



Karlovy Vary International Film Festival

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KVIFF CENTRAL STAGE SPOTLIGHTS THE FUTURE OF CENTRAL EUROPEAN CO-PRODUCTION: FOURTEEN ACCLAIMED DIRECTORS UNVEIL THEIR NEXT FILMS

Following up on the enhanced Central-European co-production focus announced earlier this month, the KVIFF Film Industry Office has just unveiled the films selected for this year's brand-new KVIFF Central Stage showcase. The 14 projects from 8 different countries of Central Europe, seeking co-production and financing opportunities, sales, distribution or festival premieres, come from established filmmakers with extensive festival pedigrees, including Andreas Horvath, Nader Saeivar, Sonja Prosenc or László Csujá.

The selected projects, which are currently in various stages of development, production or postproduction, will be showcased through interactive conversations about the filmmakers' career paths and co-production possibilities across the participating countries. The participating projects will also gain access to exclusive post-production advantages through a generous partnership with industry-leading studios UPP and Soundsquare, while also being eligible for the €20,000 Eurimages Co-Production Development Award.

Another recently established showcase, KVIFF Talents, focused on seeking out and supporting talented Czech and Slovak filmmakers and innovative audiovisual genres, will be joined by a guest project by István Kovács. This established Hungarian filmmaker will pitch the feature-length version of his Student Academy Award-winning short film *A Siege* (Ostrom) in Karlovy Vary.

KVIFF Central Stage Introduces 14 Upcoming Films From the Central European Region

One of this year's major KVIFF Industry Days program innovations, the KVIFF Central Stage represents a brand-new, more dynamic format dedicated to showcasing film projects in the making. This new initiative was created by the KVIFF Film Industry Office in



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cooperation with selected national film institutes of eight Central European countries (Austria, Czechia, Germany, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia and Ukraine).

"We introduced this new format to address a notable gap in the Central European film landscape. While emerging filmmakers often receive substantial support, mid-career filmmakers typically have fewer opportunities for visibility and financing, despite their equally compelling projects. We were fortunate to collaborate closely with Central European film institutes, who helped us identify filmmakers currently working on highly anticipated projects that genuinely reflect the established voices already resonating with audiences," says Hugo Rosák, the Head of KVIFF Industry Office.

These fourteen fiction films are all directed by acclaimed filmmakers with extensive track records of awards and festival recognition, including at Karlovy Vary IFF.

The **Czech & Slovak** projects in the making feature **Masaryk: The Coup**, a standalone sequel to the immensely successful *A Prominent Patient* by Julius Ševčík, which premiered at Berlinale and won 12 Czech Lion Awards. Michal Hogenauer and Šimon Holý, both familiar to KVIFF audiences from the East Meets West or Proxima competitions, will present their new projects **Around the Fire** and **First Dates**, respectively, both in development. Slovak director Marko Škop, whose previous films have been awarded at KVIFF and Toronto IFF, will present *Láska*, his new feature currently in post-production.

From **Austria**, KVIFF will showcase a new project in development by Andreas Horvath – the seasoned filmmaker and photographer with strong festival pedigree, also familiar to KVIFF audiences, will present **The Lime Works**, an adaptation of the eponymous novel by controversial Austrian "Nestbeschmutzer" Thomas Bernhard.

The **German**-funded (with Turkish co-production) **Hijamat** is a new film by renowned Iranian director Nader Saeivar, who won the Audience Award at Venice IFF for *The Witness* (2024) and Best Screenplay at Cannes for *3 Faces*, written together with his long-term collaborator Jafar Panahi (winner of this year's Palme d'Or at Cannes), who is also editing this project. The film is now in production and seeking production and distribution partners.

Hungary is represented by two projects from established independent directors. László Csúja, whose feature debut *Blossom Valley* won the Jury Prize at KVIFF and whose sophomore feature *Gentle* premiered in Sundance's World Cinema Competition, will present **Some Good News**, his new project in development. Director Mihály Schwechtje



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continues his successful legacy of exploring societal issues through personal dramas with his new project **Democracy Work In Progress**.

Polish director Jagoda Szalc, whose first two films premiered at Berlinale and Rotterdam IFF respectively, will showcase her new drama **Lakome**, based on the eponymous novel by successful Polish writer Malgorzata Lebda. Visual artist and filmmaker Piotr Adamski will present his new project **Starska**, inspired by his late mother and the highs and lows of her bipolar disorder.

Slovenia brings two established filmmakers familiar to both KVIFF and Tribeca audiences: Žiga Virč (Houston! We Have a Problem!) with his latest project **Purgatory**, and Sonja Prosenc (Family Therapy) with **The Happiest Day**, now in pre-production.

Last but not least, **Ukraine** will be represented by **Vacuum** by Berlinale alumna Yelizaveta Smith, whose Militantropos (co-directed with Alina Gorlova and Simon Mozgovyi) just premiered in Cannes Directors' Fortnight, and Ivan Tymchenko with his new project **Making-of**.

Moving beyond traditional pitches, the projects will be showcased through interactive conversations about the filmmakers' career paths and co-production possibilities across the participating nations. The most promising films in development, selected by an international jury, will be eligible for the €20,000 Eurimages Co-Production Development Award.

The participating projects will also gain access to exclusive post-production advantages through a generous partnership with industry-leading studios UPP and Soundsquare. Films that meet the criteria for the Czech Audiovisual Fund's 35% digital production incentive will secure an additional 15% direct reduction on comprehensive audio-visual post-production services from both studios. This distinctive package, complete with administrative assistance, showcases the growing strength of the regional audiovisual industry while making premium post-production services more accessible to regional filmmakers.

The KVIFF Central Stage showcase will take place at **1:30 pm on Tuesday, July 8**, on the Film Industry Main Stage in the KVIFF Industry Hub in Kaiserbad.

Detailed list of KVIFF Central Stage selected projects:



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The Lime Works (Austria)

Director, Scriptwriter, Producer: Andreas Horvath

Masaryk: The Coup (Czech Republic, Poland, Slovak Republic)

Director: Julius Ševčík

Scriptwriter: Julius Ševčík, Petr Kolečko

Producer: Vanessa Biermannová, Rudolf Biermann

Around the Fire (Czech Republic, Netherlands, Slovak Republic)

Director, Scriptwriter: Michal Hogenauer

Producer: Marek Novák

First Dates (Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Poland)

Director, Scriptwriter: Šimon Holý

Producer: Marek Novák

Hijamat (Germany, Turkey)

Director, Scriptwriter: Nader Saeivar

Producer: Said Nur Akkus, Tatiana Tsyganova, Emre Oskay

Some Good News (Hungary, Romania)

Director: László Csujá

Scriptwriter: Éva Zabezsinszkij, László Csujá

Producer: Anna Szijártó

Democracy Work In Progress (Hungary, Czech Republic, Germany)

Director, Scriptwriter: Mihály Schwechtje

Producer: Genovéva Petrovits

Starska (Poland)

Director, Scriptwriter: Piotr Adamski

Producer: Anna Gawlita, Marta Szymanowska

Voracious (Poland)

Director, Scriptwriter: Jagoda Szalc (based on novel by Malgorzata Lebda)

Producer: Joanna Szymańska



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Láska (Slovak Republic, Czech Republic, Croatia)

Director: Marko Škop

Scriptwriter: Zuzana Liová, Marko Škop

Producer: Marko Škop, Ján Meliš, Alice Zárubová Tabery, Marina Andree Škop

Purgatory (Slovenia, Austria)

Director: Žiga Virc

Scriptwriter: Iza Strehar

Producer: Žiga Virc, Iza Strehar

The Happiest Day (Slovenia, Norway, Italy)

Director, Scriptwriter: Sonja Prosenc

Producer: Rok Sečen

Vacuum (Ukraine)

Director, Scriptwriter: Yelizaveta Smith

Producer: Eugene Rachkovsky

Making-of (Ukraine, Czech Republic, Slovak Republic)

Director, Scriptwriter: Ivan Tymchenko

Producer: Svitlana Soloviova, Alžběta Janáčková

The KVIFF Central Stage showcase is presented in partnership with Czech Film Center, German Films, Polish Film Institute, Slovenian Film Centre, Slovak Film Institute, Soundsquare, Ukrainian Institute and UPP.

Supporting Independent Hungarian Talents

In addition to the two Hungarian projects participating in the KVIFF Central Stage, KVIFF Talents will spotlight István Kovács' *A Siege*, a feature-length rework of his eponymous short film that won him the Student Academy Award in 2018. KVIFF Talents, a program dedicated to supporting talented creators from the Czech Republic and Slovakia, offers a presentation opportunity to one guest project selected as one of the two best from a



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Hungarian program that serves as the counterpart to KVIFF Talents: Cine-Collegium Budapest, an independent film funding initiative launched under the umbrella of the Budapest International Film Festival. Its main goal is to support free and independent Hungarian cinema through community-based funding, without relying on state subsidies.

"The Cine-Collegium Budapest Foundation cannot solve the crisis of the starving Hungarian film industry, but it offers a kind of escape route — a last chance for a dedicated creator to realize their film project through personal initiative and self-sacrificing work. The unprecedented professional solidarity behind the program within the Hungarian film community also proves that many not only see the situation similarly but feel a sense of responsibility as well; they have offered their own money, professional resources, and labor because they firmly believe in free filmmaking and in the future of Hungarian culture. We hope that, year after year, we will be able to support more and more talented creators and film projects," said the founders of the Budapest International Film Festival and Cine-Collegium Budapest.

A Siege (Hungary)

Director: István Kovács

Scriptwriter: Kálmán Gasztonyi

Producer: Patricia D'Intino

The **KVIFF Talents showcase will take place at 4:30 pm on Monday, July 7**, on the Industry Main Stage. Check the full list of the KVIFF Talents 2025 Creative Pool & Feature Pool on [KVIFF website](https://www.kviff.com).

The KVIFF Talents are supported by the ČEZ Foundation and Oneplay. Media partner is Forbes.

In total, this year's KVIFF Eastern Promises will spotlight 40 promising films and series in the making: 14 feature films in KVIFF Central Stage, 9 treatments in Works in Development – Feature Launch and 5 in Works in Development – Focus Queer, 3+1 feature film and 3 series projects in KVIFF Talents and 5 original series projects in Pop Up Series Incubator. Details about all these projects can be found in the **Book of Projects** and on the [KVIFF website](https://www.kviff.com).



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KVIFF Industry Days are supported by the PPF Foundation and CME. The media partner is Deadline.

More about the KVIFF Industry Days mission, its Eastern Promises platform and other activities can be found [here](#).