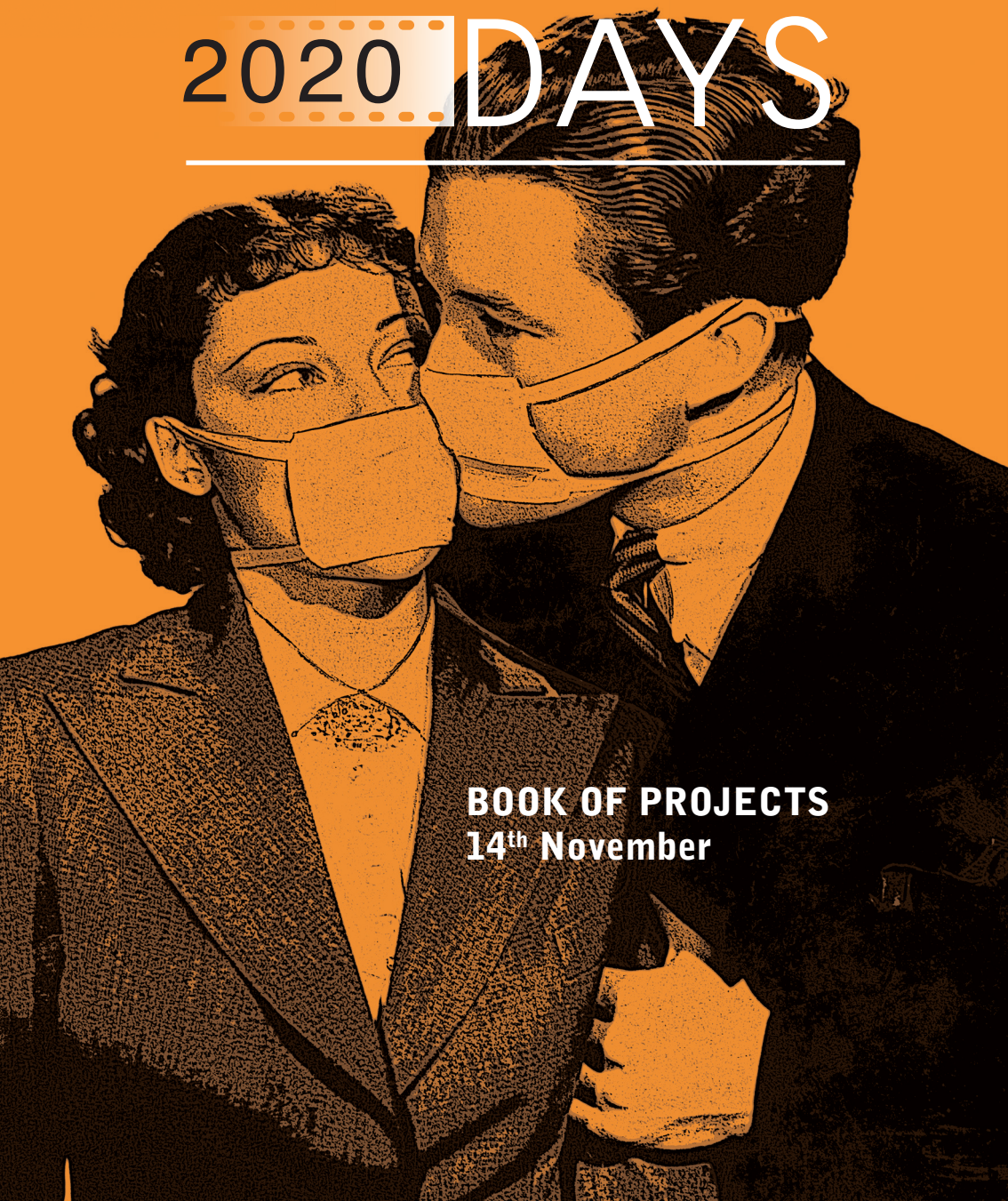


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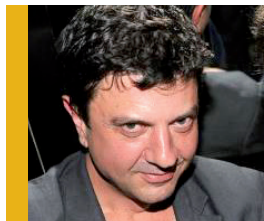
BOOK OF PROJECTS
14th November

ARRAS

2020 DAYS

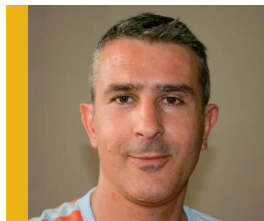
LE JURY

NICOLAS BRÉVIÈRE



He created LOCAL FILMS to support François Ozon in the production of two short films. Since then, he has produced more than 80 films (short and feature films, creative documentaries) broadcast in numerous festivals and TV channels both in France and abroad. Local Films has set itself the task of promoting innovative and demanding author's cinema, as well as revealing new talents but also authors from other horizons or more established. Nicolas Brévière is a member of ACE and UNIFRANCE.

FABIEN LEMERCIER



A graduate of Paris Sciences-Po University, since 2002 Fabien Lemerrier has been the French correspondent for the European cinema promotion website, Cineuropa. Since 2005, he has also reported on the Hungarian cinema industry and has coordinated the Focus section of the website. Since 2004, he has monitored Italian cinema for the weekly magazine Le Film Français.

CÉCILE VACHERET



She is a producer and manager of Sedna Films which is an independant production company created in 2004, located in Paris. Sedna Films has produced and coproduced around 30 documentaries and fictions. Each one of them have been selected and given a price in several international festivals. The main mission of Sedna Films is to discover and follow young and independant directors that develop their own languages.

Due to pandemic crisis, Arras Film Festival team was forced mid of October to make the decision to cancel the Festival in its usual form. But we elaborated an alternative event in partnership with cinemas and reinvented festival's form and timespan. In solidarity with the cinemas in peril, in solidarity with the authors.

But, as among others, Arras Film Festival revisited (7 Nov – 15 Dec) had to be cancelled once again due to the second lockdown. Nevertheless we has decided to hold the 9th ArrasDays session. This industry platform will present pitching session of new projects currently in development from European producers and directors selected.

To support the development of these new projects, as an exception for this particular edition only one grant will be awarded by the jury: €7,500 funded by the Festival.

Éric Miot
Artistic Director

HELLO

Stephan Komandarev (Bulgaria)

SYNOPSIS

Blaga (70) – a retired teacher, falls victim to a phone scam and loses the money saved for hers and her late husband's dream grave. In order to collect the sum again, Blaga contacts the phone scammers and starts working for them as a "mule". The once resilient and honest woman slowly starts sacrificing all of her principles.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

For the third film (following *Directions* and *Rounds*) in the trilogy presenting our attempt at an analysis of the contemporary Bulgarian reality I chose as our characters the Bulgarian pensioners.

The story of Blaga holds a mirror up to a number of painful aspects of Bulgarian society such as:

- **The Bulgarian pensioners abandoned to a humiliating existence** – our mothers and fathers. After working their entire lives, today their life is genocide and misery. Meagre pensions, no access to "privileges" such as normal food, medication, heating at home... They are also the usual victims of the phenomenon known as "phone scams". The dreams of a decent life have long since been replaced by a struggle for everyday survival.
- **The loneliness** of the Bulgarian pensioners - their descendants are far away, searching for a living in the capital or in far-off countries.
- **The complete moral crisis** our society is caught in. The obscurity of stealing the saving of an elderly person who is barely making ends meet. Making "easy money" with complete disregard for any laws, value systems or morals.

What is happening in Bulgaria? Where are we headed? Why are we sinking deeper into a crisis – mainly a spiritual one, a crisis of values? Where can we look for hope? These questions at the core of the project *Hello*. The faithful representation and understanding of reality is the first requirement for its change, the only condition for fruitful action.

Stephan Komandarev



Stephan Komandarev is a Bulgarian director, producer and scriptwriter. His filmography:

ROUNDS - Sarajevo IFF-Best actress, Cineuropa award; Gijon IFF-Best actress; goEast FF Wiesbaden -Best film, FIPRESCI award

DIRECTIONS - Un Certain Regard, Cannes FF; Sarajevo IFF-Special mention; Toronto FF

THE JUDGMENT- Bulgaria's official entry-Academy Awards; Sofia IFF - Best Bulgarian Film

THE WORLD IS BIG AND SALVATION LURKS AROUND THE CORNER - 2009 - Best Foreign Language Film - Shortlisted; Sofia IFF-Audience Award, Best Bulgarian Film; Warsaw IFF-Special Jury Award.

I HAD NOWHERE TO GO

Lina Lužytė (Lithuania)

SYNOPSIS

It's a film about Jonas Mekas known as the godfather of avant-garde cinema, the creative companion of Andy Warhol, John Lennon and many others. Yet, mostly this film's concerned about the pre-famous Jonas Mekas - a village boy from Lithuanian province, a young man who had to flee Lithuania from the Nazis and the Soviets, a man who's slaved for years in German labour camps until eventually managed to reach New York, where, continuously working in factories and dressed in his displaced person's uniform, Jonas has discovered the cinema of his own. It's a portrait of an artist who's art is he himself.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Jonas Mekas is a contradictory man. He's a sophisticated naïf; a self-described dreamer and a hard-headed tactician; an opponent of authority who operated from a succession of power bases; selfless yet self-absorbed; a farm boy adept at hobnobbing with the rich and privileged; a man fervently attached to his roots yet largely self-invented. From J. Hoberman's letter

My aim is to create a hybrid-essayistic film about Jonas Mekas that wouldn't be only a panegyric to this godfather of avant-garde but a comprehensive portrait of a very complex man.

Having received a permission from his son Sebastian Mekas - the only trustee of the Estate of Jonas Mekas - to use his vast archives: diaries, films and footage that didn't end up in Jonas Mekas's films, I want to explore Jonas as a poet, a filmmaker, a Lithuanian and eventually a displaced person.

I'm well aware that when one tries to tell it all, she/he ends up telling nothing, therefore my main interest lies in three themes: ability to remain creative under any circumstances, uncompromising selfness and selective memory.

I bring in the selective memory here because Jonas seemed to ignore many horrible historical events e.g. he rarely commented on Holocaust - some go as far as to call him a fascist, which I strongly disagree with. I'd rather say that in order to survive the horrors of history Jonas has had created a history of his own - a kind of a limbo with its own truth - the truth of an artist.

Lina Lužytė



Lina Lužytė was born in 1985 in Vilnius, Lithuania that back then was still USSR. In 2011, she's graduated from the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre with an MA in Film Directing. She has made two feature films: THE CASTLE about Lithuanian migrants in Ireland, TOGETHER FOR EVER in which she posits the family as the primary social unit to thematize communication gridlock as a diagnosis of today's society and a documentary IGRUSHKI about toy makers in Belarus. Summer of 2020 Lina has spent on Lesbos island in Greece filming a portrait of an Afghan filmmaker living in Moria refugee camp that has recently burnt down.

SERVANT

Marian Crisan (Romania)

SYNOPSIS

It's 1944. Nicu, a 12 year-old boy, is a servant for Vasile, one of the well-to-do people in a remote mountain village. His father left to war never to return from the Eastern front. The boy tends to his family horses dragging logs down the mountain to Vasile's sawmill. When the retreating German troops start seizing the horses in the village, Nicu tries to save his by riding them over the mountain to his uncle. On his journey he meets James, an American pilot whose airplane was shot down. The two start riding together trying to survive into the wild.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

It all started from stories my grandfather told me. He was just a kid during World War II and lived in a remote village in the mountains. He took care of the horses of a rich man. War seemed far away. But it was there, as lots of young men in the village went to the Eastern Front never to return. The troops, first German then Russian were passing through the village and forest...

Starting from my grandfather's personal history, I imagined a kid's intimate story during those times. A coming of age story of war seen through a child's eye. I don't want it to be a typical war film, but a more visceral approach to people living in those years. People in lost places, during big historic events. People at war, but not on the battlefield. People who struggled to survive and that were not war heroes.

What also interests me is the pivotal year 1944 for Romania, which was at the time a «servant» country as many others in the East Europe. Romania began the war along Germany and in 1944 turned sides helping the Russians defeat the German troops. That was a very dramatic point in Romania's history and is the epicentre of 20th century in the history of our country. It splits our history between a country ruled by a king and the Communist era that lasted almost until the end of the century. And it all started then in 1944... and this kid is in the middle of it all, becoming a metaphor of small countries caught between the great powers of east and west.

Marian Crisan



Born on 8th of September, 1976, in Salonta, Romania. He received his bachelor Degree in Film Directing at UNATC Bucharest in 1999. He directed short films: FAMILY PORTRAIT (2006), AMATEUR (2007) and MEGATRON (2008), which won Palme d'OR for Best Short Film at Cannes Film Festival, in 2008. His first feature film MORGEN won the Special Jury Prize at the 63rd Edition of the Locarno Film Festival, in 2010. His next film ROCKER premiered at San Sebastian Film Festival 60th Edition and ORIZONT premiered at the 19th Tallin Black Nights. He also directed the miniseries *The Silent Valley* for HBO.

THE GLASS HOUSE

Taras Dron (Ukraine)

SYNOPSIS

Viktoria is 38 years old stylish businesswoman. She does everything to escape from a little town to a big city and strengthen her status in society. At the same time, 17 years old daughter Alisa finishes school and she has a graduation. Alisa secretly dating a guy, Artem, who is two years older than her and he makes some extra cash on being "a mule", a man who hides drugs in different places for clients. During the celebration, Viktoria humbles Artem who comes to congratulate Alisa. The girl goes with him to take a new consignment of drugs. But this time they do not come back.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

This film tells about social mechanisms that make a person behave in a way that society requires. It's about a conscious taking a role, prejudice, and fixation on unessential things, about a blind attraction to invented ideals. I think that each character in this story has its distinct recognizable model of behavior that should be reflected in the visual narrative. I and DOP Oleksandr Pozdniakov want to try mixing different styles and formats confidently to find a corresponding approach to each character for a spectator to recognize immediately by the sense of what we are talking about, whose scene it is, and whose chapter. In general, the climate of a provincial town allows us to let go of the reality for a bit and to immerse ourselves in the world similar to the stories of Franz Kafka and Bruno Schulz. A hermetic atmosphere, hopeless situations, bureaucratic machine are against the person that longs for a breath of fresh air in this gloomy environment. These exact sensations lead young people to search for freedom and entertainment. The adults, instead, lock in their pseudo-reality. It's necessary to separate the visual language of these two generations and give the camera a possibility to tell each side in different ways. It concerns the framing, the movement inside the frame, and camera movement, the closeness of the shots, lighting, and editing. And the most important issue is to have all characters deeply connected to the line of the main character, Viktoria. The majority of the situations in the movie consist of a mixture of how it looks and how it is in reality. We want the camera to emphasize it, sometimes through the combination of the frames that at first sight look like they can not be connected.

Taras Dron



Born in 1980 in the Ivano-Frankivsk region (Ukraine). He studied directing at the Lodz Film School. He has produced and directed numerous music videos, commercials and award-winning short films at various festivals in Ukraine and abroad.

He then shot two feature films: DZIDZIO FIRST TIME (2018) and BLINDFOLD (2020).

LUXEMBOURG LUXEMBOURG

Antonio Lukic (Ukraine)

SYNOPSIS

Twin brothers - Vasya and Kolya - find out the father who left them in childhood, dies in Luxembourg. One brother - Kolya - decides to visit him when the other one - Vasya - does everything to prevent Kolya from leaving the country. The numerous obstacles that befall Kolya are more like a test of courage: now Kolya, who is used to run away from the problems, does not give up even when there is no way out. Eventually, the two brothers together go to meet their father who unexpectedly will turn out a fraudster.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

LUXEMBOURG, LUXEMBOURG is the manifest of love to my father, who was running away all the time. And whom I tried so long to catch up.

The main heroes are twins. They are the same, so the film will be full of details that speak about duality. The twins never knew their father and studied life by touch. My principal decision on the actors is an attempt to give people with comedic nature a serious role. This determines my approach to solving the role and brings the film closer to the concept of a «sad comedy».

One friend of mine once said that he measured all his actions with only one template - whether his father would pat him on the shoulder or not. My heroes did not have such a template, and they did everything the other way around - one did «like the father», the other one behaves oppositely. This inner conflict also determines my attitude toward this problem.

Our history is modern and, of course, I want this modernity to be created with the necessary markers, the main of which I highlight the faces. Indeed, a lot is imprinted on our faces - not only the time in which we live but also the place where sometimes we have to survive.

Antonio Lukic



Born in 1992, Uzhhorod (Ukraine). In 2015, he is graduated from Kyiv National University of Theater, The film, and Television. I.K. Karpenko-Kary. Since then, he is member of the National Union of Journalists of Ukraine. His filmography:

2015: IT WAS SHOWERING IN MANCHESTER (short)

2019: MY THOUGHTS ARE SILENT (First feature film)
Winner of the 54th Karlovy Vary International Film Festival. The film won a Special Jury Prize.

Winner of work-in-progress pitching Meeting Point of Vilnius Film Festival 2019

Golden Dzyga for best film of 2019, best female role, opening year, best script.

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Renseignements
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DANS LE CADRE DE L'ARRAS FILM FESTIVAL

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