

FILM TALENT

ACADEMY



First Feature LAB |



Short Film LAB |



IN COLLABORATION WITH
SFC | RENDEZ-VOUS INDUSTRY

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#CREATIVEEUROPEMEDIAESKORATIA



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CITY-KINO



IN COLLABORATION WITH SFC | RENDEZ-VOUS INDUSTRY FESTIVAL DE CANNES 2026

We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to the entire SFC | Rendez-vous Industry team for their generous support and inspiring collaboration.

Florian Fernandez
SFC | Rendez-vous Industry
Head of SFC | Rendez-vous Industry

Célie Chollois-Le Toulouse
SFC | Rendez-vous Industry
Publication & Film Liaison

Ophélie Logié
SFC | Rendez-vous Industry
Institutions & Market Liaison

Céline Roustan
SFC | Rendez-vous Industry
Coordination & Development

FILM TALENT ACADEMY LINZ ISFF

Launched in 2022, the **Film Talent Academy** of the Linz International Short Film Festival (Linz ISFF) has been dedicated to nurturing emerging filmmakers and providing them with the resources, mentorship, and exposure necessary to succeed in the film industry. In 2025, the Academy expanded with the introduction of the First Feature LAB, a new initiative for filmmakers working on their debut feature films. In 2026 we are launching the Script LAB. This expansion further strengthens the Academy's commitment to supporting talents at various stages of their projects.

The Film Talent Academy offers three key development programs: the **Short Film LAB**, **First Feature LAB** and **Script LAB**.

Participants in First Feature LAB and Short Film LAB will benefit from a 4-day residency at the Linz International Short Film Festival in Phase 1, where participants present their projects in official pitch sessions. Selected filmmakers then advance to Phase 2, receiving further online mentoring and personalized preparation sessions for their unique 4-day residency at the Festival de Cannes, providing access to an invaluable networking environment and the opportunity to attend exclusive panels, events and masterclasses and culminating in their pitch on the prestigious stages of Festival de Cannes.

A dedicated booth for the Film Talent Academy will be featured at the Short Film Corner in the Festival Palais, further fostering international exchange and connections between filmmakers and industry professionals.



Key Features

Short Film LAB, First Feature LAB & Script LAB: Tailored development programs for short films and debut feature films, offering personalized mentorship and professional insights from the industry.

Tailored Masterclasses: Renowned filmmakers and industry experts provide insights into directing, production, script development, and other essential filmmaking skills.

Pitch Sessions: After completing the online course, participants in the first phase of the Short Film LAB and First Feature LAB will pitch their projects during a four-day residency at the Linz International Short Film Festival. Selected participants will then advance to the second phase, where they will take part in intensive online programs and receive personalized feedback sessions with academy mentors to prepare for the residency and pitch at the Festival de Cannes. During a four-day stay in Cannes, they will present their projects.

Cannes Residency: Participants in the second phase of these programs will attend a 4-day residency at the Festival de Cannes, gaining valuable exposure and networking opportunities with industry leaders.

Dedicated Booth at Cannes: We host a booth at the Short Film Corner of the Festival de Cannes, offering a space to connect with industry professionals, showcase emerging talents, and foster collaboration.

We invite you to visit us, meet our team, learn more about our programs, and discover promising talents and projects in development. We welcome both filmmakers pitching for the 2026 Film Talent Academy and professionals seeking fresh voices.

FIRST FEATURE LAB

The First Feature LAB is an intensive two-phase program designed to support emerging writer-directors as they take the leap from short films to their debut feature. Combining professional mentorship, development tools, and international exposure, the LAB provides selected participants with a rare opportunity to sharpen their creative vision and pitch their projects on a global stage.


PHASE 1 – Online Masterclasses & Linz ISFF Residency

In September 2026, selected participants will engage in a series of online masterclasses focused on pitch training and project development. In October, they will attend a 4-day residency during the Linz International Short Film Festival, where they will pitch their feature projects in front of a professional selection committee. All participants in Phase 1 will receive a certificate of participation. From this group, approximately 5 feature film projects will be selected to move on to Phase 2.

PHASE 2 – Mentoring, Cannes Pitch Event & Cannes Residency

Running from January to May 2027, Phase 2 includes personalized mentorship, script feedback, and intensive project development sessions. The program culminates in an exclusive pitch session during Festival de Cannes 2027, connecting filmmakers with global producers, collaborators, and industry representatives.

Graduates of the LAB will be featured on the Talent page of the Linz ISFF website, and their final projects will be showcased in future editions of the festival.



Milda Baginskaitė
LINZ ISFF Pitch Session

ELIGIBILITY

Role of the Applicant The writer and director of the feature film project must be the same person.

Previous Experience Applicants should have experience in filmmaking, specifically having made at least one or two short films prior to applying.

Project Requirement The LAB is designed for filmmakers developing their debut feature film projects.

Selection Criteria Participants will be selected based on the strength of their project proposals, their passion for filmmaking, and their potential to make significant contributions to the industry.

Commitment Applicants must be able to commit to the full duration of the LAB, including both online courses and the residency in Cannes.

Language Proficiency in English is required for participation.

Participants Max. 6- 8 filmmakers with debut feature projects will be selected.



SHORT FILM LAB

The Short Film LAB is a dynamic two-phase development and industry-access program for promising emerging filmmakers developing their next short film. Designed to sharpen creative concepts, build professional networks, and elevate international visibility, the LAB helps filmmakers position their projects for success.

PHASE 1 – Online Masterclasses & Linz ISFF Residency

In September 2026, participants will join online masterclasses focused on pitching strategies and project presentation. In October, filmmakers will attend a 4-day residency during the Linz International Short Film Festival, where they'll pitch their short film projects in front of a selection committee. All participants will receive a certificate of participation. Around 10 projects will be selected to continue to Phase 2.

PHASE 2 – Mentoring, Cannes Pitch Event & Cannes Residency

From January to May 2027, selected filmmakers will receive focused mentorship, script guidance, and project refinement. The program concludes with a pitch session during Festival de Cannes 2027, offering direct access to international co-producers, curators, and industry professionals.



Mariia Felenko
LINZ ISFF Pitch Session



ELIGIBILITY

Role of the Applicant The writer and director of the short film project must be the same person.

Previous Experience Applicants should have experience in filmmaking, specifically having made at least one short films prior to applying.

Project Requirement The LAB is designed for filmmakers developing their next short film projects.

Selection Criteria Participants will be selected based on the strength of their project proposals, their passion for filmmaking, and their potential to make significant contributions to the film industry.

Commitment Applicants must be able to commit to the full duration of the LAB, including both online courses, the residency in Cannes and the pitch.

Language Proficiency in English is required for participation.

Participants Max. 8- 10 filmmakers with short film projects will be selected.



SCRIPT LAB

Script LAB is an intensive development program designed for filmmakers working on short and feature film screenplays. Combining personalized mentorship, group-based analysis, and guided rewriting processes, the Lab supports participants in strengthening their scripts and refining their storytelling approach.

The program follows a structured development process that moves from diagnosis to collective exploration, and finally to targeted revision.

The Script LAB is a development-focused program. Participants are expected to actively engage in discussions, provide feedback to others, and commit to rewriting their projects throughout the Lab.

PROGRAM FORMAT

2 individual mentoring sessions

3–4 group development sessions

Guided feedback and facilitation throughout the Lab

Focus on rewriting and practical development tools

Duration: 10 weeks (online)



Anastasiia Pashchenko
LINZ ISFF Pitch Session

ELIGIBILITY

Role of the Applicant Open to emerging writer-directors.

Previous Experience Applicants should have prior experience in screenwriting and filmmaking.

Project Requirement Applicants must apply with a film concept and treatment (short or feature-length). Projects can be at treatment or first draft stage.

Selection Criteria Applicants from all over the world are selected based on the strength of their concept, storytelling potential, and artistic vision. The writer and director should be the same person.

Commitment Participants must be available for all sessions.

Language English proficiency is required.

Participants Up to 10 short film projects, up to 5 feature film projects.



ISABELLE FAUVEL



MENTOR

After gathering experience as a producer at Flach Film, Isabelle Fauvel founded Initiative Film in 1993, the first company entirely dedicated to the creative development process. Since then, she has been working internationally, the privileged partner of writers, directors and producers for all matters regarding projects and talents development: talent scouting, book scouting, scriptwriting consultancies (on feature films and series), story editing, pitching training and insightful advising during the whole development process. As such, Isabelle has collaborated with many international festivals (Torino Film Lab, ACE Producers, MFI...) and is also a speaker for universities and film schools. Isabelle is also involved in building bridges with the publishing world at film adaptation events such as Shoot the Book! and the Polar en Séries Prize at the Quais du Polar festival in Lyon. In January 2025, Isabelle founded Silence&Conversation, a pioneering company that absorbed Initiative Film. Silence&Conversation aims to inspire thought and foster reflection on renewing the tools that support creativity and promote the development and circulation of talent.

ARASH T. RIAHI



MENTOR

Arash T. Riahi is a distinguished Austrian filmmaker, producer and screenwriter of Iranian origin. Arash is the founder and co-owner of Golden Girls Filmproduktion, one of Austria's most prominent independent production companies. Under his leadership, the company has produced numerous internationally recognized films that combine artistic vision with social impact. He is the co-president of the Austrian Academy of Film since 2021. His body of work as a director & producer won more than 200 awards and comprises various short and experimental films ("Mississippi"), documentaries, including 'Exile Family Movie' (Winner of Leipzig Filmfestival) or the cross-media project 'Everyday Rebellion' (CPH:DOX Audience Award). His first fiction film "For a Moment Freedom" was Austria's candidate for the Academy Awards in 2010. Since 2010, he is also working as a dramatic advisor (SOURCES 2, EAVE) and teaches at the Vienna film academy. The last films as a producer were "How to be normal" (Berlinale Perspectives 2025), "Perla" (Rotterdam Film Festival Tiger Competition 2025), "The Witness" (Winner of Venice Filmfestival, Orizzonti Extra 2024), "Eismayer" (2022, winner of Venice Critics week), "Born in Evin" (2020, Winner of Berlinale Documentary award), "Once upon a time in Venezuela" (2020 Sundance) and "Solo" (2019, Cannes Acid).

FLAVIO ARMONE



MENTOR

Flavio Armone graduated in Cinema History in his hometown, Torino (Italy). He started working in film festivals in 2004 and in 2015 he founded Lights On, an international sales agency. Lights On's line up is primarily focused on short films from promising authors, but the catalogue includes also some selected feature films such as "Lúa Vermella (Red Moon Tide)" by Lois Patiño (Berlinale Forum 2020), "Mammalia" by Sebastian Mihăilescu (Berlinale Forum 2023) and "Dreaming & Dying" by Nelson Yeo, winner of the Pardo d'oro and the Swatch First Feature Award at Locarno Film Festival 2023. "78 Days" by Emilija Gašić premiered at International Film Festival Rotterdam 2024. The films distributed by Lights On have premiered in some of the most prestigious festivals worldwide: Cannes Film Festival, Semaine de la Critique - Cannes, Sundance Film Festival, Locarno Film Festival, Quinzaine des Réalisateurs - Cannes, Venice Film Festival, International Film Festival Rotterdam.

MARTINA PETROVIĆ



MENTOR

She is Head of MEDIA Desk Croatia (today's Creative Europe Desk – MEDIA Office Croatia) and has studied International Relations and Psychology. She has gained most of her working experience at the Ministry of Culture, Department for International Cultural Cooperation, being responsible for various cultural exchange programmes between Croatia and other countries; among many activities, she was responsible for the organisation of Croatian film presentation during international film festivals in Berlin and Cannes. From 2008, she has been actively involved in establishing the Croatian Audiovisual Centre, where she has stayed, after being chosen by the European Commission as the Head of MEDIA Desk Croatia. Following immediate and successful results in terms of ensuring the financing by the MEDIA Programme, working thoroughly on the promotion of the Croatian film, resulted in receiving the first Albert Kapović Award by the Croatian Producers Association, given at the opening of Zagreb Film Festival in 2010.

PIROUZ NEMATI



MENTOR

Pirouz Nemati is an Iranian-Canadian actor, filmmaker, writer, and editor based in Montreal. He is internationally recognized for his work as co-writer and actor in the Canadian film "Universal Language" (2024), which premiered at the Cannes Film Festival, won the Audience Award at the Quinzaine des Cinéastes, and was submitted as Canada's official entry for the Academy Awards in the Best International Feature category. For this film, Nemati received nominations at the Canadian Screen Awards for Best Lead Performance in a Comedy and Best Original Screenplay. In the short film "Solitudes" (2025), which had its world premiere at the 78th Locarno Film Festival in the Pardi di Domani section and was nominated for the Pardino d'Oro Swiss Life Award, he played a central role. He also appears in "Inside Amir" (2025), a drama film screened in competition at the Giornate degli Autori section of the Venice Film Festival, in which he portrays a significant character—further evidence of his growing presence in international arthouse cinema. In addition to his acting and screenwriting work, Nemati is also active as an independent filmmaker. His documentary "Hemela", about Iranian-Canadian café entrepreneur Hemela Pourafzal, premiered at the 2025 Vancouver International Film Festival and highlights his versatility as a writer and director.

AFSUN MOSHIRY



MENTOR

Afsun Moshiry is a Shiraz-born, Mannheim-raised film curator, programmer, and creative producer currently based in Berlin, where she is part of the curatorial team of Sinema Transtopia, advisor to the Berlinale Forum, producer at Road River Films and artistic director of Interfilm's Script Pitch & Lab. In the past she has curated film programmes for the Berliner Festspiele and the Akademie der Künste, was a permanent member of the Kassel Dokfest, and Director of the Dokfest Campus. She is currently working on several research projects on Iranian Cinema.

PARISA GHASEMI



HEAD OF FILM TALENT ACADEMY
LINZ ISFF DIRECTOR
MENTOR

Parisa Ghasemi is an Iranian–Austrian filmmaker, curator, and queer–feminist activist. Her cinematic work explores themes such as identity, generational conflict, migration, and queer desire – always with a sensitive, personal, and politically conscious perspective. Her style combines documentary precision with poetic visual language – placing marginalized voices at the center.

She is the co-founder of the Linz International Short Film Festival. She is also the Head of the Film Talent Academy, where she supports and mentors emerging voices in cinema. She serves as Chair of the Board of dieRegisseur*innen: the Austrian association representing Austrian women directors and advocating for their professional, legal, and creative interests. From 2020 to 2025, she was also a member of the KUPF board (Kulturplattform Oberösterreich), an independent advocacy network for arts and culture in Upper Austria that works toward fair cultural policies, diversity, and sustainable cultural development.

Parisa holds both a Bachelor’s and a Master’s degree in Film from the University of Arts in Tehran. She later completed a Master’s program in Time–Based Media at the University of Arts in Linz, Austria.

TEAM



ASHKAN NEMATIAN

CLOSEFILM ASSOCIATION DIRECTOR
PRODUCTION, SPONSORING & MARKETING
LINZ ISFF AND FILM TALENT ACADEMY



CLARA SCHULTES

COOPERATION, SPONSORING & WEBSITE
cooperation@linzisff.com



ANGELIKA STÜRZL

GUEST OFFICE
talent@linzisff.com

First Feature LAB Pitch Session

Organized by Film Talent Academy in collaboration with SFC | Rendez-vous Industry

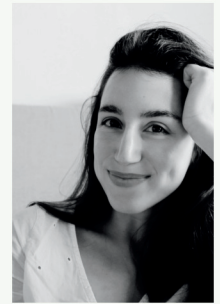
Five emerging filmmakers will pitch their debut feature projects, developed within the Film Talent Academy's First Feature LAB under the guidance of leading industry mentors. They are looking for producers, co-producers, distributors, and creative collaborators to join them on their journey. Additionally, eight Short Film LAB filmmakers and their projects will be introduced to the audience.



MILDA BAGINSKAITE
UK, LITHUANIA



KOSTA KARAKASHYAN
BULGARIA



ANASTASSYA ANGELOVA
BULGARIA

Date & Time: 20 May 2026, 14:30–15:30

Venue: Workshop 1, level -1, aisle 14, Palais des Festivals

Join us at 15:30 for a casual drink and a meet-up with filmmakers.

Access is limited to accredited guests by RSVP only.
To receive the invitation, please contact us at talent@linzisff.com.



MURAT VARGELCI
USA, TÜRKİYE



ABDULLAH HARUN ILHAN
TÜRKİYE

Short Film LAB Pitch Session

Organized by Film Talent Academy in collaboration with SFC | Rendez-vous Industry

Eight emerging filmmakers will pitch their short film projects, developed within the Film Talent Academy's Short Film LAB under the guidance of leading industry mentors. They are seeking producers, co-producers, distributors, and creative collaborators to join them on their journey. In collaboration with SFSC Rendez-vous Industry, they will meet selected producers in the New Producers Room during a private session to discuss co-production opportunities.

Date & Time:
18 & 19 May 2026, 15:00–16:00

Access only for Film Talent Academy members.



SHEIDA SHEIKHA
IRAN, CZECH REPUBLIC



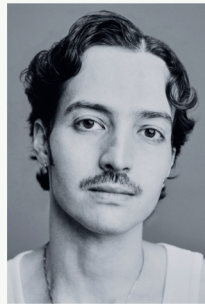
WALTA GABRIEL BUSULWA
CANADA



CYNTHIA LIN
USA



MATHEUS MALBURG
BRAZIL



PABLO SAURA
UK, SPAIN



MARIIA FEENKO
UKRAINE, CZECH REPUBLIC



ENDRIT QAROLLI
KOSOVO



NURLAN HASANLI
AZERBAIJAN

A dedicated booth for the Film Talent Academy will be featured at the Short Film Corner in the Festival Palais, further fostering international exchange and connections between filmmakers and industry professionals.

Meet us at Cannes

17-20 May 2026, 09:00-18:00

Aisle 14, Level -1, Palais des Festivals



TALENTS 2026

First Feature LAB



MILDA BAGINSKAITĖ

UK, LITHUANIA

KOSTA KARAKASHYAN

BULGARIA

ANASTASSYA ANGELOVA

BULGARIA

ABDULLAH HARUN ILHAN

TÜRKIYE

MURAT VARGELCI

USA, TÜRKIYE



CLOSEST TO THE SUN

Coming-of-age Drama

90 minutes

English, Lithuanian

Writer/Director - Milda Baginskaitė

90' Fiction
Genre: Drama
Country of production: UK, Lithuania

Looking for:
Producer, Co-producer, Fund, Distributor, Development Support, Agent

Contact: milda.bagi@gmail.com

Logline:

On a Northern English council estate, a seven-year-old Lithuanian girl pours everything into a homemade fantasy show, never suspecting its opening night will be the night she loses her father.

Biography

Milda Baginskaitė is a Lithuanian-born writer and director based in the UK. Her work combines emotional honesty with visual flair. Her films often explore themes of identity, family, youth, and the everyday chaos of being human. She tells these stories through a personal lens shaped by her experiences as a woman and a neurodivergent artist. Milda's short films have been screened at festivals that qualify for BAFTA and Oscar and have received support from organisations such as the BFI, BBC Arts, Arts Council England, and Kodansha Japan. She is a member of BAFTA Connect, Berlinale Talents, and Directors UK. Her work has gained recognition and won awards for its unique voice and emotional depth. While developing her first feature film, Milda is also working on television series, with one project optioned by a Warner Bros Discovery production company. With a background in both theatre and experimental film, she tells stories that feel authentic, surprising, and deeply human.



Milda Baginskaitė
Closest To The Sun

July Morning

WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY
KOSTA KARAKASHYAN

COUNTRIES
BULGARIA

LANGUAGES
BULGARIAN | ENGLISH | NORWEGIAN

GENRE
ROMANCE | COMING OF AGE | QUEER

RUNNING TIME
90 MIN

ESTIMATED BUDGET
75 000 EUR

ESTIMATED SHOOTING
SEPTEMBER 2026

CONTACT
KOSTA@STUDIOKARAKASHYAN.COM

STUDIO *Karakashyan*

HEXAGON

FILM TALENT
ACADEMY

90' Fiction

Genre: Drama, Romance, Queer, Coming of Age

Country of production: Bulgaria

Looking for:

Fund, Distributor, Sales Agent, Crew, Production & Post-Production Support

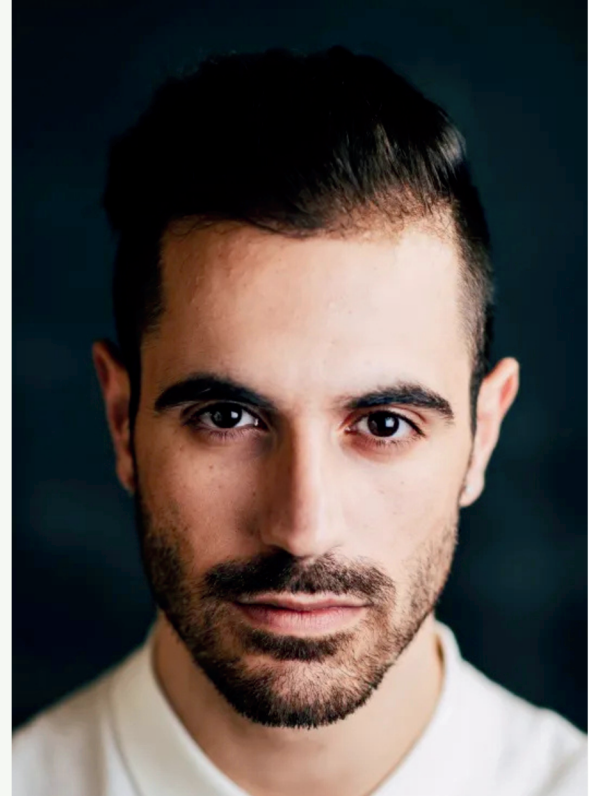
Contact: kosta@studiokarakashyan.com

Logline:

In early 2000s Bulgaria, as friends gather for the July Morning sunrise ritual, shy student Simo meets Jorgen, an enigmatic tourist whose arrival sparks a night of unexpected desire, heartbreak, and self-discovery.

Biography

Kosta Karakashyan is a director, writer, and choreographer working across film, theatre, and immersive experiences. He is an alumnus of Berlinale Talents and a member of the European Film Academy. After studying at Columbia University in New York, performing on stages around the world on Dancing with the Stars, he has gone on to direct projects for Calvin Klein, H&M, and Greenpeace. His aesthetic combines the intimacy, vulnerability, and seduction of the body in motion with a contemporary visual sensibility shaped by cinema, fashion, and spectacle. Kosta is recognized as a Forbes 30 Under 30 honoree and a member of the European Film Academy, and his work has been featured by NOWNESS, The New Yorker, The Guardian, ELLE, Bloomberg, BBC Radio, and Radio Free Europe. Kosta's work has screened at over 50 festivals worldwide, addressing themes of queer identity and resilience. His dance documentary WAITING FOR COLOR, about the LGBTQ+ persecution in Chechnya, won the Prix Lumière at Cinédanse Ottawa. Kosta is committed to telling stories that center marginalized voices and expand our understanding of personal truth, intimacy, and humanity. He sees filmmaking and performance as a way to cultivate empathy and emotion through motion.



Kosta Karakashyan
July Morning

A close-up photograph of a woman in a dark blue police uniform. She is smiling and looking slightly to the right. Her left hand is holding a pair of silver handcuffs. The uniform has a crest on the right chest. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

Ave Maria

written/directed by Anastassya Angelova

anastassya.angelova@gmail.com

80 mins, social drama, coming-of-age.

produced by: AVA Film

80' Fiction
Genre: Drama, Social
Country of production: Bulgaria

Looking for:
Producer, Co-producer, Fund, Distributor, Development Support, Agent

Contact: anastassya.angelova@gmail.com

Logline:

When her beloved brother is arrested for a shocking crime, 17-year-old Maria must choose between her family loyalty and speaking the truth that could tear them apart.

Biography

Anastassya Angelova is a writer/director born and raised in Warsaw, Poland to Bulgarian expatriates. She was interested in visual arts from a young age, when she completed a photography course at the Warsaw School of Photography and Graphic Design. After finishing high school, she went on to study film at King's College London. She completed numerous internships on film sets in Poland and Bulgaria. After graduating, she moved to Prague to study MA directing in FAMU. Her often films explore the coming-of-age of children and adolescents as they navigate their environments and confront adult problems, particularly those shaped by gender-based discrimination. Her graduation short film "Driving Lesson", premiered at Sarajevo Film Festival in 2025, and is still touring festivals both in Europe and Asia. Currently living in Heidelberg, Germany.



Anastassya Angelova
Ave Maria

“seni ben unutmak istemedim ki”

BUT I DIDN'T MEAN TO FORGET YOU

(90' fiction)

production countries

TÜRKIYE, AUSTRIA

genre

SPIRITUAL SCI-FI, MYSTERY, PSYCHOLOGICAL THRILLER

writer & director

ABDULLAH HARUN İLHAN

producer

ZEYNEP DİLAN SÜREN



90' Fiction

Genre: Mystery, Spiritual Sci-Fi, Psychological Thriller

Country of Production: Türkiye, Austria

Producer: Zeynep Dilan Süren

Looking for: Co-producer, Fund, Distributor, Agent

Contact: aharunilhan@gmail.com

Logline:

After his father's death, a professor begins communicating with him in dreams. As he races to reach the funeral in his hometown and his father's condition worsens in the dream world, he tries to unravel the fragile link between two realities.

Biography

Abdullah Harun İlhan is a film director and photographer from Türkiye. He began making films at age eleven and has since screened award-winning shorts and documentaries at hundreds of festivals worldwide. İlhan graduated from various universities and film schools in Türkiye, the USA, the UK, Qatar, and South Korea, earning two master's degrees in film directing and production. He has contributed to film and photography projects in more than 75 countries. Currently developing his debut feature, he continues to explore stories through audiovisual arts, guided by a deep interest in philosophy, memory, and human resilience.



Abdullah Harun İlhan

But I Didn't Mean to Forget You

BEFORE SUMMER

The world shifts quietly, forever.

Coming of Age Drama
100 minutes
Turkish

A Film by
Murat Vargelci



100' Fiction

Genre: Drama, Coming of Age

Country of production: USA, Türkiye

Looking for: Producer, Co-producer, Fund, Distributor, Crew

Contact: mvargelci@gmail.com

Logline:

Torn between a private boarding school in the big city and his rural home, a fifteen-year-old boy takes on a dare to build a crossbow, setting him on a quiet path toward self-discovery.

Biography

Murat Vargelci is a New York-based filmmaker whose work explores identity, vulnerability, and human connection through character-driven storytelling. He began his career in 2020 with the award-winning screenplay *The Poem*, which won first prize in Toronto and was later produced. His 2021 short film *Desolate* screened internationally and was a Semi-Finalist at the Madrid Film Awards and ARFF Berlin. He earned his MFA in Film from the City College of New York in 2024, where he completed *The Crossbow*, a coming-of-age drama that received the Chantal Akerman Award for Best Screenplay, the National Board of Review Student Grant, and the Sara Booth Excellence in Editing Award, and screened at the Cannes Short Film Corner. His recent work includes *Blue Desire* (2024), a stylish heist-driven narrative about three women entangled in a plan to steal a legendary diamond, which premiered at the New York Big Apple Film Festival, and *Hey Giggler*, currently in post-production.



Murat Vargelci
Before Summer

9th **INTERNATIONAL
SHORT FILM
FESTIVAL**

4th *QUEER &
FEMINIST DAY*



LinZ

14-17 OCTOBER 2026

TALENTS 2026

Short Film LAB



PABLO SAURA

UK, SPAIN

NURLAN HASANLI

AZERBAIJAN

MARIIA FELENKO

UKRAINE, CZECH REPUBLIC

SHEIDA SHEIKHHA

IRAN, CZECH REPUBLIC

ENDRIT QAROLLI

KOSOVO

WALTA GABRIEL BUSULWA

CANADA

CYNTHIA LIN

CHINA, USA

MATHEUS MALBURG

BRAZIL

A movie poster for the film 'Bernardo'. The background is a dark, moody scene. On the left, a young boy is shown from the chest up, looking upwards with a serious expression. On the right, a young girl is shown in profile, looking towards the boy. A wooden arrow is positioned diagonally across the lower right, pointing towards the boy. The title 'Bernardo' is written in a large, red, stylized font across the center. Below the title, the text 'A FILM BY PABLO SAURA' is written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font. The overall atmosphere is somber and mysterious.

Bernardo

A FILM BY
PABLO SAURA

15' Fiction
Genre: Drama, Coming-of-age
Country of production: UK, Spain

Looking for: Co-producer, Fund, Distributor

Contact: hi@pablosaura.com

Logline:

In a deeply Catholic corner of 2005 Southern Spain, a devout nine-year-old boy's path to his First Communion is upended by a transfixing painting of Saint Sebastian, awakening a forbidden desire that threatens to alienate his adored mother.

Biography

Pablo Saura is a screenwriter and film director from Cartagena based in London. His work combines queer sensitivity, immigrant perspective, and sharp humour to explore themes such as identity, belonging, and family. He began his career with "This Is Britain", winner of the Video Innovation Award at Eurovideo (2015), and trained in screenwriting at the London Film School. In 2025, his directorial debut, "Love Lost", BIFA-qualified, Best Director winner at Big Fridge Festival and Best Director, Best Short Film and Best Actor Winner at Film Critical Space, and was selected by NQV's "The Male Gaze" for distribution on Amazon Prime. He writes and directs in both English and Spanish, with a style marked by tenderness, irony, and a desire to represent those not usually at the centre of the narrative.



Pablo Saura
Bernardo



GREEN GRASS

A FILM BY
NURLAN HASANLI

20' Fiction
Genre: Drama, Comedy
Country of production: Azerbaijan

Looking for: Co-producer, Fund, Distributor, Crew

Contact: nurlanhasanli@hotmail.com

Logline:

Denied a visa to the USA, a Baku tour guide convinces his wife to help seduce an American tourist for a marriage visa.

Biography

Nurlan Hasanli is a filmmaker from Azerbaijan, working across both fiction and documentary. An alumnus of Sarajevo Talents and IDFA Academy, he began his career as a screenwriter. He later transitioned to directing and producing short films, which have screened at international festivals. His latest short film, *Early Feelings*, premiered at the Krakow Film Festival (2025), won best fiction film at the local competition of Baku International Film Festival. He is currently producing his first feature-length documentary, *The Amateur Photographer's Family Portrait*. His work has been supported by platforms such as IDFA Project Space, CPH:DOX, Berlinale EFM, Ji.hlava New Visions, GoEast Talent Lab, and the Doha Film Institute. He is a recipient of the IDFA Bertha Fund and Al Jazeera Documentary co-production award.



Nurlan Hasanli
Green Grass



PLOUŽÁK

short film by Mariia Felenko

Genre
Psychological drama

Runtime
15 minutes

Producer
Tina Kyrlyk

CUC
CONTEMPORARY UKRAINIAN CINEMA

15' Fiction
Genre: Psychological drama
Country of production: Ukraine, TBD

Looking for: Co-producer, Fund, Distributor, Crew

Contact: mariiafelenko@gmail.com

Logline:

On her 17th birthday, Anya, who has been living with her sister in the Czech Republic since their mother's death, decides to return to Ukraine, but first she has to make peace with the fact that her sister chose to stay.

Biography

Mariia Felenko is a filmmaker from Ukraine. She received her first education as a puppet theatre actress and later continued her film directing studies at the Kyiv National University of Theatre, Cinema, and Television named after I.K. Karpenko-Kary. Her student films screened at festivals such as Palm Springs ShortFest, Linz IFF (with *Mother*, 2024), and EnergaCamerimage (with *Butterfly Dance*, 2021, in the Film and Art School Études Panorama). From 2022 to 2025, she studied at FAMU in Prague through a special mobility program for Ukrainian students, where she shot her new short film *Unexpressed*, which was selected for the Talent Demo program at EnergaCamerimage 2024. Mariia also took part in Warsaw Next at the Warsaw IFF 2023 and Sommerfilmakademie Görlitz 2023. Mariia is currently working on her new short film *PLOUŽÁK*, which has been selected for the Linz Talent Academy 2025-2026 programme and FilmBridge Ukraine programme at Wajda Film School 2025-2026.



Mariia Felenko
Ploužák



OFF (BEAT)
FILMS

oriGine
FILMS

خالی
EMPTY
HOUSE

A 15-MINUTE COMING OF AGE DRAMA BY SHEIDA SHEIKHHA

15' Fiction
Genre: Drama
Country of production: Czech Republic, France

Looking for: Fund, Crew, Co-producer

Contact: sheidakhha@gmail.com

Logline:

In a small Iranian town, 13-year-old Elly's first real date takes a turn for the worse when the police show up to arrest her.

Biography

Sheida Sheikhha is a Prague-based Iranian writer/director with a background in Architecture, an MA in Film Studies from Tehran University, and an MFA in Directing Fiction from FAMU. Her FAMU graduation film, "Please Rise", featuring Cannes winner Zar Amir Ebrahimi, premiered at EnergaCAMERIMAGE 2023. Since graduating, Sheida has been teaching filmmaking and screenwriting at FAMU, mentoring over 50 student short films. In 2024, she won the International Project Spark competition and received funding for "Brighter Days", a short sci-fi film which was part of the Live-Action International Competition at Short Shorts Festival & Asia 2025. Sheida is now developing her next short, "Empty House" (winner of HollyShorts' ISA Award), which has received funding from the national Czech AudioVisual Fund, and is also working on her first feature, "Sana", which has been selected for the 2026 Nostos Screenwriting Retreat.



Sheida Sheikhha
Empty House



KOSOVO CINEMATOGRAPHY CENTER



Nala film

SPRING '81

A FILM BY ENDRIT QAROLLI

22' Historical Fiction
Genre: Psychological drama
Country of production: Kosovo

Looking for: Co-producer, Distributor

Contact: endrinxqarolli@gmail.com

Logline:

On March 11, 1981, in a suffocating student cafeteria in Prishtina, a defiant young woman named Bahrie endures hunger, humiliation, and mounting tension as whispers of political unrest quietly surround her. When her frustration erupts into a single impulsive act, it ignites a chain reaction that transforms everyday oppression into open political revolt.

Biography

Endrit Qarolli is a filmmaker born and raised in Prishtina, Kosovo. He moved to London to study film at the London Film Academy. After finishing film school he moved back to Kosovo to pursue a career in telling stories deeply rooted in the culture and background he grew up in. This culminated in his debut short film "Ndera" which premiered at the prestigious DOKUFEST film festival, where it won the Distribution Award.



Endrit Qarolli
Spring '81

A short film by Walta
Gabriel Busulwa

ZONA & NEDA



20' Fiction
Genre: Drama, Mystical
Country of production: Canada

Looking for: Producer, Co-producer, Fund, Distributor, Crew

Contact: waltagabrielbusulwa@gmail.com

Logline:


A pregnant woman and her police officer husband are thrust into a surreal town of lost souls, where mystical trials and buried sins will determine whether they can return home before their child is born.

Biography

Walta Gabriel Busulwa is a multiple award-winning Ugandan-Canadian filmmaker whose work bridges African and diasporic narratives through Afrofuturism, Pan-Africanism, global development, and Canadian Black cinema. He studied Film Studies at Toronto Metropolitan University, Television Production and Post-Production at Trebas Institute, and Animation and Graphic Design at CDI College. His documentary *Masaka to Toronto* has screened widely across Africa, North America, and Europe, winning an Award of Distinction at Canada Shorts and Best Documentary at the 2025 Uganda Film Festival. Gabriel has participated in numerous international development labs, including Cinephilia Film & TV Workroom (USA), Interaction Doc Lab (Serbia), Ogo-Tawa Black Arts Lab (Canada), DocLab Montréal (2025), Linz/Cannes Talent Lab (Austria, 2025–2026), CineGouna Emerge Lab, Breakthrough Lab (2026), Filmcamp Innsbruck (2026), DocsConnect Conscious Filmmaking Training (2026), and Reykjavík Talent Lab (2026). His recent film *Last Taxi to Kawempe* (2026) will premiere at the 33rd New York African Film Festival. He is currently in late development on *Disco of the Dead* (2027) and *Zona & Neda*, and has developed his debut feature documentary *Kisathamba: A Dying Glacier*. He is a recipient of the Toronto Arts Council Media Projects Grant, the Peter Wintonick Grant, and the Arts Abroad Grant.



Gabriel Walta Busulwa
Zona and Neda



a film by
Cynthia Lin

a funeral
procession
of fireflies

executive produced by
Sahraa Karimi
produced by
Weijia Zhou

work@fireflies-film.com
fireflies-film.com

30' Fiction
Genre: Drama
Country of production: China, United States

Looking for: Co-producer, Fund, Distributor, Crew

Contact: work@fireflies-film.com, fireflies-film.com

Logline:

In 1990s rural Fuzhou, thirteen-year-old Jing and five-year-old Fei wait for the ship that will carry them to a mother they barely know in the U.S. — but in the end, only one of them leaves.

Biography

Cynthia Lin is a filmmaker and visual artist exploring diasporic memories from the Chinese rural south. Drawing from her experience as a "satellite baby" raised in Fuzhou until age five, she crafts magical-realist ghost stories that echo the absence of family. Lin studied film at Yale University and has trained at FAMU in the Czech Republic and EICTV in Cuba. In 2023, she was selected for The Gotham Film and Media Institute's project development and pitch program, and she is currently in the Linz Film Talent Academy developing A Funeral Procession of Fireflies.



Cynthia Lin

A Funeral Procession of Fireflies



FIC-DOC | SHORT FILM

FLANNELS

DIR. MATHEUS MALBURG - MATHEUSMALBURG@HOTMAIL.COM

PROD. JOÃO MACEDO - JOAOMACEDOSATO@GMAIL.COM

18' Fiction / Documentary
Genre: Drama, Social, Comedy
Country of production: Brazil

Looking for: Co-producer, Fund, Distributor

Contact: matheusmalburg@gmail.com

Logline:

Three informal car guards control parking spots around a stadium in São Paulo, charging fans to leave their cars on the street. Between threats and jokes, they take over the streets on match days, revealing a world where violence and freedom blur.

Biography

Matheus Malburg is a Brazilian director and screenwriter. His graduation short *Yuta* screened at festivals including Camerimage and Watersprite, and later evolved into a feature project in development. He went on to direct *We're Still Here*, selected for Bogoshorts, Nòt Film Fest, and Camerimage again. His latest short, *Chica*, took part in The Short Film Lab at Ventana Sur, premiered at Indie Lisboa, and was selected for Hamburg Kurzfilm. In 2026, he participated in Málaga Talents and the Linz Talent Academy.



Matheus Malburg
Flanelinhas (Flannels)

Private workshop for participants of the Film Talent Academy



Organized by SFC | Rendez-vous Industry – Exclusively for Film Talent Academy

Amra Bakšić Čamo

FROM SHORTS TO FEATURES

DEVELOPING YOUR FILM AND NAVIGATING INDUSTRY OPPORTUNITIES

Amra Bakšić Čamo (SCCA/pro.ba | Sarajevo Film Festival - CineLink) is a producer and co-founder of SCCA/pro.ba, an independent production company based in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina. She has been involved in the production and co-production of feature films, drama series, short films, and documentaries, collaborating with regional and international partners. From 2003 to 2023, she was Head of CineLink at the Sarajevo Film Festival. Since 2019, she has been one of the curators of the Torino Film Lab and has been a longtime collaborator with the Berlinale Co-Production Market. She teaches Producing at the Academy of Performing Arts in Sarajevo, where she has been a professor since 2010. Her production credits include *Excursion* (2023) by Una Gunjak (Locarno), *Death in Sarajevo* (2016) by Danis Tanović (Berlinale Grand Jury Prize), *An Episode in the Life of an Iron Picker* (2013) by Danis Tanović (Berlinale Grand Jury Prize, shortlisted for the Academy Awards), *Father* (2020) by Srđan Golubović (Berlinale), and *Happiest Man in the World* (2022) by Teona Strugar Mitevska (Venice Film Festival). She is the creator, writer, and producer of the drama series *The Hollow* (2022, 2025 – 2 seasons), produced by SCCA/pro.ba for BH Content Lab.

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Mickies Kiros
LINZ ISFF Pitch Session

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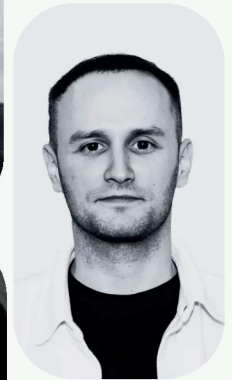
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2026**



TALENTS 2025

Short Film LAB

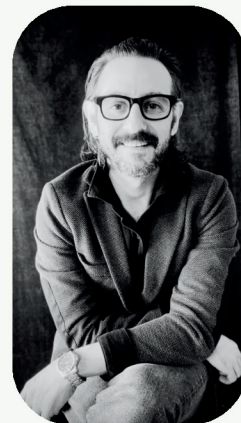
Sara Jurincic
Masha Egieva
Mickies Kiros
Iqra Rafiq
Anastasiia Pashchenko
Vyacheslav Turyanytsya
Gregory Randolph Jr.



TALENTS 2025

First Feature LAB

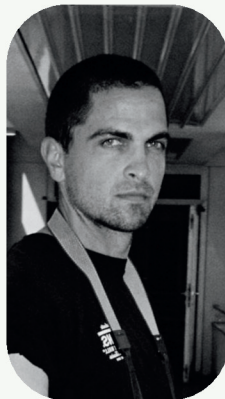
Burak Oguz Saguner
Allegra Oxborough
Olga Koleva
Gonzalo Busquets Reyes



TALENTS 2024

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Martin Vallejos
Alexandra Dzhiganskaya
Francisca Friedrich
Larissa Murai
Anita Morina
Curtis Sciano
Luigi R Parisi
Denis Pejovic



TALENTS 2023

Short Film LAB

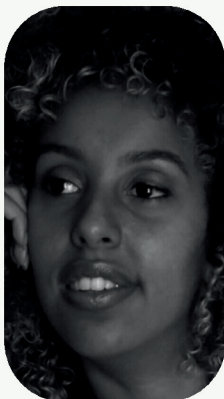
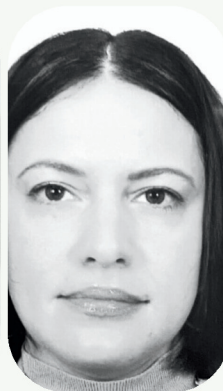
Ruijing Bu
Lena Isabella Deisenberger
Verena Aigner
Nasim Nasibi
Armin Čulić
Alexander Marcel Hövel
Irlanda Martinez



TALENTS 2022

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Jasna Safić
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