

Headliners of the 19th Cinematik IFF: 19 exceptional films not to be missed

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The Cinematik International Film Festival will open the gates of its 19th edition in Piešť'any on 10 September. During the six days of the festival, our visitors will have the opportunity to see nearly a hundred exceptional feature films, documentaries and animated films from Slovak and foreign filmmakers. The organisers of the festival are highlighting a symbolic nineteen headliners that no fan of quality films should miss.

Every year, the Paths of Glory section of the IFF Cinematik programme presents new foreign films that have already won awards and recognition from prestigious festivals around the world. One of them is the cheeky comedy *Kneecap* (2024) by British-Irish director Rich Peppiatt - the true story of the formation of a Northern Irish hip-hop group, which earned the Audience Award at Sundance and has already managed to be nominated for an international Oscar representing Ireland.

Cinematik will present the Slovak premiere of the latest film by award-winning director Yorgos Lanthimos – *Kinds of Kindness*. The film presents a trio of remarkable stories. In the first one, a man who has no other choice attempts to take control of his own life. In the second story, we meet a policeman who is reunited with his wife, who has disappeared at sea without a trace, but begins to develop the impression that the person who has returned to him is someone else entirely. The third story then follows the fate of a woman determined to find a very particular man with special abilities who is destined to become an extraordinary spiritual leader. The film premiered at the Cannes Film Festival, where Jesse Plemons won the Best Actor award.

After the Sundance, Berlinale and Karlovy Vary festivals, Slovak audiences will see the unconventional action-crime film by Rose Glass ***Love Lies Bleeding*** (2024) in the Paths of Glory section at Cinematik. At the end of the 1980s, in a desolate American backwater, reclusive gym owner Lou (Kristen Stewart) falls head over heels for Jackie (Katy O'Brian), a muscle-bound bodybuilder aiming to win the championships in Las Vegas. Their passionate love and German steroids inject an enormous dose of energy into the central duo. In an uncontrollable frenzy, they set out to confront Lou's demonic father (Ed Harris) to settle old scores once and for all. It becomes a wild audiovisual eruption of all cinematic and auditory elements.

A Different Man (2024) by American director Aaron Schimberg tells the story of an aspiring actor, Edward, who undergoes a radical procedure to change his appearance and identity. However, his new dream face quickly turns into a nightmare and he becomes obsessed with regaining what he has lost. The protagonist, Sebastian Stan, won the Best Actor award at the Berlin International Film Festival for this role.

Also making the shortlist is the evocative sports drama ***Tatami*** (2023), which tells the story of an Iranian judoka and her coach on their way to the World Championships with the aim of winning Iran's first gold medal. However, they face threats from their home country's regime. The film, directed by the duo of Guy Nattiv and Zar Amir Ebrahimi, was shot secretly in 2022 in Tbilisi, Georgia. It premiered at the Venice Film Festival.

And this year's Cannes Grand Prix winner, the drama ***All We Imagine as Light*** (2024) by Payal Kapadia, will also be present. The protagonists are two nurses in hectic Mumbai, where they share a

small apartment and relationship problems. The younger Anu is trying to break out of an arranged marriage, while the older Prabha has lost touch with her husband living in Germany. They seek peace on a trip to a small seaside village.

The Artistic Director's Choice section will also be full of exceptional films from around the world that are not to be missed. One of them is Paolo Sorrentino's **Parthenope** (2024) – For the first time, Sorrentino puts a female protagonist at the centre of the narrative: the enchanting Parthenope, whose fate he presents in chapters spanning from the 1950s to the present day. But the same name has also been borne in the past by the unique city of Naples, which charms, enthralls, shouts, laughs and always knows how to hurt. Parthenope is a spectacular film about human beauty, but also a love letter from the director to his hometown.

The section also presents the western novel **The Dead Don't Hurt** (2023) - the second directorial effort of actor Viggo Mortensen, who presented it in person at Cannes and Karlovy Vary. French-Canadian Vivienne and Holger, a Danish immigrant, fall in love right before the start of the American Civil War. When he goes off to fight, she's left to defend herself against the machinations of Weston Jeffries, an influential rancher. Returning from the war ultimately turns out to be a formidable challenge for Holger.

In **Confidenza** (2024), director Daniele Luchetti unravels the saga of the relationship between a renowned professor and his former student. When, now both renowned professors, they meet again after many years, the aging Pietro is overcome by the fear that Teresa will reveal the secret he confided to her years ago during a night spent together. The film, which had its world premiere at the Rotterdam IFF, also stands out for its enigmatic musical score by Thom Yorke and its haunting screenplay.

Das Lehrerzimmer (2023) is Germany's nominee for the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film last year. Its female protagonist is an idealistic young teacher who, despite the resentment of those around her, takes it upon herself to investigate thefts at the school where she has just started. Director Ilker Çatak's suggestive drama will be screened at the festival in the *Artistic Director's Choice section*.

The retrospective show *Respect: Radu Jude* will present a selection of the best of the award-winning Romanian director's work. One of its highlights will be **Nu astepta prea mult de la sfârșitul lumii** (2023), awarded the Jury Prize at the Locarno Film Festival. The crazy, tragicomic journey of an elaborate production through Bucharest is a metaphor for a present subordinated to social networks and nostalgia that is somewhat out of our control.

In addition to feature films, Cinematik will traditionally be a great place for lovers of world documentaries. The original film *Soundtrack to a Coup d'Etat* (2024) rewrites history and reveals extraordinary connections - it combines jazz with decolonisation and features musical icons such as Louis Armstrong, Nina Simone and Duke Ellington. The film has already been awarded a Special Jury Prize from the Sundance Film Festival, as well as other awards. The Belgian-French documentary will be screened by the festival in the *Meeting Point Europe* competition section.

One of the best horror films of the year, awarded the Silver Bear at the Berlinale - **Des Teufels Bad** (2024), is also waiting for the audience in the main competition of Cinematik. The director duo Severin Fiala and Veronika Franz take us to the Austrian forests of the 18th century, where a young, strongly religious woman in mourning over a failed marriage gradually descends into darkness.

Fans of cinematic horror should also take note of **The Substance** (2024) by French director Coralie Fargeat. The pithy satire, which won the Best Screenplay prize at Cannes, follows an aging star played by Demi Moore as she's in the process of trying out a miraculous rejuvenating substance. But there's a catch - she has to share her time with her new and younger self (Margaret Qualley). Swedish director Levan Akin's drama **Crossing** (2024) will also be competing for the jury's favour in the competition. It delivers an emotional and visually captivating journey of forgiveness and acceptance in the magical setting of the Turkish capital. The protagonist, a retired teacher, 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.

However, the headliners of the festival will also include a number of domestic or co-produced feature films. On the opening day, the Slovak premiere of the historical drama **The Hungarian Dressmaker** (2024) by Iveta Grófová will be the opening film of the 19th Cinematik. It tells the story of a Hungarian widow who hides a Jewish boy after losing her job in a Bratislava tailor shop. It depicts the war era in the Slovak-Hungarian border region during the escalating hostility towards minorities.

Living Large (2024) is a new family film by Kristina Dufkova, which the festival will screen in the Cinematik Junior section. It tells the story of 12-year-old Ben, who tries to lose weight by dieting under the pressure of bullying, but also of his love for a peer. The film was made with a combination of animation and puppets and boasts an award in the competition section of Contrechamp in Annecy.

There will also be representatives of domestic documentary filmmaking. The film **Czechoslovak Architecture 58-89** (2024) was directed by Jan Zajíček, based on a story by Vladimír 518 - it is a unique feature-length narrative probe into the pre-revolutionary architectural scene. **Wishing on a Star** (2024), a new film by the award-winning Petr Kerekes, tells a story of Luciana de Leoni d'Aspardo, an Italian expert in so-called active astrology, and five of her clients. According to the astrologer, you can change your destiny if you travel to a place with the ideal constellation of stars on your birthday.

Press release: Lucia Fajnerová & Peter Konečný
PR contact: Peter Konečný
+421 905 316 005
e-mail: peter.konecny@cinematik.sk
www.cinematik.sk

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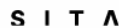
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