

EAST ×

DOC ×

SERIES ×

PROJECTS ×

PRESENTATION ×

CATALOGUE ×

IDFA
November 16
2022



institute of
documentary
film

dokweb.net

EAST × DOC × SERIES ×

East Doc Series Presentation

When: **November 16, 2022, 12:00 – 13:00**

Where: **Felix Meritis, Shaffyzaal, Keizersgracht 324, Amsterdam**

Five factual series projects in development and production will be presented to industry audiences by producers from Austria, Bulgaria, Hungary, Latvia and Romania.

Documentary series are becoming a popular format but in Central and Eastern Europe such projects are only scarcely reaching the international market, although there is a potential in topics and talents, as well as interest from the audience and producers. In 2020 the Institute of Documentary Film (IDF) introduced a new activity for supporting this format: the East DocSeries. The programme is designed to provide necessary feedback, skills, networking opportunities and know-how exchange between experts and film professionals coming from Central and Eastern Europe.

The 5 projects presented within this special IDFA presentation were part of the East Doc Platform pitches and took part in the training programme aimed to bring new ideas from experts and provide connections with broadcasters, funders, producers and more.

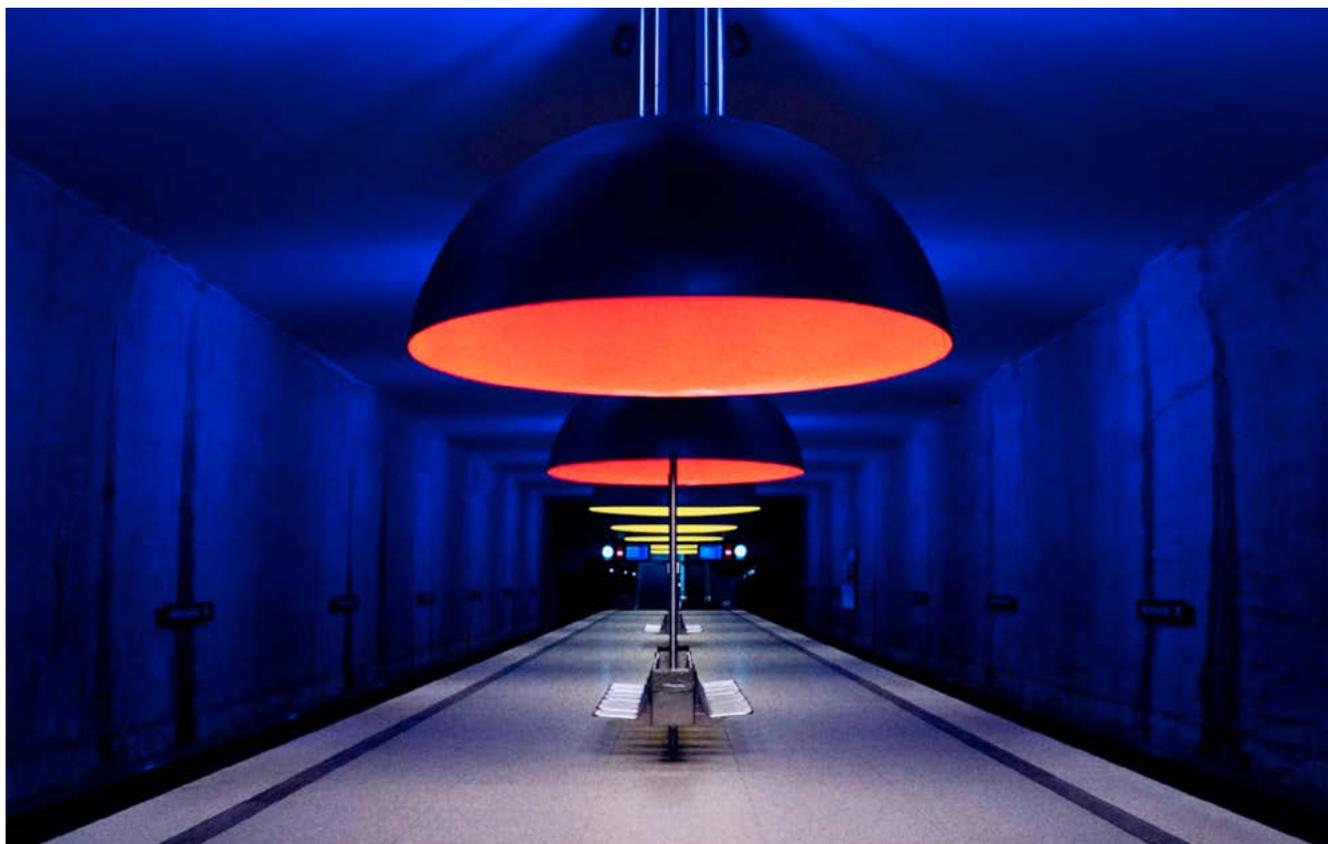
The overall IDF programme for the CEE series is devised in synergy with our own dedicated training programme Ex Oriente, which works with series projects in development and will introduce a stand-alone training programme for series in 2023.

The presentation of the East Doc Series is organized by the Institute of Documentary Film. The session will be moderated by Christian Popp (YUZU Productions).

IDF Contact:

Zdeněk Blaha

blaha@dokweb.net



Below

Below is a documentary series dedicated to subway systems all over the world.

Synopsis

Marc Augé calls these areas where people stay anonymous and lonely as non-places. The French anthropologist claims that these transit spaces are not significant enough in people's lives to build a social reference. But exactly these 'anti-spaces' will be filled with a variety of emotions trapped in breathtaking scenery of electrifying metacosmos.

"Everything seems so cold as we imagine the future. Almost no seats, nothing to hang. Some can see it depressing, I just love it. I really think this feels like cyberspace." – Frank, daily "below time": 1:55h, photographer, loves subway pictures.

Currently there are 212 different cities which are transporting their inhabitants below the surface of the earth. Below introduces not only mega-cities like Shanghai or New York but also bizarre places like Stockholm's underground which is designed by 150 artists. Furthermore, Below unveils cities such as Los Angeles, where the empty subway stations become a pure status symbol. Spectacular architecture, hypnotizing

unknown tunnels, and moving escalators, will be the setting for cultural diversity and social anthropology of the otherwise anonymous passengers.

Below will also be close to hustlers, love couples, metro system employees. We follow a variety of people from drivers to the ticket inspectors. They will share with us their stories and their relationship with the subway.

"Rather than being on the bus, being on the subway means you think differently. Going through dark tunnels is more of an experience, when you come out on the other end it's more like a transition I suppose. It does not seem real sometimes." – Carol, daily "below time": 1:52 h, has two jobs to put her through medical school.

"Everyone of these people has as much going on in their lives, as I have, so it's like an amazing volume of stories that I am passing when walking through the subway." – Robert 38, daily "below time": 1.17 h, New Yorker, writer, gets inspiration for his novel in the subway.

Director

Timo Novotny

Producer

Sebastian Rieker – Seehund Media GmbH

Countries

Austria, Germany

Status

In development

Running time

5 × 26'

Genres

Arts and Culture, Docu Series, Music, Society, Travel, Anthropology

Screening format

DCP

Expected release

December 2023

Biographies



Director – Timo Novotny

Timo Novotny studied in the visual media class of Peter Weibel at the University of Applied Arts Vienna and graduated with an award. Since 1997, he has been working as a freelance artist in the realms of film, photography and design. In 2006, Novotny finished his first feature length motion picture, *Life In Loops – A Megacities Remix*. Due to its success, it was transferred to 35mm and had cinema distribution in arthouse cinemas. It was screened at more than 65 IFFs and won several prizes, most notably the Best Documentary at the IFF Karlovy Vary. Novotny's second feature length documentary *Trains of Thoughts*, premiered at the IFF Karlovy Vary, was in even more competitions and was shown at the opening of the 13th Biennale di Venezia of Architecture.

Previous films: *In Loops – A Megacities Remix* (2006), *Trains of Thoughts* (2012)

Producer – Sebastian Rieker

He produced the *Live-Show of Sofa Surfers*, toured through Europe twice with the band *Sofa Surfers* from Vienna, and founded the film company *Seehund Media* in 2014. In parallel, he studied a BA in Motion Pictures and a MA in Leadership in Creative Industries at university Darmstadt. *Abraum* is his debut documentary, which ran on *Berlinale* and several other film festivals in Europe. He also produced parts of the TV format *Lieblingsstücke* (SWR) for the first two seasons. At the moment he is working on an upcoming project with Warner Germany.

Previous films: *Abraum* (2019)

Production company – Seehund Media GmbH

Seehund Media is a film company based in Darmstadt. We are working on several projects for cultural costumers, like orchestras, operas and ensembles in all over Germany. Aside from that, *Seehund Media* is a service producer for commercial costumers like Telekom Germany and TV-stations like Pro7, Arte, 3Sat and the German state television HR.

Production company
Seehund Media GmbH
 Pfungstädter Straße 35
 642 97 Darmstadt, Germany
 +49 151 464 062 03
 Rieker@seehundmedia.de

Coproduction Company
Gebrüder Beetz Filmproduktion Hamburg GmbH & Co. KG
 Eppendorfer Weg 93A
 20259 Hamburg, Germany
 +49176 30458949
 o.ehlers@gebrueder-beetz.de

Original idea
 Timo Novotny

Dramaturgy
 Katarzyna Kalinska, Harald Salaun,
 Timo Novotny

Script
 Timo Novotny, Katarzyna Kalinska,
 Harald Salaun

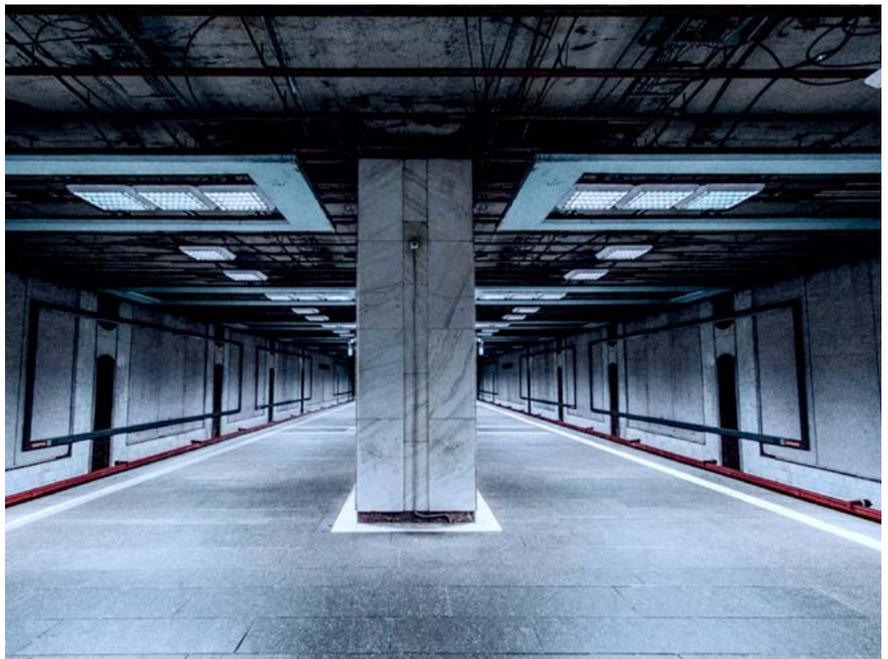
Editing
 Timo Novotny, Harald Salaun

Sound
 Markus Kienzl

Financing for 5 Episodes

Financing in place	
Seehund Media GmbH	5 000 €
Own investment	5 000 €
Financing pending	
BR/ARTE (negotiating)	150 000 €
HessenFilm und Medien GmbH	80 000 €
Film Fund Vienna	30 000 €
Financing still required	17 000 €

Total budget	350 000 €
Financing in place	10 000 €
Financing pending	260 000 €
Still required	80 000 €





El Lobo: The Legend of Latvian Wolf

El Lobo tells the story of Wolf Ruvinskis, a Latvian – born Jew, forced to leave his country of origin and move halfway across the world to Latin America, where he became a legendary luchador, actor, and socialite.

Synopsis

The world got to know him as the villain El Lobo Letón, or The Latvian Wolf, but his real name was Wolf Ruvinskis. Street brawler, soccer player, luchador, actor, socialite, lover, husband, and father. This is the legend of The Latvian Wolf! The plot follows the spectacular journey

of a lifetime of Latvian refugee Wolf Ruvinskis from Liepāja through Argentina, Columbia to Mexico. From poverty and life on the run to glory and fame of Mexican Cinema.

Director
Kārlis Lesiņš

Producer
Dominiks Jarmakovičs –
Woodpecker Pictures

Country
Latvia

Status
In development

Running time
5 × 45'

Genres
Archive, Docu Series, Travel, History,
Entertainment

Screening format
4K

Production period
May 2021 – October 2023

Expected release
October 2023

Biographies



Director – Kārlis Lesiņš

Kārlis represents the new generation of Baltic directors, and this movement can be observed in his work. Just recently he released his first feature, *Despair* (2020), and has started work on his second full-length documentary *Nord Express* (2020). This project has been featured in a previous edition of *Ex Oriente*. He has already been awarded the Latvian National Film Award *Lielais Kristaps* for his work – short fiction film *Converts* (2016) as the Best Student Short, and short documentary *Grandfather's Father* (2017) – as Best Debut.

Previous films: *Despair* (2020), *Under the Upturned Moon* (2018), *The Exporters of Revolution* (2017)

Producer – Dominiks Jarmakovičs

Dominiks Jarmakovičs holds a degree in audio-visual arts and is finishing a Master's in business administration. With different managerial experience in projects across the creative industry – festivals, music concerts, contemporary art events, dance performances – for the past 6 years he has focused on the compelling nature of audio-visual arts. Even though his first self-produced feature was released just recently, Dominiks's work is associated with many projects where he has joined as Producer and also as Associate Producer, Co-Producer, Production Manager, Line Producer, or Production Coordinator.

Previous films: *Songs for a Fox* (2021), *The Year Before the War* (2021), *Christmas in the Jungle* (2020)

Production company – Woodpecker Pictures

Woodpecker Pictures is a company that unites keen and competitive professionals in the audiovisual field – directors, producers and journalists. Having previously focused their work on documentaries and commercials, the studio has now started working on feature films as well.

Production company
Woodpecker Pictures
Meness street 14–12,
LV-1013 Riga, Latvia
+371 200 543 98
info@woodpeckerpictures.lv

Distributor
Kino Spektrs (LV)

Executive producer
Dominiks Jarmakovičs,
Sergejs Timoņins

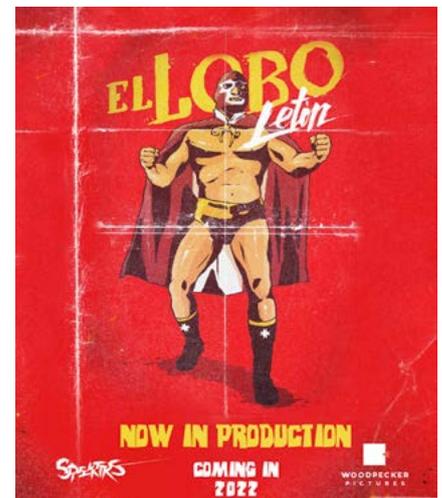
Original idea
Segejs Timoņins, Kārlis Lesiņš

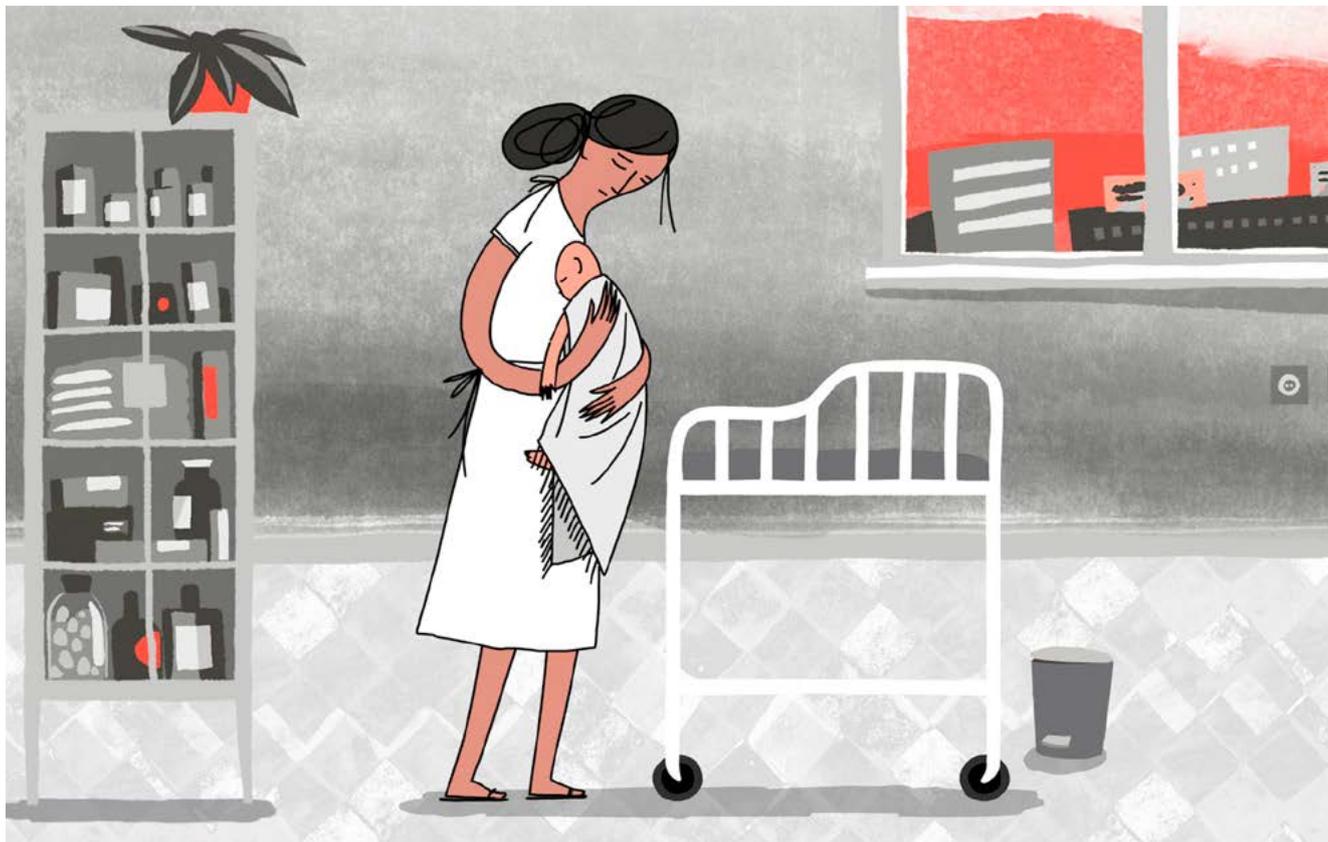
Cinematography
Mārtiņš Jurevics

Script
Kārlis Lesiņš

Sound
Edvards Broders

Financing confirmed	116 440 €
Financing pending	280 000 €
Still required	80 000 €
Total budget	476 440 €





Finding Home

Animated documentary series on climate refugees setting out to reimagine the notion of 'home'.

Synopsis

Finding Home is an animated documentary series telling the stories of climate refugees from around the world and setting out to reimagine the notion of 'home'. Each episode features the testimony of an actual environmental refugee uprooted from their home and forced to relocate to strange new lands, and uses the power of animation to convey raw emotion and reveal the life-shattering effects of climate

change. Our pilot episode follows Antonia Jardenia da Silva from Brazil: a climate refugee forced to move from her home village to the big city in order to take care of her newborn baby as it struggles with microcephaly. The story sheds light on the period of drought in Northeastern Brazil, the subsequent Zika epidemic caused by a mosquito-transmitted virus, and Jardenia's attempts to feel like she belongs.

Director

Maria Stanisheva

Producers

Manon Messiant – Iliade et Films,
Maria Stanisheva – ANIMADOCS

Countries

France, Bulgaria, USA

Status

In development

Running time

12 × 6'

Genres

Environmental, Docu Series,
Human Rights, Society, Social Issues,
Animated

Screening format

HD

Production period

January 2023 – October 2024

Expected release

October 2024

Biographies



Director – Maria Stanisheva

Maria Stanisheva is a film director, producer and founder of ANIMADOCS. She is a graduate of Sofia University, Central European University, and New York Film Academy's Documentary filmmaking program. With over 15 years of experience Maria specializes in social issue documentaries, animation, and experimenting with mixed genres. The animated-documentary *Father* which she produced in 2012 was awarded 28 times, including the Golden Dove for Animated Film at DOK Leipzig Festival. Her 2016 animated campaign *Together to End Male Guardianship* commissioned by Human Rights Watch – an awareness campaign based on real-life stories from Saudi Arabia – was seen by over 10 million people and featured the *New York Times*.

Previous films: *Trump & Jesus Show* (2016), *Brilliant Ideas* (2015), *Between Earth and Sky* (2012)

Producer – Manon Messiant

Manon Messiant is a French producer. After studying political science, she began working as a production assistant on sets, then at Kazak Productions (Virgil Vernier, Clément Cogitore). In 2017, she decided to devote herself to independent animation and joined Sacrebleu productions, where she was in charge of the production of all animated projects. Since 2018, she became associate producer at Iliade et Films where she produces emerging authors.

Previous films: *Before Forget Heliopolis* (2020), *May Since Reign* (2020), *Jungle* (2016)

Production company – ANIMADOCS

ANIMADOCS is an independent film production house, based between New York City, Sofia and Paris that specializes in animation, documentary and everything in-between. It creates a diverse variety of media content: story-driven feature films, TV and online series, independent and commissioned shorts, educational videos, and more.

Production company – Iliade et Films

Iliade et Films is a French production company based in Paris and founded by Oury Milshtein in 2007. It produces documentary, live action and animated features and shorts. In 2018, Manon Messiant joined the company to produce films from emerging directors from all over Europe.

Production company

Iliade et Films

Boulevard de Magenta,
750 10 Paris, France
+33 (0)6 80 90 44 13
contact@iliadefilms.fr

Distributor

Miyu Distribution (FR)

Executive producer

Manon Messiant, Maria Stanisheva

Original idea

Maria Stanisheva

Script

Maria Stanisheva

Sound and Music

Pierre Oberkampf

Designer

Rositsa Raleva

Illustrator

Antonia Mechkueva

Financing confirmed

80 000 €

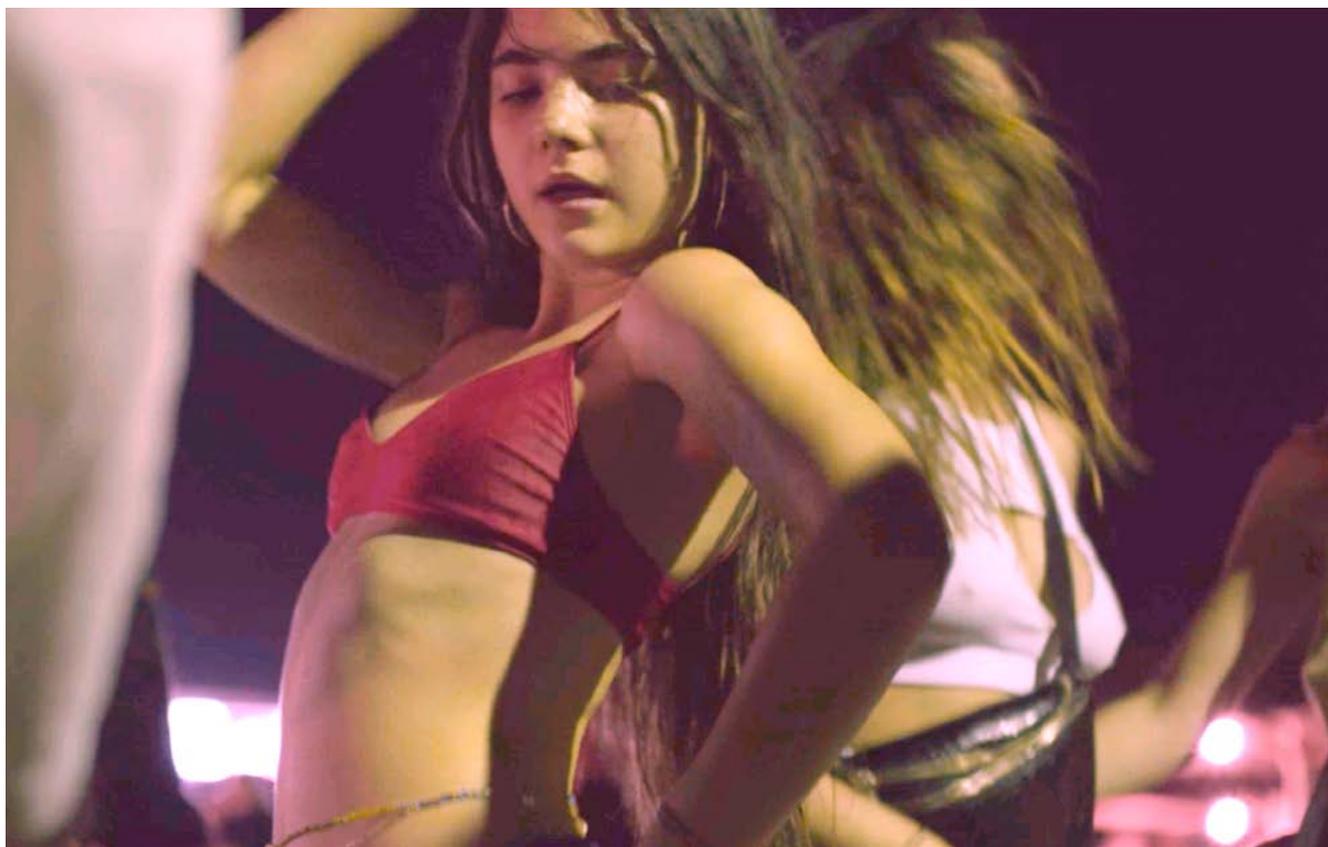
Still required

880 000 €

Total budget

960 000 €





Imaginary Youth

Three adolescents take the decision to leave their families and their country behind and emigrate after high school, for a better shot at fulfilling their dreams. Will they go through with their plan?

Synopsis

"I see things are not changing for the better in my country and I think I need to take a break from Romania," says the FFF activist Stefania.

"I used to think that I need to stay here and do something in our country. Now I realize this is impossible," reckons the 16-year-old rapper Habet.

"I can't wait to study in Berlin!", Una exclaims in front of her friends and colleagues.

Una, a teen actress from an activist family, has the lead role in a theater play about her generation leaving the country. Torn between wanting to stay in Romania and fight for social causes, and the influence of her peer group, applying for scholarships at top universities abroad, Una doesn't yet know what to do, but she is pondering a life in Berlin,

where a young artist's life is closer to her ideal. Habet is a rapper from a poor neighborhood. Migration is how his family survives and now it's his turn. But he has other plans. He wants to go to London and make it big with his rapping. Will dreams come before survival? Stefania is a young activist who spent her last 2 years protesting in the streets. While forceful and driven in leading protests, she feels the victim of over-protecting parents, and wants to get away. Her plan is to move across Europe once she reaches university. Those are the stories of Imaginary Youth. While focusing on these three young people from very different environments, our series brings to life a first major turning point in the coming-of-age process: what to pick for your life after high-school?

Director

Ruxandra Gubernat

Producers

Monica Lazurean-Gorgan,
Elena Martin – Manifest Film

Country

Romania

Status

In development

Running time

5 × 25'

Genres

Docu Series, Youth Documentary

Screening format

4K

Production period

June 2022 – January 2023

Expected release

May 2023

Biographies



Director – Ruxandra Gubernat

Ruxanda is a Bucharest-based independent documentary filmmaker, journalist, and researcher. After studying journalism in Bucharest, she moved to France and has Master's in Media Sociology at ENS Lyon. At the same time, she graduated from the Institute for Political Studies in Lyon, focusing on cultural communication and sociology of film. Ruxandra obtained her Ph.D. in Political Science at the University of Paris Nanterre in 2017. After coming back to Bucharest, she is now working on bringing research and cinema together, doing documentaries that examine Romanian social realities. Her first feature length is *Portavoce* (2018), a documentary tracking the emergence of the Romanian protest culture.

Previous films: *Portavoce* (2018)

Producer – Monica Lazurean-Gorgan

Monica Lazurean-Gorgan is an experienced producer and a member of the AMPAS/Oscar, as well as EFA. Monica is the producer of the successful documentary *Acasa, My Home* by Radu Ciorniciuc, winner of the Sundance Cinematography Award and other 40 international awards, delegate producer for *Touch Me Not* by Adina Pintilie and co-producer for *Chuck Norris vs Communism* by Ilinca Calugareanu. Monica is the director for feature length documentaries such as *A Mere Breath*, winner of Best Doc in Sarajevo IFF, Best Doc in CEE Vienna IFF, co-director of *Wood*, premiered in *HotDocs* and *CPH:Dox 2020* etc.

Previous films: *Acasă, My Home* (2020), *Timebox* (2018), *Free Dacians* (2018)

Producer – Elena Martin

Elena Martin has a BA in screenwriting. She has plenty of executive producer experience signing festival awarded short films like *Kaimos* by Sarra Tsorakidis (winner of TIFF Cluj 2020), *Laila* by Raya al Souliman (official TIFF Cluj 2020 selection), *How to fly a kite?* by Gabor Lorand (Clement Ferrand official selection, winner of the Grand Jury Prize at Poitiers Film Festival, 2018). She is developing her knowledge on documentary making by working closely with Monica Lazurean-Gorgan for projects such as the EFA awards nominee *Acasă, My home*, which premiered in Sundance and *Timebox*, acquired by HBO.

Previous films: *Kaimos* (2020), *Laila* (2020)

Production company

Manifest Film

Street Inginer Dimitrie Tacu 28,
Bucharest, 050184 Bucharest,
Romania
+40 749 100 958
monica.manifestfilm@gmail.com

Executive producer

Elena Martin

Script

Ruxandra Gubernat, Henry Rammelt

Cinematography

Andrei Dudea

Financing confirmed	224 000 €
Financing pending	30 000 €
Still required	80 000 €
Total budget	334 000 €



Production company – Manifest Film

Manifest Film is a winning production company based in Bucharest, Romania. The 2020 feature length documentary *Acasa, My Home*, by Radu Ciorniciuc was awarded in Sundance and 25 other international awards. In 2018, *Timebox* by Nora Agapi was awarded as Best Documentary at Jihlava IDFF plus another 7 awards. In 2016, for the documentary *A Mere Breath*, director Monica Lazurean-Gorgan was awarded with The Heart of Sarajevo/ Best Documentary Film in Sarajevo IFF, awarded with Gopo awards (National Film Awards) for Best Romanian Documentary, Best Documentary Award in SEE Vienna IFF, Best Romanian Documentary at ASTRA IFF etc, selected in *Visions du Reel 2016*, *Chicago IFF*, *Message to Man*, *ZagrebDox* and many other film festivals, screened on Mubi in 2017 and Amazon.



Queen of Chess

Queen of Chess tells the story of the relationship and the games of two minds: Judit Polgar, the greatest female chess player of all time and Garry Kasparov, the legend – who believed that a woman and a man cannot fight

Synopsis

Laszlo and Klara Polgar, the Hungarian teachers decided to raise geniuses in socialist Hungary as an experiment. Zsuzsa and Zsofia both become legendary. When Judit, the youngest challenges her all-time favorite master, Kasparov, the 16-year-old girl gains a draw. For the best player in the world, it is not an easy take from a girl. They keep on fighting until he invites her to his chess camp in Greece. In 2002, Judit Polgar defeats Garry Kasparov.

Our audience will understand the parallels between life and chess, enjoy the creatively-cut archive footage and understand the political events from the end of the Cold War through regime change to the 21st century. Get ready for the most dynamic board game challenges and enjoy the growing tension – while you experience one girl's struggle in becoming the Queen of Chess.

Director

Creator
Gabor Harmi

Producers

Peter Stern – Queenside Pictures

Countries

Hungary

Sales

Salma Abdalla – Auflook Filmsales

Status

In development

Running time

5 × 45'

Genres

Archive, Docu Series, Gender, Sport, Politics

Production period

2022–2023

Expected release

November 2023

www.queensidepictures.com

Biographies



Creator, Producer – Gabor Harmi

Writer and producer. Studied at the SZFE Filmacademy of Budapest and FAMU – University for Drama and Film in Prague. He worked in England, US and Norway as a filmmaker. Gabor currently serves as a showrunner in the fictional series "Fata Morgana" executive produced by Béla Tarr (Sátántangó, Werckmeister Harmonies), developed by AMC Central Europe.

Producer – Peter Stern

Studied law and political science. He is passionate about environmental protection, Peter cofounded and co-developed the first consulting entity for sustainable filmmaking in Hungary, called 'Film in Green'. Runs an environmentally themed radio show called 'Power Plant' in the infamous channel, Tilos Rádió.

Production company – Queenside Pictures

Queenside focuses on high-concept documentary series. The vision is to ask the right questions and reflect on our everyday current lives with stories that can help us survive and understand our world. Our company collides exceptional talents like Bernadett Tuzaritter (A Woman Captured). We work closely with the documentary studio Speakeasy Project LLC and Madoke, the Hungarian Association of Documentary Filmmakers.

Production company
Queenside Pictures
Bimbó út 10./a
1022 Budapest, Hungary
+36 309 196 443
stern@queensidepictures.com

Total budget	1 016 403 €
Financing in place	276 403 €
Financing pending	0 €
Still required	740 000 €



Financial Support



Creative
Europe
MEDIA



MINISTRY OF CULTURE
CZECH REPUBLIC



CURRENT
TIME

HBOMAX

END ×