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ZAGREBDOX PRO: SLOW PITCH 20/04 – 25/04

MENTORS: MARC ISAACS, VANJA JAMBROVIĆ, LUCIE KON, CECILIA LIDIN

HEAD OF INDUSTRY: MELITA MUKAVEC

PRODUCTION ASSISTANTS: LJUBICA KOTROMANOVIĆ, BLAŽ ORDANIĆ

INDUSTRY AMBASSADOR: ROBERT TOMIĆ ZUBER

We set the course of the last year's edition of the ZagrebDox PRO segment by asking the following question – is the quality of documentaries growing together with the growth of competitiveness in the documentary film industry? Looking for an answer to that question, as well as to whether this type of extremely competitive pitching model is the right model for creating new documentaries, we launched the Slow Pitch event. We have focused exclusively on the projects and authors themselves, that is, creative teams that develop them in an atmosphere which excludes competitiveness and promotes a more focused approach to mentoring work with filmmakers. And it seems that there is an alternative way of developing successful documentaries! At least according to the response of the authors who took part in the first edition of Slow Pitch. Or according to the further development and success of their projects. We are continuing with this – now tested concept – this year as well. The authors of eight projects selected from as many as 91 entries, arriving from all over the world, talk to four mentors over the four days of the event. Every day, mentors Marc Isaacs, Vanja Jambrović, Lucie Kon and Cecilia Lidin will focus exclusively on selected authors and their projects.

Slow Pitch, a section dedicated to filmmakers and projects, is supported by this year's award partners: Impronta films (UK) provides a mentoring award, Ji.hlava New Visions program (Czech Republic) provides a professional accreditation, MEDIMED Doc Market (Spain) guarantees one project participation in their Pitching Forum, and Nebulae-Doclisboa (Portugal) provides an accreditation for their industry section. Rab Film Festival (Croatia) will also provide a residency award to the selected project.

ZagrebDox Pro: Slow Pitch takes place with the support of the Croatian Audiovisual Centre, the City of Zagreb and the Croatian Film Directors' and Producers' Association.

WORKSHOP MENTORS

ZAGREBDOX PRO 20/04 – 25/04/2026

KAPTOL BOUTIQUE CINEMA, DOKUKINO KIC

MARC ISAACS

Since 2001, **Marc Isaacs** has made more than 20 creative documentaries for the BBC and Channel 4. His films have won Grierson, Royal Television Society and BAFTA awards as well as numerous international film festival prizes.

In 2006, Marc had a retrospective at the prestigious Lussas Documentary Film Festival in France and his work has been included in numerous documentary books and academic studies. In 2008, Marc received an honorary doctorate from the University of East London for his documentary work. Marc is a guest tutor at the London Film School, the National Film and Television School and Royal Holloway University. His 2020 film *The Filmmakers House* was screened in cinemas and at film festivals worldwide. In January, 2022, a retrospective of his and Denis Gheerbrant's work was presented at Centre Pompidou, Paris.

VANJA JAMBROVIĆ

Vanja Jambrović holds a degree in Comparative Literature and Philosophy from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb, and a degree in Production from the Academy of Dramatic Art in Zagreb. She is one of the founders of the organization Restart, which operates across the entire documentary film field, including production, education, distribution, and cinema management.

The films she has produced have been shortlisted three times for the European Film Awards (*Fiume o morte!*, 2026; *Valerija*, 2024; and *Srbenka*, 2019), with *Fiume o morte!* winning Best European Documentary Film at the awards ceremony in January 2026. The same film also received the Tiger Award and the FIPRESCI Award at the International Film Festival Rotterdam. Other major recognitions include three Heart of Sarajevo awards for Best Documentary Film (*Valerija*, 2024; *Museum of the Revolution*, 2022; *Srbenka*, 2018) and the Doc Alliance Award for *Srbenka*.

Her projects have been supported by various international institutions, including the Sundance Institute. She is employed at the Academy of Dramatic Art and has participated as a mentor in international workshops including Documentary Campus Masterschool, Eurodoc, Ex Oriente, BDC Discoveries, Eurodoc, and Circle Women Doc Accelerator.

LUCIE KON

Lucie Kon is an Emmy Award-winning Executive Producer whose credits include the Oscar and BAFTA winning feature documentary *Mr Nobody Against Putin*. Until recently a Commissioning Editor at BBC Storyville, she works with leading and emerging filmmakers to develop ambitious international stories with global impact. Lucie advises on financing, editorial strategy and audience positioning across festivals, theatrical and broadcast release, and has mentored emerging talent at festivals, forums and labs worldwide.

CECILIA LIDIN

Cecilia Lidin has more than 25 years in documentary development and financing. She has been involved in establishing numerous international co-production workshops and has served as both tutor and moderator at internal and external pitching events for EDN (European Documentary Network).

From 2006 to 2009, she was the Artistic Director of the Odense International Film Festival. In 2009, she became Head of EDN together with Hanne Skjødt, a position she held until 2011, when she left to take on the role of Film Commissioner for Documentaries at the Swedish Film Institute. In 2015, she was appointed Film Commissioner for Documentaries at the Danish Film Institute, where she worked until 2020. She currently holds a part-time teaching position for documentary directors at the National Filmschool of Denmark and works as a freelance consultant, moderator and programmer.

BEAUTIFUL DEATH

Andris Gauja, Elza Gauja
Latvia, Bulgaria, Estonia, Italy

Production: Riverbed (Latvia),
AGITPROP (Bulgaria), Film
Tower (Estonia), Mammut Film
(Italy)

Development stage:
Development, Financing

Contact email:
gauja@riverbed.lv

What makes a beautiful death? Modern neuroscience meets ancient ritual to reimagine our deepest fear — increasingly proving itself not as an endpoint, but a passage, both profound and unexpectedly blissful.

Currently pursuing a professional doctorate in film studies, **Andris** has written and directed both documentaries—such as *Family Instinct* (2010, IDFA nomination, AFI Docs Grand Prix, Cinema Eye Honors nomination) — and narrative films, including *Nothing Can Stop Us Now* (2019, nine nominations for the Latvian National Film Prize) and *The Lesson* (2014, Montreal IFF, Chicago IFF, Bergen IFF). His films often explore thought-provoking topics, and his current focus is on scientific documentaries. Recently, Andris premiered his documentary *The Art of Looking* at the Jihlava IDFF, won the Best Short Documentary at the Madrid Shorts FF, was selected for the DocPoint IDFF (Finland, Estonia) and is currently making its way to other IDFF's, next stops being ArtDocFest Riga (Latvia) competition, Las Cruces IFF (USA) competition and 60th AFO Science Film Festival (Czech Republic) competition.

HELL HAS NO FIRE ESCAPE

Sorcha Bacon
South Africa, UK, Australia

Production: Try Hard Films
& Closer Productions (South
Africa, UK, Australia)

Development stage: Financing,
Production, Postproduction

Contact email:
sorcha@try-hard.co.uk

Inheriting her husband's evangelical drug clinic, Ina Dry clings to faith - until an online romance with „Jason Momoa” awakens desires that threaten her ministry and those who rely on her.

Sorcha Bacon is a 2021 Screen Daily Screen Star of Tomorrow and BAFTA, BIFA and Grierson-nominated producer and founder of Try Hard Films - a company committed to bold, surprising storytelling. She is behind short films including *Good Thanks, You?* (Cannes Critics Week, BFI London Film Festival, Palm Springs), *Wren Boys* (BAFTA, Sundance, SXSW), and *If You Knew* (Sheffield, BFI LFF, Encounters). She co-produced *Phantom Parrot* which premiered in competition at the 2023 CPH:DOX and Sheffield Doc/Fest. She has a slate of features in development with the BFI, BBC Films, Film4 and is currently in production on a BFI Doc Society-backed film.

HERE BEFORE US STANDS A MAN

Igor Vrtačnik
Slovenia

Production: Film Horizont,
Slovenia
Development stage: Financing
Contact email:
fhorizont@gmail.com

A journey through the Gorizia-Gradiška region of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, seen through the eye and lens of photographer Milan Klemenčič from the year 1836, through World War I, and up to 1934. A story of the miraculous power of human imagination and creativity, in which he found solace.

Igor Vrtačnik studied and graduated from the Ljubljana Film Academy, and has since worked as an independent film producer and director. Over the years, he has created sixty documentaries, most of them for Slovenian national television, as well as five short fiction films and a feature film, *Pirandello*, made in collaboration with renowned cinematographer Georgy Rerberg — best known for his work on Andrei Tarkovsky's *The Mirror* (1974) and *Stalker* (1979).

THE SQUARE OF SILENCE

Ines Mrenica, Joško Bačura
Croatia

Production: 4 Film, Croatia
Development stage:
Development
Contact email: office@4film.hr

Three decades after losing his mother in the 1995 rocket attack on Zagreb, Zlatan embarks on a journey to uncover the truth about her death and confront the man responsible.

Ines Mrenica M. is a dramaturge and screenwriter with many years of experience in the film and television industry. She is the author of documentary films, television projects and radio dramas, as well as screenplays for fiction and documentary formats supported by the Croatian Audiovisual Centre (HAVC). At BHRT, she edited and hosted the film program *Veliki ekran* (*The Big Screen*). As a film critic, she publishes reviews on Index.hr and reports from international film festivals. She is also a collaborator with the Sarajevo Film Festival and a member of the European Film Academy's network of film critics, as well as SPID (the Association of Screenwriters and Writers of Performing Works).

THROUGH THE PROCESS

Marina Petković Liker
Croatia

Production: Četvororuka /
Fourhanded, Croatia
Development stage: Production
Contact email:
marinapetkovicliker@gmail.com

After a bomb killed eight children in 1993, there was no justice and no resolution to the crime and the trauma. Today the survivors of the Vitez massacre have to face an uneasy truth: trauma remains because political alliances are sometimes more important than lives.

Marina Petković Liker is a Croatian theatre and documentary director whose work explores trauma, silence and the fragile space where personal histories meet broader social and political realities. Her projects often emerge from long-term engagement with the people and stories she works with, shaped by an observational approach and a strong sense of responsibility toward her subjects. In theatre, she has developed a distinctive performance language, with works that have been widely recognized and awarded across Croatia and the region. *Through the Process 10-6-93*, her first feature-length documentary, continues this focus, opening an intimate and layered perspective on memory, testimony and the lasting impact of past events.

TRANSFOR- MATION STORIES FROM AKBELEN FOREST

Selen Çatalyürekli, Zeynep
Gültekin
Turkey

Production: Nar Film, Turkey
Development stage: Financing,
Production, Postproduction
Contact email:
catalyurekli.selen@gmail.com

Five women defending Akbelen forest transform through resistance to a vast coal mine. Told through an ecofeminist lens, the film explores personal change and imagines a just transition from extraction toward regenerative, gender-aware futures.

Selen Çatalyürekli is a documentarist, social designer and visual artist based in Istanbul, Turkey. She received her Bachelor's degree from Sabancı University's Social and Political Science program and her Master's degree in Industrial Product Design program from Istanbul Technical University. She has been working as a freelance video director and producer for the last fifteen years. She taught design at Kadir Has University at Art and Design Faculty as a part time instructor. Her areas of focus are transdisciplinary design in public spaces, ecology and urban movements, migrant rights, gender issues and visualization of memory spaces. She took part in various international art programs, and documentary projects. Her works have been displayed at many art venues, universities and NGOs.

TURNING THE TIDE

Louisa Rechenbach
UK

Production: Iridescent Films,
United Kingdom
Development stage: Production
Contact email:
l.rechenbach@gmail.com

When a heteronormative couple embraces a gender-open approach to parenting, they are faced with life altering challenges. Filmed over ten years, this documentary captures the parents' fundamental transformation as their child gradually discovers and asserts their own identity.

Louisa is an award-winning documentary filmmaker whose work explores the intersection of art and social commentary through intimate, character-driven storytelling. She is drawn to narratives that challenge the status quo and offer new ways of thinking about identity, community and the shape of contemporary life.

She took part in Reclaim the Frame's Filmonomics 7 programme, was selected by the BFI and Doc Society to join the UK Producers Delegation at CPH:DOX 2023, and has been a BAFTA Connect Member since 2023. In 2025, Louisa was awarded a British Council travel grant to attend the five-week UnionDocs Early Production Lab in New York City with her debut feature documentary in production.

WARRIORS' WHISPER

Elena Avdija
Switzerland, Kosovo

Production: Close Up Films,
Switzerland & AJO Pictures,
Kosovo
Development stage: Late
development - Early financing
Contact email:
elena.avdija@gmail.com

A friendship between a Kosovar and a Serbian activist during the Balkan war, a paediatrician delivering babies in the forest during the conflict, a group of feminists today in Prishtina... *Warriors' Whisper* is an inter-generational story of resistance to the occupations of yesterday and today.

Born in Kosovo in 1987, **Elena Avdija** grew up in Switzerland. Trained in field sociology (EHESS, Paris), she worked as an assistant director on documentaries and fiction films before directing her first feature, *Stuntwomen*, with Bande à Part Films in Lausanne. The world premiere took place at the Zurich Film Festival in 2022, where the film won the Best Focus Award. After a theatrical release in Switzerland, *Stuntwomen* was voted Best Documentary of the Year at the Swiss Film Awards in 2023. Between 2022 and 2025, Avdija directed two documentary films for television: one on the social taboo around miscarriages, the other a portrait of a teenager living with autism. *Warriors' Whisper* will be her second feature-length documentary for festivals and theatrical release.

SCHEDULE



20/04–
25/04
2026

MONDAY 20/04

TUESDAY 21/04

10:00

COFFEE TIME

Vanja Jambrović

12:00

SLOW PITCH SESSIONS

18:00

GET TOGETHER

WEDNESDAY 22/04

THURSDAY 23/04

FRIDAY 24/04

SATURDAY 25/04

10:00

COFFEE TIME

Marc Isaacs

COFFEE TIME

Lucie Kon

COFFEE TIME

Cecilia Lidin

12:00

SLOW PITCH SESSIONS

SLOW PITCH SESSIONS

SLOW PITCH SESSIONS

12:00

AWARDS CEREMONY

15:30

FINAL MEETING

Mentors' Take

17:00

FINAL MEETING

Participants' Take

22:00

PARTY TIME