

The main film competition of the 19th Cinematik IFF will present an exceptional selection of new European films awarded at top festivals in Cannes, Berlinale, Venice, Rome and Sundance

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Cinematik International Film Festival traditionally presents a competition of top new European films under the section name **Meeting Point Europe**. This will be no different during the 19th edition of the festival, which will take place in Piešťany from 10 to 15 September 2024. This year, the main competition section of Cinematik will feature a diverse selection of films by talented, mostly young filmmakers. Several of them are noteworthy not only for their prestigious awards from foreign film festivals, but also for their strong casts.

One of the titles in the main competition *Meeting Point Europe* of the 19th Cinematik International Film Festival will be the drama **Crossing** (2024) by Swedish director Levan Akin. It brings an emotional and visually captivating journey of forgiveness and acceptance in the magical setting of the Turkish capital. The protagonist of the story Lia (Mzia Arabuli), a retired schoolteacher, sets out to find her sister's lost niece, who was disowned by her family years ago because of her trans identity. The film opened the Panorama section at this year's Berlinale.

The Substance (2024), another title in the Meeting Point Europe competition, is a film that is being talked about not only for its unique subject matter, but also for Demi Moore's excellent performance in the lead role. French director Coralie Fargeat's film is a concise and sharp satire that starred at the Cannes Film Festival and took home the Best Screenplay award. Its protagonist is an ageing TV star who, in an attempt to rejuvenate herself, tries out a miracle substance that can make her more beautiful, younger and more perfect. But there's a catch - she has to share time with her new self, Sue (Margaret Qualley).

After the Fire (2023) is a crime drama in which debuting French director Mehdi Fikri tells the story of a young woman (Camélia Jordana) seeking justice for her tragically deceased brother. The film is a powerful tribute to the victims of police brutality and arrives at Cinematik already awarded the Best Debut Award from the Rome

International Film Festival. The other film in competition, *Hoard* (2023), is also a directorial debut, this time by British filmmaker Luna Carmoon. It premiered at the

80th Venice Film Festival, where it won several awards from critics and audiences alike. It tells the story of a young girl coming to terms with her childhood memories in the company of her mother, a pathological hoarder.

The Austrian-German historical drama with horror elements **Des Teufels Bad** (The Devil's Bath, 2024) will also compete for the jury's favour. The well-known director duo Severin Fiala and Veronika Franz take us to the Austrian forests of the 18th century, where a young, strongly religious Agnes (Anja Plaschg) gradually descends into darkness in her grief over a failed marriage. Inspired by real-life period superstitions and rituals, the film won the Silver Bear at the Berlinale for Martin Gschlacht's excellent cinematography.

The next film in competition is *L'homme d'argile* (**The Dreamer**, 2023) - the feature directorial debut of French actress, screenwriter and filmmaker Anaïs Tellenne. It's the haunting dreamlike story of one-eyed Raphaël (Raphaël Thiéry), who takes care of a house where no one lives anymore, lives with his mother and lives a quiet but lonely life. But everything changes when the heiress of a large estate appears.

The soundtrack to a *Coup d'Etat* (2024) by Johan Grimonprez takes us back to the Cold War. The original film rewrites history and reveals unusual connections - it combines jazz with decolonisation and features such musical icons as Louis Armstrong, Nina Simone and Duke Ellington. The film has already won several festival awards, including the Special Jury Prize in the Documentary category at Sundance.

The selection also includes **Le successeur** (2023), a Canadian-Belgian-French thriller from director Xavier Legrand full of twists and turns. The protagonist (Marc-André Grondin) must deal with a mysterious inheritance from his father. Georgian filmmaker Luka Beradze, on the other hand, gives us a literally smiley insight into the 2012 election campaign in his home country in his documentary **Smiling Georgia** (2023) in the main competition of the Cinematik IFF. Back then, the ruling party promised voters beautiful new teeth as a reward for winning. But they lost the election, and the thousands of Georgians who fell for this populism were left without teeth - and illusions.

The winner of the **Meeting Point Europe** competition is decided by an expert jury composed of members of the Panel of European film critics and festival dramaturgs. This year's panel includes Austrian film publicist Reinhard Bradatsch, Belgian screenwriter, critic and subtitler Grégory Cavinato, New Zealand-based German critic Carmen Gray, and Philip Ilson, co-founder and artistic director of the London Short Film Festival, Norwegian critic and commentator Aksel Kielland, Midnight Sun Film Festival programme manager Milja Mikkola from Finland, and Dutch publicist Mike

Naafs, who has also served on juries at the Cannes and Kiev festivals.

The diverse international line-up of jurors will also include the director of Radio Montenegro Vuk Perović, French multimedia artist Pamela Pianezza, Estonian film critic

Tristan Priimägi, Spanish film and video curator Xavier García Puerto, Czech film publicist Matej Svoboda, Polish sociologist and film critic Krzysztof Świrek, Slovak publicist Daniel Vadocký and Hungarian film and theatre critic Kata Anna Váró.

The nineteenth edition of the Cinematik International Film Festival will present, in addition to the prestigious main competition of films from all over Europe, an equally important competition of domestic documentary films Cinematik.doc. Nearly a hundred other great cinephile experiences await festival visitors in non-competitive sections, shows and retrospectives. Accreditations for the 19th Cinematik International Film Festival are on sale at the official festival website www.cinematik.sk.

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