



Karlovy Vary  
International Film Festival  
Official Selection – Competition

## **Nočno življenje / Nightlife** by Damjan Kozole

Slovenia / Macedonia / Bosnia - Herzegovina

**51st Karlovy Vary International Film Festival (July 1-9, 2016)**  
**World Premiere in Official Selection - Competition**

*Press and Industry Screening*

July 6, 2016 at 10:30 - Congress Hall

*Official / Public Screenings*

July 6, 2016 at 20:00 Grand Hall

July 7, 2016 at 13:00 Pupp Cinema

July 9, 2016 at 11:30 Drahomira Cinema

## synopsis

One night, a high-profile attorney is found on the pavement along a main road through Ljubljana. He is barely conscious, lying in a pool of blood, and covered in dog bites. Doctors at the medical center fight to keep him alive while his wife, in shock, confronts her deepest fears. During the course of this night she will break every moral standard she has stood up for in her life.

*"This is a film about a society where fear is the driving force. It doesn't provide any simple solutions, but it deals with how fragile our lives are and how everything is connected. It also deals with the fact that some wounds never heal. Because people are more vicious than dogs."*

*Damjan Kozole*



*Where did you get the idea for this film?*

I was abroad in February 2010, and I read online that back home in Ljubljana three bullmastiffs mauled their owner, a well-known doctor, to death. The doctor's body was found in his yard, naked in the snow, with blood everywhere. Lying next to him was a huge wooden dildo. The tragic death launched a scandal with political implications. The media speculated that the doctor was having sex with his dogs and that there may have been actual orgies going on for a while with many people involved. There were rumors that the spouse of a high-ranking official fled the scene and so on. The story didn't settle down for a few years and it still comes up today. Comments on the internet were wild, even bloodthirsty, with thousands of people commenting on each article. The country divided into two camps: those who are still convinced that

the decadent post-transition elite meet in garages for canine orgies and those who defended the integrity of the deceased and his right to privacy. The latter, more normal ones got the nickname "dog-fuckers". In short, the affair breached all boundaries of normality. I followed all this craziness and thought about what would be worse, to be mauled by dogs or by people? And that's what this film is about. The character in my story survives, but that could be an even bigger punishment.

*The film skips the shocking details. It's not so much a film about the scandal as it is about fear and society.*

Fear has permeated every pore of this society. In a way, this is a film about frightened, even cowardly people. We live in a time when people are afraid of character assassination in the media more than they fear actual death.



*We're thrown right into the gory situation.*

My co-writer Ognjen Sviličić and I decided on a basic premise where the film doesn't offer any explanation for the incident or tragedy, or any specific insights into the psychology of the main characters, and there are no clues to advance the story. There's no real plot or climax. I consciously tried to eliminate any causes, motivations or explanations. In short, it's a kind of an anti-film about people and their fear of what Jonathan Franzen would call "the ultimate irresponsible" media. Nightlife has the outward appearance of a crime film, but it's not about an investigation. Instead it's about a woman who is confronted by an investigation. This is a film about our inner lives, about the fears and about the kind and perverted thoughts that churn behind our facades.

*The main character withholds and even hides her emotions. We are constantly wondering whether she knows more. What's going on in her head?*

The main character just can't afford to show her emotions. She's confronted with a frightening, alien, incomprehensible truth. During the course of that night, the heroine simply can't grasp her situation, even though she makes every effort to think it through. That's a good question: what's really going on in her head? The film steers us toward what will happen when the truth finally has a chance to come out. And what happens? Nothing. She rejects that option. The film has an open form that will surprise and even confuse the viewer. It carries the audience forward but doesn't take them anywhere. It raises a number of questions, but there are never any answers.

*The film doesn't provide any catharsis at the end, either.*

Neither does life, for the most part. My reason for this decision was simple: we always want and demand more from films than is possible in real life. We want logic, to know each character's motivation and what they're thinking. Yet in real life you don't know what someone is thinking even when they look you straight in the eye and listen to you. You don't know what anyone is thinking in this film. What Lea, his wife, knows or doesn't know and why she does what she does is left to the viewer. From my point of view, she is like a lioness defending her cub, their son, from humiliation. Nothing is ever cleared up in our society and our reality, and we come to our own conclusions. Therefore, everyone should make their own conclusions in this film as well. But I don't agree completely that there's no catharsis at the end. The catharsis comes when we sense their intimate connection, their love.

*You followed up Slovenian Girl, featuring the captivating Nina Ivanišin, with another film about a strong woman. Strong female characters are becoming a major theme in your work.*

This film is about a woman who is strong but also powerless. Men usually make films about women because we want to believe that we understand a woman's soul. I'll gladly admit that I don't. For me, women are still a big mystery, like a black hole in space. I want to know them; I really try. They interest me. I know a lot of women, but I don't know them. I don't even know myself, to be honest. Every





morning, when I look in the mirror, I still wonder. Every morning I always hope I'll see someone else. I make films about women and films about men because I'm always wondering and asking, who are we, who am I? What's in our conscious state and our subconscious? How would I react in a situation like that? Would I protect those closest to me at any cost, regardless of any moral dilemma?

*This film will probably trigger a lot of polemics and commentaries in Slovenia.*

I like polemical films that dare to provoke at the risk of getting ripped apart. I'm well aware I didn't shoot a film for the broadest audience possible. Instead, it's a fairly demanding and painful x-ray of a certain situation, that will probably come under the knife in big debates. My films usually divide audiences and critics alike, which is just fine with me. I don't make films so people will like me.

*In closing, give a brief description of your film.*

Nightlife deals with basic questions in contemporary European society, like trust, ethics, hypocrisy, corruption. This is a film about a society where fear is the driving force. It doesn't provide any simple solutions, but it deals with how fragile our lives are and how everything is connected. It also deals with the fact that some wounds never heal. Because people are more vicious than dogs.

If I could put it even more succinctly, I would say Nightlife is a work that viewers will find easier to feel than to understand.

filmska ekipa / film crew

igrajo / cast PIA ZEMLJIČ, JERNEJ ŠUGMAN, MARKO MANDIČ, PETER MUSEVSKI,  
JANA ZUPANČIČ, PETRE ARSOVSKI, MOJCA PARTLJIČ, DEJAN SPASIĆ, MATIJA VASTL

režiser / director DAMJAN KOZOLE

scenarista / screenwriters DAMJAN KOZOLE, OGNJEN SVILIČIĆ

sodelavka pri scenariju / script collaborator URŠA MENART

direktor fotografije / cinematographer MILADIN ČOLAKOVIĆ

glasba / music KOSTOV, SILENCE

montažerja / editors JURIJ MOŠKON, IVO TRAJKOV

zvok / sound IGOR ČAMO, JULIJ ZORNIK, GAŠPER LOBOREC

scenografa / production designers DUŠAN MILAVEC, NEŽA ZINAJIĆ

kostumografinja / costume designer ZORA STANČIČ

oblikovalka maske / make-up artist MOJCA GOROGRANC PETRUSHEVSKA

direktor filma / production manager MATIJA KOZAMERNIK

produkcija / production company VERTIGO (SI)

koproducenta / co-produced SISTERS AND BROTHER MITEVSKI (MK), SCCA PRO.BA (BA)

v sodelovanju z / in collaboration with FS VIBA FILM (SI)

producent / producer DANIJEL HOČEVAR

producenti / producers LABINA MITEVSKA, AMRA BAKŠIĆ ČAMO, ADIS ĐAPO

finančna podpora / financial support SLOVENSKI FILMSKI CENTER, AGENCIJA ZA FILM NA  
REPUBLIKA MAKEDONIJA in / and FONDACIJA ZA KINEMATOGRAFIJU SARAJEVO

tehnični podatki / technical information

DCP, v barvah / in color, 85 min, format slike / screen ratio: 1 : 2.35, zvok / sound: 5.1

[nightlifefilm.si](http://nightlifefilm.si) & [facebook.com/nightlifefilm](https://facebook.com/nightlifefilm)



**Damjan Kozole** (born 1964) is a distinguished Slovenian filmmaker whose directing credits include the 2003 critically acclaimed *Spare Parts* and 2009 worldwide released *Slovenian Girl*, among others. *Spare parts* was nominated for the Golden Bear at the Berlin International Film Festival; in 2008 *Sight & Sound* ranked it among the ten most important films of the New Europe. *Nightlife* is Kozole's ninth feature.

*In his films, "some of the most raffish, funky and even sordid characters discover their own humanity" (Alissa Simon, Variety).*

Selected films:

*Ulay, doc. (2013)*

*Long Vacation, doc. (2012)*

*Slovenian Girl (2009)*

*Forever (2008)*

*Labour Equals Freedom (2004)*

*Spare Parts (2003)*



**Pia Zemljič** was born in Slovenj Gradec, Slovenia in 1975. She studied at the University of Ljubljana Academy for theatre, radio, film and television and graduated in 2001. She worked in the Slovenian National Theatre in Maribor from 2002 to 2008 and is currently working at Slovenian Public Theatre Celje. She has received multiple awards for her film and theatre work.

Selected films:

*Panic (2013)*

*Practicing Embrace (2012)*

*Good Night Missy (2011)*

*Rooster's Breakfast (2007)*

*The Guardian of the Frontier (2002)*



**Jernej Šugman** was born in Ljubljana, Slovenia in 1968. He studied at the University of Ljubljana Academy for theatre, radio, film and television. He graduated in 1992 and has been working in the Slovenian National Theatre in Ljubljana ever since. He is one of the most distinguished and award winning actors of his generation in Slovenia.

Selected films:

*Chefurs Raus (2013)*

*Panic (2013)*

*Good Night, Missy (2011)*

*Short Circuits (2006)*

*Suburbs (2004)*

*Headnoise (2002)*



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