

## Three Czech films to premiere in Locarno

At the 75th Locarno Film Festival, Czech cinema will be represented by two Czech films and one Czech minority co-production. Slovak-Czech thriller *Nightsiren* by Tereza Nvotová will celebrate world premiere in the Cineasti del Presente Competition, while experimental short *Asteri3n* by Francesco Montagner will world-premiere in the Pardi di Domani section. Furthermore, Locarno's Semaine de la Critique sidebar will introduce documentary feature *The Visitors* by Veronika Liřková. All three films were supported by the Czech Film Fund.

### Nightsiren | Cineasti del Presente

The prestigious Cineasti del Presente Competition, dedicated to emerging directors and devoted to first and second features, will host world premiere of Tereza Nvotová's second feature *Nightsiren*. An oppressive thriller tells a story of a young woman who returns to her native mountain village, searching for answers about her troubled childhood, but as she tries to uncover the truth, ancient legends begin to invade modern reality, leading the villagers to accuse her of witchcraft and murder.

Tereza Nvotová, whose evocative debut *Filthy* (2017) caught the eye of Czech film critics and won the best film award as well as the prize for newcomer of the year, based the *Nightsiren's* setting on her own memories – in a hundred-year-old cabin, with no electricity or running water, where she has spent time since childhood. This wilderness setting also represents the place where the *Nightsiren's* protagonist goes to return to the place where her wandering in today's world began.

The film is a joint project of producers Peter Badač of BFILM (Slovakia) and Miloř Lochman of moloko film (Czech Republic) with Radio and Television Slovakia also being on board as a co-producer. The Czech Film Fund supported *Nightsiren* in the calls for early script, development and production altogether with EUR 434 000, and the project also received the Eurimages support (EUR 260 000).

Czech cinema has recently been visible in the Cineasti del Presente Competition. Last year, Francesco Montagner's *Brotherhood* premiered in this section, while three years ago the competition presented the co-production drama *Oroslan* by Slovenian director Matjař Ivaniřin.

### Asteri3n | Pardi di Domani

Director Francesco Montagner, last year's winner of the prestigious Pardo d'oro with his debut *Brotherhood*, returns to Locarno with brand-new work *Asteri3n*. An Experimental documentary short will world-premiere in the Pardi di Domani section for expressive experimentation and formally innovative films, which last year introduced another Czech short – *Love, Dad* by Diana Cam Van Nguyen.

In *Asteri3n*, Montagner reflects on the ambiguous relationship between man and bull. He focuses on the history, present, meaning and symbolism of a strange yet persistent human ritual and wonders why a man wants to dominate the bull, embody its strength, and subconsciously becoming the bull: a Minotaur.

The film was made in Czech-Slovak co-production with Veronika Kůhrová and Michal Kráčmer of Analog Vision acting as main producers. Co-producers include Slovak Artichoke and FILMTALENT Zlín. The Czech Film Fund supported *Asteri3n* in the call for production of experimental films with EUR 20 000.

## **The Visitors | Semaine de la Critique**

Locarno's sidebar Semaine de la Critique marks its 32<sup>nd</sup> edition this year, which will be enriched by world premiere of Czech documentary film ***The Visitors***. Second feature by Veronika Lišková (*Daniel's World*) follows the story of a young anthropologist who moves with her family to Svalbard, Norway, to study how life is changing in the Arctic. After falling in love with her new home, she discovers that more than icebergs are vanishing there. Through conducting interviews with residents, she begins to perceive how heterogeneous the small local community actually is, while also revealing tensions that lie beneath the surface.

Czech-Norwegian-Slovak co-operation is produced by Kristýna Michálek Květová of Cinémotif Films in co-production with Ten Thousand Images (NO), Peter Kerekes Film (SK) and Czech Television. This month, the forthcoming film was presented within Eastern Promises' Works in Progress at the Karlovy Vary IFF, and as a project in the making, the doc benefited from the support of the Czech Film Fund – combined EUR 72 000.

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