

WHEN EAST MEETS WEST

reimagine imagination



19/22

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2025

trieste

catalogue

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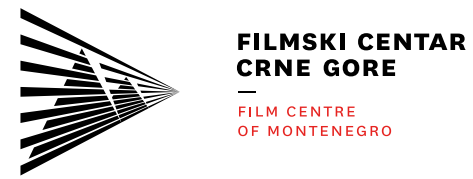
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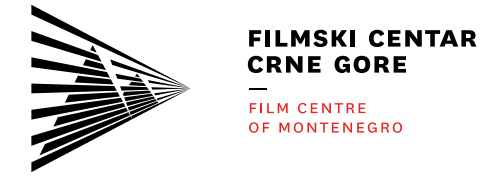
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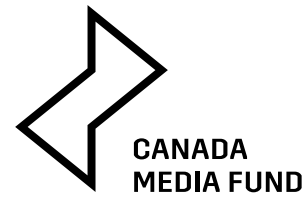
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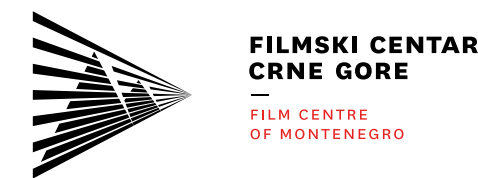
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Reimagine Imagination

Set as our starting point for this upcoming edition of WEMW, our claim does not only represent this year's focus, it also suggests a visionary destination. To "Reimagine Imagination" means to place ourselves at the centre of any creative process and invites us to embrace the potential that lies before us. Imagination will always be the compass of our creative journey while new technologies will serve as instruments to explore unknown directions and expand our frontiers: the tools may evolve, but so does our imagination, now presented with unprecedented opportunities to challenge its limits and venture into the unthinkable.

Our new image by Polly in Wonderland

While navigating this complex landscape, we felt it was essential to reimagine aspects of our own identity as well. We were looking for a visual image that fully embodied the theme of this current edition and found it in the work of the emerging Ukrainian artist Polina Kostanda, also known as Polly in Wonderland. One of the artworks from her recent *Paper Boat* series, showing a girl and her paper boat sailing across a sea of dreams and new possibilities, perfectly captures our navigation through the boundaries of imagination and condenses the world we have imagined for the 2025 edition of WEMW.

Polina's work seamlessly blends fantasy and reality, transporting viewers into her boundless imagination. Her visionary worlds and creations will fill in every space of WEMW 2025 as her artworks will not only create our unique visual identity but they will be showcased in the pages of this catalogue and in an immersive digital exhibition held in the main market venue.



Polly in Wonderland

Polina Kostanda is a Ukrainian AI artist & poetess.

My creative path began in youth. I wrote poetry, directed and acted in the theatre. Worked in creative fields such as: advertising & copywriting.

With the advent of AI as an artistic tool, I have focused on creating images that provoke thought and awaken the mind.

The main goal of creativity is to take the viewer beyond the boundaries of habitual thinking and perception of the world.

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Co-Production Forum

A fine selection of 21 projects in development including 10 creative documentaries, 9 live-action features and 2 animated shorts, coming from 14 countries



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Amerika

Davide Maldi

Ring Film

Italy

In a world where family debts fall upon the children, twins Ada and Livio are torn apart to opposing destinies. Ada flees in search of freedom, leaving Livio to bear their family's burden. Eventually, they must confront the outcomes of their choices.



Director

Davide Maldì

Writers

Davide Maldì,
Micol Roubini,
Giulia Cosentino,
Chiara Lagani

Producer

Massimiliano Navarra

Company

Ring Film

Budget

€ 2.498.000
(€ 918.000 in place)

Looking for

Co-producers,
Financing,
Sales Agents

Project Status

Late development

1st feature

Synopsis

In a State that forces its citizens to repay their failures through labor, a grim law permits parents to transfer debts to their children.

Ada and Livio, inseparable twins, are branded as “Esposti” and condemned to repay a very high debt. Livio, trapped by fear and responsibility, bends to the fate of forced labor.

Ada, on the other hand, decides to escape and joins a group of fugitives like herself. Driven by the desire to find her brother and reach the legendary “Amerika” together, Ada is willing to anything, even sacrifice her new companions. But when the twins finally reunite, their meeting shatters her hope, and Ada will be forced again to choose between Livio and herself.

Director's note

The film's genesis is deeply rooted in my own adolescence, shaped by my family's economic collapse. While my filmmaking has typically begun with an exploration of reality, this time I wanted to create a fictional world that distorts certain aspects of our society, amplifying its selfish nature. This shift from reality—embodied by inheritance law—serves to depict the trauma of familial failure and betrayal. It isn't just a force that tears apart a family; it symbolizes generational betrayal, reflecting the fallout from decisions made by predecessors that today's generation must confront.

Amerika emerges as a coming-of-age drama, mixed with adventure and thriller, centered on theme of betrayal: of parents against their children and of Ada against her twin brother, Livio. While Livio passively accepts his fate, Ada refuses to conform and chooses to run away. She leaves her brother behind, to chase what becomes an illusion rather than a real dream: Amerika. Like my previous works, Amerika thrives on the interplay between performance and writing, focusing on the dynamic between the actor and his character, and the tension that arises from it. My goal is not to recrea-

te a world but to reveal how this altered world reflects truths of ours.

Amerika is a film-experience that seeks to explore the nature of reality, demonstrating how blurred the lines between reality and fiction can be.

Company profile

Ring Film is an Italian independent production company based in Rome. Ring Film is internationally oriented yet deeply rooted in our country's culture. The production choices of Ring Film are geared towards films that are linguistically evolved and have a contemporary vision. Its goal for the coming years is to develop international art house and elevated genre films, along with edgy and contemporary TV shows.

Track record

RE GRANCHIO by Alessio Rigo De Righi & Matteo Zoppis, ITA-ARG-FRA 2021

ARIANNA by Carlo Lavagna, ITA 2015

FRAMMENTO 53 by Carlo Gabriele Tribbioli & Federico Lodoli, ITA 2015

IL SOLENZO by Alessio Rigo De Righi & Matteo Zoppis, ITA-ARG 2015

THE CHALLENGE by Yuri Ancarani, ITA-FRA 2016

WALKING ON WATER by Andrey Paounov, USA-ITA 2018

ALBE by Elisa Fuksas, ITA 2018

THE EXECUTRIX by Michele Civetta

USA - ITA

Tv Shows

SILVIO BALDINI - QUESTO È CALCIO a documentary by Pietro Daviddi & David Gallerano

ITA 2024 32' | Dazn Stories

NON ESCLUDO IL RITORNO a documentary by Pietro Daviddi & David Gallerano

ITA 2023 40' | Dazn Stories

W SABATINI a documentary by Pietro Daviddi & David Gallerano

ITA 2022 23' | Dazn Stories

IL RAGAZZO GIOCA BENE a documentary by Pietro

Daviddi & David Gallerano

ITA 2022, 59' | Dazn Stories

DARK POLO GANG LA SERIE a docuseries

by Tommaso Bertani & Carlo Salsa

ITA 2018, 300' | Channel TimVision

PROFESSIONE LOLITA a documentary

by Carlo Lavagna ITA 2017, 71' | Channel: Nove

Director's profile

After graduating from the Roman School of Comics, Davide Maldì began working as an illustrator, storyboard artist and assistant director for cinema. He studied Performing Arts and Sciences at La Sapienza and Cinema and New Media at RUFA. In 2007 he won a study and training residency at the New York Film Academy. He then worked as a director, filmmaker and DOP for cinema, making documentaries of social research and investigation. He founded L'Altauro, a production house for development of works of art and auteur's documentary. In 2011 he directed *Sul Fiume*, an anthropological journey made aboard a small boat along the Tiber River, from its source to its mouth. In 2014 he made *Uproar (Frastuono)*, the first chapter of a trilogy on adolescence. The film is presented in international competition at the 32nd Torino Film Festival and wins the 2015 Corso Salani Award at the Trieste Film Festival. His latest work, part two of the trilogy, *The Young Observant (L'Apprendistato)* (2019) was competed at the 72nd Locarno Film Festival, in several international festivals including DocFortnight at MoMA. The film won the jury prize at the 37th Torino Film Festival. With his cinema, halfway between reality and fiction, he searches new forms of rites of passage in the contemporary world, namely the changes in the position that an individual occupies in society. He has repeatedly investigated the condition of the adolescent with respect to his dutiful and sometimes cruel transition to adult life

Beatrice

Vallo Toomla

Stellar Film

Estonia, Italy, Lithuania, Latvia

A scientific experiment brings Kristi back after her death in a car accident, giving her and Tom a second chance for a life they have always dreamed of. While confronting her new identity, they must discover if their love can survive her resurrection.



Director

Vallo Toomla

Writer

Małgorzata Piłacińska

Producers

Evelin Penttilä,
Johanna Maria Paulson

Company

Stellar Film

Budget

€ 2.423.000
(€ 1.233.000 in place)

Looking for

Financing,
Co-producers,
Sales Agents,
Festivals

Project Status

Financing stage

2nd feature

Synopsis

Set in a near-future Europe devastated by climate change, Kristi (33), an eye doctor, and Tom (33), an art historian, are pursuing their dream of becoming parents. After years of infertility, they try a radical procedure: implanting a synthetic chip in Kristi to regulate her hormones. Their hopes soar when Kristi becomes pregnant, but tragedy strikes when she dies in a car accident weeks before giving birth. Although the baby Rossi survives, Tom is left devastated.

Months later, scientists approach Tom with an extraordinary offer: they can bring Kristi back. Kristi's consciousness can be transferred into the body of a recently deceased climate refugee. Desperate, Tom agrees, and Kristi is resurrected. However, she awakens in a stranger's body, with a foreign accent, struggling with the loss of her identity.

As Kristi and Tom attempt to rebuild their family, they face a host of challenges. Kristi must adapt to her new body while trying to connect with her daughter, and reclaim her life. Tom struggles with grief and the reality of this altered version of his wife. Their relationship strains under the weight of these changes, and Kristi's estranged mother rejects her resurrection. Kristi is drawn to the past of her new body, questioning if her old life can ever truly be restored or if a new path awaits.

In this exploration of identity, love, and rebirth, the film examines if love can endure when everything changes and if Kristi can find a purpose in this second chance at life.

Director's note

"Beatrice" is a deeply personal story of love, identity, and emotional survival. It explores the relationship between Kristi and Tom, a couple whose bond is profoundly tested when Kristi dies and is brought back to life in a new body. While the world around them is expe-

riencing environmental and societal upheavals, the film focuses on the intimate and emotional journey of these two characters.

Kristi's resurrection is not the solution Tom had imagined. Though brought back, she is no longer the woman he once knew. Her consciousness is transferred into another woman's body, and Kristi is left struggling with her new identity, torn between the life she had and the alien existence she now inhabits. Tom, too, faces his own emotional struggles, unable to reconcile the wife he loved with the woman standing before him.

For me, this story is a metaphor for the challenges we face when our relationships—and our sense of self—are radically transformed. "Beatrice" questions whether love can survive when everything changes, when the person you once knew becomes someone entirely different. Can love endure through profound change, or does it inevitably break under the weight of transformation?

Visually, "Beatrice" will reflect the melancholic yet hopeful tone of this emotional journey. The atmosphere will be damp, misty, and textured, mirroring Kristi's internal struggles.

Company profile

Stellar Film is one of the leading production companies in Estonia, established in 2015 and run by Evelin Penttilä and Johanna Maria Paulson. The filmography ranges from short and feature-length fiction films to documentaries and TV series, all of which share a common goal of telling encouraging and inspiring stories, blending genres, and pushing boundaries.

Notable works include the feature film *The Sleeping Beast* (2022, dir. Jaak Kilmi), short films *Sauna Day* (2024, dir. Anna Hints, Tushar Prakash), *The Weight of Light* (2023, dir. Anna Hints) and *Bad Hair* (dir. Oskar Lehe-maa), as well as internationally co-produced features

The Missile (2024, dir. Miia Tervo), *Hit Big* (2022, dir. J. P. Valkeapää), *Omerta 6/12* (2021, dir. Aku Louhimies), *Helene* (dir. Antti J. Jokinen), *Christmas in the Jungle* (2020, dir. Jaak Kilmi), and *Maria's Paradise* (2019, dir. Zaida Bergroth).

Many of the films have been showcased at prestigious festivals, including Cannes Semaine de la Critique, Sundance, TIFF, Hot Docs, Camerimage, Fantastic Fest, Fantasia, Black Nights FF, Palm Springs FF, Aspen, and Busan, among others.

Stellar Film is a proud member of the EPC, the Estonian Film Industry Cluster and is one of the founders of Tallinn Film Wonderland.

Director's profile

Vallo Toomla has studied theology at the University of Tartu and continued his studies at Tallinn University's Baltic Film and Media School, majoring in film directing. He has made five short films and one animated film—*LEMONADE TALE* (2013). His second student film *MORBIDUS* (2009) was selected to the Sleepwalkers sub-festival of Tallinn Black Nights Film Festival, where it won the award of Best Estonian Short Film. His debut feature *PRETENDERS* (2016) premiered in San Sebastian International Film festival – New Directors Section, won Estonian National Film Award for the best screenplay in 2017 as well as the film of the year by Estonian Cultural Endowment. His documentary *VERBA DIERUM: A YEAR WITH MARJU LEPAJÖE* (2019) was awarded the Documentary of the Year by Estonian Cultural Endowment, nominated the film of the year by the Estonian Film Critics Association as well as earning the highest Estonian cultural recognition the National State Cultural Award. Vallo's most current work is his feature documentary *THAT'S HOW IT IS* (2024).

Berliner

Anna Khazaradze
1991 Productions
Georgia, Germany

Nana, a Georgian translator based in Berlin, serves as a bridge for asylum seekers, helping them share their stories through translation and navigate the challenges of starting a new life.



Director

Anna Khazaradze

Writer

Anna Khazaradze

Producer

Nino Chichua

Company

1991 Productions

Budget

€ 484.961

(€ 18.381 in place)

Looking for

Co-producers,
Financing,
Sales Agents,
Festivals

Project Status

In production

1st feature**Synopsis**

Nana, a 61-year-old Georgian woman, has lived in Berlin since the early '90s. Once an architect in Georgia, she now works as a licensed translator, accessing refugee centers, courts, and prisons. Fluent in both Georgian and German, she becomes a crucial guide for Georgian asylum seekers, helping them navigate the complex bureaucracy of Germany. Many see her as their lifeline, believing their future depends on her.

“Hello, I'm your interpreter,” Nana often says to newly arrived asylum seekers. More than just translating words, she acts like a compassionate mother or experienced sister, offering advice and emotionally involving herself in their stories. She accompanies them to their new homes to make sure they settle in without barriers.

Recognizable by her colorful outfits, Nana moves through Berlin with her carry-on suitcase, named Konstantin, filled with essentials like food, first-aid items, and clothing. She balances her intense work with her love for jazz, concerts, and spending time with her family as a proud grandmother. The film follows Nana into refugee centers and translator's rooms, offering a glimpse into the hidden world of asylum seekers. The translator's room becomes a microcosm where freelance interpreters from various nationalities share meals, stories, and the common experience of waiting—both for assignments and alongside the refugees.

Nana's work is under threat, though, as German authorities push for replacing face-to-face translators with remote systems, aiming to protect interpreters from the emotional strain of refugee stories. Despite initial trial failures, the authorities persist, threatening Nana's job and the deeply personal connections she forms with those she helps.

The film explores how translation impacts both Nana and the refugees, questioning whether these vital human encounters could be replaced by impersonal technology, severing the emotional bonds that make her work so meaningful.

Director's note

During my second stay at a Georgian immigrant woman's flat in Berlin, I learned about her job interpreting for the Berlin police, courts, and refugee arrival centers. This is how I met Nana, a translator who shared captivating stories from her work, even showing me her journal where she documented the people she translated for. I was struck by her character and the access her job could provide to closed-off spaces like Berlin's refugee arrival center.

Two intertwined themes emerged: translation and immigration. Nana, as an interpreter, became the central figure, embodying both literal and metaphorical translation. Her role drove the narrative. The sheer volume of immigrants leaving Georgia for Berlin fueled my curiosity. I wanted to explore why so many were seeking refuge in Germany. Nana's story is key to understanding this, especially as her decision to leave Georgia stemmed from the trauma of being kidnapped by two men posing as taxi drivers.

Nana is now content with her life. She says she has everything she needs and finds joy in simple moments, like sitting under a fig tree smoking a cigarette. Through this film, I aim to tell her story and show the power of translation—both the literal and emotional kind—and how it impacts Nana amidst the political and emotional changes around her. In the film, Nana will serve as the key to worlds hidden from the public eye.

Company profile

1991 Productions is a Tbilisi-based women-led film production and service company run by Nino Chichua and Anna Khazaradze who develop finance and produce talented directors' fiction and documentary films through co-productions. The most recent feature film they co-produced, CROSSING (2024) by Levan Akin opened Berlinale Panorama 2024 and won Teddy Jury Award for Ensemble Cast. Recent credits also include feature documentary SMILING GEORGIA, directed by Luka Beradze, premiering at Karlovy Vary International Film Festival 2023 and

feature documentary GLORY TO THE QUEEN screened over 25 festivals globally, winning the Best Documentary award in Georgia in 2021.

Nino graduated from NYU's Tisch School of the Arts, with a degree in Film & TV Production and Anna holds a BA in Film and Television from the London College of Communication (UAL). Determined to bring the best practices to their home country's growing film industry, Nino and Anna moved back to Georgia and started 1991 Productions in 2017.

Director's profile

Anna Khazaradze is a co-founder of 1991 Productions, a Tbilisi-London-based production company specializing in developing, financing, and producing fiction and documentary films through European co-productions. With years of experience, Anna is dedicated to supporting emerging local and international talents. She is also a co-founder and executive board member of DOCA - Documentary Association Georgia.

Recently, Anna co-produced Levan Akin's Crossing, which opened the Berlinale Panorama 2024. Her producer credits include Smiling Georgia (2023), which premiered at the Karlovy Vary International Film Festival, and Glory to the Queen (2020), which she also co-directed. The film won the Best Documentary prize in Georgia and was showcased at 25 festivals worldwide.

Anna is currently developing several projects, including the documentary 9-Month Contract, pitched at Sheffield Doc/Fest as a Whickers finalist and spotlighted at Cannes Docs. She is also directing the feature documentary Berliner (Nipkow, CIRCLE Women Doc Accelerator, Close-Up Initiative), and the feature fiction Tear Gas, funded by GNFC, CNC, and ZDF/Arte. Her projects have garnered attention at various international pitching markets and workshops.

Anna holds a bachelor's degree in Film and Television from the London College of Communication (UAL).

Better Than Gold

Leen Michiels
Krater Films
Belgium

“Use these matches to burn all art, and the last to burn me.” Inscribed on Burnart, an animated matchbox, this hybrid documentary delves into the art market’s world, exploring how our connection to art shifts when it’s hidden, intangible, or destroyed

TOTAL ART MATCH-BOX

USE THESE MATCHS TO DESTROY ALL ART — MUSEUMS
ART LIBRARY'S — READY —
MADES POP — ART AND AS
I BEN SIGNED EVERYTHING
WORK OF ART — BURN —
ANYTHING — KEEP LAST
MATCH FOR THIS MATCH —



70/37
+ 05
30



Director

Leen Michiels

Writer

Leen Michiels

Producer

Maarten D'Hollander

Company

Krater Films

Budget

€ 640.000

(€ 175.000 in place)

Looking for

Co-producers,

Financing,

Sales Agents

Project Status

Advanced Development

1st feature

Synopsis

Better Than Gold is a hybrid documentary that follows Burnart, an animated matchbox artwork inspired by Ben Vautier's Total Art Match-Box, as it grapples with its desire for self-destruction in a world where art's value is increasingly tied to market forces. Trapped in an art vault, Burnart longs to burn, reflecting on the paradox of destruction as creation. Along its journey, Burnart interacts with artists, collectors, and digital art experts who challenge the boundaries of physical and digital art.

As Burnart moves between the physical world and the digital metaverse, it faces new dilemmas: Can burning itself bring the fulfillment it seeks? Or does the endless revival in the form of NFTs render destruction meaningless? Or the other way around? Featuring insights from renowned artists like Anish Kapoor, Tacita Dean, Damien Hirst and Pak and with guidance of an art oracle collector Alain Servais, Better Than Gold explores how art evolves and is reborn in the ever-changing landscape of the creation of value and meaning in the contemporary art market.

Director's note

Better Than Gold is a hybrid documentary that blends fiction and reality to explore the evolving relationship between art, value, and destruction. The film ventures into the art market's backstage, where art functions not only as a cultural symbol but also as a financial commodity, often deemed "better than gold." This serves as a starting point for a deeper inquiry into art's place in society, its commodification, storage, and the impact of its absence.

The central character, Burnart, an animated matchbox yearning for flames, embodies a paradox: to fulfill its purpose, it must be destroyed, symbolizing the ultimate form of absence. The film explores this as a path toward renewal, asking whether destruction can be a form of creation and if the absence of art can generate new meaning.

The project is inspired by a fundamental question: what is art in today's market? As digital art transforms percep-

tions, the market has evolved, and the physicality of art has diminished, with works stored away or existing solely online. Drawing on Luc Tuymans' idea that "an artwork is only complete after being watched by humans," Better Than Gold examines shifting views on value, meaning, and the human experience of art in a digital age.

Influenced by movements like Fluxus and artists who embrace absence and destruction, such as Ben Vautier, Anish Kapoor, Damien Hirst, and Tacita Dean, the film also considers contemporary digital art, including blockchain-based works by Pak. Its hybrid form mirrors the shifting art landscape, blending fact and fiction, digital and physical art, and personal stories with broader market dynamics. Through Burnart's journey toward destruction, Better Than Gold engages viewers with the philosophical, emotional, and financial forces shaping the future of art.

Company profile

Krater, founded during the dawn of covid times 2020, is a new, content-driven audiovisual production company, based in Ghent/Belgium. Krater creates quality fiction films, series and documentary projects with an international potential. The company was established by Maarten D'Hollander and Tim Martens, who both have extensive experience as producers. Maarten has worked as an independent producer on international productions since 2015, Tim has been working for more than 10 years as a producer and head of production for production and distribution company Lumière. They joined forces in Krater to create new and thrilling content.

LET THE SEA TAKE AWAY ALL EVIL, Documentary feature, in production

THE PUPIL, Feature Coprod, Postprod

HARTA, feature fiction, Feature Coprod, Postprod

A RINGING IN THE EARS, Feature Coprod, released, 2024

BRUGFIGUREN, feature documentary, released, 2024

ZODIAC, Short, released, 2024

ULTRAVIOLET, Short, released, 2024

LUKA, Feature prod, released, 2022

BONSAI, Short, released, 2023

THE BLIND, Short, released, 2023

NOCTURNUS, Short, released, 2022

Director's profile

I first stumbled into my love for storytelling during my interdisciplinary Cultural Studies at Maastricht University, where I became enchanted by the tangled intersections of visual culture, narrative, psychology, philosophy, and expression—where applying the rules of one discipline to a question from another often leads to delightfully surprising insights. I'm fascinated by how art can teach us about the mind and how storytelling unravels the complexities of human behavior—like how only knowing something rarely makes us change, no matter how much we wish it did! The beauty of mixing disciplines is that philosophy, science, and the arts each offer their own lens, reshaping how we see and experience the world. It's in these unexpected connections—where a psychological theory meets a paintbrush, or a philosophical question sneaks into a film scene—that I find the richest ground for creativity.

This curiosity brought me into the audiovisual world, where I navigated a variety of projects—television, fashion, theater, branded content, and social organizations—as a self-taught director. My debut short film, *Your Approval is Not Essential* (2016), blurred boundaries and won awards, shifting between dance film in the fashion world and fiction film in the dance community. Genre-bending wasn't a deliberate choice; it just happens when playful curiosity loves to cross borders, blend perspectives, and unravel conventions to get at the heart of a story.

Big Women

Milica Tomović

Big Time Production, Non-Aligned Films

Serbia

Two wild women, best friends and beauticians, embark on an unexpected trip to the coast of Montenegro, to settle forgotten bills, rediscover their friendship, and uncover long-buried secrets.



Director

Milica Tomović

Writers

Milica Tomović,
Tanja Sljivar,
Sara Djurovic

Producers

Jelena Radenković,
Dragana Jovović

Companies

Big Time Production,
Non-Aligned Films

Budget

€ 1.083.000
(€ 65.000 in place)

Looking for

Co-producers,
Financing,
Sales Agents,
Festivals

Project Status

Financing stage

2nd feature

Synopsis

Mira, naval officer's wife, sets off with her best friend Tina on a journey from Podgorica to the coast. That trip was ordered by Mira's mother-in-law, who is owner of the family guesthouse from which Mira can afford her comfortable lifestyle. Along the way two crimes happen. One committed by Mira, unspoken and intangible, only sensed, it has already been repeated several times, the other: a burglary in a guesthouse. Mira's brother-in-law Danilo, a policeman investigates the burglary, but actually rekindles old passions with Tina. With each new day the two women discover new traces of the burglary, realizing it was a family with kids who broke into the guesthouse. Along with the traces, it is as if they left their ghosts behind, which two friends touch in order to summon their own past. By evoking shared memories they rebuild their relationship - but the first crime casts a dark shadow over their seemingly carefree girlhood.

Further into the mountains, Mira is forced to confront her previous life and the people she avoided: her estranged father, her friend from elementary school, her husband's family. But with Tina by her side, she can handle it all, she can ignore the past and suppress the crime she committed. Danilo's invitation to the big local party tends to ruin Mira's peace and newfound closeness with Tina. Mira's insecurity starts to build up and the feelings of guilt flowing from her wrongdoings sneak up on her. She destroys the party and in front of everyone brings out all the artillery against Tina, putting her back in her subordinate place. While Tina, just between the two of them, finally reveals Mira's crime that is invisible. Mira does not have repeated miscarriages, she repeatedly aborts female fetuses. Exposed and broken down Mira finds refuge in the back seat of an abandoned car. Unexpectedly the engine starts and she gets another chance for redemption by accepting responsibility and her friend's firm grip. Tina is driving, it's time to go back.

Director's note

Bright costume colors, glitter, silver, purple, always blow-dried hair, big lips, strong makeup, and trained bodies in con-

trast to a gray city with decaying socialist buildings, bus transportation from 30 years ago, beautiful nature, and palm trees in the winter sun. Two opposites: the life we would love to lead and the one we are actually leading. The characters would like to be from SEX AND THE CITY (1998-2004), but they and the city don't have the budget for it. It's a character-based movie, and the accent is on their world and the inner struggle of keeping a secret of the "crime" the main character committed. BIG WOMEN investigates the subject of selective abortions by portraying complex female characters in a way that dissects specific ways in which patriarchy excludes and suppresses. In addition to that, it is a hilarious surrealist fever dream that focuses on the perseverance of female friendship, which is often loving but at the same time toxic. My intention is not to dwell on the darkness of the theme and pathos. When MIRA and TINA are together, they are a tour de force with the decisions they make, skanky behaviors, and situations they get themselves into. This makes them seem a bit oddball, easy, and often comical. This is why my main reference for the tone of the movie is MURIEL'S WEDDING (1994) by P.J. Hogan.

Company profile

Big Time Production is Belgrade-based production company with a focus on contemporary cinema. Founded by producer Jelena Radenković, the company realized several international co-productions, including Serbian-German co-production CENTAR by Ivan Marković, an awarded experimental documentary, which had the premiere on DocLisboa 2018 and had numerous festival screenings, including Beldocs 2019 (Best Film Award), Dokufest Prizren (Best Newcomer Award), Jakarta International festival (Jury award). Currently, they are developing several documentary and feature projects.

Non-Aligned Films is a Serbian boutique film production company founded by directors Ognjen Glavonić and Stefan Ivančić, along with producer Dragana Jovović. The company aims at working with the finest auteurs from Serbia and former Yugoslavia – filmmakers who are interested in pushing

the boundaries of traditional cinema. The most notable films produced by Non-Aligned Films include Dušan Zorić and Matija Gluščević's Have You Seen This Woman? (Venice, 2022), Ognjen Glavonić's The Load (Cannes, 2018) and Depth Two (Berlinale, 2016), and minority co-productions such as Ivan Salatić's You Have the Night (Venice, 2018) and Luka Popadić's My Swiss Army (Solothurn, 2024). Non-Aligned Films currently has two features, set to premiere in Rotterdam Tiger Competition 2025, Stefan Djordjević's debut Wind, Talk to Me and the minority co-production Wondrous is the Silence of My Master by Ivan Salatić.

Director's profile

Milica Tomović (1986. SFR Yugoslavia) graduated from the Academy of Dramatic Arts in Belgrade 2011. with the omnibus film "October", which she made together with her classmates. The film was shown in Cottbus, Trieste, Sofia Film Festival, Isola Cinema and others. In 2016. her short film "Transition" premiered at Locarno Film Festival (Pardi di domani), followed by North American premiere at Toronto International Film Festival (Short Cuts). "Transition" won: golden plaque in Serbian short fiction film selection at Belgrade Film Festival, Heart of Sarajevo best short film at Sarajevo Film Festival, Best Director Award at the International Short Film Festival of Cyprus and others.

In 2018 she directed five episodes of TV series "Morning Changes Everything", that was broadcasted on Serbian National Television (RTS) in prime time with great success. In 2021. her debut feature film "Celts" had its world premiere at Berlinale Film Festival in Panorama section, after which continued a good festival life (Heart of Sarajevo for Best Director - Sarajevo FF 2021 Jury Prize; Taiwan Film - Critics Association Award; Audience Choice Award - Taipei IFF 2021, Standard Readers' Jury Prize - Viennale 2021).

She tried herself in a new genre – teenage horror mystery, by directing three episodes of a TV series "Blok 27", which had its premiere on cable television Supernova in February 2022 and was recently acquired by Beta Film.

Biodestructors

Aistė Žegulytė

Studio Uljana Kim

Lithuania, France, Latvia

Through an immersive journey, Biodestructors explores the unseen, delving into humanity's struggle to preserve against microfungi's relentless decay, revealing a deep connection between creation and destruction.



Director

Aistė Žegulytė

Writers

Aistė Žegulytė,
Licia Eminentī,
Vėjūnė Tamuliūnaitė

Producer

Uljana Kim

Company

Studio Uljana Kim

Budget

€ 766.043
(€ 661.043 in place)

Looking for

Co-producers,
Financing,
Sales Agents,
Festivals

Project Status

In production
(shooting)

2nd feature**Synopsis**

Fascinated by the unstoppable force of microscopic life, Biodestructors delve into the ongoing battle between humans and microfungi—tiny organisms, including fungi, bacteria, and other microorganisms.

As restorers and bioarcheologists work tirelessly to preserve art and historical artifacts, microfungi persistently consume these treasures, eroding their materials and stories. Can humanity ever triumph over time and decay? The film captures the collision of two powerful forces: human curiosity and the microfungi's relentless drive to thrive. Instead of portraying biodestructors as mere adversaries, it examines their profound connection to the human experience, revealing the intricate, unseen interactions and confrontations that unfold daily.

Biodestructors offers an immersive, sensory journey where creation and destruction are inseparable forces, perpetually shaping and transforming the world around us—leaving behind only new forms of existence.

Director's note

For 5 years, I've been captivated by fungi—microorganism that are essential to life and facilitate decomposition after death. Through numerous experiments, I've formed relationships with three distinct fungal types, each forming unique colonies with their own personalities. This journey reveals the tension between fungi and humanity. On one side, art restorers combating mold threatening valuable paintings. On the other, scientists in a prosectorium attempt to preserve the mummified remains of two bishops from aggressive microfungi. Meanwhile, we're drawn into a microscopic realm where we witness these fungi dancing erotically and fighting fiercely for survival. While they consume cherished items, observing them under the microscope reveals a

breathtaking beauty in decay. Fungi teach us to accept change, to witness how life multiplies, transforms, and illustrate the cycle of life, transforming pain and death into something almost sacred.

Company profile

Lead producer is Studio Uljana Kim, a leading company in Lithuania, with 34 feature and documentary films produced / coproduced since 1997, including "Kiemas" by Valdas Navasaitis (1999, Cannes IFF - Director's Fortnight), "You am I" by Kristijonas Vildžiūnas (2006, Cannes IFF - Un Certain Regard), "Parthenon" by Mantas Kvedaravičius (2019, Venice Critics Week), "Mr Landsbergis" by Sergei Loznitsa (2021, IDFA Best Film Award), "Mariupolis 2" by Mantas Kvedaravičius (2022, Cannes IFF Special Documentary Jury Prize; European Documentary Award at European Film Awards), "The Natural History of Destruction" by Sergei Loznitsa (2022, Cannes IFF, Special Screening).

To Be Continued, coproducer in France, is an independent collective production house with an editorial line of art house - "cinéma d'auteur" projects that have a strong commercial value, both demanding and accessible. Feature films include "Onoda, 10 000 nights in the jungle" by Arthur Harari (2021, Opening film Un Certain Regard at Cannes IFF, French academy award for best screenplay), "All the Gods in the Sky" by Quarxx (2018, BFI, Austin, ...), "Land" by Babak Jalali (2018, Berlinale), "Hannah" by Andrea Pallaoro (2017, Venice - Mostra award for best actress to Charlotte Rampling, TIFF...), "Rock'n'roll... Of Corse!" By Lionel Guedj & Stéphane Bébert (2010, Cannes IFF - Out of Competition, SXSW...), "Blind Sun" by Joyce A. Nashawat (2015, TIFF - Creativity in Cinematography award, BFI, ...), and others.

Director's profile

Aistė Žegulytė studied photography and film directing. She explores human relationship with nature in its various forms, in its all variety and complexity.

Her first long-form documentary, Animus Animalis, premiered at the DOK Leipzig Film Festival. The film has already visited many festivals around the world: the CPH: DOX, the Tallinn Black Nights (PÖFF), the Thessaloniki International Film Festival, the Hot Docs, and many more.

Fascinated by the microscopic fungi and mould, she has been working on new documentary film Biodestructor since 2019.

Glowing

Martin Páv

Frame Films

Czech Republic

To glow means many things: to achieve success in life, to meet someone who truly loves you, to perform well on social media, to look perfect, or to have a lighter skin than others. The film takes place in New Delhi, Nairobi, and Seoul.



Director

Martin Páv

Writer

Martin Páv

Producer

Zuzana Kucerova

Company

Frame Films

Budget

€ 213.000

(€ 148.000 in place)

Looking for

Co-producers,
Sales Agents,
Festivals

Project Status

In production

Synopsis

In this world, to glow means many things: to achieve success in life, to meet someone who truly loves you, to perform well on social media, to look perfect, or to have a lighter skin than others. Taking place in New Delhi, Nairobi, and Seoul, the film tells stories of six protagonists from different cultural, as well as socio-economic backgrounds, who share one thing in common – in order to glow, they apply various skin-lightening products.

The film depicts how glowing transcends cultural, as well as economic boundaries, weaving together the bodies, as well as stories of our protagonists. Exploring their interconnectedness, the film asks a question, what is hidden beneath this universal desire to glow?

Director's note

The tension between identity and globalisation has always been a primary focus for me as a film director. After completing my feature debut, *Vote for Kibera* (2018), set in an informal settlement in Nairobi, I chose to study a PhD in the field of postcolonial theories and urban studies. This decision was driven by my desire to become more capable of understanding diverse and nuanced topics within non-Western cultural contexts, while critically reflecting on my own positionality as a filmmaker.

Glowing came hand in hand with my PhD studies, during which I spent five years researching in Nairobi and exploring the topic of internalised stigmatization experienced by people living in the city's informal settlements. This journey also prompted me to reflect on my own past as a gay man with a complicated coming out, which resulted in years of denial regarding my own identity. I found a resemblance between my experiences and those of my research participants, particularly in our shared ten-

dency to constantly imitate the “normative” demands of society while refusing to accept certain aspects of ourselves. The internalised stigma, combined with our relentless pursuit of ideals of perfection, I began to see as a profoundly universal theme that is worth a cinematic exploration.

However, I was aware that the topic, being too universal and broad, needed to focus on particular stories connected by common threads..

Company profile

Frame Films production company focuses on creative audiovisual projects with artistic elements. Producers Jitka Kotrlová and Zuzana Kučerová have teamed up to work on the projects together and they work as a collective. The producers often work with the same authors on multiple projects. The company has produced *The Killing of a Journalist* (premiered at Hot Docs), *Wolves at the Borders* (premiered at Visions du Réel), *Central Bus Station* (premiered at Sheffield Doc/Fest), *Vote for Kibera* (premiered at Ji.hlava IDFF and FIPA-DOC), VR film *Darkening* (premiered at Venice IFF), documentaries *The Investigator* (premiered at Ji.hlava IDFF), a fiction feature *Snowing!* and *Empire Builders* (premiered at One World IHRDFF and Festival dei Popoli).

Director's profile

Martin Páv graduated from the Department of Fiction Directing at FAMU and is currently pursuing a PhD at Metropolitan University Prague, where he focuses on the research of postcolonial identity in informal settlements in cities of the Global South. He is also involved in domestic and international research projects studying the impacts of the climate crisis on society's functio-

ning. He has directed two award-winning documentary films. His debut, *Vote for Kibera* (2018), was screened at several international festivals and won the Audience Award at the Ji.hlava International Documentary Film Festival.

His second feature film, *Wolves at the Borders* (2020), won the Anthropological and Environmental Approach Award at the Jean Rouch Festival, the Best Central and Eastern European Film Award at Astra Film Festival, and received a Special Jury Mention at the Ji.hlava International Documentary Film Festival. His third feature film called *Dajori* tells a story of a Romani family in Northern Bohemia (premiered at IFDF Jihlava, received Audience Award and Award for Original Approach).

Helter Skelter

Paul Vincent de Lestrade

Need Productions

Belgium

Eva (14) was raised in an alt-right group by a single father who taught her all she knows and whom she admires more than anything - until death suddenly intrudes into her life.



Director

Paul Vincent de Lestrade

Writer

Paul Vincent de Lestrade

Producer

Anne-Laure Guégan

Company

Need Productions

Budget

€ 2.600.00

(€ 136.100 in place)

Looking for

Co-producers,

Financing,

Sales Agents,

Festivals

Project Status

Early development

1st feature**Synopsis**

In its most literal English translation, 'Helter Skelter' is a to-boggan that children hurtle down with enthusiasm and a touch of apprehension. 'Helter Skelter' is a vertiginous slope that only accelerates until it takes off or crashes. It was in this spirit that I conceived the story and the events that will turn Eva's life upside down.

The story of this 14-year-old teenager takes place where Belgium, France and Luxembourg meet. A region of forests devastated by logging and haunted by the ghosts of metal factories.

This is where Eva grew up, immersed in the ultra-right ideology that her father, Arnaud, instilled in her from birth.

Eva repeats what the adults say, which she knows almost by heart, but she is still a child caught up in a fusal relationship with a father she admires.

That summer, Eva got closer to Maxence, a teenager who works for her father. But the ideology she has grown up with soon comes up against the teenager's incomprehension.

Arnaud and the small group to which he belongs are planning a sabotage operation in which Eva takes part. Eva's world is turned upside down when she realises that she was one of the cogs in a terrorist action that led to someone's death. What was still abstract to her becomes brutally real and Eva is caught between a moral question and her allegiance to her father.

Maxence, who has realised that something serious has happened, urges her to confide in the police. Like a hunted animal, she rejects him violently, seeing him as a threat.

When something dramatic happens, Arnaud takes his daughter on a hopeless run, pursued by the police and abandoned by the group.

The figure of the protective father collapses when he urges her not to betray him, to stay by his side, come what may. Terrified, Eva is a prisoner of her own father.

Eva will have to make an adult choice to save herself and prevent her father from killing again.

Director's note

Helter Skelter is born from a deeply personal confrontation with the insidious rise of ultra-right ideologies. In 2020, an investigative report exposed a chilling reality: groups targeting individuals like myself, those advocating for cultural and ethnic integration. What struck me most was the presence of young women in these hyper-masculine spaces, a disturbing yet under-explored phenomenon.

The film centers on Eva, a 14-year-old girl who idolizes her father, Arnaud, the leader of an ultra-right group. Eva's world is initially defined by her father's ideology, which she accepts as truth. As she matures, however, she begins to see the cracks in this worldview, and the darkness it harbors. Helter Skelter is a narrative about the painful process of self-discovery and the moral reckoning. Eva's journey is one of disentangling love from violence.

Setting the film within an ultra-right group is a deliberate choice, not just to confront a growing societal issue, but to explore the intimate, often contradictory emotions that bind us to toxic beliefs and relationships. With Helter Skelter, I aim to delve into the complexities of love that becomes a weapon—whether it's love for a family, a country, or a distorted sense of self.

This film is a continuation of my exploration into the lives of young people on the brink of breaking free from the constraints of their upbringing. Helter Skelter challenges not only the characters within it but also the audience, to confront the uncomfortable truths about love, loyalty, and the cost of liberation.

Company profile

Need Productions is a Brussels-based Belgian production company founded in 1999. Since it was founded, Need Productions has produced and co-produced some sixty films that have won awards at A-list festivals around the world. The company's DNA is both the development of young talent in its own territory and its commitment to international co-productions.

In 2014, Géraldine Sprimont and Anne-Laure Guégan took over the reins of the company and breathed new life into it, not least by extending their collaboration to new territories.

Anne-Laure and Géraldine are graduates of SERIE WOMEN (2022), EAVE and EAVE-PUENTES (2016 and 2018), EURODOC (2016 and 2022), GREEN FILM LAB (EAVE_TorinoFilmLab).

Identified in its home territory (French-speaking Belgium) as one of the most active and award-winning companies, Need Productions has received particular attention from national funding bodies: cultural funds, economic funds, regional funds and broadcasters.

As producers, and ever since they took over the reins of the company, Anne-Laure Guégan and Géraldine Sprimont have chosen in tandem the projects to which they commit themselves, and pay particular attention to ensuring that their editorial choices are representative of their values, in order to support the stories of a society that denounces its excessive inequalities, its excluding patterns, its unknown or forgotten parts.

Director's profile

After completing a degree in cinema at the Sorbonne (FR), during which time he worked as a film critic for various student media, Paul Vincent de Lestrade entered INSAS (BE) to study directing. Whether in his school films (VISAGES and RESPIRE) or UN BON GARÇON (to date, 47 festival selections and 23 awards), he has developed a style of directing that places the expressiveness of bodies at the centre of the narrative. CAGE, his second short film, which he is shooting this summer, and HELTER SKELTER, his first feature film, are conceived in this vein, with characters grappling with an obsessive dilemma that puts their whole bodies under tension in order to emancipate themselves from a world that traps them.

Klára Is Here

Dávid Csicskár

Filmfabriq

Hungary

Elderly Péter devotes himself to caring for his wife, Klára, who has dementia, but the strain is taking a toll on his own health. When he falls in love with Klára's vibrant old female friend, he is torn between his duty and the promise of a new life.



Director

Dávid Csicskár

Writer

Dávid Csicskár

Producer

Balázs Zachar

Company

Filmfabriq

Budget

€ 1.000.000

(€ 200.000 in place)

Looking for

Co-producers,

Financing,

Sales Agents

Project Status

Development

(second draft in progress)

1st feature**Synopsis**

Klára and Péter, retirees married for fifty years, live in an old house in southern Hungary. Klára suffers from dementia, and Péter cares for her with love and devotion, but the strain takes a toll on his health. One morning, Péter collapses in the kitchen, leaving Klára unsupervised.

Under pressure from his daughters, Péter agrees to place Klára in a daycare center where she can spend her days and return home to sleep. For the first time in years, Péter has free time, but he feels lost without the daily responsibilities of caring for Klára. At the daycare, he encounters Andrea, Klára's old friend and hairdresser, who wants to amend for disappearing after Klára's illness.

As Andrea starts visiting them regularly, she and Péter get involved in a sexually heated love affair, revealing a hidden side of Péter. The fragile balance shatters when Klára escapes from the daycare and finds Péter and Andrea together. Though Klára doesn't seem to remember what she saw, her condition worsens, and Péter struggles to balance between his two lives.

Péter relies on Andrea to care for Klára 24/7, as it's the only way they can be together. But the pressure drives Andrea to step back and end their affair. To be with Andrea, Péter should place Klára in a permanent care home, signing her death sentence. Torn between devotion to his wife and longing for Andrea, Péter faces an impossible dilemma: he should sacrifice his own happiness out of respect for the woman he has loved for fifty years.

Director's note

My grandparents were suffering from dementia. Watching them I was having the sad impression that with the demented person, the healthy partner is also fading away. Both of their identity faded away. Years after my grandparents' death a friend of mine asked me to shoot a documentary about a daycare center, where elderly and demented people are treated. There I met an old

couple: the wife was fully demented not even knowing what was going on around her. While the husband was fresh, healthy and full of energy. I was wondering how unjust life is. Spending their life together and at the end they just cannot connect at all. The face and freshness of the husband did not let me rest: why does he seem so alive? What is he doing all day long while his wife is in the daycare center? That was the point when I started to write about Peter, my debut film's main character.

We all know, that aging, dementia are crucial problems of our modern societies. Even the wealthiest countries' healthcare system has to catch up with the vast number of demented people because of a simple fact: with the growth of the life expectancy the number of demented people is increasing as well. Despite all this, my movie is not a disease movie. Klára is Here is a man's quest for happiness and it is about his journey to look back to his life and his marriage amidst the heartbreaking reality of the present. The film tries to capture the tragedy and beauty of letting go of love and the bravery of starting over at an old age.

My vision as a director is to show the beauty, the simplicity and the cruelty of the situation my main character is in. I also want to provoke with the theme, the perspective and the explicit, but not romanticized sex scenes. In spite of the topic my film is not a depressing debut: I want to find the tonality which reflects the the ordinary days of the characters with its mundane nature but also with a heartfelt humor.

Company profile

Filmfabriq Kft. was founded in 2012 by Gábor Osváth and Dorottya Ócsai. The company has since produced seven feature-length fiction films, several documentaries, dozens of award-winning shorts, an animation series and numerous commercials. Some of the recent projects include 'Captives' (2019), directed by Academy

Award-winner Kristóf Deák, which won nine awards at the Hungarian Film Week, including Best TV Film and Best Director. Filmfabriq's comedy feature, 'Christmas Flame' by Dániel Tiszeker became the highest grossing Hungarian film of 2021. Filmfabriq made the documentary Colors of Tobi in 2021 about a transgender character, with the support of Sundance Institute and premiered in BFI Flare London. The company's international co-productions include Tony, Shelly and the Magic Light (a Czech-Slovak-Hungarian animated feature), that received the Jury Award in Annecy International Animation Festival in 2023.

Director's profile

David Csicskár was born in Pécs, Hungary in 1987. He graduated at Pécs University in 2010, then made his second graduation in film studies at Eötvös Lóránd University Budapest. He started his television career with soap opera writing for the national private channel, TV2 (Family secrets, Private investigators). Later he was writing series for RTL and HBO Hungary. Among others he wrote and directed the successful black comedy series "Tóth János" for the Hungarian Public Service Television. Recently he directed several comedy series for Viasat3 and TV2. He made numerous short films, among which "Uchebnik" was selected by various festivals (including Montreal Intl Film Festival) and was nominated for the best Hungarian short film award in 2017. He is a graduate of the European Showrunner Programme at the International Filmschule Köln.

Laí Huí (Back & Forth) - Recording the Field Along the New Silk Road

Antoine Prum

Paul Thiltges Distributions

Luxembourg, Germany, Georgia, Romania

A group of Chinese underground artists travels along the controversial New Silk Road with the intention of carrying out an artistic audit of China's geopolitical ambitions.



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Director

Antoine Prum

Writer

Antoine Prum

Producers

Paul Thiltges,

Adrien Chef

Company

Paul Thiltges Distributions

Budget

€ 700.000

(€ 80.000 in place)

Looking for

Co-producers,

Broadcasters,

Sales Agent

Project Status

Financing stage

Synopsis

As China's controversial Belt and Road Initiative is celebrating its tenth anniversary, a group of Chinese underground artists led by the poet and musician Yan Jun travels along the New Silk Road with the intention of carrying out an artistic audit of their country's geopolitical ambitions.

Along the track, which leads from Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan province, to the small Luxembourgish town of Bettembourg and its freight hub, the impromptu collective adopts the Situationist practice of the *dérive* to engage in a series of largely improvised encounters on and off the train.

The film will take the form of a poetic inventory of a world in transition, caught up in the whirlwind of a gigantic infrastructure project that claims to be 'harmonious and inclusive'.

Director's note

The idea for *Lái Huí* began with my encounter with Yan Jun, a central figure in Beijing's sonic avant-garde. He introduced me to a vibrant underground scene where artists freely experiment with poetry, music, and unconventional performances—often in private apartments, away from a regime that limits creative freedom.

Yan Jun's ability to bring people together struck me deeply—his spirit and that of his peers reminded me of the musicians I've previously filmed in politically charged contexts. But here, in China, their energy and resourcefulness feel all the more urgent. At a time when the New Silk Road embodies China's ambitions to reshape global connections, these artists set out to forge their own, more personal paths of exchange.

Our film follows them on a train journey from Chengdu to Luxembourg, along the rail routes of the New Silk Road. Inspired by the Situationist *dérive*, the trip is an open exploration: the artists document their encoun-

ters through sound, capturing everything from the roar of freight stations to field recordings and spontaneous collaborations with local performers.

For me, this project is about courage, improvisation, and finding beauty in unexpected places. Though not overtly political, the very premise—non-conformist artists traveling along a geopolitical artery—reveals an inherent tension. This collective journey reflects the creativity and humanity that persist in a world shaped by rapid transformation and growing restrictions on movement.

Company profile

Paul Thiltges Distributions (PTD) is a Luxembourg based film production and world sales company founded in 1993 by Paul Thiltges and jointly run with Adrien Chef. Collaborating with a large range of international partners, the PTD team has built up a considerable network, allowing it to initiate projects or participate in ventures on a worldwide scale as producer, co-producer or sales agent.

The company's film catalogue reflects the diversity of its professional network by including socially impactful documentaries and fiction such as works by Michael Glawogger, Hicham Lasri or Ari Folman, while simultaneously working on fiction film projects with Frederic Jardin or Sylvie Testud. PTD also commits to animated fiction aimed at children, co-producing stories such as *Kirikou & the Sorceress* by Michel Ocelot or *The Blue Arrow* and *A Greyhound of a Girl* by Enzo d'Alò.

These projects have, amongst others, earned Paul Thiltges Distributions numerous nominations and awards at prestigious film festivals around the world such as Locarno, Cannes, San Francisco or Annecy, strengthening its reputation in the international film industry.

Paul Thiltges Distributions was awarded the Golden Bear at the Berlinale 2021 for *Bad Luck Banging or Loony Porn* by Radu Jude.

Director's profile

Antoine Prum is a Berlin-based trained visual artist and filmmaker who has been active in documentary film production since 2005. Representing Luxembourg at the 51st Venice Biennale, Prum later established Ni-Vu-Ni-Connu Productions, an independent film company and record label specializing in alternative musics. His work critically explores the legacy of free improvised music, with a trilogy of acclaimed documentaries: *Sunny's Time Now* (2008), *Taking the Dog for a Walk* (2014), and *Blue for a Moment* (2017).

Nearby Faraway

Sonia Liza Kenterman

Byrd

Greece, Luxembourg, Germany

A Jewish woman's sense of identity is shattered after she seeks out and meets the German father who abandoned her and discovers that her family history was fabricated: who she thought she was is not who she is.



Director

Sonia Liza Kenterman

Writers

Sonia Liza Kenterman,
Tracy Sunderland

Producer

Myrto Stathi

Company

Byrd

Budget

€ 2.935.000
(€ 805.000 in place)

Looking for

Co-producers,
Sales Agents,
Festivals

Project Status

Financing stage

2nd feature**Synopsis**

Nearby Faraway is a poetic exploration of a young woman's quest to find her long-lost father who abandoned her as a child. Anna clings to the few memories of him and devotes her life to preserving her father's legacy as a Jewish survivor from the Holocaust. After her mother's death leaves her grief stricken and orphaned, Anna finds renewed purpose in traveling to Germany in the hopes of finding the only parent she may still have. Anna locates Hans in Dresden: he's still alive! The two spend tender but fragile time together. Hans is a charismatic storyteller and moody eccentric. Anna finds herself drawn to him despite her anger. A relationship between them seems possible. Yet, on the very day they are to visit the Synagogue together, Hans disappears. Anna searches for her father to no avail: each bit of information she uncovers about him capsizes her world. Anna discovers a devastating, incomprehensible truth: her grandfather was a Nazi who euthanized and conducted unspeakable experiments on blind children. Her family isn't Jewish. Her father is an imposter. Anna's entire sense of self is smashed into irretrievable bits. Who she thought she was, is not who she is. There's one thing left to her: the truth. We witness her at the end of the film, now part of a chosen family, rather than the one dictated by birth. Anna will glimpse a future ahead, the possibility of life, of healing. She will live fully, not just survive.

Director's note

This screenplay is the outcome of years of research trying to understand and forgive my father. It's a personal story turned into a fictional one. My father has lied about who he is for his entire life. He's an impostor who fabricated a personal mythology and identity in order to survive truths that were too difficult for him to bear. When my father met my mother in Athens, he introduced himself as a Jewish survivor. He and his family

had survived the Nazis by remaining in hiding in underground bunkers in his hometown in Germany. His blind eye and other wounds on his body were injuries from the war. When he abandoned my mother and me, I didn't see him for 25 years, not until I decided to look for him. In Germany, I met a man living a Jewish life, who talked – and still talks – about his childhood in exquisite detail and with admiration towards his parents. It was only when I met the other members of my German family, that I discovered that they are not really Jewish but Protestants and bit by bit – after many visits – I also discovered that my grandfather was in fact a Nazi who committed war crimes – for which he was never convicted or even accused.

My father couldn't face this terrible reality, so he created a fantasy past as a means to control his future. Reality would have defeated him whereas fiction saved him. I understand this about my father now, I understand that a person can lie to themselves so long it becomes the truth. But I'm still trying to grapple with the ramifications of his twisted, traumatized motives: how could he use one of, if not the, most horrific tragedies in the history of mankind to turn himself into a hero? I'm ashamed, haunted and fascinated by this: and this is the reason why I want to make this film. It's my small, personal story, yes, but it's part of a much larger reckoning with the generational trauma and the legacy of the Holocaust.

Company profile

BYRD is the newly founded Film and TV development and production arm of Topcut Modiano, one of the oldest production houses in Greece. It has also co-produced a number of features that were screened in top tier film festivals including Yorgos Lanthimos' "Kinetta" [Toronto International Film Festival 2005, Berlin International Film Festival 2006], Babis Makridis' "L" [Sundance Film Festival 2012, International Film Festival Rotterdam 2012, Karlovy Vary International Film Festival 2012], Phedon Pa-

pamichael's "Arcadia Lost" [São Paulo International Film Festival 2010] and his most recent "Light Falls"[PÖFF 2023].

Continuing the company's legacy in cinema and co-productions and under the new structure, BYRD has completed documentary "Dogwatch" (Gregoris Rentis, 2022) [Thessaloniki Documentary Film Festival - Silver Alexander award, Visions Du Réel, True/False, Raindance] and short films "Pendulus" (Dimitris Gotsis, 2022) [4 awards at Drama International Short Film Festival] and "Super" (Nikolas Kouloglou, 2023) [Busan International Short FF, PÖFF Shorts, Brussels IFF, HollyShorts, Young Jury Award for best Short film in Cinema Jove Valencia IFF]. BYRD is continually investing in bringing creative minds together to tell engaging stories and is currently developing a slate of feature films and TV series set to be filmed in 2025/2026. BYRD 2023 slate has been funded by Creative Europe Media.

Director's profile

Sonia Liza Kenterman is a Greek/German Film Director and Writer. She studied at The London Film School. Her graduation short film NICOLETA won 15 awards and entered 41 festivals worldwide. Her first feature film TAILOR is a Greek/German/Belgian co-production. It participated at the MFI, Cinemed, Crossroads and Sofia Meetings. Tailor premiered at Tallinn Black Nights. It's been selected by 47 festivals and won 16 awards. Tailor released in cinemas in Germany, Austria, Japan (nominated for Best Foreign Film) Spain and Hong Kong. It will be distributed also in China, Taiwan, Switzerland, Brazil, Slovenia, Turkey and South Korea. It's streaming on HBO, Amazon Prime, Apple TV and MUBI.

Now You See It

Alessandro Leonardi
Open Citadel
United Kingdom

A young physicist on the brink of a sensational discovery grapples with depression and academic setbacks while evading in the strange world of quantum physics. What happens when you venture to the edge of human thought and end up losing your mind?



Director

Alessandro Leonardi

Writer

Alessandro Leonardi

Producer

Alevtina Nepomnyashchikh

Company

Open Citadel

Budget

€ 260.000

(€ 180.000 in place)

Looking forCo-producers,
Financing,
Sales Agents,
Festivals**Project Status**

Post-production

1st feature**Synopsis**

Marios is a theoretical physicist from war-torn Cyprus. He seeks solace in the abstract realms of quantum theory to escape the ugly reality of growing in a displaced family. Little does he know, he becomes part of the new scientific and technological revolution.

While being haunted by the thought of losing everything again, physics becomes a refuge for him - a sanctuary from the ghosts of war and the shadows of depression. His deep yearning to make sense of the world though leads him to question the very foundations of our existence. Will his research into the uncharted territories of physics heal him or unveil an even greater chaos? In a spiral of scattered equations, his research, initially a solitary pursuit, revolves around solving the century-old enigma of merging general relativity with quantum mechanics. Despite his absent minded and introverted demeanor, he will gather some of the brightest quantum physicists in the world to redefine our understanding of reality.

Director's note

Quantum Mechanics is the science behind nuclear explosions, smart phones, particle collisions. But more than that, as a theory of nature, it sketches a hidden reality beyond what we experience, transforming our notion of what is real. A new picture of the world emerges. Reality is not what it seems. Marios and his peers chase a vision—a perfect equation, a thread of meaning woven through the chaos of the cosmos. Yet, time and again, they find themselves stranded at the edge of infinity, bound by the frailty of their own human limits. Science is often viewed as dogmatic and impersonal, seen as the ultimate authority in a world where religion has lost its influence. The prevailing belief is that scientific progress follows a defined path toward an ultimate truth, an ultimate picture of the universe. When I met

Marios, who is developing new ideas that may one day fundamentally change our lives, I was struck by how hopelessly confused he is, and consumed by the long process of building consensus and running endless experiments. I want to give a glimpse into his mind and thought processes, derailed by depression and the fear of failing, and show how science is first and foremost a human endeavor, driven by a need for connection, meaning, community and friendship.

Company profile

Open Citadel is a young award-winning company, dedicated to producing compelling and thought-provoking documentaries that inspire change, and foster a deeper understanding of the world.

'The Lesson' by Elena Horn and 'Pizza, Democracy and The Little Prince' by Alessandro Leonardi were selected to several festivals, including Human Rights Watch Film Festival, Zurich Film Festival, Rhode Island International Film Festival, St.Louis Film Festival, and were honored with multiple awards. Additional details can be found on the company's website: open-citadel.com.

Director's profile

After graduating in Philosophy in Milan, Alessandro moved to London, where he earned a Master's degree in Documentary Practice. His first documentary short 'Generation In Transit' was broadcast by BBC Three. After Brexit, he moved to Berlin, where he became the author and cameraman of numerous prime-time reportages for the public channel ARTE and Spiegel TV. His works explore social phenomena such as the migration crisis and the resurgence of nationalisms in Europe. 'Una Giornata di Silvia M.' was awarded by Torino Piemonte Film Commission and 'Pizza, Democracy & The Little Prince' screened by the UN headquarter and won international awards. He also worked as cinema-

tographer for Netflix documentaries and as story producer on branded documentaries for BBC Storyworks. Some of his work was published on 3Sat, The Guardian, ZDF, SRF and NZZ. He is a Logan Nonfiction and IDFAcademy fellow.

Running with Beasts

Leila Basma

Other Stories

Czech Republic, Lebanon

Amid Lebanon's economic collapse, five high school friends embark on a risky secret plan to afford their dreams. Their bodies are weirdly transforming and they will soon face the unexpected price of growing up.



Director

Leila Basma

Writer

Leila Basma

Producer

Natalia Pavlove

Company

Other Stories

Budget

€ 1.147.000

(€ 35.500 in place)

Looking for

Co-producers,

Financing,

Sales Agents,

Festivals

Project Status

Development

1st feature**Synopsis**

In the midst of the ongoing Lebanese economic crisis, a group of five high schoolers meets one last time after their graduation day to finalize their secret plan, which guarantees to afford their approaching dreams.

Lana, Mira, Omar, James, and Nader each have to face the sudden pressure of stepping into adulthood in a country dwelling in tragedies. On top of struggling with their personal lives, their sexualities, and their relationships, they are also going through inexplicable changes. Their bodies are transforming, their appetite, their tastes, their cravings. They look with envy at their classmate, Rami, who has everything they wish for.

The plan is dangerous and fun, but responsibilities are around the corner. None of them has imagined the consequences of their doing, a big tragedy awaits along a big techno party.

Director's note

Running with Beasts is a film about today's Beirut taken by the tragic economic crisis. It is a portrait of its tired youth, forced to become the darkest and ugliest versions of themselves to be able to survive, yet showcasing how at the core, these young people just want to have fun, explore their sexualities, and accomplish their most basic dreams. This film follows a group of friends who are driven to become thieves as a means of survival. This harsh reality is what coming-of-age looks like in Lebanon today—adulthood often means stepping into a life of crime.

With the sudden change in social class, the streets of Beirut also got invaded by stray dogs, just like these youngsters, left with only a few options to survive. In the film, this symbolism of becoming stray dogs is translated with Magical Realism elements that start with realistic changes in their bodies. Some experience sudden meat cravings, some have jaw pains, hair growth,

a need to bite, and stressful shouting/barking. This is what puts this story on the verge of a genre story. I hope that this genre-bending coming-of-age film connects with anyone who has faced seemingly impossible dreams.

Company profile

Other Stories is a Prague-based production company established in 2021 by producer Natália Pavlove. The company is dedicated to ambitious projects, particularly those by debut and female filmmakers. With a strong focus in international co-productions, Other Stories collaborates with partners across Europe, the Middle East, and Africa. Natalia is EAVE Puentes and EURO-DOC graduate and her latest production, Sea Salt, a Czech-Lebanese-Qatari co-production, premiered in the Official Orizzonti Competition at the Venice Biennale IFF 2023.

Director's profile

Leila is a Lebanese filmmaker and photographer currently based between Beirut and Prague. She holds a BA in Audiovisual Arts from IESAV in Beirut, and an MFA in Film Directing at FAMU. Through her work, she explores the themes of society, youth, womanhood, and identity. Her second-year FAMU short documentary The Adam Basma Project was short-listed for the 48th annual Student Academy Awards (the Student Oscars) after touring various international documentary film festivals. Her graduation film Sea Salt was selected to premiere at the 80th La Biennale Venice International Film Festival in the official Orizzonti Short Film Competition. Leila is currently developing also her feature documentary Dance with me, winner of the Robert Bosch Stiftung development award.

Salvatierra

Gabriele Licchelli, Santiago Raphael Priego
Epica Film, La Cabra Lagarto, Broga Doite Film
Italy, Mexico

Angel Salvatierra comes from a shark fishing community on the beach of Punta Lobos in Todos Santos, Mexico. However, he seeks a path other than the sea to escape the shadows of his loneliness, which draw him back to his addiction and violent past.



Directors

Gabriele Licchelli,
Santiago Raphael Priego

Writers

Gabriele Licchelli,
Santiago Raphael Priego

Producers

Alice Drago,
Paulina Valencia,
Sebastian Castillo,
Andrea Settembrini

Companies

Epica Film,
Mfc Madrefoca Cine,
La Cabra Lagarto,
Broga Doite Film

Budget

€ 400.000
(€ 138.000 in place)

Looking for

Co-producers,
Financing,
Sales Agents,
Festivals

Project Status

Late development,
Financing stage

2nd feature

Synopsis

In Todos Santos, Mexico, a fishing community gathers daily on the beach of Punta Lobos to venture into the open sea in search of sharks. Gomita, El Tieso, Popeye, and Pedro are among the fishermen carrying on this tradition, passed down through generations and practiced by a close-knit group bound by a strong sense of solidarity and brotherhood. However, the community is also deeply affected by drug use and violence.

The largest family in the community is the Salvatierra family, to which Angel, a man in his fifties, belongs. Angel, however, seeks a different path in life, one far from the sea. Raised in an aggressive environment by a violent father, he channeled his anger and frustration into alcohol and crack. In turn, he perpetuated the same violence on his wife and three children, leaving home multiple times.

Over the years, Angel has tried to escape the grip of addiction and rebuild his life, but he has repeatedly fallen back into the depths of dependency. He found a new partner, Laura, who is trying to help him stay clean. Yet the shadows of loneliness and his visceral connection to the beach seem to draw him back toward the abyss.

The abyss—the space beneath the sea where the shark moves, both predator and prey—represents the unconscious realm of our characters in the world above. The deep blue reflects the dynamics of Angel and the fishermen, who are simultaneously perpetrators and victims within a complex interplay of personal choices and community dynamics.

Director's note

One afternoon a few years ago, I began reading Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*. Little by little the book stirred up a series of fragmented ideas and memories from inside me. There was an aspect to the book that stuck in my mind: the old man, Santiago, sees the shark fishermen of his town as young and reckless people, who consider the sea as a masculine force to be defeated and not as a

woman to be loved. I was fascinated by this literary world and began to wonder how these characters would be shaped in today's Mexico, with global markets, drug wars, and the intensification of tourism.

Salvatierra aims to be an accurate, intimate, and poetic portrait of Angel and his family, the Salvatierra, shark fishermen on the beach of Punta Lobos. Their lives are full of contradictions, vices, fear of loss, love, and affection. It is an exercise in observation, through the eye of the camera— that unfolds scene by scene, guiding the audience to discover the characters in their complexities.

Like a piece of a mosaic, each element of the story gains meaning within a more intricate system of connections and causes, creating a rich and emotional narrative. In this film, nothing is black or white, nothing is right or wrong; everything is constantly up for debate, and the characters oscillate between being prey and predators. But unlike the shark, which acts purely on instinct, our characters have the choice to bite or resist the hook of their vicious cycles

Company profile

Epica Film is a production company based in Piemonte, founded in 2014. Storytelling is at the core of their creative process. They produce documentaries and fiction, always seeking an experimental approach. Their films have been financed by regional and national funds and awarded at many international festivals. Epica Film developed the documentary "Aurora" by Giuseppe Bisceglia, distributed in Italy, the UK, and the USA through Amazon Prime Video until December 2023. They produced the short film "MONO," directed by Chiara Troisi, developed at the Biennale College Cinema of Venice – VR section. The short premiered at the Venice Film Festival — Venice Immersive in 2022, then screened at Filmmaker Milan (Best VR Short), NewImagines Festival in Paris, and Kaohsiung Film Festival XR. In 2022, Epica Film produced "Go, Friend, Go," co-produced with Broga Doite Film (Italy), Brush & Bow (UK), Border Violence Monitoring Network (Germany). and supported

by the Piemonte Doc Film Fund. After its premiere at the 63rd Festival dei Popoli (winner of the Home Video Distribution Doc award), it was selected by the 32nd FESCAAAL (awarded Best Film in the E'extra competition), Crossing Europe Film Festival in Linz, and Karama Human Rights Film Festival (Amman, Jordan). Epica Film also creates and supervises cinema training projects for Erasmus Plus and several Italian universities.

Director's profile

Santiago Raphael Priego (1996, Mexico) is a filmmaker and visual artist with a particular interest in non-fiction. He moved to Europe to develop his storytelling skills. He attended Scuola Holden, where he co-directed *Arca Hotel*, his diploma film, which was selected at Festival dei Popoli. He then moved to London to pursue a bachelor's degree in Anthropology and Media at Goldsmiths University. Over the past few years, he has embarked on numerous human experiences, seeking new stories and refining his artistic style. He is currently working as a freelance professional in Mexico City, taking on different roles in the directing department for commercials and TV series.

Gabriele Licchelli (1993, Italy) is a director and editor. He comes from a small village in southern Italy and moved to Turin to complete his education in cinema studies at Scuola Holden. His diploma film, *Arca Hotel*, was selected at Festival dei Popoli.

In 2019, his short film *Anche gli uomini hanno fame* premiered at IDFA and went on to be selected at MakeDox, FEST, ShorTS, and MedFilm Festival. In 2021, he co-wrote *IO|OI*, a short dance film, which premiered at Torino Film Festival and was subsequently selected at Short Waves Festival, Aesthetica Film Festival. In 2022, he co-directed and edited *Go, Friend, Go*, which premiered at Festival dei Popoli and was selected for FESCAAAL, Crossing Europe, Festival Jean Rouch, among others. In 2024, he attended a workshop with Gianfranco Rosi at EICTV in Cuba.

Schrödinger

Sergo Kibus

Rebel Frame

Estonia, France, Belgium

An exploration of utter uncertainty and joy of existence through the eyes of a domestic cat.



Director

Sergo Kibus

Writer

Sergo Kibus

Producer

Kadriann Kibus

Company

Rebel Frame

Budget

€ 313.923

(€ 238.578 in place)

Looking forCo-producers,
Financing,
Sales Agents,
Festivals**Project Status**Pre-production,
Financing stage**Synopsis**

In a small apartment, a domestic cat leads a carefree life with her human, an artist working from the comfort of his home. There is a deep connection and a secure routine between the animal and the man. Although their life seems idyllic, the man struggles daily – something is wrong with his health. After an ordinary day filled with usual routines, the cat's safe realities shatter when her human collapses and remains lying on the floor. The friendly apartment becomes a prison, nightmarish confusion and anxiety flood over the cat. As the man's body is lying on the floor, the art he has created starts to haunt the cat. Trapped in the apartment, a place that brought feelings of joy and safety, a place that has now become just a sealed box, how will the animal accept this new reality?

Beauty in both existence and non-existence, compassion for other beings, and fragility of life are the underlying themes of this oil painted animated film, which is inspired by thought experiments of quantum physics, deconstructionist philosophy of Jacques Derrida, and Claude Monet's impressionist paintings, especially the painting of his wife, "Camille on Her Deathbed" (1879).

Director's note

During my short life I have experienced a lot of uncertainty, the passing of family members and my own serious health struggles. But all those struggles, albeit hard to process at first, ultimately made me appreciate all facets of life. I learned to see lush colors and uniqueness even in tough situations. When one accepts the inevitability of death, life gains more meaning. Without darkness, light loses its power and purpose. Quantum physics shows us that also the natural world is not so defined – a particle can become a wave and vice versa, depending on the presence or absence of an observer. Erwin Schrödinger (1887-1961), an influential theoretical physicist of quantum mechanics, is famous in popular culture for his thought experiment. He imagined a human observing a closed box with a cat placed inside, and

by the law of quantum superposition the cat is both dead and alive at the same time. In my film, I want to deconstruct this experiment. The main character of the film is a cat who is living with a human in a studio apartment, a metaphorical box. The human has a heart condition and passes away in the first half of the film, leaving the cat to deal with grief and uncertainty in a way animals seem to know best - by adapting to the moment. Through animal gaze, I wish to bring a new emotional perspective to what our life really means and what we leave behind.

Company profile

Rebel Frame is an Estonian film studio focused on animation and documentary production. It is run by a producer and documentary director Kadriann Kibus along with animation director and writer Sergo Kibus. Rebel Frame currently has a feature-length documentary "A Place Like Home" (ESoDoc 2020, Sheffield MeetMarket 2024) in production, as well as multiple animated shorts in development, pre-production, or production. For example: oil painted animation "Schrödinger" by Sergo Kibus, puppet stop-motion "Glass Elephants" by Vykintas Labanauskas and Dominyka Adomaitytė (LT/EE), and "Winter in March" (stop-motion and digital 2D, EE/AR) by Natalia Mirzoyan. In 2023 we finished "Point and Line to Cosmos" by Pablo Ballarin (PÖFF Shorts national competition, Turku FF, Fest Anča, Stop Trik etc.) and just recently, a digital cut-out "The Dog" by Kaspar Jancis. We have established long-term relationships with local talent and are welcoming international co-productions and collaborations.

Director's profile

Sergo Kibus (previously Sergei Kibus) is an animation director, screenwriter, and a cinematographer. He is a co-founder of the film studio Rebel Frame.

Sergo holds degrees in photography and audiovisual media and is currently pursuing a master's degree in "Asian Politics and Societies". As an academic lecturer he has

held courses in animation, scriptwriting, and photography. His breakthrough as a director was an award-winning animated short "Teofrastus" (2019, Nukufilm). The film has been screened at more than 40 film festivals and received 15 awards. In 2022, he directed a stop-motion horror short "The Undertaker". His new film "Schrödinger", currently in pre-production, won at the Baltic Pitching Forum and participated in the EURO CONNECTION 2022 at the Clermont-Ferrand Film Festival.

Soma

Miklós Keleti

Velvet Films

Belgium, Estonia, Netherlands

*A scientist and his primatologist wife
explore new methods to help their son
with a rare language disorder.*



Director

Miklós Keleti

Writers

Miklós Keleti,
Jon Goldman

Producer

Sebastian Schelenz

Company

Velvet Films

Budget

€ 2.638.147
(€ 1.641.647 in place)

Looking for

Co-producers,
Financing,
Festivals

Project Status

Financing stage

1st feature

Synopsis

PAUL is a renowned neuroscientist who focuses his research on brain diseases and enhancing cognitive capabilities. When his son THEO is diagnosed with a rare language disorder, Paul puts all his energy in pursuing the research into a new drug that could help Theo.

SARAH, Paul's ethologist wife believes in the power of nature and a strong emotional bond. She manages to establish a form of communication with Theo through sign language and arranges to work from home, continuing her research with the young chimpanzee ALBERT. Albert becomes Theo's best friend. However, both parents are struggling with the evolution of their son's handicap and progress seems slow.

This is when Paul's work on the experimental drug "Soma" is showing progress: the product hugely increases the language and communication abilities on chimpanzees. But time is slipping away for Paul to treat his son. In an attempt to make things move faster, Paul breaches protocol. The lab immediately halts the drug trial and suspends him.

Unwilling to let go, Paul secretly continues the research from home, testing an enhanced version of Soma on Albert. The chimp's behaviour changes, and Paul notices major improvements in the communication between Albert and Theo. The drug seems to help Albert evolve towards humanlike consciousness. In an ecstatic moment, Albert shares the product with Theo, who also shows signs of progress. But things quickly take a turn for the worse when Albert causes an accident involving Theo.

Director's note

The original idea for this project was to deal with an important subject: the conflict between human nature and technological evolution: How will mankind adapt and accept that new (bio)technologies can change and affect their inherited condition?

To give life to this large theme, I wanted to focus the story on a more personal level: The tale of a neuroscientist who

is obsessed with his research to improve humanity. Paul is a convinced rational materialist and cannot accept the illness of his child who is diagnosed with a rare form of speech disorder. He firmly believes in science as the only way to push boundaries and eventually succeeds to develop a drug to cure his son.

Dealing with this subject through science-fiction and within a tense family drama is my approach. The film is set in a very near future but doesn't specify a geographical area mainly to make the story more universal.

The viewer will experience the impact of scientific discoveries on the personal and intimate scale of family. This heightens the tension and dramatizes the experiment the characters are locked in. Restraining the environment of the story to few locations and focusing on the characters is adding a claustrophobic effect.

Nature (animals, landscapes, organic imagery) plays a central part in the film and illustrates the inner world of the characters. The use of different form of languages (sign language, animal behaviour) shows how these characters can succeed or fail to connect.

Company profile

Velvet Films was created in 2016 by Sebastian Schelenz, producer and Christophe Jouret, entrepreneur. In May 2017 André Sommerlatte joined the team as associate producer.

Velvet Films focalizes on the development and the production of international feature films, as well as the emergence of Belgian filmmakers. Our desire is to work with ambitious partners to craft films with strong subjects and a unique vision. Without wanting to limit itself to a genre, Velvet Films perceives itself as a hub of exchange between talents and cultures, aiming to produce diversified films with high quality content.

Velvet Films credits include "Everybody Loves Touda" (2024) by Nabil Ayouch (Cannes Premiere 2024), "The Lost Children" (2023) by Michèle Jacob (Karlovy Vary Interna-

tional Film Festival) "The Blue Caftan" (2022) by Maryam Touzani (FIPRESCI Award - Un Certain Regard 2022), "Employee of the Month" (2021) by Veronique Jadin (Tribeca Film Festival), the futuristic film "Underdogs" (2020) by Chino Moya (Fantasia Festival, Tallin Black Nights), the ZDF Studios series "The Window" (2022) and "Aspergirl" (2023) for OCS (Best Actor Award at Series Mania).

Director's profile

Miklós Keleti graduated from the directing department of Belgian Film School INSAS. His graduation film "Back Against the Wall" and his following short-film "Patterns" won multiple awards around the world and were screened at Sitges, Seattle, Shanghai IFF, Rhode Island, Bristol, Brest among others. "Back Against the Wall" was nominated for Best Short Film at Les Magritte du Cinéma (Belgian Academy Awards). He has received script writing support for the psychological thriller "Watching You Sleep" from the Belgian National Fund Wallonia-Brussels Federation, which has also been selected to Atelier Grand Nord. Miklós is also co-creator of the sci-fi tv series "BioDome" which has been featured among the 5 finalists of the OCS-SACD Series Fund Contest. His first feature "Soma" is an English language sci-fi film, to be co-produced by Belgian, Estonia and Holland.

Tales of Fruits and Monsters

Gregor Božič
Nosorogi
Slovenia, France

After his mother's death, Sergej sets out on a journey to find a rare pear from her childhood. From the abandoned Mediterranean orchards to the haunted forests in Japan, the quest eventually brings him to the labyrinths of his own imagination.



Director

Gregor Božič

Writers

Gregor Božič,
Marina Gumzi

Producer

Marina Gumzi

Company

Nosorogi

Budget

€ 1.350.000
(€ 720.000 in place)

Looking for

Co-producers,
Financing,
Sales Agents

Project Status

Financing stage

2nd feature**Synopsis**

Just before she dies, Sergej's mother starts dreaming of a pear tree from her childhood. Sergej returns to his hometown on the Slovene-Italian border and sets out to find the tree. But the task turns out to be more challenging than expected as even the oldest farmers have no clue about what he's looking for. Sergej resorts to the regional archives and discovers a curious link between a Yugoslav botanist from the 1960s, who appeared to be on a quest for the same variety, and a paramilitary group that controlled the border after the 2nd World War. He shares his discoveries on the Internet, catching the interest of a Japanese scientist named Nobuko. Each on their side of the world, Sergej and Nobuko start researching the mysterious pear, until one day Nobuko suddenly stops writing. Her disappearance spirals Sergej into anxiousness, slowly warping his perception of reality. He impulsively steals money from a friend and sets off to Japan.

Director's note

After graduating from film school, I became intrigued by my grandmother's homeland: sunny hills in the west of Slovenia. The abundant Mediterranean vegetation, mild climate and vicinity to the coast created a magical atmosphere so that despite economic challenges, life in this region always felt hopeful. Curious about the nature of this joy, I started studying fruit cultivation and its connection to the region's identity. My fascination with fruits and orchards opened doors to extraordinarily convivial experiences with the locals who shared with me countless stories from their and their ancestor's lives. I learned to appreciate the way fruit was never just a source of livelihood, but, via expectation and memory, also generated for the community the sense of pride, beauty and hope. Over the next ten years, I conducted field research on traditional fruit cultivation in the Italo-Slovenian border areas, which resulted in an illustrated book cataloguing over 60 endemic fruit varieties. (...) Through my research, I eventually recognised the link

between my interest in film and fruit. Initially considering a reportage-style documentary, after several script revisions, it became clear that the world I wanted to construct with the film about fruit needed more room for fiction to also explore perception, imagination and wonder.

Company profile

Founded by a group of young filmmakers in 2008, Nosorogi is a Ljubljana-based studio specialising in development and production of independent short and feature films, in particular such that blur the line between fiction and documentary. Nosorogi provides comprehensive support for filmmakers' creative pursuits, approaching each production as a research initiative while fostering international cooperation to eventually reach different art-house audiences across the globe. Moreover, working on a small and carefully selected slate, the company focuses on continuously supporting emerging filmmakers and on increasing the importance of the overall sustainability and solidarity within creative and administration processes. Nosorogi's filmography includes titles such as Common Pear (Gregor Božič, 2025), Fiume o morte! (Igor Bezinović, 2025), Little Trouble Girls (Urška Djukić, 2025), Stories from the Chestnut Woods (Gregor Božič, 2019), Playing Men (Matjaž Ivanišin, 2017) and Little Houses (Darko Sinko & Matjaž Ivanišin, 2015).

Director's profile

Director, scriptwriter and cinematographer. After graduating from film schools in Ljubljana and DFFB Berlin, Gregor enrolled in the postgraduate program at Le Fresnoy - Studio national des arts contemporains in France. His debut fiction STORIES FROM THE CHESTNUT WOODS was premiered at TIFF in Toronto in 2019 and screened at festivals all across the world. As a director of photography, he regularly collaborates with filmmakers from across the region, most notably with Nebojša Sljepčević (The Man Who Could not Remain Silent, 2024), Matjaž Ivanišin

(Playing Men, 2017, Oroslan, 2021) and Igor Bezinović (Fiume O Mortel!). His work has been presented at festivals in Cannes, Toronto, Locarno, Rotterdam, New York, Tallinn, Marseille, Nara, Shanghai and other. Since 2008, next to working on film, Gregor has also been passionately researching old and endemic fruit varieties. Collaborating with farmers from the Italo-Slovene borderland, in 2013 he planted a gene-bank orchard in Goriška brda and wrote a book on the cultural heritage of the found varieties of the Slovene-Italian borderland.

Twisted

Martina Sarritzu, Giorgia Malatrasi
Rodaggio
Italy

Giada is an insecure pre-teen dealing with the awkwardness of her age. Due to severe scoliosis she is forced to wear a bulky brace for 16 hours a day. Sharing this secret with the boy she likes will turn her difference into an unexpected super-power.



Directors

Martina Sarritzu,
Giorgia Malatrasi

Writers

Martina Sarritzu,
Giorgia Malatrasi

Producer

Silva Fedrigo

Company

Rodaggio

Budget

€ 100.000
(€ 50.000 in place)

Looking for

Co-producers,
Financing,
Sales Agent,
Festivals

Project Status

Financing stage

Synopsis

Giada is an insecure 13 years old girl living in the countryside near the Adriatic Riviera, dealing with the horrible changes of her age: pimples sprouting out on her face, avoiding to smile openly because of her dental braces and trying not to seem the uncoolest of her school. She does not get along with the girls in her class, but there are two boys she can call friends. They like to show off the swear words they know and get up to mischief.

Giada's life changes when she is unexpectedly diagnosed with severe scoliosis. Her doctor prescribes a bulky plastic brace, which must be worn for 16 hours a day. Seemingly unaware of just how much of an ordeal this is for her daughter Giada's mother asks her to pick the brace up herself at the hospital. Moreover, the orthopedic technician who has to take her brace cast turns out to be slimy and he even mess around her breast more than necessary. Things go from bad to worse when she is harassed by a group of football supporters on the train that takes her home.

Giada desperately tries to keep the brace hidden from the rest of the world. She also invents excuses not to leave the house, spiraling in overly sad, almost hallucinatory thoughts. But despite her best efforts, she can't keep the embarrassing secret hidden from her friends forever. Yet their reaction will change her perception of her body and their friendship forever. Turning a hateful difference into a new kind of superpower.

Director's note

When I was in the sixth grade, the pediatrician told me: your back is twisting. A couple of months later I went back to him for a checkup. The body at that age grows precipitously: I was already 10 centimeters taller and my spine was following his own path, heedless of the norm. Mine was an "italic shaped scoliosis", so called since it imitated the curves of the Italian peninsula. I would have needed a Lyonais corset.

That was just yet another mess caused by my body. Everything in me was increasing: my size, my stink, and my

shyness, which was becoming more and more cumbersome. I felt a sense of injustice for that plastic armor. Why me of all people? I didn't know anyone in school who wore a brace, so there were two possibilities: either I was a rare animal, or it was something that had to be kept secret in one's own room.

The most important thing for me became hiding that corset, which could make me weak and ridiculous in the eyes of the others. Now it seems such an easy thing to be able to respond to aesthetic criticism in a firm way and claim my diversity, which over the years has become a workhorse. I would have liked to find more stories of nonconforming characters in my path, teenagers, who dealt with feeling "uncool" in an original, honest and funny way. I would have realized earlier that I was not a tragedy. That is why "Twisted" exists. And it's rooted in a lived experience, because I believe that a story is the more truthful, the more we know every dark corner of it.

Company profile

Rodaggio is a film production and distribution company based in Bologna, Italy, devoted to promote and foster hidden stories and to develop film restoration and unusual film archive related project.

In the last years it has distributed, among the others, "9 Doigts / 9 Fingers" by the french musician, writer and director F.J. Ossang, winner of the Silver Pardo at the 2019 Locarno Film Festival, and the documentary "The Disappearance of My Mother" by Beniamino Barrese, shortlisted at the 2020 European Film Awards, in the Official Selection of the 2019 Sundance Film Festival, also winner of The Women in Film Award, the Best Film Award at Cinédoc-Tbilisi 2019, the Gran Jury Award at the Global Cinema Film Festival Of Boston 2019, the Cinema Eye Honour Award as Best Debut Feature in 2020.

Its co-founder is also a teacher for the Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia in Rome in the Film restoration and Film Heritage Management course.

In 2021 the company started its production activity with its

first feature documentary "LIGHTS OFF" by Mattia Epifani supported by the Emilia Romagna Film Commission both for development and production and by national MIC funds, with also a pre-sales agreement with Sky Cinema, now going to be released. The short movie "Twisted" by Martina Sarritzu and Giorgia Malatrasi, with also the experienced animator Dalila Rovazzani attached to the project as animation director, is the company's first animated production.

Director's profile

Martina Sarritzu is a cartoonist and illustrator combining Social Studies with her education at the Academy of Fine Arts. Her works focus on kitsch, bodies and tragicomic events. VACANZE IN SCATOLA (Canicola Edizioni), illustrated by her and written by Tuono Pettinato, won at Treviso Comic Book Festival 2020 the Award for Best Comics for Young Readers. In 2021 she took part in A.M.A.R.E. (Canicola Edizioni), a five-voice women's anthology that explores the theme of adolescence and won the Lucca Comics & Games Award as Best Short Story. In 2022, SCIAME was published by Canicola Edizioni: the book is a collection of six stories that get to the heart of adolescence and talk about changing bodies, absolute friendships, bewilderment and daily struggles.

In 2024, her first graphic novel will be released with Minimum Fax's comics series.

Giorgia Malatrasi is an author and film maker living between Germany and Italy. After graduating in Communication, she earned a MA in Still and Set Photography and worked for 10 years as creative producer for VICEMedia. She specialized in short and medium length documentary formats. Her first feature film as an author "Searching Eva" took part at Berlinale Talents and premiered at the '19 Berlin Film Fest; the documentary has been selected in several film festivals around the world and broadcasted by ZDF in Germany. At the moment she's working to the development of a new feature length documentary and a TV serie.

Under the Yellow Sky

Maryna Nazarenko

Undi Tead

Estonia, Ukraine, Latvia

The film “Under the yellow sky” is a documentary story about the life and survival of civilians in a frontline city during a full-scale war, their cohesion, resilience, and the desperately fast growing up of children at the peak of frontline activity



Director

Maryna Nazarenko

Writer

Maryna Nazarenko

Producer

Edina Csüllög

Company

Undi Tead

Budget

€ 114.500

(€ 55.500 in place)

Looking forCo-producers,
Financing**Project Status**

Development

2nd feature**Synopsis**

There is a thick curtain of yellow smoke over the city of Zaporizhia. The air is critically polluted by hazardous emissions from industrial enterprises. The front line is 45 kilometers away. All state resources are thrown into military defense, the ecology is in decline. Zaporizhia is daily subjected to attacks by the Russian army using air bombs, ballistic missiles, drones. Air raid sirens sound in the city almost around the clock. Residents of the frontline city of Zaporizhia are trying to live in conditions of constant shelling and catastrophically polluted air, finding motivation for their lives in their children, in continuous assistance to the military. When the front line is so close - every resident of the city today is a volunteer.

Director's note

Against the backdrop of a huge variety of Ukrainian films about the war today, my film "Under the Yellow Sky" does not carry images of blood and death, it does not broadcast events on the battlefield. This film exposes the impact of war on a child's soul and shows the changes in the child's psyche that this war brings.

The root of this film, the heart of this film is children in a front-line city. Children are the most important thing for any country, they are the future of any country. Children should be carefree, joyful, learn about this world through school and games. They should absorb new information like a sponge. But the soul of a Ukrainian child today is pumice stone. This soul has lost sensitivity. It is an aged soul in the body of a child. Children calmly and emotionlessly eat cookies as adults discuss the torn bodies of war victims. These children unmistakably distinguish the sounds of a drone

from the sounds of a flying rocket. They skilfully cope with field stripping pistols and machine guns. In just two and a half years, children have ceased to be afraid of war and perceive war as a habitual NORM of life. This trauma of the child's psyche is now at the level of the genetic code (DNA). Ukraine is a vivid example of the fact that this can happen to children in any developed country in the modern world, if there is an aggressor neighbor nearby.

Company profile

Fenixfilm is film company established 2004.

PRODUCTIONS

2023 *WOMEN WITHOUT MAN*,
documentary, dir. Maryna Nazarenko

2023 *GIRLS OF 1960*, documentary, dir Una Celma

2022 *NEON SPRING*, feature film, director Matiss Kaza,
Latvia, distribution Magnolia films international

2022 *SISTERS*, feature film, director Linda Olte, Latvia,
Italy (HBO Europa) prizes as best feature Warsaw film festival,
Bolzano film festival, Golden Linden IFF

2019 *WHERE THE ROAD LEADS*, feature film, director
Matiss Kaza, Latvia, Italy

2018 *WANDERERS*, documentary, Latvia

2018 *MEYERHOLDS FLIGHT*, short 2018.

2016 *ONE TICKET PLEASE*, documentary, dir, Matiss
Kaza 2016.gads 78', Latvia/USA Distribution FILMDELIGHTS,
Austria; Festivals Goteborg IFF, Tempo Stockholm,
Krakov Iff, Kerala /India, New York film festival Winter
film festival, European film festival EUOFF China, Film festival
Milenium Belgium FLahertiana, Russia, BELDOCS,
Serbia Awards New Doc prize Tempo film festival Sweden,
New Perspective Award, New York

2014 *SHORT DAY*, documentary 28'; Latvian Television,
dir Una Celma

2013 *MY FAMILY TREE*, documentary 83'; Latvia

Jihava IIF baltis Sea docs

2012 *MONTH WITH THE WITCHES*, documentary, 97'

2009 *WOMAN AND THE GUARDS*, documentary, Latvia/Sweden, 52'; Milenim film festival

THE MAN WITH 150000 USD PRIZE ON HIS HEAD,
Documentary, 30'.

2008 *FINDING ELVIS*, feature film 78'; director Una Celma

2007 *DUNT TALK ABOUT IT* feature film, 100',

Director's profile

Maryna Nazarenko is a Ukrainian scriptwriter and film director, graduated from Kyiv National University of Culture and Arts with a degree in Film and TV Production:

2009 - 2014 Director (Master's degree)

2003 - 2007 TV Journalist (Bachelor)

She worked as a journalist, screenwriter, and TV show director for major Ukrainian television companies as STARLIGHT MEDIA PRODUCTION(2008 - 2017),1+1 MEDIA PRODUCTION (2017-2018),4K PRODUCTION(2018 - 2019)

Due to the Russian-Ukrainian war, she was forced to temporarily move to a safe country. Currently director is splitting her time between Ukraine and Latvia and continues to create her films about Ukraine.

War Fever

Ineke Smits

Volya Films

Netherlands, France

Time and again, British deminer Chris Garrett and American para-medic Courtney Pollock risk their lives in wars that aren't their own. Despite its intrinsic horror, what makes war so addictive? Will the birth of their daughter Reed change things?



DANGER



MINES

Director

Ineke Smits

Writers

Ineke Smits,
Jeroen Stout

Producers

Fleur Knopperts,
Denis Vaslin,
Victor Ede

Company

Volya Films

Budget

€ 883.718
(€ 84.718 in place)

Looking for

Co-producers,
Financing,
Sales Agents,
Festivals

Project Status

Financing stage

Synopsis

Chris, a tree surgeon from the Isle of Man, learned de-mining during the Karen guerrilla war against Myanmar's military regime. Later, his comrades-in-arms called him to the Donbas. In 2015, he narrowly escaped death behind enemy lines and left traumatized. He returned after an urgent call for help in Ukraine in 2022. Back in the warzone, he built a team of international volunteers, clearing mines near front lines, removing booby traps in liberated areas, and conducting training in Kyiv and across Europe.

Courtney enlisted in the U.S. Army to fulfill her dream of becoming an F-16 pilot but was grounded by a heart defect and became a ground controller. After six pilots under her watch were killed in Afghanistan, she developed PTSD and retrained as a paramedic, believing that giving aid would help her regain control. In 2023, she traveled to Bakhmut with her superior, Pete Reed. Their NGO provided first-line aid, evacuated civilians, and delivered medicine. A month later, she met Chris. Shortly after their first "romantic night," Pete's ambulance was hit by a Russian missile. With Bakhmut in chaos, Courtney discovered she was pregnant. To her surprise, Chris acknowledged the child and left the warzone. For a moment, they seemed ready to start anew. But at Pete's memorial, they vowed to continue his work. Naming their baby Reed, they founded the NGO 'Prevail.' By May 2024, they returned to Kyiv with Reed in a Maxi-Cosi among medical supplies, demining gear, and survival kits.

Director's note

War Fever's central -and controversial- question "How can something as horrific as war be addictive?" is embodied by British deminer Chris Garrett (40) and American paramedic Courtney Pollock (40). They volunteer in wars that are not theirs, they don't care about gunplay and financially they depend on donations they manage to scrape together through crowdfunding. What drives them?

For Chris, an adopted child, the warzone is where he is accepted as he is. Dismantling an explosive requires full con-

centration on the square meter in front of him; his life depends on cutting the right wire. For Courtney, the ability to save lives through direct actions makes up for her trauma inflicted by her military past. For both, the warzone makes them feel at home and understood. Their craving for a purpose in life, brotherhood and adrenaline are motives an audience can identify with.

The warzone requires a wandering day-to-day existence where you never know what fate will bring next. This life that gives Chris and Courtney so much satisfaction is turned upside down by the - equally unexpected - birth of baby Reed, the innocent antagonist of this story. Conceived during a one-night stand Reed now claims parents and a future, sharpening the dilemma Chris and Courtney must face: to remain in the warzone saving lives or to choose for their daughter's future.

We developed a style combining immersive and cinematic styles, switching from raw character focus to their warzone's wider reality.

Company profile

Volya Films is a Rotterdam based film production company that produces high quality feature films, documentaries and animations for the national and international market, mainly as international co-productions. Our films tell unexpected stories with an original style or perspective. Recent titles are CITY OF WIND, 90', Lkhagvadulam Purev-Ochir, Venice Film Festival 2023, YOUTH (SPRING) (Wang Bing, 2023, Cannes Film Festival - Official Selection 2023), LUKA (Jessica Woodworth, 2023, Big Screen Competition IFFR 2023), ARNOLD IS A MODEL STUDENT (2022, Sorayos Prapapan, Locarno Film Festival Cineasti del presente selection 2022, IFFR 2023, Winner Grand Prix Five Flavours Asian Film Festival), and TOTEM (Sander Burger, 2022, Opening Film Cinekid Festival, Winner of 17 Awards and selected for 27 festivals).

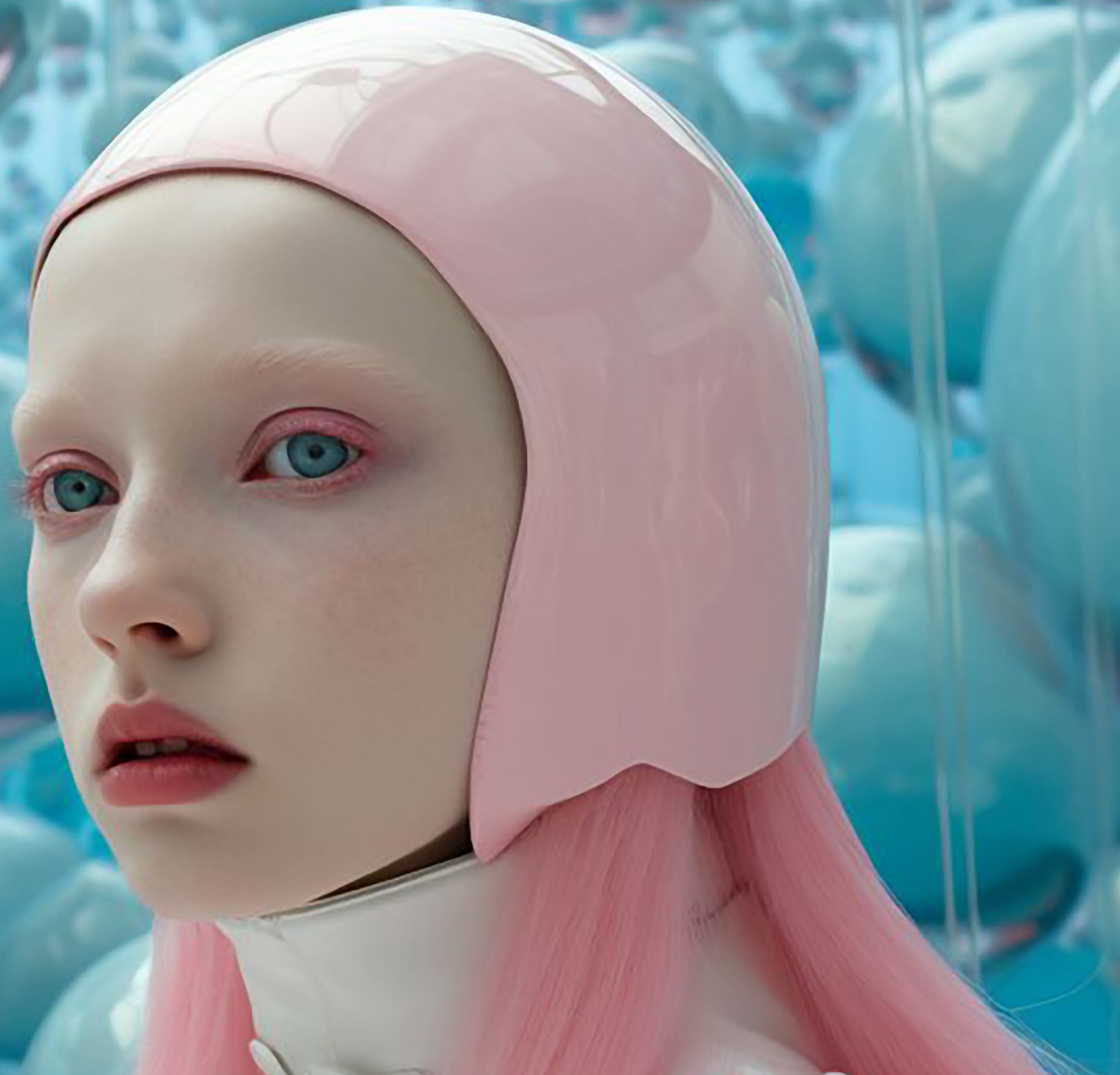
Volya Films is a member of the ACE, EAVE and Eurodoc networks, the European Film Academy and the NAPA.

Director's profile

Ineke Smits (1960, Netherlands) graduated as a photographer and video artist from the Rotterdam Art Academy in 1984. Afterwards, she obtained a master's degree in film directing and script writing from the National Film and Television School in England. She collaborated with Dutch writer Arthur Japin on a few short fiction films; their first feature fiction, Magonia (2001), was awarded Best Film at Bogotá Film Festival and was in competition at IFFR, San Sebastian, Toronto, Karlovy Vary and many other festivals worldwide. Smits received part of her training as a filmmaker in Poland and she lived and worked for many years in Georgia. She is heavily influenced by Eastern European Cinema and by the emphasis on the image that artists from Eastern Europe put in their work. Her second feature, De vliegenierster van Kazbek/The Aviatrix of Kazbek, was the closing film at IFFR in 2010 and it received a nomination for the European Film Awards.

Last Stop Trieste

5 creative documentary projects
in a stage of fine-cut



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Becoming Roosi

Margit Lillak

Tiny Desk Productions

Estonia, Germany

Deep, funny and provocative story of a girl who escaped a hippy eco-commune as a child and became a conformist cosmopolitan citizen. Who will save the planet if not the last generation?



60/2 x 12.00 x 12

Director

Margit Lillak

Writer

Margit Lillak

Producer

Margit Lillak

Company

Tiny Desk Productions

Budget

€ 360.000

(€ 360.000 in place)

Looking for

Gap-financing,
Festival Release,
Sales Agent

Project Status

Final cut

Synopsis

The filmmaker follows a girl, Roosii, for 10 years from age 8-18. She grew up as the child of an activist. She struggles to cope with climate grief and guilt. She is torn between becoming an activist herself vs finding her own life path through creativity and enjoying the teenage ecstasy. When she was 8, her family moved to an eco village. Her mother Liina was the frontwoman of the commune. Roosii hated her childhood there. Now, eight years later, Roosii is stepping in the footprints of her mom. Her intelligence and vocalness are rare for her age, expressing raw truths for the whole Z generation. We see the archetypal conflict in a mother and daughter relationship, what makes it unusual is her special heritage, I have the archival footage from the past – that helps us understand the present future life choices of the protagonist. Moving through the bottleneck of adolescence the film is full of humor and irony. Comic situations between adolescence and parents. The arch of the film is her tense relationship with both her parents and finding her place in this world.

Director's note

I started this longitudinal film in 2014, as the protagonist Roosii was a side character in my previous feature film The Circle. I realized at the editing table, that I was unconsciously obsessed with following this provocative girl already 10 years ago. I was already then making a film about her. The reason is probably my own search for understanding why I behave as I do and why my relations with my parents have been so challenging. And to get to the bottom of how we are formed into the personalities who we are. In the film I shift my focus on the teenager's point of view and then again to the grownups' POV. Because I am equally interested in both. With the access I have had over the years, the footage is intimate, raw and emotional. I will use three

elements – the adolescence years as “present” day; childhood in the commune as archive through associations; Roosii's video diary and videos of performance arts. We play with the structural elements in a non linear way following a leitmotif backbone and elements that bind the story together. The form of the film is as rebellious as the character herself. In the film I use humor as a balancing dramaturgical element, as self-irony is both of ours' coping mechanism.

Company profile

Tiny Desk Productions is an independent production company founded in 2022 by Margit Lillak.

The first feature length documentary in production is BECOMING ROOSII in collaboration with German Dirk Manthey films and SWR/ARTE.

The founder Margit Lillak has directed and co-produced 2 feature length and 3 short documentaries.

In 2019, her second documentary feature THE CIRCLE premiered at Ji.hlava IDFF and travelled over thirty festivals around the globe. THE CIRCLE was nominated for the Best documentary at Estonian Film and TV awards. 2020 Margit received the annual prize for outstanding social documentary film by Estonian Cultural Endowment. She has enrolled in several international workshops and masterclasses (Esodoc, Exoriente). She won the pitching prize at Vision du Reel 2022 for BECOMING ROOSII.

Director's profile

MARGIT LILLAK graduated from the Estonian Academy of Art as a set designer in 1999 and went to work as director of animated films at the Multifilm studio. In 2002, Margit graduated from the Royal Holloway College in England with a MA degree in screenwriting. In 2022 Margit founded her own production company Tiny Desk Productions, and is working on “Becoming

Roosii” as her first feature length film as a producer in collaboration with German Dirk Manthey films and SWR/ARTE. Margit participated with the project in Esodoc and Exoriente training programs and won the pitching prize in Vision Du Reel 2022. Besides these trainings she also pitched at East Doc Forum and Baltic Sea docs at 2024.,Dok Preview international at DokLeipzig 2024.

She has directed and produced several short documentaries. In 2012 she directed her first feature-length documentary “40+2 weeks” as a first-person film about her own pregnancy and home-birth.

“The Circle” is her second feature-length film that follows a newly formed eco-community. The film premiered at Ji.hlava IDFF 2019. It was also the opening film at Docpoint Tallinn in 2020, Then went to many international film festivals and screenings. The film gained a lot of attention in Estonian media and was popular with domestic audiences. Margit received an annual prize for best documentary from the Estonian Cultural Endowment.

Divia

Dmytro Hreshko

Gogol Film, Up Ua Studio, Valk Productions

Poland, Ukraine, Netherlands

A visually and sound driven immersive journey that portrays Ukrainian landscape across three distinct periods: a period of harmony, the unsettling rupture caused by Russian aggression, and the gradual process of its regeneration.



Director

Dmytro Hreshko

Writer

Dmytro Hreshko

Producers

Polina Herman,
Glib Lukianets,
Richard Valk

Companies

Gogol Film,
Up Ua Studio,
Valk Productions

Budget

€ 445.200
(€ 415.200 in place)

Looking for

Festival Release,
Sales Agent

Project Status

Final cut

Synopsis

Divia documentary reveals Ukraine's harrowing journey through unprecedented Russian aggression and its haunting aftermath: forests reduced to ash, fields damaged by explosions, and the haunting presence of abandoned military wreckage amidst treacherous minefields. Amidst this desolation, nature stands as a silent witness, absorbing and beginning to heal from the scars of conflict. The meditative narrative without any dialogues follows deminers, body searchers, environmentalists, and animal activists who navigate the wreckage, striving to quantify the tragedy's impact and restore Ukraine's fragile ecosystems.

Director's note

In this documentary, I reflect on the catastrophic impact on Ukraine's environment resulting from the Russian invasion and how nature is recovering from this aggression. This is a deeply personal topic for me, as I have a passion for traveling to natural sites. The destruction of nature is a significant part of the cost we Ukrainians pay for our freedom from Russia, which views nature and the world around it merely as resources for exploitation and expansion. Documenting the Russian military's eco-crimes and the destruction of natural landscapes and ecosystems is crucial. Understanding the scope of these issues is the first step toward solving them. While environmental concerns might not be a priority for Ukrainians amidst pressing issues, neglecting them could pose greater threats to our lives than anticipated. The title DIVIA should serve as the symbol of the ancient Slavic goddess of nature and all living things, who is opposed to war, destruction and death.

Company profile

Polina Herman is a Ukrainian film producer. Since

2016, she founded her own production company UP UA STUDIO, aimed at supporting Ukrainian cinema. In 2023, she founded the company UP USA STUDIO in Los Angeles, where she has been living since 2022. She moved there after the beginning of Russian full-scale invasion. Polina is a member of several film academies and guilds, including the Television Academy, Producers Guild of America and the European Film Academy. She is also a member of Ukrainian Film Academy.

Her filmography includes documentaries "The Price of Conflict", "King Lear: How We Looked for Love During the War", "Mountains in Heaven in Between" and feature film "Between Us".

UP UA STUDIO is a Ukrainian film company founded in 2016 by producer Polina Herman. The company produces both full-length feature and documentary films and short films, catering to festival formats as well as broader audiences. UP UA STUDIO is capable of providing a full cycle of film production and developing projects in the audiovisual sector. Additionally, it organizes different large-scale film events aimed at promoting Ukrainian cinema.

Director's profile

Dmytro is an eco activist, cinematographer and director. In 2020 a short film "Save me, doctor!" (2020) received the award "Best Ukrainian film of 2020" at the 14th Lviv International Short Film Festival "Wiz Art" and a special jury prize at the Kyiv International Film Festival "Molodist". In 2021, his first full-length documentary film "Mountains and heaven in between" was premiered at the 19 Docudays UA. It's international premiere happened at Sheffield DocFest, and it was screened at FIPADOC, DOK Leipzig, Krakow Film Festival. Regular participant of international workshops and pitchings

like Sunny Side of the Doc, DOK Leipzig Co-Pro Market, The Baltic Sea Docs, East Doc Platform, CEDOC Market, Eurodoc. Member of Ukrainian Association of Cinematographers and Ukrainian Film Academy.

Since 2020, he has been an active participant in the Transcarpathian Film Commission and is a co-founder and program coordinator of the Carpathian International Mountain Film Festival (CMIFF) in the city of Uzhhorod. His second film, King Lear: How We Looked for Love During the War, explores the world of amateur theatre for refugees in western Ukraine.

Electing Ms Santa

Raisa Razmerita

HaiDOC Productions, Tangaj Production

Republic of Moldova, Romania

In a remote Moldovan village, 42-year-old Elena defies social norms and family duties, embarking on a transformative journey to gain control of her life and pursue her dreams, even if it means leaving everything behind.



Director

Raisa Razmerita

Writers

Raisa Razmerita,
Ion Gnatiuc

Producer

Ion Gnatiuc

Companies

HaiDOC Productions,
Tangaj Production

Budget

€ 229.474
(€ 199.474 in place)

Looking for

Gap-financing,
Festival Release,
Sales Agent

Project Status

Picture lock

Synopsis

In a remote Moldovan village, 42-year-old Elena leads a dual life. By day, she's a poor farmer, tending to pigs, poultry, and a cow alongside her controlling 72-year-old mother, Ana. But Elena's true passion lies in her role as the village's beating heart – distributing donations to lonely elders, engaging children in environmental activities, and donning a Santa Claus costume each year to reward young volunteers.

Despite her demanding responsibilities, Elena yearns for personal growth. She enrolls in online courses, listening to lectures while milking the cow, finding both excitement and escape in these learning opportunities. Driven by ambition and a desire to challenge the status quo, Elena makes a bold move: she decides to run for mayor.

In this journey of self-discovery, filmed over seven years, she evolves from simply trying to do what she wants to actively opposing what she feels obligated to do. Ultimately, Elena realizes her true calling lies not in political office, but in her role as the village's nurturing soul.

The film concludes with Elena embracing her identity as the community's beloved Santa Claus, bringing joy to the village she holds dear. "Electing Ms Santa" is a poignant exploration of identity, the clash between generations, and the search for meaning beyond traditional boundaries of place and gender. It's a testament to the power of perseverance and the importance of finding one's authentic place in the world.

Director's note

I have known Elena for many years - we grew up on opposite ends of the same village. My departure to university in 2007 coincided with the beginning of Elena's activism. When I returned, we exchanged experiences, each shaped by our different journeys.

As the youngest of four siblings, Elena was bound by tradition to care for her elderly mother. With limited educational opportunities in her village, Elena channeled her yearning for more into founding a local NGO. I admired her perseverance and how she compensated for the lack of formal education through trainings for women from rural Moldova she attended in the capital. These experiences opened a window to a life she had long aspired to but never thought possible. For 40 years, Elena lived under the weight of familial and societal expectations, confined by a home environment dominated by her mother's beliefs. A mother who is also incapable of accepting her frailty and is unable to denounce the predetermined role that women have in the cultural system she comes from and which Elena deeply now questions.

Filmed over 5 years, the film captures Elena's evolution from striving to fulfill her own aspirations to actively resisting what she has been told she must be. Along the way she confronts old expectations and navigates new challenges, ultimately finding her true place as a community organizer and a change-maker within my community, a realization that defines her true purpose.

Company profile

HaiDOC Productions is a team of Moldovan storytellers who are delving into unique and impactful social themes through ethnographic and anthropological exploration, dedicating substantial time, attention, and involvement to allow each story to unfold naturally. We focus mainly on documentary film production, working on creating films that approach social topics and reflect on nowadays Moldavian society. In addition to our own productions, we work with selected partners and bring full production services for cinematic work – we serviced or produced for Netflix, HBO, EAVE, IMS,

The Guardian, DW, ZDF, etc. Our films were selected to an extensive list of film festivals – Jihlava International Documentary Film Festival, goEast Film Festival, Transilvania International Film Festival, Helsinki International Film Festival, One World Romania, and many others.

Director's profile

After several years of working both in the media and in the non governmental sector in the field of children's rights in the Republic of Moldova, Raisa Razmerita discovered that the documentary field allows her to get to know the characters "with the heart", because "eyes do not see the essential", as the Fox says in THE LITTLE PRINCE (her favorite book). Raisa embraced the development of her first feature length documentary film project almost simultaneously with the process of making sourdough bread. These processes ran in parallel in the last years and helped her develop the necessary patience and the ability to capture the small details that often make the difference. A graduate of BDC Discoveries – Balkan Documentary Center and a Malik Bendjelloul fellow, Raisa is following the courses of a Master's Degree at the State University of Moldova – Philosophy and Cultural Management. Besides collaborating as a film director with HaiDOC Productions, she is also editing and collaborating with a few Moldavian NGOs that are implementing projects on topics like child sexual abuse, women's involvement in politics, and employment of people with mental disabilities. In this segment, Raisa is directing and editing video content with a strong documentary approach, but also helping them to implement documentary films in their area of expertise as tools to raise awareness and generate impact through films.

Home Is Where the Films Are

More Raça
Arena
Kosovo

Amidst the harsh realities of a refugee camp, a group of displaced children discovers the transformative magic of cinema, finding hope, inspiration, and a sense of belonging through the stories that light up the screen.



Director

More Raça

Writer

More Raça

Producer

More Raça

Company

Arena

Budget

€ 150.000

(€ 120.000 in place)

Looking for

Gap-financing,
Post-Production Services,
Festival Release,
Sales Agent

Project Status

Rough cut

Synopsis

In March 1999, six-year-old More and her family fled Kosovo, seeking refuge in a Macedonian camp. Amid the struggle of adjusting to a place far from home, a glimmer of hope appeared when someone brought a screen and projector to show cartoons and movies to the children. Now, 20 years later, More has become a filmmaker in Pristina. This documentary follows her journey to rediscover the individuals who introduced her to the magic of cinema during those dark days in the refugee camp.

Director's note

In creating this film, I was driven by a deep sense of historical and personal resonance that touches every frame. The documentary weaves a narrative that spans from cinema's inception to the turbulent events of Kosovo in the late 1990s. My goal was not just to recount events but to explore the human experiences behind them, capturing the essence of their impact.

The film begins with a reflection on the birth of cinema, spotlighting the 1895 train arrival and light lasers that marked a pivotal moment in cinematography. This historical touchstone lays the groundwork for understanding the evolution of visual storytelling. As the narrative moves from these early cinematic experiments to the film's contemporary story, it highlights media's role in documenting and reflecting human experience.

Transitioning to the 1990s, the film delves into a period of profound personal and political upheaval. Kosovo's historical context during this era is portrayed not merely as a backdrop but as a vital force shaping the personal stories within. The experiences of ethnic Albanians, including systemic oppression, are vividly depicted through personal accounts. My fa-

mily's story—my father's migration to Germany and his eventual return—mirrors the broader historical narrative and its impact on my upbringing.

The personal anecdotes throughout the film, such as the refugee camp screenings and the poignant moments captured by my father's camera, offer an intimate view of how individuals endure and resist adversity. These reflections are essential for grasping the human dimension of historical events, demonstrating how personal and historical narratives intertwine to create a deeper understanding of our collective past.

Company profile

Arena is a family-run production company based in Pristina, Kosovo, operating since 2000. Founded and managed by father and daughter Sunaj and More Raca, the company has produced a range of documentaries, TV shows, and award-winning short and feature films that have successfully participated in prestigious festivals.

Arena holds the distinction of producing the first-ever Spanish-Kosovo co-production and the first Kosovo project financed by the Ministry of Culture in Italy. The company is dedicated to supporting emerging directors, with a strong focus on films that address important social issues.

Director's profile

More Raça, born in Kosovo in 1992, is an accomplished filmmaker with a Ph.D. in Film Theory, Arts, and Television from South West University "Neofit Rilski." Her debut feature, "Andromeda Galaxy," won the Glocal in Progress award at the San Sebastián Film Festival and premiered at the Sarajevo Film Festival 2020. Beyond filmmaking, More is recognized for industry advocacy, selected for prestigious programs like Berlinale Talents and Zurich Film Festival

Academy. She was awarded the 2021 Annual Award for Achievement in Kosovo Cinema and served as a guest filmmaker at the University of Pennsylvania. As a Fulbright scholar, More conducted research in Film Pedagogy at NYFA in Los Angeles, further enhancing her contributions to the field.

My Dad's Lessons

Dalija Dozet

Hulahop

Croatia

After her father's death, a daughter finds tapes recorded throughout his life, and by watching the footage, she rediscovers him and tries to understand him.



Director

Dalija Dozet

Writers

Dalija Dozet,
Beatrica Kurbel

Producer

Dana Budisavljević

Company

Hulahop

Budget

€ 92.377
(€ 92.377 in place)

Looking for

Festival Release,
Sales Agent

Project Status

Final cut

Synopsis

This documentary film was created after the death of the director's father, who spent decades recording his life and everyday moments with a camera. After discovering his numerous tapes—none of which he ever labeled, edited, or watched—the director embarks on a cinematic and personal journey to rediscover who he was. By watching footage of moments she wasn't present for and recalling her own childhood and the family's life alongside the camera, which served her father as a diary-like tool and an extension of himself, the director gets to know him in different roles, times, and parts of the world.

Director's note

The moment I think of my dad, I see a camera lens. That was my dad—a camera man. An adventurer. A provocateur. He never watched his own footage. When he was here, he got on my nerves, but now that he's gone, I feel completely lost. A few days after his funeral, I find myself thinking that I can't let him go until I watch all those tapes of his, gathering dust in the shed, the basement, the garage, under the stairs. Will they show me the father I remember, or reveal a side of him I never got to know? Will watching them help me understand him better, or make me wish I could say something to him? Because, in the end, we're all just children who, when it really matters, often don't have the courage to share everything we feel, think, or secretly wish with our parents. Even if it's just the simplest moments, childhood frustrations, or maybe small life lessons we're picking up along the way.

Company profile

HULAHOP was founded in 2006. Three main strands of activities include film production, distribution, as

well as organization of the World Festival of Animated Film ANIMAFEST ZAGREB.

Hulahop produced and co-produced numerous films, most notable being THE DIARY OF DIANA B., WHEN THE WAR COMES, THE CARS WE DROVE INTO CAPITALISM, FAMILY MEALS, and THEN I SEE TANJA. Hulahop also produced three seasons of documentary TV series SLUMBERING CONCRETE for Croatian Television about modernist Yugoslav architecture.

Hulahop's projects have been supported by national film funds, Creative Europe - MEDIA, and Eurimages.

Currently, Hulahop has 2 projects in postproduction whose completion is expected by early 2025, and a couple of projects in development.

Director's profile

Dalija Dozet graduated with a degree in film directing from the Academy of Dramatic Art in Zagreb. She works as a director and screenwriter, involved in various artistic and commercial film projects of all lengths, as well as in film education. She is the president of Kinoklub Zagreb and the founder of educational programme Filmska RUNDA in Osijek. In her work, she explores themes of closeness, loss, and the challenges of communication across different film genres. She is currently developing both a live-action and an animated project. My Dad's Lessons is her first feature-length documentary film.

This Is IT

Feature and hybrid works-in-progress
produced or co-produced by Italy or
2025 spotlight territories



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Cat on My Mind

Laila Pakalnina

SIA Kompānija Hargla

Latvia

*No doubt, he was thinking of a cat.
Because he was trying to take a photo of
the cat.*



Director

Laila Pakalnina

Writer

Laila Pakalnina

Producer

Laila Pakalnina

Company

SIA Kompānija Hargla

Budget

€ 450.000

(€ 390.000 in place)

Looking for

Gap-Financing,
Post-production Services,
Festival Release,
Sales Agent

Project Status

Rough cut

Synopsis

The film will be a cinematic poem to be written using the light that was shining some 40-50 years ago. It will be recalling of strange memories through exposed photo negatives of 1968-78 found in a dustbin (of which pictures have never been produced, most probably).

We have named the unknown photographer as Anton, the son of Aunt Emma. Looking through his blueprints (with many imprecisions: indistinct sharpness, random elements in the shot, wipes, accidental and double exposures, etc.), we will imagine what he felt and what he thought, as well as what people he took the photographs of felt and thought. More precisely – what our lives would be if these were our photos.

Anton, being an unprofessional photographer, simply takes photos of everything he sees, and therefore it often happens, that he catches also elements he doesn't see, but that simply are in Anton's life – beginning with a hen and ending with truck racing, amid which he catches also relatives, friends, neighbours (both in celebrations and in daily life) and, of course, a cat. Besides – the way he takes photos! Exactly as he wants – emotionally and impulsively choosing the photography objects (sometimes it seems he does it intermittently). – if we look from the angle of correctness, it is totally incorrect. Immortalizing the world in this manner, Anton definitely is not telling a chronological story. That's why it is a poem – the form that is content, and the content that is form – through which we would like to reflect the inspiration we have gained from the photo negatives we've found. Meaning that the shots/episodes will be the lines of this poem gathering around the photos.

Director's note

When the first image from the negatives found in the dustbin was scanned, it started to chase me. There was an elderly lady with flowers (most probably a birthday pho-

to) with an unexpected element in the background – the neighbor climbing over the fence with a bottle of vodka in one hand and two beers in the other. So, needless to say I had to make a film! Especially since the rest of the photos were no worse.

The film will consist of these wonderful photographs and of our footage, in which we will try to imagine what happened before and/or after the photographer pressed the shutter.

The film will be in black and white, aspect ratio 1:1.33. This choice is determined by the need to include the old photos in the film as plastically as possible (merge them with our filmed footage). Since we are really fascinated by the authenticity of these photographs, i.e. we are excited exactly because they are as they are (with all the “mistakes” made from all points of view - “wrong” compositions, double exposures, blurring, smearing, etc.), we want to include them in the film unedited, so the selected format is the most appropriate. Even taking into account the fact that the photos are not only in horizontal format, but also in vertical, the selected aspect ratio of the film frame will allow us to display them to the fullest.

I would like to compare the structure of the film to a poem, as the film will consist of a series of “poetry lines” inspired by photographs. Which, I think, corresponds to what we want to do - remember other people's memories. But memories, in my opinion, are something completely non-linear - they are flashes, images, broken episodes - this is a form that perfectly suits cinema. Moreover, this structure of the film seems to naturally arise from the “non-linearity” of the series of found photographs - there are impressions, states of mind, needs, etc., which are, by no means, a story (and therefore a poem!), but which are exciting to follow.

Company profile

When Laila Pakalnina realized that if she wants to make the kind of films she wants to make Laila Pakalnina needs to become a producer of her own films. So Laila started to produce Lailas films on 1995. On 1997 together with cinematographer Gints Berzins they founded Hargla Company. So far by producing 6 feature fictions, 20 creative documentaries and 4 short fictions the activities of Hargla Company have been targeted at the same direction – to make films of Laila Pakalnina.

Almost all the films have festival awards. They were selected for Cannes, Venice, Berlinale, Locarno, Busan, Tallinn Black Nights, Rome, Karlovy Vary, IDFA, Visions du Reel etc.

Selected films: HOMES, 2021; IN THE MIRROR, 2020; SPOON, 2019; DAWN, 2015; PIZZAS, 2012; ON RUBIKS' ROAD, 2010; FIRE, 2007; WATER, 2006; THE BUS, 2004; THE PYTHON, 2003; PAPA GENA, 2001; THE SHOE, 1998

Director's profile

Laila Pakalnina graduated from the Moscow Film Institute (VGIK), Department of Film Direction, in 1991. A director and scriptwriter of 32 documentaries, 5 shorts, and 6 fiction features, altogether she has 43 films, 2 children, 1 husband, 1 dog and 2 bicycles. And many ideas for new films. Her films have screened in official programmes at Cannes, Venice, Berlinale, Locarno, Karlovy Vary, Rome, Tallinn and other international festivals, where they have won numerous awards.

Cuerpo Celeste

Nayra Ilic

Planta, disparte

Chile, Italy

Chile, 1990. For Celeste nothing will be the same anymore.

Her father died in front of her, and after months living away she returns to her mother before she sells their house. Both will struggle between memories and a future that takes on space.



Director

Nayra Ilic

Writer

Nayra Ilic

Producers

Fernando Bascuñán,

Alessandro Amato

Company

Planta,

dispàrte

Budget

€ 600.000

(€ 600.000 in place)

Looking for

Festival Release

Project Status

Final Cut

2nd Feature**Synopsis**

Summer 1990, Chile returns to democracy after 17 years of dictatorship. In a coastal town in the Atacama Desert, in a laid-back liberal community, Celeste (16) spends New Year's Eve with friends and family. Everything seems to bring joy and hope, when suddenly the next day her father dies because of a heart attack. After this tragic event, Celeste's mother, Consuelo, falls into a personal crisis, leaving the girl in the care of her sister in Copiapó. Almost one year later, an astronomical event takes place at the coastal town. Consuelo asks Celeste to return to their house to meet again. Celeste, unwillingly, accepts. Consuelo doesn't know how to deal with her husband's death and decides to sell the house, while she desperately tries to reconnect with Celeste, who also struggles with the acceptance of grief, collecting small objects that remind her of her father and their life before his death.

For her nothing is the same anymore: the place is full of tourists who don't respect the nature where she grew up, her eternal lover starts dealing cocaine with other fisherman, and the desert where she used to look for fossils with her father turned into a forensic territory; it seems there are bodies of desaparecidos there.

During the eclipse, between darkness and shadows, where the reality is mixt with the magical, Celeste understands that the world she's experiencing is more hostile than death itself, and that death is a new beginning where love is the only thing that transcends.

Director's note

I was born in the Atacama Desert, I grew up there during the Pinochet dictatorship and despite the suffering that surrounded us, with my family and friends we created a bubble where we could be free in the middle of the desert. But that bubble burst when that desert was revealed as a violent place that held the horrifying secrets of the dictatorship.

My memories speak of an era, but also of mourning. Dying is never natural for those who remain and that tense balance between the strength of a teenager to discover the world and the pain of her father is the core of this film. Cuerpo Celeste is a film about a painful transition, about the loss of the innocence of a country, of a family, of a mother and of a girl, who along with losing her father, also loses her own north.

Celeste goes through mourning, but also through the understanding of her feminine nature within a sexist society. During the 90's, a Chilean woman had little chance of becoming independent and was easily labeled a madwoman if her behavior wasn't in accordance with male canons. In this context of opacity in women's freedoms and a strong hope for change that implied the return to democracy is how the journey of Celeste and her mother is built.

This film is born to go through death and understand that which is unraveled after absence, but also about life and survival. Will it be possible to embrace what disappears? No, but it can be remembered. Resistance lies in affection and affection remains revolutionary.

Company profile

PLANTA is a Chilean film production company based in Santiago and led by producer Fernando Bascuñán. Founded to blend fresh voices with established talents, Planta's films have premiered at major festivals such as Cannes, Venice, Sundance, and Rotterdam. Key works include Simón de la Montaña by Federico Luis, winner of the 2024 Cannes Critics' Week; Rapaz, a short by Felipe Gálvez (Cannes Critics' Week 2018); documentary series Gabinete and Habitar (2018); Vida de Familia by Alicia Scherson and Cristián Jiménez (Sundance and Rotterdam 2017); and Moises Sepúlveda's debut Las Analfabetas (Venice Critics' Week 2013).

DISPÀRTE is a Rome-based production company founded by Alessandro Amato and Luigi Chimienti. We develop projects with an international appeal and imagined for a wide audience, through a careful editorial process within international workshops and co-production markets. Our movies have been selected in prestigious festivals such as Cannes, Venice and Locarno. In 2024 we released Los Domingos Mueren Más Personas by Iair Said, a co-production with Campo Cine (Argentina), at ACID - Cannes Film Festival and Windless by Pavel G. Vesnakov, a co-production with Red Carpet Films (Bulgaria), at Karlovy-Vary IFF Proxima section. Among our recent releases are: Margini, premiered at the Venice International Critics' Week (Audience Award) and Maternal, premiered at the Locarno IFF - Main Competition (winning four awards). dispàrte is a member of AGICI, EPC and EFA.

Director's profile

Nayra Ilic García is a Chilean filmmaker and writer, Master in Documentary Cinema (University of Chile), Bachelor of Arts, Mention of Acting (Catholic University of Chile), Specialization in Film Direction (Film School of Chile), Diploma in Advanced Screenwriting (International Film School of San Antonio de los Baños EICTV, Cuba). She has received in several occasions the support of CORFO, DIRAC, MERCOSUR RECAM Grant, FFA (Audiovisual Promotion Fund) and the Private Fund of L90 Cinedigital of Minera la Escondida. Cuerpo Celeste is her second feature film, which mixes biographical locations of the Atacama Desert from where she is originally from, focused on an intimate story. Currently, she works as a teacher in the Film School of Universidad Austral.

Home

Or Sinai

Baryo Film & TV Productions, Morefilm

Israel, Poland, Italy

After almost 15 years working as a housekeeper for a rich family in Israel, Mila must go back to her family in a poor village in Poland. Mila returns differently, searching to rediscover both her home and herself.



Director

Or Sinai

Writer

Or Sinai

Producers

Adi Bar Yossef,
Aneta Zagórska

Companies

Baryo Film & TV Productions,
Morefilm

Budget

€ 1.086.405
(€ 978.547 in place)

Looking for

Gap-Financing,
Post-production Services,
Festival Release,
Sales Agent

Project Status

Rough cut

1st Feature**Synopsis**

50-year-old Mila has been working devotedly for a rich family in Israel, for almost 15 years, and regularly sending money to her family in a poor village in Poland. Mila convinces herself that the only reason for the temporary affair she is having with Samir, the gardener of the rich neighborhood, is to help her deal with her homesickness. Despite the distance, Mila feels she is still connected to her family and involved in their lives. One day Mila breaks her arm; wearing a cast she can't work for a whole month. The rich family hires a temporary replacement for her, and Mila decides to go visit her family back home.

Mila arrives in Poland and surprises her husband Anton (55) and her daughter Kasha (22). The initial excitement and joy of the family's reunion slowly turns into a struggle to adjust. Mila discovers that things are very different from what she thought. More than anything, she is shocked by her daughter, who hid her new pregnancy from her and has dropped out of school.

Mila gives up the planned return to Israel, and her job at the Bar family. She is broken hearted by the unexpected separation from Samir, but understands that now is her time to fight for her place in her family. Mila is trying to find the way back to her family, but she realizes that for her, there is no way back home and the future she was building with her family is no longer hers.

Director's note

After years of struggling with Parkinson's disease my mother decided to let into their home an immigrant worker. A bulldozer dug a deep hole under the house, to build an underground room for the new housekeeper. And suddenly there was another woman in our home. And she'd be the housewife my mom couldn't be anymore. Having a new foreign woman in our home affected me a lot. She was always next to us, but everyone was trying to pretend as if she was not there. It made me aware of

the cruel division to social classes, even inside my own home.

In the beginning she was only the Polish caregiver for me too, but I realized that she is only 3 years older than me, and slowly the polite small talks in half Hebrew – half English, became deep conversations about life. She told me stories about her family back home. She also told me about her lover in Israel, and it amazed me. I felt that her heartbreaking stories come in an absurd contradiction to how much she is a shadow in our society.

I want to shed a new light on characters from the outskirts of society.

The gap between the woman Mila used to be before she left, and the woman she is today, is the story I want to tell. This gap touches on an unresolved conflict of mine as well. Caught between the patriarchal conventions I grew up with and the modern liberated woman I'm trying to be.

Company profile

BARYO is an emerging film and TV production company with a special focus on female centered character-driven projects that challenge social conventions. Based in Tel-Aviv, the company was founded in 2019 by Adi Bar Yossef, a seasoned producer with 15 years of experience on numerous large scale, award-winning, Israeli productions such as: Cinema Sabaya by Orit Fouks Rotem, winner of best film in the Israeli academy award 2022, awarded best film at festivals around the world; Shake Your Cares Away by Tom Shoval, winner of the Jerusalem film fest 2021; and Scaffolding by Matan Yair, screened at the Cannes Film Festival (ACID) 2018 and won the best film at the Jerusalem Film Fest 2019. As an executive producer of the drama department at Endemol-shine Israel: 2025 Motherland by Evgeny Ruman; 2024 The Truth by Daphna Levin; 2023 Broken ties by Dalit Kahan; and 2022 Queens by Gal Zaid.

MOREFILM is a film production studio based in Krakow, Poland. Since 2006, Morefilm has been providing comprehensive production services for a wide array of film projects, encompassing feature films, documentaries, animations, and international co-productions. The studio's dedication to high-quality filmmaking is showcased in its latest productions. "True Life of Angels" dir. A. Więcek (2022), and starring renowned actors Krzysztof Globisz and Kinga Preis, distributed in cinemas and on VOD platforms. Currently, Morefilm is engaged in the post-production of "Man of Marble" a documentary by Sz. Kuriata, which has generated considerable interest at international industry events, including Ex Oriente Film, and IDFA. Morefilm actively participates in co-production forums and festivals, demonstrating its commitment to fostering collaboration and promoting Polish cinema on a global stage.

Director's profile

A graduate of the Sam Spiegel Film School, Berlinale Talents alumnus. Currently editing her debut feature - Home which received 4 production funds. Participated in Torino Feature Lab and won the production award. Was developed in Torino Script Lab, and won the CNC Award. Wrote and directed the short film Anna, which won the Cinéfondation Award at the Cannes FF, among many others. Works on a theater play – "Arale wants to be happy" - for the Israeli theater "Beit Lessin". Also works on her first TV series – I Got You – with Endemol Shine Israel, which is being developed in The Jerusalem Sam Spiegel Series Lab. Her films focus on women from the outskirts of society, struggling to liberate themselves from social conventions and be free.

Like Heaven Without God

Luca Capponi
Onira, Wild Rocket
Netherlands, Italy

*Five residents of an improvised RV
community find temporary refuge inside
a parking lot of Berkeley, California.*



Director

Luca Capponi

Writer

Luca Capponi

Producers

Rodolfo L. Mase Dari,

Luca Capponi

Companies

Onira,

Wild Rocket

Budget

€ 200.000

(€ 180.000 in place)

Looking for

Festival Release,

Sales Agent

Project Status

Rough cut

1st Feature**Synopsis**

Residents of an RV community find temporary refuge from harsh street life in a parking lot of Berkeley, California.

Dale is a sixty-year-old Oakland native with terminal cancer. Despite his medical condition, he is making plans to leave for Oregon and toils everyday to repair his RV.

Luis is a 70-year-old undocumented immigrant from Mexico who has been living in the Bay Area for almost 30 years. His deep and reflective personality have earned him the nickname of "Poet".

Melissa is in her late sixties and has delicate features with soft blue eyes. She suffers from dissociative identity disorder, which has led directly to her chronic homelessness.

Next door, there are Andrew and his father David, who suffers from dementia. Andrew has sworn off drugs and checked into rehab, but getting help in a facility would mean leaving his dad alone.

Amber, once a candidate for the Albany City Council, is a skilled mechanic and the trustworthy spokeswoman of the RV community.

In the confines of the parking lot, moments of joy and darkness intertwine – life is constantly at stake here. And as the program that hosts them is set to expire, the community might be forced to move out of the space it has called home for over two years.

Director's note

When I arrived in Berkeley during the pandemic, I was stunned by the stark reality before me. The sight of the elderly and mentally ill left abandoned on the streets was both heartbreaking and appalling. I soon began volunteering with Dorothy Day House, the non-profit behind the SPARKS shelter program, regularly visiting the RV owners and organizing photography workshops. This approach helped establish strong relationships and trust in the storytelling process, thereby making the community part of the creative team.

To enhance this intimacy, people are depicted with as little intervention as possible. At its core, the film is a testament to the transformative power of human connection and how this can become a beacon of hope in the lives of those society often overlooks. People like Dale, Melissa, and David are not different from anyone else – they are simply individuals whose lives have taken challenging turns. Their stories reveal how a sense of belonging can flourish anywhere, even in the most unexpected places. Eventually, I began to realize how the parking lot was transforming for me into a universal metaphor: a fragile microcosm where pain and joy coexisted, a non-place of 'bare existence' that, in all its simplicity, mirrored the precariousness of the human condition, exposing both the beauty and the hardship that define our shared experience.

One of the characters referred to it as a 'heaven without god'. I could have never come up with such a perfect description.

Company profile

ONIRA is an independent film production company dedicated to developing thought-provoking artistic voices that present meaningful topics with international appeal. Founded by Filippo Schiaffino and Rodolfo L. Mase Dari, the company focuses on early development and production, with Filippo bringing years of experience as a Production Executive at Groenlandia, a leading Italian studio known for award-winning films and TV series produced in collaboration with global platforms like Netflix, Amazon, and Sky.

Among Onira's recent projects are the VR documentary Nexus (featured at Venice Biennale College VR, Cannes XR, and UN COP26), the short film Playing God (Venice International Critics' Week 2024), and the feature documentary Like Heaven Without God (IDFA Forum, in post-production).

WILD ROCKET is a production company created by filmmaker Luca Capponi, dedicated to develop and produce cinema-verité documentaries.

Director's profile

Luca is an Italian-Ecuadorian filmmaker, born and raised in a small town in the province of Bergamo. In 2015, he graduated from the University of Bologna with a Master's degree in Cinema and Multimedia Production, during which he began creating his first videos and organizing cultural events focused on Human Rights and Art-House Cinema. In 2016, he enrolled at the Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia in Palermo, specializing in documentary filmmaking. During this time, he concentrated on migration stories, traveling from the Balkans to the Mediterranean Sea. In 2018, he participated in the nomadic biennial Manifesta 12, collaborating with artists such as Jelili Atiku, Marinella Senatore, Uriel Orlow, and Laura Poitras. On that occasion he directed the short film 'Chronicles from Dusk' presented at the Critics' Week of the Venice Film Festival, which was subsequently screened at various international festivals.

In 2019, he began working for the film production company Arbash, led by director Pasquale Scimeca. With Scimeca, he co-directed his first feature-length documentary, 'Il pranzo di Francesco', which premiered at the 2021 Torino Film Festival and was later acquired by RAI Cinema.

He currently lives in Berkeley, California, where he works as an independent filmmaker.

The Lost Son

Darko Štante

Staragara

Slovenia, Greece, Croatia, Italy, North Macedonia

A detective encounters his long-lost, violent brother, sparking a chain of events that unravels their lives. As he endeavors to help his brother, the consequences of his actions reverberate, shaking their existence to the core.



Director

Darko Štante

Writer

Darko Štante

Producers

Miha Černec,

Nina Robnik

Company

Staragara

Budget

€ 1.350.000

(€ 1.350.000 in place)

Looking for

Festival Release,

Sales Agent

Project Status

Final cut

2nd Feature**Synopsis**

Andrej, a detective, is used to dealing with domestic violence cases—until one day, the abuser he encounters is his own estranged brother, Kristian. Shaken by this revelation, Andrej is forced to confront his past, including the abuse they both endured from their father. As he tries to reconnect with Kristian and prevent him from repeating their father's mistakes, Andrej's own unresolved trauma surfaces, pushing him into a spiral that strains his relationship with his girlfriend, Anna.

While balancing a difficult abuse case involving a troubled teenager, Andrej's life spirals out of control. His growing instability alienates Anna, who, in the midst of her pregnancy, is forced to distance herself. Seeking closure, Andrej and Kristian confront their unrepentant father, only to find more heartbreak.

When Kristian's violent tendencies reach a tragic climax, Andrej must make a choice that will shape his and his family's future forever. This is a story about confronting generational trauma, forgiveness, and the heavy toll of the past on one's present.

Director's note

With this film, I aim to realistically depict the dynamics of relationships among individuals at different stages of life who grew up in families where they were victims of various forms of violence. I wonder if it is possible to break the cycle of violence, which often gets passed down from generation to generation, turning victims into perpetrators. Despite the challenging story I am addressing, my goal is to create a film that communicates with a wide audience and provides a space for discourse on the topic at hand.

Company profile

Staragara is one of Slovenia's leading film production companies, known for its dynamic portfolio and high tur-

nover. With over 20 years of experience, Staragara has built a cohesive team and extensive network of collaborators across Eastern Europe and beyond. As a delegate producer, Staragara has produced nine feature films and participated in multiple minority co-productions, with premieres at top international festivals including Venice, Cannes, and San Sebastian, showcasing its commitment to excellence and innovation in filmmaking.

Director's profile

Darko Štante, an acclaimed director and scriptwriter from Slovenia, holds a master's degree in Film Direction from the Academy of Theatre, Radio, Film and Television in Ljubljana. He made his debut with "Consequences" (2018), which premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival and went on to win multiple awards and secure distribution deals worldwide.

On Their Own

Tudor Jurgiu

Indyca, Libra Films

Italy, Romania

Growing up in Bucharest without her parents who went to work in Italy, Flavia has become a cold, hard girl. The routine she has created with other peers allows her to maintain a kind of emotional distance from what happens to her. But her balance is broken when two young boys on the run from their parents take refuge with her.



Director

Tudor Jurgiu

Writers

Tudor Cristian Jurgiu,
Anca Iftime

Producers

Francesca Portalupi,
Bogdan Craciun

Companies

Indyca,
Libra Films

Budget

€ 1.000.000
(€ 950.000 in place)

Looking for

Festival Release,
Sales Agent

Project Status

Selected scenes

Synopsis

Growing up in Bucharest without her parents who went to work in Italy, Flavia built a routine she with other peers, that allows her to maintain a kind of emotional distance from what happens to her. The relationship with her parents is exclusively via video call: their voices distorted, their faces pixels, sometimes more sometimes less.

A presence that is more like an absence.

Her daily routine is composed of moments when she seems to claim his autonomy, to others when she often awkwardly and clumsily seeks the presence of adults.

But the balance of this cold, hard girl is broken when two young boys on the run from their parents take refuge with her.

Director's note

Growing up with your parents off to work in another country: always just voices, always just faces on a screen. Never touch, never smell. No embraces. The parents are bodiless beings inhabiting mobiles and laptops. Their voices distorted, their faces pixels, sometimes more sometimes less. The first people that you relate to become in time a bit abstract. I want to convey this longing for human touch, for the hands and skin of their parents, for their actual presence. They are not totally absent but also never quite there for you. Available on a tight schedule. Almost never at night. Night, when devices are off and the real absence begins. What cure or surrogate can one find for that? How do you satisfy this urge for human touch at the age of sexual discovery? The terrible frustration of this absence makes everything almost unbearable and our protagonist tries to satisfy that frustration by sexual exploration in a let's say unconventional way. And then of course the anger. The anger of not being able to blame anyone. Everyone is innocent yet there is so much pain. There is no satisfaction in blaming poverty or the state of the country. Anger and blame need

to be aimed at something alive that can suffer it not just take notice of it. What happens to this anger? These are some of the questions that will drive the conception of the film.

I have relatives and close friends who grew up like this and everywhere I turn I find more. Talking to them I realized that what I knew from the media was too superficial and distant, so I decided to explore the many nuances of this story.

Company profile

Indyca is a production company established in 2007 in Turin, Italy, specialized in producing both groundbreaking documentaries and art house films with strong international appeal. Among its previous productions are the recent Tribeca Jury Award winning "SAMIA", San Francisco Film Festival Audience Award winning "Cuban Dancer", the SXSW Audience Award winning "We Are the Thousand" and other productions which premiered at important international festivals including Berlinale, Mostra del Cinema di Venezia, IDFA and HotDocs to name a few. Across the years, Indyca has gained a solid reputation as a coproducer of international films, partnering with countries all over the world and obtaining prestigious support from the likes of Eurimages, Ibermedia, and Creative Europe, along with other national and international funds.

Libra Films is an independent film/television production company founded in 2014 by Oana and Tudor Giurgiu. Libra Films took over the portfolio of projects produced by the same producers under the Libra Film Productions banner, which included such titles as "Katalin Varga" (2009), by Peter Strickland, winner of the Silver Bear (2009) and the "European Discovery of the Year" award at the EFA Awards, "The Japanese Dog," by Tudor Cristian Jurgiu (San Sebastian IFF 2013), "Why me? ", by

Tudor Giurgiu (Berlinale 2015), Stere Gulea's "Moromete Family: On The Edge of Time," a national box office hit in 2018, In 2024, he had the world premiere at the Cannes Film Festival of the documentary film NASTY directed by Tudor Giurgiu.

Director's profile

Born in Medias, Romania in 1984. Started studying film directing in 2006 at the National University of Drama and Film in Bucharest and graduated in the summer of 2010. He then studied an MA in the same institution and is now about to finish his PhD diploma. He has also been teaching scriptwriting and directing at UNATC for the past 6 years. During school he has directed three short films and a documentary. „Oli's Wedding", his third short film won a couple of awards such as: Best Fiction Short – Leeds IFF UK, Best short film - Anonimul IFF Romania, Best Romanian film - Next IFF Romania.

His MA short film "In the fishbowl" was awarded third prize in the Cinefondation competition of the 2013 Festival de Cannes. It went on to win Best Short in Zagreb FF and was in competition in Uppsala FF and TelAviv student FF, among others.

"The Japanese Dog" is his feature debut, after a script by Ioan Antoci, awarded Krzysztof Kieslowski prize in Cannes 2009, by ScripEast Association (Poland), at the end of their scriptwriting training. The film premiered in New Directors competition of San Sebastian FF (2013). It also won the Best Film Award in Vilnius IFF and Best Film in the 1-2 Directors Competition award in Warsaw IFF. It was in competition in New Directors New Films, New York, USA, March 2014, in Haifa International Film Festival, Israel, October 2014 and many others.

His second feature, developed through Torino Film Lab Framework, is called "They May Still Be Alive Today". It was a co-production between Romania and Greece and had premiered in the Romanian cinemas in August 2020.

The White Club

Michele Pennetta

Beauvoir, Indyca, Nefertiti, Vertigo

Switzerland, Italy, Slovenia

Trapped in a hidden nightclub and forced into prostitution, Nina fights to escape and find her sister, captured when they illegally crossed the border. A dark tale about lost power and the desperate quest to reclaim it—at any cost.



Director

Michele Pennetta

Writers

Michele Pennetta,
Giulia Moriggi

Producers

Francesca Portalupi,
Aline Schmid,
Simone Catania,
Nadia Trevisan,
Alberto Fasulo,
Danijel Hočevar

Companies

Beauvoir,
Indyca,
Nefertiti Film,
Vertigo

Budget

€ 3.200.000
(€ 3.200.000 in place)

Looking for

Festival Release,
Sales Agent

Project Status

Rough cut

Synopsis

In search of a better future, Nina flees home with her younger sister. But at the border, Leijla is kidnapped by a group of paramilitaries. Nina wakes up in the White Club, a strange club hidden away in an old racecourse. The nightclub is run by a manipulative woman, Ofelia, assisted by her son, Mirko.

Thrust into the world of luxury prostitution, Nina keeps thinking and searching for Leijla. While she forges new alliances at the club and gets closer to Ofelia, Mirko goes in the opposite direction. After years of blind submission to his mother, he is torn between his loyalty to her and Leijla's fate. When Sara, his secret lover, mysteriously disappears, Mirko is left with only one option: to rush onwards.

THE WHITE CLUB is a parable about the state of the world, exposing its subterranean forces and the illusions that inhabit it. Through the journeys of Nina and Mirko, the film explores the loss of power and the desperate quest to regain it, by any means possible.

Director's note

After three documentaries, THE WHITE CLUB is my first true fiction. My films focus on people excluded from the system, forced to survive by its rules. THE WHITE CLUB follows young smuggler Mirko and two migrant sisters, Nina and Leijla, victims of sexual exploitation. In my documentaries, I've used fictional devices to reconstruct reality without overexposing or endangering my characters. Given the sensitive topic of human trafficking, 'pure' fiction seemed best. Mirko and Nina were inspired by young people I met during the development phase. In Florence, the INTERSOS center cares for underage girls from the Balkans, each having fallen into the hands of traffickers before entering prostitution. I also met a young Italian smuggler in Milan, barely 20, who sought a better life despite the illegal and dangerous path. THE WHITE

CLUB is set in a non-place, offering an allegorical view of contemporary Europe's promises, illusions, and brutality. Instead of using a lurid approach to social injustice, I introduce artifice, creating an almost unreal atmosphere. Initially dark, the colors become exaggerated, as do the relationships within the Club, sometimes grotesque. While the fable grows strange, it remains deeply human. The 'Balkan route' taken by Mirko and the girls mirrors the path of thousands of migrants trying to reach Europe despite the walls and obstacles.

Company profile

INDYCA is a production company established in 2007 in Turin, Italy, specializing in producing both groundbreaking documentaries and art-house films with strong international appeal. Over the years, Indyca has gained a solid reputation as a co-producer of international films, partnering with countries around the world and securing prestigious support from organizations such as Eurimages, Ibermedia, and Creative Europe MEDIA, as well as other national and international funds.

The company's recent productions—We Are the Thousand, Happy Winter, Becoming Zlatan, Drive Me Home, and smOKings—have been released in over 40 countries. In 2024, we premiered The Secret Drawer at Berlinale, Samia at Tribeca, Alice nella città, and Honeydew as an Italian premiere at Festival Dei Popoli, among others. Always seeking international collaborators and new expressions of the human spirit, Indyca is deeply invested in the artistic landscape of Europe and the world beyond.

BEAUVOIR FILMS produces documentary and fiction features for festivals, theatrical releases, and TV. We collaborate with directors who have a distinct visual and narrative style, pushing the boundaries of storytelling in creative ways.

THE GIRL AND THE SPIDER by Ramon & Silvan Zürcher won two prizes at Berlinale 2021. LE THÉORÈME DE MARGUERITE by Anna Novion was in official selection at Cannes, and RIVIÈRE by Hugues Hariche screened at Locarno 2023. In 2024, MY SWISS ARMY by Luka Popadić won the Audience Award at Solothurn, THE LANDSCAPE AND THE FURY by Nicole Vögele received the Grand Prix at Visions du Réel and the Doc Alliance Award. SPHERES by Daniel Zimmermann premiered at Karlovy Vary.

Director's profile

Born in Varese (Italy) in 1984, Michele Pennetta graduated from the University of Art and Design of Geneva (HEAD) and the Ecole Cantonale d'Art de Lausanne (ECAL) in 2010 with a Master's degree in directing. His diploma film I CANI ABBAIANO was selected for several festivals. In 2013, he started working with Joelle Bertossa's Close Up Films and directed the medium-length film 'A IUCATA', which won the Pardino d'Oro in Locarno and was also nominated for best Swiss short film. The film went on to numerous international festivals, winning Best Film at the Festival dei Popoli in Florence. His interest in his country and in current affairs led him to write and direct his first feature film, PESCATORI DI CORPI, in international competition at the 69th Locarno Film Festival (2016). His recent feature film MY BODY WAS selected in international competition at Vision du Réel and ACID at Cannes 2020. In 2023, he made LONELY, an Italian-Swiss co-production presented at the Zurich Film Festival and Alice nella Città, among others.

Wolf Park

Demelza Kooij

Jump Cut, Folk Film, Sisyfos Film Production

Norway, Sweden, Italy

Wolf Park is the tragic story of Talla, the last wolf of her kind, seen through the eyes of a filmmaker who is also searching for her place in the world.



Director

Demelza Kooij

Writer

Demelza Kooij

Producers

Sebastiano Luca Insinga,
Anita Norfolk,
Mario Adamson

Companies

Jump Cut,
Folk Film,
Sisyfos Film Production

Budget

€ 413.000
(€ 214.000 in place)

Looking for

Gap-Financing,
Festival Release,
Sales Agent

Project Status

Rough cut

1st Feature

Synopsis

Deep in the night, distant wolf howling lures a filmmaker closer. She follows the sound to its source and finds herself in a wolf park. In the eyes of the wolves, she glimpses a wild past she feels herself drawn to. She uses her camera to get a better understanding of this 'wolf world'. She becomes enthralled by a young female wolf called Talla, who is the odd one out in the pack. As Talla grows up, she gets more and more dominant. This behaviour clashes with other she-wolves, who sense a threat for their positions in the pack. When Talla loses an ear in a fight, the animal keepers intervene and put her in an enclosure by herself. Demelza begins to recognise the artificiality of the park and the consequences of keeping these 'wild' animals in confinement. If Talla would live in the wild, at this moment in time she could leave the pack and become a lone wolf in search of another pack or start a wolf-family of her own. In the park she cannot make this decision; Talla's future is in the hands of humans.

For years Demelza returns to witness Talla's life in captivity. She sees parallels between her own problems and Talla's predicament: Demelza also feels she's an outsider and misses a sense of belonging. But, as she gradually realises, Demelza can take control of her own life whereas this is impossible for Talla. As the world of Talla gets smaller and smaller, Demelza understands she has the ability to set herself free.

Director's note

From the moment I stepped into the wolf park I realised something strange was going on. Why were the wolves unlike any I read about in books or seen in films and news media? They were smaller than I imagined and not aggressive. I realised popular media are perpetuating the same story. I decided to immerse myself and film in the wolf park to tell a different story.

In the nine years of filming, the she-wolf Talla showed herself time and again. As a youngster she was noticeably playful. As she grew older she became even more boi-

sterous, which the other female wolves did not accept. In one of the persistent fights, they ripped off some of her ear. The animal keepers intervened and put Talla in an enclosure by herself. Her story exemplifies the harm we inflict upon wolves when we meddle with nature. Additionally, as a female wolf with alpha traits, she defies how we think about the binaries male-female, alpha-omega, and associated gender roles.

I felt a kinship with Talla, because at this point in my life I was struggling to answer to responsibilities that were demanded of me - I felt trapped. Hence, I saw a parallel between myself and Talla. When a producer asked me "would you have been the same person today if you hadn't made WOLF PARK?", my answer was 'no'. Through filming Talla I recognise I have the freedom to act and decide for myself.

With WOLF PARK I am presenting a wolf that goes unseen in popular stories and it's an ode to Talla the last wolf of her kind.

Company profile

JUMP CUT is an independent film production company founded in 2011. Based in Trento, in the Trentino-Alto Adige region of northern Italy, the company is dedicated to producing arthouse films that are experimental in theme, style, and form.

In addition to its own productions, Jump Cut provides executive production services within the region for both fiction and documentary projects.

Jump Cut's most recent releases include *Il mondo è troppo per me* (The World Is Too Much for Me), directed by Vania Cauzillo, *L'Inganno* (Deception), directed by Sebastiano Luca Insinga, and *Sconosciuti Puri* (Pure Unknown), directed by Valentina Cicogna and Mattia Colombo.

FOLK FILM is an independent production company focusing on creative documentaries and animation. It does a lot of international co-productions, and most recent-

ly co-produced the feature documentary *Motherland*, which won the main award at the 2023 CPH:DOX and was nominated for the European Film Awards. Other titles include *How to Save a Dead Friend* (ACID Cannes, winner Grand Jury Prize International Competition DOC NYC 2022) and *The Scars of Ali Bouala* (premier Tribeca, winner TEMPO 2021).

Folk Film produced Demelza Kooij's film 'Wolves from Above', winning the Jury Award at the 2019 Ann Arbor Film Festival.

Based in Stockholm, Sweden and Edinburgh, Scotland, SISYFOS is behind the internationally acclaimed films such as *Scheme Birds* (Best Documentary Feature, Tribeca Film Festival, 2019), *Merry Christmas, Yiwu* (Winner of the Heart of Sarajevo, 2020), *The Scars of Ali Bouala* (Tempo Documentary Award, 2022), *How to Save a Dead Friend* (ACID Cannes 2022) *Butterfly Vision* (Cannes Un Certain Regard 2022) and *Motherland* (Winner CPH:DOX, 2023)

Director's profile

Dr Demelza Kooij is a director of documentary, hybrid film, and moving image installations. She explores the beyond-human, human engagement with flora & fauna, cultural heritage, sci-fi, and women's histories.

Her work is presented at film festivals, art exhibitions, and museums. Highlights are winner of the Jury Prize at the 57th Ann Arbor Film Festival 2019 for *Wolves From Above* (2018); screenings such as Festival Du Nouveau Cinéma Montréal, Edinburgh IFF, Hamptons FF, Zinebi, Full Frame, and exhibitions at Wrocław Media Art Biennale, FACT Liverpool, The Finnish Museum of Photography, and The National Museum of Modern & Contemporary Art Seoul [MMCA].

Demelza also directed award-winning shorts *Graminoids* (2014) and *The Breeder* (2017). *Wolf Park* is her feature debut.



First Cut+

Feature films that previously took part
in a First Cut Lab workshop

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Amores

Grace Passô

Entre Filmes, Desvia, Globo Filmes

Brazil

The mysterious silence that surrounds a Brazilian family is disrupted by a series of strange events that happen within the four walls of their house. The youngest son, however, knows a secret that can help everyone to come in terms with this moment.



Director

Grace Passô

Writer

Grace Passô

Producer

Ricardo Alves Jr.

Companies

Entre Filmes,

Desvia,

Globo Filmes

Budget

€ 760.500

(€ 610.000 in place)

Looking for

Gap-financing,

Sales Agents,

Festivals

Project Status

Final Cut

1st Feature**Synopsis**

A typical Brazilian family is dealing with a recent loss. They don't know how to express what they're feeling; they work hard, numbed by life and grief, and live immersed in private dramas. Suely, the mother, repeats every day the ritual of listening to the last audio message she received from her late husband; Gilson, the eldest son, is tormented by recurring nightmares of abandonment; Grazi only listens to music on her headphones as if she could see life as a music video; Guto goes off to strange places; Gisele desperately seeks contact; however, Tutu, the youngest son, constantly skips school.

The mysterious silence that surrounds the routine of a Brazilian family is disrupted by a series of strange events that happen within the four walls of their house. However Tutu, is the only one who seems to know the secrets the house hides and tries, little by little, to reveal them to his family.

Director's note

"And you, who are reading these words, will sign a pact with me: I will open the house, but you must wipe your feet before entering, and look at the paintings, the records chosen at each stage of life with great discretion, the glasses, cutlery and crockery, the bathroom with its perfumes, toothbrushes and cream brands; look at them with great respect. I would be irresponsible if I didn't say this: this movie was born as an ode to my family. To what we have lived and built together."

AMORES reinforces the search for narratives with new themes and fabulations for contemporary Brazilian cinema, fictionally resizing the subjectivities of blackness in the country.

The fiction brings together ten characters in its central plot, discussing processes of racialization in Brazil as well as the challenges of mourning within black Brazilian families. Most of the story of AMORES takes place

in the family home, a space of common Brazils, a house located on the outskirts of the city of Belo Horizonte. This house is full of the sounds of time, sounds that suggest suspense in the film: the rust on the gate, the squeak of the shower tap, the fan in Tutu's room, the creak of the table and, in addition to the objects, the fruit that falls in the yard.

AMORES shows that affection and the sense of community are historical elements that have made black families survive the dramas and tragedies of time in Brazil.

Company profile

Entre Filmes is a Brazilian production company based in Belo Horizonte, created by the filmmaker Ricardo Alves Jr. Since 2006, the company has produced 4 features and 7 shorts or medium length films.

In 2018, *The Dead and the Others*, by João Salaviza and Renée Nader Messoro, was part of Festival de Cannes - Un Certain Regard's competition. The film won the Special Jury Prize, was selected in over 70 festivals, and won over 15 awards. Upon its release in France the film was received with critical acclaim and brought over 50.000 people to the cinemas.

In 2023, the partnership with João Salaviza and Renée Nader Messoro continued with the co-production of *The Buriti Flower*, which premiered at Un Certain Regard section at Festival de Cannes and received the Ensemble Award. The film was presented in over 50 festivals and was released in France, in Portugal, Brazil, Argentina, Spain, Austria, collecting amazing numbers of public and great reviews.

The previous films produced by the company were selected in festivals such as Cannes's Semaine de la Critique, Berlinale, Locarno, Oberhausen, Rotterdam, Havana, BAFICI, FICUNAM, Mar del Plata, among many others. The first feature produced by ENTREFILMES was Ricardo Alves Jr.'s feature debut, *Elon Doe-*

sn't Believe in Death, released in 2016 and selected to festivals like IFFR, Cartagena and Macao, where it won an award for Special Artistic Contribution.

Amores, directed by Grace Passô, is the most recent project, currently in post-production.

Director's profile

Grace Passô (1980) is a director, screenwriter and actress.

She has a long career in theater and has received all the main Brazilian awards for her plays on the country's theater scene. She is the first black playwright to ever receive the Shell Award in Brazil.

She is the director of the short film *REPÚBLICA* (awarded at São Paulo International Short Film Festival and the Brazilian Cinema Grand Prix) and the medium-length film *DAZED FLESH*, co-directed with Ricardo Alves Jr, which was part of the Berlinale 2019 - Forum Expanded. *AMORES* is her first feature film.

As a film actress, she was awarded Best Actress at the Torino International Film Festival, and was twice awarded at Brasília Film Festival and Rio de Janeiro International Film Festival.

As a screenwriter, she is the co-author of the series *HISTÓRIAS IMPOSSÍVEIS*, broadcasted on Globo and co-writer of the documentary *RESISTÊNCIA - STORIES OF BLACK RESISTANCE IN BRAZIL*, produced for Globoplay streaming platform.

Grace has seven books published with her dramaturgies by publishers Cobogó and Javali. She has works exhibited at the 36th SP Biennial and was honored at Mostra de Tiradentes in 2019.

Borderline

Ignas Jonynas

Baltic Productions

Lithuania

Ornithologist Vilius, trapped by guilt and loss, gets himself into a dangerous smuggling business, unexpectedly, this criminal activity forces him to rethink his life and reconnect with his daughter.



Director

Ignas Jonynas

Writer

Ignas Jonynas

ProducersRūta Jekentaitė,
Martynas Mickėnas**Company**

Baltic Productions

Budget€ 1.600.000
(€ 1.400.000 in place)**Looking for**Sales Agents,
Festivals,
Distributor,
Financing**Project Status**

Final Cut

Synopsis

After his wife's death, mourning ornithologist Vilius is left alone to look after his daughter, Urte. One day, while driving home, he accidentally hits a group of smugglers evading the border control guards. The criminals impressed by the bird tracking GPS in Vilius' car, see an opportunity, and offer him a job. Seduced by the big pay and by the great opportunity to escape his daily struggles, he agrees in no time. His job is to track loads of smuggled goods crossing the border, instead of migrating birds.

During one operation, the smuggler assigned to watch the house turns on Urte, attacking her while she's alone. When Vilius returns, he finds a dead body on the floor. He acts quickly to hide the body and come up with an alibi, but his actions raise suspicion among the rest of the team. When Vilius receives another task, he knows it will be his last.

Director's note

Borderline - is a elevated thriller exploring the questions of empathy and human life's value against the backdrop of high-stakes smuggling crimes and intense personal challenges. The action of Borderline unfolds in the smuggling underworld. Accidentally drawn into this criminal environment, the protagonist, Vilius, is forced to confront not only the risks and moral dilemmas of his new reality but also his own inner struggles. After the death of his wife, ornithologist Vilius has lost all interest in his own life and the lives of those around him. He feels trapped in an emotional prison of his own making, from which, paradoxically, his involvement in illegal smuggling begins to free him. The risks and disregard for societal norms release him from his emotional chains, compelling him to reevaluate his existence from a new perspective.

Faced with the looming threats of imprisonment and de-

ath, Vilius begins to see life and the people around him in a new light. He realizes how important his psychologically troubled daughter Urte—whom he once saw as an unnecessary burden—has become to him. Midway through the film, Vilius notices that Urte's seemingly random scribbles on the walls of their home form an intricate optical art piece depicting the world outside the house. This discovery becomes a metaphorical hint toward the possibility of mutual understanding and support. As a result of this symbolic realization, the emotional wall between Vilius and Urte starts to crumble, offering hope that emotional closeness between the withdrawn father and his almost non-communicative daughter might be achievable. This reconnection leads Vilius to appreciate not only Urte's life but also his own.

Company profile

Baltic Productions is a dynamic audiovisual company based in Vilnius, Lithuania, operating since 2011. With over 12 years of experience, our team specializes in delivering high-quality projects ranging from short and feature-length films to mini-series, documentaries, multimedia performances, museum installations, and VR projects. Our editorial line emphasizes creative documentaries and feature films that showcase original content and an authentic cinematic aesthetic.

Our latest feature-length documentary debut, "Roberta" (2023), directed by Elena Kairyte, was nominated in the "Changing Faces of Europe" category at the 2023 HOT DOCS festival, and "Murmuring Hearts" by Vytautas Puidokas was awarded for the best Cinematography in Poff, 2024. Currently, Baltic Productions has 11 projects in development, including two feature films, one TV series, and eight documentaries.

We produce and co-produce art-house films by both local and international directors, remaining open to diverse genres while being particularly driven by creati-

ve and original content. Although primarily based in Lithuania, we are inspired by the borderless exchange of ideas and actively seek international partnerships and mutual creative ownership.

Director's profile

Ignas Jonynas is a Lithuanian film director, and the Borderline project will be his third feature film, for which he has gathered a strong and talented team. His previous films - were very successfully received both nationally and internationally. The Gambler has been called a marker of a new beginning for the Lithuanian cinema. It was the first Lithuanian film to be premiered at the San Sebastian Film Festival. Before stepping into cinema Ignas worked in the theatre for almost 10 years, he also directed several shows in the radio, created multiple short films (Sunday as it is, and Dancing Worm), and before this, was part of the first generation of Baltic region advertisers, writing and producing many commercials. Ignas continues to make his name in the industry. Per his first two films is seen as a very promising and talented Eastern Europe filmmaker with particular talent and expertise in expressing authentic visual language.

Despite the Scars

Felix Rier

Helios Sustainable Films

Italy

In her quest to recover from a brutal gang rape, Thea turns to dance as a means of healing her emotional and physical trauma. As she embraces a new relationship and the joy of motherhood with the birth of her son, Thea is faced with the challenging question of whether true healing is ever attainable.



Director

Felix Rier

Writer

Felix Rier

Producers

Martin Rattini

Petra Forer

Company

Helios Sustainable Films

Budget

€ 287.500

(€ 233.360 in place)

Looking for

Gap-financing ,

Sales Agents,

Festivals

Project Status

Pre-Picture Lock

1st Feature**Synopsis**

After enduring the trauma of a brutal gang rape, young dancer Thea embarks on a profound journey of healing. Through her choreography, she confronts her pain step by step, gradually transforming her vulnerability into a quiet yet fierce bravery. With the unwavering support of her partner Thiago and the unconditional love of their dog Mandinga, Thea discovers a safe space to begin piecing together her shattered world. The birth of her son Monan further redefines her relationship with her body and sense of self. We follow Thea's most intimate struggles through her personal video diaries, intertwined with the tender lens of her childhood friend, filmmaker Felix, who uncovers the unspoken layers of her healing process.

DESPITE THE SCARS highlights the collective responsibility we share in supporting those who have endured trauma, reminding us of the vital roles empathy, dignity, and love play in times of darkness.

Director's note

This film tells the courageous story of Thea, a young woman reclaiming control of her life after surviving a traumatic act of violence. This extraordinary protagonist invites us to follow her delicate journey of healing through dance, self-awareness, and love.

Thea and I share a long history and close friendship, dating back to our childhood in the Italian Alps. She was even my first great love. Years later, we both found ourselves living in Berlin. Shortly before I left the city, Thea had to cancel our farewell coffee, explaining that she was in the hospital. There, she told me about the hostage-taking, the drugging, and the rape.

That moment was deeply unsettling for both of us, but what must have been going on inside her remains beyond my comprehension. Out of the sense of guilt, I wrote an imaginary letter to "Undine*" – a pseudonym

given to Thea in a newspaper article reporting the crime. This inspired my short film ein mann zu sein (being a man), reflecting on the moral responsibility and the shame I felt as a man. Thea, moved by the film, invited me to create a larger project to share her story.

While ein mann zu sein explored themes of remorse, grief, and guilt, DESPITE THE SCARS turns toward perspective, resilience, and the struggle for a better life. It is a powerful reflection of Thea's courage, humanity, and determination - proof that even after the darkest moments, strength, dignity, and hope can prevail.

Company profile

Helios Sustainable Films is an independent production company based in Italy. Founded in 2012, it is run by its CEO producer Martin Rattini, has two employees and an extensive network of freelance professionals. We strongly emphasise sustainable filmmaking — content-wise we focus on socio-political and environmental issues, while also upholding the standards of Green Producing. The films produced by Helios range from creative documentaries to feature films.

Director's profile

Felix Rier was born and raised in the Italian Alps. After graduating from business school with a focus on finance and marketing, he moved to Berlin in 2016 and began a three-year apprenticeship as a media designer. Therefore, he mainly works in the camera department, as first and second camera assistant, as junior DOP and sound technician. From 2019 to 2022 he studied camera and light at ZeLIG - School for Documentary Film in Bolzano, Italy. As part of his film studies, he produced the short film ein mann zu sein (to be a man), which premiered at the Trento Film Festival 2021.

Girl in the Night

Luka Marčetić

Temporama

Slovenia

The aimless life of a lonely kleptomaniac takes an unexpected turn for the worse when he steals a bicycle from a mysterious girl who spends her nights fighting crime.



Director

Luka Marčetić

Writer

Luka Marčetić

Producer

Andraž Jerič

Company

Temporama

Budget

€ 930.000

(€ 900.000 in place)

Looking for

Sales Agents,

Festivals

Project Status

Final Cut

Synopsis

To cut through the mundanity of his night shifts, Rok keeps himself busy by stealing chocolate bars at the gas station where he works. One night, he meets a mysterious girl with severe bruises on her face. She only appears at night, is all about saving crime, and claims to possess super powers. If he wants to meet her again, Rok will have to come up with a cunning plan – so he decides to steal her bike.

Director's note

Girl in the Night is a comic and absurd story about archetypal weirdos and outcasts, but this time around they are not just placed in the background as a humorous element, but are brought to the forefront of the film and into the spotlight. Not only as heroes, but as superheroes. This is a story about boredom and the search for friendship in very strange circumstances. I am very interested in people who are not necessarily “cool”, but are mostly quiet, shy and enjoy the solitary existence. I can't claim to be quite exactly like the characters in this story (although people might claim that about me), but I can definitely somehow identify with them. I believe in the good of the people and even sometimes feel a little naïve about it. However, I also believe that with every little thing we do, we change the world for the better, even if we are not really superheroes.

Company profile

Temporama was established in 2013 to provide support for the new generation of up-and-coming Slovenian film-makers. Since then, they've produced a number of short and experimental films, music videos, and webseries, such as the 2015 hit Paired Up by Luka Marčetić. In 2018 their first feature film Consequences, written and directed by Darko Štante, premiered at Toronto IFF, followed by a considerable festival and distri-

bution success. The most recent focus of the company has been on producing feature films, with several titles in production or development at the moment, but they also remain active in short form, documentary film, television content, and experimental cinema.

Director's profile

Luka Marčetić was born in 1985 in Zagreb, Croatia, where he lived until moving to Slovenia by the age of 15. He graduated at the Institute and Academy of Multimedia in Ljubljana where he started experimenting with different formats for various platforms. He created the first Slovenian web series Day of Love, released on YouTube, which he followed with three seasons of Paired Up, a TV series which gained both critical and commercial success. Since then, he made a couple of short films and directed a feature length film in 2016, a local low-budget comedy At Hostar which broke Slovenian box office records and became the most viewed film in Slovenian history. He followed the success with a sequel in 2022.

Summer School, 2001

Dužan Duong
nutprodukce
Vietnamese, Czech

A Czech-Vietnamese family reunites years after leaving their eldest son in Vietnam, only for old wounds and rivalries to resurface. When the younger brother is found injured, they must confront the fragile ties that have kept them apart.



Director

Dužan Duong

Writers

Dužan Duong,
Jan Smutný,
Lukáš Kokeš

Producers

Lukáš Kokeš,
Dužan Duong

Company

nutprodukce

Budget

€ 750.000
(€ 656.500 in place)

Looking for

Sales Agents,
Festivals

Project Status

Final Cut

1st Feature

Synopsis

A teenage boy returns to his family after years apart, carrying the wounds of being sent away to Vietnam as a child while his younger brother stayed in Czechia with their parents. Reuniting at their bustling Asian market means facing a father who barely knows him, a mother desperately trying to smooth over the emotional cracks, and a younger brother who isn't exactly thrilled to share the limelight.

The father's attempts at masculinity feel more performative than practical, the mother's peacemaking is equal parts charming and chaotic, and the younger brother's mischief masks his insecurity at suddenly being bumped from center stage.

One particular summer pushes them all to their limits, as things literally start to fall in the wrong direction. In a series of events as clumsy as the family dynamics, the younger brother ends up in the hospital after falling from a roof at the marketplace. What really happened? Between misunderstandings, misguided lessons in masculinity, and the unpredictability of family life, the family learns that sometimes, the only way to build something new is to let the cracks show.

Director's note

What does it mean to be a man? Through the lives of three men, I explore masculinity and the complex roles of fathers and sons. Amid their struggles, the mother stands as the family's voice of reason. Can fractured relationships be repaired, or are some bonds too damaged to mend?

At the center is Zung, who chases a false dream of success, neglecting his loved ones in pursuit of validation. He sacrifices his soul to become the man he believes he must be, losing sight of what truly matters.

The bond between a father and son is often seen as sacred. Fathers are role models, and sons follow in their

footsteps. But what happens when this bond is disrupted by absence? At five, my parents sent me to Vietnam, 8,323 kilometers away. This left a scar on our relationship.

Kien, one of the characters, carries a similar wound. Torn from his parents at a young age, he struggles with abandonment and reconciling his identity in the shadow of a father he barely knows. His journey explores whether broken bonds can ever be repaired.

Tai, the youngest son, is shaken by his estranged brother's arrival. Overwhelmed by jealousy and fear, he questions his place in the family, feeling threatened and overshadowed.

My goal is to authentically depict Vietnamese immigrant life and show how the chase for wealth often alienates us from the family we aim to support. While family is central to Asian values, many of us put money first, using family as justification. This is a disconnect we must confront.

Company profile

Nutprodukce is one of the leading production companies in the Czech republic with 15 Czech Lions and 7 Czech Critics' Awards. Its position is based on a wealth of experience ranging from documentaries, high end TV series to animation works and an artistically diverse selection of arthouse cinema. Nutprodukce's reputation stands for both professionalism and nonconformity, best exhibited in its works such as the miniseries Burning Bush directed by Agnieszka Holland (11 Czech Lions), Graffitiger (Student Oscar nominee), animated short Pandas (Cinéfondation 3rd Prize, Cannes, 2013), original TV series for HBO Europe Wasteland (TIFF - Primetime selection, 2016), Spoor, also directed by Holland (Silver Bear Alfred Bauer Prize at the 2017 Berlinale), Sergei Loznitsa's latest film State Funeral (Venice Film Festival, 2019), Francesco Montagner's Brotherhood (Golden Leopard at Locarno's 2021 Concorso Cine-

asti del Presente), Michal Blaško's Victim (Venice Film Festival Orizzonti Competition 2022) or Michal Blaško's TV mini-series Suspicion (Berlinale Series 2022). Characterized by its distinct artistic policy, the company constantly seeks original and innovative slate of audiovisual works from central Europe. Nutprodukce has also become known for discovering and developing long-term relationships with new directorial and screenwriting talent, having produced more than 9 film feature length film debuts.

Director's profile

Duzan Duong was born in 1991 in Hanoi. At the age of 4, he moved to the Czech Republic with his family. He studied banking and insurance at the University of Economics and for one semester he was a student of the editing department at the Film and TV School in Prague - FAMU. In 2015 he made his first short film MAT GOC, which premiered at the Jihlava IDFF. In 2017, his next short BO HAI premiered at the same festival and won the Best Director Award at FAMUFEST and the Best Short Film Award at Finale Pilsen. He also received a special mention from the jury at Prague Shorts and nominations for the Film Critics' Prize and the Magnesia Award. He is a self-taught filmmaker with passion not only for directing but also for cinematography and overall any discipline within the filmmaking process. He is a co-founder of Czech production company AZN kru.

Those Who Whistle After Dark

Pinar Yorgancioglu

Rosa Film, Gece Kuşu Film

Turkey, Bulgaria, Germany

A supernatural encounter burdens the recently retired Mr. Melih with an existential awakening. Soon he, his wife, and their daughter are all haunted by the ghosts of lost opportunities, abandoned dreams, and alternate possibilities...



Director

Pinar Yorgancıoğlu

Writers

Pinar Yorgancıoğlu,
Emre Gulcan

Producers

Dilde Mahalli,
Zeynep Ekmekci,
Pinar Yorgancıoğlu,
Bekir Yusuf Açıksöz

Companies

Rosa Film,
Gece Kuşu Film,
İndiBindi Film Co.,
İkinciYeni Film

Budget

€ 563.000
(€ 501.500 in place)

Looking for

Gap Financing,
Sales Agents,
Festivals

Project Status

Final Cut

1st Feature

Synopsis

THOSE WHO WHISTLE AFTER DARK is an absurdist tale with dark humor, which follows the members of a dysfunctional family.

MR. MELİH (64), the retiring manager of the Natural History Museum, clumsily tries to adapt to civilian life. After a supernatural encounter, his innocent middle age depression spirals into a major existential crisis. He seeks solace from his family, but they are busy with their own crises. His wife SUZAN (59), an ambitious nurse that is stuck in a life she's disappointed with, has fallen victim to a scam she cannot tell to anyone. In the meantime, their video-game addict daughter TOPRAK (30), an unemployed aspiring writer, plots a doomed escape to the U.S. to run away from an increasingly bleak future.

With Melih searching for the meaning of his life, Suzan secretly trying to find a way out, and Toprak going nowhere fast; soon they are all haunted by the ghosts of the past — literally... This is the story of three lost souls who are mourning their dreams and searching for themselves while trying not to lose one another.

Director's note

My parents' generation was brought up on middle class Turkish values, and were promised peace and prosperity if only they behave and be good kids — and I was raised by them. So we all got scammed with the belief that hard work, good intentions and tolerance will solve all of the world's problems. The reality left us disillusioned with ourselves, the world, and for me: the future.

I spent my life trying to show gratitude to my family for what I have, and hide my moments of disappointment & despair. These hidden edges are why I seek an outlet through storytelling and why I'm fascinated with "who people are, when no one's looking". I find the freedom & loneliness of these moments magical but melancholic— a mix that inspires all my work. My debut too has this, not only in the themes, but within the playful storytel-

ling that mixes open and closed form narrative. Despite feeling lonely, my three characters are all going through very similar griefs about the "potential they once had" — a similarity that can only be seen from the "outside". So, through interviews with ghosts, the film gives an outsider's perspective on the living.

While the film mirrors the despair of the times, I hope it's dark humor will encourage the audience to laugh at its face instead of becoming numb with it. Against a backdrop of normalized absurdity and generational despair, Whistle is a film that desperately wants to stay hopeful.

Company profile

ROSA FILM: After 18 years of experience in different levels of production Dilde Mahalli founded her own company Rosa Film in 2021. Born in 1984 in Istanbul, She worked in production of the films "The Impeccables" (2012- Busan, Antalya FF) by Ramin Matin, "Something Useful" (2019- Tallinn, Seattle FF) and "Queen Lear" (2019-Sarajevo, Goteborg, Big Sky FF) by Pelin Esmer, "Chronology" (2019-Busan, Warsaw, Santa Barbara FF) by Ali Aydın and "Kouldelka: Crossing the Same River" (2022,Jihlava, Istanbul FF) documentary by Coşkun Aşar. Currently she completed Emine Yıldırım's debut film "Apollon by Day, Athena by Night" (2024-Tokyo FF), Pelin Esmer's new fiction feature "And The Rest Will Follow" (2025- Rotterdam) and Pinar Yorgancıoğlu's debut film "Those Who Whistle After Dark".

Gece Kuşu Film brings together bold narratives and innovative collaborations to create impactful films that resonate across borders. Founder ZEYNEP EKMEKCI (Sarajevo Talents '22 & NYU '16) is dedicated to produce films that inspire and provoke, believing in cinema's power to spark dialogue and understanding. She is a producer on Pinar Yorgancıoğlu's debut feature film in post-production Those Who Whistle After Dark, a Turkey-Bulgaria-Germany coproduction, and Irmak Kara-

su's debut documentary, Kızıltoprak. She previously worked in the productions of various national and international films including Levan Akın's last feature film Crossing (Berlinale '24) and Aslı Ö zaraslan's debut feature Ellbogen (Berlinale '24). She produced three short films that premiered at Antalya Film Festival: the Yellow, the Cat, the Kayakers and the Host (Esme Madra - 2020), Stormers (Esme Madra - 2022) and Tower (Emre Birişmen - 2022) and the experimental feature film AMA (2022). She worked as the associate producer of the documentary Invisible to the Eye (Zeynep Dadak 2020, DokuFest).

Director's profile

PINAR YORGANCIOĞLU holds a masters degree in film directing from Columbia University. Her short film "Mrs. Nebile's Wormhole" (2016), shot in Germany with the Baden-Württemberg film fund, premiered at the Warsaw Film Festival and got awards at the likes of !f and IKSİ Istanbul FF. Her previous short "Prayers at Dawn" (2014) screened at festivals worldwide including Palm Springs film festival and was nominated for the grand prize at Xining FF. Together with Gregorio Mircea Franchetti, they created the web-series "The Art of Hospitality", and sold the rights to Warner Music Group and Eko Studio. She is an alumna of Biennale College Cinema, of Sarajevo Talents, and of !f Istanbul Screenwriters Lab. Her side hustle is editing, where her main editing credits include Sundance winner short "Green" and Esme Madra's "The Stormers" which received a Best Editing award at Kaş Film Festival. Her assistant editor credits include "Love After Love" directed by Russ Harbaugh, starring Andie Macdowell and Chris O'Dowd.

Urban Disobedience Toolkit

Vladimír Turner
Beginner's Mind
Czech Republic

*Guerrilla Artists show you how to fix your
post-capitalist city*



Director

Vladimír Turner

Writer

Vladimír Turner

Producer

Ondřej Lukeš

Company

Beginner's Mind

Budget

€ 110.000

(€ 90.000 in place)

Looking forGap Financing,
Sales Agents,
Festivals**Project Status**

Final Cut

1st Feature**Synopsis**

Urban Disobedience Toolkit explores the evolving dynamics of public space in big cities, showing how art can inspire people to reclaim and reshape their urban environments. Through three artistic interventions and a performative lecture, the film illustrates ways to “take back the city.” These elements are seamlessly interwoven under the direction of artist and filmmaker Vladimír Turner, who has spent nearly two decades dedicated to art in public spaces. The title, Urban Disobedience Toolkit, highlights the avant-garde potential of art—not as mere decoration, but as a radical intervention and a driving force against technocratic perceptions of the world.

Director's note

The foundation of this film lies in the last 15 years of my systematic work in film and visual arts. I have explored not only artistic forms and new models but also pressing social issues: the right to the city, privatization of landscapes, homelessness, racism, alternative social systems, elitism, and institutional critique. Combining documentary techniques, visual art, and experience with workshops and educational activities, I aim to inspire many others to overcome their resignation regarding life in big cities— which are so often a melting pot of toxic phenomena.

Since 2007, I have monitored guerrilla art in Prague's public spaces. I participated in Media Reality, when our group Ztohoven hacked live Czech TV broadcasts, airing a montage of a nuclear explosion in the Krkonoše mountains. I documented this event in On Media Reality, a precursor to Urban Disobedience Toolkit, reflecting my growing focus on conceptual art responding to urban issues, often at the edge of legality. This produced guerrilla-style films, experiments with camera techniques, fast editing, and tension.

These experimental films are regularly exhibited and screened at festivals. My archive includes footage of protests, happenings, squatting, and demonstrations.

In Urban Disobedience toolkit, this mosaic of urban activities forms a playful, associative montage, seamlessly shifting between past and present. The film combines experimentation with audiovisual material, visual essays, classic documentary techniques, staged scenes, and performative lectures, connecting my core areas: art, film, and civic engagement. It extends my international practice, treating public space as a free platform for accessible art. My goal is to develop my methods while contributing to both the art community and the wider public.

Company profile

Beginner's Mind is a film production company founded in Prague in the autumn of 2022. We are primarily interested in fiction and documentary films with a strong authorial vision and the potential to also appeal to international audiences. It is also very important for us to have a personal relationship with the authors. Our goal is to have a diverse film portfolio - we enjoy both large projects and DIY. We see this as a good practice to maintain a beginner's mind, which helps prevent slipping into routine and recycling the same procedures. Crucial is the effort towards environmental and social sustainability, to which the company is committed on all its projects without exception. We are the only independent production company who is a founding member of the newly emerging first Czech green filming platform, which unites the most significant players in the Czech audiovisual industry. The ambition of Beginner's Mind is thus not only the production of films with innovative cinematic language, but also the effort to contribute to changing some

of the standards of film production within its territory.

Director's profile

The long series of films, videos, engaged interventions in public space, performances, and object installations provide a consistent testimony to the power of the themes reflected. For many years, Vladimír Turner(1986) has persistently pointed out problematic, and often strongly cautionary, moments of Anthropocene civilisation in various places around the world. The enchanted mechanism of consumption-production, the deceitfulness of marketing strategies, the extraction of non-renewable resources, the brutal devastation of the landscape, mass tourism, the misconception of the possibility of shackling the organism of a big city to a structure of order, gentrification, homelessness, inhumane methods of political systems. In fact, the theme of the essence of pure humanity, personal and social responsibility towards the landscape, nature, and a sustainable way of life based on local self-sufficiency is recalled again and again. He points out the themes through matter-of-factly simple acts. This makes the awareness of the necessity of individual engagement all the more intense. Although his conceptual works have an activist character, often dealing with the subversion of paradox, the expressive power of the pure artistry cannot be ignored.

White Lies

Alba Zari

Slingshot Films

Turkey, Italy, Germany, Norway, Netherlands

Through confrontation with her mother and grandmother, Alba traces the story of three generations of women, investigating their choices, uncovering their hidden truths and the white lies that defined their identities.



Director

Alba Zari

Writer

Alba Zari

Producer

Manuela Buono

Company

Slingshot Films

Budget

€ 365.000

(€ 294.000 in place)

Looking for

Gap Financing,

Festivals

Project Status

Rough Cut

1st Feature**Synopsis**

Alba was 25 years old when she learnt that Johnny was not her father. Confronting herself with her mother Ivana and grandmother Rosa, she discovered that more was untold: Rosa left Trieste in the 80ies, leaving behind her conventional marriage and bringing with her only Ivana, 13 years old at that time. After an adventurous trip they reached Bangkok where they entered the Sect of the Children of God, a christian sexual cult spread out from California all over the world. They lived in a commune, and practice the so-called "Flirty Fishing", the enrollment of new male adepts through prostitution. Alba was born there as Jesus Baby – the name given to the children of unknown fathers. A few years later Rosa decided to escape, bringing with her her daughter and grandchildren. Altogether Ivana and Rosa had spent in the cult more than ten years.

Alba today has no memories of the years she spent in the cult; still, she lives the consequences of that choices: while Rosa overcome the past denying her responsibility and reiventing herself as a wedding planner, Ivana was unable to reconnect with life after the sect: diagnosed with psychiatric disorders, she looks at her younger self with struggling melancholy and unacceptance for her destiny. Through the eyes of Alba and her artistic work, White Lies traces the path of three women and their struggle to exist: through denials and unacceptance, through re-elaboration and creation, three identities in search for reconciliation and redemption.

Director's note

At 25, I discovered that Johnny, whom I believed to be my father, was not. Instead of answers, my grandmother Rosa gave me a box filled with photos and VHS tapes. At 30, Rosa joined a cult in Trieste and fled to Thailand, taking my mother Ivana with her. This decision had lasting consequences for our family. I delved into the box's content, decoding my history from clues. The film's title reflects Rosa's explanation for her silence: "a white lie." Pursuing pho-

tography, I used it to uncover my father's identity, leading to a virtual journey. While photography revealed isolated moments, cinema allowed me to explore complex relationships with Rosa and Ivana over time. Our bond is marked by silence, unspoken words, suspicion, and a desire to be understood. "White Lies" focuses on our roles and destinies shaped by choices.

The goal is to tell this story as if it were an intimate, personal diary, filled with notes, post-its, annotations, dried flowers between the pages, maps, and letters kept as a reminder, perhaps even a warning. The VHS images, with their faded colors from worn-out tapes, will repeat themselves as I watched and rewatched them until their mystery turned into obsession. The virtual reality images, so clean, sophisticated, sharp, technological, yet so real that they can only be imagined. I intend to question the status of the image and memory and, by sharing our story, I hope to empower others to speak out against abuse and break the cycle of trauma.

Company profile

Launched in 2013, Slingshot Films is sales agency and production company based in Trieste, Italy specialized in creative documentaries and art-house fiction films.

Company Filmography:

(Fiction, co-producer) 2024 - New Dawn Fades (or. tit. Yeni Şafak Solarken), by Gürcan Keltek, feature fiction, Turkey/Germany/Italy/Norway/Netherlands, 130', (Locarno Film Festival, International Competition, Boccacino d'Oro Award for Best Film)

(Fiction, executive producer) 2023 - Frarìa by Alberto Diana, short fiction, Italy, 18' (Torino Film Festival)

(Producer, Doc) 2021 - Freikörperkultur by Alba Zari, Italy, 18' (Venice International Critics' Week)

(Producer, Doc) 2021 - Diteggiatura by Riccardo Giaccioni, Italy 18' (Giornate degli Autori, Venice, Rotterdam IFFR, New York FF)

(Producer, Doc) 2019 - Fango Rosso by Alberto Diana,

Italy, 54' (Torino Film Festival)

Director's profile

Born in Bangkok in 1987, since childhood she led a nomadic life that brought her to live in different cities and countries. Her experience as a traveler influences and is reflected in her photographic practice, with intends to explore social themes, for example her visual studies of mental health centres since the Italian Basaglia Law and of the widespread eating disorders of the American society. Her style is distinguish by her very painterly use of the color of the material, and by her images featuring unresolved, melancholic environments. Zari has an introspective sensibility for photography. Through the lens, she depicts posing female figures who, despite the classicism of the compositions, emerge in all their expressive power with aching intimacy.

Her recent works include Occult (2020-), a visual study on the propaganda of the cult Children of God, she travelled tracing her mothers past to India, Nepal and Thailand. The Y- Research of Biological Father (2017), born out of a journey in search of her origins through the father she never knew. Places (2015), a book and a photographic project executed with ElementWo, witch deals with analysis of the visual communication of ISIS propaganda.

With The Y she is part of the Foam Talents 2020. Her work has been exhibited in international festivals and museums such as MAXXI, Rome, London Art Fair, Circulation Paris and Athens Photo Festival; won awards such as Backlight prize (Finland) and GraziaDei prize (Italy), Images Vevey Jury prize (Switzerland) . Her work is held in private collections and museums such as Fotomuseum Winterthur, MAXXI museum, Fondazione Orestiadi and Collezione Donata Pizzi.

She has released the short documentary Freikörperkultur (2021) premiered at the Venice Film Festival- Settimana della Critica. She is working on her first documentary feature film White Lies.

A woman with dark hair is shown from the chest up, standing under a showerhead. She is looking upwards and to the left. Water is spraying from the showerhead onto her face and hair. The background consists of yellow-tiled walls. In the bottom left corner, a portion of a shower faucet is visible. The overall lighting is warm and soft.

MIDPOINT Shorts

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Heart in Your Throat

Petar Lakić
Baš Čelik Film House
Serbia

On the day of her grandfather's suicide, Marina (13) is torn between grief and first time desire for a local hunk. As guilt becomes unbearable, she plans to escape from her small town.



HEART IN
YOUR THROAT



Director

Petar Lakić

Writers

Petar Lakić,
Đorđije Petrović

Producers

Danilo Mladenović,
Savina Smederevac

Company

Baš Čelik Film House

Budget

€ 38.263,95
(€ 26.264,95 in place)

Looking for

Co-producers,
Financing,
Sales Agents,
Distributors

Project Status

Financing stage

Synopsis

MARINA (13) lives alone with her grandparents JAGODA (60) and SLOBA (60). Like every summer, her grandparents are preparing huge amounts of tomato juice for the winter. When Marina wakes up one day, she finds the yard empty and her grandfather dead by suicide. Her guilt starts to emerge as she wonders what would happen if she didn't sleep in. Soon after her aunt JELENA (38) arrives with her family. When Marina is left to take care of her little cousin, she sees the most beautiful SEXY MAN (28) she has ever seen walking across the street. She starts fantasizing about him and her guilt becomes unbearable. Marina overhears a conversation between Jelena and Jagoda, she starts to suspect that Jagoda let Sloba hang himself. The night that family leaves, Marina is left to confront her grandmother about her grandfather's death. After she fails reconnecting with her, Marina resorts to the last option - she calls her absent mother SEJA (40). Marina's world shatters when her mother fails to calm her down. Luckily for Marina, the Sexy man breaks into her little room and steals her, taking her far away in the night. She is finally happy as she looks at his rugged bloody face.

Director's note

It's the end of August. I am eight years old, and my sister, Marina, is thirteen. We play in the yard while our grandparents sit under an umbrella, boiling tomato juice next to a stove. My sister and I tease Grandpa about the sweat pouring from his bald head, calling it a fountain. This memory stayed with me and my family, because that day when we left the courtyard, grandpa took his own life. Returning to my hometown brings with it the relentlessness of boredom and the mono-

tony that never seems to end. I wanted to connect his dark complicated desire for suicide to the geography of Vojvodina.

The script merges genres of thriller and magic realism. The thriller elements develop in the world of grown ups which Marina desperately tries to enter looking for connection and love. In her own lonely world she starts to imagine the Sexy man as a savior.

Narration is explored through a mix of objective and subjective storytelling, emphasizing Marina's transition from childhood to adulthood. Poetic realism emerges from Marina's inner world, with surreal imagery reflecting her emotions-subtle and gentle, contrasting the thriller's suspense.

Through Marina, we explore the weight of adult responsibilities placed on a 13-year-old. Marina's desire represents my memories of discovering my queer identity as I followed my hunk neighbour around. The film Heart in your throat is about growing up suddenly, and examines sexuality as a way of escape.

Company profile

Film House Bas Celik was established in 1998 and by 2024 we have produced and co-produced more than 30 feature films, several documentaries and short films. Our productions include "The Trap" directed by Srđan Golubovic (2007. Berlinale Forum, 22 international awards and was shortlisted for the Best Foreign Film Oscar), "Clip" directed by Maja Miloš (Tiger Award at 2012 Rotterdam IFF), "Circles" directed by Srđan Golubovic (Special Jury Prize at Sundance 2013., Prize of Ecumenical Jury at Berlinale Forum 2013.) and the latest production feature film "Father" directed by Srđan Golubovic (Prize of Ecumenical Jury and Audience Award at Berlinale Panorama 2020).

EFA nominated Goran Bogdan for Best Actor Award for his role in "Father". Films we produced were screened at more than 900 festivals worldwide and won more than 200 international film awards. Savina Smederevac and Danilo Mladenović worked on many projects in Film house Baš Čelik, developing both short films and feature length films.

The Faculty of Dramatic Arts is a constituent institution of the University of Arts in Belgrade which focuses on education and research in the fields of film, theatre, dramaturgy, culture, radio, acting and media. It was established in 1948, as the first faculty of this type in Yugoslavia.

Director's profile

Petar Lakić was born in small village in Vojvodina, Serbia in 2000. There, he grew up and graduated from high school. He holds dual citizenship - Croatian and Serbian. Since 2020, he has been studying at the Department of Film and Television Directing at the Faculty of Dramatic Arts in Belgrade. He was chosen to represent the University of Arts in Belgrade at the European Film Awards in Berlin as a member of the young jury in 2023. During his studies, he directed several short fiction and documentary films that were screened at numerous festivals: "My Own Private Hospital Estate" (2022) - Febiofest in Bratislava, Pančevo Film Festival, Bistre Reke, "Just This World" (2023) - Bašta Fest, Special Mention at the Valjevo Film Encounters, "Bull's Eye" (2024) - Bašta fest, Special jury award at Merlinka international LGBTQ+ film festival, "Through the Veil" (2024) - Kasseler Dokfest. His short film "Heart in your throat" got financially supported by Film Center of Serbia, is selected for MIDPOINT Shorts, and is planned to start shooting in summer 2025.

HEART IN YOUR THROAT
THRILLER, MAGICAL REALISM,
COMING OF AGE

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MIDPOINT SHORTS
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Kurkuma

Drishya Gautham

Stray Factory

Germany (TBC), India

An amateur Indian chef tries to win over his Berliner girlfriend's friends by cooking them a lavish meal in an old Brandenburg mansion. But when he leaves a kurkuma stain on the white marble counter, he is faced with supernatural consequences as the yellow stain takes a life of its own.



KURKUMA

Directors

Drishya Gautham

Writers

Tarana Reddy,
Drishya Gautham

Producer

Mathivanan Rajendran

Company

Stray Factory

Budget

€ 90.000
(€ 10.000 in place)

Looking for

Co-producers,
Financing

Project Status

Financing stage

Synopsis

Kurkuma follows Magesh, a 31-year-old Indian who lives in Berlin and works for KultServ, a soulless “culture-for-hire” app, and dating a Berliner woman named Lisa. Magesh aspires to join Berlin’s artsy social circle, and so he takes a cooking job at Lisa’s friend Tobi’s immersive art party at a Brandenburg mansion.

It’s Magesh’s chance to shine—or so he hopes. The dinner goes surprisingly smoothly... until he spills kurkuma on Tobi’s pristine marble counter. At first, he brushes it off - it’s just a small stain, and the guests seem to love his food. But the yellow stain defies all efforts to clean it, and starts spreading uncontrollably in the form of a creeping mould across the kitchen, then onto Magesh himself.

Magesh tries to suppress his growing panic, as the mould begins to follow him everywhere. Soon, the party’s atmosphere shifts. Guests start acting strange—smearing food on themselves and spiralling into bizarre, zombie-like behaviour. Terrified, Magesh searches for Lisa and finds her covered in the yellow mould and obsessively scrubbing her hands raw. He barricades himself in the kitchen and spends the rest of the night frantically scrubbing the countertop.

By morning, the chaos is gone, the guests are all asleep, and Lisa seems calm and normal. Exhausted and wondering if he imagined it all, Magesh leaves the mansion. As Magesh waits at the train station with a cup of coffee, a KultServ notification reveals Tobi has downvoted him for the kurkuma mishap. Magesh looks up from his phone, smiling slightly, as his eyes flash a bright, eerie yellow.

Director’s note

Kurkuma was born from my anxieties integrating into life in Berlin, where I made a deep, instant connection with the city but battled feeling like an outsider. I hope for the film to be an engaging, relatable yet surprising exploration of trying to fit in and the lingering guilt and shame

of doing something wrong in the process. I would like to capture the hypocrisy of today’s so-called progressive society in our appreciation of exotic and marginalised cultures alongside our lack of curiosity - and sometimes, outright dismissal - of the depths of those very cultures.

The story came to life when my co-writer Tarana, who has a great background in genre storytelling, drew parallels with Shakespeare’s classic Macbeth. Apart from the obvious visual of the stain (“out, damned spot!”), we picked up the themes of guilt and ambition, weaving a character-driven classical story structure into the premise.

We are also excited to bring the colour and kitsch from our Indian storytelling to the often loaded subject of immigrant alienation. We believe that this blend will make for a great film for arthouse and genre audiences alike.

Some early references are social horrors like Get Out and The Witch, and absurdist satires like Black Mirror (“Nosedive”) and Triangle of Sadness.

We’re ready with a second draft of the screenplay and are ready and eager to collaborate with European producing partners on a final draft before going into prep. As I have a background in theatre and acting, I thrive on workshoping the script with actors while having a tight screenplay to back us up. We look forward to collaborating with exemplary technicians in Europe who will further elevate the project.

Company profile

Stray Factory is an award-winning independent film production company founded by BAFTA Breakthrough & EAVE producer Mathivanan Rajendran that has focused on international co-productions from India. Its 2019 arthouse horror ‘Nirvana Inn’, secured the Asian Cinema Fund and premiered at the Busan International Film Festival.

Its 2020 Indo-dutch co-production ‘Nasir’ received the Hubert Bals Fund, premiered in Tiger competition at

Rotterdam and had a theatrical release in the Netherlands. The film went on to win the IFFR NETPAC award, the Grand Prix at Andrei Tarkovsky Zerkalo and the FILIPRESCI Best Indian Film award, in addition to widespread critical acclaim. Stray Factory also produced Drishya Gautham’s debut short film B. Selvi & Daughters, which received a grant for impactful short films from German institution GIZ. Stray Factory focuses on films that are authentic, contemporary and attempt to challenge the status quo.

Projects in Development:

- Indi/Pendent: Indo-European musical comedy series (Created by Drishya Gautham, developed at Serial Eyes)
- 72 Hours: Newsroom thriller about reproductive rights (written by Drishya Gautham & Tarana Reddy)
- Annaikatti Blues: arthouse drama (Nasir’ director Arun Karthik’s next feature)

Director’s profile

Drishya is a writer-producer from South India and a 2024 alumnus of the Serial Eyes program in Berlin. Previously, she has commissioned series across four Indian languages as a Development Executive at Amazon Prime, and developed films and series as an in-house Creative Producer at some of India’s leading production houses, during which she co-created the SonyLiv streamer series Meme Boys. Her debut short was nominated for three Indian Film Critic’s Guild awards. She is currently developing an Indo-European musical comedy series, which was selected for the NFDC Co Production Market in Goa and a commercial feature film on reproductive rights, which is in pre-production with an acclaimed Indian cast and crew.

Meridian

Markela Kontaratou

Sonder Films, Coda Films

Greece

Marina, a lignite miner, lives with her sister Elina in the desolate village of Meridian, where lignite is worshipped as a deity. When a mysterious explosion seals the mine, her identity, her relationship with her sister and her faith are tested



Director

Markela Kontaratou

Writer

Markela Kontaratou

Producers

Manos Tzivakis,
Kyriaki Kontaratou

Companies

Sonder Films,
Coda Films

Budget

€ 92.000
(€ 13.000 in place)

Looking for

Producers,
Financing

Project Status

Development,
Early Financing

Synopsis

Meridian is inspired by real communities in Northern Greece, suffering the effects of lignite mining and eventual delignitisation. In the film's universe, lignite is worshipped as a deity, and the miners are considered martyrs at the altar of its extraction.

Marina, a miner living under bleak conditions in the isolated village of Meridian, hides her health issues from her sister Elina, who, being pregnant and very religious, tries to find hope in the life she carries within her.

One evening, a mysterious light falls from the sky near the mine. The sisters, along with Marina's colleague, Ahmed, and other villagers, gather near the mine to investigate the strange phenomenon, which remains unexplained.

Soon, the workers are told that the mine will be permanently sealed. This inexplicable development causes outrage amongst the workers.

Marina tries to cope with the loss of her job, which leads to questioning her identity, while being plagued by strange nightmares. At the same time, Elina devotes herself even more to religion and tries to maintain hope for the future.

The conflict between the sisters is exacerbated by the arrival of a group of foreign "lignite pilgrims", who, in search of a miracle, approach the sisters. Elina welcomes them, drawing hope from their faith, while Marina, whose faith is beginning to waver, treats them with suspicion. Their arrival will make the clash between Marina and Elina inevitable.

Director's note

Welcome to Meridian: a world where harsh reality and the supernatural coexist, creating a parallel universe not too different from our own.

Meridian is inspired by the villages near Kozani, where li-

gnite mining became the main source of income but caused pollution, diseases, and the displacement of villages. Paradoxically, the locals resist to accept the end of the lignite era. This forms the central theme of Meridian: relying so heavily on something that irreparably harms you. In the story, the characters see the end of the lignite era as the death of God, exploring how the loss of belonging can be experienced as a metaphysical, revelatory experience.

The character of Marina reflects my own experience working on set as a lighting technician, in a male-dominated field, often pushing my body to its limits by excessive strain. But, like Marina, I often gain satisfaction and purpose from this exhaustion, which also contains an aspect of physical dependance on the very labour.

Through the relationship of the sisters, which moves from one of dependence and routine to one of distance and implicit understanding through acceptance of their differences, the evolution of family ties through crises is examined, as well as my own relationship with my sister.

The original themes and carefully selected visual elements of Meridian will create a delirious and unique world, with the aim of telling a story of mourning, faith, survival, transcendence and inner rebirth.

Company profile

Sonder films is the newly established production label of film producer Manos Tzivakis (Sarajevo Talents 2023, Oxbelly 2022, APostLab 2021). His credits include short films by emerging filmmakers such as Love you more than Peanut Butter by Ariadni Angeliki Thyphronitou Litou (nominated for the Hellenic Film Academy's IRIS Awards, awarded twice at the 45th Drama Film Festival and), "The first setting Sun of Summer" by Asteris Tziolas (IN THE PALACE,

awarded twice at the 46th Drama Festival). Sonder is currently developing a slate of films by Markela Kontaratou, Ioanna Digenaki, Ioanna Tsilili and Jacques Simha.

Coda Films is the Athens-based production company of Kyriaki Kontaratou. She has produced the short films "Scorched Earth" by Markela Kontaratou (Pardi Di Domani, 76th Locarno Film Festival), "No Future Kids" by Eleni Pouloupoulou (awarded twice at 47th Drama ISFF) and "Kelsey" by Yorgos Sakarellos (nominated at the Thessaloniki ISFF 2024). She is Executive Producer for Efi Spyrou's films "Womanifesto" (Best Experimental Film Award in Los Angeles Best Film Awards 2024, nominated at On Art Poland FF and San Francisco Arthouse Short Festival) and "Between Water and Roof: Black Stories", by Efi Spyrou (in post-production).

Director's profile

Markela Kontaratou is a filmmaker from Athens Greece. She has studied visual arts at the Athens School of Fine Arts, English Literature at the American College of Greece, and completed an MA with distinction at The London Film School. Her work as a visual artist has been shown in group exhibitions in Greece, the Netherlands and Austria. Her debut short film Scorched Earth (2023) premiered in the Pardi Di Domani competition of the 76th Locarno Film Festival. It has since screened at Palm Springs, Aesthetica Film Festival, Manaki Brothers FF, Drama International FF, Zagreb FF, Poitiers FF among others. Markela has also trained and worked in various other aspects of filmmaking such as lighting, editing and producing, which have given her a deeper understanding of the medium.

Pithead

Wannes Vanspauwen, Pol De Plecker
Animal Tank
Belgium, France

*Amidst an icy dreamscape, a woman
braves a blizzard to seek refuge in a
desolate black metal bar, only to discover
a penguin stranded in a nearby tree
separated from its colony.*

Directors

Wannes Vanspauwen,
Pol De Plecker

Writers

Wannes Vanspauwen,
Pol De Plecker

Producer

Brecht Van Elslande

Company

Animal Tank

Budget

€ 200.000
(€ 180.000 in place)

Looking for

Gap-Financing,
Broadcasters,
Distributors,
Festivals

Project Status

Financing Stage

Synopsis

Rain, a 51-year-old woman, makes her way through hail and wind in an icy dreamscape, heading towards Pithead, a bar distinguished by an inflatable penguin on its roof. Inside the bar, strange regulars sip black coffee to a black metal band, as if it were jazz. The bartender mentions a penguin colony migration. Rain and the patrons step outside to see thousands of penguins marching under a moonlit snowy sky.

A lone penguin's cry draws Rain to a tree, where a penguin separated from its colony is stuck high up in the tree. She tries to help but returns to the bar as the storm worsens. The patrons now dance a tango in the bar, indifferent to the penguin. Rain goes back outside, but the storm obscures her view. She decides to give up and returns to her car.

The penguin, alone, watches the inflatable one on the roof but falls dead trying to reach it.

Amidst a lightning storm, the penguin colony continues their chaotic, hopeful migration.

Director's note

Today, we find ourselves in a rapidly changing, chaotic world. In Ancient Greek, chaos literally means a gaping void. The great nothingness. An immeasurable, black, empty space without beginning or end. Within it lies the question: what is going to happen? Or, what can still emerge? What happens in the meantime? The global chaos and transformation of today are largely related to the climate crisis, with which we as humans are so intertwined that we can hardly maintain a clear perspective on it.

In Belgium, the climate crisis is not always immediately palpable but rather takes the form of a creeping threat. Cli-

mate warming is both invisible and omnipresent. Despite humanity's entanglement with the issue, individualism still prevails, and in a massive crisis like this, we are thrown back to our individual responsibilities.

Pithead is a way to show how we deal with chaos. It takes us into a world that feels both strange and lonely, with characters who must fight their own battles in a cold, desolate, and industrial environment. It reflects our contemporary confrontation with the climate crisis, individualism, and the search for connection in an era of chaos and transformation. It encourages the viewer to reflect on our role in the larger whole. The audience may be left with a sense of introspection about the human condition in the face of irreversible change and is invited to think about the possibilities for connection and solidarity in an apparently divided world.

Company profile

Animal Tank is a Belgian based production company and animation studio, specialized in audiovisual production and services. Brecht Van Elslande and Bert Lesaffer, both based in Ghent, Belgium, founded Animal Tank in the beginning of 2014. They have produced films that won prizes at Berlinale, Annecy and Fantoche, got nominated for the European Film Awards and were sold to ARTE France, France TV, Canal+, Canvas, MUBI and HBO.

Director's profile

Wannes Vanspauwen (°1994) and Pol De Plecker (°1995) are a directing duo based in Ghent, Belgium. They first met during their studies at KASK School of Arts Gent, where they both earned a master's degree in film.

Their working relationship truly flourished during their graduation projects, where they worked closely together every step of the way - from writing to directing and editing. Their individual graduation projects have received critical acclaim, with Wannes' film *The Day That Was White* (2021) receiving a special mention from the jury at Film Fest Gent and winning the jury prize at the Leuven International Short Film Festival. It also received recognition from various festivals around the world and is now being showcased at Short of the Week.

Pol's graduation project *Noisetrain* (2022) swept multiple awards at the Leuven International Short Film Festival, including the Jury Prize and Best Cinematography. The film has also been selected for prestigious festivals including Vienna Shorts, where it received a special mention and was praised as one of the "future five" by renowned filmmaker Lukas Dhont at CONNEXT 2023.

Their collaboration has also extended beyond their studies, with the creation of a short film for the 50th anniversary of Film Fest Gent. This project brought together 25 composers and 25 international filmmakers, showcasing Wannes and Pol's ability to work with internationally acclaimed composer Daniel Hart. Currently they are developing their first feature film.

CONTACTS

Siren's Cove

Anastasia Babenko

Coast House Materials

United States of America

A gas station customer unintentionally becomes a witness to a bizarre scene involving a bikini barista, a police officer, and a measuring tape.

ESSO

2007



Chai Me!

Blended Ice Kucha

HAWKS

LAUNDROMAT

OPEN

CrossFit 138



Director

Anastasia Babenko

Writer

Anastasia Babenko

Producer

Bobby McHugh

Company

Coast House Materials

Budget

€ 29.516,22

(€ 9.949,49 in place)

Looking for

Co-producers,

Financing,

Sales Agents,

Festivals

Project Status

Financing stage

Synopsis

Christian (35) pulls into a gas station to refuel, only to find himself caught in a strange situation. Just as he's about to leave, he notices Cricket (28), a local bikini barista who runs a drive-thru coffee stand, being inspected by the police. Concerned, Christian pulls up to make sure she's okay. Driven by politeness and respect, he unwittingly becomes her next customer.

Cricket makes him a coffee while wearing nothing but her bikini, and Christian is left to observe from the window of his car, following the stand's rule to stay inside. As he lingers, he becomes more and more attracted to this sharp-tongued and captivating woman, finding an unexpected refuge from his own personal drama. The awkward tension between them only grows when it's time to leave a tip.

Questioning the limits of his empathy and the weight of his own assumptions, Christian is hit with a brutally uncomfortable reality check, forcing him to confront whether a tip can ever just be a tip.

Director's note

When I first moved to Seattle, I was introduced to the phenomenon of bikini baristas — a local concept I'd never encountered before. A legal battle over the bikini barista dress code, with absurd clauses like "the top three inches of the legs below the buttocks," sparked my initial inspiration for this story.

What began as an exploration of body regulations, gender dynamics, and the crisis of masculinity soon evolved into something deeper. I realized this film wasn't just about gender or sexuality — it's about miscommunication, societal projections, and the failure to understand "the other." These themes resonate deeply with my personal experiences. After Russia invaded my home country, Ukraine, I was hit with a wave of pity—well-meaning but ultimately misplaced and triggering.

This led me to explore how we reduce others to stereotypes, boxing them in and projecting our own assumptions onto one another. It became the heart of the film: two characters caught in a psychological ping-pong of misinterpretation and self-doubt.

To capture this disconnection, we're casting a professional actor for Christian to portray his emotional journey, while for Cricket, we want to work with a real-life bikini barista, whose raw honesty and charisma will infuse the role with an authenticity that can't be faked.

Given the intimate, even provocative nature of the setting, visually we aim to focus on the ordinary, not the sensational. We're thrilled to collaborate with a Seattle-based cinematographer Jacob Rosen (Sundance, Tribeca, SXSW), whose compassionate and unexploitative lens will guide us through this unique and awkward journey.

Company profile

Coast House Materials is a multidisciplinary creative studio and artist roster based in Seattle, founded in 2023. Specializing in narrative filmmaking with a distinct artist-forward approach, the company debuted its first project ever, a horror short "Dream Creep" (dir. Carlos A.F. Lopez, 2024) at Sundance 2024. The Oscar-Qualifying short was deemed "The Scariest Short on the Festival Circuit" and is now streaming on Mubi.

Director's profile

Anastasia Babenko is a Ukrainian writer/director based in Seattle, WA. Her debut short film "The Diaper Cake" (2021) received a Vimeo Staff Pick and played over twenty Oscar-qualifying film festivals around the globe, including Clermont-Ferrand IFF, Palm Springs ShortFest, Short Shorts & Asia, etc. Her new project "Siren's Cove", was selected for Talents Sarajevo Script Lab 2023, and is currently a part of MIDPOINT Shorts 2024-2025 development program.

Slash

Vlad Bolgarin

VOLT Cinematography

Moldova

A love-hate relationship between two teenage brothers, who struggle with an authoritarian father and an absent mother, growing up in an environment where violence is normalized.



Director

Vlad Bolgarin

Writer

Vlad Bolgarin

ProducersVlad Bolgarin,
Lucia Lupu**Company**

VOLT Cinematography

Budget

€ 31.600

(€ 11.600 in place)

Looking forCo-producers,
Financing,
Sales Agents,
Festivals**Project Status**

Financing stage

Synopsis

ION (17) and NICU (11) are two brothers that are growing up in the countryside of Moldova, in an environment where violence is normalized and is even seen as a necessary means for education.

On the day they expect their mother to come back from a long absence working abroad, an accident happens. The younger brother breaks the new bike and the older one is punished for it, by getting smacked with the stick. The father has to meet the mother at the airport, leaving ION to watch over the younger brother, with the warning "not a single hair should fall from his head". ION is forced to take NICU wherever he goes. After getting involved in a dispute between rivaling gangs from the two neighboring villages, NICU finds the chance to redeem himself in front of his older brother, but ends up making it worse. ION loses sight of his younger brother and is forced to overcome his fears and anger, if he wants to find him.

Director's note

In the last couple of years, I started to look deeper into the patterns that emerge in a family and how we inherit traumas that are not ours, yet they become part of us. Noticing and trying to change these patterns in myself, I started to find where they come from.

I decided to explore the love-hate relationship between two teenage brothers, making it the context through which the dysfunctionality of their family is revealed.

While developing this story, it gradually started to shape around the violent and aggressive environment in which my post-soviet generation grew up in and how normalized it is, even to this day. The father from the story thinks that violence and fear is the best way to discipline his children, probably because that's the way he was educated, and his parents too. But what happens when the entire community is educated in a similar manner? In everyday challenges, violence becomes the default reaction.

The moments of aggressive confrontations are inspired by my own experience as a teenager in a post-soviet country, so I feel like I can bring them to the screen in an interesting and fresh way. While this story seems to have a dramatic and realistic tone, I want to infuse it with moments of humor and brightness, which I believe is what helps us to heal.

Company profile

VOLT Cinematography is a film production company founded in 2017, based in Chisinau, Republic of Moldova. We specialize in the production of author driven films, telling local stories and contributing to the development of the film industry from our country. With a background in animation, short films and series, we also offer services for film post-production and production of documentaries, advertising and music videos. We produced some of Moldova's most successful short films in recent years – "Place under the sun" and "Sigh", both directed by Vlad Bolgarin (selected to Shanghai IFF, Sarajevo FF, Busan ISFF, Animayo IFF). We also produced "Lost in Moldova" – a Moldovan-American short series, that became Moldova's most popular show online (selected to LA Shorts, SerienCamp, SERIAL KILLER and awarded at Web Fests in Berlin, Seoul, Sydney, Los Angeles). We are currently in the post-production stage of "Mothers and Daughters" – the first professional short fiction by one of the most promising Moldovan female authors Lucia Lupu, and we are in the development stage of two fiction feature films.

Director's profile

Vlad is a film director, writer, editor and producer, based in Republic of Moldova (born in 1993). He studied filmmaking at the Academy of Music, Theatre and Fine Arts from Chisinau, and is the head of VOLT Cinematography – a film production and post-production services company. Vlad is the author of some of Moldova's most successful

short films - „SIGH” and “Place under the sun”, screened at more than 100 film festivals (Shanghai IFF, Sarajevo FF, Busan ISFF, Animayo IFF). He also produced and co-directed the Moldovan-American short series “Lost in Moldova” (selected to LA Shorts, SerienCamp, SERIAL KILLER and awarded at Web Fests in Berlin, Seoul, Sydney, Los Angeles). He is currently working on the development of several short films and his debut feature fiction film.

Vlad has already established himself as one of the most promising authors from Moldova. His desire to experiment with blending genres, searching for his own voice, with a delicate approach to the visual language, results in a fresh vision that is exciting to watch.

Time, Space and Everything in Between

Savva Dolomanov
8Heads Productions
Czech Republic

Two days before her wedding, Juliet joins her brother Alex and ex-boyfriend Leo on a spontaneous trip to revisit a childhood bowling alley. When a detour through a long-abandoned village tied to their past unearths forgotten memories and emotions.



Director

Savva Dolomanov

Writer

Savva Dolomanov

Producer

Ellyn Černochová

Company

8Heads Productions

Budget

€ 58.000

(€ 34.062 in place)

Looking forCo-producers,
Financing**Project Status**

Financing stage

Synopsis

Juliet (26) is on the brink of her wedding, but she's far from ready. Restless and uncertain, she sets off on a road trip with her older brother Alex (28) to revisit a childhood bowling alley. She also invites Leo (27), her ex-boyfriend, who carries his own burdens beneath a carefree facade. Together, they are a mismatched trio, traveling through landscapes filled with memories, silences, and tension.

As they drive, places along the road stir Juliet's faded memories of childhood—fleeting images that resurface like forgotten footage, blurring the boundaries between past and present. The trip, in its quiet unraveling, becomes a confrontation with time itself, forcing Juliet and Alex to face what they've lost and how far they've grown apart. Moments of connection rise unexpectedly amid the unease, as long-buried emotions simmer beneath the surface. Each stop along the way brings them closer to a place they've been avoiding—the village where Juliet and Alex grew up. There, surrounded by the echoes of their shared past, Juliet stumbles upon a diary she wrote as a child. Its words awaken something she's been missing: a connection to herself, to her brother, and to the time that has shaped them both.

Though the elusive bowling alley remains out of reach, the journey reveals what has been forgotten, what still lingers, and what must be let go.

Director's note

The feeling I wanted to capture in this film comes from my own experience at a close friend's wedding. Surrounded by the joy of summer, I couldn't help but feel an emptiness about the future, a sense that happiness and uncertainty often exist together. This feeling is connected to the vulnerability of youth, the awareness that time is always moving forward, and the bittersweet changes that come with it. It is this passing, unstoppable time that I want to explore through the characters' journeys—how time shapes our

relationships, our identities, and how we see the world. Juliet's anxiety comes from her struggle with time. Her past feels distant and fragile, while her future is unclear and overwhelming. She feels the present is the only thing she can hold onto, but even that feels uncertain. Her desire to escape adulthood comes from not knowing how to deal with this.

The relationship between Juliet and her brother Alex is at the heart of the story. Alex is stable, sure of what he wants, while Juliet is more unsure, trying to figure out what she truly needs. Leo, her ex-boyfriend, represents another side of her—free but also lost. The road trip is like a journey into their minds, where past and present meet. At the end, Juliet finds a diary she wrote as a child, reconnecting with who she was.

Company profile

8Heads Productions, a film production company based in Prague, was founded in 2010 with the aim to produce primarily original projects, created in close collaboration between the screenwriter, director, and producer. It focuses on short and feature films, and now also series, with international potential and the possibility of global distribution, with a special emphasis on co-productions with former socialist countries. Founder of the company, producer, film theorist, and a former long-time Programme Director of the Karlovy Vary IFF, Julietta Sichel, draws on her experience in the film industry and her long-standing contacts with foreign film representatives and international festivals. Films produced or co-produced by 8HP have been screened at numerous film festivals around the world, including Busan, Montreal, Tallinn, Jeonju, Raindance, Sarajevo, Kyiv or Jihlava and many more. In recent years, 8HP has been focusing on high-quality children and youth content. Julietta Sichel, joined forces with Ellyn Černochová, a recent FAMU graduate, to produce *Time, Space and Everything in Between*, a project

that reflects 8Heads Productions' dedication to original and unique storytelling with international appeal.

Director's profile

Born in 1997, Savva Dolomanov is a graduate of FAMU's Bachelor's program in Editing and is pursuing his Master's degree. He is the author of several short films screened at international festivals.

Savva's filmography includes *Untitled Bloody Project* (2019), a dark comedy in which a peculiar customer turns a gas station worker's life upside down, and *Quiet Drive* (2022), in which a man finds himself immobilized in a hospital after a car accident.

His most recent work, *Silhouette* (2023), which he collaborated on with production manager Ellyn Černochová and cinematographer Kryštof Čížek, has been selected for festivals such as the One Country One Film Festival, CloseUp IFF, Marienbad FF, Bardolino FF, and Bosphorus FF, where it won Best International Short Film. *Silhouette* follows a young man who, after meeting a woman on a train, becomes a witness to her sexual harassment by two strangers, leading to an elusive relationship.

Building on their collaboration on *Silhouette*, Savva, Ellyn, and Kryštof have reunited for their current project, *Time, Space, and Everything in Between*, promising a continuation of their unique storytelling and visual style.

Savva is also working on the first draft of his debut feature film. Throughout his studies, Savva has contributed to *Triple Voice* (2024) (MAUR Film), *Vinland* (2024) (Moloko Film), and *1+1+1* (2024) (D1 Film). He has worked as an editor with established companies such as Czech TV.

Unwellness, or the Principle of Precaution

Reka Pinczes
ULab, Umbrella
Hungary

Rigid Ildikó is going through the thick of menopause at her accountancy training in a spa hotel, when a full-of-life hearing-impaired woman unexpectedly awakens her long-dormant sensuality, disrupting her previously assumed sexual identity.



Director

Reka Pinczes

Writer

Reka Pinczes

ProducersAnna Toth,
Ádám Felszeghy**Companies**ULab,
Umbrella**Budget**€ 75.000
(€ 50.000 in place)**Looking for**Financing,
Sales Agents,
Festivals**Project Status**

Financing stage

Synopsis

ILDIKÓ (52) is a prominent accountant whose comfort zone are numbers where everything is precisely calculated, unlike intimate connections, which she distances herself from. Going through menopause and having a broken relationship with her own body, her sexual life has become practically non-existent and she has given up trying to change it. Until an accountancy training, which takes place at a spa hotel in the countryside, brings her back to sensuality.

The person who ignites the long-dormant desire in Ildikó happens to be ODETT (38), a hearing-impaired woman working at the hotel. At their first encounter, gentle and attentive Odett, with her tender radiance, touches Ildikó in a way which is able to smooth away her stiffness. In many aspects, reserved Ildikó and friendly Odett are polar opposites, but the physical chemistry is so strong between them that they feel an urge to be close to each other.

Not only does Ildikó have to learn communication methods that the hearing impaired can understand in order to talk to Odett, but more importantly, she has to resolve her broken relationship with her own body in order to experience intimacy.

Director's note

I, for my part, like to think that I am in harmony with my sexual identity, but again and again, I have to realize that it is a very fragile thing and will probably remain so for the rest of my life. I have a hard time escaping a feeling of lingering loneliness, even if I'm in a relationship, and it limits my ability to express my intimate needs.

That's how Ildikó (52), my heroine, has been created. She represents the intimacy barriers in question, because she's someone who isolates herself, someone who doesn't want to be seen and can't articulate her desires, what's more: she is not even aware of her desires because she suppresses them so much.

Middle aged women are easy targets of desexualisation as they are either on the verge of menopause or already going through it, which can be a tough battle. For some, it leads to lack of libido and depression, but for some, it can be a new turning point of self-exploration, or even a sexual rebirth. The latter is happening to Ildikó in this film with her newly found attraction to a woman.

However, it's not the gender which is the important aspect about the subject of her desire but it rather comes down to whether she is able to allow herself the intimacy she has been subconsciously craving for.

I feel like, if I don't pay attention to myself, there is a chance that I could end up like Ildikó: with repressed sexual desires, isolated from physical pleasures. That is why I am eager to tell her story, which I believe could be engaging for anyone with similar issues.

Company profile

ULAB is a film production company that is a creative branch of Umbrella Collective in Hungary. Since 2018 we search, develop, produce and co-produce both short and feature length animations, fictions and documentaries. We are focusing on cutting edge storytelling and innovative hybrid forms of narratives with authentic personal voices.

UMBRELLA is a leading creative agency and production/post-production house in Hungary. The company has produced hundreds of television commercials, branded content and music videos, and animated short films. Umbrella's projects have been invited to prestigious film festivals and have won several creative awards, including a Golden Cannes Lion in 2024.

Besides several shorts, such as My Name is Boffer Bings (2012), Balcony (2016), or Affricate (2022) the company group produced three feature films so far, which travelled over the world's film festivals from Palm Springs to Hong Kong. The low-budget feature The First Two (2023) won

Myrtle Beach Independent Film Festival (US), ÉCU Independent Film Festival (France) and Lublin Film Festival (Poland), while All About the Levkoviches (2024) was distributed all over the American Continent by the Menemsha Films (1945, Kiss me Kosher) and Encipta and won a FIPRESCI Award at Sofia International Film Festival. The animated documentary feature Pelikan Blue was in the shortlist for the European Film Awards nomination in 2024 after premiering at the A list film festival PÖFF Black Nights Tallinn (2023) and competing at more than 40 film festivals across the globe.

Director's profile

Réka Pinczés (28) is an emerging film director working on documentaries and fiction. She earned her MA in film directing at ELTE Budapest. In her films she explores suppressed sexual desires of characters from various age and gender groups.

Apart from Midpoint Shorts programme, she has also pitched her short film project, Unwellness, or the Principle of Precaution, at Friss Hús Budapest International Short Film Festival's pitch forum and took part in ELBE DOCK International Film Festival's story editing workshop, which is a Czech-German-Polish programme.

She has been developing her debut feature-length documentary for over two years with the working title Steps of Domonkos. The project has been awarded at Verzio Documentary Film festival's DocLab pitch forum with the encouragement award by DAE (Documentary Association of Europe) and the Best Hungarian Project award by MADOKÉ (Hungarian Documentary Association). The project also recently got selected into the 4th edition of PITCH_IT workshop at Berlinale. Besides directing, she works as a freelance editor and editor on set, mostly working on short formats, such as commercials and music videos.

Juries

Co-Production Forum Jury

Jean-Baptiste Bailly-Maitre (Alpha Violet)
Svetlana Cherrier (Ciclic Center-Val de Loire)
Edvinas Puksta (Black Nights Film Festival)

Last Stop Trieste Jury

Sarah Dawson (IDFA)
Maria Bonsanti
Carmen Vicencio (American Documentary)

This Is IT Jury

Caterina Mazzucato (Bio to B - Biografilm)
Gaia Furrer (Giornate degli Autori)
Pascale Ramonda (Ramonda Ink)

MIDPOINT Shorts

Marie Lamboeuf (Salaud Morisette)
Karim Aitouna (Haut Les Mains productions / Waq
Waq Studio)
Andrea Magnani (Pilgrim)

First Cut+

An Feyfer (Flanders Audiovisual Fund)
Ilse Ronteltap (Netherlands Film Fund)
Gabor Greiner (Film Boutique)

EAVE Slate



This intense and compact workshop, run in close partnership with EAVE, offers to 12 companies that are developing a slate of A/V works, consultancies on how to build a successful company slate and strategic company planning, together with business-to-business exchanges with key players from different industry sectors. Selected participants will work together in three groups led by Ankica Tilic (Kinorama), Michael Kitzberger (Geyrhalterfilm) and Benjamin Domenech (Rei Pictures).

Stefano Centini
Volos Film Italia | Italy

Zoran Dzeverdanovic
Blade Production | Slovenia

Juan Camilo Figueroa
Hotel B Filmes | Colombia

Valeria Forster
Brava Cine | Argentina

Caroline Houben
Climax Films | Belgium

Malin Huber
HER Film | Sweden

Kalin Kalinov
INVICTUS | Bulgaria

Andrea Magnani
PILGRIM FILM | Italy

Akira Martins
Rodô Audiovisual | Brazil

Eugenia Olascuaga
Monarca Film | Uruguay

Marta Szymanowska
KIJORA FILM | Poland

Claudia Wohlgenannt
Plan C Filmproduktion | Austria

Inspirational Labs

A series of workshops to explore new formats
and develop new business models



Amazing Intelligence

Artificial Intelligence Inspirational Lab
in partnership with ACE Producers

For many producers within our industry AI may feel like this vast and infinite space cramped with information. How does one find their way through all the available technology without losing the collaborative synergy between human ability and AI efficiency. The AI Inspirational Lab is the solution for producers who are looking to expand their knowledge in the fast-paced ever-changing world of AI. Expert Maciej Żemojcin, joined by key speakers in the field, will guide producers through this process with a series of interactive lectures, case studies and group work, to provide producers with an extensive overview of current AI tools, and ways to effectively incorporate these tools within their own production processes.

Greta Akcijonaite

Greta Garbo Films | Lithuania

An Feyfer

Flemish Audiovisual Fund | Belgium

Francesco Lattarulo

Mediterraneo Cinematografica | Italy

Ilaria Malagutti

Mammut film | Italy

Ivana Marinić Kragić

Marinis Media | Croatia

Virginia Martin

Contando Films | Germany

Rasa Miskinyte

ERA FILM | Lithuania

Hilal Senel

Hafif Film | Türkiye

Svitlana Soloviova

Svitlofor Film | Ukraine

Anima Spirit

Animation Inspirational Lab in partnership
with CEE Animation Workshop

ANIMA SPIRIT is designed as an entrance door for experienced producers and film companies coming from live action or documentary, wanting to discover the exciting and complex world of animated film production. The Lab will combine group work, individual consultancies, and lectures on financial and creative aspects of animation production. The Lab is hosted by the CEE Animation Workshop team and led by international experts Martin Vandas (producer, MAUR Film, Czech Republic) and Sabine Andersone (producer, Atom Art studio, Latvia).

Adrian Bila

Adenium Film | Romania

Anna M. Bofarull

Kaboga Art & Films | Spain

Nicolas Britos

Mil Monos Cine | Spain

Edina Csüllög

Undi Teod | Estonia

Nicholas Hooper

CUBHO Audiovisual | Chile

Dan Radu Mihai

Dash Film | Romania

Nenad Mikalački

Druid | Serbia

Piergiuseppe Quarto

Nowhere Pictures | Italy

Martin Vallejos

Fish in Water Films | Germany

Cold Open

Drama Series Inspirational Lab in partnership
with MIDPOINT Institute

Cold Open will once again select international producers, with a background in feature films, who aspire to shift to drama series content. The programme will be led by MIDPOINT Institute's tutors and experts, and will include lectures, group sessions and a space for in-depth discussions, aiming to supply hands-on skills of development, production planning and financing of serialised drama content.

Miljenka Čogelja

Pipser | Croatia

Edwin Goldman

Goldman Film | Netherlands

Sergio Grobas

Astra Pictures | Spain

Gianna Isabella Magliocco

Gate 67 | Canada

Stelios Mavrodontis

Filmiki Productions | Greece

Debora Nischler

Albolina Film | Italy

Matěj Paclík

Breathless Films | Czech Republic

Julietta Sichel

8heads Productions | Czech Republic

Deja Škerjanc

666 Productions | Slovenia

Miljan Vučelić

Protos Film | Montenegro

Docs Meet Series

Docuseries Inspirational Lab in partnership
with EURODOC

Docs Meet Series is designed for producers willing to build or strengthen skills specific to Docuseries. The programme targets independent producers who have a background in feature-film production (documentary, narrative, animation) and aspire to produce high-end creative Docuseries within an international perspective, preferably with an ongoing project currently at the writing or at the development stage. The programme's participants will gain updated intelligence and hands-on skills on the European current artistic landscape, market leading players (private and public), and (co)production strategies when it comes to Docuseries. The workshop, led by senior EURODOC tutors with a background in production and platform commissioning, will combine group work, lectures, and case studies of recent prominent EU-coproduced Docuseries.

Karin Berghammer
berg hammer film | Austria

Patricia D'intino
Good Kids | Hungary

Renko Douze
Een van de jongens | Netherlands

Ania Gawlita
Kijora Film | Poland

Timea Huszár
Timea Huszár | Hungary

Jakob Krese
Majmun Films | Italy

Andrius Lekavicius
Cinema Cartel | Lithuania

Leonidas Liambeys
Long Run Productions | Greece

Arantza Maldonado
Curare Films | Canada

Enrico Pacciani
Alkermes | Italy

Erika Ponti
Oki Doki Film | Italy

Bernabé Rico
TALYCUAL | Spain

Iva Tkalec
The Fish Square | Belgium

Stephanie Von Lukowicz
LUKIMEDIA | Spain

East & West

East & West Co-Production Inspirational Lab
in partnership with the WEMW

A complete journey through the main co-production and distribution opportunities offered by Europe and Latin America, with a focus on the most dynamic regional and national funds, but also on the Eurimages, Ibermedia and Creative Europe support schemes. The Co-Production Inspirational Lab is specifically designed for upcoming producers that need to acquire the necessary tools to co-produce films and other audio-visual formats in the international marketplace, and will include lectures, exchange sessions with leading industry key players and successful East & West co-production case studies.

Rita Balogh

Other Films | Hungary

Gunda Bergmane

Nafta Films | Latvia

Ekin Calisir

Purple Pigeon Productions | Italy

Yiannis Christoforou

Decoy Images | Greece

Alberto Favruzzo

Abisso Studio | Italy

Alessia Gasparella

Red Sled Films | Italy

Massimiliano Gianotti

Cooperativa 19 | Italy

Melissa Guevara

Burn and Die Films | El Salvador

Samaya Hillenbrand

Doghouse Filmproductions | Germany

Diego Hoefel

Corpo Aberto | Brazil

Aymeric Isnard

futur antérieur production | France

Martina Knoblochová

Punk Film | Czech Republic

Maria Langousi

Hellenic Broadcasting Corporation | Greece

Ondřej Lukeš

Beginner's Mind | Czech Republic

Yatna Gabriela Montilla

Alba Films | Dominican Republic

Livia Rădulescu

Redwood Productions | Romania

Andrea Rapallini

Materiali Sonori Cinema | Italy

Kelly Sanchez

Saqras Films | Peru

Paulo Serpa

MEUS RUSSOS | Brazil

Dan Silov

Bright Nine | Latvia

Larissa Silva

Floresta Produções | Brazil

Angelo Rocco Troiano

Mediterraneo Cinematografica | Italy

Olita Vārpa

BMH / UNTOLD | Latvia

Marija Vlahović

ABHO Film | Montenegro

Films x Games

Video Games Production Inspirational Lab
in partnership with SpielFabrique

The video game industry is reaching USD 200B and targets everybody on a global basis! The Films x Games Inspiration Lab is offering an expert glimpse of the opportunities through understanding how to position, finance and distribute a game. The Lab is developed with pan European game ecosystem catalyst SpielFabrique with the support from renowned experts. It offers keynotes and personal support to filmmakers wishing to expand to video games.

Diana Caravia
Micro Film | Romania

Franco Colman
Cosmic Brew Studios | Argentina

Viktória Dénes
Éclipse Film | Hungary

Martin Fir
Aerodrom | Slovenia

François Le Gall
a_BAHN | Luxembourg

Irena Markovic
Focus Media | Croatia

Joanna Szymanska
Shipsboy | Poland

Andrea Trincardi
Altreforme | Italy

Genre Rules

Fantastic Film Inspirational Lab in partnership
with the Fantastic Film Forum of the
Trieste Science+Fiction Festival

Genre Rules is meant as a hands-on guide to the inner workings of genre cinema. Even though genre movies today are more popular and marketable than ever, producing them may not prove so easy. The genre film industry is highly specialised, with key players, industry events and subgenres of its own, and constantly changing trends. This lab is designed to provide an in-depth overview of this sector and will focus in particular on the best strategies to develop your project and effectively place it in the market. The workshop targets independent producers and new talents with an international attitude, who wish to improve their skills and become acquainted with the genre film landscape.

Cristina Badea
Adenium Film | Romania

Gana Čomagić
Evil Ideas Film And Music Production |
Montenegro

Frederik Ehrhardt
Freud & Ecstasy | Germany

Vildan Ersen
Gataki Films | Türkiye

Mary Fernandez
Orlok Films | Spain

Adrian Gonzalez De La Peña
Machakiller Productions | Canada

Ellen Havenith
PRPL | Netherlands

Maximiliano Monzon
Mil Monos | Argentina

Gregory Rossi
Nerofilm | Italy

Augusto Sandino
Schweizen Media Group | Colombia

Sara Stijović
Tiny Sofa | Montenegro

Milan Stojanovic
Sense Production | Serbia

Sophia Zornitsa
Mq Pictures | Bulgaria

Impact Zone

Outreach & Impact Inspirational Lab in partnership
with ESoDoc

Impact Zone is dedicated to empowering filmmakers to harness the transformative power of storytelling. Hosted by The Good Media Network—the visionary organisation behind Berlin's brand new and innovative media and nonfiction festival Dokumentale, as well as Germany's pioneering film and impact initiative, The Good Media Pitch—this lab is a hands-on co-creation space. It invites selected fiction and documentary projects to explore how their stories can ignite meaningful change in society. Through a dynamic, guided workshop, participants will craft a compelling vision for the societal shifts they hope to inspire. The process includes defining clear, actionable impact goals and outlining strategic steps to unlock their film's full potential. By diving into the nuances of impact, the lab aims to deepen participants' understanding of the role stories play in creating change—not just for their productions, but for audiences, collaborators, and the broader community. Key outcomes of the workshop include the development of a foundational impact strategy tailored to integrate seamlessly into every stage of the filmmaking process, from scriptwriting to distribution. Participants will gain practical tools and personalised guidance to refine their vision and implement effective campaigns.

Daria Akimenko
Helios Sustainable Films | Italy

Ilze Falkovska
Kultfilma | Latvia

Brunella Fili
Officinema Doc | Italy

Lucia Kasova
Filmsomnia | Slovakia

Eszter Knopp
Good Kids | Hungary

Leon Lee
Flying Cloud Productions | Canada

Gabriela Ponce
Roue De Cine | Luxembourg

Eleonora Zappia
L'eubage | Italy

Streamers Ecosystem

Streamers Ecosystem Inspirational Lab

This Lab offers an unparalleled angle to explore the diverse global streaming landscape and the evolving dynamics of the on-demand ecosystem. Combining cutting-edge market analysis on emerging trends and expert insights through a blend of lectures, case studies and masterclasses, participants will gain access to in-depth data, insider tips & tricks on striking deals with top streamers and best practices for navigating various business models.

Key features include exclusive access to top streaming executives and thought leaders who will share practical approaches to co-financing opportunities, online distribution and audience engagement. Whether aiming to secure deals with major streaming platforms or optimise an online distribution strategy, this Lab provides the tools and knowledge needed to thrive in an ever-evolving digital landscape.

Nayita Adames
Aramida Films | Panama

Lukasz Bluszcz
Vision House Productions | Poland

Stefano Chiavarini
Piroetta | Italy

Luigi Conte
Rizoma Film | Italy

Eliška Kovářiková
Cat&chips | Czech Republic

Herwig Krawinkler
Satel Film | Austria

Ula Okrojek
Satel Film | Austria

Paola Beatrice Ortolani
Sevenhalf Lab | Italy

Ben Pace
Harald House | Belgium

Jure Pavlovic
SEKVENCA | Croatia

Sergei Serpuhov
Baltic Pine Films | Latvia

Katerina Tarbo-Ignatenko
Spirito Libero | France

Unlocking Capital

Private Investment Inspirational Lab in partnership
with Investors Circle by Marché du Film – Festival
de Cannes

Unlocking Capital is designed to equip medium-experience film producers with the knowledge and tools to successfully collaborate with private investors. Participants will gain insights into the types of investors, the negotiation process, legal considerations, and practical case studies. The programme also offers consultations with experts, helping producers understand the potential for private financing. The programme features leading industry professionals, including producer Jean des Forêts (Petit Film), the director of the Investors Circle programme Aleksandra Zakharchenko (Marché du Film – Festival de Cannes), as well as high-profile international private investors.

Julia Cöllen
Fünferfilm | Germany

Maria Drandaki
Homemade Films | Greece

Natalia Drozd
Yellow Blackbird | Germany

Ivan Eibuszyc
Frutacine | Argentina

Kristof Gerega
Schuldenberg Films | Germany

Isabel Orellana Guarello
Araucaria Cine | Chile

Krystyna Kantor
Shipsboy | Poland

Ines Massa
Materia Cinema | Spain

Zala Opara
Vertigo Ljubljana | Slovenia

Patricia Ramírez Arévalo
Todos Los Ríos | Venezuela

Marija Razgute
m-films | Lithuania

Daniele Segre
Redibis Film | Italy

Sarah Pennacchi
PILGRIM | Italy

Denis Vaslin
Volya Films | Netherlands

Anna Werner
Seven Elephants | Germany

A woman with short, white hair and sunglasses is shown in profile, looking towards the right. She is wearing a vibrant orange jacket with a floral pattern. She is holding a large, orange chicken costume that has a red comb and wattle. The background is a clear blue sky with some light clouds. The overall scene is bright and colorful.

Participants

Browse the complete updated list of attendees

Team





Alessandro Groppero
Head of WEMW



Alessandra Pastore
Market Manager



Elena Bertoni
Co-Production Forum &
WEMW Platform
Coordinator



Elisa Bordon
Accreditation &
Administrative
Coordinator



Giulia Battaglini
Sustainability & Events
Coordinator



Suomi Sponton
Inspirational Labs &
Design Coordinator



Carolina Stera
Inspirational Labs &
Talks Coordinator



Massimo Iannetti
East & West Lab
Coordination



Roxana Ivan
Impact & Final Report
Coordinator



Paula Mal'árová
Last Stop Trieste
Matchmaker



Tanika Sajatovic
Meeting Coordinator



Luka Venturin
Meeting Coordinator



Claudia Bradamante
Hospitality Manager



Ghila Cerniani
Partnership
Implementation &
Coordination



Lucia Codognato
Social Media Manager



Paolo Vidali
Financial Supervision

