



Karlovy Vary International Film Festival

KVIFF Talents in Karlovy Vary: Showcasing Creativity to Potential Partners

The 56th Karlovy Vary IFF showcased the very first flight of [KVIFF Talents](#) – eleven projects ranging from a VR game, animated webseries to feature films that were selected by KVIFF for their creativity and international ambition. By inviting the filmmakers to Karlovy Vary for a series of networking, pitching and mentoring events, the festival sought to connect these original concepts in various stages of production with potential production partners and investors, as well as present them to the audience and international press.

“We believe that KVIFF has a unique potential to help develop new films by highlighting and mentoring them. We’re developing the program in several steps – we started this year with Czech and Slovak projects as a pilot edition. The Czech system of film funding is very limited, so we wanted to create an alternative method of finding the means for filmmaking,” KVIFF’s Executive Director Kryštof Mucha said during the Creative Czechia conference, one of the events where the KVIFF Talents were showcased.





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The first showcase, dedicated to the film industry and a wider audience, took place on Monday, July 4 in KVIFF.TV Park. Hosted by Linda Bartošová, the creators presented the eight projects selected for the **Creative Pool**, a programme that seeks to support audiovisual concepts no matter the length or genre. The authors of **Don't Light My Fire** (a short mockumentary by David Payne and Tomáš Navrátil), **Give It Take It** (an animated web series by Michael Přibil, Matouš Valchář and Karel Větrovský), **Sunny Boys** (feature film by Jan Kubíček and Alice Krajčířová), **K-point** (music video, short and feature film by Šimon Šafránek), **I Will Drive You Yesterday** (VR narrative game by Kateřina Hanáčková), **Orla** (experimental fairy tale by Marie Lukáčová), **You Can Tell Us** (feature film by David Semler) and **Pig Slaughter** (feature film by Adam Martinec) were then followed by the three feature films selected for the **Feature Pool**. This part of the KVIFF Talents programme is dedicated to feature films with the potential to be made quickly and with a low budget (5 million Czech crowns, i.e. approximately 200,000 EUR). The pilot edition consists of **Skinny Bitch** (feature film by Michael Hogenauer), **Luigi** (feature film by Eliška Kovářiková, Kateřina Kovářiková and Adam Struhala) and **The Hour Between Dog and Wolf** (feature film by Terézia Halamová). [You can stream the whole presentation on KVIFF.TV](#) (in English).

A day later, nine of the KVIFF Talents then took part in the schedule of **Creative Czechia**, a conference organised by Rockaway Capital and focused on innovative local projects and technologies. The KVIFF Talents' mission was introduced by Kryštof Mucha and KVIFF's Head of Industry Hugo Rosák, who's responsible for the programme: "We know that creativity may be risky, and not everybody wants to take the risk of investing in it – so the festival decided to remove this roadblock by focusing on low budget films and a wide array of genres and formats." Each of the filmmakers then had a few minutes to "elevator-pitch" its project to a selected network of the festival's partners and potential investors attending the conference. The projects were presented with a short clip that introduced the filmmakers and their creative vision, followed by a short interview with the conference host Yemi AD. A [recording of the KVIFF Talents pitches](#) as well as the [whole event](#) can be streamed on KVIFF.TV (in Czech).

Besides these pitching sessions, the filmmakers took part in a workshop on low-budget filmmaking with experienced film producer Katriel Schory, a long-time executive director of the Israel Film Fund and Midpoint Institute tutor. This inspirational mentor was also available for one-on-one meetings, where the creators could consult with him on their particular issues and project needs. Several networking events such as a cocktail with the



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international press, partnered by HBO Max and Variety, were also part of the Talents' programme in Karlovy Vary.

However intense, this festival agenda is just the beginning, as KVIFF Talents is a year-round programme. The selected creative teams in both pools will now receive further tailored mentoring as well as financial support for development – 50,000 CZK for selected Creative Pool projects and 120,000 CZK for the three Feature Pool projects, whose scriptwriters will also be given the opportunity to participate in a creative residency in Karlovy Vary. The ultimate goal is, of course, to see these projects come to life and enrich the festival ecosystem with successfully finished films and other formats.

"Each project is different – some are looking for producers, some need work done on the script, some are basically ready to start and just looking for funds. This is our first time, but I believe that KVIFF Talents will be successful in its mission and in five years, we'll be sitting here in Vary contemplating the great films and series that this programme helped to create," Kryštof Mucha sums up.

More information on the KVIFF Talents programme and its goals is available [here](#) or at talents.kviff.com (in Czech). The three Feature Pool and eight Creative Pool projects selected for this year are also presented in detail below

Projects selected for FEATURE POOL:

Skinny Bitch, feature film by Michael Hogenauer and XOVA Film

Kristina is a young girl who unexpectedly breaks up with her longtime boyfriend due to his infidelity. She joins a friendly couple who runs a food truck with sweet potato fries and a plan to tour Czech music festivals for a few weeks. Kristina needs to sort out her thoughts and priorities and grapple with emotions she still doesn't properly understand. But she gets caught up in the whirlwind of music and parties, chance meetings, dancing and burnt frying oil. Can Kristina find a better prospect for a quieter future when the first wave of Covid is appearing?

Creators' Bio

Michael Hogenauer studied promotional graphics, photography and directing at FAMU. His graduate film *Tambylles* (2012) premiered in the Cinéfondation section of the Cannes Film Festival. In 2015, he co-founded the film education platform Cinergy Prague. From



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2017, he was the artistic programmer of IFF Febiofest Prague for three years. His feature debut *A Certain Kind of Silence* premiered at the Karlovy Vary International Film Festival 2019. He is currently finishing his second feature film *V korunách stromů je klid*.

XOVA Film is a Prague-based production company with an eclectic, auteur profile, whose aim is to produce audiovisual works with an authentic creative vision. Founded in 2014, the company started with TV documentaries (*Daleko od Majdanu* by Michal Varga), experimental/hybrid films (*Vienna Calling* by Petr Šprinckl) and feature documentaries (*Circus Rwanda* by Michal Varga), and gradually started to make feature films (*Erhart* by Jan Březina, *Ordinary Failures* by Cristina Groșan). The company is managed by producer Marek Novák and focuses on the projects of emerging talents, both fiction and documentary, both as a majority and minority producer. Marek Novák graduated from FAMU in Prague, is a graduate of EAVE Producers Workshop 2019, Berlinale Talents, Emerging Producers 2020 and is a Producer on the Move 2021.

Luigi, feature film by Eliška Kovářiková, Kateřina Kovářiková, Adam Struhala

The summer holidays have just ended in Sardinia and Luigi, who has just graduated, has no plans for the future. He wanders boredly between his father's workshop and the village and spends time on Instagram, watching the new lives of his classmates who have left the island to continue their studies. Luigi despises it all, as well as ordinary work. His lonely daily routine is only interrupted by the annoying cars of tourists looking for a nearby canyon. When his father confronts him with an ultimatum to either find a job by the end of the week or start working at his auto repair shop, Luigi must act. The next morning, he stands outside the canyon with a Guide tour sign next to the professional guides. He accepts clients whom others have turned down because they couldn't handle the arduous climb – retirees with crutches, people with small children, or the very obese, making them pay extra money. Luigi is pleased to watch his waist bag fill up quickly with banknotes. He has just earned as much as he would in a month in the auto repair. An unusual, disparate group of tourists from different countries starts to descend to the bottom of the canyon, embarking on a trip that is bound to turn into an adrenaline rush and make Luigi look at the world through a slightly different lens.

Creators' Bio

Eliška Kovářiková holds a Master's degree in Screenwriting and Dramaturgy from Prague's FAMU.



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2022 - Czech Lion Awards: nomination in the short film category for *The Glory of Terrible Eliz*

Czech Lion Awards: nomination in the Magnesia Student Film category for *Still Awake?* (screenplay)

Czech Film Critics Awards - nomination for the short film *The Glory of Terrible Eliz*

Young Film Fest – winner in the 9 – 11 Years category *The Glory of Terrible Eliz*

Famufest - Best Unrealized Screenplay - screenplay *Moravská odysea*

Adam Struhala is studying the Screenwriting and Dramaturgy Master's programme at Prague's FAMU.

2022 - Czech Lion Awards: nomination in the short film category for *The Glory of Terrible Eliz*

Czech Film Critics Awards - nomination for the short film *The Glory of Terrible Eliz*

Young Film Fest – winner in the 9 – 11 Years category *The Glory of Terrible Eliz*

The Hour Between Dog and Wolf, feature film by Terézia Halamová

The film closely follows a group of 5 male strippers on their annual tour through the Czech Republic, Poland and Slovakia. Their dynamic nightly performances are interwoven with everyday scenes of small towns. For Rudo, the youngest of the group, dancing is the purest phenomenon that he knows in a life full of misunderstanding and helplessness. The group is falling apart and is confronted with only two extreme attitudes from the audience – either absolute desire or endless contempt. Rudo has the hardest time coming to terms with his inability to control the events around him and is on a journey to discover what he can truly have power over. He plunges into a world seemingly full of possibilities, but only finds people disinterested in his presence. His heart is broken by his own naivety, and a childlike sulking makes him question the meaning of doing good.

Creator's Bio



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As a student of Directing at FAMU in Prague, **Terézia Halamová** is in close contact with both fiction and documentary film and also works in the private sector. In addition to assisting on various sets, she has worked on her short films in collaboration with Czech Television.

2019 - Winner of the Akcelerátor competition in cooperation with Czech Television

2020 - Winner of the Papaya Young Directors Competition (PL)

2020 - Jury Prize for the film *Sing for Us* at the International Kinoproba Festival (RU)

New Talent Europe and The Best Cinematography awards at the Zubroffka Festival (PL)

Best Film Award in the Short Film Competition at the KameraOkó festival (CZ)

Award for Best Film in the PragueShorts Short Film Competition (CZ)

Award for Best Film in Short Film Competition Vilnius International Film Festival (LTU)

Projects selected for CREATIVE POOL:

Don't Light My Fire, short mockumentary by David Payne and Tomáš Navrátil

A mockumentary about the environmentalist group Anti-methuus, which seeks to put an end to the use of fossil fuels in a rather unusual way: by returning fire back to the gods. Throwing torches into the air seems silly at first, but to everyone's surprise, the activists actually succeed one day. From that moment on, however, they too must face the catastrophic consequences of their visibly ill-conceived plan.

Creators' Bio

David Payne moved from studying archaeology to directing at FAMU, where he made the short films *Filip Is Celebrating* (2017), *Wild Game* (2019), *Fundamentals of Art* (2021) and *Still Awake?* (2021). He is now working on the educational series *Koumando* (2022) for ČT D, the children's channel of Czech Television.

Tomas Navratil is studying production at FAMU.



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Give It Take It, an animated web series by Michael Přibil, Matouš Valchář, Karel Větrovský

A diverse bunch of people share the rent in two apartments in a Prague building. The first apartment is inhabited by two long-time friends; in the second one there's a rather random group of roommates who don't have enough money to pay rent on their own. Some have just finished or are finishing up college, others are already working. They share a similar lifestyle that includes the recreational use of a wide range of drugs and a certain free-spiritedness that manifests itself in open sexual relations and a spontaneity that often leads to unexpected situations. However, this lifestyle is beginning to clash with the feeling among some of them that it's time to grow up.

Creators' Bio

Michael Přibil graduated in Film Studies from the Faculty of Arts at Charles University. He currently works at Czech Television as a programme editor. He has a wide range of experience in film production, having worked in various positions (from extra, set designer, runner to production assistant) at companies such as Sirena Film and Film United. He writes film scripts in his spare time.

Matouš Valchář graduated from the Ladislav Sutnar Faculty of Design and Art at the University of West Bohemia in Pilsen with a Bachelor's degree in Animation and Interactive Production. He also holds a Master's degree in Film and Television Graphics from the Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design in Prague. His achievements include winning the main student prize at Animafest Zagreb 2019 and New Chitose Airport International Animation Festival in Japan for his puppet film *After* (co-written by Karel Větrovský) and the main prize at Bizárfest for the film *Red and Blue in the Church*. Most of his films have been selected for European festivals dedicated to animation and short film (Annecy, Corto Imola Festival, Anifilm, Fest Anča and others). He works with puppets not only in animation, but also in theatre productions and in the multimedia project *Televize Estráda*. His puppet show *Luna* is currently showing at the Švandovo Theatre in Prague. As an animator, he is also involved in the making of Kristina Dufková's feature film *Living Large*.

Karel Větrovský graduated in sociology from the Faculty of Arts at Charles University and in management from the Faculty of Business and Economics at the University of Economics in Prague. He gained experience in film production at FilmBrigade and Wet Cat Pictures, working as a production assistant and helping with alternative distribution strategies for independent documentaries. He currently works as a web and content



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analyst for a Czech media company, where he selects key content and thematic focus for their internet users.

Sunny Boys, feature film by Jan Kubíček, Alice Krajčířová

Thirty-year-old Jiří is a disillusioned dreamer who is gradually becoming more and more sociopathic, trying unsuccessfully to break into the music industry. He is most fascinated by boy bands because he naively believes in their unbreakable collective friendship. After failing to survive in Prague and bombing a singing competition, he receives the sudden news of his grandfather's death and returns to his provincial hometown, where he inherits a house and a sizable sum of money. This inheritance gives him a new plan to turn his dreams into reality. He turns the basement of the house into a rehearsal room, and, thanks to a series of coincidences, manages to kidnap three young men, Dominik, Sen and Antonín. Inside the house, he then plans to form a boyband and record a demo with them. The abductees are initially resistant to his plan and focus on their own problems, but gradually they start to like something about Jiří's idea. The police try to find out what is behind the trio of sudden disappearances, but are unable to find any clues. But, even without their help, the prisoners eventually manage to escape and Jiří ends up in a mental hospital. The three men, however, uncover the mystery of Jiří's past and visit him again, this time perhaps giving sense to the project after all.

Creators' Bio

Jan Kubíček first studied graphic design, then intermedia, and has a Master's degree in photography. He now works full time as a projectionist at FAMU. In 2020, he founded his own visual project Graffiti Repairs, dealing with technical visual signage. Together with a New York-based artist and producer known as Sporting Life, they created a short film called *Ghost Story*, in which they work with various spatial graffiti repair objects in a virtual reality environment.

Alice Krajčířová graduated from the Department of Scriptwriting and Dramaturgy at FAMU. Films based on her short scripts have screened at SOHO, BFI Flare, Palm Springs ISF, SAPPORO, Image+nation, Reeling and others. She has collaborated with Marek Čermák on the script for his feature film *Domovina*, and has also worked on the experimental short film *Fata Morgana* directed by artist and photographer Veronika Čechmánková. She is now working with Ondřej Moravec on a short interactive animated VR project called *Darkness*. Her most recent scriptwriting work is for a video art installation



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by the winner of the 2021 Jindřich Chalupecký Award, artist Jakub Jansa, commissioned by the nascent Museum of Literature in Prague.

K-point, music video, short and feature film by Šimon Šafránek

Lída was born in the Giant Mountains of the Czech Republic, she is 14 years old and loves ski jumping. Fanda is 17 and is a newcomer to the mountains. He used to jump just because it was the only fun he could have with his friends. Now he's tired of it and only wants to ride his enduro. His dad regrets this, as Fanda's success could help save the slowly crumbling local ski jumping hills. But Fanda hates his parents and their world. He destroys the landing hill with his enduro bike – no one's gonna jump here anymore! Lída is sad to see this and Fanda feels embarrassed, so he at least gives her a ride on the enduro. She likes it. Gradually, a friendship develops and inevitably grows into love, which is against the rules considering Lída's age.

Creator's Bio

Šimon Šafránek is a director, writer and journalist. His documentary *King Skate* (2018) won the Czech Lion Award and the Best Skateboard Documentary Award at the Paris Surf and Skateboard Film Festival (2019), and his documentary *Meky* (2020) about singer Miro Zbirka won the Audience Award at the Tady Vary 2020 festival. *Rapstory* (2021), his online docu-series commissioned by Czech Television, premiered at KVIFF in 2021. He has made numerous music videos for Czech and foreign bands, the music documentary *Zěmě revivalů* (2016) and the music TV series *Kombo* and *Apollo*. He wrote the novel *Fleischerei 36* (2008) and the novella *23* (2005). As a film and cultural journalist, Simon has contributed to most Czech print and digital media.

I Will Drive You Yesterday, VR narrative game by Kateřina Hanáčková

A narrative virtual reality game about saving the world through time travel. The game is a first-person adventure set in a fictional western metropolis. The player controls Karin, a professional taxi driver who is approached one day by her future self and tasked with changing a series of events in order to prevent the environmental collapse of the world.

Creator's Bio



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Kateřina Hanáčková is a game designer and creator of virtual reality experiences. She places a strong emphasis on storytelling and the innovative use of interactive mechanics as narrative elements. As part of her game design studies at FAMU, she creates small-scale, non-profit games. Nevertheless, she was lucky enough to find a partner and producer for her next dream project – the Prague-based Brainz Immersive studio, where she works as a creative director of commercial projects.

Orla, experimental fairy tale by Marie Lukáčová

An experimental fairy tale exploring the relationship between nature and artificial intelligence as one possible way out of a globalised and hierarchical society. The plot brings us to a society surrounded and isolated by nature. Here, people live around a castle that demonstrates the superiority of those who inhabit it. The main character is a 16-year-old girl, Jasna, endowed with the power of critical thinking, which brings her into conflict with authority. The ruler, Volk, condemns her to a difficult path from which there is no return... The film aims to break down stereotypical ideas based on unequal arrangements and oppression. Orla combines live-action scenes with animation and a 3D interface.

Creator's Bio

Marie Lukáčová is a visual artist working primarily in the medium of video and video installation. Her films reimagine characters borrowed from politics, mythology, geology or science and travel across different dimensions of time and space, addressing the issues of an uncertain future through specific narratives and poetics.

Selected works:

Skuzomeetzah (14. min., 2019) - Finalist of the 2019 Jindřich Chalupecký Award

Pole Žin (8 min., 2019)

Milena's Song, (8 min., 2019) - Honourable Mention, Ecumenical Jury, Oberhausen Kurtz Film Festival

Moréna Rex (11 min., 2019) - Best Experimental Film Award - Ji.hlava Documentary Film Festival



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You Can Tell Us, feature film by David Semler

Ben and his Colombian partner Miguel are planning to start a family, but adoption by a gay couple is not possible in the Czech Republic. In addition, finding a surrogate mother is not only illegal but also very expensive. Ben's older sister Adéla, on the other hand, doesn't want children, but the rest of the family demands them of her. When Adéla's negative attitude towards children might cause her to lose the farm that her grandmother would otherwise have left her, she decides to have a child with the plan to hand it over to her brother afterwards. However, the conservative family must not know about the agreement, at least not until the farm ownership is passed over to Adéla. But when her ex-boyfriend returns to her, thinking he is the child's father, Ben and Miguel begin to realize that they might lose the child. Is Adéla really determined to give the baby up? And how would Miguel act if he had to choose between Ben and his child?

Creator's Bio

David Semler studied screenwriting and dramaturgy at FAMU. During his studies, he wrote and directed the short film *Must Be Painful*, which was selected for more than twenty film festivals, won the French-German ARTE channel's award for best student short film and was also nominated for the Magnesia Student Award at the Czech Lion Awards. He is currently involved in the development of two other projects as writer and director: the five-part crime miniseries *Studna* for Luminarfilm; and the dramedy series *This Is Just the Beginning*, which is being developed for the German production company Intaglio Films. He is also collaborating on several other projects as a screenwriter: the feature-length drama *Neposlušné děti* (directed by Luboš Kučera), the feature-length adaptation of the play *Ledoví koně* (Luminarfilm, directed by Dodo Gombár), and the comedy audio series *Holubník* (Audiotéka).

Pig Slaughter, feature film by Adam Martinec and Matěj Paclík

An old homestead is the site of an annual pig slaughter. It's the only day when the whole family gets together to have fun, complain a little, eat, drink and basically enjoy themselves. Life's dramas, big and small, pop up around every corner. Fortunately, no one knows yet that the butcher is hiding the fact that his ammunition has gone wet. Grandpa is nervous all day and doesn't know how to tell Karl that this slaughter is the last, because



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the ritual is more important than ever to the widower in question. Lucie's marriage is falling apart, Romana misses her mother and Dušík lacks a real role model. After Karel slips up and spills all the pig's blood, it's uncertain whether the slaughter will be a success.

Creator's Bio

Adam Martinec is a director known for crafting powerful stories that he always has a very personal connection to. In his films, he searches for meanings hidden in the mundane situations of everyday human life. He has made several short films, the most successful of which so far include *Sugar and Salt* (2018), which toured film festivals around the world and collected several awards, and *Anatomy of a Czech Afternoon* (2020), which won the Magnesia Award for Best Student Film and the Czech Lion Award for Best Short Film.