



TPS
TRANSILVANIA
PITCH STOP

TRANSILVANIA PITCH STOP

BOOK OF PROJECTS 2026

 **TIFF.25**

CONTENTS

1. FATHERS (BULGARIA)	4
2. COLORS OF FREEDOM (HUNGARY)	7
3. ANOTHER STORY ABOUT MY SON (ROMANIA)	10
4. DECEBAL'S WEDDING (ROMANIA)	13
5. SUN OFFSPRING (ROMANIA)	16
6. A BRIGHTER WORD THAN BRIGHT (TÜRKIYE)	19
7. THE GUARDIANS OF THE OLD LADY (TÜRKIYE)	22
8. RAIN COUNTRY (TÜRKIYE)	25
9. THE SILENT SHORE (UKRAINE)	28
10. TIMES NEW ROMAN (UKRAINE)	31

TRANSILVANIA PITCH STOP

Ten projects in development will be presented to industry professionals (producers, distributors, sales agents, representatives of film funds & more) at the Transilvania Pitch Stop this year. The 13th edition of the program includes the presentation of projects in front of potential partners and financiers on June 18th during the Transilvania International Film Festival (June 12-21, Cluj-Napoca, Romania).

Five projects will benefit from a tailored script consulting provided by David Pope, while all projects will be coached by the renowned consultant Agathe Berman prior to their presentation.

The program is open to feature-length fiction film projects of 1st and 2nd time filmmakers coming from Romania, Republic of Moldova, Hungary, Bulgaria, Serbia, Ukraine, Greece, Türkiye, Georgia, the Republic of Cyprus and Albania.

The ten projects selected for the 13th edition of Transilvania Pitch Stop are:

- 1. Fathers (Bulgaria)**
- 2. Colors of Freedom (Hungary)**
- 3. Another Story About My Son (Romania)**
- 4. Decebal's Wedding (Romania)**
- 5. Sun Offspring (Romania)**
- 6. A Brighter Word Than Bright (Türkiye)**
- 7. The Guardians of the Old Lady (Türkiye)**
- 8. Rain Country (Türkiye)**
- 9. The Silent Shore (Ukraine)**
- 10. Times New Roman (Ukraine)**

FATHERS

1

(Bulgaria)
БАЩИТЕ

Directed by **Martin Iliev**
Produced by **Angel Ivanov** (Handplayed)
Leda Dragieva (Handplayed)

First Film
Drama / Dark comedy
Secured: 20.12 %
Budget: 906.605 EUR
Beginning of production: January 2027
Looking for: Co-producers

Contact Details

Leda Dragieva
leda@handplayed.co



Director Martin Iliev



Producer Angel Ivanov



Producer Leda Dragieva

FATHERS

Facing a life-threatening diagnosis and looming fatherhood, Pavel, a young director, is pulled into a road trip with his distant father, who insists he's saying goodbye to life. The journey forces them to confront old wounds, pushing Pavel to face generational trauma and finally break the cycle.

SYNOPSIS

Pavel (33), a director, is thrown into crisis when his girlfriend is rushed to the hospital after their third IVF attempt. At the same time, worsening back pain and an MRI leave him convinced he may have a tumour. Before he can process the news, his hypochondriac father Simeon, forces him on one final road trip to the Black Sea to say his goodbyes. Cramped in an old Beetle with a coffin on the roof, Pavel confronts years of resentment, fear of fatherhood, and the weight of inherited trauma. Tensions escalate when Pavel discovers his father's medical records. A confrontation ends abruptly when Simeon suffers a heart attack. As the journey spirals from absurdity to tragedy, father and son finally reach the sea for a long-delayed reckoning.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

"Fathers" follows Pavel, a young director, and his aging father Simeon on a road trip across Bulgaria to a seaside town - a trip neither of them has chosen willingly. I'm drawn to the road movie not as genre exercise, but because movement externalises what these two men cannot say to each other. The landscape becomes the emotional subtext. The film moves in a register of melancholy, restrained dramatic tension, and occasional dark humour - the kind that surfaces when people are too proud to cry. Through their journey I want to explore how silence becomes inheritance - how the things left unsaid between a father and a son don't disappear, but accumulate, shaping who we become and how unresolved pain is passed from generation to generation.

DIRECTOR'S BIO

Martin spent his teenage years pursuing a dream of becoming an actor but fate led him down a different path. After graduating from the NATFA in Sofia, he dived into the world of filmmaking and has built a career that spans fiction, television and advertising. He made several award-winning short films,

co-wrote the feature "The Pig" (FIPRESCI Award, Sofia IFF) with director Dragomir Sholev and recently stepped into long-form television, directing a tv series for one of the country's largest commercial broadcaster. His directing style is shaped by his roots in theatre - performance-led, emotionally honest, comfortable crossing between comedy and drama. He's currently developing his debut feature "The Fathers", written by Konstantin Bojanov.

PRODUCER'S NOTE

After years of collaboration on different projects, Martin Iliev and I reunited in 2019 for the short film Father-Time, which screened internationally and aired on CANAL+. Our feature project Fathers expands on themes deeply personal to Martin: complicated father-son relationships, inherited fears, and the anxiety of becoming a parent while confronting mortality. Developed with support from the Bulgarian National Film Center and co-written by Cannes award-winning filmmaker Konstantin Bojanov, the film follows a tense and darkly humorous road trip across winter Bulgaria toward an emotional reckoning. The project also won the ArteKino award at the Sofia Meetings pitching forum, part of Sofia International Film Festival.

PRODUCTION COMPANY INFO

Handplayed is a Sofia/Amsterdam based award-winning production collective, working across fiction, documentary, and commercial projects. Founded in 2015 by producer Angel Ivanov, an alumnus of Sarajevo Talents, Maia Workshops, and Erich Pommer Institut, the company became the first Bulgarian member of IQ in 2022. Its films have screened at festivals including Locarno Film Festival, Thessaloniki IFF and Sofia IFF and have been acquired by CANAL+, HBO and BBC. Recent titles include MILEN, Don't Let Me Die, For You and The American Spy. Its commercial work is recognized by Cannes Young Lions, Golden Drum, Effie, The One Show, IAB. Handplayed producer Leda Dragieva has 5+ years of experience in commercials, long-term campaigns and short films.

COLORS OF FREEDOM

2

(Hungary)
A SZABADSÁG SZÍNEI

Directed by **Tóth Kristóf Zsolt**
Produced by **Alexandra Devai**
Eszter Óvári, Júlia Szandtner (Hello:Yes
Production)

First film
Coming-of-age, Drama
Secured: 25.645%
Budget: 128.248 EUR
Beginning of production September 2027
Looking for: Co-producers

Contact Details
Alexandra Devai
hello@hello-yes.com



Director Tóth Kristóf Zsolt



Producer Alexandra Devai



Producer Eszter Óvári



Producer Júlia Szandtner

COLORS OF FREEDOM

After feeling her suffocating city life, 22 year-old Lili falls in love with a drifter in Bosnia, but as poverty drives them from pretty crime to selling their intimacy online, she realizes the freedom she longed for may have been an illusion.

SYNOPSIS

Lili, 22, escapes the stifling predictability of city life to travel the world alone. In Bosnia, a chance encounter brings her together with Leon, 32, a kind gas station attendant, and they decide to continue their journey together. Along the way, they fall deeply in love, but their lack of funds pushes them into increasingly serious crimes. After a life of stealing and fleeing, they seek a new way to make money and begin selling their own intimacy. While their online sex videos provide a comfortable lifestyle, they also bring growing responsibilities. Lili finds the rules of life outside society even more restrictive than those within it. She eventually realizes that the freedom she was chasing was nothing more than an illusion.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

"This story begins when one of us stands up and, to everyone's surprise, actually leaves. She is Lili, a 24-year-old woman who, seemingly without any explanation, decides she's had enough and bails. She is that part of our soul that wants to go, and in this film, we get to see what would happen to her if she did. The problem is that the whole thing is an illusion. That doesn't exist. At the end of the line, there is no pot of gold; instead, you just become a joke: 45 years old, with dreadlocks, looking haggard on a beach. Which one is the scam? Does freedom truly not exist? Perhaps not, but I also feel that the 8-hour daily grind is a scam as well. Life cannot be just this. My film, Colors of Freedom, seeks the answer to this question."

DIRECTOR'S BIO

Film Credits • 2025 | Alice, the lover of the toreador (short film) – Screenwriter, Director • 2025 | Sokol (short film) – Screenwriter, Director • 2025 | Berta.night (short film) – Screenwriter, Director • 2024 | Danube drift (short film) – Screenwriter, Director • 2024 | Denisa (short film) – Screenwriter, Director • 2024 | Bear (music video) – Director • 2024 | Anna (short film) – Screenwriter (Exam film) • 2024 | Feér – Screenwriter (Exam film) • 2023 | Examination (short

film) – Screenwriter (Exam film) • 2021 | Winter Dream (feature film) – Actor • 2020 | Forward! (short film) – Actor • 2019 | Pilate (dir. Linda Dombrovsky, TV movie) – Actor

PRODUCER’S NOTE

Colors of Freedom is a coming-of-age road movie that explores the illusion of freedom, digital exploitation, and the emotional uncertainty shaping an entire generation of young Europeans today. As a producer, I believe this film is important because it asks a deeply contemporary and universal question: what does it actually mean to be free today? Although rooted in Eastern Europe, Colors of Freedom speaks to a global audience. This project is important because it is not simply a story about rebellion. It is a portrait of a generation. A film that opens a conversation about the price we pay for the illusion of freedom — and whether real freedom can still exist in a world where everything has become transactional.

PRODUCER’S BIO

With a producer’s degree from London and more than fifteen years of experience, Alexandra Devai brings multiple producer credits and a global perspective to her work. Her Communication skills and cultural adaptability contribute to seamless collaborations in the world of film production. With nearly two decades of extensive experience as a line producer and producer, Eszter Óvári has a wide-ranging background in international service productions, including feature films, commercials, and Hungarian films. With a degree in economics, Júlia Szandtner has spent the past ten years working in the management of feature films and commercials. She has strong expertise in preparing applications for various tender opportunities.

ANOTHER STORY ABOUT MY SON

3

(Romania)
O ALTĂ POVESTE DESPRE FIUL MEU

Directed by **Adrian Silișteanu**
Produced by **Iriana Adnana** (Domestic Film)
Maya Vitkova Kosev (Viktoria World Sales and Distribution)

First Film
Drama

Secured: 61%

Budget: 1.103.600 EUR

Beginning of production:

August-september 2027

Looking for: Co-producer/ co-financier,
sales agents

Contact Details

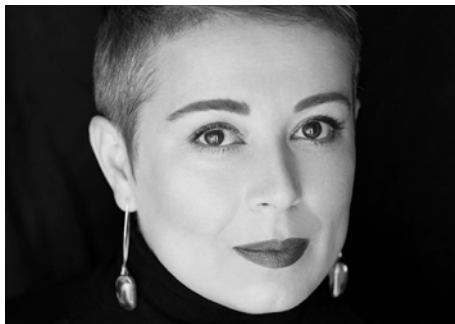
Adrian Silișteanu
contact@adriansilisteanu.ro
Alex Sirbu - junior producer
alexioansirbu@gmail.com



Director Adrian Silișteanu



Producer Iriana Adnana



Producer Maya Vitkova Kosev

ANOTHER STORY ABOUT MY SON

A Roma community leader helps a film crew recreate the ethnic conflict that claimed his son's life, embarking on a painful journey through grief, memory and acceptance.

SYNOPSIS

HOBICĂ, the leader of a Roma community, wholeheartedly supports a film crew that has come to his village to shoot a movie inspired by an interethnic conflict that claimed the life of his son. As filming progresses, he notices that the reenactments do not fully match historical reality and begins paying close attention to the production. His frustration reaches a peak when he discovers inconsistencies in the portrayal of his son's story. Disturbed by the reconstruction of his murder and overwhelmed by painful memories, Hobică enters open conflict with the director, refusing to cooperate in the completion of the project.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

The death of a child is the deepest rupture a human can endure. As a father, I have often imagined the pain of never holding your child again. This empathy led me to tell this story. Mourning is love with nowhere to go. The idea emerged while researching a violent interethnic conflict in Romania in which several young Roma were killed. I wanted not only to portray that specific event, but also to explore a universal wound—the lingering pain and fractures between communities. Hobică, the main character, fiercely defends his people. After his son's violent murder, grief hardens into rage, guilt, and purpose. Years later, making a fiction film about this tragedy becomes both a political act and a desperate way to keep his son's memory alive.

DIRECTOR'S BIO

Adrian Silisteanu was born in 1975 in Bacău, Romania. In 2003, he graduated with a BA in Cinematography in Bucharest, while also studying Digital Cinematography at the National Audiovisual Institute in Paris. Romanian director Adrian Sitaru's debut feature, *Hooked* (2008), was also Silisteanu's first film as Director of Photography. Since then, he has worked on more than 30 films and TV series with various directors across Europe and the Middle East. Stepping into the director's shoes, Adrian Silisteanu directed three short

films: *The Ditch* (2012), *Written/Unwritten* (2016), and *The Afghanistans* (2019) which had a good festival track record. *Written/Unwritten* brought him a nomination for Best Short Film at the European Film Awards in 2017.

PRODUCER'S NOTE

ANOTHER STORY ABOUT MY SON proposes a powerful narrative that combines social realism with a meta-cinematic structure, questioning the ethics and purpose of representation itself, while confronting grief and loss. The script addresses universal themes, memory, sacrifice, and reconciliation, while foregrounding ethnic conflict between Roma and Romanian communities, an underrepresented subject with strong relevance across Europe and beyond. In a context marked by renewed debates on social integration, and historical injustice, the film engages with urgent questions of representation, human rights, and marginalization. The film's meta-cinematic approach adds a further layer of complexity, inviting reflection on the construction of truth.

PRODUCERS' BIO

Iriana Adnana (Babelsberg MBA candidate) joined 4 PROOF FILM in 2023. She produces Adrian Sitaru's *Virgin Mary*, presented *Harakiri* at Sarajevo 2024, currently manages six-projects in various stages and participates in CineLink Sarajevo Producer's Lab '26.

Bulgarian filmmaker Maya Vitkova-Kosev EP'd the Cannes-selected *Eastern Plays* and directed *Viktoria*, Sundance's first Bulgarian entry. She is in post-production on *One Month* and developing her Cannes-awarded script, *Afrika*. Founded in 2014 by Sitaru and Adrian Silişteanu, Domestic Film produces auteur-driven global cinema. Highlights include Berlinale-winner *Ilegitim*, *Day of the Tiger* (Rotterdam), and *Blindsight* (Best Director, *Black Nights* 2025).

DECEBAL'S WEDDING

4

(Romania)
NUNTA LUI DECEBAL

Directed by **Matei Lucaci Grunberg**
Produced by **Gabi Suciu** (Atelier de Film)

First Film
Comedy, Drama
Secured: 70%
Budget: 666.800 EUR
Beginning of production: April- June 2027
Looking for: Gap financing, co-producers, sales

Contact Details

Gabi Suciu
gabisuciu.exec@gmail.com



Director Matei Lucaci-Grünberg



Producer Gabriela Suciu

DECEBAL'S WEDDING

In 2007, a traditional Romanian family's tech-challenged attempt to attend their son's New York wedding devolves into a hilarious cultural collision with his progressive American in-laws.

SYNOPSIS

Vasile and Violeta Popa are getting ready for the wedding of their only son, Decebal, who left the small town of Gura Humorului, Romania and has been living in New York for 8 years. Though they've never set foot in the U.S., the miracle tech of the year 2007 offers them a surprising solution: virtual attendance at the overseas event, streamed live straight to Decebal's childhood bedroom, which, naturally, has remained untouched since the day he left.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

I want to create a bittersweet family comedy about the invisible cost of the "American Dream". Set in early-2000s Romania, it follows a family fractured by migration, where parents and children were chasing better lives. I'm drawn to this moment when technology hadn't yet erased distance, when a phone call felt precious. Romania was in transition, absorbing Western values while fragmenting. Families drifted apart unknowingly. I am not looking into the political or tragic, but digging into the deeply human struggles of longing, love persisting despite separation and loosening roots. It happened in Gura Humorului. But it could happen anywhere the dream infiltrated, anywhere families learned proximity isn't connection.

DIRECTOR'S BIO

Theater and film director, playwright, and screenwriter, Matei Lucaci-Grünberg holds a Ph.D. in Film Studies. He's a keen observer of the Romanian society with intelligent humor, putting his notes in tragi-comic theatre plays and short film formats. His previous shorts have earned international acclaim, including a Karlovy Vary selection. After staging numerous acclaimed performances in both state and independent theaters, he is now returning to cinema, alongside his ongoing work in the theater to debut into feature films with "Decebal's Wedding".

PRODUCER'S NOTE

Decebal's Wedding taps into a universal wound reopened by the hyperconnected age. We live in an era of "connected isolation" where families are separated not by necessity but by choice, by opportunity, by the illusion that distance no longer matters. Yet it does. Set in early-2000s Romania, this story isn't nostalgic, it's urgently contemporary. We still leave. We still lose each other despite having the world in our pockets. The 2000s setting will become our marketing engine, invoking nostalgia for the 35+ millenials demographic, while speaking to younger audiences about timeless family rupture.

PRODUCER'S BIO

Gabi Suciú has 16+ years of experience in film production. At 26 she was nominated Young Hope at the Gopo Awards, in 2021 she became the first Romanian producer to have won the Golden Shell at the prestigious San Sebastian Film Festival in its 74 editions so far. Gabi combines her field work with her professorship, being the director of the Film Production master's program and the vice-dean of the Film Faculty at UNATC.

Atelier de Film is a film production company based in Bucharest. They are a regular presence in the international film market, with recent productions selected for Cannes Quinzaine des Realisateurs, San Sebastian and representing Romania twice in the Smart7 Competition.

SUN OFFSPRING 5

(Romania)
COPIII SOARELUI

Directed by **Octavian Șaramet**
Produced by **Mara Cracaleanu** (Melancholia Film)

First Film
Folk Horror / Psychological Horror / Found Footage

Secured: 20.72%

Budget: 1.255.000 EUR

Beginning of production 2027

Looking for: Co-producers, public and private financing, sales/distribution partners, and pre-sales opportunities

Contact Details

Mara Cracaleanu
mara.cracaleanu@gmail.com



Director Octavian Șaramet



Producer Mara Cracaleanu

SUN OFFSPRING

Two lovers longing for parenthood are drawn into a secluded Romanian wellness community anchored in a horrifying belief: you can meet your child before it exists.

SYNOPSIS

Victor and his wife Ana, an emerging entrepreneur, meet another couple during a routine gynecological visit. Drawn by a potential investment, they follow them to a secluded wellness community surrounded by forest and fields. Within this closed world, intimacy grows intrusive. They submit to breath-induced trance work, mechanical bodily suspension and mirrored isolation chambers. All of these serve the idea that birth can happen before conception.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Whom do we trust when searching for meaning? This film explores how the quest for spiritual connection can be twisted into absolute control. Inspired by true events in Romania, I want to expose abuse born from unaddressed trauma and the desperate need to belong. I focus not on the monstrous cult leader, but on his insidious system: a trap where obedience feels voluntary, and victims are blind to their subjugation. Today's obsession with mindfulness can be weaponized, echoing regimes like Communism that exploited faith in a savior. As the elections of 2024 showed, spiritual rhetoric still elevates leaders into objects of blind devotion. "Sun Offspring" reveals how empathy and love can be forged into a deadly weapon.

DIRECTOR'S BIO

Octavian Șaramet is a Romanian filmmaker and screenwriter. A graduate of the Faculty of Theatre and Film at UBB in Cluj-Napoca, his work explores spirituality, ritual, and the unseen forces shaping human experience. His work has screened at Astra Film Festival, Torino Film Festival and TIFF Romania. He is currently developing his debut feature "Sun Offspring", selected for European Genre Forum, Sarajevo Talents, Sitges FanPitch, and Pustnik Residency.

PRODUCER'S NOTE

"Sun Offspring" is a rare project for the Romanian and SEE landscape: an auteur-driven folk horror rooted in local spiritual practices, fertility anxieties, and the legacy of collective belief systems. The project has already been warmly received by leading European markets and labs, confirming its strong potential. We see it as a way to expand the language of Romanian cinema through genre, while opening a new path for audiences to experience this side of the world. We are now seeking co-production partners, public and private financing, and festival/market support to move the project towards production.

PRODUCER'S BIO

Mara Cracaleanu is a Romanian producer, Forbes 30 Under 30 Entertainment honouree, Council of Europe award recipient, and founder of Melancholia. Her projects have screened at festivals and institutions including BFI Flare, Torino Film Festival, FIPADOC, XV Florence Biennale and UCLA, and have been developed through Ex Oriente Lab, MIA Market, East Doc Platform, WEMW, European Genre Forum and CIRCLE. Melancholia is an award-winning Romania-UK production company developing international co-productions, auteur-driven films, series, elevated genre and immersive experiences for global audiences.

A BRIGHTER WORD THAN BRIGHT

6

(Türkiye)

PARLAKTAN DAHA PARLAK BİR SÖZ

Directed by **Belkis Bayrak**

Produced by **Murat Yaşar Bayrak** (Saba Film)

Guillaume De Seille (Arizona Films)

Valmira Hyseni (Plan Bee Films)

Second Film

Drama

Secured: 40%

Budget: 890.000 EUR

Beginning of production 2028

Looking for Co- Producers, Additional
Financing, Post production, Sales Agent

Contact Details

Belkis Bayrak

bayrakbelkis@gmail.com



Director Belkis Bayrak



Producer Murat Yaşar Bayrak



Producer Guillaume De Seille



Producer Valmira Hyseni

A BRIGHTER WORD THAN BRIGHT

To ensure Ziya is declared a martyr, Osman takes legal blame for the suicide, shielding Ziya's pregnant fiancée, Yaren. Released after five years, Osman reunites with her. A profound bond strives to bloom between them, piercing the heavy burden of their shared secret.

SYNOPSIS

During his military service, Osman forms a bond with his superior, Ziya. When Ziya takes his own life, Osman makes a choice to protect Ziya's pregnant fiancée, Yaren. He accepts the blame for the death so Ziya can be honored as a 'martyr'. After five years in prison, Osman returns as an outcast. While trying to reclaim his life through teaching, he reunites with Yaren. Their encounter evolves into a tender bond that offers a chance to rewrite their future. Together, they navigate the weight of a shared secret through the healing power of literature and human connection.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

This film springs from a void in my family: my uncle's suicide at 32. Growing up in a household touched by this unspoken tragedy, I saw how collective stories like martyrdom often overwrite private pain. Through *Osman*, I explore characters who resist through gentleness. His sacrifice is a long emotional aftermath of holding on. In a world that celebrates noise, I want to listen for resilience—where truth reveals itself not through confession, but through the continuity of teaching and art. Working with cinematographer Kürşat Üresin, we use poetic realism to capture the pulse beneath stillness and the light that seeks what is brighter than bright.

DIRECTOR'S BIO

Belkis Bayrak is an Istanbul-based filmmaker with an MA in Film and Television from Istanbul Bilgi University. After premiering at the Toronto International Film Festival and celebrating its European premiere at San Sebastián, her debut feature *Gülizar* (2024) screened at more than 50 international festivals and won 20 awards, including three at the Antalya Golden Orange Film Festival.

Her second feature fiction film, *A Brighter Word Than Bright*, won Co-Production Award at TRT 12 Punto, the Best Project Award at Arras Days, and was selected for M2 Film Lab. Belkıs is an alumna of Torino Film Lab and a member of EWA.

PRODUCERS' NOTE

A Brighter Word Than Bright is a character-driven auteur project with profound cross-border potential, weaving poetic realism. Our production strategy mirrors this artistic vision by building a solid, organic international co-production. With 40% of our €890,000 budget secured through prestigious national awards and producers' equity, the project stands on a concrete financial foundation. To fully realize its cinematic ambition, we are actively looking for co-producers to consolidate our framework. Furthermore, we seek additional financing, post-production partners, and international sales agents to board this journey at an early stage.

PRODUCERS' BIO

The project is a co-production between Saba Film (Türkiye), Arizona Films (France), and Plan Bee Films (Kosovo). Murat Yaşar Bayrak (Saba Film) is an independent producer dedicated to auteur cinema, focusing on international co-productions like the acclaimed feature *Gülizar*, which premiered at TIFF and San Sebastián. Guillaume de Seille (Arizona Films) is a veteran French producer whose filmography includes over 50 titles premiered at Cannes, Venice, and Berlin. Valmira Hyseni (Plan Bee Films) is a key figure in the Kosovar film industry, specializing in regional financing and European collaborations."

THE GUARDIANS OF THE OLD LADY

7

(Turkey)

YAŞLI KADININ GARDİYANLARI

Directed by **Selda Taşkın**

Produced by **Sezgi Üstün San** (Sezzfilm)

Gökçe Işıl Tuna (Motiva Film)

First Film

Drama

Secured: 43.47%

Budget: 982.208,64 EUR

Beginning of production: September 2027

Looking for: Co-producers, sales agent

Contact Details

Sezgi Üstün San

sezgi@sezzfilm.com



Director Selda Taşkın



Producer Sezgi Üstün San



Producer Gökçe Işıl Tuna

THE GUARDIANS OF THE OLD LADY

In a dystopian system that places elderly inmates in low-income families, a young woman cares for a female prisoner confined to a room in her home. As unsettling truths emerge, the fragile line between care and control blurs, and she begins to turn her own life into an act of resistance.

SYNOPSIS

Sema, a young woman and an unemployed nurse about to marry, lives with her family and cares for Saliha, an elderly female inmate placed in their home by a state program. Hidden behind a locked door, Saliha's faint mechanical heart echoes through the house. When a stranger knocks on their door, Sema begins to uncover the truth behind the system and her family's role in it. As a fragile bond forms between them, Sema transforms her care into an act of resistance on her wedding day.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

This film emerges from my upbringing in a migrant Balkan family, alongside my grandmothers, and my studies in philosophy. Its visual world treats the house as both home and prison, where care and control meet. Static interiors reflect the confinement of the elderly inmate, while a freer camera outside suggests freedom, with occasional POV shots echoing a child's gaze. Through art direction — using colorful ornaments that disrupt muted interiors — and sound design, with elements like a mechanical heart, everyday reality is slightly deformed into a realistic dystopia. This world unfolds through quiet tension and subtle humor. I aim to create a cinematic world where hope can emerge within the story of two women bound by a dark system

DIRECTOR'S BIO

SELDA TAŞKIN is a film editor, writer and director born in İzmir, Turkey, in 1984. She has a multidisciplinary academic background in philosophy, architectural culture, and art history from METU. After gaining experience in audiovisual production through various cultural institutions, she

founded Punctum Creative Productions in 2009. Since then, she has worked as a director, producer, and editor on numerous projects spanning advertising, film, and animation. A 2020 Berlinale Talents alumna, Selda has edited several award-winning feature films that have screened at major international festivals, including Sundance, Tokyo, Venice, Toronto. Selda is an active member of the EFA and the Film Editors Society of Turkey.

PRODUCERS' NOTE

What motivates us most in filmmaking is transforming years of observation into stories exploring human vulnerability, fear, and social structures. *The Guardians of the Old Lady* immediately struck us with its ability to approach justice through the intimate space of the family. The project constructs a world that feels both dystopian and disturbingly close to reality. Developed by Sezzfilm and Motiva Film together with German co-producers Schiwago Film, the film explores themes of aging, economic precarity, institutional violence, and women's solidarity. Through its emotionally resonant narrative and strong visual identity, we believe the film can connect deeply with international audiences and major festival platforms.

PRODUCERS' BIO

Sezzfilm, founded by producer Sezgi Üstün San, focuses on international co-productions and auteur-driven cinema. Her credits include *Once Upon a Time in Anatolia*, *Winter Sleep*, *The Field*, *The Cage*, *The Reeds*, and *Quiet Life*. She is an EAVE graduate and a member of EFA and SEYAP.

Motiva Film, founded by producer Gökçe Işıl Tuna, develops documentaries and feature films with strong international potential. Her productions include *Küf*, winner of the Lion of the Future award in Venice, *The Swaying Waterlily*, and *The Four Walls*. She is also an EAVE graduate and currently co-producing the Greek-Turkish feature *Achinos*.

RAIN COUNTRY 8

(Türkiye)
YAĞMUR ÜLKESİ

Directed by **Zeynep Köprülü**
Produced by **Aysun Karaman** (Rename Media)

Second film
Drama, Coming of Age
Secured: 23.09%
Budget: 474.564,00 EUR
Beginning of production: Spring 2028
Looking for: Co-producers, financing, post-production partnerships, sales agent.

Contact Details
Aysun Karaman
aysunkaraman@renameproject.com



Director Zeynep Köprülü



Producer Aysun Karaman

RAIN COUNTRY

In 2002 Istanbul, 17 year old Gül hides a secret after a classmate's suicide. As pressure builds around her, she must face her guilt and find a way to break free.

SYNOPSIS

Istanbul, 2002. As graduation approaches, 17-year-old Gül dreams of leaving Turkey to study art abroad. She spends her days with her best friend Melis while secretly seeing Can, the boyfriend of another student, Yasemin. When Yasemin dies by suicide, the school is shaken by rumors. As everybody searches for someone to blame, Gül hides her connection to Can and the guilt inside her. At home, her parents discover the relationship and confine her. Her only comfort becomes her grandmother, drifting into dementia. As rejection letters arrive, Gül feels trapped inside a future she never wanted. During a stormy graduation party, her secret is exposed. Humiliated and abandoned, Gül is forced to confront her guilt, anger, and the future ahead.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Rain Country is a film about growing up unheard. I was seventeen in 2002, just like Gül. I was part of a generation told the future was full of possibilities, yet what awaited many of us was pressure, silence and the difficulty of finding ourselves. Unlike Gül, I wasn't brave enough to express my emotions or desires. Through her journey, I want to revisit those years and explore what it means to search for yourself while feeling isolated and misunderstood. Visually, the film blends realism with a poetic atmosphere, where the presence of rain gradually grows, becoming a symbol of collapse and renewal. Though set in the early 2000s, the film speaks to a feeling that remains relevant today: the desire to be accepted without hiding who you are.

DIRECTOR'S BIO

Zeynep Köprülü is an Istanbul based filmmaker whose work explores displacement, coming of age and emotional repression. Her short films screened at festivals including the Palm Springs International Festival of Short Films, the Antalya Golden Orange Film Festival and the Mediterranean Short Film Festival of Tangier. A co-founder of Periferi Film, Köprülü co-produced Elizabeth Lo's award-winning documentary *Stray* (2020). She is an alum of Talents Sarajevo 2021. Her debut feature-length film, *On The Water Surface* (2024), had its premiere at the Adana Golden Boll

Film Festival in Turkey and received the Audience Award at the Créteil Women's Film Festival. She is currently developing her second feature, Rain Country.

PRODUCER'S NOTE

Rain Country examines the lasting impact of peer pressure, exclusion, and emotional violence within youth culture. I have known Zeynep Köprülü for years, and I deeply admire her sensitive approach to portraying complex political and emotional realities. We are developing the project through international collaborations, particularly on the creative and post-production sides. At TPS, we hope to connect with co-producers and sales agents who can support the film's international journey. Casting will be one of our main challenges, with the process planned for September 2026. We are also seeking partnerships with foundations and sponsors aligned with the project's social perspective and long-term impact.

PRODUCER'S BIO

Graduated from Ege University, Department of International Relations. She began her career in theater at BKM Mutfak, working in the theater department and as an assistant to actors. In 2020, she worked as Producer's Assistant on two documentaries by Oscar-nominated producer Kirstine Barfod, screened at festivals including Sydney Film Festival and CPH:DOX. She later collaborated with Zeynep Atakan on several projects and worked on international co-productions including Avalanche and Par-dessus bord. She is currently producing This Is It, The Apocalypse, selected for the Tallinn Black Nights Film Festival Script Pool and awarded the Türker İnanoğlu Debut Film Encouragement Award at the 2026 Meetings on the Bridge Work in Progress platform.

THE SILENT SHORE

9

(Ukraine)

МОВЧАЗНЕ УЗБЕРЕЖЖЯ

Directed by **Iryna Asonova**

Produced by **Rafael Thomaseto** (Driven Equation)

First Film

Drama

Secured: 23%

Budget: 1.300.000 EUR

Beginning of production: April 2027

Looking for: Funding organization representatives, sales agents, festival programmers, and producers interested in joining the film as minority co-production partners

Contact Details

Rafael Thomaseto

rafael@drivenequation.com



Director Iryna Asonova



Producer Rafael Thomaseto

THE SILENT SHORE

A family of Ukrainian theater artists is torn apart by war as Sofia flees abroad with her children, leaving her husband behind in Kyiv. As their lives unfold across two countries, they confront loss, displacement, and the challenge of staying connected.

SYNOPSIS

The Silent Shore follows a family of Ukrainian theater artists whose vibrant theatrical life is shattered by war. When Sophia flees Ukraine with her two daughters while her husband Roman remains in Kyiv, each family member copes differently with trauma and displacement. Sophia gradually loses her sense of home and her identity as an artist and mother. Remaining in the theater that once defined his life, Roman witnesses its transformation from a place of art into a shelter for those seeking safety. As war reshapes the theater and its people, he rediscovers art as a source of resilience, connection, and survival. Through loss and transformation, the family searches for a way back to one another, determined to reunite despite the ongoing war.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

"Silent Shore" consciously moves away from documentary realism. Rather than depicting war literally, the film enters a stylized theatrical world where visual metaphors and the transformation of space reveal the psychological impact of war. As normal life collapses, the theater itself becomes a mirror of life in Ukraine, reflecting the disruption of war while revealing art as a means of survival.

The visual language contrasts the vibrant, saturated world of theatrical Kyiv, shot on Super 16mm, with the vast, nearly monochrome Baltic shoreline, captured on 35mm. Through distinct subjective POVs, the film explores how trauma reshapes perception and creates different realities for each character.

DIRECTOR'S BIO

Iryna Asonova is a Ukrainian filmmaker, writer-director, and producer whose work explores memory, trauma, displacement, and the psychological impact of war. Her short films Cage for the Talking Parrot (2017) and The Apple Garden (2018) focused on the emotional aftermath of conflict and screened internationally. In recent years, she

has worked as a producer on international co-productions while continuing to develop her own directorial voice. She is currently developing her debut feature as writer-director, *Silent Shore*, a project developed through HerArts Lab, Warsaw Next and the Warsaw Co-Production Market.

PRODUCER'S NOTE

Supporting emerging female filmmakers is central to my work as a producer, and *The Silent Shore* is exactly the kind of story I am drawn to. Having collaborated with director Iryna Asonova for several years, I have had the privilege of watching her develop a deeply personal and distinctive artistic voice. While the film emerges from the Ukrainian experience, its themes extend far beyond a single place or conflict. In a world increasingly shaped by migration, displacement, and instability, the story speaks to a shared human desire for connection and belonging. What moved me most about the script was its intimate focus on how large historical events reverberate

through families, relationships, and everyday life.

PRODUCER'S BIO

Rafael Thomaseto is a film producer and co-founder of Driven Equation, a boutique production company based between Los Angeles and São Paulo. He is also Head of Production at Simbelle Productions, a nonprofit supporting women in film. His recent credits include the SXSW 2025 feature *Satisfaction*, the Ukrainian feature *The Eternity Man*, and acclaimed shorts such as *Huella* (Sundance) and *Tita & The Machines* (Tribeca). Rafael also associate produced *Blue Heron*, which premiered at Locarno, where it won the Swatch First Feature Award, before continuing to TIFF and San Sebastián, and executive produced *I'll Be Gone in June*, produced by Wim Wenders and premiered in the Un Certain Regard section at the 2026 Cannes Film Festival.

TIMES NEW ROMAN

10

(Ukraine)
TIMES NEW ROMAN

Directed by **Philip Sotnychenko**
Produced by **Valeria Sochyvets** and **Sashko Chubko** (Contemporary Ukrainian Cinema)
Halyna Kryvorchuk (VIATEL)

Second film
Road movie
Secured: 20%
Budget: 1.300.000 EUR
Beginning of production: Spring 2027
Looking for: co-producers, funds, sales agents, distributors

Contact Details
Valeria Sochyvets
sochyvets@gmail.com



Director Philip Sotnychenko



Producer Valeria Sochyvets

TIMES NEW ROMAN

Amid the invasion, a Ukrainian artist embarks on a project reenacting political assassinations across Europe, driven by a desire to escape.

SYNOPSIS

Roman is a Ukrainian artist from Kyiv going through a midlife crisis during the full-scale war. Together with his pregnant wife Kateryna, he tries to sell his parents' apartment, but the deal falls through. Living a double life with a lover, Roman works on an art project re-enacting assassinations of Ukrainian political figures in Europe. Through this cycle of staged deaths, he confronts historical trauma, personal responsibility, and his place in a world shaped by war.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Times New Roman is a narrative feature intertwining personal experience, historical memory, and artistic inquiry. It follows a Ukrainian artist traveling across Europe to reenact the assassinations of Ukrainian political figures killed in exile by Soviet agents. What begins as a conceptual art project gradually becomes a deeply personal journey where performance and reality blur.

The film explores how history permeates the present and how war shapes identity beyond the battlefield. Emerging from my own experience of working as an artist during wartime, the project reflects questions of responsibility, displacement, and truth through a cinematic language that combines documentary sensitivity with performative form.

DIRECTOR'S BIO

Philip Sotnychenko graduated from Kyiv National Film University in directing and film criticism, and in 2015 co-founded the creative collective Contemporary Ukrainian Cinema. His short films *Son*, *Nail* and *Technical Break* received awards at international festivals including Clermont-Ferrand, Tallinn PÖFF Shorts, Odesa IFF and Wiz-Art. His feature debut *La Palisiada* premiered in Tiger Competition at IFF

Rotterdam, where it won the FIPRESCI Prize. The film later received awards in Vilnius, Torino and Sarajevo, was nominated for the European Film Awards Discovery Prize, won eight Ukrainian Film Academy Awards, and became Ukraine's official Oscar submission. Since 2024, Philip has been a member of the European Film Academy.

PRODUCER'S NOTE

I have worked with Philip Sotnychenko as a producer for over 12 years. Together we co-founded Contemporary Ukrainian Cinema, a production company and creative collective. Last year we released Philip's debut feature *La Palisiada*, which premiered at IFF Rotterdam, won the FIPRESCI Prize, received a European Film Awards Discovery nomination, and became Ukraine's Oscar submission. Philip constantly experiments with film language and aesthetics. *Times New Roman* is a film about an artist going through a midlife crisis while trying to find himself within the reality of war.

PRODUCER'S BIO

Valeria Sochyvets

Member of the European Film Academy

Member of the Ukrainian Film Academy

Member of the Ukrainian Guild of Directors

Berlinale Talents 2023, Sarajevo Talents

2023

In 2015, Director and Producer Valeria Sochyvets founded the organization CUC (Contemporary Ukrainian Cinema) with the goal to promote Ukrainian cinema and produce films. Valeria produced a number of films that took part in many international film festivals, such as Rotterdam IFF, San Sebastián, Sarajevo IFF, PÖFF Shorts, Clermont-Ferrand, Tampere, Molodist, Warsaw IFF etc. In 2020, she was part of an expert board at a national competition for debut short film projects at the Ukrainian State Film Agency. From 2018 to 2024 a Board Member of Ukrainian Film Academy. Valeria became a participant in the Studio + (Poland, Wroclaw) with her debut feature project *Curtain* - educational program at the festival *New Horizons 2023* and won London Film Academy Award. Member of Film Bridge program in Wajda film school 2023- 2024. Director's project "*Curtain*" received TPS award and Riga Showcase award. *La Palisiada* produced by Valeria was nominated *Discovery Prox-FIPRESCI* at *EFA 2023* and now is Ukraine's Entry for the 97th Oscars. She holds a BA from Karpenko-Karyi Kyiv National University of Theater, Film and TV.

The 10 projects are competing for the awards kindly provided by our industry partners:

**Grand Prize
offered by Chainsaw Europe**

Post-production services
Worth 25.000 Euro

**TPS Development Award
offered by Avanpost**

worth 5.000 Euro

CNC Moldova Award

worth 1.500 Euro

**Connecting Cottbus cocoLAB:
East-West Emerging Producers Award**

The selection of a producer
from Romania or the Republic of Moldova
to participate in the cocoLAB 2026 program
dedicated to emerging producers.

**The new Luno Award
post-production services offered by Luno**

(editing, online conform & mastering, Dolby Vision color grading, sound editing & sound design, Foley, ADR, Dolby Atmos 11.1.8 mixing, and final deliverables preparation)

For info about TPS, contact us: tps@tiff.ro

RO DAYS | INDUSTRY EVENTS

TPS
TRANSILVANIA
PITCH STOP



**INSTITUTUL
CULTURAL
ROMÂN**



AVANPOST



co co connecting
cobbuss

LUNO®

**german
films**

DS
**DAȚIN
SARA**



**UPFAR
ARGO**
Uniunea Producătorilor de Film și Audiovizual din România
Asociația Română de Gestune și Operatori din Audiovizual

NESPRESSO

JIDVEI

Radisson **BLU**
CLUJ