

Kudos to István Szabó



Photo courtesy of Locarno Film Festival

The feted Hungarian Oscar-winner has spent his epic career probing Central Europe's painful, morally complex history of post-imperial trauma and totalitarian tragedy.

Stephen Dalton, August 9, 2023

István Szabó is more than just the most feted Hungarian filmmaker of his generation. With a remarkable life and epic career that spans many of Europe's darkest world-historical convulsions across the 20th century and beyond, the much-garlanded 85-year-old deserves major kudos for his long service as the cinematic conscience of his nation, even if the journey required him to make some tough ethical compromises along the way. Indeed, Szabó is

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CONCORSO INTERNAZIONALE



Photo courtesy of Locarno Film Festival

LOUSY CARTER

VERDICT: American indie darling Bob Byington will please his fans with this minor amusing look at an underachieving English lit professor whose greatest disappointment is himself.

Jay Weissberg, August 9, 2023

The Austin independent film scene is a self-contained world, guided by its own minimalist aesthetics and wry humor. Its inward-looking individuality is admirable, yet that very quality makes it difficult to translate onto an international market, though Bob Byington has had more opportunities than most to show his films outside the States: *Frances Ferguson*, *7 Chinese Brothers*, *Somebody Up There Likes Me*, and others. His

latest, *Lousy Carter*, remains firmly in that mold, filmed in Austin and edited largely in shot-counter shot with lowkey dialogue full of snide zingers delivered by a cast well-known to acolytes of the subgenre. Set on a college campus where an uninspired English professor with unrealized dreams is told he has six months to live, the film relies heavily on a pre-existing fan base, for whom this will be a pleasant entertainment.

[Continues next page](#)

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ISTVÁN SZABÓ (Continued)



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probably the greatest living big-screen chronicler of Central Europe as a whole, a vast trauma zone still recovering from wave after wave of imperial collapse and totalitarian tragedy.

Szabó is attending Locarno Film Festival this week to receive an honorary Golden Leopard prize and introduce his most recent feature, *Final Report* (2020), a wry, elegiac, semi-autobiographical reflection on creeping old age and political hypocrisy. This minor-key autumnal drama reunites the director with his friend and long-time collaborator Klaus Maria Brandauer, a potent Austro-Hungarian double act first forged more than 40 years on the majestic Oscar-winner *Mephisto* (1981), in which Brandauer plays an ambitious German stage actor

whose moral compass is warped by his growing success during Hitler's rise to power. "Vanity is the artist's weakness," the veteran director told *Film Philosophy* magazine in 2002, "it enables seduction."

Even in his early directing days, Szabó was a forensic examiner of how people in repressive dictatorships, from ordinary citizens to famous artists, make their own tricky moral compromises with murderous regimes. One of his earliest stand-out films, the autobiographer coming-of-age drama *Father* (1966), casts a cynical eye on national myth-making in the wake of the bloody Hungarian uprising of 1956, which was brutally put down by the Soviet army.

[For Full Article, Click here](#)

LOUSY CARTER (Continued)



Photo courtesy of Locarno Film Festival

The film starts with a framed photo of Lousy Carter (David Krumholz), his peculiar name never addressed, with a quotation from F. Scott Fitzgerald describing Jay Gatsby as someone with "an extraordinary gift for hope." Professor Carter has made a specialty out of *The Great Gatsby*, but the description doesn't fit him at all: he's a schlub of a figure with an extraordinary gift for disappointing people, himself most of all. Once an animation filmmaker who hoped for a bright career, Lousy is now financially strapped and trapped teaching students he doesn't care about. At the film's start his indifferent doctor informs him he has six months to live, setting off a re-evaluation of his life that begins by falling off the wagon.

His one confidante is his ex gf Candela (Olivia Thirlby), a no-nonsense beauty with no interest in humoring his self-pity, though she does suggest that a good way to get out of his current funk is to sleep with one of his students.

[Full Review](#)

DOX Leipzig

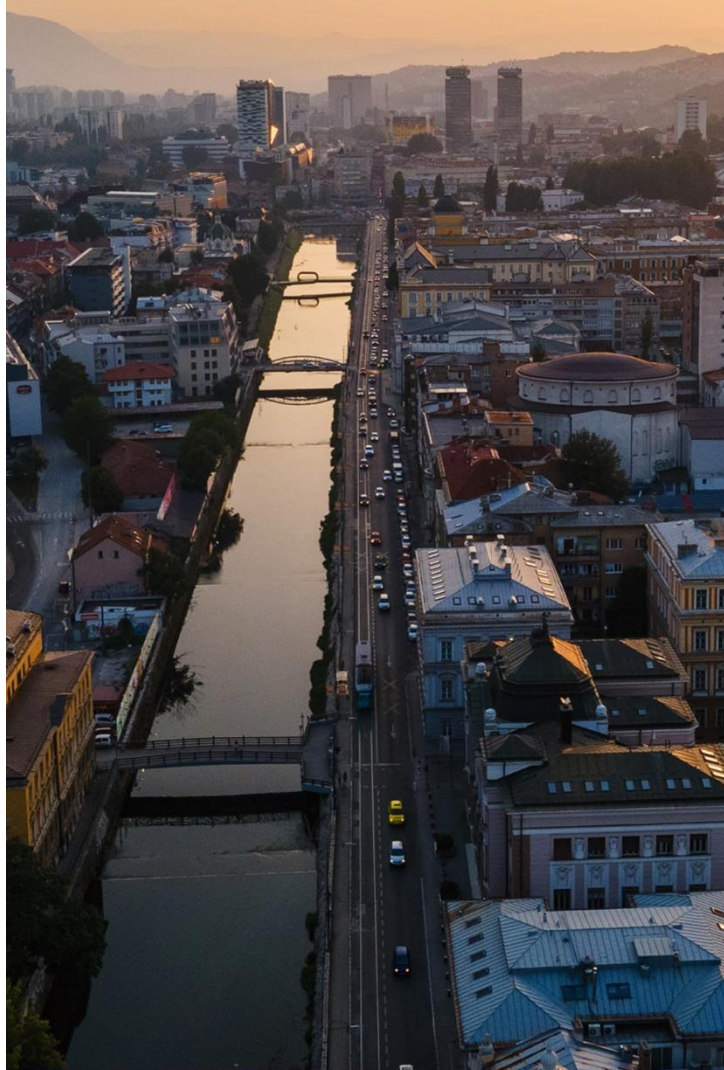
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PIAZZA GRANDE



FIRST CASE

VERDICT: Victoria Musiedlak's first feature from France contains strong performances from Noée Abita and Anders Danielsen Lie as people who aren't allowed to talk to each other outside of work -- but of course want to.

Boyd van Hoeij, August 9, 2023

A young French law-office worker unexpectedly finds herself defending a murder suspect in *First Case (Première Affaire)*, the debut feature from Victoria Musiedlak.

The unassuming drama continues in the vein of down-to-earth portraits of regular people working in France's police and/or judicial systems that we've seen in titles from *The Young Lieutenant* (2005) to *Courted* (2015), and more recently, in César winner *The Night of the 12th* (2022). Here, the rush of being asked to step up to the plate independently for the first time as a lawyer is paired with a coming-of-age story, as the female protagonist is just 26 and only has theoretical knowledge but no practical experience both as a lawyer and as a, well, a human adult. Though the story's well-structured, dialogue are a little iffy, so it helps immensely that the two leads are played by actors as intensely watchable as Noée Abita (*Ava*) and Anders Danielsen Lie (*The Worst Person in the World*). It'll also be their names that'll allow the film to travel from Locarno's Piazza Grande to other festivals.

Nora (Abita) comes from an Algerian family that fled to France in the 1990s, Algeria's "Black Decade," and that has since had to basically start over. So it's no wonder that especially her mother, Baya (Saadia Bentaieb, always a welcome face), likes to protect her as much as possible from the harsh outside world. But it's impossible to be a lawyer and not be exposed to the outside world and more specifically its ugliness and nonsensical violence and malice.

[Full Review](#)

VERDICT SHORT



DAMMI

VERDICT: Riz Ahmed takes centre stage with Isabelle Adjani in 'Dammi,' Yann Mounir Demange's fragmentary, experimental and highly sensorial reckoning with his own bifurcated past.

Ben Nicholson, August 9, 2023

With his new film *Dammi*, Yann Mounir Demange has been given free rein by AMI Paris to create a bold and emotionally complicated portrait of self.

Alexandre Mattiussi's fashion house is no strangers to artistic collaboration, having launched a touring exhibition in collaboration with Magnum in 2022. There, a dozen photographers and video artists were given carte blanche to interpret the theme of 'family.' Granted similar freedom, Demange's new film explores his own roots – spread between Algiers, Paris, and London – through a theatrically mounted short that splinters an overarching narrative of romance and self-identification into something impressionistic and experiential.

What narrative there is involves Riz Ahmed's character narrating a desire to somehow change his past through repeated visits back to Paris to see his Algerian father who stayed there when his mother took him to the UK. At the time of doing that, he left his Arabic name, Mounir, behind – notably, 'Mounir' has been restored to the director's name in the credits for the film – and now, when he comes back to France, he finds himself pulled between these three (national) identities. During one evening in a local bar with his father's friends, Mounir meets Hafzia (Souheila Yacoub), who shows him a way to be in Paris as an Algerian, but this only serves to stoke the fires of his internal conflict.

The debates seem to rage within Mounir and between him and Hafzia – recriminations are laid at one another's feet as well as at those of Mounir's parents (played by Isabelle Adjani and Yousfi Henine).

[Full Review](#)



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GRAN TURISMO: BASED ON A TRUE STORY

VERDICT: This biopic of a gamer-turned-racer delivers sports-movie uplift and racing-movie thrills while never letting up on the product placement.

Alonso Duralde, August 8, 2023

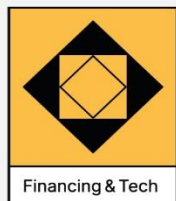
2023 is shaping up to be the year of the product-placement biopic, about subjects ranging from shoes (*Air*) to spicy snacks (*Flamin' Hot*) to hand-held digital devices (*Blackberry*) and even video games (*Tetris*). *Gran Turismo: Based on a True Story* doesn't focus on the creation of the popular PlayStation driving

simulator, but it's no less of a feature-length advertisement for it.

Still, even as they're crafting a piece of marketing propaganda, director Neill Blomkamp and screenwriters Jason Hall and Zach Baylin slip a relatably human triumph-of-the-underdog story amid the corporate-mandated product-pitching, with some solid auto-racing thrills for extra pleasure. (This is the kind of movie that benefits from a booming cinematic sound system where one can feel the engines revving along the back of one's neck.)

The based-on-a-true-story part centers on Jann Mardenborough (played here by Archie Madekwe, *Midsommar*). Except for the time he got taken to an auto show as a five-year-old, the closest Jann ever got to a racecar was in the hours and hours he played *Gran Turismo*; the game, as we are reminded over and over again in this film, was designed to be as accurate as possible, from the creation of the cars to the sounds and sensations of racing at the world's most famous speedways. Jann's dad Steve (Djimon Hounsou) wishes his son would turn off his computer and play football (Steve was a pro player on Cardiff's team); mum Lesley (Geri Halliwell Horner, nearly unrecognizable as the Artist Formerly Known as Ginger Spice) is more supportive.

[Full Review](#)



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FEST clips

Lazar Dragojević to host the opening ceremony of the Sarajevo Film Festival

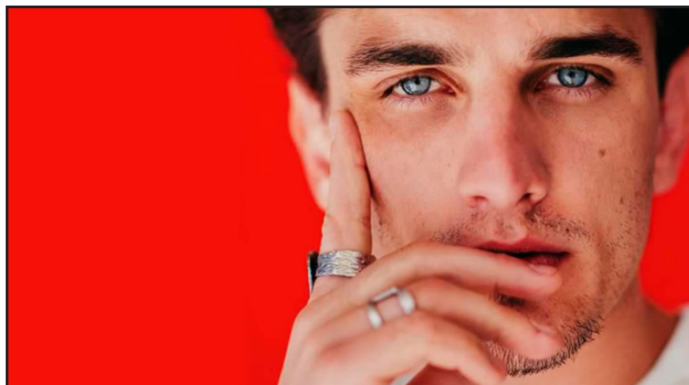


photo courtesy of Sarajevo Film Festival

The 29th Sarajevo Film Festival will open on Friday, August 11th, with a ceremony at the Sarajevo National Theatre and a series of events leading up to it.

This year's host, actor Lazar Dragojević said, "Sarajevo is the most beautiful chapter of my life, a city which I always return to. The Sarajevo Film Festival is the nicest event in the year to me, a period when the city never sleeps and when art takes over. It is an honor and a pleasure that I was given the role of host of the opening ceremony. I cannot briefly describe my joy, it's immense."

Lazar Dragojević was born in Podgorica in 1996. He graduated from the Academy of performing arts in Sarajevo in 2020.

Every year, Sarajevo Film Festival is pleased to hand over the opening ceremony host role to the successful regional film artists of the younger generation, with the desire to discover, support and promote regional young film professionals.

Sarajevo Film Festival takes place Sept 11 - 18



Photophobia to premiere in the Venice Film Festival Giornate degli Autori



© Punkchart Films

Two of the three filmmakers behind the award winning documentary *Velvet Terrorists*, Ivan Ostrochovský and Pavol Pekartík, have reunited for a film project called *Photophobia*, shot in Ukraine after the Russian invasion. Both filmmakers arrived in the country in spring 2022 with humanitarian aid personnel and spent four months shooting the movie. The film premieres at the Venice Film Festival, set for the independent Giornate degli Autori sidebar.

Photophobia is being produced by Ivan Ostrochovský, Albert Malinovský and Katarína Tomková, of Punkchart Films (Slovakia), Tomáš Michálek and Kristýna Michálek Kvetová from Cinémotif Films (Czech Republic), and Denis Ivanov from Arthouse Traffic (Ukraine). Radio and Television Slovakia, Czech Television and partizanfilm (Pavol Pekarcík) are serving as co-producers. The Slovak Audiovisual Fund, Czech Film Fund and Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic have provided support. Filmtopia will handle the Slovak theatrical release.

Venice Film Festival takes place Aug 30 - Sept 9

Saltburn International Premiere to open 67th BFI London Film Festival

The tale of privilege and desire is directed, produced and written by Academy Award winning UK filmmaker Emerald Fennell. The film stars Carey Mulligan, Rosamund Pike, and Richeard E. Grant.

BFI London Film Festival takes place Oct 4-15

Location flashback

Chateau de Chillon, Veytaux, Vaud, Switzerland

The Little Mermaid (1989)
Location Inspiration



Photo: Walt Disney Pictures

Chateau de Chillon, location inspiration for the animated *Little Mermaid*, is an island castle located on Lake Geneva, south of Veytaux in the canton of Vaud. It is situated at the eastern end of the lake, on the narrow shore between Montreux and Villeneuve, which gives access to the Alpine valley of the Rhone,

The castle has been around since the Bronze Age (3300 BC to 1200 BC) and was first used as a romantic locale in 1816 by Lord Byron when he used the chateau as the setting for his poem “The Prisoner of Chillon,”

The *Little Mermaid* was released to theaters on November 17, 1989, to critical acclaim, earning praise for the animation, music, and characters. It was also a commercial success, garnering \$84 million at the domestic box office during its initial release, and \$235 million in total lifetime gross worldwide, becoming the sixth-highest-grossing film of 1989. The film won two Academy Awards for Best Original Score and Best Original Song (“Under the Sea”).



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