepting everything she can be.

Narcosis



Film synopsis

When a beloved husband and father disappears, his wife (Thekla Reuten) – who can communicate with the spirit world – and her two children each cope with the loss in their own peculiar way.

Director's biography

Martijn is a writer and director. He graduated with honors from the Willem de Kooning Academy in 2004 and later decided to study at the Dutch Film Academy. He has won advertising awards such as Spinawards, ADCN Awards, VCP Kodak Award, Esprix, and a Cannes Lion. Martijn specializes in realistic films dealing with the small inconveniences in life.
Free (2014) - 50 min - Grand Prix & Best Directing Nice, Best Short Oldenburg
Stand-By Me (2013) - short - Official Dutch Submission for the Academy Awards

Producer's biography

Trent studied Economics and Philosophy before he graduated from the Dutch film academy in 1997. In 2005, he began to produce independently, working with enthusiastic, nice and skilled people to make emotional, special and layered films in a collaborative manner. So far OAK has produced over 15 feature films and many shorts.
Holiday (2018) - co-producer - competition in Sundance, winner New Horizons,
The Wound/Inxeba (2017) - co-producer - competition at Sundance, Berlin and longlisted for Oscar Best Foreign feature film,
Hold On (2016) - Best short at Tribeca and Huesca,
Villegas (2012) - co-producer - Official Selection Cannes, *Hunting & Sons* (2010) Official Selection NDNF New York, BFI London, Sao Paulo,
Can Go Through Skin (2009) - FORUM Berlinale, Ingmar Bergman Debut Award

110 min, Netherlands

This is the film's working title and may change.

This film is director's feature debut.

director **Martijn de Jong**
 scriptwriter **Laura van Dijk, Martijn de Jong**

producer **Trent**

camera **Martijn van Broekhuizen**

music **Jorrit Kleijnen**

cast **Thekla Reuten (The American, Red Sparrow, In Bruges), Fedja van Huet, Lola van Zoggelen, Sepp Ritsema**

language **Dutch**

genre **drama**

what's missing **post-production, PR agency, international sales, distributors**

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Author's statement

Narcosis is about a mother and her two children, who have to find life again after the loss of their husband and father. He goes diving in one of the deepest underwater caves in the world, never to surface again. We follow the broken family a year after this loss and see how they also try to keep themselves from drowning. Although they have to deal with grief and loss, the film strives towards hope and light. This contrast will give the film a melancholic touch. We will bring this feeling to life in the acting, locations, colours and imagery of the camerawork, but also in the music and life of the characters.

A Piece of Sky / Drii Winter



Film synopsis

In a remote mountain village, the young love between Anna and Marco is put to a severe test. As a result of a brain tumour, Marco increasingly loses his impulse control. In the tense relationship between the village community and the effects of Marco's illness, Anna tries to preserve a love that in the end even outshines death.

Director's biography

Michael Koch graduated from the Academy of Media Arts in Cologne, Germany. He wrote and directed several successful short films including *Poolside*, which premiered in the Competition at Locarno 2006, *We Are the Faithful*, which won the Canal+ Prize at the Clermont-Ferrand International Short Film Festival 2006, and *Polar*, which received Special Mention at Berlinale 2009 and won the German Camera Award as well as the German Short Film Award 2009. Michael's debut feature film *Marija* had its world premiere in the Competition at Locarno 2016. The film was screened at several festivals such as Toronto, Busan, Angers and Gothenburg, winning numerous national and international prizes.

Producer's biography

Since 2002, Christof Neracher has produced over 30 narrative and documentary films including the award-winning features *Aloys* (Berlinale 2016 / FIPRESCI Award), *Chrieg* (Max Ophüls Award / 2014), *Harry Dean Stanton - Partly Fiction* (Venice, 2012), *Pepperminta* (Sundance /2010) and *Vitus* (Shortlist Academy Awards / Best Foreign Language Film, 2007). As a creative, finance and hands-on producer, he has worked closely with filmmakers including Pipilotti Rist, Fredi M. Murer, Dani Levy and Tobias Noelle. Currently, Christof Neracher is producing *A Piece of Sky*, Michael Kochs' second feature film, *Jill* by Steven Hayes, starring Tom Pelphrey and Juliet Rylance, and the Docufiction *Fever Dream* by Tobias Nölle.

131 min, Switzerland, Germany

This is the film's working title and may change.

This film has sales company attached.

director **Michael Koch**
 scriptwriter **Michael Koch**
 producer **Christof Neracher**
 camera **Armin Dierolf**
 music **Tobias Koch**
 cast **Michèle Brand, Simon Wisler**
 language **German**
 genre **drama**
 release date **01.01.2022**
 what's missing **sound design, end credits**

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Author's statement

The first impulse to work on *A Piece of Sky* came from an encounter with a young woman in a remote mountain village. She told me about her very own way of dealing with her husband's illness and death. I had the feeling that her inner peace and her connection with nature made her react to the challenge of fate differently than we might expect. She spoke about her belief in the cycle of nature. And I think her ability to understand illness and ultimately death as part of a natural cycle enabled her to follow the path she chose. I spent months and years with the local mountain people. It became very clear to me that they should embody all their characters themselves. With their own bodies as well as their own thoughts and destinies, they had a decisive influence on the film.

Power / Moc



Film synopsis

On the border of two Central European countries, a young boy is killed in a hunting accident. Steiner, an intelligence agent, is brought in to investigate. But when the facts of the case point to a prominent politician about to be elected to a major international post, Steiner realises his job is to hush up the crime, not to solve it. As Steiner searches for someone to take the fall for the politician, the boy's parents and a crusading journalist continue searching for the truth. From a small town in the middle of nowhere, Steiner's investigation will take him to the very heart of political power and its deepest moral dilemmas. What is worth sacrificing for the greater good?

Director's biography

Mátyás Prikler - Born in Bratislava in 1982, Mátyás Prikler graduated from the Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava, where he studied film direction under the guidance of Stanislav Párnický. Between 2005 and 2006, he studied at the Hungarian Film Academy in Budapest, where he attended classes by János Szász and Attila Janisch. His short film *Fine, Thanks* (2009) was screened within the Cinéfondation section at the 2010 Cannes International Film Festival. His first feature-length movie *Fine, Thanks* premiered at IFF Rotterdam in January 2013. Together with producing partner Zora Jaurová, he also produces feature and documentary films (MPhilms).

Producer's biography

Zora Jaurová holds an MA degree in theatre and has worked as a dramaturge and critic and later in EU affairs and diplomacy. For several years, she was the vice-president of Culture Action Europe. She was the co-author and director of Kosice – European Capital of Culture 2013. She is the President of the Slovak Creative Industry Forum – national platform for creative industries. Zora Jaurová works as a producing partner in MPhilms, and her first feature film *Slovakia 2.0* was released in 2014. Since 2015, she has been a member of the prestigious producers' network ACE (Atelier de Cinema Europeen). Together with Mátyás Prikler, she produced the TV series *Ex-Prime Ministers* (2018), and co-produced *Wild Roots* (2021) by Hajni Kis, which will be released at IFF Karlovy Vary 2021.

100 min, Slovak Republic, Hungary, Czech Republic

This is the film's working title and may change.

director **Mátyás Prikler**
 scriptwriter **Marek Leščák, Mátyás Prikler**
 producer **Zora Jaurová, Mátyás Prikler**
 camera **Gergely Pálos**
 music **Zsófia Taller**
 cast **Szabolcs Hajdu, Jan Kačer, Mihály Kormos, Éva Bándor, Attila Mokos, Mária Zaujecová, Lucia Kašová**
 language **Slovak, Hungarian, Czech, English**
 genre **drama, political thriller**
 what's missing **post-production**

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Author's statement

The film *Power* is a drama that plays with genre features – mainly the political thriller and detective story. Through the tale of a mortal accident involving a high-level politician and the following efforts to investigate it – or rather to hush it up – the film reveals the machinery of political power and its self-preservation, but also asks questions about the real identity of political figures and the stories behind their public faces. Each of our main characters is trying to find the truth about what really happened. But whose story is really true?

Upurga



Film synopsis

Andrejs is an adventure guide who is afraid of real adventures. But that's exactly what he gets when his sister, an influencer, goes missing in the valley of a wild river together with a vegan sausage advertising crew. Facing the ancient forces of nature, Andrejs' deepest anxieties awaken as he engages in a futile search that pushes his body and mind to the extreme. During his journey, the young man meets various locals, such as a silent cabbage fermenter or a weird brotherhood of hunters who speak a language completely of their own. They are the protectors of a wondrous natural phenomena, haunting and beautiful at the same time. Andrejs doesn't know that every path in this strange forest leads exactly to the thing you're looking for - but to find it, you first have to get lost.

Director's biography

Uģis Olte is a Latvian director / editor who enjoys staying playful when dealing with serious subjects. He is equipped with the senses of a musician and convinced that dreams, myths and fairy-tales can be useful tools for telling any story. He has created numerous original TV documentary formats, filmed a bunch of weird music videos and also three short fiction films (*The Red Spot*, *KK2678* and *King Of The Wild Things*). His efforts in the documentary genre have resulted in three feature length films - *Stuck in Stikine* (2007), *Double Aliens* (2015) and *Liberation Day* (2016, co-directed with Morten Traavik).

Producer's biography

Uldis Cekulis created the independent production company VFS FILMS 22 years ago. In 2007, he was named among the seven filmmakers to receive the International Trailblazer award at MIPDOC in Cannes. He has worked on almost 50 creative documentaries and author-driven prime time TV docu-series both as a producer and sometimes as a cameraman. Most of his produced films have travelled around the world, and many have received prestigious awards, such as the Shanghai IFF Golden Goblet (*Bridges of Time* by Audrius Stonys and Kristine Briede) or the Karlovy Vary IFF Crystal Globe (*Immortal*, by Ksenia Okhupkina). His coproduced Italian-Latvian docu-feature *The Rossellinis* by Alessandro Rossellini premiered at the 77th Venice IFF.

85 min, Latvia

This is the film's final distribution title. This film is director's feature debut.

director **Uģis Olte**
 scriptwriter **Uģis Olte, Bojana Babič, Lucas Abrahão**
 producer **Uldis Cekulis, Raitis Ābele**
 camera **Valdis Celmiņš**
 music **Reinis Sējāns**
 cast **Igors Šelegovskis, Inga Tropa, Rihards Sniegs, Elvita Ragovska, Reinis Boters, Morten Traavik**
 language **Latvian**
 website **www.facebook.com/upurga**
 genre **mythological thriller**
 release date **20.08.2021**
 what's missing **international sales, festivals, distributors**

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Author's statement

I grew up in the Latvian countryside, and once I found myself desperately lost in a forest that I thought I knew like the back of my hand. I had to beg a gang of wild boars to leave me alone after accidentally stepping into their lair. And once I almost drowned twice in one day in a creek that was only a foot deep. I want to tell the story of a young man's initiation by facing the ancient forces of nature. It's a story that deals with elements that I know by heart. The viewer gets seated on the shoulder of our main protagonist Andrejs and follows his wandering viewpoint as he delves deeper and deeper into a mystery that is much bigger than himself. The film's tone attempts to forge opposing elements into one amalgam as it meanders from menacing dread to quirky humour, from believable realism to mythological dreamscapes.

Valeria Gets Married / Valeria Mithatenet



Film synopsis

Christina is a Ukrainian bride who marries an older Israeli man. Her younger sister Valeria is arriving today to meet her own Israeli husband and is supposed to follow in her older sister's footsteps.

But Valeria is struggling with her decision, forcing both sisters to reconsider the choices they have made.

Director's biography

Blush (San Sebastian, Karlovy Vary)

Producer's biography

Tel-Aviv on Fire (Venice FF), *Paradise Now* (Golden Globe winner, Oscar nominee), *Jellyfish* (Camera d'Or), *Walk on Water* (Berlin FF), *James' Journey to Jerusalem* (Cannes FF)

72 min, Israel, Ukraine

This is the film's working title and may change.

This film has sales company attached.

director **Michal Vinik**

scriptwriter **Michal Vinik**

producer **Ayelet Kait, Amir Harel**

camera **Guy Raz**

language **Hebrew, Russian, English**

genre **drama**

release date **01.01.2022**

what's missing **sound design, sound mix, color grading**

Author's statement

I asked myself time and again why I was so fascinated by the men and women who willingly participate in such an "arrangement". I have come to realize that my interest has mostly to do with how these relationships serve as a mirror for all committed relationships between a man and a woman, whether married or not. The arrangement between a Ukrainian bride and Israeli groom may fall on the extreme end of the relationship scale, but at the core of many relationships there is a financial component that creates a hierarchy or imbalance. In this film, I take a microscopic look at the meaning of choice in a world where no real choice exists.

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