



Press Release
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Film Servis Festival Karlovy Vary, a.s.
Panská 1, 110 00 Praha 1, Czech Republic / +420 221 411 011
festival@kviff.com / production@kviff.com / program@kviff.com
industry@kviff.com / press@kviff.com / gservice@kviff.com

57th Karlovy Vary
International Film Festival
June 30 – July 8, 2023
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ANOTHER BIRTH. IRANIAN CINEMA, HERE AND NOW

The 57th KVIFF celebrates independent Iranian cinema with a selection of singular works made in the past four years. Collectively these works offer an insightful testimony of the burning creativity of Iran's artists in face of the challenging reality. Nine mostly young filmmakers – urgent, unheard, voices – who palpably bear a spiritual connection to the previous generations of their country's greats, tackle the current reality with a remarkable sensitivity and great inventiveness. Melancholic dramas, comedies, war movies, sci-fis...films about love, and films within films. Together, these nine unique and intensely personal testimonies form a multi-dimensional mosaic that reflect the collective spirit and openness of Iran's young cinema of today.

“This cinema should not be read with the regular tools we use to decode most films. This cinema compels us to reinvent our tools, to reinvent how we see and interpret film, in order to engage with the intentions of these filmmakers,” says the retrospective's curator Lorenzo Esposito. *“As the title of a poetry collection by Forough Farrokhzad read: “We present here and now another birth of Iranian cinema.”*



Nader Saeivar's Kafkaesque nightmare **NO END**, co-scripted and co-edited by Jafar Panahi explores, with vivid realism, the control and humiliation of the individuals by their



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authoritarian regimes. **THE LOCUST**, is a film within a film: a comic drama and a docu-fiction. The second directorial effort from Kiarostami's protégé Faeze Azizkhani is an ingenious hybrid of a movie, anchored by the director's authentic female perspective. **ZAPATA**, Danesh Egbashavi's rousing genre blend of comedy, detective fiction, and mockumentary was filmed with two iPhones, a small hand-held camera, a GoPro action camera, and the appreciable influence of Roger Corman.

THE SKIN, the debut from the Ark brothers, hotly anticipated since 2017 when they won a Cinéfondation prize at Cannes for their short piece *AniMal*, is an innovative fantasy horror flick blending genre elements with local folk legends. Negin Ahmadi is the young director and protagonist of mesmeric debut **DREAM'S GATE**, a soul-searching documentary that leaves Tehran to follow the lives of an all-female militia group fighting in Syrian Kurdistan. Produced by the filmmaking collective, Kamja, electrifying debut **A TRIP TO THE MOON** by Mohammadreza Shajan-Nejad follows the zany exploits of a man venturing to recover the sounds left to him by his partner in a bottle before leaving on a trip to the Moon.

BLACK AND WHITE RIVER by Farzin Mohammadi tells the story of the artistic crisis facing young filmmaker Amin, who is trying to recover lost time. **CREATION BETWEEN TWO SURFACES**, the second film by photographer and filmmaker Hossein Rajabian, is an adrenaline rush that boldly seeks wisdom in madness. Inspired by Ingmar Bergman's *Persona*, the director gradually transforms film reality into a psychiatric nightmare. Vahid Vakilifar's **K9** offers an intoxicating, visionary sci-fi, which, in spite of the darkness consuming the world, remains a believer in the power of light.



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KVIFF CELEBRATES ICONIC JAPANESE FILMMAKER YASUZO MASUMURA WITH A CAREER-SPANNING PROGRAM

A towering figure of post-war Japanese cinema is the subject of the 57th Karlovy Vary International Festival's forthcoming tribute program. Long neglected in most of the Western world, the zany films of Japanese filmmaker **Yasuzo Masumura** (1924 – 1986) have been gaining traction over the past decade, attracting new devotees and forcing critics and academics to reassess his ascribed position within the Japanese New Wave.



Two decades after his work began to circulate across in Europe and the U.S., albeit in limited capacities, the films of Masumura now rank among the biggest film discoveries of the 21st century – a highly eclectic, unabashedly confrontational body of work with rebellious politics and highly distinctive aesthetics.

Reflecting his singular versatility, knack for experimentation, and strong engagement with the political landscape of the day, the films of the retrospective range from his youthful Sun Tribe debut **Kisses** (1957) and gorgeously lensed Sirkian melodrama **The Blue Sky Maiden** (1957), to the biting espionage thriller

The Black Test Car (1962) and the hugely daring lesbian drama **All Mixed Up** (1964).

Masumura's anti-war stance was front and center in his work – an ideological position detected in a number of the program's titles such as the sharp satire **Hoodlum Solider** (1965) and, most controversially, in **The Red Angel** (1966), the director's most famous work in the West whose latest 4K restoration is having its festival premiere at KVIFF 2023.

The corrupting pull of consumerism and celebrity cultures; the empowering device of sex for women in attaining their agencies; the unshakable legacy of Japan's imperialism and militarization; the collapse of traditional family structures...Masumura's subjects have lost



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none of their urgency and relevancy. His aesthetics – which evolved from the garish to the pared-down – remain as visionary and unpredictable as ever.

“We, Kadokawa, are very pleased to collaborate with the Karlovy Vary International Film Festival for this retrospective,” Kadokawa representatives said. *“Masumura was the first Japanese filmmaker to study film in Rome and brought a new style to the Japanese film industry at that time. Over the years, he attracted a sizeable fanbase in Europe, including the great Michelangelo Antonioni. This is the first time this century, however, that a European film festival hosts such a large-scale program comprised of recently restored 4K films. We hope that this special program will lead to a reevaluation of his work.”*

“Masumura has proven that mainstream cinema can be as bold, as political, as perceptive, as its arthouse counterpart,” Joseph Fahim, the program’s curator, said. *“Constantly breaking barriers and blurring boundaries between art and commerce, the films of Yasuzo Masumura are no less revolutionary than the best of Samuel Fuller, Nicolas Ray or Frank Tashlin. This retrospective, held in anticipation of his 100th anniversary next year, aims to not only introduce audiences from around the world to Masumura’s wild cinema, but to cement his growing reputation as one of Japan’s great film masters.”*

Titles of the retrospective:

Kisses (Kuchizuke, 1957)

The Blue Sky Maiden (Aozora musume, 1957)

Giants and Toys (Kyojin to gangu, 1958)

A Wife’s Confession (Tsuma wa kokuhaku suru, 1961)

Black Test Car (Kuro no tesuto ka, 1962)

All Mixed Up (Manji, 1964)

Hoodlum Soldier (Heitai yakuza, 1965)

The Spider Tattoo (Irezumi, 1966)

Nakano Spy School (Rikungun Nakano gakkō, 1966)

The Red Angel (Akai tenshi, 1966)

Blind Beast (Moju, 1969)



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FUTURE FRAMES IS ENTERING A NEW ERA THANKS TO ITS PARTNERSHIP WITH ALLWYN AND COLLABORATION WITH UTA AND RANGE MEDIA PARTNERS

Since 2015, the program *Future Frames – Generation NEXT of European Cinema*, organized by the European Film Promotion and Karlovy Vary International Film Festival, has helped emerging talented European directors launch their careers in the film industry. The program is now expanding the pool of opportunities provided to the filmmakers through its partnership with Allwyn, a leading global lottery operator, and a collaboration with US-based talent agency UTA and management company Range Media Partners.

“Through this partnership, Allwyn is continuing to grow its community of winners around the globe. We’re passionate about changing lives for the better and this extends beyond those who buy a lottery ticket. It means supporting those who strive to achieve greatness in society, including in the arts. Initiatives like Future Frames ensure that opportunity is spread across generations, and, as we build the lotteries of the future, we are equally committed to ensure future generations also benefit from the good we provide to society,” commented Pavel Turek, Allwyn’s Chief Officer of Global Brand, Corporate Communication, and CSR.

The *Future Frames* program highlights the promising emerging talent behind new European cinema. Each year, 10 outstanding film students and graduates, recommended by the European Film Promotion member organizations are selected by the program department of Karlovy Vary IFF to showcase their short and medium-length films to the festival audience. The selected filmmakers also participate in a tailored mentorship program that includes training, networking and promotion elements. In the past years, mentors such as Felix van Groeningen, Denis Côté, Tim Sutton or Jasmila Žbanić have shared their expertise with the program attendees. Alumni of the program include Michal Blaško (feature film *Victim*, world premiere at 2022 Venice Film Festival), Hleb Papou (feature film *The Legionnaire*, the Best Emerging Director award at 2021 Locarno Film Festival) or Tadeusz Lysiak (short film *The Dress*, nominated for 2020 Academy Award).

“Thanks to our new partner, Allwyn, and our close collaboration with talent agency UTA and management company Range Media Partners, we can provide promising European directors with a vital opportunity to kick-start their careers and further their creative development, as well as the chance to gain experience from renowned figures in the world of film. The Karlovy Vary Film Festival continues its long-term strategy of discovering and supporting the filmmakers of the future,” says Kryštof Mucha, Executive Director of the Karlovy Vary IFF.



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This year's edition of *Future Frames* will take place from July 2nd to July 5th at Karlovy Vary IFF. *Allwyn Future Frames Lounge*, a brand new creative and networking area located in the Thermal Hotel festival center, will host training and networking sessions for the participants and will also serve as a space for one-on-one meetings with UTA and Range Media Partners representatives. They will provide feedback and guidance and ultimately choose one director, who will receive a special scholarship, sponsored by Allwyn – enabling them to spend a month in Los Angeles, learning from the best in the film industry.

“We are excited to be partnering with this iconic film festival known for its commitment to independent world cinema. We have admired the filmmakers and talent showcased at the festival throughout the years and are proud to partner its Future Frames Program,” says Jim Meenaghan & Rena Ronson, Co-Heads of UTA Independent Film Group.

“We are thrilled to be partnering with the word class Karlovy Vary Film Festival and to be joining their Future Frames Program. We have had colleagues and clients attend the festival in the past and their commitment to independent cinema is second to none,” says Range Media Partners representative.

About Allwyn

Allwyn is a leading global lottery operator. Allwyn builds better lotteries that return more to good causes by focusing on innovation, technology, efficiency and safety across a growing casual gaming entertainment portfolio. The lottery-first approach of focusing on affordable recreational play has earned Allwyn leading market positions with trusted brands across Europe in Austria, Czech Republic, Greece and Cyprus, Italy, the United Kingdom, and the United States (Illinois).



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VISUAL DESIGN OF THE 57TH KARLOVY VARY INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL FROM STUDIO NAJBRT

The visuals for this year's Karlovy Vary International Film Festival have once again been designed by Studio Najbrt, specifically by Jakub Spurný and Aleš Najbrt.

Commenting on their design, Spurný and Najbrt say, "After last year's illustrated poster, the visuals for the 57th Karlovy Vary International Film Festival have been composed using four colored lines that act out an experimental game with legibility and motion involving the number 57. This approach enables a number of additional variations, both static and animated. With a crack of the whip, we can begin!"





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KARLOVY VARY FILM FESTIVAL TO PRESENT WORLD PREMIERE OF DIGITALLY RESTORED FILM COURAGE FOR EVERY DAY

As part of its long-running project of premiering digitally restored copies of important works of Czech cinema, this year's Karlovy Vary film festival will be showing Ewald Schorm's award-winning *Courage for Every Day*.

Schorm's 1964 feature-length debut is a key work of the Czechoslovak New Wave. Based on a screenplay by Antonín Máša, the film took a new approach to exploring the moral crisis felt by the generation that experienced the social changes following the condemnation of Stalin's cult of personality.

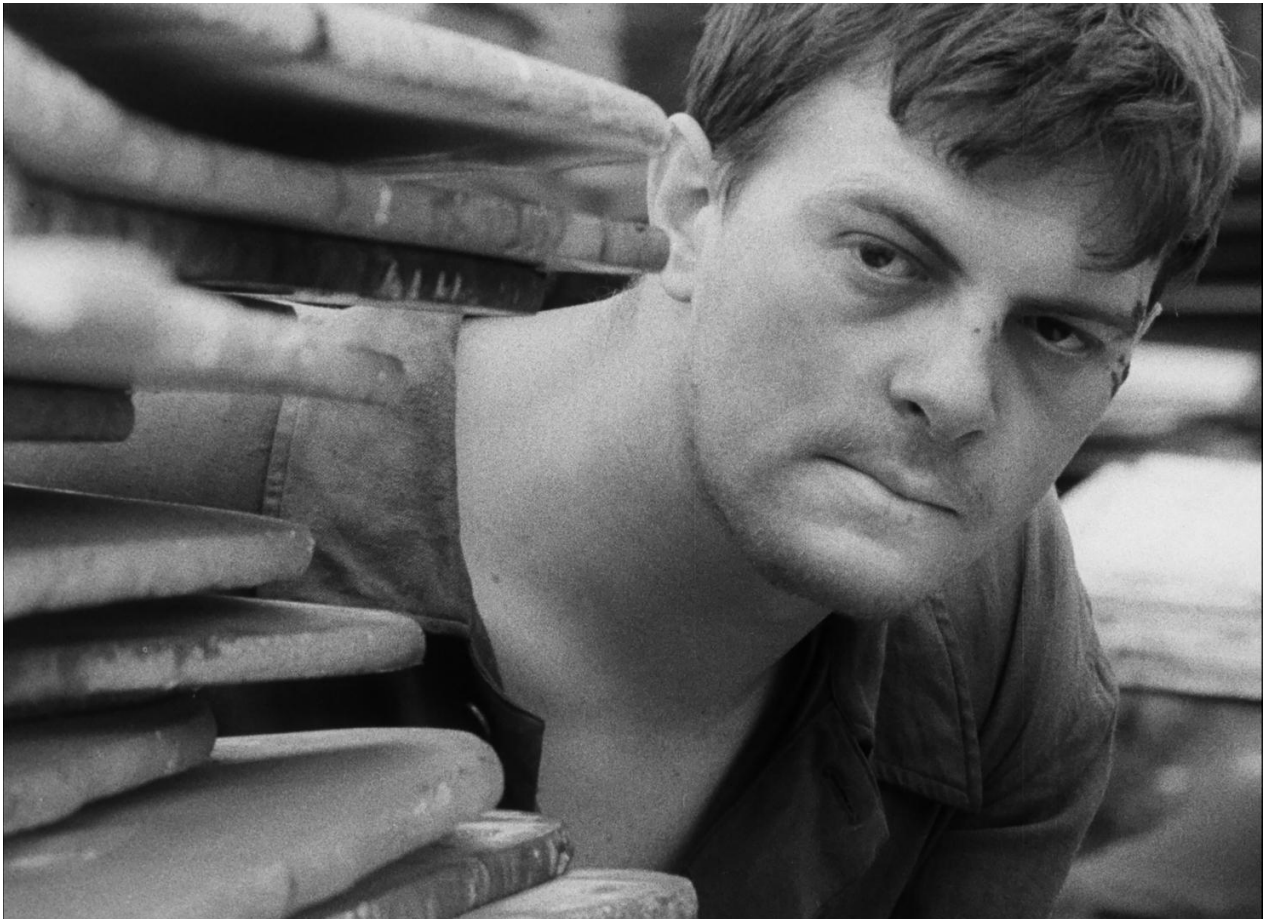


Photo credit: NFA

The main protagonist, the machine worker Jarda, is a youthful communist shock worker who thanks to his political engagement enjoyed a stellar career following the communist victory in 1948. But the new political course and new social developments following the criticism of



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Stalin are a rude awakening from false ideals, and Jarda finds himself unable to adapt to the new situation. Suddenly, the political activities that had brought recognition and success and had given his life meaning are the subject of ridicule, and he feels betrayed. Social disillusionment is combined with a personal crisis as the thirtysomething Jarda fails both in his professional life and in his relationship with the window dresser Věra.

At the time, *Courage for Every Day*, a provocative dramatic study of a man whose attempts at finding stability in life end in disaster, encountered significant ill will from the establishment and was even directly condemned by communist president Antonín Novotný. As a result, the film, starring Jan Kačer and Jana Brejchová, was released into cinemas a year behind schedule. The era's critics, nevertheless welcomed it with great enthusiasm. Schorm's film was the first to touch so openly on the crumbling ideals and bitterness of a generation that felt "betrayed by history." Even so, official pressure caused news of the film receiving the domestic critics' award to be suppressed.

One of the most respected domestic films of the 1960s, *Courage for Every Day* subsequently earned the Grand Prix at the 1966 Locarno International Film Festival and also took home a prize from the international festival of new cinema in Pesaro, Italy.

Courage for Every Day is another in a series of award-winning Czech films to be digitally restored thanks to financial support from Milada and Eduard Kučera. To date, some forty Czech films have been digitally restored in this way. As part of its specialized KVIFF Classics project, the Karlovy Vary International Film Festival regularly includes renewed premieres of films whose digital restoration has been made possible by the Kučeras in its official program.

Performed in 2023 in collaboration with the National Film Archive and the State Fund for Cinema, the digital restoration process was done by UPP and Soundsquare using an original negative image and original soundtrack stored at the National Film Archive.



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KARLOVY VARY FILM FESTIVAL TO PRESENT AWARD TO ACTRESS DANIELA KOLÁŘOVÁ

The KVIFF President's Award will be presented to actress Daniela Kolářová at the closing ceremony of the festival's 57th edition.



Daniela Kolářová is one of the most distinctive Czech actors of the past several decades. She first appeared in front of the camera while still a student at DAMU, the Theatre Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague, specifically in an adaptation of Vladimír Páral's novel *Soukromá vichřice* (Private Torment, dir. Hynek Bočan, 1967). In 1969, she first met her long-time acting partner Jaromír Hanzlík on the big screen in *Slasti otce vlasti* (Majesties and Cavaliers, dir. Karel Steklý). In 1971, the two played a married couple in the legendary Czech sitcom *Taková normální rodinka* (Such a Normal Family, dir. Jaroslav Dudek), and over the following years they appeared together in a number of popular films, including the musical *Noc na Karlštejně* (A Night at Karlstein, dir. Zdeněk Podskalský, 1973), the comedy *Léto s kovbojem* (Summer with a Cowboy, dir. Ivo Novák, 1976), and

the television movies *Otec nebo bratr* and *Dopis psaný španělsky* (Father or Brother, 1978, and A Letter Written in Spanish, 1980, dir. František Filip). In 1976, she began another long-term artistic collaboration – with actor and screenwriter Zdeněk Svěrák. The two played a married couple in Jiří Menzel's comedy *Na samotě u lesa* (Secluded, Near Woods, 1976), and in 1978 she appeared alongside Josef Abrhám in one of the main roles of Svěrák and Smoljak's comedy *Kulový blesk* (Ball Lightning, dir. Ladislav Smoljak, Zdeněk Podskalský). She and Zdeněk Svěrák again played husband and wife in Jan Svěrák's *Vratné lahve* (Empties, 2007) and *Betlémské světlo* (Bethlehem Night, 2022). In fact, Kolářová has made regular appearances in the younger Svěrák's films, even if in smaller roles, including *Obecná škola* (The Elementary School, 1991), *Akumulátor 1* (Accumulator 1, 1994), and *Tmavomodrý svět* (Dark Blue World, 2001).

In 2009, Daniela Kolářová was awarded the Czech Lion for Best Supporting Actress for her role in Jan Hřebejk's drama *Kawasakiho růže* (Kawasaki's Rose). Other distinctive roles



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from recent years include a character in the mysterious reworking of the well-known Czech ballad *Polednice* (The Noonday Witch, dir. Jiří Sárdek, 2016) and the sarcastic mother of one of the main characters in Patrik Hartl's comedy *Prvok, Šampón, Tečka a Karel* (Bet on Friendship, 2021).

For many years, Kolářová has enjoyed as solid a position on Czech television screens as she does on the big screen, having appeared in a number of successful series, among them *Nemocnice na kraji města* (The Hospital at the Edge of the City), *My všichni školou povinní* (All of Us of Mandatory School Age), *Život je ples* (Life's a Ball), *Život a doba soudce A. K.* (The Life and Time of Judge A.K.), *Ulice* (The Street), *Sestřičky Modrý kód* (Blue Code Nurses), and most recently *Zlatá labuť* (The Golden Swan).

After graduating from DAMU, Daniela Kolářová initially was an ensemble member of the S. K. Neumann Theatre, and after 1971 she spent many years at the Vinohrady Theatre, where she gave unforgettable performances in productions of *The Robber*, *Hamlet*, *The Gingerbread Lady*, and *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant*. Her performance in *Destination* at Divadlo Komedie Praha earned her the 2004 Alfréd Radok Award. She can currently be seen at a number of different Prague theaters, including Studio Dva, the MANA Theatre in Vršovice, and the Viola Theatre.

The Karlovy Vary International Film Festival will honor Daniela Kolářová with a screening of her film *Ball Lightning*.



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PPF FOUNDATION SUPPORTS THE FESTIVAL'S FILM INDUSTRY SECTION

This year's festival section for film professionals has a new sponsor – the PPF Foundation. The foundation's mission is to support projects that help to export Czech talent abroad or that bring foreign sources of inspiration and information about the international context to the Czech Republic.

The foundation's support has made possible many of the activities associated with this year's Film Industry section of the Karlovy Vary film festival.

Two Czech films in the editing stage can participate in the First Cut Lab international workshop, at which foreign experts help to guide films towards an excellent reception by international audiences.

The foundation's support has also made it possible to send a participant in the KVIFF Talents program to the three-day Visegrad Pop-up Residency.

And in cooperation with other established foreign festivals, selected young Czech film professionals will have the chance to participate in educational programs currently being organized as part of a future international festival network (Film Industry Ambassadors).

The Industry Days section also features an inspiring program where selected foreign experts or producers will present talks for film professionals on subjects that are currently at the forefront of discussion in both Europe and Hollywood:

- artificial intelligence (AI) and copyright
- marketing strategies for independent films
- innovative technologies for film distribution
- leadership tools for mental health in the film industry
- the relationship between gaming and cinematic ways of telling a story

Thanks to the cooperation with and support of the PPF Foundation, the festival can invite leading foreign experts to Karlovy Vary and also send talented Czech filmmakers and professionals abroad in order to learn about innovative approaches in other parts of the world.

The PPF Foundation was established in 2019 as a way for the PPF Group to support non-profit projects. To date, the foundation has provided more than 262 million crowns to 103 projects in total. www.nadaceppf.cz