

The 16th year of the Cinematik festival will open with *107 mothers*, coming straight out of Venice

Press release, July 28, 2021

Great news for lovers of quality domestic filmmaking: The Cinematik Piešťany International Film Festival will open its 16th year with a new feature film by director Petr Kerekes *107 mothers* (*Cenzorka*, 2021). The film, made in a Slovak-Czech-Ukrainian co-production, will have its world premiere at the beginning of September at the 78th year of the prestigious Venice IFF. Only a few days later, *107 mothers* will have its ceremonial Slovak premiere at Cinematik IFF, taking place from 14 to 19 September this year.

Blinded by jealousy, young Lesja murders her husband. Although she was pregnant at that time, she did not avoid justice and is to serve seven years in prison in Odesa in the south of Ukraine. Here, she meets a lone operations officer, Irina, who has a particularly sensitive duty in a facility: As a professional prison censor, she must read and check all correspondence between convicts and their families, friends, but also partners. The paths of two totally different women get intertwined when Lesja, after an unsuccessful request for conditional release, fights to keep her son Kolja from ending up in an orphanage.

The theme of *107 mothers* was brought by Ivan Ostrochovský, who participated in the film as a co-author of the screenplay and as a producer. Originally, they prepared a documentary about the extraordinary work and the fate of real prison censors. Over the course of the process of collecting material, Slovak filmmakers visited several Ukrainian prisons. In one of them they met Irina Alexandrovna, a real prison censor who ended up cast in the role of herself in the film. According to Peter Kerekes, Irina was supposed to be just an episodic character, but the story of a single woman in her fifties reading intimate correspondence of strangers all day was so fascinating for the filmmakers that they decided to focus on this very aspect. For the award-winning documentary filmmaker Kerekes, *107 mothers* will be a feature film debut.

Like many other projects, the making of the film *107 mothers* was marked by the complications associated with the global pandemic. As the filmmaking team of *107 mothers* is international, including Ukrainian protagonists and a German editor, the production was prolonged, and the completion and premiere were delayed. We are all the more pleased that the film will soon reach not only the domestic audience but also the visitors and the jury of one of the most important film events in the world - the Venice International Film Festival. In the program of its 78th year, Cenzorka will present itself as part of the Orizzonti competition section, which draws attention to innovations and new forms of cinematic expression.

During the filmmaking process, *107 mothers* won the Works in Progress award at the Karlovy Vary International Film Festival in 2017 and a year later won the award the Best Project at the Odessa IFF. The film was co-produced by Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Ukraine. The screenplay was written by both Ivan Ostrochovský and Peter Kerekes, with Martin Kollár behind the camera.

Aside from *107 mothers*, the sixteenth issue of the International Film Festival Cinematik in Piešťany will also present dozens of other domestic and foreign titles - many of them also in the Slovak or world premiere or distribution preview. As usual, the festival will have its two competitive sections: one of the European feature films, and the other of Slovak documentaries. There will be many accompanying events and workshops, as well. The festival launches in less than two months and will be the largest film event in Slovakia.

Accreditations for the 16th year of the International Film Festival Cinematik are on sale on the official website of the festival www.cinematik.sk.

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