



Karlovy Vary International Film Festival

## The Karlovy Vary IFF presents titles selected for November's special four-day event "KVIFF 54½"

"A perfect life is a perfect trap" – such could be the tagline describing the meticulously constructed psychological British-Canadian drama **The Nest** starring Jude Law. Part of the Borderline Films collective (tribute at KVIFF 2013), director Sean Durkin (*Martha Marcy May Marlene*) introduced the film to the public at this year's Sundance festival in January.

The carefully assembled selection features noted movies not only from Utah's celebration of independent cinema but also from the Berlinale, Venice, San Sebastian as well as several titles with the Cannes 2020 Label. Diverse in terms of theme, genre, and geography, the selection boasts the winner of the Venice festival **Nomadland** from director Chloé Zhao; **Crock of Gold: A Few Rounds with Shane MacGowan**, an emotionally charged documentary portrait of the legendary frontman from Ireland's cult band the Pogues; and the first part of Russian filmmaker Ilya Khrzhanovsky's fascinating project, **DAU. Natasha**.

In addition to renowned auteurs such as Jasmila Žbanić (**Quo vadis, Aida**), Gianfranco Rosi (**Notturmo**), Kelly Reichardt (**First Cow**), Benh Zeitlin (**Wendy**), and Victor Kossakovsky (**Gunda**), the festival will host a number of exceptional debuts. Christos Nikou's gently melancholic drama **Apples** (Greece) ranks as one of the key events of this year's Venice fest, while the charmingly subversive love story between clashing cultures and families **Kiss Me Before It Blows Up** from Israel's Shirel Peleg will enjoy its international premier in front of Karlovy Vary audiences.

*"In view of the government measures related to the spread of the coronavirus, we anticipate that the current situation will continue to change, and so we are tentatively cancelling the planned start of ticket sales originally scheduled for 21 October 2020. We will inform you about our next steps the moment we have further information as to how and under what conditions we will be able to hold our festival. By holding the Karlovy Vary IFF 54½, we hope to support cultural life in our country while thoroughly observing all health and safety measures,"* the organizers stated.

### THE FULL LINE-UP:

#### **Bloody Nose, Empty Pockets / Bloody Nose, Empty Pocket / Bloody Nose, Empty Pocket**

Director: Bill Ross IV, Turner Ross

USA, 2020, 98 min

Populated by regulars, a dive dubbed the Roaring 20s is one joint tourists to Las Vegas tend to avoid. Tomorrow the bar is closing for good, so today the place is packed. Perhaps the locals are afraid that something inside them will die with the demise of their favourite bar. The Ross brothers show us an



Karlovy Vary International Film Festival

America without lustre and embellishment, an America where, fortunately, there's still a place left for the ordinary guy. A must-see for those who appreciate the poetry of sleazy dives, all-night watering holes and sordid downtown diners.

**Crock of Gold: A few rounds with Shane MacGowan/ Crock of Gold: A few rounds with Shane MacGowan / Hrnec zlat'áků: Pár drinků s Shanem MacGowanem**

Director: Julien Temple

United Kingdom, Ireland, 2020, 124 min

This time around, respected music documentarist Julien Temple has chosen as his protagonist the Irish music icon Shane MacGowan, legendary frontman of the Pogues. Temple described filming him as akin to flying through a radioactive rainbow, but in the end there is an inner "crock of gold" waiting to be discovered by those who persevere. Through reminiscences and interviews with MacGowan's family and close friends, Temple conveys to the viewer the elemental temperament, quirky humour and inward sensitivity of a punk poet for whom alcohol became a lifelong companion. *Crock of Gold* was coproduced by MacGowan's friend of many years, Johnny Depp, who also makes an appearance in the film.

**Dau. Natasha / Dau. Natasha / Dau. Nataša**

Directors: Ilya Khrzhanovsky, Jekaterina Oertel

Germany, Ukraine, United Kingdom, Russia, 2020, 146 min

Natasha runs a canteen for employees and visitors in a secret research institute somewhere in the Soviet Union. During the day she hands out food, in the evening she joins in wild parties, attended by people of all classes and political backgrounds. Their daily routine, however, is disrupted one day by the arrival of Luc, a French scientist. *DAU. Natasha* is the first part of a fascinating multi-genre project that emerged between 2009 and 2011: hundreds of volunteers, scientists and artists were filmed as they simulated life in the Soviet Union from the late 1930s to the end of the 1960s.

**The Disciple / The Disciple / Žák**

Director: Chaitanya Tamhane

India, 2020, 128 min

As a young boy Sharad was instilled with the strict laws of Indian classical music. Now he immerses himself every single day in the study of traditional tonal sequences in order to discover the surprising possibilities of their interpretation. He certainly has talent but only the best can attain excellence, those who possess both a masterful voice and harmony of personality... Accented by melancholic audiovisual chords, this multi-layered picture won the FIPRESCI Prize at this year's Venice IFF.

**Exil / Exile / Exil**

Director: Visar Morina

Germany, Belgium, Kosovo, 2020, 121 min



## Karlovy Vary International Film Festival

Xhafer, a Kosovo-born pharmaceutical engineer, has lived in Germany for a number of years. Although now settled with a family and a good job, he gets the creeping feeling that he is being discriminated against because of his ethnic background. A dead rat hanging from the gate in front of his home only confirms his suspicions... Masterfully directed, this oppressive drama about paranoia and identity is the second offering from Visar Morina, whose debut *Babai (Father)* won Best Director at KVIFF 2015.

### **Eyimofe / This is My Desire / Touhy**

Directors: Chuko Esiri, Arie Esiri

Nigeria, 2020, 116 min

Mofe and Rosa share a home and also the desire to leave it behind in order to travel far beyond the borders of their native Nigeria. Although all kinds of traps lie in wait to thwart their dreams, neither of them gives up, and each finds a way to live despite the myriad catastrophes they have to face. Offering a vibrant, optimistic account of contemporary Nigeria, the enchantment of *This Is My Desire* lies in its spontaneity, gentle humour and its precise observation of the surroundings.

### **First Cow / First Cow / První kráva**

Director: Kelly Reichardt

USA, 2019, 122 min

It used to be tough trying to make a go of it in Oregon, yet skilled chef Cookie Figowitz and enterprising immigrant King-Lu come up with an offbeat business plan to pave their way towards the American dream. Kelly Reichardt's latest piece is an easy-going buddy film, which doubles as an endearing Western. It tells the tale of affable male friendship, a melancholic cow, and the chilly landscape of the Pacific Northwest, where ambiguous smiles mingle with the occasional sound of gunshot.

### **The Furnace / The Furnace / Výheň**

Director: Roderick MacKay

Australia, 2020, 116 min

With a nod to the Western, this stirring, big screen drama is set in the 1890s gold rush of Western Australia. The story tells of a little known but remarkable community of Afghan, Indian and Persian cameleers who frequently sought the assistance of the local Aboriginal people when transporting goods across the country. The same is true of young Muslim Hanif, but his encounter with an Australian bandit called Mal changes his life forever.

### **Gagarine / Gagarine / Gagarin**

Directors: Fanny Liatard, Jérémy Trouilh

France, 2020, 95 min

Sixteen-year-old Youri has spent his whole life in a high-rise building on the outskirts of Paris, part of a residential block named Gagarine in honour of the first cosmonaut. The skilful youngster, who dreams of journeying into space, is an active member of the local community. When he discovers



Karlovy Vary International Film Festival

that the housing complex is earmarked for demolition, Youri decides to act... A touching, formally inventive debut from directing duo Liatard and Trouilh about perseverance, the connection to a specific place and the power of imagination.

**Gunda / Gunda / Gunda**

Directors: Victor Kossakovsky  
Norway, USA, 2020, 93 min

Another of Kossakovsky's quirky cinematic concepts. Foregoing colour and words, the Russian documentarist observes the life of farm animals with a resourcefulness and technical brilliance that doesn't spare the viewer's emotions. One of the most talked-about cinephilic events of 2020 and, according to the reviews, "a soul-stirring meditation on some of our most underappreciated fellow earthlings" and "a visionary case for veganism."

**Hayaletler / Ghosts / Duchové**

Director: Azra Denis Okyay  
Turkey, France, Qatar, 2020, 90 min

The recent winner of Venice's Settimana della critica has worked its way with graceful vigour to become one of this year's most remarkable debuts. Istanbul, not far in the future, and the city has been plunged into darkness, yet this has little to do with the sudden power surge. Four characters, four fascinating aspects of an unsettling metropolis are profiled in this punkishly rough lampoon on the cost of personal freedom and the dignity of the neglected.

**Les choses qu'on dit, les choses qu'on fait / Love Affair(s) / Milostné historky**

Director: Emmanuel Mouret  
France, 2020, 120 min

If you're a responsive person, love will enter your life without knocking. How will that heady, sweet passion affect you? What if it's evasive and fickle? Will it bring a new dimension to your existence or will it become a painful void? Paying tribute to the French tradition, where romance is unassailable, Emmanuel Mouret relates a story of four individuals driven by desire. The result furnishes further proof that, when it comes to treating romantic subject matter, the French are way out in front.

**Kiss Me Before It Blows Up / Kiss Me Before It Blows Up / Lásky je košer**

Director: Shirel Peleg  
Germany, Israel, 2020, 105 min, International Premiere

Love doesn't make distinctions and isn't bothered about orientation, let alone the origins of the people it has brought together. Yet when their families start meddling in their relationships, chaos is bound to follow. Focusing on intercultural and intergenerational dialogue, this dramedy by debuting Shirel Peleg deftly tells the story of two generations of Israeli women whose hearts are won by those whom history has shown to be their enemies.



Karlovy Vary International Film Festival

**Kočár do Vídně / Coach to Vienna / Kočár do Vídně**

Director: Karel Kachyňa

Czechoslovakia, 1966, 76 min

In its day, this drama of revenge sought by a countrywoman against two soldiers of the Wehrmacht was a radical negation of how the war had usually been viewed: in every Czech film Germans, without variation, were portrayed as unambiguously negative. Sophisticated black-and-white camerawork helped create a mood of suspense in a story that artfully adheres to the unities of place, time, and action.

World premiere of the digitally restored version.

**Mila / Apples / Jablka**

Director: Christos Nikou

Greece, Poland, Slovenia, 2020, 90 min

The world has been gripped by a pandemic which causes sudden amnesia. A nameless man becomes part of a special programme designed to help him build a new identity replete with new memories. This beguilingly melancholic debut by Greek director Christos Nikou opened this year's Orizzonti in Venice, where it justifiably earned unanimous praise from the critics and won the viewers' hearts.

**Nadia, Butterfly / Nadia, Butterfly / Nadia, motýlek**

Director: Pascal Plante

Canada, 2020, 106 min

Top-flight competitive sports only have winners and losers. Nonetheless, does the decision to leave a world of constant grind automatically indicate capitulation? A young swimmer's participation in the Olympic Games signals the last competition of her career, but what goes on around her becomes the backdrop for a much bigger battle. In Pascal Plante's second film – an intimate, subtle drama about suppressed emotions rather than performance itself – he entrusted the main roles to professional athletes.

**The Nest / The Nest / Klícka**

Director: Sean Durkin

USA, 2019, 107 min

Opportunities in the United States gradually begin to dry up for Rory (Jude Law), a commodity broker, so he moves with his family back to his native England, enticed by the promise of a lucrative new beginning. Could the sumptuous but isolated country manor outside London become a real home? This unsettling, aesthetically precise drama examining man's inflated attitude to wealth is typically set during the thriving economic liberalism that was Reagan's America.

**Nomadland / Nomadland / Země nomádů**

Director: Chloé Zhao



## Karlovy Vary International Film Festival

USA, Germany, 2020, 108 min

The jury and everyone else were unanimous when it came to the winner of this year's Venice festival. This unaffected drama is sensitively constructed around the character of Fern (the ever-captivating Frances McDormand), a widow in her sixties who regains her vitality as she travels across America in her white van encountering various similarly disposed modern-day nomads. This agreeable film with plenty of soul is sure to be considered for an Academy Award next spring.

### **Notturmo / Notturmo / Nokturno**

Director: Gianfranco Rosi

Italy, France, Germany, 2020, 100 min

The only documentarist to have won the top prize at two of Europe's three most prestigious festivals competed at this year's Venice IFF once again with the lone non-fiction entry among a programme of features. Gianfranco Rosi shot his mesmeric collage of scenes from Iraq, Kurdistan, Syria and Lebanon over the past three years in order to depict the darkness shrouding the Middle East, a region pounded for years by injustice.

### **Quo vadis, Aida? / Quo vadis, Aida? / Quo vadis, Aida?**

Director: Jasmila Žbanić

Bosnia and Herzegovina, Austria, Romania, Netherlands, Germany, Poland, France, Norway, Turkey, 2020, 104 min

Twenty-five years ago more than eight thousand fathers, husbands and sons disappeared forever from the lives of their Bosniak women. One of Europe's most prominent filmmakers surveys the massacre carried out by the Bosnian Serbs under General Mladić in the infamous town of Srebrenica. Events are seen through the eyes of the director's charismatic titular heroine, an interpreter for Dutch soldiers sent by the UN to war-ravaged former Yugoslavia. This breath-taking, evocative drama competed at this year's festival in Venice.

### **Sweat / Sweat / Sweat**

Director: Magnus von Horn

Poland, Sweden, 2020, 106 min

Fitness motivator Sylwia's career prospects couldn't be more promising. Her tour is going brilliantly, copies of her workout DVD are filling the shelves, famous brands are knocking at the door, and her Instagram followers are multiplying by the hour. Yet, as this resolutely confrontational portrait shows, it takes just three days for the young influencer to realise that social media bring more than fame: they also result in the loss of privacy, intimacy and even perhaps the chance for authentic expression.

### **Un triomphe / The Big Hit / Triumph**

Director: Emmanuel Courcol

France, 2020, 106 min



**Karlovy Vary International Film Festival**

Étienne, a soft-hearted man who loves the acting craft, secures a job to organize a theatre workshop in a prison. There, he is surprised to discover the talent that emerges from his motley crew of inmates - why couldn't they perform on stage as well? Reviving the immortal play *Waiting for Godot*, this feel-good drama about application, determination, and faith in others and in oneself also offers a glimpse of the darker side of the human psyche.

**Wendy / Wendy / Wendy**

Director: Benh Zeitlin

USA, 2019, 112 min

Eight years after *Beasts of the Southern Wild*, which enchanted viewers with its spontaneous style and poignant message, Benh Zeitlin returned to Sundance with his adaptation of *Peter Pan*, a dream project that was years in the making. This modern, wildly reimagined treatment of the classic fairy tale bears all the hallmarks of the director's style: rich imagery, untrammelled editing work, a lofty soundtrack, and phenomenal direction of the child actors.

**Zanka Contact / Zanka Contact / Zanka Contact**

Director: Ismaël El Araki

Morocco, France, Belgium, 2020, 120 min

The dark netherworld of Casablanca, crammed with nightclubs and brothels, is hardly the most romantic setting for a love story yet, even so, it can happen. Streetwise call girl Rajae and demonic has-been rocker Larsen are united after a car crash, their hearts locked together for all time... The director of *Zanka Contact* himself states that this isn't a film but a wild fire, and viewers will surely agree. *Wild at Heart* and *True Romance* in oriental garb.