

20th BRATISLAVA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

20th Bratislava IFF Pays Tribute to Women and Robert Redford

Bratislava, November 20, 2018

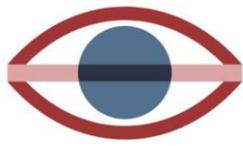
Between 29 November and 2 December 2018, the Bratislava cinemas Lumière and Mladost' will brim with extraordinary films from all around the globe. The Bratislava International Film Festival is here with its attractive programme sections designated to showcase the finest of world cinema. A special status was given to the topic of women in society and cinema, which is reflected in this year's section Lexicon, as well as in the festival spot and visual identity.

The curators of the section *Lexicon: Female gaze*, festival programmer Tomáš Hudák and the director of this year's festival spot Ivana Hucíková, have focused on the status of women in cinema, their portrayal in film, and the uniqueness of a woman's experience. The topic also served as inspiration for the festival spot. The half-minute video is a montage of films directed mainly by women filmmakers. Their protagonists are women of different colour, appearance, age, and character in various life situations. In the background, we can hear the voice of the musician Katarzia, who's asking: "Do you think we can't change anything, because we're just women?", a lyric excerpt from the song *Dolls Are Killing Each Other*, found on her new album *Antigona*, on which Katarzia (Katarína Kubošiová) cooperated with Pjoni (Jonatán Pastirčák). "The past year has been - not only in the cinema - the year of #MeToo, and that is part of why we've decided to reflect on the status of women in society and cinema. We have chosen the topic of female gaze as opposed to the male gaze, identified by the film theorist Laura Mulvey. In the section we give space to women authors, we try to bring attention to the female experience, which is - in film as well as the society - often overlooked, reflect on how women were and are depicted in film and remind that there is no such thing as male and female genres," say the curators. "It is, however, not just about this one section. Five out of the eight films in the Fiction Competition have been shot by female directors and even other sections will present films disrupting the male gaze hegemony "

One of these is a debut by the Cypriot director, screenwriter and producer Tonie Mishiali **Pause** (*Pafsi*, 2018). The story draws us into the monotonous life of a not so happily married Elpida (Greek for *hope*), a middle-aged woman living in a patriarchal, conservative-oriented society with a despotic husband. **Beau travail** (1999) is a work of the French director Claire Denis, inspired by Herman Melville's novel *Billy Budd*. The story centres around Sergeant Galoup, who is trying to destroy his subordinate Gilles Sentain. Through the main storyline, the director reveals her idea about the life of soldiers. The female gaze is amplified by Denis' long-time director of photography Agnès Godard, presenting the images of male strength and beauty, but also their weakness. A sexist view of women and their depiction in film is reflected in Diego Galán's documentary film **Barefoot in the Kitchen** (*Con la pata quebrada*, 2013). The Spanish director captures the often funny, but also tearfully stereotypical scenes from selected Spanish films made from 1930s up to now.

The popular section *Cinema Now* brings an overview of the most remarkable films of the season. Its curators, Nenad Dukić and Tomáš Hudák, have assembled the most interesting movies that have stirred the waters of world's major festivals. For 20 years, the Bratislava IFF has been supplying the Slovak film public with names, which often become stars of the screen.

Forbidden love in Kenya is a subject-matter developed by the director Wanuri Kahiu and her film **Rafiki** (2018). Homophobia, coming-out, misunderstanding and refusing love from the people of the same sex, but also joy is what we explore through the story of two daughters of competing politicians. Kena is a smart student whose ambition is to become a nurse, although she could very well aspire to be a doctor. Her best friend Blacksta, a pal from street soccer, games and life in



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general, secretly awaits the day when Kena will become his wife. However, she's only got eyes for the extravagant Ziki and her dreadlocks. The film was banned in Kenya, but the spectator community of Cannes festival received it warmly.

Fans of Vanessa Paradis can look forward to **Knife + Heart** (*Un couteau dans la coeur*, 2018). She portrays the main protagonist Anne, a lesbian producer of gay porn at the end of 1970s in Paris, going through a breakup with her long-time partner. The French director Yann Gonzalez makes her existential crisis even deeper, when a serial killer appears and starts murdering the actors from Anne's films. Sombreness taking turn with relieving humour, dark atmosphere and shots, a mix of genres, neon lights and captivating soundtrack by M83 give the film strength and a sense of mystique.

The daring documentary **Putin's Witnesses** (*Svideteli Putin*, 2018) clarifies the situation which arose at the turn of 1999 and 2000. The new Russian President is Vladimir Putin. One of the members in his closest team is the documentary filmmaker Vitaly Mansky, whose task is to record the President during his office hours. In his outraged film the director offers the viewer first-hand information – his archive footage, authentic images, testimonies and statements shedding light on one of the world's most central policymakers and the early stages of his tyrannical government. The film had its world premiere at the Karlovy Vary IFF, where it won the Best Documentary award.

The Bratislava IFF will also present the awaited biographical film by the director and scriptwriter David Lowery. **The Old Man & The Gun** (2018) is the last film ever to star Robert Redford. After 60 years of acting, the 82-year-old star of the screen decided to round off his career with the role of a 70-year-old bank robber Forrest Trucker, who has managed to escape from prison 17 times. Now he could finally enjoy retirement, but he cannot seem to resist the temptation and organize another bank robbery.

The Bratislava International Film Festival acts as a platform where the general viewing public, cinephiles as well as film professionals from Slovakia and abroad meet and interact. Ever since its establishment in 1999, it has been developing its identity of a young cinema festival and event aiming to discover new names and future stars of contemporary film.

For the latest updates on the programme of the 20th Bratislava International Film Festival, please visit our official website at www.bratislavaiff.sk/en or our official Facebook account at www.facebook.com/bratislavaiff/.

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29 November - 02 December 2018

Kino Lumière, Kino Mladost'

Kino MIER Modra, Kino Záhoran Malacky, Artkino METRO Trenčín

Main Organiser: **Partners Production**

The Bratislava International Film Festival is held with the generous financial support of: **Slovak Audiovisual Fund, the Bratislava Self-Governing region**

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