



SARAJEVO REVIEW DAILY

Quality TV Competes at Sarajevo



Once again, the Avant Premiere Series lineup aims to explore the best of regional TV production.

Max Borg, August 11, 2023

For the seventh year running, the Sarajevo Film Festival offers a spotlight on regional scripted productions for television via its Avant Premiere Series curated by Tina Hajon, who sees 2023 as an exceptionally interesting year for the lineup's "universally high production value".

In total, six series, all eligible for the Unicredit Audience Award, are showcasing one or two episodes each, giving audiences the chance to enjoy small screen thrills and laughs in a movie theater, as has become increasingly commonplace at festivals around the

[Continues next page](#)

FEATURE COMPETITION



LOST COUNTRY

VERDICT: A teen comes of age as a troubled Serbia reckons with its direction in 'Lost Country', Vladimir Perisic's sombre yet astute, politically-charged drama.

Carmen Gray, August 11, 2023

Vladimir Perisic's *Lost Country* opens as a storm brews. The symbolism in his sombre but politically incandescent, urgent sophomore feature tends toward the heavy-handed, but the stakes are high in finding meaning, as it reflects on the 1996 local elections in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia as a dire crossroads for the nation's future.

The threat of rain curtails an idyllic afternoon picking walnuts in the countryside for fifteen-year-

old Stefan (Jovan Ginic), where his grandfather (Dusko Valentic) has been reminiscing nostalgically about his younger years as a water polo Olympian and anti-fascist partisan in Tito's Yugoslavia. The darkening weather coincides with civil unrest on the streets of Belgrade. The party of authoritarian president Slobodan Milosevic faces defeat at the polls, and moves to cling onto power by falsifying results, with public relations help from

[Continues next page](#)

HONORIFICABILITUDINITIBUS

To be or not to be.
From September 13 until September 17.

nordmedia STADT OLDENBURG BLP Oldenburg KDO EWE

oldenburg FILMFESTIVAL 30 YEARS

QUALITY TV COMPETES AT SARAJEVO *(Continued)*



the world. (Though dedicated sections are not always a given, as we've seen recently with the announcement that the Berlinale is jettisoning its Series strand and returning to the pre-2015 tradition of screening select productions in the Berlinale Special program.)

The opening slot has been given to the Bosnian comedy series *Smashing It*, which is screening the first and seventh episode of its inaugural season. (A similar programming strategy has been adopted for the Serbian thriller series *The Call*, about a police officer investigating threatening phone calls made to a single mother). Pitched as a satire on fame and the idea of bringing the American dream to the Balkans,

the show focuses on Miki, who comes back from Los Angeles with a woman he met Stateside, convinced he's still a big deal in his hometown. The harsh reality is, no one actually remembers him, despite the best efforts of a local TV channel that runs his old music videos on a loop.

After last year's *The Hollow*, acclaimed director Danis Tanovic is back in the Avant Premiere Series selection as the showrunner of *Frust*, created by Srdan Vuletic and Gabor Krigler. A coproduction between Serbia, Hungary and Bosnia and Herzegovina, it revolves around a struggling young writer whose lust for recognition takes an outlandish turn when he shoots a criminal and gets acclaimed for his vigilantism.

Also from Serbia comes the drama series *The Visit*, with four stories based on true events. Each story focuses on a different, completely ordinary person who ends up in investigative detention as they wait to either be released or taken to court. The first two episodes will play at the festival, forming a complete narrative titled *The River*.

Croatia participates with *The Highlands*, set in the Gorski Kotar region. The narrative revolves around the lives of the members of the local Mountain Rescue Service.

[For Full Article, Click here](#)

LOST COUNTRY *(Continued)*



Stefan's mother (Jasna Duricic), their spokeswoman.

Following its Critics' Week premiere at Cannes, *Lost Country* screens in the Feature Competition at Sarajevo Film Festival — a long-awaited return for Perisic since he won the Heart of Sarajevo Award for Best Film for his 2009 debut *Ordinary People*, which dealt with the dehumanising effects of the military on young men. It's a coming-of-age drama that uses the inner struggle of Stefan, torn with conflicting loyalties towards his mother, a self-declared "patriot," and his classmates, who are clamouring to join the resistance, to astutely reckon with Serbia's path forward.

The split between those pursuing Milosevic's nationalist, xenophobic agenda to create a Greater Serbia, and those advocating a turn to greater integration with Western institutions, as Yugoslavia fell apart, deeply resonates, amid the resurgent divisions of today's Europe.

[Full Review](#)



EVERYTHING
about the
MOVIES

Profiles of Top Stars and
Filmmakers

Upcoming Movie Releases

Trailers, Film Clips and Videos

BH PROGRAM



EXCURSION

VERDICT: Una Gunjak's sensitive, richly textured Bosnian coming-of-age about a lie's repercussions questions sexual double standards in a society of repressed fears.

Carmen Gray, August 11, 2023

Almost a decade ago, Bosnian director Una Gunjak won the European Film Award for Best Short Film for her debut short *Chicken* (2014), a powerful and direct reflection on the fragility of

life and close proximity of death set in the Sarajevo of 1993, when snipers were a daily reality. This year, she returns to her home city and the Sarajevo Film Festival with her first feature, *Excursion*, screening out of competition on the back of its Locarno world premiere.

The time between the two films has allowed for a maturing of vision, with *Excursion* offering subtle and astute food for thought on what it means to come of age in a Bosnian society grappling to break free from the hardships of past generations, in which a legacy of fear simmers under the surface of public life. Gunjak explores, in a sensitive drama richly textured with detail, how a strong patriarchal bias leaves young women vulnerable to sexual double standards and a rumour mill of insatiable gossip that limits their ability for playful exploration and self-determination.

Iman (played with just the right mix of impulsivity and nervy self-doubt by Asja Zara Lagumdžija) is something of a misfit among her middle-school peers, her short crop of pink-tinted hair setting her apart in a tide of more classic femininity. Her huge crush on Damir, a slightly older boy who has shown a casual interest in her, is a source of obsessive anxiety.

[Full Review](#)

DOX Leipzig

8.10.–

15.10.2023

Get your
accreditation
for our 66th edition!

KINOSCOPE



ORLANDO: MY POLITICAL BIOGRAPHY

VERDICT: Debuting director Paul B. Preciado's extravagant manifesto pushes the boundaries of feminine-masculine genres as well as cinematographic ones.

Lucy Virgen, February 19, 2023

Writer and LGBT+ activist Paul B. Preciado is frequently asked why he doesn't write his autobiography. "Because f***ing Virginia Woolf wrote it in 1928" is the answer Preciado gives at the beginning of *Orlando, My Political Biography*, his film

debut. And then he adds, "and I say f***ing in a tender and full-of-admiration way." *Orlando, My Political Biography* is listed in the Berlin catalog as a documentary. Right there is where the disruptive agenda of the film begins. We see 24 persons, trans or non-binary, introduce themselves with their real names and add, "I am representing Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*", then they read from the novel. The Orlandos present themselves as if in a scripted fiction film. Each one tells his, her or their story, like in a classic talking-heads documentary. The director is using all the tools in his cinematographic toolbox to tell his story. We could paraphrase Virginia Woolf: "The documentary – for there is no doubt of its genre – though the film conventions of the time did something to disguise it."

Even if the film is a great addition to the incipient trans cinema canon, the director's biography – the classic one – deserves a separate film. He is a writer and philosopher well known among scholars long before he began to inject himself with testosterone. This time in his life is recounted in his book *Testo-Yonqui*. He was not thinking of going through sex reassignment; he just wanted to experiment with the effects of the hormone, without considering its secondary effects.

[Full Review](#)

Attend IDFA this year!

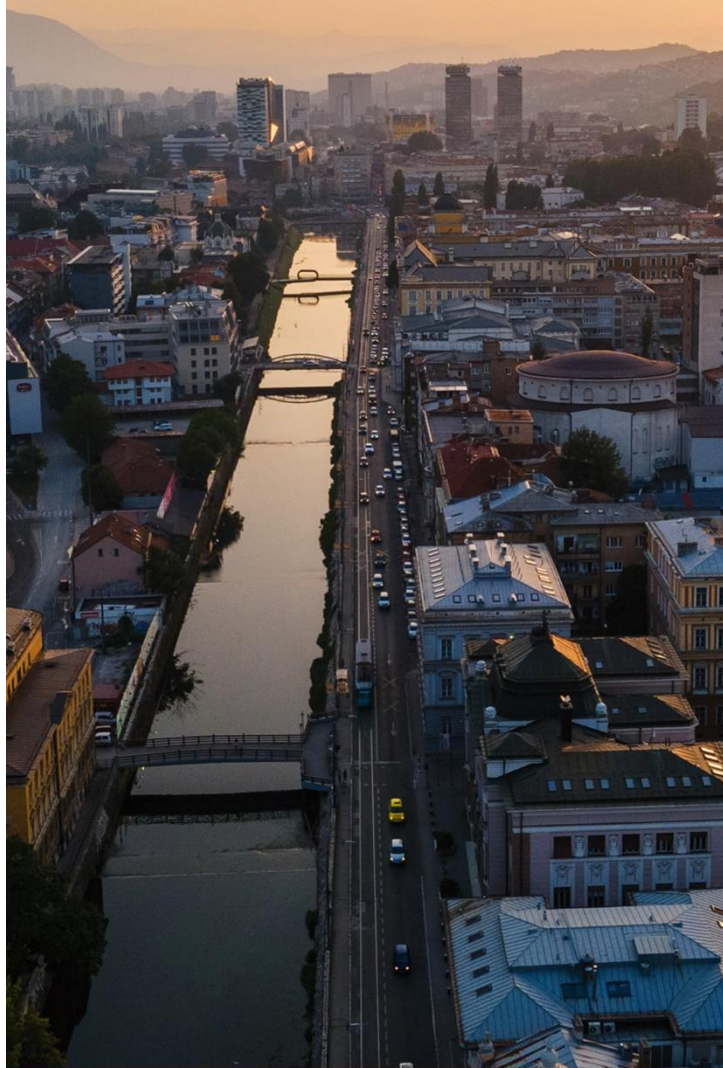
idfa

8–19 November 2023

International Documentary
Film Festival Amsterdam

FILM IT IN SARAJEVO

30% CASH REBATE



SARAJEVO
CITY OF
FILM


Member of
the Creative Cities Network



Grad Sarajevo
City of Sarajevo



Ministarstvo kulture i sporta
Kantona Sarajevo

IN FOCUS



BLAGA'S LESSONS

VERDICT: There's no dignity in a market economy, as a scammed pensioner turns scammer in this caustic Bulgarian tragifarce and thriller.

Carmen Gray, July 5, 2023

The market economy is both a waking nightmare and an excuse for much shady behaviour in Bulgarian director Stephan Komanderev's sardonic drama of societal breakdown, which world-premiered in the Crystal Globe competition at Karlovy Vary. *Blaga's Lessons* portrays a Bulgaria that has lost all scruples and sense of community in its punishing transition to capitalism, in keeping with a director who has for decades made films exploring his country's tumultuous history and struggle to find its feet.

Former literature teacher Blaga (Eli Skorcheva) is already unmoored by grief over the recent death of her husband, a policeman, when she is duped by Romanian phone scammers and their local mules out of her savings. Posing as law enforcement and insisting she's in danger in a shock avalanche of phone calls, the practiced criminals convince her to throw her valuables off the balcony. She had earmarked part of the money to pay for a cemetery plot before the forty days are up that, according to religious belief, her spouse's soul stays on Earth (in a dark joke, we're initially cued to think she's shopping for real estate for herself — not a great stretch, in a nation of condemned citizens walking.) With no collateral for a bank loan, and a recklessness at odds with her usual self, the pensioner resorts to risky measures to make quick cash and potentially turn the tables on her tormenters, in a caustic vision of contemporary Bulgaria that teeters between tragifarce and suspense thriller.

[Full Review](#)



وزارة الثقافة
MINISTRY OF CULTURE

www.ciff.org.eg



45TH CAIRO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

15TH - 24TH NOVEMBER 2023



Looking forward to see you in our 45th edition
Cairo International Film Festival
November 15th to November 24th 2023

CIFF 44TH EDITION HIGHLIGHTS



Masterclass Schedule

Sarajevo 2023

This year's Sarajevo Film Festival Masterclass program provides a unique opportunity to learn from experienced film professionals about various aspects of film production, directing, screenwriting, acting and other key aspects of the film industry. This allows creatives and film lovers to gain a deeper understanding of the filmmaking process and improve their skills in the world of filmmaking.



Photos courtesy of Sarajevo Film Festival

Mark Cousins

13 August
10:00 - 11:30
BKC Cinema



Charlie Kaufman

14 August
10:00 - 11:30
BKC Cinema



Lynne Ramsay

16 August
10:00 - 11:30
BKC Cinema



Jessica Hausner

17 August
10:00 - 11:30 BKC Cinema

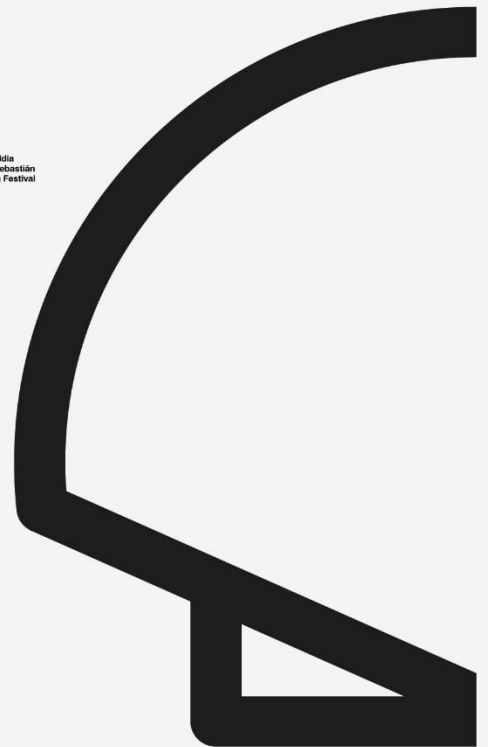


Spanish Screenings XXL

September 26-28

Creative Inverstors' Conference

Zinemaldia Startup Challenge



With the support of:



+ info:

industria@sansebastianfestival.com sansebastianfestival.com

SSIFF

2023
September
22/30

71

Official Sponsors

Media Partner

Official Collaborators

Associated Institutions

