



SARAJEVO REVIEW DAILY

29th Sarajevo Film Festival Opens Its Doors



Lynne Ramsay, Charlie Kaufman and Mark Cousins Are Honoured

Ben Nicholson, August 10, 2023

After scooping the Global Production Award for the best “City of Film” during Cannes in May, the 29th Sarajevo Film Festival returns to the streets of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Luminaries who will receive honorary awards for their contribution to the cinematic art include Lynne Ramsay, Charlie Kaufman, and Mark Cousins. Each of these filmmakers will attend the gala screening of one of their films – Ramsay’s stripped-back revenge thriller starring Joaquin Phoenix, *You Were Never Really Here*; the Spike Jonze-directed adaptation, for which Charlie

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OPENING GALA



KISS THE FUTURE

VERDICT: Director Nenad Cicin-Sain's engaging but slightly fawning documentary chronicles Irish rock supergroup U2's love affair with war-torn Sarajevo during the Balkan wars.

Stephen Dalton, August 10, 2023

In May last year, Bono and the Edge of Irish rock supergroup U2 gave a surprise impromptu performance in a Kyiv bomb shelter. For older fans, this show of solidarity with war-torn Ukraine inevitably echoed events from 30 years ago, when the band’s empathy for the besieged citizens of Sarajevo during the bloody break-up of the former Yugoslavia developed into a full-blown love affair, culminating in a 1997 stadium concert in the city.

In *Kiss The Future*, Croatian director Nenad Cicin-Sain revisits these events with a glossy, broadly positive, occasionally fawning documentary, chronicling U2’s heartfelt but sometimes clumsy interventions in the Balkan wars.

With Ben Affleck and Matt Damon credited as producers, and guest speakers like Bill Clinton sharing their memories on screen, *Kiss The Future* largely plays like a slick, band-endorsed promotional

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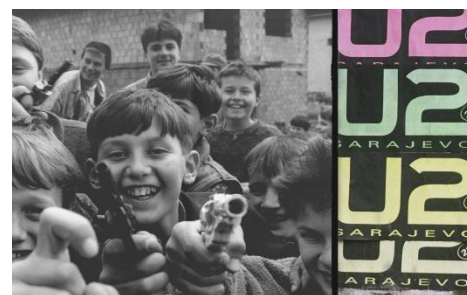
Kaufman wrote the astonishing Oscar-nominated screenplay, *Being John Malkovich*; and Mark Cousin's recent documentary *March on Rome*, in which he wrangles with the propaganda of Mussolini. Each of the awarded filmmakers will also deliver a masterclass during the festival.

Since its 2022 iteration, the festival has established annual awards for regional films, which will gather more than 400 film and television professionals to determine their winners. While the award ceremony will not take place until January 2024, the festival continues to warrant its standing as a central film hub for the Balkan region, with a host of local talent amongst those competing for the prestigious Heart of Sarajevo awards. Here are just some of the films making world or regional

premieres in the festival's competition programmes: Sudابه Mortezaei's *Europa*, Christina lakeimidi's *Medium*, Tudor Giurgiu's *Libertate*, Andrei Tănase's *Day of the Tiger*, Nemanja Vojinovic's *Bottlemen*, and Kumjana Novakova's *Silence of Reason*.

Actress Mia Wasikowska will act as president of the main jury this year alongside fellow thespis Zlatko Buric and Danica Curcic, actor and director Juraj Lerotic and the curator of MOMA's Department of Film, Josh Siegel. Members of some of the festival's other juries include the artist director of CPH: DOX, Niklas Engstrom, festival director of Sydney Film Festival, Nashen Moodley, and the head of programming at the EYE Filmmuseum, Mila Schlingemann.

[For Full Article, Click here](#)

KISS THE FUTURE *(Continued)*

project. All the same, this familiar story still feels worthy of re-telling a generation later, with an extra 30 years of post-war historical hindsight. Featuring new interviews with U2 and other key players, including Bosnia's rich underground subculture of musicians and artists, alongside some terrific archive footage, this polished rockumentary should have pretty broad audience appeal. Unveiled at the Berlinale and Tribeca, it finds a more natural launch platform this week as the splashy opening open-air gala screening at Sarajevo Film Festival.

Kiss The Future is based on the 2016 memoir *Fools Rush In* by Bill Carter, an American aid worker and film-maker who was based in Sarajevo during the siege. Inspired by U2's public statements of solidarity with Bosnia, Carter charmed and jostled his way backstage at their Verona show in July 1993, securing a short but intense Bono interview for a small news station in Bosnia. This comically awkward exchange features here, with both players adding wry commentary on their callow younger selves.

[Full Review](#)

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FALLEN LEAVES

VERDICT: Aki Kaurismäki's latest is a largely familiar but lovely new work.

Boyd van Hoeij, May 22, 2023

Some world-cinema auteurs are accused of making the same film over and over again as if that were a bad thing. But thankfully, watching *Fallen Leaves* (*Kuolleet lehdet*), the latest working-class tale populated with a handful of loveable sad sacks from Finnish auteur Aki Kaurismäki, confirms the idea that not only can it be a good thing, but it is the very familiarity of the filmmaker's world that can work like

a balm. It's the cinematographic equivalent of that one comfy sweater. On the one hand, you know what to expect, and on the other, the filmmaker's minute variations on familiar things add that frisson of freshness that keeps it exciting. Kaurismäki's first feature in six years and 20th overall premiered in competition in Cannes and should see solid arthouse returns for the Finnish maestro.

The two protagonists are people whose largely uninteresting lives are the stuff of stonefaced comedy. Part of what makes their lives quietly funny is the underlying desperation that never quite goes away, turning frequently mundane situations into moments of uneasy laughter because the only other option would be to simply stop and cry. Very few directors manage to walk the fine line between comedy and tragedy as well as Kaurismäki, who takes the tragedy of daily life seriously enough for us to be able to laugh about the absurdity of the situations.

Ansa (Alma Pöysti, the titular lead from *Tove*) restocks shelves in a supermarket. Her job is as deadly boring as the job of Holappa (Jussi Vatanen, from the *Lapland Odyssey* films), who works at a scrap-metal yard. Kaurismäki follows the daily routines of both these loners as they deal with the ugliness of late-stage capitalism.

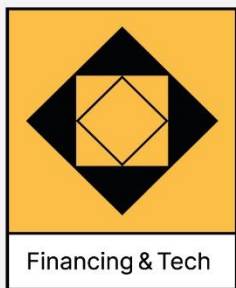
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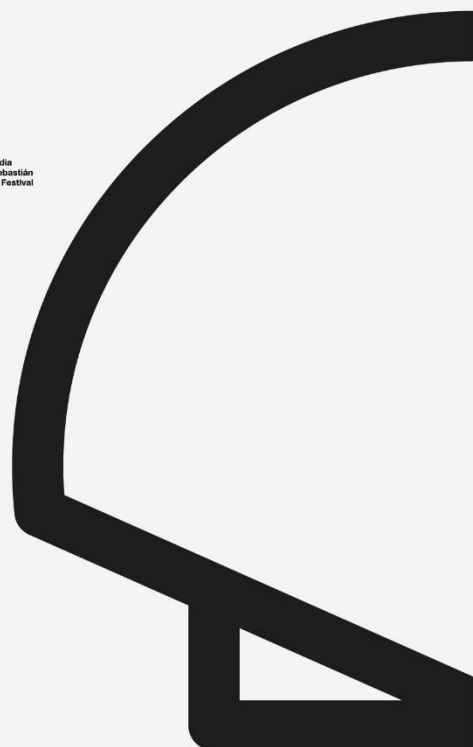


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FOUR DAUGHTERS

VERDICT: An enthralling “fictional documentary” by Kaouther Ben Hania exploring the psychological states of a strong-headed Tunisian mother and her four daughters, two of whom joined Islamic State, through staged recreations and interactions with actors playing their roles.

Jay Weissberg, May 20, 2023

A return to non-traditional documentary forms was an excellent move for Kaouther Ben Hania, whose *Four Daughters*, billed as a “a fictional documentary,” brings the Tunisian director back to her strengths at finding creative ways to explore difficult topics. In this

instance, it’s the story of Olfa Hamrouni, a strong-minded working-class woman with four daughters, two of whom joined Islamic State in Libya following a wild teenage stage. Olfa is such a trickily charismatic figure, and her two younger daughters so disarmingly articulate, that Ben Hania needed a way to get them to open up without allowing them – Olfa in particular – to hide behind well-practiced responses. To that end, she brought in two actresses to play the missing daughters and star Hend Sabri to impersonate Olfa, leading both sides to interrogate the recreations and prevent standardized reactions to difficult junctions in their lives. The resulting film is an enthralling hybrid that explores matriarchy, rebellion, and extremist religion’s poisonous misogyny; while the Cannes competition slot is a peculiar fit, it will likely help *Four Daughters* reach the wider audience it deserves.

By the time Ben Hania began shooting, Olfa had been interviewed multiple times by Tunisian media, making it all but impossible to get this deeply self-protective woman to drop the multiple filters that had become second nature to her. In addition, the director didn’t want to focus on the radicalization of her eldest daughters but rather their lives before, encompassing Olfa’s difficult childhood, disastrous relations with men, and deeply problematic censoring of her daughters’ sexuality.

[Full Review](#)



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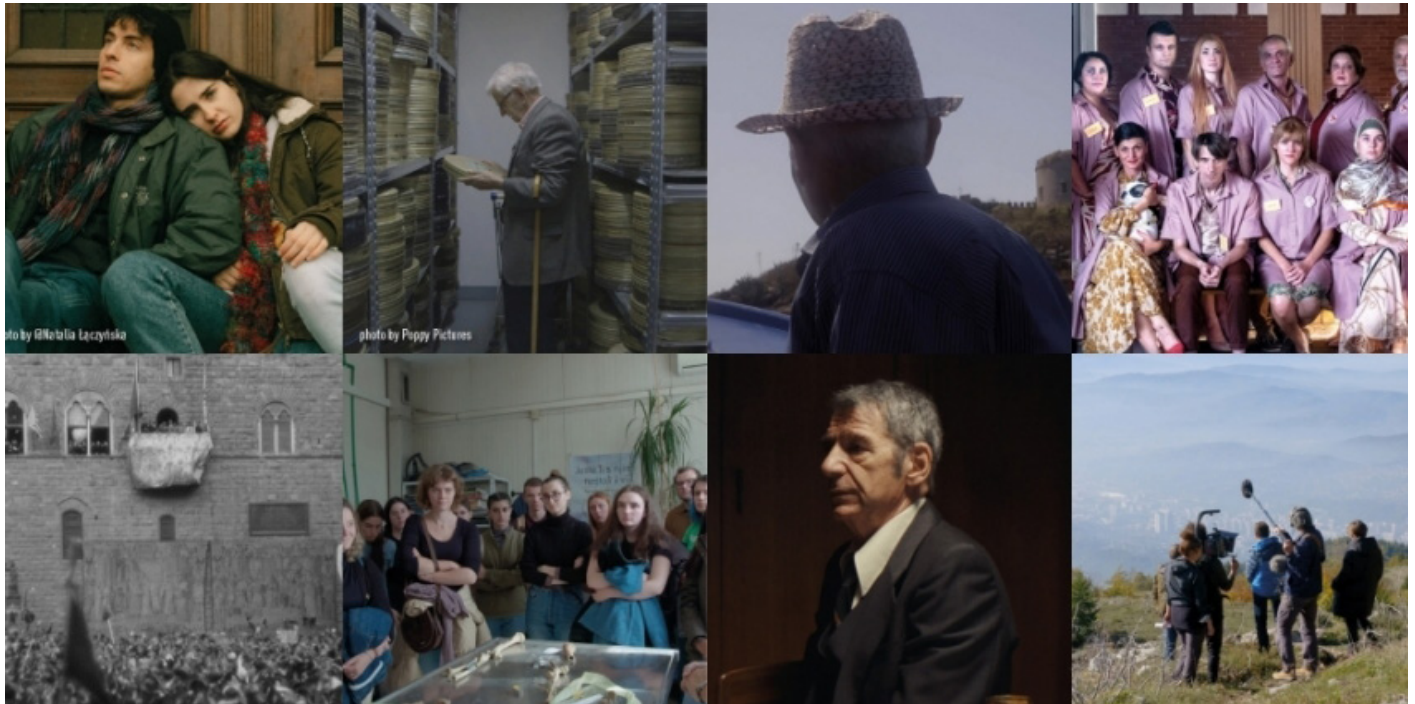
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Sarajevo Film Festival

Dealing with the Past Program



Photos courtesy of Sarajevo Film Festival

The Dealing with the Past program at the 29th Sarajevo Film Festival is an additional platform for testimonies and stories that can serve as a base for developing film scripts, projects and films. The aim of the program is to initiate dialogue in the countries formed from the disintegration of former Yugoslavia and to deal with problems arising as a result of the wars in the region.

As part of the Dealing with the Past program, the True Stories Market was launched, the purpose of which is the presentation of stories and collected materials (personal testimonies). This year's program will present authors who became famous with films about real events, as well as new authors

who question the position of individuals whose lives have been marked by trauma from the recent past.

Two films in this year's program, *Mamula All Inclusive* by Aleksandar Reljić and *War Souvenirs* by Georg Zeller, will have their world premieres, and both are based on stories that were presented as part of the previous editions of True Stories Market.

The Dealing with the Past program is supported by the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES).

For complete program, [click here](#)

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