



**58TH
KARLOVY
VARY**

**INTERNATIONAL
FILM
FESTIVAL**

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KARLOVY VARY IFF UNVEILS OFFICIAL SELECTION AND JURIES OF THE 58TH EDITION

The Official Selection of the 58th Karlovy Vary IFF Revealed

“The 58th KVIFF official selection, closely watched core of the festival's annual line-up comprising the Crystal Globe and Proxima competitions as well as the Special Screenings program offers a unique epicenter of genres and themes vibrating through the contemporary cinema. Freshly revisionist take on the esthetical canons of a period film. A balanced, caring but also provocative look on the fate of a woman in the contemporary society in any moment of her life. The immediate influence of political events on the life of an individual human being anywhere in the world. My colleagues and I discovered these themes running through our selection of films. 15 out of 32 films featured in the official selection are debuts and we could not be more excited they are accompanied by the brand new works of renowned filmmakers of the likes of Mark Cousins, Oleh Sentsov, Noaz Deshe, Antonin Peretjatko, Beata Parkanova and Burak Çevik.”

Karel Och, artistic director of Karlovy Vary IFF

CRYSTAL GLOBE COMPETITION

Ai ni ranbou / Rude to Love

Director: Yukihiro Morigaki

Japan, 2023, 105 min, World premiere

An unsettling drama about a marriage which is steadily losing its spark. Momoko (Noriko Eguchi) leads a respectable life as a housewife. She dresses elegantly and ensures that the apartment looks just right, down to the last detail; she attends to her husband assiduously and goes to great lengths to cook him proper Japanese food. Are these expressions of love, or rather paranoia from the emotional chasm that has opened out between them? And when does devoted care become an obsession? A psychologically precise case history of a spent relationship, in which long suppressed pain has risen to the surface. A film that examines the dark corners of human frustration and hysteria, where the desire to create something good develops into the urge to destroy.



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Banzo

Director: Margarida Cardoso

Portugal, France, Netherlands, 2024, 127 min, International premiere

In 1907, Alonso arrives on Prince's Island, where he has been tasked with treating a group of workers plagued by a mysterious affliction called *banzo*, also known as slave nostalgia. Those affected feel an intense homesickness, fall into apathy, lose the strength to live, and eventually die. Alonso slowly discovers that it is not enough to treat the physical symptoms; he must understand the soul of those who have been uprooted. The oppressive atmosphere of the isolated tropical island forms the backdrop for a story from the dark colonial past in which humanity is put to the ultimate test. *Banzo* is also a reminder that there is more than one way to interpret the past, and that behind every story is a person telling the story.

Cì xīn qiè gǔ / Pierce

Director: Nelicia Low

Singapore, Taiwan, Poland, 2024, 109 min, World premiere

After Han is released from juvenile prison, where he served seven years for killing an opponent in a fencing match, he meets his younger brother and insists on his innocence. Jie believes him, and the torn brotherly bond begins to heal. Behind their mother's back, Han helps Jie perfect his fencing skills so that he can qualify for the national championships. But the initially energetic clinking of sabres is slowly drowned out by silent doubts: is Han really innocent? Nelicia Low's gripping atmospheric thriller offers a nerve-wracking duel between the ideals of brotherly love and the illusions that we project onto those close to us.

Drie dagen vis / Three Days of Fish

Director: Peter Hoogendoorn

Netherlands, Belgium, 2024, 85 min, World premiere

Just as he does every year, dad flies from sunny Portugal for a three-day visit to the Netherlands, the drab country of his birth. He has his usual errands to run and he visits his doctor for his annual check-up, accompanied by his eccentric grown-up son... This intimate film offers a glimpse into the relationship between two men who have grown apart yet, as they engage in seemingly mundane activities, little by little they try to find their way back to one another. *Three Days of Fish*, the second outing by Dutch filmmaker Peter Hoogendoorn, is a gentle drama, interlaced with the dry humour typical for the region. The director's feature debut *Between 10 and 12* premiered at the Venice IFF.

Elskling / Loveable

Director: Lilja Ingólfssdóttir

Norway, 2024, 101 min, World premiere



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While Sigmund is always away on business, Maria juggles her career with childcare and managing the home. Like many other relationships, theirs was also all about love and harmony in the early stages, however, after years of married life, the cracks started to appear. Sigmund is ultimately the one to ask for a divorce, and Maria is forced to confront her greatest fears. While ostensibly a divorce drama, this debut by writer-director Lilja Ingólfsdóttir nevertheless takes us further, delivering a multilayered character study of a woman experiencing a crisis that leads her to self-knowledge. *Loveable* isn't a story about the quest for true love; on the contrary, it takes a fresh approach to examine contemporary ideas of romance, equality within the relationship, and the power of womanhood.

Ema a smrtihlav / The Hungarian Dressmaker

Director: Iveta Grófová

Slovak Republic, Czech Republic, 2024, 129 min, World premiere

It's the 1940s. The Slovak state witnesses the rise of nationalism and it's not an auspicious time for minorities. The turbulent social mood also impacts the widow Marika, who loses her job in an Aryanised dressmaker's shop. Given the increasing anti-Hungarian sentiment she shuts herself away, particularly since she is harbouring a little Jewish boy. Despite this she still finds herself singled out by two men: a German Nazi officer and a captain of Slovakia's Hlinka Guard. This drama by Slovak director Iveta Grófová is an adaptation of the novella of the same name by Peter Krištúfek, which conjures up the dramatic atmosphere of wartime Slovakia. The story of a fragmented era, which forces the protagonists to confront complex dilemmas, is told not only through words, but also by way of a powerful visual language.

Mord / Our Lovely Pig Slaughter

Director: Adam Martinec

Czech Republic, Slovak Republic, 2024, 84 min, World premiere

The pig-killing fest on an old farm is a tradition Karel looks forward to every year. It's the only chance for the whole family to get together, have a good time, engage in a squabble or two, and enjoy some great food. But this time things are different. The butcher hides the fact his cartridges are damp, grampa can't bring himself to tell Karel, recently widowed, that this slaughter will be their last, daughter Lucie is depressed after her marital breakup, and grandson Dušík runs away while his parents argue over whether he's old enough to watch the kill. As for Karel, the pig's blood spilling everywhere is the last straw... Adam Martinec's feature debut is a remarkably incisive study of the Czech temperament which, through its visceral character portrayal and searing humour, evokes the masterworks of the Czechoslovak New Wave.



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Panoptikoni / Panopticon

Director: George Sikharulidze

Georgia, France, Italy, Romania, 2024, 95 min, World premiere

When Sandro's father decides to devote his life to God and leaves for a monastery, the teenage introvert finds himself deprived of the fundamental certainties of life. Abandoned by his father and his mother, who is working abroad, the young man embarks on a journey of self-discovery, opening up both to a new friendship with the radical Lasha, who has ties with an ultra-right organisation, and also to the chance to explore his own sexuality. George Sikharulidze's perceptive feature debut considers how fine the line is between the observer and the observed, and asks where contemporary post-Soviet Georgian society is heading as it hovers on the border between religious conservatism and nationalisation on the one hand, and the desire for independence and modernisation on the other.

Proslava / Celebration

Director: Bruno Anković

Croatia, Qatar, 2024, 86 min, World premiere

Bruno Anković's feature film debut is set in an impoverished Croatian village between the years 1926 and 1945. The constant deprivation, repeated changes to the regime, and war pervaded the forests and shrouded the place in a miasma that obscured all visions of a better future. Village life was also tough for Mijo: His young, innocent soul was burdened by the outside world and troubled by inhumane orders, and he then fell prey to the false sheen of right-wing ideology. This film adaptation of the successful novel of the same name by Damir Karakaš presents us with wonderful shots of the rural landscape, but it is also a testimony of commonplace brutality and demonstrates the reasons why innocent people become easy quarry for ideological crusaders.

A Sudden Glimpse to Deeper Things

Director: Mark Cousins

United Kingdom, 2024, 88 min, World premiere

One of the most important women in British modern art, the painter Wilhelmina Barns-Graham was a highly inspirational figure, whose work was deeply impacted by a pivotal event in her life. In May 1949, this leading representative of the modernist St Ives group of artists climbed to the top of the Grindelwald glacier in Switzerland, an experience which was to transform the way she saw the world. She spent the rest of her life capturing its shapes and colours, indeed its very essence. In his essayistic portrait documentarist Mark Cousins delves into complex themes of gender, climate change and creativity, while laying bare the artist's character and vast imagination so pervasively that he creates the impression we are seeing the world through her eyes.



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Světýlka / Tiny Lights

Director: Beata Parkanová

Czech Republic, Slovak Republic, 2024, 74 min, World premiere

Amálka is six years old. She loves her cat, her parents, and her gran and grampa. It's summertime and all the little girl could wish for is for the day to turn out just as it should. Except that things are different. Her parents have shut themselves in a room and she can hear raised voices through the door, which isn't normal. Something's going on and Amálka has no idea what it is. In a superbly creative direction from Beata Parkanová, *Tiny Lights* follows a family break-up as perceived by a child: Through the keyhole, ear pressed to the door, everything seen at adult waist height. Each day has to end, and this one has brought Amálka to the point of no return. She feels the hurt as she drifts off to sleep, but she has also grown up a little.

Xoftex

Director: Noaz Deshe

Germany, France, 2024, 95 min, World premiere

Xoftex is a Greek refugee camp, where Syrian and Palestinian asylum seekers anxiously wait for news of their refugee status. To pass the time between interviews with the immigration office, Nasser and his friends film satirical sketches and make preparations for a zombie horror flick. Except that the reality of the camp could be taken for a horror scenario itself. The tension between its inhabitants gains momentum and every conflict removes one more brick from the wall which divides reality from dream – or, indeed, nightmare. Fragments of real life, humour, and the unimaginable suffering of people risking their lives to escape their own country, merge into an explosive, at times, surreal spectacle which invites the viewers to immerse themselves in the story and the lives of immigrants in a way they will never have experienced before.

PROXIMA COMPETITION

Bezvetrije / Windless

Director: Pavel G. Vesnakov

Bulgaria, Italy, 2024, 93 min, World premiere

After years away Kaloyan returns to his native Bulgaria in order to sell his late father's flat. What at first seems like a routine task devoid of emotion gradually develops into a journey to the depths of his being, where he is confronted with distant traumas, yet he also strikes a new path towards self-discovery. While childhood is filled with sensations and the



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rustling wind, adulthood is a state of fragile windless and fading memories of those closest to us. Vesnakov delivers colourful existential reflections on the nature of family bonds and personal identity over the course of time. Yet he also muses on modern-day Bulgaria, where the cemeteries of its original inhabitants are being replaced by shady casinos, and where cultural memory is waning in a country deceived by an illusory vision of economic prosperity.

Cabo Negro

Director: Abdellah Taïa

France, Morocco, 2024, 76 min, World premiere

Two young people, Soundouss and Jaâfar, arrive at a luxury villa in the resort of Cabo Negro rented by Jaâfar's lover, who is supposed to join them later. But something is wrong – he still hasn't turned up, and they can't reach him on his phone. Left on their own, they decide, despite their uncertain financial and personal situation, to enjoy their holiday as much as their minds and bodies will allow. On vacation, with time seemingly non-existent, they take the opportunity to reflect on their relationships back home – and on the future, which feels so distant here on the sun-drenched beach. Writer-director Abdellah Taïa presents a queer ode to the seemingly carefree time of youth.

Clorofilla / Chlorophyll

Director: Ivana Gloria

Italy, 2023, 75 min, International premiere

Green-haired Maia is tired of city life and, driven by a desire to be among nature, she decides to spend the summer picking oranges. In the orchards she is greeted by the gardener, an eccentric loner called Teo, who notices that Maia isn't like everyone else. In the same way he tends his plants, he devotes his time and energy to her, too, and the young woman starts to blossom. Their burgeoning friendship, however, is unsettled by the arrival of Teo's father and older brother Arturo, who are planning a celebration in a neighbouring village... In her richly coloured story, which shows it's sometimes difficult to find someone who could help us to discover our true selves, director Ivana Gloria awakens within us senses that we didn't even know we had.

Fără suflet / The Alienated

Director: Anja Kreis

Germany, Moldova, France, 2024, 95 min, World premiere

Varvara, a professor of philosophy, is discussing the concept of God's death with her students. She is visited by her sister Angelina, an eminent gynaecologist who has been recalled from Moscow and sent to another city, where she is to reduce the number of abortions. Not long afterwards a girl comes to see her at the hospital, asking her to perform an abortion, claiming that she is carrying the Antichrist in her womb. After a



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heated dispute with a student, Varvara ponders the presence of evil in human nature, while Angelina carries out an illegal abortion on the girl and takes the embryo home with her... This mystical film by Anja Kreis is beguiling for its ominous atmosphere and raises uncomfortable questions about human conscience, morality and faith, although it declines to provide definitive answers.

Hiçbir şey yerinde değil / Nothing in Its Place

Director: Burak Çevik

Turkey, Germany, South Korea, 2024, 76 min, International premiere

One evening, one apartment, five leftist students, and one vision of a non-violent socialist revolution. When this gathering is interrupted by the unannounced visit of two members of a right-wing movement, things quickly spiral out of control. Turkish director Burak Çevik uses long takes and an enclosed space as a canvas onto which his ensemble cast's strong performances paint a story reflecting the turbulent political situation in 1978 Ankara. How far are people willing to go for their political beliefs, and how much can the ideology of a group influence the behavior of an individual? *Nothing in Its Place* holds up a mirror to more than one revolution.

Ju wai ren / Stranger

Director: Zhengfan Yang

USA, China, Netherlands, Norway, France, 2024, 113 min, World premiere

The hotel room as a place where everybody is a stranger. A place that is yours for just a moment. A temporarily intimate space entered by a maid in order to clean it while, if possible, not leaving a single trace of her visit. Each part of the episodic *Stranger* is set in just such a place. One episode equals one shot. One shot equals one story. What they have in common is China, the home country of both guests and staff, although each of their lives differs from the others. The film's absurd, darkly humorous, poignant, and mysterious stories are set in a seemingly confined space that nevertheless opens up new and surprising dimensions with each episode.

Lapilli

Director: Paula Ďurinová

Slovak Republic, Germany, 2024, 65 min, World premiere

In her feature debut director Paula Ďurinová sets out to wander among varied rock formations in order to try and come to terms with the loss of her grandparents. Different stages of grief unfold among the sea currents, the dark caves and the volcanic wasteland, while the strings of an autoharp resonate in the ravines. *Lapilli* finds a unique balance between the personal and the environmental in a modernistic requiem full of perceptive observations on natural phenomena and on man himself. This is a work that excels in its inner strength and rare film language, where sea waves reflect shifting thoughts, and



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where the erosion of arid soil is reminiscent of a broken heart filled with memories of people who are lost to us forever.

Od marca do mája / March to May

Director: Martin Pavol Repka

Czech Republic, 2024, 85 min, World premiere

A family of five lives together in an old village house. While the parents are slowly aging, the children are growing up, and it is clear that they will soon go their own way. This unchanging rhythm of everyday life is disrupted by the unexpected news of the mother's pregnancy, and the idea of a new sibling gradually affects all members of the household. *March to May* is an understated, intimate portrait of family togetherness, which is often expressed in the smallest of ways. An unassuming yet highly original story, filmed with the same tenderness and patience with which nature awakens every spring.

Second Chance

Director: Subhadra Mahajan

India, 2024, 104 min, World premiere

Desolate after experiencing a traumatic incident, Mia travels to the family's summer retreat amid the snow-covered Himalayas in order to regain her strength. There she finds the company of the caretaker's mother-in-law, Bimal, and her grandson, Sunny. Irrespective of their differing ages, social background and their ideas of happiness, a surprisingly strong bond develops between them, which cannot be broken, not even by the arrival of someone who drives Mia straight back into her trauma. This visually mesmerising film offers an authentic and vivid depiction of the process of coping with female pain and demonstrates that a second chance might emerge where we least expect it.

Trans Memoria

Director: Victoria Verseau

Sweden, France, 2024, 72 min, World premiere

"I collect. I document. I write down my memories. I'm afraid they'll disappear." This is how Victoria Verseau introduces her intimate documentary diary, in which she returns to Thailand and to the year 2012, when she underwent her transition. She had long awaited this moment, but then came feelings of uncertainty, amplified by the death of a close friend. The conceptual artist adopts an almost archaeological approach to the past and lays bare the process of writing a personal story that is intrinsically linked to the creation of her own identity. In this deeply felt debut she reveals the joyful aspects and also the dark recesses of transition and, bringing other testimonies into play as well, she critically examines what defines women as women.



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Tropicana

Director: Omer Tobi

Israel, Canada, 2024, 82 min, World premiere

A lonely middle-aged woman lives her monotonous life. Every morning, she goes to her job as a supermarket cashier, and every day after work she goes straight home to look after her ailing mother and the rest of the family. Nobody, however, seems to care. Then, the mysterious murder of her boss sets off a chain of events at the end of which she can be free and find her own worth. How to describe her journey? Perhaps best as a sexual odyssey, an exploratory expedition to places where an important role is played by carnality, desire, and its gratification. *Tropicana* is a subtly enigmatic reflection on conservatism, prudery, and the false ideal of physical beauty.

Vino la noche / Night Has Come

Director: Paolo Tizón

Peru, Spain, Mexico, 2024, 96 min, World premiere

A group of young adventurers sign up for one of the most challenging military training courses in Latin America, which will turn them into fearsome warriors entrusted with overseeing the dangerous VRAEM region, an area filled with coca plants, terrorists, and smugglers. In his absorbing look at the hermetically sealed world of the army, debut director Paolo Tizon paints a portrait of one institution while depicting individual human stories and reflecting on male identity, the potential for self-determination, and a fragile masculinity that stands in striking contrast to the brutal training. Sensitivity alongside violence, beauty alongside vulnerability.

SPECIAL SCREENINGS

Architektura ČSSR 58–89 / Czechoslovak Architecture 58–89

Director: Jan Zajíček

Czech Republic, Slovak Republic, 2024, 126 min, World premiere

Vladimír 518, uncompromising rapper, artist, stage designer and activist, is a rare phenomenon, who not only writes books, but publishes them as well. Today also a respected authority primarily on pre-1989 architecture, he has written not only a major publication on the subject, but also the story for two audiovisual works treating the same theme, which were shot by Jan Zajíček, renowned director of music videos. In addition to the recent TV series we have the eagerly anticipated feature film which, through its fascinating and impressive exploration of Czech and Slovak architecture of the latter half



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of the 20th century, offers exclusive insight into extraordinary buildings and unique individuals living below the Tatra Mountains.

In the Land of Brothers

Director: Alireza Ghasemi, Raha Amirfazli

Iran, France, Netherlands, 2024, 95 min, European premiere

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan led to a massive flight of Afghans to neighboring Iran, which – since they hoped to find a new home there – they called the “Land of Brothers.” But the dream of fraternal coexistence soon faded, Iranian law never accepted them as equal citizens, and so even the descendants of the first refugees still carry the burden of otherness. Alireza Ghasemi and Raha Amirfazli’s wistful, beautifully shot feature debut about a family who will never feel at home in the country where they live won over audiences immediately upon its premiere at Sundance.

Ještě nejsem, kým chci být / I’m Not Everything I Want to Be

Director: Klára Tasovská

Czech Republic, Slovak Republic, Austria, 2024, 90 min

This year’s notional award for excellence on the domestic film front should unquestionably go to the unique documentary on the internationally renowned photographic legend Libuše Jarcovjáčová, a work which enchanted just about everyone at the 2024 Berlinale. This remarkable project by Klára Tasovská and her team looks back over the past fifty years at the life of a true icon, known as the Czech Nan Goldin, and this via a fascinating montage of several thousand of her photographs and her diary entries, which she reads out herself. Portraits, self-portraits, immortalised moments, the quest for truth lying deep within nameless fellow opponents of grim Normalisation, reflections of the transformation of body and soul, black-and-white images, emotion and life in flashes of brilliant light.

Das Lied der Anderen - Eine Suche nach Europa / The Song of Others - A Search for Europe

Director: Vadim Jendreyko

Switzerland, 2024, 136 min, International premiere

What is Europe? In his highly topical personal essay, Vadim Jendreyko travels across the old continent to discover its essence in places that might be called acupuncture points of European identity. His various stops include the bottom of the Rhine, Greek docks, the European Parliament, a primeval forest in Poland, and a Sarajevo library. All of these places invite ambivalent reflections: on the one hand, they celebrate Europe’s diversity and the breadth of its cultural heritage; on the other hand, they are symbols of turbulence, conflict, and bloody history. Is Europe condemned to be stuck in a vicious circle of violence, or is there hope in those who try to sing the songs of others?



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Real

Director: Oleh Sentsov
Ukraine, Croatia, 2024, 90 min, World premiere

Acclaimed filmmaker, activist, Sakharov Prize-winning former Kremlin prisoner, and soldier Oleh Sentsov is currently defending his homeland as a lieutenant in the Ukrainian army, which he joined in the first days of the Russian invasion in February 2022. During one assault, his infantry fighting vehicle was destroyed by enemy artillery. His attempts to organize the evacuation of part of his unit were complicated by the lack of ammunition and incessant Russian fire. The name of the operation was Real, and Sentsov's eponymous film is a unique immersive experience that offers a hyper-documentary insight into the reality of the war through the eyes of one direct participant.

Ta druhá / The Other One

Director: Marie-Magdalena Kochová
Czech Republic, 2024, 85 min, World premiere

In her feature-length debut, Marie-Magdalena Kochová uses the character of eighteen-year-old Johanna to explore the phenomenon of "glass children" – children who, because they have a special-needs sibling, are neglected by their family, however unintentionally. They often feel invisible, their problems are always considered less important, and they are often expected to help take care of their disabled brother or sister. Johana is about to graduate from high school, and so she must decide whether to leave home to study, or stay and help her parents. An immensely sensitive account of the nature of sibling love which, for once, puts "the other one" first.

Tatabojs.doc

Director: Marek Najbrt
Czech Republic, 2024, 94 min, World premiere

"Foot Soldiers", "Attention aux hommes", "Dancer", "Repetition"... These are just some of the string of hits by Prague band Tata Bojs. Always energetic, capable of myriad transformations, precise in their conceptual approach to the visual and musical interpretation of individual albums and concerts. It's no surprise that Marek Najbrt (*Champions, Protector, Polski film*) decided not to go for the conventional documentary. He tells the band's story as a playful collage, pieced together from a wealth of archive material and recordings of concerts and futuristic stage performances with the Vosto5 theatre company. Thus, unfolding before our very eyes is a portrait of a highly original band which, despite the alternative nature of its output, has earned its rightful place among the country's top players.



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Vlny / Waves

Director: Jiří Mádľ

Czech Republic, Slovak Republic, 2024, 131 min, World premiere

One might think that Czech and Slovak filmmakers have already said all there is to say about the period around 1968 in Czechoslovak history. As Jiří Mádľ's latest outing shows, however, this crucial era in our modern history still has forgotten stories to offer that are worthy of our attention. The film revolves around the international news office at Czechoslovak Radio, a place full of talented individuals possessing broad insight, linguistic skills, and above all a commitment to honest journalistic work with a focus on the truth. An epic, dynamically shot, rewarding film, which embraces uncommon heroism in the face of an oppressive regime, the strength of fraternal ties, and the eternal themes of love, betrayal, morality, and hope.

Voyage au bord de la guerre / Journey to the Brink of War

Director: Antonin Peretjatko

France, 2024, 62 min, International premiere

Within the first month of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, more than 12.5 million people were forced to flee their homes and 5 million fled the country altogether. Documentary filmmaker Antonin Peretjatko returns to Lviv with Andrei, who has left with his family for France, to retrieve Andrei's personal belongings and to explore his own roots, but most importantly to record eyewitness testimony from people who have remained in Ukraine. Part reportage documentary and part poetic road movie with an aesthetic style reminiscent of the early French New Wave, *Journey to the Brink of War* tries to share with the viewer what everyday life looks like in a war-torn country.

Zahradníkův rok / The Gardener's Year

Director: Jiří Havelka

Czech Republic, 2023, 104 min, World premiere

A true story of injustice perpetrated on a peaceful gardener by a wealthy neighbor meets Karel Čapek's eponymous literary work about a gardener's hardships and successes over the course of a year. Director Jiří Havelka, one of the most complex artistic personalities of our time, has long proved that "alternative" and "audience-friendly" need not be mutually exclusive. His quietly moving tragicomic story about a remarkably stubborn struggle for the right to a dignified life is built on two great performances by the always outstanding Oldřich Kaiser and Dáša Vokata.



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Christine Vachon and Geoffrey Rush Among the Jury Members of the 57th Karlovy Vary IFF

CRYSTAL GLOBE JURY

Christine Vachon

American producer and recipient of the Independent Spirit Award and Gotham Award, who co-founded powerhouse Killer Films with partner Pamela Koffler in 1995. Over three decades they have produced more than 100 films, including some of the most celebrated and important American independent features, such as *Kids*, *I Shot Andy Warhol*, *Happiness*, *Boys Don't Cry*, *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*, *Far from Heaven*, *One Hour Photo*, *Still Alice*, *Carol*, *Beatriz at Dinner*, and *Dark Waters*. Vachon has executive produced acclaimed miniseries such as *Mildred Pierce* and *Halston*. Notable releases from last year include Todd Haynes' *May December* and Celine Song's *Past Lives*, the latter marking her first Oscar nomination in the Best Motion Picture category.

Geoffrey Rush

An internationally acclaimed actor, who started his career in Australian theatre. He was catapulted to global recognition in 1996 with his starring role in director Scott Hicks' feature *Shine*, for which he won an Academy Award, a BAFTA, Golden Globe, SAG Award, and New York and Los Angeles Film Critics' Awards, among many others. In 2004 he received an Emmy for his performance in *The Life and Death of Peter Sellers*. Five years later he won a Tony Award for his part as the ailing king in Ionesco's absurdist drama *Exit the King*. His most recent effort is his role in James Ashcroft's thriller *The Rule of Jenny Pen* alongside John Lithgow. In 2022 Rush received the Crystal Globe for Outstanding Artistic Contribution to World Cinema at the Karlovy Vary International Film Festival.

Sjón

Icelandic author and screenwriter, who broke into the world of film with his script for the Cannes prize-winning drama *Lamb* (2021), starring Noomi Rapace, which became one of the top ten highest-grossing films in the USA and was Iceland's entry for Best International Feature at the Oscars. He co-wrote the script for the revenge drama *The Northman* (2022), and he is working on a screen adaptation of *Hamlet* with Ali Abbasi. Sjón's novels have been translated into more than forty languages, among them, *The Blue Fox*, *From the Mouth of the Whale*, *Moonstone* and the ambitious *CoDex 1962: A Trilogy*. Several of his works are published in Czech. In 2017 Sjón became the third writer to be chosen to contribute to the Future Library project, a public artwork based in Norway. In 2001 he was nominated for an Academy Award for his lyrics to the song "I've Seen It All", performed by



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Björk in Lars von Trier's *Dancer in the Dark*. In February 2023 the Swedish Academy awarded him its Nordic Prize for his contribution to the art of storytelling.

Eliška Křenková

Czech actress. During her studies at the Duncan Centre contemporary dance school she received an offer to appear in the popular film *The Rafter* (2006) and decided thereafter to focus on acting, subsequently graduating from Prague's Theatre Faculty (DAMU). She is highly respected for her collaboration with director Olmo Omerzu, which brought her a Czech Lion award for Best Supporting Actress in *Winter Flies* (2018) and a nomination for the same award for his *Bird Atlas* (2021). She was nominated for a Best Actress award from the Czech Film Academy on three more occasions, in works directed by Michal Hogenauer (*A Certain Kind of Silence*), Jan Foukal (*Two Ships*) and Matěj Chlupáček (*We Have Never Been Modern*). All the above-mentioned films competed at the Karlovy Vary IFF, which also screened the world premieres of *Borders of Love* (2021) and the acclaimed series *Wasteland* (2016). Her performances in alternative stage productions are also outstanding, such as Viktor Tauš's *American Chick* and Shakespeare's *The Tempest*.

Gábor Reisz

Hungarian director, screenwriter and composer. He studied film history and theory, and later film directing as well. His feature debut *For Some Inexplicable Reason* premiered in the East of the West Competition at Karlovy Vary in 2014 and went on to become a cult film and also a huge success at the box office both in Hungary and on the international circuit. A year later he was invited to the Cannes Film Festival's Residence programme, where he developed his second feature *Bad Poems*; this film ultimately won sixteen awards, including best Hungarian film of 2018. His third feature, *Explanation for Everything*, presented at this year's KVIFF, won Best Film last September in the Venice FF's Orizzonti competition, and a Gold Hugo at the Chicago IFF.

PROXIMA JURY

Bianca Balbuena

Filipino producer, general manager of Kroma Entertainment's Anima Studios, which produced *Leonor Will Never Die* (Special Jury Award at Sundance and at KVIFF the same year). She was previously CEO of Epicmedia, producers of such films as *Engkwentro* (Best Debut in Venice), *A Lullaby to the Sorrowful Mystery* and *Cu Li Never Cries* (both awarded at the Berlinale), *Viet and Nam* (Un Certain Regard competition at Cannes) and *In My Mother's Skin* (Sundance and KVIFF). Balbuena has served on the jury at a number



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of festivals, she has mentored at various workshops, and she holds important distinctions, such as Producer of the Year, conferred upon her by the Asian Film Commissions Network.

Wouter Jansen

Dutch founder of the sales company Square Eyes, known from 2013 to 2019 under the name Some Shorts; the company represents bold, author-driven features and shorts, and in close collaboration with filmmakers it devises bespoke festival distribution and sales strategies. This has resulted in a catalogue of films that have premiered at prestigious festivals. In the past Jansen worked for ten years as head of programming at the Dutch short film festival Go Short. His specialist knowledge is welcomed at Locarno Open Doors and First Cut Lab, and he has given lectures at schools such as Le Fresnoy, HEAD Geneva and the Netherlands Film Academy.

Adéla Komrží

Czech film director. She studied art history at Charles University's Faculty of Arts, and documentary filmmaking at FAMU, where she is currently taking her doctorate. In 2018 she was enrolled at the Konrad Wolf Film University of Babelsberg, where she took a course in film direction. Her films *Intensive Life Unit* (2021) and *Art Talent Show* (2022) screened at a series of prestigious international festivals all over the world and won numerous awards (Czech Lion, Czech Film Critics' Award, top prize in KVIFF's Proxima Competition, FIPRESCI Prize, among others).

Mohamed Kordofani

Sudanese aircraft engineer turned filmmaker after fifteen years in aviation. He is the co-founder of Klozium Studios, a production house based in the Sudan, Kenya and the UAE. His debut feature film *Goodbye Julia*, which was executive produced by Hollywood star Lupita Nyong'o, was first screened in Cannes in the Un Certain Regard competition, where it won the Prix de la Liberté; the film also won the Roger Ebert Award at the Chicago International Film Festival and had various successful screenings at last year's KVIFF.

Daniela Michel

Mexican festival organiser and Founding Director of the Morelia International Film Festival, an annual event launched in 2003 to support and promote a new generation of Mexican filmmakers. The festival has an ongoing partnership with Cannes' Critics' Week. She holds a degree in English literature and studied filmmaking at Mexico's Centro de Capacitación Cinematográfica. She has curated major retrospectives of classic Mexican cinema, both at home and abroad. Michel has also served on the jury at the festivals in Cannes, Venice,



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Berlin, Sundance and San Sebastián among many others as well as for other institutions, such as the Rockefeller Foundation's Media Arts Fellowship, the Fulbright García-Robles Film Fellowship, and the Rolex Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative.