

ARRAS_

2023 DAYS

Book of projects
November, 11-12

12th edition



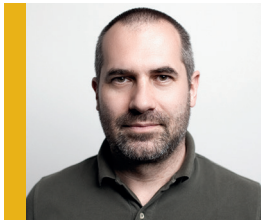
THE JURY

HÉLÈNE AUCLAIRE



After studying literature and cinema at the Sorbonne Nouvelle in Paris, she gained experience in programming and coordination at a number of festivals (Premiers Plans d'Angers, Paris Film Festival, La Rochelle Film Festival...) before joining La Semaine de la Critique in 2005 as Head of the Film Department. There she developed programming and professional networking activities until 2022. She contributed to the creation of the Next Step Workshop in 2014, where she is in charge of the Rencontres Professionnelles. In 2023, she will join the Gan Foundation for Cinema as Head of Creation and Distribution Support.

DANIJEL PEK



He studied political science and then production at Academy of Dramatic Arts in Zagreb. He started working as journalist for radio and TV. In 2007, he started his own company Antitalent Produkcija which involved in numerous coproductions and service productions of foreign films that are shot in Croatia. In recent years, he has established himself as a reputable film and TV producer, whose portfolio includes the Caméra d'or winner *Murina* by Antoneta Alamat Kusijanovic, which premiered in Cannes. In November 2021, he became the president of the Croatian Association of Independent Producers. Since 2023, he is the new artistic director of the Pula Film Festival, Croatia's biggest festival dedicated to national production and coproduction.

MEINOLF ZURHORST



After studying history of art, film, TV and anthropology, he worked as a film critic. He is the author of several books on film and actors. He has also written biographies of actors. He is one of the founders of a production company which has produced several programmes for Voice of Germany, as well as a company for film and post-production. He was also the co-writer and director of several documentaries. Since 1992, he was the commissioning editor in cinema department of Arte in Strasbourg, and in 1994 he was appointed head of this department. In 2000 he moved to German TV ZDF to direct the film department in charge of ARTE. He is now President of the selection committee of the Film Fund Luxembourg.

Born at the initiative of the Arras Film Festival, this co-production platform is innovative and atypical in concept, and it offers an introduction to yet-to-be-screened European film projects still at the writing stage, most of them seeking co-production partners.

For us, this constitutes a new way of supporting the directors and producers presenting a film in the European Competition, Eastern Visions or European Discoveries during the current edition of the festival. In coming here to present their film, they are able to submit their very latest project for consideration by a jury. In most instances, these have never before been shown. So the ArrasDays are a unique and precious opportunity to experience this absolutely premiere and to be the very first to see up-and-coming works.

In 2022, the ArrasDays inaugurate a new formula. Each year, the Arras Film Festival will focus on a country to discover its creative dynamic. For this edition, the guest country is Croatia. The 5 projects presented are in various stages of development, from treatment to full scenario or Work in Progress. With no competition at stake, this component aims to introduce you to talents, they will come and talk to you about their work and their needs.

Since last year, ArrasDays has become a co-production forum for European cinema offering French and European producers and directors the opportunity to meet public and private institutional players in the film industry, key actors in the world of cinema from various countries, regions, support funds and distributors.

I wish you all two intense days of exchanges and meetings. Long live to cinema!

Éric Miot and Nadia Paschetto
Artistic Director and Executive Director

TWO DAYS TO DISCOVER PROJECTS AND MEET PEOPLE

ROUND TABLE

Saturday 11 November, 10.00am to 11.00am - Hôtel de Guînes

Round table on the subject «What support for emerging profiles in industry? will be held at the opening of the pitches session.

Key participants:

Fadette Drouard, screenwriter

Georges Goldenstern, former director of the Cannes Film Festival Cinéfondation, Méditalents advisor

Jean-Loup Ballard, Cinema TV and Documentary Project Manager at Pictanovo

Moderator: **Guillaume de Seille** (Arizona films)

This project is part of our creation support strategy, our objective being to bring on young creatives in the field of fiction in the Hauts-de-France Region.

PRESENTATION OF NEW FILMS PROJECTS

on Saturday 11 November, 11.00am to 5.00pm - Hôtel de Guînes

Project proposers will have 30 minutes to present their films in front of an audience of film professionals and a jury made up of

Hélène Auclaire (Project Manager for Creative Support at the Gan Fondation for Cinema),

Danijel Pek (producer, Antitalent - Croatia)

Meinolf Zurhorst (Film Fund Luxembourg).

To support the development of these new projects, two grants are awarded by the jury: one for €7,500 granted by the Arras Film Festival and the other for €5,000, granted by the Town of Arras.

FOCUS ON CROATIA

on Sunday 12 November, 10.00am to 11.00am - Mégarama

The festival sees the start of a major European tour **with one particular country featured:** this year, the focus is on a new European centre of dynamism, **Croatia**. The festival presents five projects, from screenplay stage to WIP, whose makers will come to talk about their originality and explain their needs for these films, be they in the making or near completion.

During those two days, professionals who wish to do so will be able to meet project leaders during individual meetings.



PROJECTS IN DEVELOPMENT

REAL FACES

Leni Huyghe (Belgium)

SYNOPSIS

Julia (29), an ambitious casting agent, relocates to Brussels after a breakup. Struggling to build a new life, she masks her insecurities behind a façade of success and happiness. She meets reclusive microbiologist Elliott (32) and forms an unexpected, authentic friendship that inspires her to break free from societal expectations.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Real Faces is a portrait of a young woman at a crossroads in her life. The viewer observes how Julia tries to stay true to herself in a fragmented world, and how she, through a series of events and encounters, consciously decides to take her life in her own hands, and on her own terms. *Real Faces* is also the story of deep human connection, of how a single encounter can transform your life. The arena of this film is the advertising industry, an important motor in the reproduction of idealized pictures. The attempt to conform to these idealized pictures also applies to Julia in *Real Faces*. As a casting director, however, she herself is complicit in the perpetuation of these images. Julia is an antiheroine; she is conflicted and ambiguous. I have consciously chosen an atypical female protagonist. Such characters still don't find their way to the big screen often enough. I want to contribute to this other way of looking.

Although the film definitely has a melancholic side to it, I've chosen a satirical approach with a dry sense of humor. With Leonie Buysse and Gorges Ocloo, we have found two actors who have comic timing, dare to improvise and are open to explore the boundaries between realism & caricature, funny & painful. For the cinematography, together with DoP Grimm Vanderkerckhove, we aim for a metropolitan, hectic dynamic that exudes a lust for life. This rather documentary-like approach will be interspersed with a few specific larger scenes with a filmic mise-en-scène.

Leni Huyghe



Leni Huyghe (1986) is a Brussels-based filmmaker. She has a Masters in Audiovisual Arts and is a Berlinale Talent alumna. She made five acclaimed shorts that won several prizes and travelled to international film festivals such as Cinéfondation Cannes, Visions du Réel and Palm Springs. She finished a documentary about the Covid crisis at elderly homes for the public broadcaster Canvas and directed the 2nd season of the short series *Hacked for Streamz*. She is currently developing a new screenplay titled *Nightshade* and is a guest lecturer at the Luca school of Arts, Brussels.

MADE IN EU

Stephan Komandarev (Bulgaria)

SYNOPSIS

Iva, 43-year-old is a seamstress in a small town. She is forced to hide the fact that she's ill to keep her job, but after the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic in town, all the blame falls on her as she's demonized by the community.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

This project is based entirely on true events. Have you ever wondered what lies underneath the labels on beautiful clothing by world famous brands that we buy?

For years now I have been closely following the developments in the Bulgarian clothing industry. For the most part, it is represented by small factories in places with high unemployment rates, where the seamstresses face extreme workplace exploitation for a pittance. The standards of this particular "industry" in Bulgaria are far below those of the European Union, much more similar to the third world and sometimes even worse. When the coronavirus epidemic broke out in Bulgaria, it was exactly those sewing factories that became the first (of many more to follow) hot spots of the disease. It only made sense, given the number of people stuffed in crowded workshops, the appalling working conditions, the lack of basic safety measures, and the prioritization of profit over human lives. Quite often, workers concealed any illness by «popping» a few pills to avoid missing work and losing their already low wages, half of which are a "bonus" tied up in perfect attendance!

Made in EU is a film about the exploitation within the textile industry, which reaches far beyond the borders of the "third" and "civilized" worlds. This is a global story set in a local, intimate and specific setting, in one of the poorest regions in Bulgaria – the Bulgarian provincial town. This is a film about two epidemics – an economic and a health one... we've already developed vaccines for the latter, it's high time we start talking more about the former.

Stephan Komandarev



Bulgarian director, producer and scriptwriter. He has a number of award-winning fiction and documentary films such as: *Blaga's Lessons* - Grand Prix Cristal Globe and Best Actress Award at Karlovy Vary IFF 2023. *Rounds* - premiered at Sarajevo FF 2019, won 13 awards, *Directions* - premiered at Un Certain Regard Cannes film festival 2017, won 12 awards, *The World is big and Salvation lurks around the Corner* 2008 - the first Bulgarian film, shortlisted for Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film, *The Judgment* in 2014.

SALVATION

Kilian Riedhof (Germany)

SYNOPSIS

2048: The climate crisis provokes immense migration flows and distribution struggles. Imany, a refugee child from Africa, lives in this world on the brink. She is an outsider, highly gifted, with a hypersensitive sense for the suffering of people and nature. When the U.S. president declares the United States' withdrawal from the global climate agreement, Imany is haunted by a terrible vision: she foresees the end of creation. Protected by her mentor, climate scientist Lacroix, Imany develops a plan to save the world: every person, every state, every company should sacrifice 10% of their possessions.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

43° in the shade is the normal condition. The nights bring no relief. Those who are rich cool their apartment to a livable state. Those who are poor sit down in front of the refrigerator at home out of desperation. Or collapses dehydrated. For water is scarce. People are easily irritable because of the heat. Traffic accidents, fisticuffs and heart attacks quickly occur. Exotic mosquitoes transmit tropical diseases. Crime is on the rise. The state struggles to control the situation. The news brings new reports of storm surges and plagues of locusts in staccato.

This is the world in *Salvation*. It is overheated. It is on the brink. It is our world, as it could be in almost 30 years, if we believe scientists. This world reflects the greatest crisis in the history of mankind. A crisis that threatens our existence and that of our planet - the climate crisis. Is there still hope? Do we still have the strength, the faith to turn it around and save our planet? No question occupies me more at the moment. And then there's Imany, the refugee child from Africa. A highly sensitive, nerdy outsider. A being who connects with nature and its elements, embraces and speaks to trees, listens to the earth and looks into people's souls. An auratic young woman whose magic moves the world, animates it, and awakens it to new hope. And this magic, this gentle epic pull, this floating, this sublimity and transcendence, precisely the divine in the midst of a torn, desperate and angry humanity must be the energetic center of our film. *Salvation* will move in the field of tension between mystical subjective phases, in which we are very close to the experiences of Imany and her friends, and passages that show Imany's effect on the world. Passages in which she is exposed to media crossfire and public attacks and she becomes a person of contemporary history.

Kilian Riedhof



He received numerous awards for the TV drama *Homevideo*. In 2013, he scored an audience hit in movie theaters with the heartbreaking comedy *Back On Track*. His political thriller *Der Fall Barschel*, about the still-unsolved death of a German politician received several prestigious awards. In 2018, he filmed the two-parter *Gladbeck*, about the 1988 hostage crisis, which was a national and international success, and the only non-English feature nominated for the 2019 British BAFTA TV Award. In 2020 he shot *Vous n'aurez pas ma haine*, based on the non-fiction book of Antoine Leiris, which had its world premiere at the Locarno Film Festival. In 2021 he directed *Stella. A Life*.

EAST OF LIMBO

Luana Bajrami (Kosovo)

SYNOPSIS

After six years, Julian returns to Kosovo, with his Parisian friends, to his village and his family he left behind at the age of 17. His return confronts him with his adolescent memories and stirs up his uncertainties. The unprecedented encounter between French youth and Kosovar youth echoes the duality of his own condition as an immigrant. In particular, he meets up with Mona, who enables him to rediscover his buried "self". A romance is born between them, amid the turmoil of their youth, the weight of their families and the eternal question of where they fit in.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

After exploring the state of boredom, then loneliness, of this youth left behind, full of ardor and rage to break the loop ; as well as the desire to capture this impalpable death of recklessness that represents the "coming of age", the question of identity became screaming. Identity which we commonly associate with belonging to a group, a community. In the Name of Identity: *Violence and the Need to Belong*, an essay by Amin Maalouf published in 1998, never ceases to haunt me. Coming back is a vast subject. What interests me in this new project is the notion of the stranger, the fruit of two entities: "the other" and "the unknown". The other is Julian. The unknown is Mona. That's why I include this quest for identity and the notion of the stranger in the relationship between Julian and Mona: a love story consumed by nostalgia for a past we regret, and the uncertainty of a future we fear. Through my constant desire to confront my two cultures in order to reveal the universality of our states of mind and emotions as human beings, it seemed obvious to me to concretely connect France and Kosovo, both through the settings and the characters, in order to write the finale of this triptych about youth. Once again, *East Of Limbo* is intended to be a character-driven film. I am imposing an aesthetic continuity on myself with my two previous feature films, *The Hill Where Lionesses Roar* and *Phantom Youth*.

Luana Bajrami



With a dual Franco-Kosovar culture, Luana Bajrami travels from one country to the other, following the rhythm of her projects and collaborations with different filmmakers. She made a name for herself in 2019 with roles in Sébastien Marnier's *School's Out* and Céline Sciamma's *Portrait of a Lady on Fire*. Self-taught, she wrote and shot her first feature film at the age of eighteen. *The Hill Where Lionesses Roar* is about youth and highlights the little-known landscape of her homeland: Kosovo. The film premiered at the Directors' Fortnight in 2021. *Phantom Youth* is her second feature film.

THE HOST

Nae Caranfil (Romania)

SYNOPSIS

Bucharest 2020, early spring. Ovidiu, 25, medical student, starts a romance with Delia, 10 years older than him. Delia has recently lost her job, and with the impending national lockdown, she is not able to pay the rent for the semi-basement flat where she lives. The owner, Sebastian, a widowed retired military, lives alone in the apartment above the one he rents out to Delia. When the young woman suggests that he postpone the payment of the rent for a couple of months, Sebastian makes an unexpected counter-offer: he would host her free of charge in exchange of full care-taking services.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

One of the important themes of this dark comedy should be the generation gap, a problem that is timeless and yet more stringent than ever now, at the beginning of a new millennium. The increasing life expectancy, the overpopulation of our planet, the delayed transfer of responsibility from one generation to another, all are worrisome and even terrifying. On top of that, the recent pandemic has polarized the society and has fed into the conspiracy theory according to which we are dealing with an attempt to do a "spring cleaning" of the world population. Against this background, a young couple (Ovidiu and Delia) gradually embraces the idea of physically eliminating an elderly man by infecting him with SARS-Cov-2 "in a natural way". The old man (Sebastian) is a mix of soldierly rigidity and childish whims. This state of confusion is the result of the Alzheimer disease.

The background for this story is an eerie-looking Bucharest, in full social distancing and stay-at-home process, with deserted streets and parks... but also with some hidden "safe houses" "speakeasys", where the youth organize clandestine parties, "flying" under police's radar, defying the prohibitions and giving the finger to the State. Visually, the film will alternate between these contrasting atmospheres: half-deserted, post-apocalyptic urban landscapes, interspersed with moments of vitality and hedonism, when energies are unleashed. Stylistically, I want to focus on tactility: in a world marked by "social distancing", touches, of any kind, become events: the camera will "hunt" these moments, subliminally suggesting the danger of contagion.

The realistic approach of the story is repeatedly punctured by the young man's "driftings": breaking the fourth wall and addressing the audience directly. This is also meant to gradually imply that Ovidiu could be the Virus itself; the story allows this second layer of interpretation – a medical one, if you wish: the coronavirus (Ovidiu), the host cell (Delia) and the body that is being invaded and take possession of (Sebastian's flat). In this reading, each member of the audience whom Ovidiu addresses every now and again could be his next victim.

The Producer Tudor Giurgiu



Member of the European Film Academy, founder and President of the Transilvania International Film Festival, the most prestigious film-related event in Romania. His feature debut *Love Sick* was selected in 2006 Berlinale Panorama and awarded in several international festivals. Tudor's second feature, *Of Snails and Men*, was awarded in Warsaw IFF and Valladolid IFF. *Why Me?* premiered in 2015 Berlinale Panorama. His most recent film *Libertate* premiered in Sarajevo IFF in 2023, received the Award of CICAE; he is also in post-production with *Nasty*, a documentary about the career of iconic tennis player Ilie Nastase. Tudor produced or co-produced many feature films such as *Servants* by Ivan Ostrochovsky (Berlinale 2020), *Mission of the Human Resources Manager* by Eran Riklis (Audience Award in Locarno 2010), *Katalin Varga* by Peter Strickland (Silver Bear in 2009 Berlinale).

THE CENTER OF THE WORLD

Marko Santic (Slovenia)

SYNOPSIS

In the middle of Dalmatia proudly stands the city of Split, once a transit port, and today one of the main destinations for young partygoers. During one tourist season, the film follows three rental property owners, Antea, Elza, and Darko, along with a resident of the city center, Snježana, as they witness the gradual transformation of their own city. Our heroes thus question the fundamentals of their own society as they witness their once authentic way of life increasingly shift into memories that fade over time under the burden of modern tourism.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

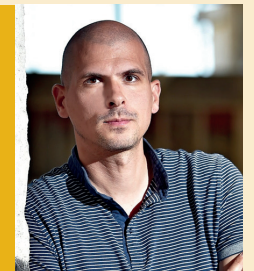
Thinker Hakim Bey claimed that tourists are like terrorists. They come and destroy what they came to see. Croatia is a tourist country, and the question of how willing the residents of its coastal cities are to resist the challenge modern tourism brings is increasingly being raised.

In such a constellation of destroying what is unique to a place, all that remains for us is the memory of what once was. This is actually the main reason why this film is very personal to me, as it tells the story of my hometown of Split, whose former life is slowly disappearing and transforming into something else, something global and universal. The space of the city increasingly resides in memory as a tranquil, romantic Mediterranean place. Through the film, it is clear that the protagonists are experiencing the same, unconsciously contributing to this destruction by engaging in tourism and earning from tourists.

In the end, the question arises for us: should we turn our homes into rental property, should we leave forever, or should we adapt and stay?

With *Center of the World*, I aim to show Split as a place where we are just waiting for someone to write the graffiti „Tourists go home“. I also want to show the stories that are hidden behind the facade of a successful tourist country while, on the other hand, we bear witness to the tourist gentrification.

Marko Santic



He studied film directing at AGRFT in Ljubljana. His short feature student films *Good Luck Nedim* and *The Hole* received many international awards. His first feature film was *Seduce Me*, which internationally premiered at 29th Warsaw Film Festival, where he received Special Mention. *Seduce Me* was also the Slovenian Oscar candidate for best foreign film. *Wake Me* is his third feature and it premiered at Tallinn Black Nights Film Festival. On the Slovene Film Festival *Wake Me* received five awards. Marko received awards for the Best Feature Film and Best Screenplay.

DANCING ANGELS

Ferit Kilic (Türkiye)

SYNOPSIS

Set within the genres of drama and psychological thriller, the film follows 15-year-old Ali as he navigates a world encircled by the shades of violence - offering a reflection on the invisible burdens society places on its youth and adults.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

My mission is to explore the often-overlooked issue of bullying, a pervasive problem affecting children within the educational system and their homes. The film aims to shed light on the uncomfortable truth that many choose to ignore. Unlike conventional approaches that focus solely on the consequences of bullying, my vision is to unravel the details of this complex phenomenon. The narrative delves into the discomfort of exploring the origins of bullying, presenting a nuanced portrayal of both the aggressor and the victim.

I aspire to be a voice that challenges the trend of turning a blind eye or punishment only when the repercussions become dire. It's a call to action, urging all parties to reflect on their roles in perpetuating or preventing this cycle.

The film also takes a poignant look at the struggles faced by both children and adults in a world fixated on competition, on an incessant pursuit of superiority, where individuals grapple with the conforming to social norms and conceal their true selves. The lens of the film zooms in on the adolescent years, a time when individuals are wrestling with their identities and navigating through a maze of expectations.

In essence, the dichotomy between the bully and the bullied is not a black-and-white narrative but rather two sides of the same coin. My aspiration is to provoke conversations, inspire introspection and contribute to a collective effort to foster empathy and understanding in a world often marked by indifference.

Ferit Kiliç



Born in Istanbul in 2005, Ferit Kiliç directed his first short film, SUS-MA (BE SILENT-DON'T), at the age of 13, working with a crew of 40 and a cast of 27. His second short film, "Dancing in the Dark," completed in March 2024, premiered in December 2024 at EuroShorts Young Filmmakers. He is currently working on his first feature film project "Dancing Angels" and aiming to shoot in the beginning of 2025.



NEW PROJECTS FROM CROATIA

WORKS IN PROGRESS



**Croatian
Audiovisual
Centre**
Hrvatski audiovizualni centar

BETWEEN US

Laura Pascu

SYNOPSIS

The film delves into the lives of a young couple who, after several years together, confront a relationship crisis. Marina, an aspiring painter, seeks recognition in the art world, while David, a guitarist, aspires to make his mark in the music scene. We witness their relationship evolve as they face life's challenges, from the early stages of love and moments of intimacy to navigating a long-distance relationship when Marina seizes an opportunity abroad. Conflicts and reconciliations start to suffocate their love.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

I've always been curious about human relationships and wanted to make a film that makes people think about their own lives. My own family, with all its imperfections and my parents' puzzling divorce, got me thinking. I was a quiet kid, watching life from afar, trying to understand the spoken and unspoken.

The initial screenplay idea by Matej Sudarić, in collaboration with the actors, evolved into *Between Us*. It explores depression, family duties, relationship ambitions, and enduring gender struggles. Selecting actors with chemistry, we spent a year in rehearsals, delving into character development using exercises and mental maps. Nature served as our sanctuary, where we immersed in characters.

Memories of past relationships are fragmented, and storytelling and editing intertwine through emotional cues. Using a non-linear structure, we depict the fractured relationship, mirroring characters' emotions. The story revolves around a coming-of-age journey. Colors transition to darker tones as the relationship evolves, with smaller settings, narrower lenses, and reduced depth of field creating a claustrophobic feel. Framing aligns with emotions, favoring subtle camera movements, avoiding wide-angle lenses.

The music resonates locally, with the acoustic guitar symbolizing David's presence. The apartment's design mirrors their chaotic lives. Costumes and makeup reveal character evolution. Abstract artworks by my sister, Luisa Pascu, intensify tension during conflicts.

Laura Pascu



She graduated in 2019 in animated film and new media at the Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb and received the Rector's award for her work. She gained valuable experience in various film departments, notably editing the feature film *Zagreb Equinox*. Laura produces video and photography content for London-based music company Duke of Uke and has a diverse portfolio, including music videos, animated and live-action films, and commercial work. Her debut feature film, *Between Us*, is in the final stages of post-production. Laura is continuing her artistic journey by enrolling in Zhdk Masters Studies in Directing Fiction in Zurich.

CELEBRATION

Bruno Anković

SYNOPSIS

Based on the novel by Damir Karakaš the film *Celebration* shows 20 years in the life of Mijo and his family in a poor Croatian village. The non-linear and elliptical plot gradually forms a clear picture that testifies to the eternal cycle of history and the impossibility of a real change in the Balkans.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

In *Celebration*, through the intimate story of the main character Mijo and his family, a clear image of the history of our Balkan region shines through; the constant turmoil of war, poverty, and a desperate hope for something better.

Even though the story follows a boy, and later a young man, who becomes an Ustaša (Nazi) soldier, the film is not about politics, and only very indirectly touches upon that topic. The film is about the way politics and ideology shape our private lives and influence our intimate decisions, and about how it is impossible to avoid this. The reason Mijo joins the Ustaša regime may be the trauma left behind when the previous regime ordered him to kill his own dog. It may be his new boots, or the desire to impress Drenka's family. Or, most likely, it is all of these reasons. Mijo rushes to the celebration organized for the founding of the new (Nazi) state like he is charging toward the promise of a better life.

Bruno Anković



Bruno Anković (Split, 1976) graduated in film and TV editing at the Academy of Dramatic Arts in Zagreb. He has directed short fiction and documentary films and TV formats. Since 1999 he has been working as a director of a great number of high-profile commercials winning awards and recognition for his work. He directed over 1500 commissioned works in Croatia, Austria, Slovenia, Serbia, Lebanon, Bulgaria, Ukraine and Russia. *Celebration* is his first feature fiction film.



PROJECTS IN DEVELOPMENT



**Croatian
Audiovisual
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BLACK SWAN

Hrvoje Hribar

SYNOPSIS

Big time banker from the Croatian capital gets transferred to a remote provincial branch office. Country girl climbs high politics. In the lawless county on the EU border, two of them decide to make it, and they make it big. Until they don't anymore.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Black Swan or *How to Steal the Wind* is meant to be a "green energy farce" loosely inspired by the real life events in what happens to be all over the European Union: EU funds fraud in its digitalization models, either in high politics or lower badly trained administration staff.

The film is a light-hearted portray of a town in Dalmatian hinterland, populated with distinct individuals, giving birth to an impossible love story. Set in the stone desert of Western Balkans, on the dry edge of the sacred Schengen space, film bares a strong connection to the reality of its territory, its geography, and its absurdly cruel past. Centuries of multinational relations, migrations and shady ethical principles lie behind our "wind stealers", our universal dark heroes in their love and crime chores, and their lust and greed driven personalities.

Black Swan is a comedy, also a *noir*, and a farse about unpredictability. It is a chronicle about charming people that can't help themselves messing up everything.

Hrvoje Hribar



Film director, producer and writer, graduated film directing at the Academy of Dramatic Arts in Zagreb, filming both short *Between Zaghul & Zaharias* and feature fiction films *What is a Man without a Moustache?*, *The Tranquillizer Gun*, *Croatian Cathedrals*, documentaries *The World is Great, Once there was a Man* and numerous commissioned projects. As a member of the Croatian Producers Association, and a member of the Executive Committee the Croatian Film Directors' Guild, he contributes to publications, conferences, and lectures to contemplate on the active role of cultural politics. He was chief executive of the Croatian Audiovisual Centre.

HONEY BUNNY

Igor Jelinović

SYNOPSIS

Honey Bunny is an arthouse comedy with an anti-heroine as a protagonist: Anita, aka Koke, the irritating aunt who tramples everyone (including her only sister's family) who stands in her way towards the desired family inheritance which consists of a universally attractive summer house on the island of Hvar, or anywhere else for that matter.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

My grandmother Smiljana died in the suburbs of Split in mid-summer of 2012. She had a big funeral in her hometown of Hvar, where she lived her whole life. It was at the proceedings that we learnt the house in Hvar had been in my aunt's ownership for seven years, and that she got it through a deed of gift. Mum and Aunt were very close. Nothing in her behaviour suggested she had deprived my mother of her inheritance.

Thinking about everything that happened, I realized too many things were running through my mind and decided to write a script about what troubled me. I realized that, if I wanted to write a good script, I had to try to understand my aunt. I think that, despite her many flaws and contradictions, my aunt Anita is too complex to be reduced to a simple stereotype of a manipulative culture.

My family cut off all communication with my aunt's family. A relationship that was built and developed for over fifty years has suddenly ended and will probably never come to life again. With this film, my desire is to record a moment of calm before the storm, in which some know what others do not, and how they all cope with their knowledge, or ignorance. Although this makes it look like these relationships are fake at first glance, they are actually sincere and authentic and exactly as they have always been and would continue to be if my family reconciled with my aunt's family.

Igor Jelinović



He is young Croatian director and screenwriter, the author of some very successful short fiction titles like *Sea Foam* (2016), *Secret Life of Fairies* (2016), and *Little Bear* (2015) that have all reached a great interest and sympathies of festival audience and film critics. He is also a president of non profit association named «Blank», whose main activity is focused on film education for children and youth, and film production of short forms for debut authors. Beside directing his films, he has also been working in various positions as producer, DOP and 1st AD. *Honey Bunny* is his first feature fiction.

MOM, DAD AND I

Vanja Juranić

SYNOPSIS

Mom, Dad and I is a bittersweet comedy about a successful scientist Daša who returns home from abroad due to her mother's cancer diagnosis. Leaving behind unresolved professional and personal affairs she takes over the helm of the family. Her homecoming takes her back to her roots, stirring up cultural clashes and unveiling long-buried family secrets. In this new dynamic, Daša confronts doubts about herself, her parents' relationship, and her future.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Mom, Dad, and I is a bittersweet comedy celebrating women's strength, emancipation and resistance to the rigid patriarchal mindset and patterns of behavior. It's a story in which family dynamics and customs are gradually revealed through the filter of illness; its strength lies in what is unspoken, and in the atmospheric, well-defined scenes and sparkling dialogue.

With abundant humor and wit, the skilled author Tena Štivičić portrays the Croatian mentality, problematizing its structure, and granting the female protagonist the right to seek professional fulfillment and put herself first, which is rarity in European cinema. As a director it is my great pleasure to portray and put forward atypical, progressive, ambitious female characters who express themselves clearly and courageously. Men in this story do not drive the narrative, they have the role of passive observers, even trophies, which is uniquely refreshing in our cinema.

Another important, yet rarely explored issue in both Croatian and European cinema, is the state of non-belonging, people who grew up in a certain context, but found success and fulfillment in a foreign culture. Paradoxically, this spiritual wealth and simultaneous belonging to different groups often creates a sense of non-belonging and separation from one's own roots.

Despite the painful subject where protagonists are deeply immersed in heartbreaking life situations I intend to make an energetic and humorous film that emanates love and life force.

Vanja Juranić



She works as a screenwriter, director, and editor. She began her career in the mid-nineties, directing and filming over 100 music videos. Her script for the docu-fiction short *On the Square* premiered at the Berlinale in 2008. Her debut documentary *Am I Happy or What?* won the Jury's Special Mention at ZagrebDox in 2011. Her debut feature film *Zagreb Cappuccino* premiered in 2015 at the Göteborg FF, earning recognition for Best Cinematography and Best Music at the Pula FF. Her latest film *Only When I Laugh* also screened at the Pula FF and awarded for Best Actress in a leading role.

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info@arrasfilmfestival.com

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