

60th Karlovy Vary International Film Festival

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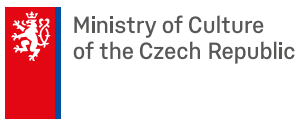
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THE CREATOR OF THE CELEBRATED HBO SERIES THE SOPRANOS, DAVID CHASE, TO TAKE THE STAGE AT THE KARLOVY VARY FESTIVAL

Seven-time Emmy winner and showrunner of the hit HBO series will be a highlight in Karlovy Vary's Industry Days program. In an exclusive on-stage conversation, he will reflect on his extraordinary contribution to television and film storytelling, while discussing the evolution of the audiovisual industry and creative risks.



Photo Credit: Devin Yalkin, The New York Times

The topics of discussion will draw from his more than fifty years of experience in the industry. Chase moved to Los Angeles after he completed graduate studies at Stanford University, earning credits on such notable series as *The Magician* and *Kolchak: The Night Stalker*. He eventually became a writer and producer for the classic NBC series *The Rockford Files*, for which he was awarded his first Emmy in 1978, in the category of



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Outstanding Drama Series. He received his second Emmy in 1980 for his script for the television film *Off the Minnesota Strip*, which also earned him a Writers Guild of America Award.

Chase began directing in the 1980s when he directed an episode he had written for *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*. He received further Emmy nominations for the series *Northern Exposure* and *I'll Fly Away*.

The Sopranos debuted in January 1999 and went on to become arguably the most celebrated work in the history of cable television. The mafia saga was an absolute pop cultural phenomenon, running six seasons (1999–2007) and earning numerous awards, including 21 Emmys, five Golden Globes, and a George Foster Peabody Award – the “television Pulitzer.”

Chase made his feature film directorial debut with 2012's *Not Fade Away*. This musical tale of growing up in an American suburb in the 1960s was one of the main attractions at the 50th anniversary New York Film Festival and was subsequently released in cinemas by Paramount Pictures.

In October 2021, the Warner Bros.-produced *The Many Saints of Newark*, a long-anticipated prequel to *The Sopranos*, opened in cinemas. David Chase wrote the film's screenplay and acted as its producer.

His exceptional status was further confirmed by his recent induction into the New Jersey Hall of Fame (2023). In addition, to mark the 25th anniversary of *The Sopranos*, director Alex Gibney dedicated a two-part documentary to Chase titled *Wise Guy: David Chase and The Sopranos*, which premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival.

David Chase will discuss his illustrious career in a special moderated discussion with Zac Ntim of *Deadline*. **The event will take place on Wednesday, July 8, as part of the Screen Focus Sessions on the Film Industry Main Stage at the Kaiserbad.**



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**FROM EMMY-WINNING CINEMATOGRAPHER TO OSCAR-WINNING PRODUCERS.
THE KARLOVY VARY FESTIVAL WELCOMES LEADING FILM INDUSTRY
PROFESSIONALS**

In addition to an exclusive conversation with David Chase, the Industry Days program lineup at the Kaiserbad will offer a deep insight into the behind-the-scenes of global production and casting. Among the guests who will share their experience from July 5 to 8 are *Succession* director and cinematographer Andrij Parekh, Mollye Asher and Greg Shapiro, the recognized producers of the Oscar-winning films *Nomadland* and *The Hurt Locker*, respectively, and industry legend Debbie McWilliams, a casting director who has spent decades casting James Bond films. Another key theme of this year's edition will be technological transformation and storytelling in the era of artificial intelligence. The festival guests will also include Oscar-winning producer John Lesher and director and screenwriter Sophie Barthes, whose film *Cold Souls* was included in the Official Selection of the 44th Karlovy Vary International Film Festival and won the Best Actor award.



Andrij Parekh



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Standing behind the hit series *Succession* is **Andrij Parekh**, a graduate of Prague's FAMU and one of the most respected cinematographers and directors working today, who earned an Emmy Award for directing *Hunting*, an episode of the successful series. Also accepting the invitation is **Sharon Horgan**, the BAFTA-winning and Emmy-nominated actress, screenwriter, and producer responsible for such award-winning titles as *Bad Sisters*, *Catastrophe*, and *Divorce*. These two filmmakers will appear together on Wednesday, July 8, at the session titled ***The Cinematic Series: Storytelling in the Age of Streaming***, which follows right after the discussion with the creator of *The Sopranos*.

Polish director **Jan Holoubek**, who filmed the successful Netflix series *Heweliusz* about the tragic sinking of the eponymous ferry in the 1990s, will appear on **Wednesday, July 8**, as part of a discussion titled ***Marketing Starts in Development: How Great Series Build Their Audience Before They Exist***.

The festival's Industry Program also features an exceptionally strong lineup of world-class producers responsible for some of the most notable productions in recent years.

These include **Ben Jackson** and **Katie Sinclair** of Riff Raff Entertainment, a production company founded by actor Jude Law. The two producers have brought to life the series *Black Rabbit* and the crime thriller *The Order*, which premiered at the Venice Film Festival in 2024 and will be screened this year in Karlovy Vary. On **Tuesday, July 7**, both guests will take part in a Cinematic Focus discussion panel titled ***Production Company Spotlight: Riff Raff Entertainment***.

Also on **Tuesday, July 7**, two top names associated with Oscar-winning films will appear at a discussion titled ***Curating Projects and Building a Producing Identity***. Sharing their experiences with audiences are **Mollye Asher**, producer of Chloé Zhao's award-winning films *Nomadland* and *The Rider* and **Greg Shapiro**, who produced the war drama *The Hurt Locker* and the science-fiction film *Voyagers*.

Mollye Asher is coming to Karlovy Vary as part of a prestigious Film Independent workshop organized for Czech and Slovak Producers. In addition, on **Monday, July 6**, she will appear with Mathias Noschis, strategist for the Alphapanda agency, as part of a discussion panel titled ***Audience First: Rethinking Film Marketing Before Distribution***.



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On **Monday, July 6**, experienced producer of feature films (*Suspiria*) and top-notch documentaries (*Sea of Shadows* and the Oscar-nominated *The Ivory Game*)

Michael Frenschkowski will be one of the main speakers of the Cinematic Focus block. In his keynote speech titled ***Reinventing Yourself as Everything Changes***, he will reflect on his own creative path in a dynamically changing cinema landscape.

A co-founder of the Fabula production company, **Juan de Dios Larraín** is one of the leading producers of Spanish-language cinema. His impressive portfolio includes the Oscar-winning *A Fantastic Woman*, the award-winning *The Eternal Memory*, and two films – *Spencer* and *Maria* – on which he collaborated with his brother Pablo. On **Monday, July 6**, he and curator Steffen Kottkamp will present their new projects aimed at offering producers and other filmmakers alternative distribution paths. Their panel discussion is titled ***The Future of Film Distribution Is Already Here: Same Problem – Opposite Directions***.



Cecilia Shen

Cecilia Shen, alumna of the global Forbes 30 Under 30 class of 2026 and CEO of the Utopai AI studio in Silicon Valley, will present her vision of the technological future of film and television production as part of a block titled ***The Next Studio: Building Stories in the Age of AI***. Shen founded Utopai Studios, an innovative AI production company working with its own artificial intelligence models, after her departure from Google X labs. Today, the company is valued at an estimated \$1 billion dollars. Utopai has already produced the two-part historical epic *Cortés* and is currently preparing, among other things, an animated series with NBA stars James Harden and Carmelo Anthony.

Artificial intelligence will also be the subject of the panel discussion ***Production Value Reimagined: How Technology Is Expanding What Producers Can Achieve***. The discussion is directly followed by an intensive hands-on workshop organized in



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cooperation with Plot Next that will provide an in-depth introduction to innovative AI tools. All three events are held on the afternoon of **Wednesday, July 8**, as part of **Screen Focus Sessions**, which is organized in collaboration with the VOD platform Oneplay.

Several special panels and KVIFF Talks will also present trendsetters from other film professions. Members of the public and industry insiders alike can look forward to a meeting with leading British casting director **Debbie McWilliams**, who has cast every James Bond film since 1981's *For Your Eyes Only* and who also worked on the cult comedy *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*. Her **KVIFF Talk will take place on Friday, July 10, in the Festival Lounge at the Hotel Thermal**.



Debbie McWilliams

The subject of casting will be discussed at two talks organized on **Thursday, July 9**, by the International Casting Directors Association on the Film Industry Workshop Stage in the Kaiserbad. Actress **Aňa Geislerová**, among others, will discuss the reputation of actors



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from Central and Eastern Europe. **Nancy Bishop**, casting director for *Borat Subsequent Moviefilm* and the recently completed *Kristallnacht*, starring Clive Owen and Mélanie Laurent, will be part of a panel tackling the complex process of creating a perfect cast.

Unless noted otherwise, all events take place on the Film Industry Main Stage in the Kaiserbad. You can find the full program of KVIFF Industry Days on the [festival's official website](#). Industry Days are supported by the PPF Foundation and the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic.



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THE 60TH KVIFF LINEUP BOOSTED BY DUO OF HIGHLY ANTICIPATED CZECH TITLES

The film program of this year's KVIFF is ramping up its local presence, locking in two prominent domestic releases that entice audiences with their sleek genre execution. ***The Cursed Warrior*** (*Bojovník*) is a feature-length debut from Vojtěch Frič and Tomáš Dianiška, which promises a compelling, high-stakes narrative blending raw emotional depth with unapologetic, hard-hitting action. On the episodic front, festival goers will get an exclusive first look at ***Filter***, a buzzy new six-part miniseries from Czech Television. Helmed by the talented David Semler, the series centers on the turbulent, challenging period of transition from childhood into young adulthood.



The Cursed Warrior

The Cursed Warrior (dir. Vojtěch Frič, Tomáš Dianiška, Czech Republic/Slovakia 2026, 120 min.)

Years after retiring, former European boxing champion and Olympic medalist Pavel "Hoff" Hoffmeister (Milan Ondřík) accepts a lucrative offer to return to a world that used to be his entire life. Instead of a boxing ring, however, he'll be getting into an MMA cage to fight the



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feared Hungarian Béla Kardos (Ján Jackuliak). Can a father-son trainer duo (Pavel Rímský and Martin Finger) help the determined Hoff get back in shape and succeed in a world of new rules and also in the minefield of strained family relationships? Applying their knowledge of the genre and its best examples (*Rocky*, *Fists in the Dark*, *The Wrestler*), the creators of this eagerly anticipated film depict the world of dramatic encounters in the octagon with a sense of respect but also with subtly humorous detachment.



Filter

Filter (dir. David Semler, Czech Republic 2026, 151 min.)

Sixteen is a difficult age. Besides having to choose a high school (and pass entrance exams), it's also a time of finding oneself – emotionally, sexually, and just sort of in general. Matty knows that he wants to study art, that he likes boys, that he doesn't like his mother's new partner, and that he can rely on his friends – but he definitely did not expect to fall in love during exams. Radek is great, but their relationship isn't, and so the difficulties start to mount. An exclusive sneak preview of director David Semler's new Czech Television miniseries, *Filter*.



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WHERE TO SEE THE STARS AT THE 60TH KVIFF

Opening Ceremony

The Opening Night of the 60th KVIFF begins on **Friday, July 3rd at 6:00 PM**.

The Red Carpet **opens at 4:00 PM** with a musical performance by Annet X and NobodyListen, followed by the gradual arrivals of the Opening Ceremony guests on the red carpet in front of the entrance to the Hotel Thermal Grand Hall. The red carpet arrivals will be accompanied by hosts.

The Opening Ceremony will be broadcast live on the KVIFF.TV platform, in Czech only.

Guests of the 60th KVIFF

MAGGIE GYLLENHAAL

July 3, 6:00 PM, Opening Ceremony, Thermal, Grand Hall

Red carpet arrival

Will receive the President's Award

July 4, 10:30 PM Thermal, Grand Hall

Red carpet arrival

Will introduce the film *The Bride!*

JESSE EISENBERG

July 3, 6:00 PM, Opening Ceremony, Thermal, Grand Hall

Red carpet arrival

July 4, 11:00 AM Thermal, Grand Hall

Red carpet arrival

Will receive the President's Award

Will introduce the film *The Double*

Followed by a post-screening Q&A



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July 4, 5:00 PM, Thermal, Festival Lounge

KVIFF Talk with the audience

DUSTIN HOFFMAN

July 3, 6:00 PM, Opening Ceremony, Thermal, Grand Hall

Red carpet arrival

Will receive the Crystal Globe for Outstanding Artistic Contribution to World Cinema

July 4, 2:00 PM, Thermal, Grand Hall

Will introduce the film *The Graduate*

HARVEY KEITEL

July 3, 6:00 PM, Opening Ceremony, Thermal, Grand Hall

Red carpet arrival

July 5, 10:30 PM, Thermal, Grand Hall

Red carpet arrival

Will introduce the film *Mean Streets*

ROBERT RICHARDSON

July 5, 2:00 PM, Thermal, Grand Hall

Red carpet arrival together with the film delegation

Will receive the Crystal Globe for Outstanding Artistic Contribution to World Cinema

Will introduce the film *Robert Richardson: The While Devil*

July 5, 5:00 PM, Thermal, Festival Lounge

KVIFF Talk: Awards Chatter Live with Robert Richardson



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KEVIN BACON, KYRA SEDGWICK, TRAVIS BACON

July 10, 10:30 PM, Thermal, Grand Hall

Red carpet arrival

Will introduce the film *The Family Movie*

JULIETTE BINOCHE

July 9, 2:00 PM, Thermal, Grand Hall

Red carpet arrival

Will present the film *In–I in Motion*

July 9, 10:00 PM Karlovy Vary Theatre

Will present the film *Certified Copy*

July 10, 11:00 AM, Thermal, Grand Hall

Will present the film *Three Colours: Blue*

July 11, 6:00 PM, Closing Ceremony, Thermal, Grand Hall

Red carpet arrival

Will receive the Crystal Globe for Outstanding Artistic Contribution to World Cinema

MAGDA VÁŠÁRYOVÁ

July 9, 12:15 PM, KVIFF.TV Park

KVIFF Talk with the actress Magda Vašáryová, and her daughter, writer Hana Lasicová

July 9, 4:00 PM Karlovy Vary Theatre

Will present the film *Birds, Orphans and Fools*

July 11, 6:00 PM Closing Ceremony, Thermal, Grand Hall

Red carpet arrival

Will receive the President's Award



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JEFFREY WRIGHT

July 10, 2:00 PM, Thermal, Grand Hall

Red carpet arrival

Will present the film *Basquiat*

July 11, 6:00 PM Closing Ceremony, Thermal, Grand Hall

Red carpet arrival

Will receive the President's Award

Delegation for Crystal Globe Competition Films

They always arrive via the red carpet at the Hotel Thermal Grand Hall.

Detailed information can be found in the event overview and the festival program.

Daily at 4:00 PM (starting July 5th), Meet & Greet sessions with competition film delegations will take place at the KVIFF.TV Park – for details, visit www.kviff.com in the [accompanying program](#) section.