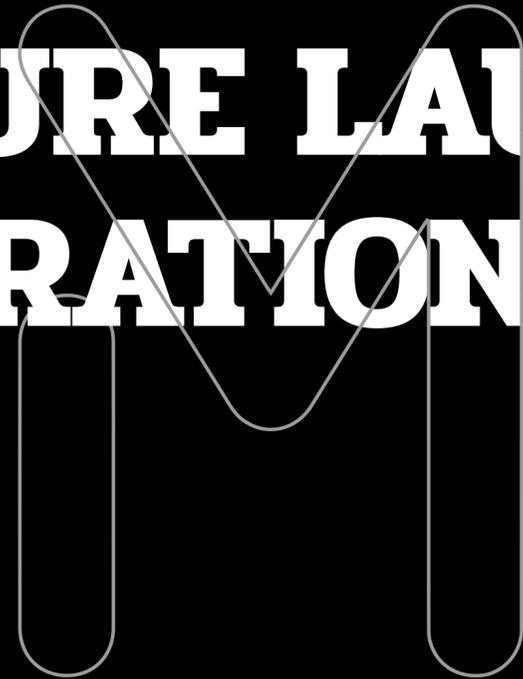


**PROJECT BOOK  
MIDPOINT  
FEATURE LAUNCH  
GENERATION 2018**



feature film projects

developed within

FEATURE LAUNCH 2018

program

Under the auspices of



Funders



Partners



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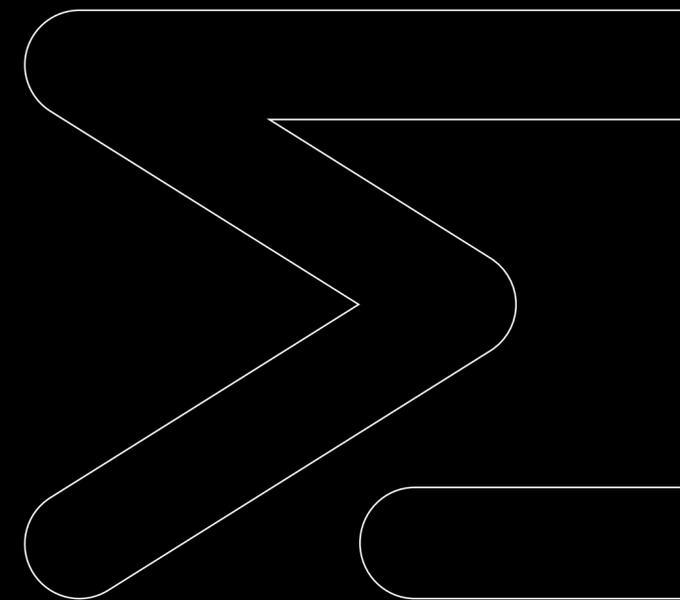
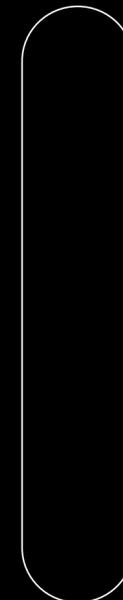
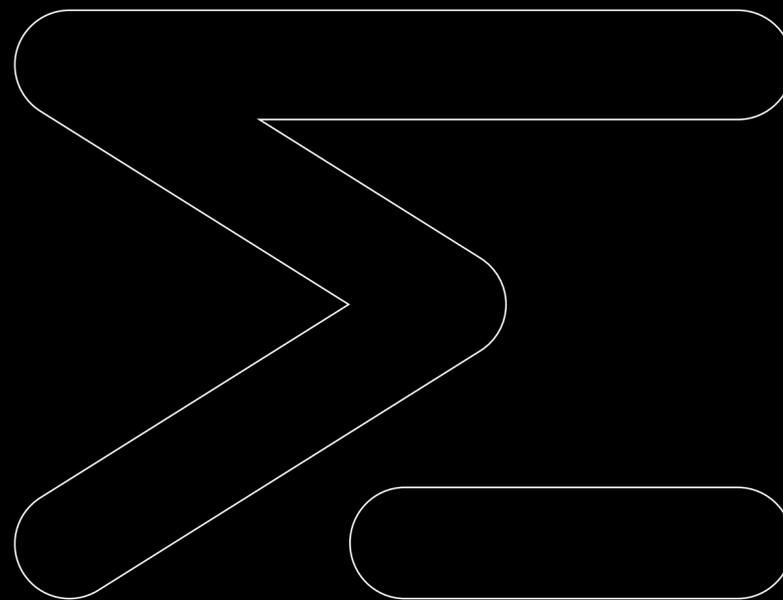
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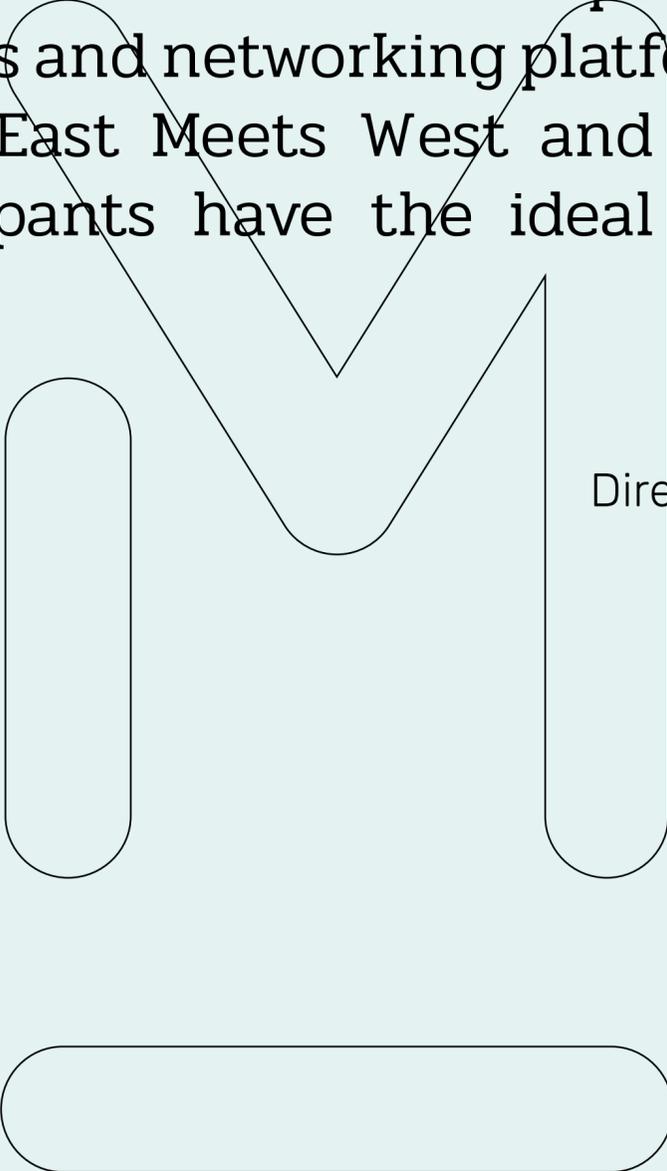
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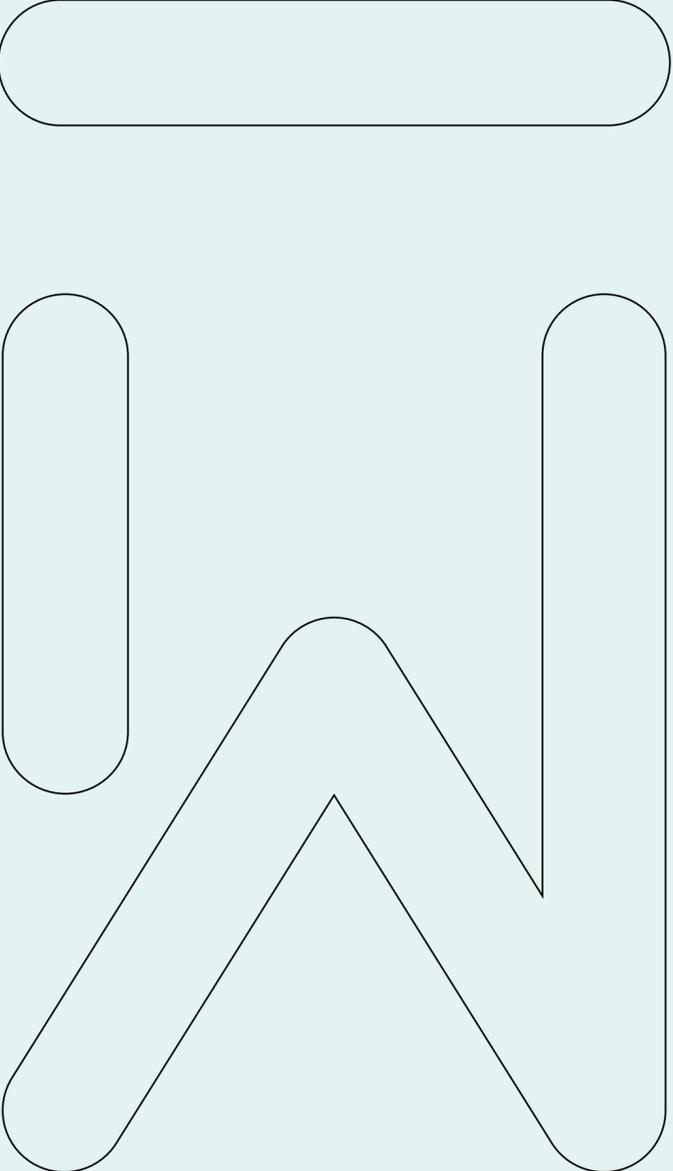
**FEATURE LAUNCH TEAM**



“MIDPOINT grew out of the need for greater support in the script development process in our region. Nowadays we embrace not only the script process, but project development as a whole. The partnerships we have with important international film festivals, markets and networking platforms such as the Karlovy Vary IFF, When East Meets West and the Trieste FF ensures that our participants have the ideal setting for developing their projects.”



**Barbora STRUSS,**  
Director and Co-founder of MIDPOINT



# ABOUT MIDPOINT

MIDPOINT is a training and networking platform, for script and project development operating under the auspices of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague. It is aimed at creative teams of writers, directors and producers from Central and Eastern Europe.

MIDPOINT was conceived in 2010, with the aim of strengthening the level of collaboration within creative teams during the development process. Over the last eight years, it has grown into a platform that provides several types of programs designed to cover the areas of film and TV dramaturgy and to systematically assist filmmakers through the entire development process. It already has over 700 graduates, mostly from Central and Eastern Europe. Filmmakers who have attended its programs have achieved success at festivals such as the Berlinale, the Karlovy Vary IFF, the Cannes Film Festival and other leading European market platforms.

# MIDPOINT PROGRAMS

## MIDPOINT FEATURE LAUNCH

- a script and project development platform
- intended for first or second feature film projects
- includes a training program for aspiring script consultants

## MIDPOINT TV LAUNCH

- focuses on the development of content-rich TV series
- mini-series, ongoing series, web series
- training for junior commissioning editors

## MIDPOINT SHORTS

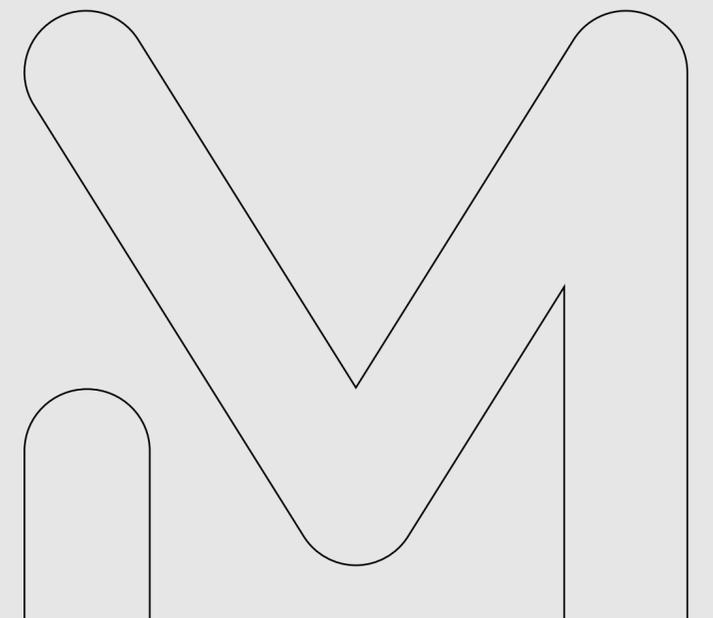
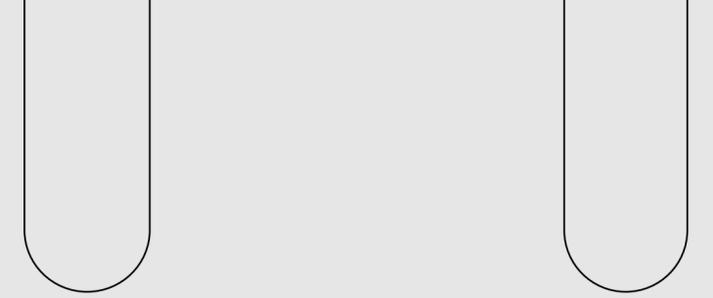
- a script and project development program
- intended for professional or graduation short film projects

## MIDPOINT INTENSIVE

- tailored workshops on demand
- script analysis for creative teams of writers, directors and producers

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**Deadline for submissions:  
21 September 2018**



# MIDPOINT FEATURE LAUNCH 2018

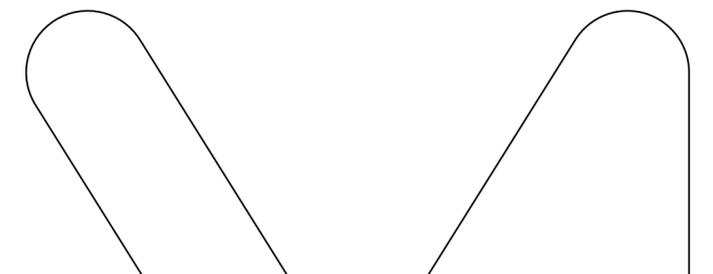
Starting in 2018, Feature Launch has initiated new collaboration with the **Karlovy Vary International Film Festival, When East Meets West** and the **Trieste Film Festival**. The year-long script and project development program, which includes 4 modules, follows and reflects the current development and financing process for feature film. The modules are carefully planned and organized in cooperation with these leading industry partners.

This year it has selected 9 feature film projects coming from Azerbaijan, the Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Serbia and Ukraine.

Having worked on their projects since January, both at the **2 residential workshops in Trieste and in Belgrade** (in partnership with Film Center Serbia) as well as during online sessions with their tutors, the

participants will now present their projects in front of decision makers from the film industry during the **Works in Development – Feature Launch** as part of the Industry Days program at the Karlovy Vary IFF. After the presentation, there will be curated meetings where selected experts will discuss the projects and give feedback to the participants.

After finishing the program, the Feature Launch producers will be invited by the co-production market, When East Meets West, in January 2019 to re-engage with potential artistic and financial partners.



# THE TUTORS FOR MIDPOINT FEATURE LAUNCH 2018

## MIDPOINT ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Pavel Jech

## MIDPOINT FEATURE LAUNCH HEAD OF STUDIES AND PRODUCER TUTOR

Danijel Hočevar

## SCRIPT CONSULTANTS

Anne Gensior

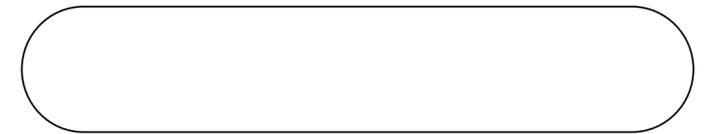
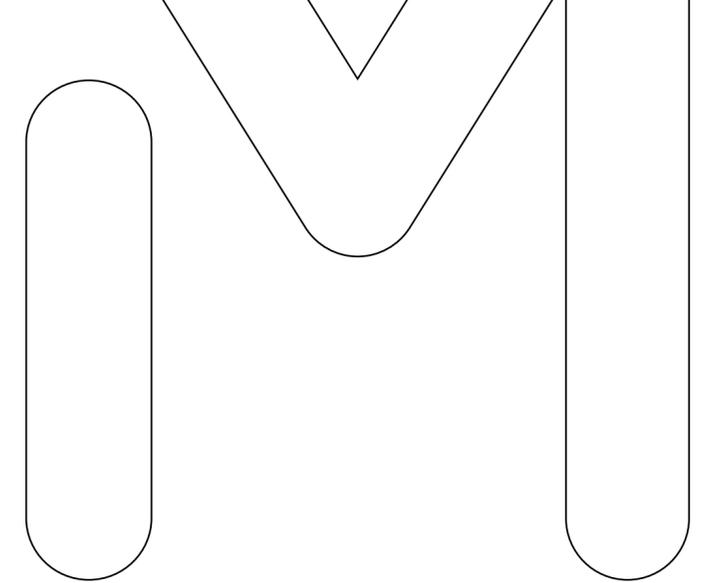
Pavel Jech

Ivo Trajkov

Pavel Marek

## PITCHING TRAINER

Gabriele Brunnenmeyer



**MIDPOINT  
FEATURE  
LAUNCH  
PROJECTS**

**BALAU  
BRAZIL  
CLOUDS ON LEASHES  
ERASING FRANK  
HOMEWARD  
LEAVE NO TRACES  
THE MYTH OF A REAL MAN  
SIRIN  
THE UGLY MANDARINE**

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18

MIDPOINT

Mrs. Ivanovici, a 35-year-old religion teacher and wife of the town priest, becomes involved in a relationship with Iuliu, an audacious 16-year-old student of hers. Iuliu starts confessing to the priest.

# BALAU



**ENGLISH TITLE:** Balaur  
**ORIGINAL TITLE:** Balaur  
**GENRE:** Drama  
**DIRECTOR/WRITER:** Octav Chelaru  
**PRODUCERS:** Radu Stancu (producer), Livia Rădulescu (delegate producer)  
**PRODUCTION COMPANY:** deFilm  
**COUNTRY:** Romania  
**LANGUAGE:** Romanian

**ESTIMATED BUDGET:** 700 000 EUR  
**STATUS OF THE PROJECT:** In development and financing stage (approx. 50% of budget secured, looking for co-producers and partners)  
**RELEASE DATE:** 2020

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**SYNOPSIS** Mrs. Ivanovici, a 35-years old mother of three, lives in a small Romanian town that is trapped by traditional beliefs. She has a monotonous marriage with an older priest and teaches religious studies at a local high school.

One day, Mrs. Ivanovici challenges Iuliu, a 16-years old audacious student, to the point of insulting him. When Iuliu confronts her, she is surprised, but apologizes and then offers to give him a lift home. During this short drive, Mrs. Ivanovici becomes friends with Iuliu and, for the first time in a long time, feels that somebody seems to care about her. Very soon after that, the ambiguous maternal feelings transform into desire and a sexual relationship between Mrs Ivanovici and Iuliu begins. After Mrs. Ivanovici starts to raise barriers, Iuliu uses the weapon she knows best against her – religion. In order to keep their relationship, Iuliu blackmails Mrs. Ivanovici by confessing to her husband, the town priest, that he has an older girlfriend. While he does this, he calls Mrs. Ivanovici so she can listen in on the confessions. Scared, Mrs. Ivanovici fights back as Iuliu’s tactics become obsessive and harder and harder to control. As a final blow, Iuliu reveals to the priest that the older girlfriend is in fact, his wife, Mrs. Ivanovici. Exposed and with all the certainties of her life now turned upside down, Mrs. Ivanovici confronts Iuliu and finds out that beyond this evil mask, there is a lonely and scared person, similar to her.



**OCTAV CHELARU**

**DIRECTOR/WRITER'S CV** Octav Chelaru (b. 1991) started making films when he was 14-years-old, using his relatives and classmates as actors. In college, he directed commercials and videos and produced short films for other directors. Among the short films he directed are: „Occupied” (2015) - winner at Timishort IFF; „Private Party” (2017) – selected for Les Arcs IFF, Tirana IFF; „Black Clothes” (2017), produced by deFilm, selected to be in competition at the Locarno IFF, the Valladolid IFF, the Grimstad IFF and others. Currently, Octav is developing his debut feature, “Balaur,” and participating in various workshops and markets.

**DIRECTOR/WRITER'S STATEMENT** I have always been interested in how set beliefs seem to offer valid explanations for everything. When I read the story from my hometown about a high school student’s committing suicide after a relationship with his religious studies teacher, I considered it a tragedy and that was it. Yet the story kept coming up in conversations with my parents who still live there. I found out that the whole community was supporting the teacher during her trial. Then it hit me, everybody knew. As I went further and started to research this type of relationship, I understood that there is a pattern. Teachers who do that, usually do it many times and with multiple students. But this particular case from my hometown was very different from the pattern, because the traditional values of the society added a special ingredient to the whole story: the feeling that beneath the seemingly in-control surface, there are many questions that need to be answered.

**COMPANY PROFILE** deFilm was conceived as an independent production company in 2009, gathering a group of young filmmakers that share common passions and values. We engage all types of cinematic productions with diverse approaches and styles. Films such as “Ramona” by Andrei Crețulescu, “Horizon” by Paul Negoescu, “Black Clothes” by Octav Chelaru, “The World is Mine” by Nicolae Constantin Tănase, or “Marița” by Cristi Iftime, were presented and awarded in prestigious international film festivals: Cannes, Locarno, Karlovy Vary, AFI, Chicago, Busan, Transilvania IFF, and many more. More recently, the stop motion animation “The Best Customer” by Serghei Chiviriga was selected in 11 major international festivals dedicated to the genre. We are currently in different stages of production with two feature films, “To The North” by Mihai Mincan, and “Balaur” by Octav Chelaru, five shorts, one feature animation, and three documentaries.



**LIVIA RĂDULESCU**

**PRODUCER'S CV** Livia Rădulescu made a career leap of faith into film production in 2016, after ten years of management roles in technology innovation, social entrepreneurship, advertising and cultural management. Since then, she has worked on various projects, including the short film “Black Clothes” (2017, dir: Octav Chelaru – IFF Locarno, IFF Valladolid), one feature film “The Story of a Summer Lover” (2018, dir: Paul Negoescu), and one feature-length documentary (in production). She is now in development stage with the feature film “Balaur”. She is the co-founder of FILM+, a laboratory for young independent filmmakers.

**PRODUCER'S STATEMENT** From the very beginning, there were several facts that compelled us to make this film but also struck us personally. “Balaur” tells the intriguing story of a woman whose core values become subject to transformation when her unquestioned traditional setting is challenged by a forceful encounter. For her, this provokes surprising actions that reach illegality. For us, a series of larger questions are brought up. Can one’s faith resist a dramatic blow to core beliefs? This question can be even more arduous when posed from a women’s perspective in a traditional setting. Further questions refer to dysfunctional familial dynamics, to twisted aggressor-victim roles, to the division between opposing values in society. In addition to these subjects that are at the forefront of worldwide discussions today, “Balaur” addresses central human needs: for love, for acceptance, for defining one’s place in society, and in life.



**RADU STANCU**

**PRODUCER'S CV** Radu Stancu is a Romanian film producer, owner of independent production company deFilm. After graduating in Sound and Editing, and Film Production (MA), he developed his career as a producer gathering successful shorts, animations, feature films and documentaries, selected and awarded in major international festivals – Cannes, Locarno, Karlovy Vary, AFI, Chicago, and many more. He is currently in postproduction with two creative documentaries and with a feature film “The Story of a Summer Lover” (dir. Paul Negoescu), and in development/ financing stage with two other features.

Christos – a tough, headstrong rationalist – is losing control of his body due to a terminal illness. Desperate for hope, he travels to a healer in Brazil; on a journey he would never have imagined for himself.

# BRAZIL



**ENGLISH TITLE:** Brazil  
**ORIGINAL TITLE:** BPAZIAIA  
**GENRE:** Tragicomedy  
**DIRECTOR/WRITER:** Thelyia Petraki  
**PRODUCER:** Kostas Tagalakis  
**PRODUCTION COMPANY:** TOPSPOT  
**CO-PRODUCER:** HERETIC  
**COUNTRY:** Greece  
**LANGUAGE:** Greek, French, Brazilian Portuguese, English

**ESTIMATED BUDGET:** 880 000 EUR  
**STATUS OF THE PROJECT:** In Development  
**RELEASE DATE:** 2020

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**KOSTAS TAGALAKIS**  
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**E:** kostastagalakis@gmail.com

**SYNOPSIS** Christos (60) – a tough, headstrong rationalist – is diagnosed with ALS, a terminal disease that is gradually paralyzing his body. In desperation, he travels to Brazil’s renowned healer João de Deus, along with Alexis (30) – an artist leading an aimless life – who is the only one willing to follow him on his eccentric quest. The two men are radically different, and their trip is full of underlying tension. When they reach João’s camp, a unique place full of rituals and mysteries, Alexis is excited about everything, while Christos is full of doubts. Among other spiritual activities that he systematically avoids, Christos has mandatory meetings with an Indigenous Brazilian girl Aylen (24), who is a spiritual guide, in order to cleanse his soul before his final surgery. Christos is unwilling to connect and open up to her, until Aylen suffers a seizure one night. Christos in a state of panic urges Alexis to help her, but Alexis insists that they should not interrupt a possible connection with the great and beyond. Christos is furious with Alexis, but also very disappointed with himself that he is not in a position to help her, due to being disabled. After she gets well, they make an agreement; she will visit a real doctor, if Christos agrees to follow Joao’s methods. Christos participates in Joao’s activities with genuine determination and gets used to the eerie company of Aylen who, along with Alexis, manages to unlock his past and his hidden emotions. After his operation, Christos is very optimistic. He has finally managed to feel everything anew. But just before leaving Caza, he realizes that the disease has spread to his upper body. On their last day, Alexis and Christos wait for Aylen on the bus to take her to the doctor, before going to the airport, but she will never come; she must support another visitor now. Despite it all, when the bus departs, Christos’s reflection on the window appears relaxed and gratified, juxtaposed with the Brazilian horizon, which stretches out as far as the eye can see.



**THELYIA PETRAKI**

**DIRECTOR/WRITER'S CV** Thelyia Petraki is a Hellenic Film Academy award-nominated director. She graduated from CALARTS (USA) with a BA in Film, and from UCL (UK) with an MA in Visual & Material Culture. She has directed the short films: PRAY, 2012, (Palm Springs, Uppsala, Austin, etc.) distributed by Premium Films, HELGA ÄR I LUND, 2016, (Clermont Ferrand, Busan, Tirana etc.), and the medium-length documentary ME AND THE OTHERS, 2015, co-produced with COSMOTE TV. Currently, she is in pre-production of her third short film BELLA and developing her debut feature film BRAZIL.

**DIRECTOR/WRITER'S STATEMENT** “Brazil” aims to dramatize how people react when the certainty of death invades their lives and pushes them to face the harshest dilemma: surrender to the inevitable and accept that life is running short with every passing second or fight to the end and do anything and everything in order to survive? Our protagonist finds himself trapped in this age-old conflict between the human instinct for survival and the inevitability of death. Under these extreme circumstances he must define his own truth and make the most out of the limited time he has left. Our goal is to render Christos’s journey with empathy and passion, and finally allow us to witness a man who – when faced with certain death – chooses to give himself over to the forces of instinct and live free of any qualms or moral and intellectual inhibitions.

**COMPANY PROFILE** TopSpot is a film production & services company founded by Kostas Tagalakis and Thelyia Petraki. Maintaining a vast film location archive, we specialize in undertaking domestic and international productions eligible to be shot in the territory of Greece. The company’s mission has always been to promoting Greece as a film friendly destination. Among other initiatives TopSpot is one of the pioneers in consulting government officials to endeavor and establish the National Cash Rebate (25%). Since now, the curriculum of the company activities include high profile TV Commercials, domestic and foreign Feature and Short Films, TV Series from around the world and Celebrity Photo Shoots. Under the umbrella of TopSpot we have been producing projects such as short films and documentaries. Currently we are at the stage of pre-producing our third Short film “BELLA” and in development of our debut narrative Feature film “BRAZIL”.



**KOSTAS TAGALAKIS**

**PRODUCER'S CV** Kostas Tagalakis received his Master in Audiovisual Management (EMAM) in Rome, Italy. His work as a producer includes:  
**FEATURE FILMS** Fiction BRAZIL, 2020 - In Development | Co-produced by HERETIC | Producer  
• Fiction PARI, 2018 – In Post-Production | Produced by HERETIC | Executive Producer  
• Documentary ME AND THE OTHERS, 2015 | Producer  
**SHORT FILMS** Hybrid Fiction/Doc BELLA, 2019 - In Pre-production | Producer  
• Fiction HELGA ÄR I LUND, 2016 - Clermont Ferrand FF, Busan FF | Producer  
• Fiction PRAY, 2012 - Palm Springs, Austin Texas FF, Uppsala FF, Premium Films Sales | Producer.

**PRODUCER'S STATEMENT** With the director, we met when we were still working in the advertisement industry. Realizing how well we work together, we established our own production company, TopSpot. Since then we have come to share mutual understanding and trust which gives us the confidence to continue and evolve as creative partners. “Brazil” is going to be our first feature film. I am drawn to “Brazil” because it addresses the issue of terminal illnesses, highlighting their effects on the individual. Through this filmic journey to Brazil we aim to expose all the harsh truths concerning the subject matter and to open up the discussion surrounding the eternal experience of someone facing the certainty of death. I am confident that “Brazil” can be the ideal project for co-production, because the topics it explores, disability, mortality and the need for hope – even miracles, are concerns that will always have a universal appeal.

After the death of her father, an imaginative girl must find a way to rescue herself and her mother from a shadow life of grief and captivity, with the help of magical creatures and a surreal fantasy world.

# CLOUDS ON LEASHES



**SYNOPSIS** The story begins in modern day Azerbaijan, as Grace and her mother Sara start the forty-day mourning period, a tradition required for Muslim widows. Nine-year-old Grace is rendered mute by the trauma of losing her father, cut off from her tense, emotional, and withdrawn mother.

As Grace helps Sara through the painful routines of widowhood, a treehouse left unfinished by her father's untimely death calls to her in reality and in fantasy. Retreating there, she enters a rich imaginative world where the veil between reality and her imagination becomes thinner and thinner and she meets strange and friendly creatures, each representing the stages of grief: Denial, Anger, Bargaining, Depression and Acceptance.

Meanwhile, Sara goes through the grim process of clearing her husband's belongings from their lives—his clothes, his personal items. Sara slowly emerges from her catatonic state and tries to bring her daughter back to reality, but her overbearing efforts don't work. Banished from the treehouse, Grace just goes deeper into her fantasies, convinced that she can find her father alive if she completes the quest in her fantasy kingdom. As Grace searches for her father, Sara embarks on a parallel journey through the various cultures of coping—therapists, religion, spiritualists, and superstition—as she tries to rebuild their lives anew. Finally, Sara comes to terms with her daughter's powerful imagination. As Sara picks up her husband's tools, she reveals to her daughter the truth of her father's tragic suicide, and they begin to finish the treehouse. An intimate, surrealist fable of death, separation, and reunion, "Clouds on Leashes" explores the real—and fantastical—aspects of death through the eyes of a young girl.

**ENGLISH TITLE:** Clouds on Leashes  
**ORIGINAL TITLE:** Clouds on Leashes  
**GENRE:** Fantasy/Drama  
**DIRECTOR/WRITER:** Gunel Eva  
**PRODUCER:** Maria Ibrahimova  
**PRODUCTION COMPANY:** Cinex  
**COUNTRY:** Azerbaijan  
**LANGUAGE:** Azeri

**ESTIMATED BUDGET:** 650 000 EUR  
**STATUS OF THE PROJECT:** In Development  
**RELEASE DATE:** May 2020

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Azerbaijan, AZ1052

**GUNEL EVA**  
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**E:** hello@guneleva.com

**MARIA IBRAHIMOVA**  
**T:** +994 502 188 069  
**E:** mariaibr@icloud.com



**GUNEL EVA**

**DIRECTOR/WRITER'S CV** Gunel Eva is a contemporary artist, director, cinematographer, screenwriter, and animator specializing in stop-motion. Gunel graduated from The University of the Arts in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 2009 with a double major in Documentary Film and Advertising. Her varied skill set helped her invent the mesmerizing blend of cinematic style and production design required for her first feature film CLOUDS ON LEASHES. In this highly personal, yet universal tale, she brings her own life experience and creative passions together for a unique look at contemporary life and death in Azerbaijan.

**DIRECTOR/WRITER'S STATEMENT** The idea has developed from both my personal experience and my desire to explore the universal understanding of death. I want to unravel the subject of grief, by exploring Azerbaijani cultural traditions around the 40-day mourning period. Shedding light on what it's like to be a woman in a patriarchal society, where certain expectations are placed on women when left without a man. I am attracted to stories that lend themselves to the philosophical exploration of the human condition. While writing the script, I worked closely with a child psychologist to remain accurate in developing the human psychological condition. My dual ambition is to create a timeless fable for adults, bringing them in touch with their inner child, and to depict a soul-nurturing tale of healing for people who are experiencing or have experienced grief.

**COMPANY PROFILE** Based in Baku, Cinex Productions offers high level professional production servicing. Facilities include post-production studios, a full range of production equipment, as well as professional and experienced crew. Cinex is the go-to production company for most international productions wishing to shoot in Azerbaijan. For the last two years Cinex has been developing NIGHT TIDE which was awarded production support by the Russian Ministry of Culture through Non-Stop Production and producer Alexander Rodnyansky (ELENA, LEVIATHAN, LOVELESS). Last year, NIGHT TIDE took part in the MIDPOINT Intensive @KVIFF and was selected to pitch at the East/West co-production market COCO in Cottbus. NIGHT TIDE is currently in production. Cinex is now developing CLOUDS ON LEASHES which was chosen for the MIDPOINT Feature Launch 2018 and Istanbul Film Festival's Meetings on the Bridge co-production market.



**MARIA IBRAHIMOVA**

**PRODUCER'S CV** Maria Ibrahimova's debut film MISS GULAG, was produced with support from the Sundance Institute and Ford Foundation. It premiered at the Berlinale and screened at over 40 festivals. A Fulbright recipient for her work on landmines, Maria directed and produced several award-winning short films. Recently, she created WOMEN IN MOTION, a program giving female filmmakers the opportunity to write/direct in Azerbaijan. Her first feature film, NIGHT TIDE, with director Ismail Safarali and producer Alexander Rodnyansky is in production. CLOUDS ON LEASHES is Maria's second feature film as a producer.

**PRODUCER'S STATEMENT** Ironically, given Gunel's interest in overcoming grief after death – somebody had to die for us to meet. In Azerbaijan there is something like a cult around death, there are many rules, and various events to attend when someone dies and it goes on for 40 days. We were introduced after one such event and she gave me a first draft of her script. The visuals were so unique and the story so moving that I was instantly smitten. I was also attracted to Gunel's hands-on approach to making her vision into reality. During the filming of the teaser she physically crafted much of the props and did all of the production design herself. It was a level of artistic ability that I hadn't encountered before in a filmmaker. Even though our film takes place in Azerbaijan, and we will show a lot of the cultural colors and traditions, it still remains at its core, a story that will resonate with all those who have lost a loved one.

Drama of a punk singer behind the Iron Curtain, a free voice that freaks out the power.

# ERASING FRANK



**ENGLISH TITLE:** Erasing Frank  
**ORIGINAL TITLE:** Szex, Drót, Rock 'n Roll  
**GENRE:** Drama  
**DIRECTOR/WRITER:** Gábor Fabricius  
**PRODUCERS:** Gábor Ferenczy, András Muhi, Gábor Fabricius, Miklós Havas (delegate producer)  
**PRODUCTION COMPANY:** Focus Fox; Otherside Stories  
**COUNTRY:** Hungary  
**LANGUAGE:** Hungarian

**ESTIMATED BUDGET:** 981 294 EUR  
**STATUS OF THE PROJECT:** In Development  
**RELEASE DATE:** spring 2020

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**SYNOPSIS** 1983. Frank, a kid from the streets of Budapest represents a sensitive, talented, but angry generation – youth with “no future” in a dystopian world. With his punk band he realizes that the state banned their music because their words are political. The police are after them, so Frank escapes to a psychiatric ward, where he finds not only the disabled, but opposition thinkers, free-spirited artists, and enemies of the system looking for safe haven. There he meets Hanna, a boyish, young patient who has never experienced freedom. They join forces to fight Comrade Erős, the cultural leader of the state. Erős is a skillful match and as sensitive as Frank. Oddly enough, he is the only one Frank can look up to. In a maniacal fight, Frank sacrifices his friends, love, and - due to political psychiatry’s medication - even his own voice, in order to get his message across: words of freedom that one day make a rusty empire collapse.



**GÁBOR FABRICIUS**

**DIRECTOR/WRITER'S CV** Gábor Fabricius is a director, novelist, and MA graduate from Central Saint Martins College in London. He has been writing and directing short films since 2010. They have been screened at over 50 film festivals around the world and have won several prizes. His topics mainly are socio-political and psychological. *Bianka* premiered at the 43rd Hungarian Film Week. *Skinner* had its world premiere at the Toronto International Film Festival and won the Zoltán Huszárik Prize from the Hungarian Media Fund. *Dialogue* has won a FICC Special Mention at Febiofest in 2017.  
[www.othersidestories.com](http://www.othersidestories.com)  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gabor\\_Fabricius](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gabor_Fabricius)

**DIRECTOR/WRITER'S STATEMENT** Political and social drama set in 1983, behind the iron curtain, in a dystopian world, using brutalist architecture. The film guides through a world where words are weapons of mass destruction. As a kid being around my parents, I recall memories of detecting paranoia in their eyes, since they were involved in different movements. Dystopia was reality; the state destroyed individual voices, so it is a story of an unknown soldier, fighting for freedom of speech, a hero of the '1984' times, who reflects the mission of a generation. I emphasize the importance of the individual voice for today's youth as well, as it is eventually freedom itself. Every generation has the task of looking after freedom during each dystopian time. My goal is to redefine direct cinema in Hungarian film, which had a golden era in the 70's, in order to present a raw experience of the character. Frank will help new generations to value freedom.

**COMPANY PROFILE** FocusFox Studio has been serving clients effectively and thoroughly for 20 years with a continuous technical and infrastructural leadership. Since 2011 FocusFox acts as a Production Company marked by Gábor Ferenczy, András Muhi, Attila Tózsér. Its first independent movie „What Ever Happened to Timi” became the most successful comedy in 2014 in Hungary. „It's not the time of my life” won Crystal Globe for the Best film at the Karlovy Vary International Film Festival in 2016. András Muhi's films are participants and often winners of prestigious international film festivals. („Just the Wind”, „On Body and Soul” „Genezis”) Otherside Stories was founded by Gábor Fabricius, a London Institute Central Saint-Martins MA Graduate. Fiction, documentary, interactive – the company's aim is to create real experience for the viewer. Constantly looking for innovators, who redefine storytelling with strong visual and social approach.



**MIKLÓS HAVAS**

**PRODUCER'S CV** Miklós Havas is a graduate of the Faculty of Law at ELTE Budapest, Hungary. He also has a Postgraduate Degree from Sorbonne University for Audiovisual Business and Management (DEA, Paris I Pantheon Sorbonne, Paris, France). Member of the Hungarian Independent Producers Association. He has an in-depth experience in film financing, production and distribution. He produced several award-winning short films and documentaries which were shortlisted by numerous international film festivals.

**PRODUCER'S STATEMENT** “Erasing Frank” will be the debut feature film of Gábor Fabricius, one of Hungary's most recognized emerging filmmakers, whose award-winning short films have been presented at many festivals such as Toronto International Film Festival. We want to make a film based on an artistic and well developed script with a solid production value and authenticity. The script development was supported by the Hungarian National Film Fund and selected by Sources 2 and MIDPOINT. We aim to have the script ready by June 2018 and apply for pre-production to the Hungarian National Film Fund in October 2018. We plan to apply for production support to the HNFF in January 2019 and start shooting in spring 2019. We are looking for a potential co-producer from Central-Eastern Europe such as Poland, Czech Republic, Romania or Serbia because we believe that our story has a great international potential to appeal to a wider audience.

This is the story of Crimean Tatar's King Lear, Mustafa, who fanatically believes that the ghost of the re-found Motherland Crimea and his family are the most important things, but his firm faith drives him to despair and loneliness.

# HOMeward



**SYNOPSIS** This is a story about the returning of three Crimean Tatars: Mustafa (51) and two of his sons Alim (17) and the recently deceased Nazim (27), to Crimea.

After the occupation of Crimea, Mustafa goes through the pain of being separated from his sons Nazim and Alim, who decided to move to Ukraine. One day, Nazim dies in a random fight.

Mustafa arrives to take home his younger son and the body of the elder son, to bury him in Crimea according to Muslim traditions.

Alim knows that his father is there to take both of them away, but he doesn't want to go back to Crimea, a place where no prospects for the future are left.

Father and son embalm the body and hit the road to Crimea by car. Mustafa is in such hurry to bury his son within 24 hours that he falls asleep out of exhaustion and crashes into a tree. They enter a village early in the morning looking to repair the car at a local service station, but local orphans steal their documents.

They go after the villains and manage to take back the documents. But there is no evidence of Nazim's death. To pass the border between continental Ukraine and Crimea, they cover up the body inside the car. But during the inspection, the border guards find Nazim's body and don't allow Mustafa and Alim to cross the border. Mustafa has an argument with border guards and drives away.

They come to the border town where Mustafa's brother lives, someone he has not spoken for more than 20 years. After many years, brothers reconcile. Alim and his uncle set out to find a fishing boat, so Mustafa could illegally sail across Sivash Lake and bury his son in Crimea. They start the journey, but soon after the boat begins to leak. Alim is scared because he can't swim. He noticed how Mustafa is bleeding, because he was wounded in the accident but has hidden it from his son.

As the boat draws closer to the Crimean coast. Mustafa and Alim carry the body of Nazim ashore. Alim is reading a prayer and Mustafa follows behind him, repeating the words. At some point, Alim realizes, that he can no longer hear the voice of his father.

**ENGLISH TITLE:** Homeward  
**ORIGINAL TITLE:** Додому  
**GENRE:** Drama  
**DIRECTOR:** Nariman Aliev  
**WRITER:** Marysia Nikitiuk  
**PRODUCER:** Vladimir Yatsenko  
**PRODUCTION COMPANY:** Limelite  
**COUNTRY:** Ukraine  
**LANGUAGE:** Crimean Tatar, Ukrainian

**ESTIMATED BUDGET:** 580 000 EUR  
**STATUS OF THE PROJECT:** In Development, 3rd draft of the script is ready, searching for co-producers and sales agents  
**RELEASE DATE:** winter 2020

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**NARIMAN ALIEV**

**DIRECTOR'S CV** Nariman was born in 1992, in Crimea, Ukraine. In 2014 he graduated from Kyiv National Theater, Film and Television University, as a director. He has been a member of the Ukrainian Film Academy since 2017. As a director he made three short films united in the movie trilogy CRIMEAN STORIES: "Back with Dawn," "I Love You," "Without You." Each of the works took part in some of the biggest national and international film festivals, such as the Berlinale, Palm Springs ShortFest, the Vancouver Film Festival, the Moscow IFF and others. He also is involved in public activities helping to develop youth cinematography in Ukraine.

**DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT** This film is about how to preserve and not to lose self-consciousness and native nationality in a troubled time. The relationship between father and the son are in the center of the film. Two generations are met: the generation of the father, whose childhood was in deportation and who had to sacrifice much to return to his homeland. And the generation of a son who was born in the Crimea and does not know what the USSR is. The plot will develop on the way from Kyiv to the Crimea. The viewer will notice changes in mentality of Ukrainians living on the road from north to south. Feel how their sense of war changes as they approach the front.

I want to help viewer experience the story as something personal, but not leaving him alone with the tragedy, giving him the opportunity to feel hope in the end. I want this personal story to become a bridge for understanding who Crimean Tatars are and what is happening to them now.

**COMPANY PROFILE** Founded in 2005, Limelite (www.limelite.co) is one of the leading production companies in Ukraine, comprising a full-time staff of 35 audiovisual professionals and producing international co-productions. Over the last 13 years, LIMELITE has produced more than 600 commercials and several feature films. **SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY:** In 2017 we produced feature film "THE WILD FIELDS" by director Yaroslav Lodygin (The Connecting Cottbus Best Pitch Award 2016 and Work In Progress Award 2017). In 2017 we produced feature film "NEMATOMA" by director Ignas Jonynas in co-production with Lithuania's Revoliucijos Ideja. **IN PRODUCTION:** ATLANTIS by director Valentyn Vasyanovych. His previous film - "BLACK LEVEL" was selected as the nominee for the Oscars from Ukraine and won the FIPRESCI Prize at the Odessa International Film Festival. GLOWMAN by director Bence Fliegauf - the coproduction between M&M Film (Hungary), Manderley Films (Germany) and Limelite (Ukraine).



**MARYSIA NIKITIUK**

**WRITER'S CV** Marysia is a director, scriptwriter, and writer. She graduated from the Kiev Karpenko-Karyi University of Theater, Movie and TV in 2012. She has been working as a scriptwriter since 2012. She completed DAB script writers and producers workshops in 2013. She took part in the ScripTeast laboratory in 2016, where her script WHEN THE TREES FALL was awarded with Kieslowski award for the "Best script from Eastern Europe" in Cannes 2016. Wrote a book of horror short stories called ABYSS that was awarded with the Oles Ulianenko international literature award in 2016.

**WRITER'S STATEMENT** I was invited to join Homeward during the first draft stage. I was impressed by the clarity and brevity of Nariman's story, and I felt the real tragedy of the people relationships in the background of the historical peripeteia. Mustafa (father), is trapped by the ghost of the re-found Motherland Crimea. He belongs to the generation that was deported by force from Crimea and which tried to come back at any cost. And Mustafa has paid the full price for that. We can feel the hopelessness of Mustafa, who fanatically believes that the Motherland and his family is the most important thing for him, but his firm faith drives him to despair. This is the story of Crimean Tatar's King Lear for me.



**VLADIMIR YATSENKO**

**PRODUCER'S CV** Born in Donbas, Ukraine. 40 years old. He graduated from the National Economic University, as an economist, and later graduated from the National Theatre, Cinema and Television University as a producer. In 2005, he helped found the Limelite production company as the co-owner and producer. Over the last 13 years, the company produced more than 600 ads and several feature films. He has been a participant of Producers Network 2017 and KVIFF MIDPOINT Intensive 2017, EAVE Marketing Workshop 2017, EAVE Producers Workshop 2018. He is also a Head of the Film Industry Association of Ukraine and the Head of the Social Council at the Ukrainian State Film Agency.

**PRODUCER'S STATEMENT** HOMEWARD is very much a chamber piece and an acute drama that raises such timeless questions about fathers and sons, especially in a Muslim family. It depicts such real problems of the Crimean Tatars, who formerly lived in the territory of Crimea, but forced to leave their homeland already twice for the last 100 years. It is framed as a road movie so that we can tell the story in an easily understandable, engaging and entertaining way. The director Nariman Aliev is a Crimean Tatar, and it is absolutely essential for him to speak about the tragedy of his nation. HOMEWARD is Nariman Aliev's first feature film, but his last short film "Without You" was selected to be part of "Generation 14+" at the Berlinale in 2016. The successful festival history of the director's short films gives us hope that his debut feature length film will also be able to participate in the programs of A-class film festivals as well.

Based on real events, Leave No Traces is a multi-layered drama about an individual facing an intricate web of lies on a mass scale in the reality of a totalitarian state.

# LEAVE NO TRACES



**ENGLISH TITLE:** Leave No Traces  
(working title)  
**ORIGINAL TITLE:** Żeby nie było śladów  
**GENRE:** Drama, Historical Fiction  
**DIRECTOR:** Jan P. Matuszyński  
**WRITER:** Kaja Krawczyk – Wnuk  
**PRODUCER:** Leszek Bodzak  
**PRODUCTION COMPANY:** Aurum Film  
**COUNTRY:** Poland  
**LANGUAGE:** Polish

**ESTIMATED BUDGET:** 2 500 000 EUR  
**STATUS OF THE PROJECT:** In Development  
**RELEASE DATE:** 2020 – World Premiere

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**SYNOPSIS** Leave No Traces is set in 1983 in Warsaw. It tells the true story of Jurek, a 24-year old young man who witnesses the fatal beating of his friend, Grzegorz by the communist police. Since Jurek is the only eyewitness to the beating and is very keen on testifying, the entire power of the communist regime, represented by General Kiszczak, the Minister of Internal Affairs, is unleashed on Jurek. His flat is wiretapped, all his conversations are listened to and analyzed by the police and he is followed round the clock by several dozen secret agents wherever he goes. His situation is made even more difficult by the fact that he finds himself torn between his loyalty to Barbara, the mother of his late friend and his own parents, who are persecuted by the government. Despite the immense pressure, Jurek finds it within himself to testify, but his relationship both with Barbara and his parents is irreparably broken.



**JAN P. MATUSZYŃSKI**

**DIRECTOR'S CV** Film director, a graduate of the Krzysztof Kieslowski Faculty of Radio and Television University of Silesia in Katowice and of the Wajda School in Warsaw. He is recognized for his feature documentary DEEP LOVE (2013) for which he received various awards (e.g. Best Documentary at Moscow IFF, Silver Hobby-Horse at Krakow FF). His first feature film THE LAST FAMILY (2016) premiered in the International Competition at Locarno IFF, where it won the best actor award for Andrzej Seweryn. Up to now, the film has won over 40 awards at film festivals worldwide.

**DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT** Grzegorz Przemysk's case is a card from the past, which I thought for a long time might be a great material for a film. This is a multi-layered story about fighting against power, which has a monopoly on truth and law, which does not respect any holiness in the name of ruling. The story illustrates the feeling of claustrophobia, fear and injustice which had its source in the communist government's constant control and manipulation. It is about breaking the human's moral backbone and sometimes even somebody's whole life. The film will focus to a large extent on exposing the system of lies that the totalitarian communist regime has used as a necessary tool for evil to triumph. This story is about the tragedy of an individual, about lies and manipulation. Finally, it is a story of a crime without punishment, that was committed on an innocent boy who just wanted to celebrate passing his baccalaureate exam.

**COMPANY PROFILE** Aurum Film was founded by Leszek Bodzak, a lawyer by education who has been engaged in raising external funding and investment management for many years. He has also produced a number of documentaries. Aurum Film's first feature, CARTE BLANCHE was well received in Poland and abroad – the film was awarded the Grand Prix at Shanghai IFF. The company was joined by Aneta Hickinbotham, who spent several years in Hollywood, collaborating in the production department with such directors as Roman Polanski, Steven Spielberg and Tom Tykwer. THE LAST FAMILY is Aurum Film's second feature, achieving an audience of over 500,000 at the Polish box office. The film premiered at Locarno IFF, where it won the Best Actor award. Up to now, the film has won over 40 awards at film festivals worldwide. Currently, Aurum Film is working on further projects, including new Borys Lankosz film – DARK, ALMOST NIGHT and Jan Komasa film CORPUS CHRISTI.



**KAJA KRAWCZYK – WNUK**

**WRITER'S CV** Born in 1982. A graduate from the Institute of Audiovisual Arts at the Jagiellonian University, she also studied film production at the Lodz Film School. She has served as a writer or headwriter on several Polish tv shows ( Londoners, Straight To the Heart, True Law) and produced HBO Poland's first original series, Without Secrets. She is currently developing The Vampire, a mini-series for HBO and two other feature films, The Best Is Yet To Come and Polish Wings Estate (co-writer). Leave No Traces will be her feature film debut.

**WRITER'S STATEMENT** The adaptation of a reportage piece is like a tennis match with three opponents: as in any script, one has to not only create a convincing on-screen world in which the viewer will want to spend two hours but also remain true to the spirit of the book and historical events. How can these opposing vectors be reconciled? By finding the heart of the story, one special character who will guide the audience through this world. This character is the source of the film's central conflict. Jurek, the friend of the killed Grzegorz Przemysk, against common sense and his family's protests, decides to stand up to the communist regime and do everything he can to "leave some marks." Jurek's struggle is symbolic; it will not revive Grzegorz, it will not make anything better. The futile romanticism of his journey is what first drew me to this amazing story.



**LESZEK BODZAK**

**PRODUCER'S CV** Producer, founder of Aurum Film, a lawyer by education. Member of the European Film Academy. He has produced a number of documentaries and feature films. Winner of the Best Producer Debut award during the International Festival of Independent Cinema Netia Off Camera and Winner of the Golden Lions at the Polish Film Festival in Gdynia. He was also awarded with the Best Producer award at the Warsaw Film Festival for the film The Last Family. Currently, he is working as a producer on further projects including the new Borys Lankosz feature film – Dark, Almost Night and Jan Komasa film Corpus Christi.

**PRODUCER'S STATEMENT** Leave No Traces is a continuation of the collaboration between the director Jan P. Matuszyński and the production company Aurum Film. During the production of our previous film –THE LAST FAMILY – we established a great friendship based on mutual trust and shared artistic vision. At the same time, it is Matuszyński's second film, in which he deals with historical issues, seeking references to contemporary and universal themes in important historical events. Grzegorz Przemysk's death was one of the key events that led to the fall of communist regime in Poland. We want to make a film based on an artistic script, solid production value and authenticity of the depicted historical reality. We envision this as an international co-production, because we feel that Przemysk's story is current and has great potential to appeal a wider audience.

A young father must decide between the duty to his homeland and his family, in a nostalgic recollection of the 1999 bombing of Yugoslavia.

# THE MYTH OF A REAL MAN



**ENGLISH TITLE:** The Myth of a Real Man  
**ORIGINAL TITLE:** Mit o pravom čoveku  
**GENRE:** Drama  
**DIRECTOR/WRITER:** Lee Filipovski  
**PRODUCER:** Adi Dizdarević  
**PRODUCTION COMPANY:** Filmbakery  
**COUNTRY:** Serbia  
**LANGUAGE:** Serbian

**ESTIMATED BUDGET:** 771 000 EUR  
**STATUS OF THE PROJECT:** In Development  
**RELEASE DATE:** beginning of 2021

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**SYNOPSIS** As Vasiliye and Katarina Ostrogorsky wait for a response from the Canadian embassy on the status of their visa, their country comes under attack during the 1999 bombing of Yugoslavia. Their twelve-year-old son Georgey, who was already grappling with the idea of moving to Canada, now watches his father as he puts on his uniform and answers the call to mobilization to defend the very country that he had previously been determined to leave. During Vasiliye's absence, the letter from the embassy arrives. When Vasiliye comes back on a day's leave from the military, his wife realizes that his focus has shifted. Instead of taking the chance to escape the country, Vasiliye chooses to return to the army. It will take a heavy air raid on their neighborhood to make Vasiliye realize the gravity of the situation and see the consequences of his decision.

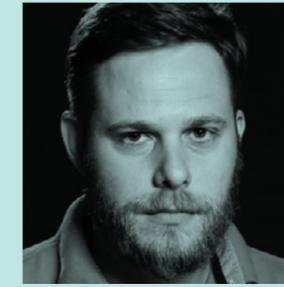


**LEE FILIPOVSKI**

**DIRECTOR/WRITER'S CV** Lee Filipovski (1989) graduated from Ryerson University in Toronto. She is a member of the Academy of Canadian Cinema and Television. Her short film Fluffy premiered at Toronto International Film Festival and won numerous awards, including the Best Short Film Award by the Hollywood Foreign Press Association/Golden Globes and the Canadian Screen Award for Best Live Action Short in 2018. Lee is selected as one of the filmmaker participants in the Nuits en Or by the César Awards in June 2018.

**DIRECTOR/WRITER'S STATEMENT** The Myth of a Real Man began a project based on my own memories of growing up in Yugoslavia in the 1990's, and subsequently immigrating to my second homeland, Canada. Those of us who immigrated reached the point when we realized that normal life in our country is no longer a viable possibility. This decision is a battle ground of the rational and emotional sides within a person. A famous Serbian author, Milos Crnjanski, described this in a quote that I believe sums up the state of mind of my protagonist „Patriotism is a form of sadomasochism: it destroys you, tortures you, torments you, brings you to the brink of existence, and yet you remain faithful. Patriotism is the perfect parity where both a lyrist and a village fool are on the same level“. The dilemmas which many people in the world face today are not much different than those of the protagonists in The Myth of a Real Man- stay and fight, or leave.

**COMPANY PROFILE** Filmbakery was founded in 2018 by two young film professionals, producer Adi Dizdarević and film director/producer Lee Filipovski. After actively working in the film industry they decided it was time to start their own production company which would focus on their first independent feature film as well as support emerging talents by creating short films, features and documentaries. Filmbakery was awarded by the British Council at the Western Balkans Start-Up workshop. The first project we worked on as a production company is Ours, a hybrid documentary by Sead Sabotic which is currently in postproduction. Previous works of the founders were screened on some of the most significant festivals in the world, and they continue to gain momentum with the project proposal for their feature film The Myth of a Real Man which is set to begin production in 2020.



**ADI DIZDAREVIĆ**

**PRODUCER'S CV** Adi Dizdarević was born in 1983 in Belgrade, Serbia. He grew up between Belgrade, Sarajevo and Paris. In 2007 he enrolled in the Production Department of EICAR (the International Film School of Paris) for one year and then returned to Belgrade where he graduated from the Academy of Arts in 2016. He participated in the Sarajevo Talent Campus in 2016. In addition to freelancing, he works with DART film, a production company based in Belgrade, Serbia, as an associate producer and production manager. In 2018 he founded the production company Filmbakery with his colleague and fellow director Lee Filipovski.

**PRODUCER'S STATEMENT** We would like to structure this film as a three to four-country co-production. The first major co-production partner we would look to attach is Canada. Director's short film Fluffy, a Serbian-Canadian co-production has won biggest prizes in Canada (including the Best Short Film Award by the Hollywood Foreign Press Association/Golden Globes and Canadian Screen Award for Best Live Action Short). We have a co-producer in Canada attached - Art & Essai, who focuses on working with indie films. We are also concentrating on France and in the event of French financing we would also focus on attaching a French sales agent. The fourth country in this case would be Czech Republic, where the director, who studied in Prague, has ties to creative young producers who are very willing to join our project. We would round up the financing process with an application to Eurimages.

After 20 years abroad, Nathalie, a Parisian lawyer, comes back to Montenegro to insure the last wishes of her client are fulfilled. This unusual inheritance case slowly becomes an inquiry about Nathalie's own past and herself.

# SIRIN



**ENGLISH TITLE:** Sirin  
**ORIGINAL TITLE:** Sirin  
**GENRE:** Drama  
**DIRECTOR:** Senad Šahmanović  
**WRITERS:** Claudia Bottino / Senad Šahmanović  
**PRODUCER:** Veliša Popović  
**PRODUCTION COMPANY:** CUT - UP d.o.o.  
**COUNTRY:** Montenegro  
**LANGUAGE:** Montenegrin

**ESTIMATED BUDGET:** 788 000 EUR  
**STATUS OF THE PROJECT:** In Development  
**RELEASE DATE:** 2020

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**SYNOPSIS** A train is stuck in a tunnel. The shadows slowly become faces as daylight floods the wagon. NATHALIE sits near the window, in her business suit. After 20 years in France, she has become a true Parisienne. She and her boss VALÉRIE are on their way to Montenegro to solve a complex and unusual inheritance case. The deceased, Sanja Djurdjevic, a spinster who was from the Balkans but lived in France, has bequeathed a large sum to the Orthodox Church in her hometown for the construction of a chapel in her name next to the cemetery where her body was repatriated. Once on the ground, the more questions Nathalie asks about Miss Djurdjevic's past and the delays in executing her will, the more Sanja's brother challenges her past actions and present motives. Slowly, Nathalie finds herself confronted by the uncomfortable parallels between her life and that of the deceased. The mask she has created for herself during all these years abroad begins to crack: the legal investigation becomes a personal interrogation. The only way to resolve this dilemma is to revisit the small village where she was born and confront her past and the people she left behind: a sister who made the sacrifice to stay and take care of their parents, dealing with a country at war, while Nathalie was building a new life abroad and trying to have it all. Seeking reconciliation, Nathalie finally reconnects with herself, the self she tried so hard to erase.

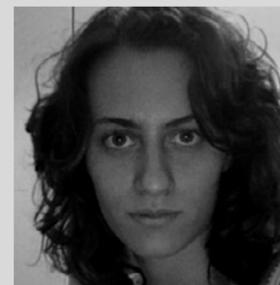


**SENAD ŠAHMANOVIĆ**

**DIRECTOR/WRITER'S CV** Senad Šahmanović was born in Montenegro, in 1982. He studied at the Faculty of Dramatic Arts in Cetinje. His short film Tranquility of Blood premiered at the Tampere International Film Festival in 2015 and was screened at more than 40 international film festivals (Busan, Sarajevo, Odense, DokuFest) winning several awards (Grand Prix in Drama International Film Festival, 2015). Senad has been a member and president of the jury at the Montenegro Film Festival. Since January 2015, he has also been collaborating as a director at the National Television of Montenegro.

**DIRECTOR/WRITER'S STATEMENT** Sirin is my first feature-length project. The idea has developed from both my personal experience and my screenwriter's. We've united our common desire to write about the long-term consequences of uprooting and transplanting ourselves, allowing an intimate approach to our protagonist's story. Our aim is to present a personal drama in a very simple yet emotionally complex way, leading the audience through a journey of personal and universal discovery. The key word for this project is: simplicity, both in the narrative and in the directing. We really believe that minimalism is the best way to raise powerful emotions. Sirin is a project that starts with a personal experience and aims to reach universal understanding and empathy. We believe this topic will speak to a large audience at this time of tension between our global and local identities. The answer to our main question – Where do I belong? – is not purely geographic.

**COMPANY PROFILE** Cut-Up is a production company dedicated to filmmakers with daring and authentic visions. Our aim is to gather projects with strong ideas, and to make them visible on international markets. Cut-Up is a relatively young company. It was established in 2013 by a group of producers who felt the urge to work independently and to be creatively involved in the projects from the very start. Since then, Cut-Up has produced short films Shelters (Zakloni, 2014, dir: Ivan Salatić) and A Matter of Will (Biserna obala, 2015, dir: Dušan Kasalica), and feature film Lowdown (Ispod mosta, među stijenama, 2016, dir: Pavle Simonović), which were shown and awarded on numerous prestigious film festivals. Besides film, we are also experienced in production services, which is prospective and important branch in production for Montenegro.



**CLAUDIA BOTTINO**

**WRITER'S CV** Claudia Bottino was born in Genova, Italy. When she was 18 years old, she moved to France to study Modern Literature at the Sorbonne University, then she started to work as a script consultant for several independent film companies. In 2014, she was part of the writing team of the award-winning TV series Ainsi soient-ils (ARTE France). In 2015, she had her first experience as a director with Duo, which was selected by in many international film festivals (Palm Springs, Odense, London Short Film Festival, Arcipelago Roma, Sundance Short Film Connection, etc.). Claudia is a Torino Film Lab alumna.

**WRITER'S STATEMENT** Sirin is a story that's been inside me for a long time, yet I never had the courage to commit it to paper. It was difficult for me to find the distance necessary to give the characters their own voices; I also wanted to find a person who could fully and intimately understand the feelings at the core of the project. When I watched 'Tranquility of Blood', I knew I could trust Senad. I recognized something I feel is missing in the cinema nowadays: humility and compassion. I knew I wanted that to be in Sirin. That was, for me, the sign that two different people coming from two very different backgrounds could together realize the same very personal story for cinema audiences around the world.



**VELIŠA POPOVIĆ**

**PRODUCER'S CV** Veliša Popović graduated from the Faculty of Drama (production) in Cetinje. Since then, he has been working as an executive producer, location manager and production manager for numerous films and TV series: Love, scars, Taxi Drive, Look at Me, Coriolanus, Cat Run, The Big Picture, The Last Panthers etc. In 2013, he started a production company, Cut-Up, which has produced two short films, Shelters (Ivan Salatić; Special Jury Award, Sarajevo Film Festival), A Matter of Will (Dušan Kasalica; Heart of Sarajevo for Best Short Film, Sarajevo Film Festival), and a feature film, Lowdown (Pavle Simonović).

**PRODUCER'S STATEMENT** Sirin is a first feature film by one of the most prominent Montenegrin filmmakers of our generation. First time when Senad and Claudia have introduced me to a project, I was moved by their urge to tell this story. The development of the project started in 2016. The script was awarded the Beaumarchais Grant for Script Development and was recently supported by the Montenegrin Development Fund. The story is very connected to France and the ex-Yugoslavian region, therefore we have already found the French co-producer (Alliance de Production Cinématographique) and the plan is to include other countries (Serbia, Croatia, Macedonia, Kosovo and/or Bosnia and Herzegovina). By the end of 2018, the plan is to apply for the Montenegrin Production Fund. We're inter-ested in meeting people who feel the same enthusiasm as us for this story, which is provocative and intriguing in our country.

Love is not the answer to everything. A contemporary drama about a Chinese girl Yiou and a Slovak girl Greta, struggling with their identities, relationship and career while trying to settle down in Prague where they can still hardly call home.

# THE UGLY MANDARINE



**ENGLISH TITLE:** The Ugly Mandarin  
**ORIGINAL TITLE:** The Ugly Mandarin  
**GENRE:** Drama  
**DIRECTOR/WRITER:** Piaoyu Xie  
**CO-WRITER:** Pepa Lubojacki  
**PRODUCER:** Veronika Kúhrová  
**PRODUCTION COMPANY:** Analog Vision  
**COUNTRY:** Czech Republic  
**LANGUAGE:** English, Chinese, Czech, Slovak

**STATUS OF THE PROJECT:** In Development  
**RELEASE DATE:** May 2020

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**SYNOPSIS** Yiou is a young woman from China studying music in Prague. Her graduation concert is coming, but once she finishes her studies, her student visa will be no longer valid. Between the stress from school and her possible deportation, Yiou finds herself trapped in between the Czech Republic and China, a situation much more complicated than just choosing one of two life styles. Being able to stay in Prague means that Yiou doesn't have to be apart from her beloved partner, Greta, a Slovak doctor who also lives in Prague. The two believe if Yiou could have the freedom of mobility between China and Europe, they will eventually figure things out. But due to the fact that the status of having registered partnership is restricted to cases when at least one of the partners is a Czech citizen and same-sex marriage is still not legalized in Czech Republic, the easiest way for Yiou to obtain the necessary permit is to apply for this as a "family reunion of an EU citizen" on the grounds of her relationship with Greta. These circumstances create a lot of tension in the relationship of these two girls. Having to go through a such a difficult personal time is already hard enough for Yiou, but the rejection of her visa application is turning her life into a blur of forms and acronyms, of checkboxes and copy shops. Not to mention, this new identity of her is depending on somebody else, which inevitably brings imbalance and inequality into Yiou's and Greta's relationship. And as these difficulties are piling up, petty fights are able to more and more easily turn into an emotional war between the two, that eventually kills their relationship, which ironically was the reason motivated them to fight for the visa in the first place.



**PIAOYU XIE**

**DIRECTOR/WRITER'S CV** Born and raised in China. Piaoyu moved to Prague after receiving a bachelor's degree in film at Hong Kong Baptist University, to pursue her MFA degree in directing at FAMU in 2013. Her shorts *On the Other Side* (2014), *All of Me* (2015) and documentary *Katerina 4392* (2014) were screened at numerous festivals and on Czech TV. Her film *The Nettle* (2017), a coming-of-age queer drama, premiered at BFI Flare and was selected by many other festivals and shortlisted for the Iris Prize. Piaoyu is working on the post-production of her new short film *Cicada*. *The Ugly Mandarin* is Piaoyu's first feature length project.

**DIRECTOR/WRITER'S STATEMENT** The Ugly Mandarin is beyond a fictional story. After years in Prague, I have met people who have significantly shaped me personally and professionally. The idea of leaving my life in Prague, as well as the freedom I have as a filmmaker is intimidating. Meanwhile, I also feel a sense of responsibility towards my family back in China who are hoping for my return. I found myself trapped between two lands and two realities. This experience brought up a lot of questions, who am I, where do I belong to, and how globalization has an impact on one's cultural identity. And by putting all these questions in the context of a relationship between two girls, I want to investigate how one's identity is not only challenged by external factors but also something internal. I would like to present a love story which is not only about love but also about who we are, and the extent to which we get to decide for ourselves.

**COMPANY PROFILE** Analog Vision is a film production and distribution company based in Prague, Czechia, and founded by 2 producers - Veronika Kúhrová and Michal Kráčmer. The fusion brings a company, which focuses on creating and distributing films of young authors from the Central Europe, developing new audio-visual forms and producing genre films targeting the worldwide market. Currently there are 4 projects in production - a feature documentary *Kiruna 2.0* about a Swedish ever-moving town (dir. Greta Stocklassa), a feature experimental archive documentary *My Unknown Soldier* about invasion into Czechoslovakia in 1968 (dir. Anna Kryvenko), a short experimental documentary *Taurophilia* (dir. Francesco Montagner) and a short fiction *Inversion* (dir. Lucia Kajánková). Several others like *Bloody Easter* (dir. Jan Bušta) in pre-production or *The Ugly Mandarin* (dir. Piaoyu Xie) in development.



**VERONIKA KÚHROVÁ**

**PRODUCER'S CV** Veronika is a graduate of Film Studies (Muni) and Production (FAMU). Her graduate project *DAVID* (2015, dir. Jan Těšitel) was screened in competitions at more than 25 international festival (including FNC Montréal, IFF Warsaw, IFF Sao Paolo, etc.) and received several prizes. She has experience from working on FAMU projects with György Kristóf and Ivan Marinović and also from working as a production manager at Axman Production and Bionaut Films. She took part in the Producers' Workshop 2015 at Cannes, EURODOC 2017, IDFAcademy 2017, became an Emerging Producer 2018 or BT 2018. She received an APA Prize in 2015.

**PRODUCER'S STATEMENT** The Ugly Mandarin is a very personal project to me. It is thanks to the hard work and dedication of the director, who approached me less than a year ago to cooperate on her debut feature film. That is quite a unique feature. That was the first time we met, ever. She trusted me as a producer, because she knew my previous work and work of Analog Vision. The same we knew her last short film *The Nettle*, which proved us her ability to create a great film. We are trying to produce *The Ugly Mandarin* very true to the story and its message we want to spread. Working with an expat director brings challenges, but trusting each other brings successful progress of the film.

# MIDPOINT FEATURE LAUNCH 2019

A year-long training platform for emerging talents primarily from Central and Eastern Europe, who are developing their first or second feature films.

Every year it selects teams of writers, directors and producers of **9 feature film** projects and as of this year it also includes a program for **4 script consultant trainees** who are to join the creative process.

The participants go through an intensive **4-module program** that consists of 2 residential workshops, a project showcase and a follow-up session.

The creative teams work in small groups as well as individually under the guidance of internationally renowned and experienced script consulting tutors.

Tailored online consultations follow every workshop according to the needs of each project.

Within the program of **Karlovy Vary IFF** Industry Days the projects present themselves during the **Works in Development – Feature Launch**.

To complete the cycle, the co-production market, **When East Meets West**, invites all producers to offer them the chance to arrange follow up meetings with their potential artistic and financing partners during the **Feature Launch Spotlight 2020**.

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**Deadline for submissions:  
21 September 2018**

The development process, the Feature Launch projects go through, is used as a platform to train the attending script consultant trainees, who are preparing for their future careers as professional script consultants.

They are trained by both their **trainee mentor**, who supervises their entire learning process and the other tutors involved in the Feature Launch, to better understand the different approaches and strategies that can be used while developing feature film projects.

## **SCHEDULE**

### **1. WORKSHOP 1**

- in collaboration with the Trieste FF / Italy / January 2019

### **2. WORKSHOP 2**

- in collaboration with the Lithuanian Film Centre / Lithuania / May 2019

### **3. WORKS IN DEVELOPMENT - FEATURE LAUNCH**

- in collaboration with the Karlovy Vary IFF / Czech Republic / July 2019

### **4. FEATURE LAUNCH SPOTLIGHT**

- in collaboration with WEMW / Italy / January 2020

# AWARDS

## **connecting cottbus Award**

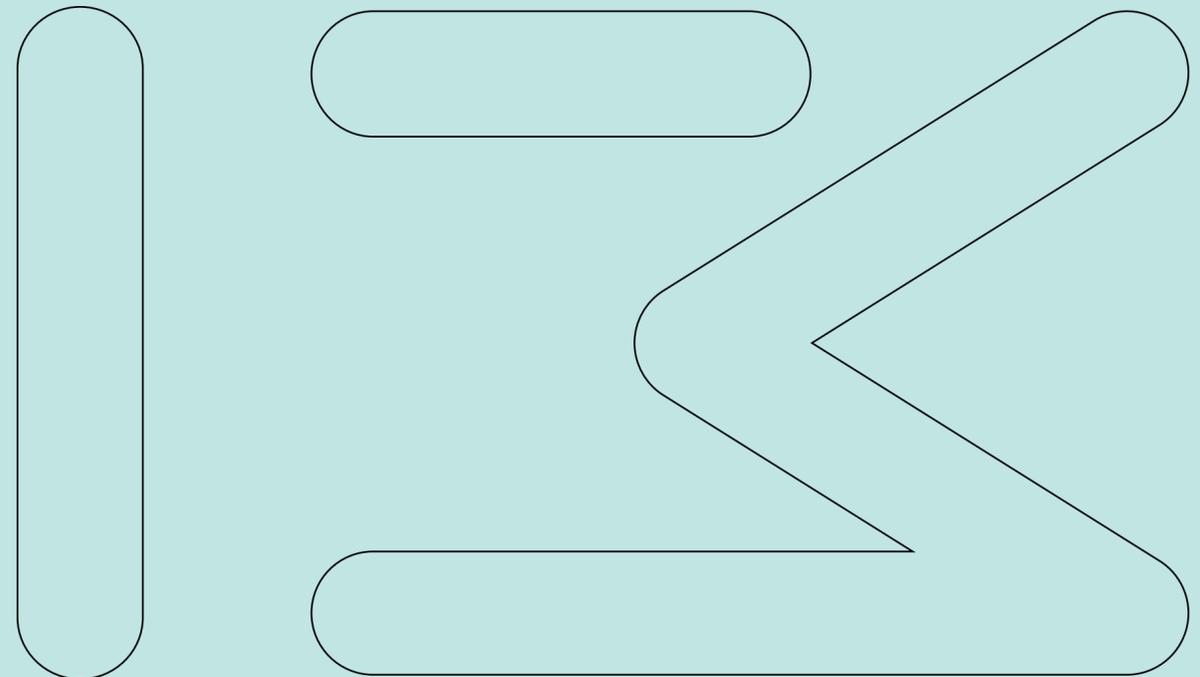
A selected project from MIDPOINT Feature Launch will be granted the opportunity to pitch at connecting cottbus, the east-west co-production market during the FilmFestival Cottbus. Participation will include individual consultations from international film professionals and one2one meetings with potential partners.

## **Rotterdam Lab Award**

One producer will be selected to go on to participate in the professional training program for producers, Rotterdam Lab, which takes place during the International Film Festival Rotterdam.

## **Art Department Masterclass Award**

The award will enable the participants from one Feature Launch project to work on the production design of their project with up-and-coming European art directors within the framework of a practical assignment workshop during this fall.



## MIDPOINT FEATURE LAUNCH TEAM

### **DIRECTOR**

Barbora Struss

### **FINANCIAL DIRECTOR**

Jana Sklenářová

### **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Eliška Malečková

### **ARTISTIC DIRECTOR**

Pavel Jech

### **HEAD OF STUDIES**

Danijel Hočevar

### **PROGRAM COORDINATOR**

Krisztina Darók

### **PROGRAM CONSULTANT**

Helena Zajícová

### **PRODUCTION COORDINATOR**

Soňa Morgenthalová

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