

Four minority co-productions selected for Venice IFF 2021

At the 78th Venice International Film Festival, Czech cinema will be represented by 4 films in this year's official selection. Polish-French-Czech political thriller *Leave No Traces* will celebrate its world premiere in the Venezia 78 Competition. Slovak-Czech-Ukrainian *107 Mothers* and Romanian-Czech-Latvian *Miracle* will both world-premiere in the Orizzonti Competition. Italian-Czech *Il Palazzo* has been selected for the Giornate degli Autori's Special Events. Czech project *Highlife VR* will take part in the Venice Gap-Financing Market.

Leave No Traces | Venezia 78

In Venice's prestigious main competition, Polish director Jan P. Matuszyński (*The Last Family*, Locarno IFF 2016) will introduce his brand-new drama *Leave No Traces* set in Poland in 1983. The country is shaken by the case of Grzegorz Przemysk – a high school student beaten to death by militia. Based on true events, the film follows the story of Jurek – the only witness of the beating, who overnight became the number one enemy of the state. The oppressive regime used its whole apparatus – the secret service, militia, the media and the courts – to squeeze Jurek and other people close to the case, including his parents and Przemysk's mother, Barbara.

Leave No Traces is produced by Leszek Bodzak and Aneta Hickinbotham of Aurum Film (PL) in co-production with Les Contes Modernes (FR) and Mikuláš Novotný of Background films on the Czech side, Arte France Cinéma, Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes-Cinéma and Canal+ from France, Magiclab and Czech Television from the Czech Republic, and Mazovia Warsaw Film Fund from Poland.

The film was supported by Polish Film Institute, Région Provence-Alpes-Côte D'azur, Région Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, Centre National du Cinéma et de l'Image Animée. The Czech Film Fund granted support in the minority scheme in 2018 amounting EUR 127 000. The international sales are handled by New Europe Film Sales.

Czech cinema participated in Venice's main competition previously in 2019 with Václav Marhoul's black-and-white drama *The Painted Bird*.

107 Mothers | Orizzonti

The Czech Republic was also involved in the production of the film by celebrated documentary director Peter Kerekes (*Cooking History*, nominated for the European Film Award in 2009; *Velvet Terrorists*, FEDEORA Award at the KVIFF 2013, Berlinale's Forum 2013) who will world-premiere his fiction feature debut *107 Mothers* in the Orizzonti Competition, dedicated to films that represent the latest aesthetic and expressive trends in international cinema, with special attention to debuts.

Kerekes' film tells a story of Lesya, who has committed a crime of passion, which brings her a seven-year sentence in one of Odessa's women's correctional facilities. She has just given birth to her first child, and now she is entering a world populated only by women: inmates, nurses and wardens, women of all ages, wives and widows, daughters, sisters, pregnant women, and women with children. If not for the color of the uniform, it would sometimes be hard to tell who is who.

The producer of this compelling drama is Slovak auteur Ivan Ostrochovský of Punkchart films who also co-wrote the screenplay. Co-production partners include established Czech production companies endorfilm (producer Jiří Konečný) and Hypermarket Film, Radio and Television of Slovakia (SK), Arthouse Traffic (UA) and Peter Kerekes Film (SK).

As a project in the making, *107 Mothers* received the Works in Progress Award at Karlovy Vary IFF 2017 (still under the title *Censor*). The film was awarded prestigious Sub-ti Award in the First Cut+ programme within Trieste's When East Meets West co-production market 2021, and it also received support from the Czech Film Fund (EUR 131 000). The international sales are handled by Films Boutique.

Miracle | Orizzonti

The Orizzonti Competition will also give floor to the world premiere of *Miracle* by Bogdan George Apetri (*Unidentified*, world premiere at the Warsaw IFF 2020; *Periferic*, Special Jury Prize at the Warsaw IFF 2010).

Divided into two chapters, *Miracle* follows young nun Cristina (19) as she sneaks out of her isolated monastery to attend to an urgent matter. Her enigmatic journey takes her all around town, but she is seemingly unable to solve her problem and find the man she is looking for. Out of options, she returns in the evening only to meet an unexpected fate on her way back to the convent. The second part of the film deals with Marius Preda (44), a determined police detective trying to understand what happened to her. Marius retraces Cristina's journey, step by step, through all the places she visited. In a perfectly mirrored structure, his investigation uncovers clues and revelations leading not only to the unfathomable truth behind Cristina's mysterious actions, but possibly, to an actual miracle as well.

Romanian producers Oana Iancu and Bogdan George Apetri of The East Company Productions have been joined by Czech producer Viktor Schwarcz of Cineart TV Prague and Latvian producer Aija Berzina (Tasse Film).

Miracle was also supported by the Czech Film Fund, with EUR 77 000 in 2020. The international sales of the film are handled by Memento International.

In the recent past, the Orizzonti section also hosted the world premiere of Czech animated short film *SH_T HAPPENS* (2019) by directing duo Michaela Mihályi and Dávid Štumpf.

Il Palazzo | Giornate degli Autori - Special Events

An independent sidebar of the Venice Film Festival, promoted by the associations of Italian film directors and authors, will host a world premiere of Italian-Czech *Il Palazzo* by Federica di Giacomo (*Liberami*, the winner of Orizzonti Competition 2016).

Giacomo's brand-new film is set in the center of Rome. With a view of St. Peter's, there is a building called the Palace. Over the years, its owner, like a Renaissance patron of the arts, has offered asylum to an eclectic community of friends that has turned every inch of the building into a permanent film set. Mauro, the most charismatic of the group, directs the tenant in a visionary film that leads him to withdraw from the outside world more and more, until he never leaves the Palace at all. When he dies suddenly, the community reassembles; Mauro has left them his legacy, thousands of hours of footage of the unfinished masterpiece they all appeared in. It's a bequest that revives the long dormant spirit of the group, in a tragicomic coming-of-age tale in which time, however, has run out.

The film is produced by Giulia Achilli & Marco Alessi of Italian company Dugong Films and Italian TV Rai Cinema. Czech co-producer of the film is Jan Macola of Mimesis Film.

Highlife VR | Venice Gap-Financing Market

In addition, one Czech Documentary VR project takes part in the Venice Gap-Financing Market 2021. **Highlife VR**, directed by Tomáš Koucký and produced by Jindřich Trčka of Oldřich Company, will be presented within the Biennale College - Virtual Reality section. The 12-minutes-long project will convey the experience how is to be a highlander balancing on the line in the heights of Alps mountains. The goal of the creators is to find co-producers and financial partners.

Press Service:

Jaroslav Kejzlar

Editor & Communication

Czech Film Center / Czech Film Fund

Veletržní 530/27, 170 00 Praha 7

telefon: +420 601 326 883

e-mail: jaroslav@filmcenter.cz

www.filmcenter.cz

[facebook](#)