



Karlovy Vary International Film Festival

WINNERS OF KVIFF EASTERN PROMISES 2024

Works in Progress, Works in Development – Feature Launch & Intensive Queer, Works in Development – KVIFF Talents, First Cut+ Works in Progress

KVIFF Eastern Promises, the festival's Industry section and film market, has the rewarding mission of bridging the gap between talented filmmakers and their potential co-production partners, festivals and audiences.

“This year has once again brought a diverse selection of strong creative voices, and we were pleased to showcase them to their potential production, distribution and festival partners in the beautiful setting of the Imperial Spa, the new KVIFF Industry venue,” Hugo Rosák, the Head of the KVIFF Film Industry Office, commented.

In addition to its well-established platforms Works in Progress, Works in Development – Feature Launch and First Cut+, this year's Eastern Promises also featured a showcase of Works in Development – Intensive Queer, and a second edition of KVIFF Talents.

A total of 39 film and series projects were screened, competing for awards with a total value of 110,000 EUR. The winners of this year's selection are:

Works in Progress

Jury:

Gabor Greiner, COO, Films Boutique sales company

Kyle Greenberg, Head of Marketing and Distribution, Utopia Distribution

Başak Emre, film producer and festival director, Festival on Wheels

Works in Progress encompasses both fiction and documentary films under one programme, as both of these categories, despite their differences, possess the same artistic value. In this year's showcase, a total of twelve feature and documentary projects from countries in Central and Eastern Europe, the Balkans, the former Soviet Union, the Middle East and North Africa were presented.

“The 2024 KVIFF Works in Progress Jury is proud to present three awards out of this year's programme. Each project transcended language and borders to present stories deserving and demanding of a global stage. Each film, unique in its own format and



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subjects, delves not only into the shifting cultural and political landscape, but also into identity politics, and speaks honestly to audiences worldwide,” stated the jury.

Works in Progress Visual Post-production Award

The jury has chosen the film ***Amedspor* (Turkey)**, directed by **Rezan Yesilbas** and produced by **Ahmet Gurata**. The award consists of a tailored post-production services package provided by UPP.

Jury statement: “An important and enthralling look at the intersection of sports and politics in modern day Turkey as a minor league football team works to reclaim its identity despite the conflict and likely repercussions. It is an important reflection of the Turkish-Kurdish conflict, telling the story not in a direct political way but through football.”

Works in Progress Sound Post-production Award

The jury has chosen the film ***Lover, Not a Fighter* (Slovak Republic, Czech Republic)**, directed by **Martina Buchelová** and produced by **Michaela Kaliská, Erika Paulinská and Julie Marková Žáčková**. The award consists of a tailored post-production services package provided by Soundsquare.

Jury statement: “The award goes to a young and talented team for their fresh and honest depiction of young love and for a tender, cruel and crazy coming-of-age trip.”

Works in Progress Award

The jury has chosen the film ***Virtual Girlfriends* (Czech Republic, Slovak Republic)**, directed by **Barbora Chalupová** and produced by **Pavla Klimešová, Monika Lošťáková and Simona Hrušovská**. A cash prize of 5,000 EUR, sponsored by Barrandov Studio, will be awarded to the project.

Jury statement: “A revealing, touching and complex depiction of individuals in the Czech Republic who have turned to the world’s oldest profession (with a twist) on today’s online and social marketplace, questioning identity, sexuality, normality, performance and more in the effort to make a living.”



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Works in Development – Feature Launch & Intensive Queer; KVIFF Talents

MIDPOINT & KVIFF Development Award Jury:

Danijel Hočevar, producer at Vertigo, producer mentor at MIDPOINT Feature Launch
Christina Tynkevych, director, film producer and scriptwriter
Arnaud Gourmelen, festival programmer and consultant

For this award, KVIFF has partnered with the MIDPOINT script and project development program, When East Meets West co-production market and Trieste Film Festival. Together, they showcased nine projects that have gone through development and mentoring within the Feature Launch programme and four projects from the MIDPOINT – Intensive Queer programme, designed to foster diversity in storytelling and provide crucial support to filmmakers in the realm of queer narratives.

The jury has decided to award the 10,000 EUR cash prize for further development, jointly sponsored by MIDPOINT, Barrandov Studio and KVIFF, to ***Klára is Here (Hungary)***, directed and written by **Dávid Csicskár** and produced by **Balázs Zachar**.

Jury statement: “We were impressed by the level of the projects that were presented to us, and we are thankful to all teams for sharing them. We would like to award a project that explores the poignant story of a man's quest for happiness amidst a heartbreaking reality, capturing the tragedy of letting go of love and the bravery to start over at any age.”

Eurimages Co-production Award Jury:

Paolo Ciccarelli, Head of Drama, MIA Markets
Claudia Bluemhuber, film producer, Silver Reel
Ilinka Teodorescu, International Relations Coordinator, Romanian Film Centre

The jury has decided to award the 20,000 EUR cash prize for further development, sponsored by the Eurimages fund, to ***Antonie (Czech Republic)***, directed and written by **Rozálie Kohoutová** and produced by **Martina Knoblochová** and **Martin Hůlvec**.

Jury statement: “The Eurimages Co-Production Development Award goes to a project that challenges conventional ideas about parenthood with humour and heart and motivates us to rethink societal norms. We are proud to support a rising female director with a unique vision, as she embarks on a promising career in the industry, aspiring to reach an international audience.”



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Connecting Cottbus Award

Connecting Cottbus representatives Marjorie Bendeck and Katharina Stumm have decided to give the award to the film ***Eli and Them (Czech Republic)*, directed and written by Petr Pylypčuk and produced by Kryštof Burda**. The project will be granted the opportunity to pitch at Connecting Cottbus, the East-West co-production market during the Film Festival Cottbus.

Statement: “For a complex coming-of-age story as well as a quietly bold portrait of a rural village undercut by racial tension, we would like to invite the team of *Eli and Them* to this year’s edition of Connecting Cottbus.”

Rotterdam Lab Award

Rotterdam Lab representative Alessia Acone has chosen **Martina Knoblochová, producer of the film *Antonie (Czech Republic)*** as the winner. The winner will participate in the Rotterdam Lab professional training programme for producers, which takes place during the International Film Festival Rotterdam.

Statement: “The team has shown a solid vision for a project that aims to break down decades-old prejudices about social belonging and modern parenthood. The producer will certainly benefit from sharing practices with an international group of fellows, and we want to encourage her to work with the director to bring this modern story to life.”

KVIFF Talents

[KVIFF Talents](http://www.kviff.com) is the festival's year-long programme created with the purpose of seeking out and supporting talented Czech and Slovak filmmakers and innovative audiovisual genres. It consists of two distinct sections – Feature Pool, dedicated to feature films, and Creative Pool, which supports other audiovisual genres from series through videoclips, gaming, etc.

This year, from over 150 submitted projects, the KVIFF selectors chose 6 – three feature film concepts and three series concepts. The selected creators and creative teams presented their projects to local and international film professionals during the Industry Days. They will also receive financial support for scriptwriting, mentoring, the opportunity to create a proof-of-concept video, consultations with experts, and for feature film authors



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also creative residency in Karlovy Vary this fall. The partners of the project are ČEZ Foundation and Voyo.

The selected projects are:

Feature Pool (120,000 CZK for further development):

***Inbetween Worlds* (Czech Republic, Slovakia), directed by Diana Cam Van Nguyen, written by Diana Cam Van Nguyen, Milada Těšitelová and produced by Karolína Davidová and Jakub Viktorín;**

***Letters to the Future* (Czech Republic), directed and written by Myro Klochko, produced by Marek Čermák, Karolína Fránková;**

***Rusalka* (Czech Republic), written by Hana Neničková.**

Creative Pool (50,000 CZK for further development):

***Casting* (Czech Republic), limited series directed by Terézia Halamová, written by Jan Černý and produced by Natália Pavlove;**

***Into the Endless Unknowns* (Czech Republic), miniseries written and directed by Veronika Ješáková and Petr Vlček;**

***Spectrum* (Czech Republic), dramedy series directed by Igor Smitka, written by Adél* Škvrna, produced by Klára Mamojková, Wanda Kaprálová and Matej Sotník.**

First Cut+ Works in Progress

Jury:

Barbara Wurm, film researcher and curator, Berlinale

John Nein, Senior Programmer and Director of Strategic Initiatives, Sundance FF

Lenka Tyrpáková, programmer and Artistic Director, Finále Plzeň

First Cut+ is a programme created for boosting the competitiveness and marketability of feature films that previously participated in First Cut Lab. The programme was launched in 2020 through close cooperation with two dynamic and well-established film industry platforms: Trieste's When East Meets West and Karlovy Vary IFF's Eastern Promises Industry Days. Each year, it promotes a portfolio of 16 fiction feature films at the stage of post-production – eight of which were presented at Karlovy Vary.



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First Cut+ Works in Progress Award

The jury has chosen the film ***Numakage Public Swimming Pool (Japan)***, directed and written by **Shingo Ota** and produced by **Kyoko Takenaka** as the winning project. A cash prize of 5,000 EUR sponsored by Barrandov Studio and Tatino Films will be awarded to the project.

Jury statement: “A fresh, surprising and personal portrait of loss that brings us into the fascinating, unexpected rhythms of a unique place and its people, Numakage Public Swimming Pool invokes the five stages of grief to create a beautiful meditation on the death of a public space, a community place, a queer space and a workplace.”

First Cut+ Works in Progress Special Mention

The Jury would also like to award a special mention to ***Mayflies (Hungary, Slovak Republic)***, directed and written by **Emília Goldberg** and produced by **Ferenc Pusztai and Linda Pfeiffer**.

Jury statement: “A first feature director who manages to deliver an atmospherically dense and strong film of historical as well as contemporary interest in times of growing social intolerance. With convincing performances, desaturated colours and gripping camera work, Emília Goldberg’s debut, based on true events, is a bewildering reflection of violence and unease.”

KVIFF Eastern Promises – Marché du Film Producers Network Award

Producers Network representative Yago Mateo has chosen **Michaela Kaliská, producer of *Lover, Not a Fighter (Slovakia)*** and **Patryk Sielecki, producer of *Anxiety of the Heart (Poland)*** as the winners. The winners will participate in the Marché du Film and Producers Network during the next Cannes Film Festival.

KVIFF Eastern Promises, Karlovy Vary IFF's industry platform, strives to help discover promising talent from the regions of Central and Eastern Europe and the Middle East, revealing it to more than a thousand distributors, sales agents, producers and festival programmers who attend the festival each year. Both European and non-European local distributors and major international sales reps rely on Karlovy Vary when searching for new movies. International sales companies introduce their films to both distributors and



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journalists from around the world. The Industry Days programme comprises a number of workshops, panels, presentations and networking opportunities. The primary focus on the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the Middle East makes it possible for key European and American industry players to discover fresh new projects in various stages of development and production.

More about the KVIFF Eastern Promises mission and activities can be found [here](#).

More information on the awarded Eastern Promises 2024 projects

(Further details are also available in the [Book of Projects](#))

Amedspor / Amedspor

Countries: Turkey

Directed by: Rezan Yesilbas

Scriptwriter: Rezan Yesilbas

Producer: Ahmet Gurata

Film synopsis

Amedspor, a minor football club from the Turkish second league, came into the spotlight when it decided to reclaim its Kurdish identity. While the “peace process” aiming to improve Kurdish citizens’ rights in Turkey was on the verge of collapsing, the team was emerging as a strong competitor. However, the club found itself in turmoil due to the escalating Kurdish-Turkish conflict. They are often attacked by nationalist fans during away games, hence travelling under police escort. The chants and banners of Amedspor supporters are often perceived as “terrorist propaganda” by the Football Federation. The club has had to pay record-breaking fines, and the footballers receive frequent suspensions. The film follows Amedspor and its loyal fans during a turbulent football season against this backdrop.

Lover, Not a Fighter / Milovník, nie bojovník

Countries: Slovak Republic, Czech Republic

Directed by: Martina Buchelová

Scriptwriter: Martina Buchelová

Producer: Michaela Kaliská, Erika Paulinská, Julie Marková Žáčková



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Film synopsis

A love story about the young Andrej, who is twenty, secretly in love, living with his grandma, and has the problem of climbing high trees when drunk and then being unable to get down. Andrej has a serious plan to better himself – to see no one, meet no one, only talk to his grandma and abstain in peace. Then he unexpectedly encounters Miša, his secret love interest, who he's tried to smile at 17 times while at parties. However, he's never able to remember her reaction, because he's always too drunk, but not today – today he's sober! Andrej and Miša start to talk and, over a glass of Fanta, they find an interest in each other. The fight for their young and tender love in this cruel and crazy world begins.

Virtual Girlfriends / Virtuální přítelkyně

Countries: Czech Republic, Slovak Republic

Directed by: Barbora Chalupová

Scriptwriter: Barbora Chalupová

Producer: Pavla Klimešová, Monika Lošťáková, Simona Hrušovská

Film synopsis

They say that you can't put a price on love — well, not unless you're on OnlyFans. This film captures one year in the fast-changing life of young mother Rosalinda. After attending an unusual workshop for OnlyFans newcomers, she decides to start a business creating online sexual content on the platform. Initially, she hides her identity with a mask, but for greater profit, she reveals her face. How does her boyfriend cope with her new career, and how is their relationship affected by the many "customers" who fall in love with her, especially one in particular?

In addition to this unconventional love triangle, the film also follows two other OnlyFans "creators" from the workshop, offering a behind-the-scenes look at the 24/7 job of selling one's identity and managing numerous users.

Antonie / Antonie

Countries: Czech Republic

Directed by: Rozálie Kohoutová

Scriptwriter: Rozálie Kohoutová

Producer: Martina Knoblochová, Martin Hůlavec



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Film synopsis

When Anton, an eternal slacker and the father of three-year-old Antonie, gets fired from his job at the supermarket, his girlfriend Soňa decides to go to France to earn money for the family as a pole dancer. Left alone to take care of a little girl in a society where men don't usually take paternity leave, Anton becomes the subject of ridicule.

With not much help around, the only support he gets is from the Roma family of his best friend Tibor. Slowly, while taking care of Antonie, he surprisingly finds the motivation he's always lacked in life. He gets back on his feet by dealing weed to mothers on maternity leave. This idyllic life is shattered when Anton's drunk stepfather cruelly remarks that Antonie isn't his daughter. The seed of doubt is planted and Anton starts to suspect his best friend Tibor, suddenly realizing all that he could lose.

Klára Is Here / Itt van Klára

Countries: Hungary

Directed by: Dávid Csicskár

Scriptwriter: Dávid Csicskár

Producer: Balázs Zachar

Film synopsis

Klára and Péter are retirees who have been married for 50 years. Klára has been suffering from dementia for a long time and Péter is devoted to taking care of her. However, the constant care takes a toll on Péter's health, so under pressure from the family, he agrees to put Klára in a care centre for the elderly. Péter feels lost and lonely without the task of nursing Klára, when one day he meets Andrea, Klára's younger, free-spirited friend, and they are drawn into an intense sexual affair. Péter's life slowly starts to change – while he spends his days discovering his growing feelings towards Andrea, his nights are dedicated to nursing Klára. When the catatonic Klára escapes from the care centre and catches the couple in the act, she starts to have lucid episodes. Péter faces reality: he loves two women, but has to choose one.

Eli and Them / Eli a oni

Countries: Czech Republic

Directed by: Petr Pylypčuk

Scriptwriter: Petr Pylypčuk

Producer: Kryštof Burda



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Film synopsis

Sheltered Eli (17) is sent to spend the summer at her sister Karo's (34) rural farm to prepare for her exams. As Karo is too preoccupied with running the farm, Eli gains unexpected freedom and begins to escape from the boredom of her studies. She meets reclusive Adam (25), who grows close to Eli, and while at a party, she sleeps with charismatic Roma drug dealer Mariana (18), later learning from her that a house in the local Roma settlement has recently burned down. Poor conditions are claimed to be the cause, so the village votes to evict the Roma population, while Mariana believes that the fire was set intentionally and wants justice. As the summer fades away, Adam, tormented by the fight for Eli's affection, claims to have set the fire. Distressed, Eli confesses it to Mariana, which tragically escalates the dispute.

Numakage Public Swimming Pool / Numakage Shimin Pool

Countries: Japan

Directed by: Shingo Ota

Scriptwriter: Shingo Ota

Producer: Kyoko Takenaka

Film synopsis

For over 50 years, Numakage, a public swimming pool complex called the “ocean” within a landlocked city in the suburbs of Tokyo, has served as a much-loved place for the elderly to improve their health, as a leisure facility for children and families, and as a meeting place for gay men. However, the urban development plan forces the pool to be demolished, ignoring the opposition of many residents and generating a sense of loss in the community. With Numakage Public Swimming Pool, Shingo Ota explores the nature of grief by using five psychological processes of denial, anger, negotiation, depression and acceptance, as examined by the psychiatrist Kübler-Ross, and questions the importance of loss that is usually only associated with human death.

Anxiety of the Heart / Nerwica Serca

Countries: Poland

Directed by: Michał Edelman

Scriptwriter: Karol Marczak

Producer: Patryk Sielecki

Film synopsis

Tymek, a wild-at-heart 17-year-old, suffers from an episode of self-harm but pretends it was a funny accident. He doesn't confess the truth to his loveless parents or the posh



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schoolmates whom he secretly hates. Instead of studying for finals, he runs away from home. He jumps off a train at the last moment and decides to stay in town to pursue the love of Zooley (19), a darkly witted expat. Initially cautious, Zooley embraces his impulsive yet loving nature. They kiss in the rain, crash a party and plan to leave the country together. But when Tymek accidentally bumps into his mother, his self-harming past strikes back. After publicly demolishing a restaurant and his own face, he is confined to a psychiatric ward. There he stands in truth with his suffering, which allows his love with Zooley to turn into a lasting friendship.