

Days of European Film Festival Will Open Tomorrow with the Drama *L'immensità* Starring Penélope Cruz

Prague, 19 April 2023 – On Thursday, the 30th annual edition of the Days of European Film (DEF) festival will start in Prague, Brno and Ostrava. Up until 25 April, audience members will be able to choose from a genre-rich programme representing the most contemporary film production from nearly 30 countries. Cinemas will screen comedies, dramas, documentaries as well as films where music plays the lead role from both famous directors and promising debutant directors. *“The contemporary European filmmakers focus on topics such as coming of age, disinformation, changes in the society, and events at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries, environmentalism and sustainability. We thus bring unique testimony of the present times and recent past from various parts of Europe,”* says Šimon Šafránek, the festival’s programming director.

Most films offered by the festival will have their Czech premieres. The opening film by director Emanuele Crialese *L'immensità* starring Penélope Cruz, *Bread and Salt* by Damian Kocur and *The Worst Ones* by Lise Akoka and Romane Gueret, which received awards at the festivals in Venice and Cannes, respectively, or *Rhinogold*, an explosive new film by Fatih Akin, to whose works one of the programme’s sections is dedicated, as well as the comedy *Fathers and Mothers* by Paprika Steen will be screened for the first time in our country.

DEF awards will be ceremoniously presented in Prague on 25 April. The panel of judges for the main debut competition will be composed of Pavel Strnad, Hana Vagnerová, Aleš Stuchlý and Juraj Lehotský. The decision on who will receive the award in the best musical film category will be made by Karel Veselý, Jay Walker and Ivar Murd.

The festival’s atmosphere will be made more exciting by meetings with filmmakers. Ann Oren and Colm Bairéad will present their films in person. Israeli visual artist and director Ann Oren working in Berlin will bring drama *Piaffe* about sexual awakening and the power of sound. Director Colm Bairéad and producer Cleona Ní Chruailaóí will present an Irish debut *The Quiet Girl*, which received an Oscar nomination. Both creators will also conduct a masterclass in Prague. Adam Sedlák will also present his film *BANGER*. at the festival in person.

After selected screenings, DEF will also offer debates with experts on the given topic, for example, with economist Danuše Nerudová, historian Luboš Švec, journalists Ondřej Soukup, Pavel Turek and Vít Schmarc, philosopher Anna Hogenová or documentary filmmaker and writer Steve Lichtag. The programme also includes screenings and workshops for children or seniors.

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From 20 to 25 April, the festival takes place in the Lucerna, Světozor and Přítomnost cinemas in Prague, in the Scala and Art cinemas in Brno and in the Etáž and Minikino cinemas in Ostrava. Special screenings in full dome format will be offered by the festival in the Observatory in Brno and the Planetarium in Ostrava. From 26 to 30 April, as part of Festival Echoes, the festival will come to dozens of cinemas in other cities and towns across the Czech Republic. All foreign language films will be screened with Czech and, in most cases, English subtitles.

The complete programme and tickets are available at eurofilmfest.cz.

On 20 April, DEF will be opened in the Přítomnost cinema in Prague by the Italian-French film *L'immensità*, which takes place in Rome in the mid-1970s. World-famous Penélope Cruz plays a woman whose marriage is crumbling and is only maintained for the sake of children. The oldest daughter Adriana, who feels as a boy and tries to convince all the people around her of this, is carefully observing the tension between her parents. This unrestrained film about the complexity of coming of age was directed by Emanuele Crialese.

The main competition, which focuses on debuts, will feature several films, in which new child or young actors gave excellent performances and which include a Portuguese film titled *Alma Viva* or a Latvian drama titled *Sisters*. "The irony is that the debut section of the programme also includes a fantastic parkour drama *Off the Rails* by Peter Day, an established English television producer, which is regarded as the new *Trainspotting*," remarks Šimon Šafránek.

The competition of musical films will feature a varied mix of films based on true events and dynamic documentaries. It will also introduce a new film titled *Rhinogold* by Fatih Akin, a winner of the Golden Bear award at Berlinale, which shows the turbulent life of the rapper Xatar, or a film titled *Meet Me In The Bathroom* by the established pair Will Lovelace and Dylan Southern, which is an adaptation of the eponymous book about the New York rock scene at the beginning of the millennium. "I am very happy that the selection includes the sci-fi drama *The Gravity* by Cédric Ido where social gangster films from Parisian housing estates meet the atmosphere of von Trier's *Melancholy*, with all this being accompanied by the unique music composed by siblings Evgueni Galperine and Sacha Galperine," Šimon Šafránek adds his tip.

The overwhelming majority of films in the DEF programme will have their **Czech premieres**, including the ones, which received awards at major world-class festivals. The film *The Worst Ones* by directors Lise Akoka and Romane Gueret, who won the Un Certain Regard section with it, was highly acclaimed in Cannes. The best director award at the same festival was won by Alexandru Belc for his Romanian retro film *Metronome*. In the Orizzonti section of the festival in Venice, Italy, the best director award was won by Tizza Covi and Rainer Frimmel for their melancholy portrait *Vera*. The

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Polish film **Bread and Salt** by director Damian Kocur won the Special Jury Prize in Venice. The Swiss drama **Thunder** by director Carmen Jaquier and the avant-garde film **Piaffe** by visual artist Ann Oren featuring the excellent Simone Bucio in the role of a film sound engineer, who starts to develop a horse tail as a result of working on a commercial with a horse, were also presented at international festivals. Another film that will have its Czech premiere will be the comedy **Fathers and Mothers** by renowned Danish director and actress Paprika Steen, in which parents and their offspring embark on a weekend school field trip.

The festival will also screen Oscar-nominated films. The drama **The Quiet Girl** by director Colm Bairéad takes place in the Irish countryside in 1981 where a timorous nine-year-old girl named Cáit is growing up with her problematic parents. Another Oscar-nominated film is the subtle story by Belgian director Lukas Dhont titled **Close**, which tells about two inseparable friends who, after spending carefree summer vacation together, find themselves at school where they are having difficulty integrating into the broader collective of boys. The melancholy drama **Aftersun** was also nominated for an Oscar and tells the story of a divorced young father and his adolescent daughter on vacation in a seaside resort in Turkey. This sensitive film by Scottish director Charlotte Wells will close the festival.

Several films deal with the theme of coping with the collapse of the Soviet Union and topical themes such as fight for freedom and the need to face all kinds of disinformation. This is reflected in the Estonian film **Kalev** by director Ove Musting, which follows participation of the Estonian national basketball team in a Soviet prestigious tournament in 1990, as well as in the drama **January** by Latvian director Viesturs Kairišs, which takes place in the early 1990s when Latvia started its journey towards independence.

For a long time, the festival has also given opportunities to films dealing with wildlife issues. This year, in a preview, we will screen the wildlife documentary **Whale Nation**, in which Jean-Albert Lièvre takes the audience to rare humpback whales, as well as the documentary essay **Who We Were** by renowned German filmmaker Marc Bauder.

DEF has a new feature called Focus, which means there is a focus on the cross-border area of Benelux. *"We highlight Benelux as the centre of co-productions and a proof that even small countries can play a prominent role in the film industry,"* Šimon Šafránek explains the focus of this year's annual edition of the festival whose programme will include, for example, the explosive drama **Rebel** by Adil El Arbi and Bilall Fallah, progressive Belgian creators with Moroccan background. Audience will also be able to watch the film **Zillion** about the origin of an eccentric disco club in the heart of Antwerp, based on true events. This film by Robin Pront was a hit in Belgium and the Czech audience will be able to see for themselves that the "nineties" were wild not only in our country. A media frenzy surrounding a presumed suspect of a brutal murder is the theme of another film, which is titled **The Judgement** and was directed by Dutch director Sander Burger.

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Accompanying Programme

The traditionally rich **accompanying programme of DEF** includes KINO 2023 seminars for cinema operators as well as events supporting animals and nature. *“The festival will also include a charity exhibition in the Lucerna cinema, organised in collaboration with the Voice of Animals society and, on the occasion of the Earth Day, the festival will offer films about the fascinating world below the surface of the ocean and about our historical approach to the planet in the Observatory in Brno. After the screening of the film *Whale Nation*, a discussion will be held there with documentary filmmaker, writer and adventurer **Steve Lichtag**,”* explains Barbora Gولاتová, the festival director. Other accompanying events will also focus on current phenomena resonating across Europe, such as social changes, LGBT issues or the increasingly topical theme of disinformation. The Prague screening of the film *January* will be followed by a discussion on the topic of disinformation, encroachment on the rights of sovereign states and hybrid threats, which will be attended by **Monika Ladmanová**, the Head of European Commission Representation in the Czech Republic, **Ondřej Soukup**, an editor at *Hospodářské noviny*, **Luboš Švec**, a historian from the Institute of International Studies at the Faculty of Social Sciences of the Charles University, and **Oldřich Bruža**, a cybersecurity expert. The screening of *Triangle of Sadness* will be accompanied by a debate on the state of and changes in the Czech and European societies with kinanthropologist and philosopher **Anna Hogenová**. Invitation to a debate was also accepted by **Danuše Nerudová**, an economist and a presidential ex-candidate, whom the audience will be able to meet after the screenings of *Alcarràs* and *Burning Days* in Brno. A debate on the topic of Queer Europe will be held after the screenings of *Will-o'-the-Wisp* and *Close* and will be attended by, for example, political scientist and politician **Pavλίna Springerová**. The debates will be moderated by **Zuzana Tvarůžková**, **Michael Rozsypal** or **Lukáš Rumlena**.

The screenings of films for children will be combined with creative animation workshops and there will also be the usual afternoon screenings for seniors for affordable prices as well as school screenings combined with theme-specific educational discussions.

Festival Awards

Since last year, **DEF** has been a competition festival and **gives several awards**. **In the main debut competition**, the decision will be made by a panel of judges composed of film producer Pavel Strnad, actress Hana Vagnerová, film critic Aleš Stuchlý and director Juraj Lehotský. DEF will also give award to the **best musical film** of this year's edition of the festival. In

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this case, the winner will be chosen by a panel of judges composed of music journalist and writer Karel Veselý, American director Jay Walker and Estonian documentary filmmaker, screenwriter and director Ivar Murd. The winners will be announced on 25 April. Another award to be given is the **LUX Audience Award**, which is given by the European Parliament in cooperation with the European Film Academy. Audience members can vote on the winning film at luxaward.eu/cs/ until 12 June.

Echoes in Regions

The Festival Echoes in regions will take place in cinemas in Boskovice (Panorama cinema), Haviřov (Centrum cinema), Červený Kostelec (Luník cinema), Jablonec nad Nisou (Junior cinema), Hradec Králové (Bio Central cinema), Hodonín (Svět cinema), Vrchlabí (Střelnice cinema), Šumperk (Oko cinema), Vyškov (Sokolský dům cinema) and Znojmo (Svět cinema) between 26 and 30 April.

Days of European Film (DEF) – List of All Sections and Films

For the First Time

They disrupt the old ways and wish to have their own voice be heard. The DEF programme competition that will give The Best European Debut of the Year award will consist of daring films of the upcoming generation of filmmakers.

Alma Viva, directed by Cristèle Alves Meira (Portugal, 2022)
Thunder, directed by Carmen Jaquier (Switzerland, 2022)
Bread and Salt, directed by Damian Kocur (Poland, 2022)
Metronome, directed by Alexandru Belc (Romania / France, 2022)
The Quiet Girl, directed by Colm Bairéad (Ireland, 2021)
Off the Rails, directed by Peter Day (United Kingdom, 2022)
Piaffe, directed by Ann Oren (Germany, 2022)
Sisters, directed by Linda Olte (Latvia / Italy, 2022)
The Worst Ones, directed by Lise Akoka, Romane Gueret (France, 2022)

Film & Music

Tones and melodies set the rhythm in this competition section focused on avant-garde, documentaries and live action films where music plays the lead role.

The Gravity, directed by Cédric Ido (France, 2022)
Meet Me in the Bathroom, directed by Will Lovelace, Dylan Southern (United Kingdom, 2022)
Karaoke Paradise, directed by Einari Paakkanen (Finland, 2022)
Zillion, directed by Robin Pront (Belgium / Netherlands, 2022)
Rhinegold, directed by Fatih Akin (Germany / Italy / Netherlands, 2022)

No Parents

First loves, fears and friendships. Films focusing on the present-day lives of children

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and adolescents.

Banger., directed by Adam Sedlák (Czechia, 2022)

Mission Ulja Funk, directed by Barbara Kronenberg (Germany / Luxembourg / Poland, 2022)

Fathers and Mothers, directed by Paprika Steen (Denmark, 2022)

Rebel, directed by Adil El Arbi, Bilall Fallah (Belgium / Luxembourg / France, 2022)
– distributed by Film Europe

A Cat's Life, directed by Guillaume Maudatchevsky (France 2023)

Stars

World-renowned creators, star actors, prestigious festivals. A selection of contemporary hits you should not miss out on.

Aftersun, directed by Charlotte Wells (United Kingdom / USA, 2022) – distributed by Aerofilms

Hilma, directed by Lasse Hallström (Sweden, 2022)

L'immensità, directed by Emanuele Crialese (Italy / France, 2022)

The Victim, directed by Michal Blaško (Slovakia / Czechia / Germany, 2022)

Vera, directed by Tizza Covi, Rainer Frimmel (Austria, 2022)

More Than Ever, directed by Emily Atef (France / Germany / Luxembourg / Norway, 2022)

There's a Hope

A section focused on films, which search for harmony with nature and prompt questions regarding sustainability and environmentalism.

Who We Were, directed by Marc Bauder (Germany, 2021) – distributed by Film Europe

Whale Nation, directed by Jean-Albert Lièvre (France, 2023) – distributed by Bohemia Motion Pictures

Wild Prague, directed by Jan Hošek (Czechia, 2022)

One for the River: The Sava Story, directed by Rožle Bregar (Slovenia, 2022)

To the Point: Disinformation

This traditional section made in collaboration with the European Commission Representation in the Czech Republic deals with disinformation and the grey zone between the truth and a lie.

Blockade, directed by Ádám Tóšér (Hungary, 2022)

Kalev, directed by Ove Musting (Estonia, 2022)

January, directed by Viesturs Kairišs (Latvia / Poland / Lithuania, 2021)

Phi 1.618, directed by Theodore Ushev (Bulgaria / Canada, 2022)

Butterfly Vision, directed by Maksym Nakonechnyi (Ukraine / Czechia / Croatia / Sweden, 2022)

The Judgement, directed by Sander Burger (Netherlands, 2020)

LUX – Audience Award

A selection of films nominated for the LUX Audience Award given by the European Parliament in collaboration with the European Film Academy. Audience members themselves will choose the winner with their votes.

Alcarràs, directed by Carla Simón (Spain / Italy, 2022)

Close, directed by Lukas Dhont (Belgium / Netherlands / France, 2022) –

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distributed by Artcam

Will-o'-the-Wisp, directed by João Pedro Rodrigues (Portugal / France, 2022)

Burning Days, directed by Emin Alper (Turkey, 2022)

Triangle of Sadness, directed by Ruben Östlund (Sweden / France / United Kingdom / Germany, 2022)

MEDIA – Tribute to Fatih Akin

One new and several older films by this German director who has won the audience's hearts with his spontaneous story-telling and portraits of heroes torn between the modern times and tradition.

The Edge of Heaven, directed by Fatih Akin (Germany / Turkey / Italy, 2007)

In the Fade, directed by Fatih Akin (Germany / France, 2017)

Soul Kitchen, directed by Fatih Akin (Germany, 2009)

The Golden Glove, directed by Fatih Akin (Germany, 2019)

Rhinegold, directed by Fatih Akin (Germany / Italy / Netherlands, 2022)

Special Screenings in Fulldome Format

-22.7 °C, directed by Dirty Monitor, Molécule (Belgium / Canada / France, 2022)

Hazelnuts, directed by Damien Maugin (France, 2022)

Moonbase – The Next Step, directed by Graham Watts (United Kingdom, 2022)

Links:

Website: www.dnyevropskehofilmu.cz

Facebook: www.facebook.com/DnyEvropskehoFilmu/

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