

What's Slovak



in Berlin?

Servants Služobníci

Interview with Ivan Ostrochovský, director, scriptwriter and producer of the film.

The year is 1980. Michal and Juraj are students at a theological seminary in totalitarian Czechoslovakia. Fearing the dissolution of their school, the tutors are moulding the students into a shape satisfactory to the ruling Communist Party. Each of the young seminarians must decide if he will give into the temptation and choose the easier way of collaborating with the regime, or if he will subject himself to draconian surveillance by the secret police.

Your second, just completed, feature film *Servants* is receiving its premiere at the Berlinale, this time in a new competition section, Encounters. It is quite an epic film with a strong international input. At the same time, it differs considerably from your previous projects. It is very artistic, thoughtful, controlled, with beautiful black and white photography. You worked with Czech, Irish and Romanian co-production partners and the film received support from Eurimages. Moreover, British screenwriter Rebecca Lenkiewicz is co-author of the script. How did the genesis of this film appear from the production perspective?

Simple. Marek Leščák came up with the concept. Rebecca Lenkiewicz, who saw *Koza* and liked it, wrote this script with us. Vlad Ivanov, who I've admired since I saw *4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days* presented me with the award at the Vilnius Film Festival and so I asked him if he'd like to act in my next film. He agreed. Then Katarína Tomková found Romanian co-producers, Tudor Giurgiu and Oana Giurgiu, and also asked Mike Downey, who is the current President of the European Film Academy, to cover Rebecca in production terms.

***Servants* is formally characterised by its ostentatiousness and also its subdued nature. As if inner discipline and order managed all its parts. In this case the form corresponds wonderfully to the theme, which is the functioning of the Roman Catholic Church in totalitarian times. At the same time, the film is about individual stories of courage and fear, moral solidarity and the pragmatism of survival. How did you get to such a theme? What is there that appeals to you in it? And what does it say about the world of today?**

We wanted to make a film about the socialist period in Czechoslovakia, but with an overlap with the present. One day, Slovak actor Vlado Zboroň told us his story. He studied at the theological faculty under the communists, but he was expelled from the school. Subsequently, secret police agents came up with an offer – if he collaborates with them, he gets the chance to return to school. Zboroň did not return and we had a nice theme. The story of coming of age and confrontation with reality, when one has to choose which side to take, is universal and always topical. Last but not least, however, the title *Servants* refers to the fact that we are always under the influence of some higher powers that control

us, whether consciously or unconsciously, and which sometimes inconspicuously alter our deeds and attitudes. Then it can easily happen that someone finds himself in a trap and serves something that doesn't correspond to his values at all.

How did you look for the final shape of the film with the screenwriters and then with the cinematographer Juraj Chlpík?

First, we were concerned with Marek Leščák about how Rebecca Lenkiewicz would react as she's not used to such a long preparation, but eventually she got used to our slow pace. We expected she would bring the precision of "western" dramaturgy to the writing and, at the same time, be a sort of editor ensuring that what the film talks about is also sufficiently comprehensible for the foreign audiences who have not experienced communist ideology. I think we managed to do that.

I opted for Juraj Chlpík on the basis of his camera work in a short film by Matúš Libovič (*Noc v hoteli*, 2004 – ed.) – mainly because the film was black and white. However, we made realisation of the film quite complicated as we did not collaborate with an architect, but we built all the locations consistently on our own, all with

What's Slovak in Berlin?



Encounters

a view to the composition of future shots. I perceive a similar consistency of composition, almost even a rigidity of the film images, in Štefan Uher's *The Organ*.

↳ Abridged from Film.sk (2020 English Special Edition)

SERVANTS | SLUŽOBNÍCI
SK, RO, CZ, IE, 2020, 80 min., fiction
Director Ivan Ostrochovský
Screenplay Rebecca Lenkiewicz, Marek Leščák, Ivan Ostrochovský
DOP Juraj Chlpík
Cast Samuel Skyva, Samuel Polakovič, Vlad Ivanov, Vladimír Strnisko, Milan Mikuščík, Tomáš Turek, Vladimír Zboroň, Martin Šulík, Vladimír Obšil, Zvonko Lakšević
Production Punkchart films (SK), Point Film (RO), RTVS (SK), Negativ (CZ), Film and Music Entertainment (IE), Libra Film Productions (RO), Hai Hui Entertainment (RO), sentimentalfilm (SK)

World premiere Encounters



Producer Ivan Ostrochovský
Punkchart films
ivan@punkchart.sk
www.punkchart.sk

Festivals & Sales LOCO FILMS
info@loco-films.com
www.loco-films.com

SCREENINGS ▶
Feb 20 17:00 CinemaxX 10 *EFM
Feb 23 13:35 CinemaxX 10 *EFM
Feb 24 11:00 CinemaxX *Press
Feb 24 17:30 CinemaxX 7 *World Premiere
Feb 25 18:00 Cubix 6
Feb 26 22:00 Kino International
Mar 1 10:00 Cubix 6



After several documentary shorts and TV series, Ivan Ostrochovský (1972) directed his feature documentary debut *Velvet Terrorists* (2013), which was co-directed by Pavol Pekarčík and Peter Kerekes, and which premiered at the Karlovy Vary IFF 2013. His feature debut, *Koza* (2015), celebrated its world premiere at the Berlinale 2015. Its success continued at many festivals; it was also shortlisted for the 2015 European Film Awards and was the Slovak Oscar Entry for 2016. His latest film *Servants* (2020) is presented in a world premiere at the brand-new Berlinale competition section Encounters.

This film was financially supported by



Charlatan Šarlatán

Interview with
Lívia Filusová,
Slovak co-producer
of the film.

The drama of an extraordinary man, reflecting the age-old struggle of the two principles that have controlled humanity from the very beginning. Good and evil. Love and hate, cruelty and mercy, faith and betrayal. All that in one person against a background of historical twists. Mikolášek's extraordinary abilities are redeemed in the battle with his own demons who force him into cynical violence.



When and how FURIA FILM became co-producer of *Charlatan*?

At the time when we were wrapping up *The Cellar*, which was also an international project, I was approached with an offer to co-produce *Charlatan*. Reading the script, I immediately saw the immense potential of the project and the name of Agnieszka Holland as the director also played an important

role in my decision-making. At the following meetings with the Czech co-producer, I learnt further details of the project, including the other team members: people like DoP Martin Štrba, costume designer Katarína Štrbová Bieliková, set designer Milan Býček, or lead actor Ivan Trojan. All of that indicated a strong film with a strong potential to succeed.

What qualities does a project have to have to make you interested?

I am drawn to stories. The story has to touch me on a personal level, sync with me. When reading the script is straining labour, I simply don't give it a second chance. Then I continue to assess what might be the benefit for the audience, the importance and urgency of the themes and ideas, taking

their effect on the society into the account. At the same time, I consider the intelligibility of the film for the audiences outside Slovakia.

Being open to all genres, I tend to stories of ordinary people, their everyday lives and problems, the relation between individuality and society. I prefer simple narratives with a strong message. At the same time, I don't see any allure in political themes. One of the reasons why I avoid them is the enormous frustration from the current political leaders that you see everywhere. In no way I mean to diminish the importance of such films, they are important. But I feel that because of the media people are not living their own lives anymore, but rather the lives of the politicians and political scandals.

As a producer I, of course, follow the trends in the market and choose projects according to what is missing and demanded. For some time already, I have been observing a certain uniformity of themes in Slovak films. That is something I would like to avoid.

World premiere Berlinale Special Gala



CHARLATAN | ŠARLATÁN

CZ, IE, PL, SK, 2020, 118 min., fiction

Director Agnieszka Holland

Screenplay Marek Epstein

DOP Martin Štrba

Cast Ivan Trojan, Juraj Loj, Jozef Trojan, Jaroslava Pokorná, Miroslav Januš

Production Marlene Film Production (CZ), Film and Music Entertainment (IE), MADANTS (PL), Czech Television (CZ), Studio Barrandov (CZ), RTVS (SK), FURIA FILM (SK)

Festivals & Sales Šárka Cimbalová

Marlene Film Production

sarkacimbalova@gmail.com

www.marlenefilmproduction.com

Before *Charlatan*, you worked with an international team while making *The Cellar*. What were the differences and in what way was the work on these projects similar?

Every project has its specificity and needs a different approach. For *The Cellar*, I was the main producer and I worked with Russian director, French lead actor, Russian lead actress, as well as with Czech and Slovak actors and international crew. Russian director (Igor Voloshin – ed.) was not acquainted with the Slovak situation and reality; in a quite short time, he had to familiarize himself with them. He didn't know our actors either. That made the development of the film, casting, location scouting, and the shooting itself a bit more challenging. Moreover, we were shooting in three languages. That went surprisingly well and we all managed, only proving that in art the language is not a barrier.

As for *Charlatan*, the situation differed. Agnieszka Holland knows the Czech Republic and Slovakia very well, she is familiar with the mind-set of people, with the

country, as she had already worked here on several films. That was a big asset. Still, the difficulty level of the preparation and making of this film was high too.

Could you tell us something about your other upcoming films or projects?

We have just finished another co-production project, this time between Czech Republic, Slovakia and Latvia called *The Pack* that should enter the Slovak distribution in autumn 2020. The film, set in the ice hockey community, deals with the issues of being a teenager, bullying, and the need of being accepted, being part of the team that is playing not exactly fair.

There are two other projects in the development. One, *Lovec*, builds on the Slavic mythology but is set in the present times. It points out to the Forces that intervene with our lives and influence our actions. Production-wise, it will be a difficult project that I plan to realize as a European co-production. The other project is on the mainstream side, and it will be a comedy.



Lívia Filusová (1960) is a Slovak producer. In 2006 she founded the production company FURIA FILM and has produced over 30 films to date. The documentary *The Town of Flying Words* (2006, d. Tina Diosi) and the fiction film *In Silence* (2014, d. Zdeněk Jiráský) were screened at Karlovy Vary IFF, while *The Cellar* (2018, d. Igor Voloshin) screened in an international premiere at Busan IFF. The latest film *Charlatan* (2020, d. Agnieszka Holland) is presented in a world premiere in the Berlinale Special Gala.

Berlinale Special Gala

This film was financially supported by



FREM FREM

The film is a reaction to the current wave of post-humanist thinking caused by the development of technology and artificial intelligence as well as the climate crisis. The human species is coming to recognize its insignificance and transience, and human identity has found itself in a crisis. **FREM attempts to reflect this feeling and creates a dehumanized and alienated view of landscape and nature beyond the human perception of reality. Incomplete thoughts and fragments of dialogue, diverse music interrupted by rushes and glitches, and the seemingly confused, unanchored camera, create a disturbing, philosophical reflection on the limits of anthropocentric thinking.**

Interview with Viera Čákanyová, director, scriptwriter and DoP of the film.

Your film is about an artificial intelligence breaking into the physical world and coming to know it. How did you come up with the idea?

For a long time, I have been following the progress in AI and other technologies we are developing in an effort to overcome the evolutionary biological limits of our species. The evolution of AI can be pretty unpredictable which is stimulating artist's imagination. In my film, the main character is not a human being, but a new form of a non-human entity observing the natural world we are part of. I think we are living in times when we need to address our position in the world from a planetary perspective instead of using our usual anthropocentric perspective and that involves a certain distance from ourselves. Maybe it's also a question of our survival on this planet we are systematically and successfully destroying.

Your film suggests the presence of AI as an independent agent, yet it seems to be without a "physical body" – we only get to know it through its "sight". Why did you choose this approach?

When watching the film, I wanted to suggest the feeling of being inside the head of this entity. AI's "mental processes" are spatially distributed using the 5.1 sound

architecture, which also supports this idea. As to the visual, we decided to use a subjective camera, which hopefully helps the audience to identify with the "main character", even if it refers to a non-human experience. However, the aspect of a body and physicality is present in the film, at least in the form of a shadow on the snow. At one point, it becomes evident that what we are following is not just an abstract consciousness. As suggested in the prologue, the entity uses a sort of "physical prosthesis" to step out of its natural digital environment to explore the organic one.

Why did you choose to shoot in Antarctica? Its environment evokes pre-human or post-human times...

That was exactly the reason! Even though talking about the pre- or post-human era in the context of geological time is irrelevant – the human era is absurdly short. Nature and matter were here long before us and will remain here long after we are gone. In Antarctica, you are very well aware of this simple fact. The landscape around you is mostly inorganic, monumental, beautiful and indifferent at the same time. It offers itself to be observed and reflected upon by human consciousness in its short moment of existence.

Was your intention to use the vast landscapes of Antarctica and its post-apocalyptic feel to hint the problem of climate change? Moreover, both, AI and climate change are among the greatest threats to human species, they are both getting (or, quite probably, soon will be getting) out of our control. Do you think there is a connection between the two?

We got used to the idea that scientific and technological inventions will help us deal with the increasingly complex problems that we create. And climate change is an extremely complex problem. To be able to evaluate connections among millions of different inputs and outputs, influences and micro-influences, we collect huge amounts of data and we use various forms of AI that help us make sense out of them. It's only one of the AI's applications in areas where our mental capacities are inferior. At the same time, we are creating artificial neural networks based on evolutionary biological mechanisms that are able to learn and improve themselves. No-one can predict where exactly this silicon evolution will lead. There is a reasonable concern presented by part of the scientific community, that as soon as AI exceeds our level of intelligence, we lose control over it. At the

What's Slovak in Berlin?



Forum

same time, we are working very hard on our self-destruction by accelerating the climate change. Today it's clear that its impact is unavoidable; the question is only how fatal for (not only our) biological species it will be. And here comes the idea which initiated *FREM* – the emergence of a new, post-human observer, a possible witness of our extinction.

International Premiere Forum



FREM

CZ, SK, 2019, 73 min., hybrid

Director & Scriptwriter

Viera Čákanyová

DOP Viera Čákanyová, Tomáš Klein

Production Hypermarket Film (CZ),

Punkchart films (SK), Czech Television (CZ)

Festivals Wanda Kaprálová

wanda.kapralova@gmail.com

Sales Nina Numankadić

nina@dafilms.com

www.hypermarketfilm.cz

Slovak Co-Producer Ivan Ostrochovský

Punkchart films

ivan@punkchart.sk

www.punkchart.sk

SCREENINGS ►

Feb 21 19:30 Arsenal Cinema 1

*International Premiere

Feb 21 22:00 CinemaxX 6 *Press

Feb 22 11:30 Delphi Filmpalast

Feb 25 22:00 Zoo Palast 2

Feb 29 11:00 Zoo Palast 2



Viera Čákanyová (1980) is a documentary film director and scriptwriter. Her short- and medium-length films won numerous international awards including ones at *Visions du réel 2010* and *Kasseler 2010* (both for film *Alda*, 2009). *FREM* is her first feature film.

This film was financially supported by





Cook F**k Kill

Žáby
bez
jazyka

Jaroslav is a handsome and seemingly good-natured son, father and decent husband. But, in fact, he is pathologically jealous of his wife Blanka and very much afraid that she will leave him one day with their three children. Jaroslav and his family do not hesitate to employ violence, deceit and terror against others, which ultimately leads to a family tragedy.

What's Slovak in Berlin?

Market Screenings



Let There Be Light

Nech je
svetlo

Milan (40), a guest-worker in Germany, discovers that, back home in Slovakia, his teenage son has become involved with home-grown militias and is accused of bullying and killing a classmate. The father starts to seek out the truth about what happened, the truth about himself...

CZ, SK, 2019, 116 min., fiction

Director & Scriptwriter Mira Fornay
DOP Tomáš Sysel
Cast Jaroslav Plesl, Petra Fornay, Regina Rázlová, Jan Doman, Jazmína Cigánková

Production CINEART TV Prague (CZ), MIRAFOX (SK), RTVS (SK), Czech Television (CZ), Synergia film (CZ)

Festivals Dorian Magagnin
cercamon
dorian@cercamon.biz
www.cercamon.biz

Sales Sebastien Chesneau
cercamon
sebastien@cercamon.biz
www.cercamon.biz

Slovak Co-Producer Mira Fornay
MIRAFOX
mira.fornay@mirafox.sk
www.mirafox.sk

WORLD PREMIERE
Black Nights Tallinn FF 2019

SCREENING ►
Feb 22 12:50 Cinemaxx 11 *EFM

SK, CZ, 2019, 93 min., fiction

Director & Scriptwriter Marko Škop
DOP Ján Meliš
Cast Milan Ondřík, František Beleš, Zuzana Konečná, Daniel Fischer, Ľubomír Paulovič
Production ARTILERIA (SK), Negativ (CZ), RTVS (SK), Czech Television (CZ)

Festivals & Sales LOCO FILMS
info@loco-films.com
www.loco-films.com

Slovak Producer Marko Škop, Ján Meliš
ARTILERIA
arteria@arteria.sk
www.arteria.sk

WORLD PREMIERE
Karlovy Vary IFF 2019

SCREENINGS ►
Feb 21 16:15 Cinemaxx 2 *EFM

This film was financially supported by



This film was financially supported by



Scumbag Sviňa

A country somewhere at the foot of mountains is controlled by high-ranking criminals, people connected to politics, mafia, the police, courts. Can the truth survive?

SK, CZ, 2020, 98 min., fiction

Director & Scriptwriter

Mariana Čengel Solčanská,
Rudolf Biermann

DOP Ivan Finta

Cast Jozef Vajda, Marko Igonda,
Daniel Heriban, Gabriela Marcinková,
Diana Mórová

Production IN Film Praha (CZ), Magic
Seven Slovakia (SK), CinemArt SK (SK)

Festivals & Sales Princ Films
info@princfilms.com
www.princfilms.com

Slovak Producer CinemArt SK
office@cinemart.sk
www.cinemart.sk

SCREENING ►
Feb 25 12:40 CinemaxX16 *EFM



What's Slovak in Berlin?

Market Screenings | Accompanying Events

European Shooting Stars

Katarína Krnáčová
producer

Every year, European Shooting Stars, one of EFP's flagship programmes appoints a jury of five prominent industry figures to select Europe's best young actors and actresses from a variety of up-and-coming acting talent from all over Europe. The 2020 jury also includes Slovak producer **Katarína Krnáčová**.



Katarína Krnáčová is EAVE graduate and Producers on the Move participant, Vice-President of the Slovak Film and Television Academy and a

voting member of European Film Academy. Krnáčová is the delegate producer of the family drama *Little Harbour*, a Slovak-Czech co-production awarded with Crystal Bear at the Berlinale 2017 for the Best Film in Generation Kplus. She previously worked on the short film *Thanks, Fine* by Mátýás Prikler that premiered in Cinéfondation in Cannes 2010, followed by Prikler's feature *Fine, Thanks* that premiered at IFF Rotterdam 2013 and anthology *Slovakia 2.0*. Krnáčová also worked on Mira Fornay's *My Dog Killer*, which won the Tiger Award at IFF Rotterdam 2013 and was the Slovak Oscar entry.

TO BE PREMIERED IN 2020

Summer Rebels

fiction – completed

Summer is finally here! Jonas is excited to be spending the holidays with his grandpa Bernard. But with no wife and no job, grandpa is not in the best of moods. Jonas knows something needs to be done. This is the beginning of a turbulent summer story which ends in an extraordinary friendship.

Stand Up

fiction – in postproduction

Michael, a stand-up comedian, dreams big. Flying high, he quits his day job and hassles a new TV show to become a famous name in Slovakia. However unprepared for what is coming, his American niece and fresh college dropout Julia seeking a new start in Europe clips his wings and puts him back into orbit.

Contact

Silverart
katarina.krnacova@gmail.com
www.silverartfilm.sk

Emerging Producers 2020

Tomáš Krupa
director and producer

Emerging Producers is a promotional and educational project of the Ji.hlava IDFF, which brings together talented European documentary film producers. Since 2017, following the success of the previous five editions, the programme was extended with an additional four-day meeting in Berlin and producers' presentation during the Berlinale. Slovak Emerging Producer 2020 is **Tomáš Krupa**.



In 2012, Tomáš Krupa directed and co-produced his feature debut *Graduates: Freedom Is Not For Free*. In 2013 he established production company

HAILSTONE focused on producing independent creative documentaries. Its latest release *THE GOOD DEATH* is the result of an international coproduction of Slovakia, France, Germany, Austria

and the Czech Republic. The documentary had a world premiere at Ji.hlava IDFF 2018 within Between the Seas section focused on best films from Central and Eastern Europe. It has been screened at film festivals all around the world, won several film awards and was theatrically released in Slovakia and the Czech Republic.

UPCOMING FILM

We Have to Survive

documentary – in development
Mankind is unlikely to stop the climate change, but it can adapt to new conditions. Dystopian documentary about people from areas in the world that have been hit by a big disaster where life is subject to extremely difficult conditions.

Contact HAILSTONE
krupa.tom@gmail.com
www.hailstone.sk

EFM Landmark 2020 presentation

FILMING IN SLOVAKIA 33% CASH REBATE

Date: Monday, February 24, 2020 at 11:15 a.m.

Venue: EFM Landmark, Gropius Bau

Slovakia's film and TV cash rebate for international productions increased to 33% from January 1, 2020. Learn about the country's locations highlights, information about the film infrastructure and examples of major projects that have been shot in the country.

Berlinale Talents

Martin Smatana
director, scriptwriter and animator

Berlinale Talents is a development programme for emerging filmmakers and drama series creators that stands for sustainable promotion and exchange amongst different disciplines of the film industry. This year, Slovakia is represented by **Martin Smatana**, who is currently preparing animated short **Hello Summer**.

What's Slovak in Berlin?

Accompanying Events



Martin Smatana (1991) finished his master's degree in Animation at FAMU, Prague in 2018. During his bachelor studies he completed an inter-

ship at Nukufilm Studios in Tallinn. For 5 years he has been leading animation workshops for youth. His debut *Rosso Papavero* premiered in the Berlinale 2015 Generation Kplus, screened at more than 200 festivals and won 15 international awards. After four years, the same Berlinale's section world premiered his graduation film *The Kite* which also won the Children Audience Award at Annecy IAFF. He is currently developing the next film *Hello Summer* at the Animation Sans Frontières.

Filmography

upcoming: *Hello Summer* (in development)

2019: *The Kite*

2015: *Rosso Papavero*

UPCOMING FILM

Hello Summer

Short animated movie depicts funny situations which happen to a family during their summer holiday, using the objects of everyday life which they packed to their luggage, combined with hand drawn animation which changes those objects into the other forms.



Contact

Martin Smatana
smatana.mato@gmail.com
www.martinsmatana.com



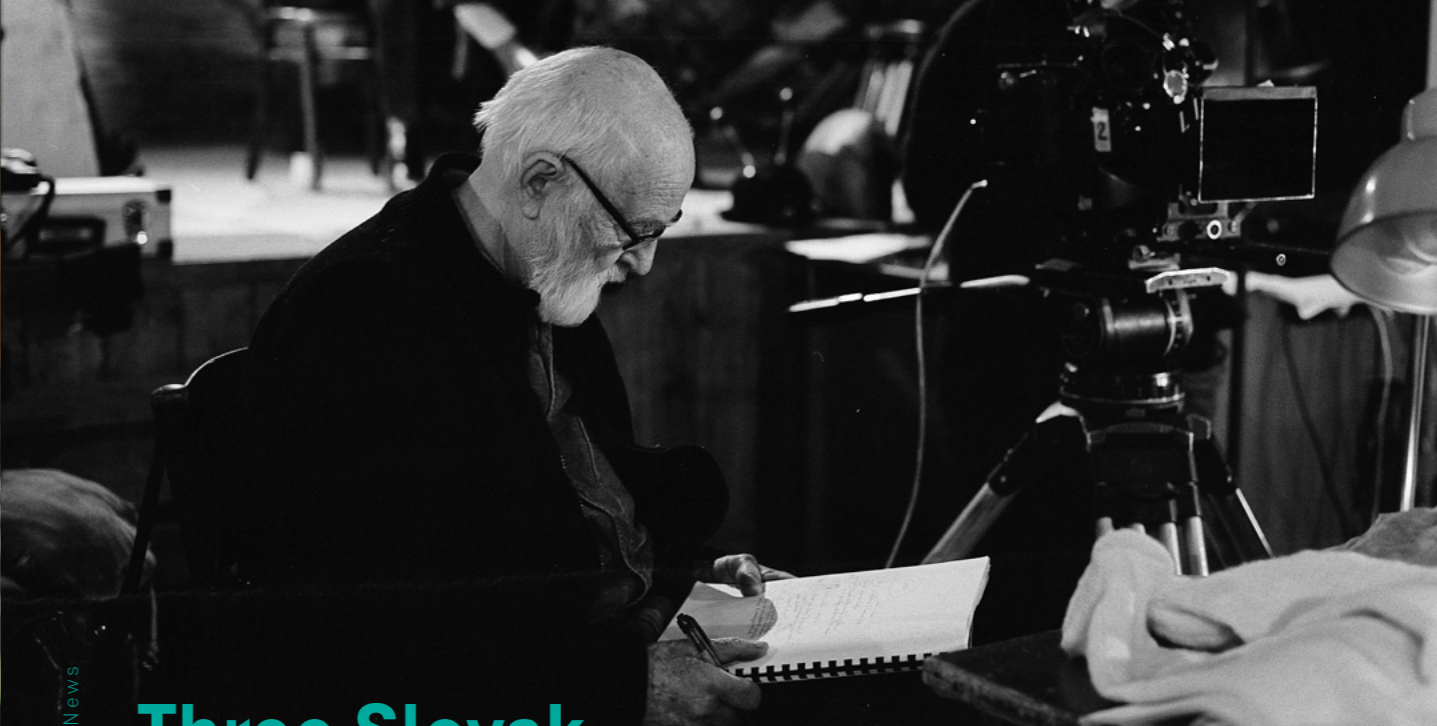
My Grandpa Is an Alien Nominated for ECFA Award

My Grandpa Is an Alien, a sci-fi adventure by Dražen Žarković and Marina Andree Škop competes for the Award for the Best European Children & Youth Film of 2019, which will be announced by ECFA – European Children’s Film Association during the Berlinale 2020.

Every year, European Children’s Film Association not only pays special attention to quality films for young audiences, but also brings European children films into the spotlight. *My Grandpa Is an Alien* is among the seventeen titles shortlisted for the ECFA Award thanks to the ECFA Award at the Olympia International Children’s Film Festival in Pyrgos, Greece. The decision about the winner will be taken by members of ECFA, that is by more than 100 film professionals from different fields of the industry incl. production, distribution, festivals and media education. The award will be given by all ECFA members and will be presented during the Berlinale 2020.

A seven-country co-production, *My Grandpa Is an Alien* tells a story of Una (9) and an alien robot who have 24 hours to find her grandpa who was kidnapped by aliens. This extraordinary adventure will lead to a new friendship, the rational robotic logic will be replaced by emotions, and Una’s selfless love will save her half-alien family.

What's Slovak in Berlin?



Three Slovak Films at the 48th IFF Rotterdam

The 48th edition of the prestigious International Film Festival Rotterdam (Jan 22 – Feb 2, 2020) presented two Slovak documentaries and one fiction film.

A six-hour film essay in four acts *Communism and the Net or the End of Representative Democracy* (d. Karel Vachek), which explores the philosophical optics of the history of regimes and revolutions, leaders and martyrs screened in its international premiere within the section Perspectives. The Deep Focus section offered a world premiere at the same time of the feature documentary *Alchemical Furnace* (d. Jan Daňhel, Adam Olha), an exceptional portrait of one of the most original and internationally renowned representatives of Czech-Slovak cinema - director and artist Jan Švankmajer. Švankmajer is known to the IFFR audiences, as he was a guest in Big Talk on the occasion of the world premiere of his film *Insect* in 2018. The last but not least is yet another figure that has already left a mark at the IFFR, Mira Fornay. The director whose second feature *My Dog Killer* won the Tiger Award in 2013, revisited the festival with her latest fiction feature about the pathological jealousy *Cook F**k Kill* in the Voices section.

Accompanying Events | Slovak Film News



A Year Around the World with Slovak Classics

What's Slovak in Berlin?

Slovak Film News

PHOTO © Archive SFI
Wild Lilies / Lalie poľné (1972)
Photo: Anton Podstraský

2019 marked a successful year for international presentation of Slovak audiovisual heritage. Slovak classics left the safety of the archive to set off on a journey around the world visiting numerous prestigious film festivals, cinematheques and cultural institutions.

For a third year in a row, the prestigious Lumière Festival, Lyon (France) became the place of the world premiere of recently digitally restored film – an expression of liberated and spontaneous rhythm inspired by folk poetry, surrealism, and naive artists, *Wild Lilies* (1972) by Elo Havetta.

Kolkata IFF (India) honoured the work of the New Wave scriptwriter and director Dušan Hanák by holding a retrospective with *322* (1969); *Pictures of the Old World* (1972); *Rosy Dreams* (1976); *I Love, You Love* (1980) and *Paper Heads* (1995) in the lineup. Moreover, the filmmaker presided the International Competition Jury.

A western-like, personal revenge story set on the backdrop of the Slovak National Uprising *Captain Dabač* by Paľo Bielik (1959), and an existential, primordial struggle for

survival in snowbound mountains *The Bells Toll for the Barefooted* by Stanislav Barabáš (1965) were selected for the Austrian Film Museum and Viennale held *O PARTIGIANO! Pan-European Partisan Film* retrospective in Vienna (Austria).

Kafkaesque comedy *The Barnabáš Kos Case* by Peter Solan (1964) became the hit of 2019. A travelling programme *The Central European Cinema of the Absurd, 1958-1990*, curated by a film historian Gabriel Paletz brought it to the HKIFF Cine Fan Program (Hong Kong) and National Gallery of Art in Washington, D. C. (USA), while it also caught the eyes of the programmers of Karlovy Vary IFF (Czech Republic) and Cinefest Hamburg (Germany). Additionally, blu-ray release of the film was among the finalists of Il Cinema ritrovato DVD Awards 2019 and

received a special mention by jury member Shivendra Singh Dungapur.

Traces of Experiment in Slovak Short Films, a programme of shorts made in the 1960s and 1970s originally curated for Intl. Short Film Festival Oberhausen (Germany) in 2018, inspired further programming. In 2019, Kino Tuškanac in Zagreb (Croatia) presented the altered shorts programme together with Dušan Hanák's feature-length *Pictures of the Old World* (1972) and in Ljubljana (Slovenia) they made part of Slovak Film in Czechoslovakia at Slovenska kinoteka. Bibliothèque publique d'information au Centre Pompidou in Paris (France) included *World Championship* (1970), a medium-length documentary by Milan Černák into its Faster, Higher, Stronger programme dedicated to sports documentaries.

And back to Vienna where this spring, the Austrian Film Museum will hold a retrospective dedicated to Czech, Slovak and Czechoslovak animated films made within 1920-2020. The proposed program encompassing around 50 screenings would closely cover the long-standing tradition of Czechoslovak animation, but also show a myriad of not-yet-canonical works, including contemporary student films or works on the verge between animation and experimental film.



On Your Marks! Na značky!

SK, CZ, 87 min., documentary
Director Mária Pinčíková
Screenplay Jakub Medvecký
DOP Denisa Buranová
Production PubRes (SK), Cinepoint (CZ), RTVS (SK), Czech Television (CZ)

Producer PubRes
pubres@pubres.sk
www.pubres.sk

Prague, July 2018. Fifteen thousand women and men of all generations gather together in one place to give a mass gymnastic performance. They all belong to Sokol, an apolitical movement established in the 19th century to foster self-development within a democratic community. We follow the participants of this huge endeavour with all their failures and victories. As the date of the show approaches, the participants feel under more and more pressure, which leads to many intense situations. The struggle of the Sokol members becomes an absurd metaphor for our society.

*Mária Pinčíková's feature debut **On Your Marks!** has completed the intensive workshop dok.incubator SK.

Once There Was a Sea... Bolo raz jedno more...

SK, PL, 15 min., animation
Director Joanna Kozuch
Screenplay Joanna Kozuch, Katarína Moláková
Production BFILM (SK), Anima-Pol (PL), TVP (PL), RTVS (SK)

Producer Peter Badač
BFILM
info@bfilm.sk
www.bfilm.sk

The film is inspired by the Aral Sea and the stories of the people that the director met when she was exploring the disaster of the Aral Sea, which has almost disappeared because of the ill-informed decisions of the comrades from the Soviet Union. We follow four stories – the story of the Russian one-eyed woman Svetlana, who worked in a cannery, and after its closure she refused to leave, the Russian Captain from Muynak, Sergei from Uzbekistan and Gulshat from Kazakhstan, the owner of the last hotel in Muynak.

***Once There Was a Sea...** was presented at the Euro Connection co-production platform during the International Short Film Market in Clermont-Ferrand 2019.

www.once therewasasea.com

The Report Správa

SK, CZ, PL, DE, 110 min., fiction
Director Peter Bebjak
Screenplay Jozef Paštéka, Peter Bebjak
DOP Martin Žiaran
Production D.N.A. (SK), Agresywna Banda (PL), Evolution Films (CZ), Ostlicht Filmproduktion (DE), RTVS (SK), Czech Television (CZ), TVP (PL)

Producer D.N.A.
rs@dnaproductio.nsk
www.dnaproduction.sk

Festivals & Sales Beta Cinema
beta@betacinema.com
www.betacinema.com

On April 7, 1944, Alfred Wetzler accomplished something inconceivable – along with his younger fellow prisoner Vrba, he escaped from the heavily guarded death camp Auschwitz. After an exhausting journey, the fugitives reached Slovakia and compiled a report about the genocide. The report reached W. Churchill and F.D. Roosevelt and influenced the course of WW II. *The Report* tells the story of their extraordinary courage and is directed at younger audiences.

*Peter Bebjak's feature **The Line** world premiered at Karlovy Vary IFF and received the Best Director Award in 2017.

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Contact

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Slovakia is hosted at the European Film Market in Berlin for the 15th time. With friends and colleagues from the Czech Republic and Slovenia, under the umbrella stand "Central European Cinema", Slovak Film Institute offers an informational and promotional point for Slovak cinema and a networking place for Slovak film professionals and their international counterparts.

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REPRESENTATIVES AT THE BERLINALE 2020

SLOVAK FILM INSTITUTE
Peter Dubecký Feb 21 – 25
sfu@sfu.sk

Rastislav Steranka Feb 21 – 25
rastislav.steranka@sfu.sk
+421 905 539 500

Kristína Aschenbrennerová Feb 20 – 27
kristina.aschenbrennerova@sfu.sk
+421 917 684 839

Veronika Krejčová Feb 20 – 27
veronika.krejcova@sfu.sk
+421 905 479 726

Lea Pagáčová Feb 20 – 24
lea.pagacova@sfu.sk
+421 905 422 281

SLOVAK FILM COMMISSION
Zuzana Bieliková Feb 21 – 26
zuzana.bielikova@filmcommission.sk
+421 905 360 033

Eva Pospíšilová Feb 20 – 25
eva.pospisilova@filmcommission.sk
+421 948 768 846

CONTACT

Slovak Film Institute
Slovenský filmový ústav
Grösslingová 32
SK - 811 09 Bratislava

+421 2 5710 1503
sfu@sfu.sk

www.sfu.sk
www.aic.sk
www.klapka.sk
www.film.sk
www.skcinema.sk

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