



# FEACES

## of Eastern Europe

### 13 Short Films from 13 Countries in the European Union

Since its establishment 60 years ago, the Oberhausen International Short Film Festival has devoted itself to the latest developments in the world of short film. From the very beginning, the Festival has fostered a strong connection to East European filmmaking. The 1958 Festival motto "Path to the Neighbors" was a programmatic decision that testifies to the interest in East European film ever since the Cold War. The Festival continues to offer a unique "Window to the East", affording all who are interested a glimpse into the cultures of Eastern Europe through the medium of film.

Against this backdrop, the Goethe-Institut Washington, The European Union National Institutes of Culture (EUNIC) Washington, DC, and the Delegation of the European Union to the United States developed the idea of celebrating the tenth anniversary of the eastward expansion of the European Union by assembling a selection of short films from the 13 newest Member States: Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Cyprus, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, the Slovak Republic, and Slovenia.

In the resulting two-part film program, the 13 countries present an array of thematic, aesthetic, and narrative responses to today's Europe. As a whole, the films reflect the diversity and breadth of topics that can be addressed in the short film genre. Neither conventional narrative cinema nor simple entertainment, these films are instead self-reflections using the language of film.

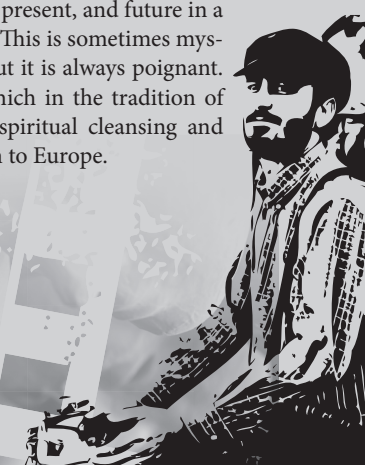
The artists dig deeply. Deimantas Narkavičius's *Europa 54°54'-25°19'*, about the search for the geographic center of Europe is a case in point. The discovery of Europe's middle creates a feeling of déjà vu and can be seen ironically. Other films, such as *Day by Day* by Kornél Mundruczó, ask what promise the future holds for the old, the young, and the very young. What new world are they being born into? How new is this world? Is it the reality for which we were hoping? Or asked another way: how do we get to a better future? What questions do we need to ask ourselves? Are they the right questions? The past impedes into the present. We dig it up and uncover, as Paweł Łoziński depicts, unpleasant memories. Yet we know that whoever runs away from his past will lose the race in the present. Is it even possible for an individual to win today?

Is life from childhood onwards a balancing act between fortune and disaster, survival and destruction? How much luck and pleasure can today even contain?

The program contains documentary films such as Marjolena Boonstra's powerful portrait of a Roma family, alongside what at first glance are funny films, such as an animation film by Zlatin Radev which uses allegory to address political systems. Jaan Tomik's film about the life of soldiers at the end of the Soviet era is a multi-layered story which blends glimpses into the future with flashbacks.

Conflicts with film history can be seen in the short films from the Czech Republic, Slovenia, and Croatia. The Czech film *Summer of the Long Flights* patterns itself after the New Wave film tradition and its use of the grotesque and social-political. Marina Gržinić and Aina Šmid's film *Obsession* is an experimental performance work about the history of video art in Eastern Europe. Dalibor Martini's found-footage film *We the People* observes at a meta-political level the character and social position of the countless individuals without personality who populate feature films, but compared to the heroes and stars, are barely visible.

These films have no heroes, but nevertheless offer up pictures, situations, fears and hopes that are familiar to all of us. So what can one say is worth announcing from Europe? Nothing heroic, except perhaps the important fact that thinking and reasoning, speaking and artistic articulation, are radical and free—free of religion, shame, and taboos; free to recognize and survive sorrow and terror. This is not a freedom of "anything goes", but instead a painful freedom. It makes possible a scrutiny of the past, present, and future in a relentless search for the truth. This is sometimes mystical, excruciating or ironic, but it is always poignant. Herein lies film's catharsis, which in the tradition of Greek tragedies, expresses a spiritual cleansing and the restoration of a connection to Europe.



## FILMS IN DEPTH — PROGRAM 1 90 MINUTES

*Europa 54°54'-25°19'*, Deimantas Narkavičius, Lithuania, 1997, 8 min, BluRay, color, English; Production: Deimantas Narkavičius

### Synopsis:

A play in the style of Soviet television: a film report on the geographic center of Europe in the Lithuanian moor, somewhere, with a voice-over about the dream of traveling somewhere else.

### Biography:

**Deimantas Narkevičius** was born in Utena, Lithuania in 1964. Originally trained as a sculptor, he began working with film in the mid 1990s. His films examine the relationship between personal memory and political history, particularly in relation to the social changes in Eastern Europe. Employing archival footage, voice-overs, interviews, and re-enactments, Narkevičius's films and videos reinterpret historical events.

*Neighbor (Gomşu)*, Sholeh Zahraei/Kamil Saldun, Cyprus, 2013, 5 min, BluRay, color, Cypriot Turkish & Cypriot Greek, English subtitles, Production: Lupa Pictures

### Synopsis:

A short film about post-war trauma and what happens after wars. Often people do not see their neighbors ever again. But they quietly have hopes.

### Biography:

**Kamil Saldun** was born in Cyprus, in the city of Famagusta. He graduated from the Faculty of Art and Science in the Department of History at the Eastern Mediterranean University, Cyprus in 2008. Later he obtained his Master's Degree from the Faculty of Education. Since 2010 Kamil Saldun has been working together with Sholeh Zahraei on different film projects as an actor, writer, producer and director. Their films have won awards at international film festivals.

*Can Film (Konservfilm)*, Zlatin Radev, Bulgaria, 1990, 18 min, BluRay, b/w, no dialogue, Production: Zlatin Radev

### Synopsis:

Simple cans playing the role of human beings become a symbol for human behavior in the face of political and consumption-oriented terror.

### Biography:

**Zlatin Radev** was born in 1960 in Bulgaria. He is known for his work on *Can Film (Konservfilm)*, *Shock* (1993) and *Benedikt, the Teddybär* (2009).

*White Man, White Men (Gadzo, Gadze)*, Marjoleine Boonstra, Slovakia, 2004, 6 min, BluRay, color, Roma with English subtitles; Production: Marboni

### Synopsis:

"How can this grandfather look after his grandson?" The film is an interview film with a Roma family. Different generations talk about their lives, their visions for the future, their wishes and fears, their self-perceptions and their perceptions of others.

### Biography:

**Marjoleine Boonstra** (b. 1959) is an internationally acclaimed photographer, filmmaker, and winner of film awards.



Oleg, Jaan Tomik

Can Film (Konservfilm)

*Day after Day (Afta)*, Kornél Mundruczó, Hungary, 2001, 24 min, BluRay, color, Hungarian with English subtitles; Production: Hungarian Academy of Film and Drama

### Synopsis:

In a small town, an ordinary day in a boy's life: The day is incredibly hot. Everything is perfect: one gang, one game, one football field, one girl. But on this day, he will come to a point of no return.

### Biography:

**Kornél Mundruczó** (b. 1975) is a Hungarian actor, film director and screenwriter. He has directed 15 short and feature films



Day after Day (Afta)

since 1998. His film *Johanna* was screened in the Un Certain Regard section at the 2005 Cannes Film Festival. His upcoming film *White God* has been granted production from the Hungarian Film Fund. It won the Un Certain Regard Prix at the 2014 Cannes Film Festival.

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**Choir Tour**, Edmunds Jansons, Latvia, 2012, 5 min, BluRay, color, no dialogue; Production: Atom Art

**Synopsis:**

Under the guidance of a strict conductor, a world-famous boys' choir transforms into a docile instrument. Without supervision though, the boys are simply playful children. While in Seoul, the conductor is accidentally trapped in an elevator.

**Biography:**

**Edmunds Jansons** (b. 1972) works as animation film director and graphic designer. In 2001 he co-founded the film studio Atom Art. In spring 2012 he received his degree in Animation at the Estonian Academy of Arts. Jansons also works as a children's book illustrator.

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**We the People** (*U ime naroda*), Dalibor Martinis, Croatia, 2013, 17 min, BluRay, b/w, English/ French/Spanish /Italian; Production: Dalibor Martinis

**Synopsis:**

The film is a sort of metapolitical contemplation on the nature and "social" position of masses of individuals without individu-



*Plangent Rain (Daquet ix-Xita)*

ality who surround the movie heroes who are the only ones allowed to feel, suffer, or enjoy the drama of life in film.

**Biography:**

**Dalibor Martinis** is a transmedia artist and a video maker who has produced videos and video-interactive and site-specific installations for many international exhibitions and video films which have been broadcast by national television networks in Europe. The works have received several international and national awards. Martinis is guest professor at the Academy of Drama Arts in Zagreb and the Ontario College of Art in Toronto, and professor emeritus at the University of Rijeka.



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## FILMS IN DEPTH — PROGRAM 2

90 MINUTES

**Oleg** (Jaan Tomik), Estonia, 2010, 21 min, BluRay, color, Russian with English subtitles; Production: Allfilm

**Synopsis:**

Twenty-five years after his release from the Soviet army, a former soldier goes on a ritual journey to a distant village cemetery to free himself from painful memories and guilt about a tragic accident in the army.

**Biography:**

**Jaan Toomik** (b. 1961) is one of the most prominent contemporary artists from Estonia. He began as a painter in the late 1980s, and received widespread recognition during the 1990s with site-specific installations and video works. Toomik's works were shown at the most important exhibitions representing Eastern European and Baltic art, and were exhibited in many large international forums of contemporary art such as Manifesta I, Sao Paulo Biennale and la biennale di Venezia, among others. They have been included in the programs of international video and short film festivals.



*We the People (U ime naroda)*

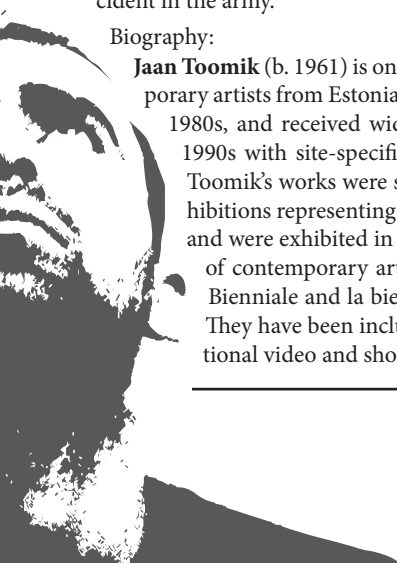
**Inventory** (*Inwentaryzacja*), Paweł Łoziński, Poland, 2010, 9 min, BluRay, color, Polish with English subtitles; Production: Krakow Film Foundation

**Synopsis:**

A short, metaphorical story about memory, identity and the search for traces of the recent past. On 30 downtown acres, an inventory of a lost city is created.

**Biography:**

**Paweł Łoziński** (b. 1965 in Warsaw) is a director, scriptwriter and producer of documentary and feature films. He serves as the director of studies at the Polish National Film School in Łódź. His films have been shown at international film festivals and have won several significant prizes.





*Neighbor (Gomşu)*

**Obsession (Obsedenost)**, Marina Gržinić / Aina Šmid, 2008, 16 min, BluRay, color, Slovenian with English subtitles; Production: CCC

**Synopsis:**  
This film reflects on emancipative politics and the possibility of a production of radical knowledge opposing the new and old colonial context of capitalism. It is based on knowledge and resistance stemming from thoughts and ideas by different international theoreticians, whose critique of anti-Semitism in Europe challenges

us to think about the use of the word "Jew" in today's European politics. The video constructs a conceptual genealogy of video art and its experimental history in Eastern Europe.

**Biography:**  
**Marina Gržinić and Aina Šmid** have been involved in video since 1982. They have collaborated in more than 40 video art projects and numerous video and media installations. They have each directed several video documentaries and television productions. In 1997, they created an interactive CD-ROM for ZKM in Karlsruhe, Germany. During their almost three decades of collaboration, Gržinić and Šmid have presented and exhibited their video works and installations at more than 100 video festivals around the world. They have received several major awards for their video productions.

**Summer of the Long Flights (Léto, cas dlouhých letů)**, Ramūnas Greičius, Czech Republic, 1996, 4:55 min, BluRay, color, no dialogue; Production: Studio F.A.M.U.

**Synopsis:**  
Two women spend their vacation at the sea. And right now is time for everything they had dreamt of and they could have dreamt of, time for everything that can elsewhere be only a dream, time for dreams from the bottom of their souls. Time for everything to happen.

**Biography:**  
**Ramūnas Greičius** (b. 1986 Vilnius, Lithuania) studied cinematography and directing in Prague and Lithuania. Greičius's films won several prizes at international film festivals. He currently works as a director of photography, films, and commercials.

**Plangent Rain (Daqqet ix-Xita)**, Kenneth Scicluna, Malta, 2010, 14:30 min, BluRay, b/w, Maltese with English subtitles; Production: Lighthouse & Ashley

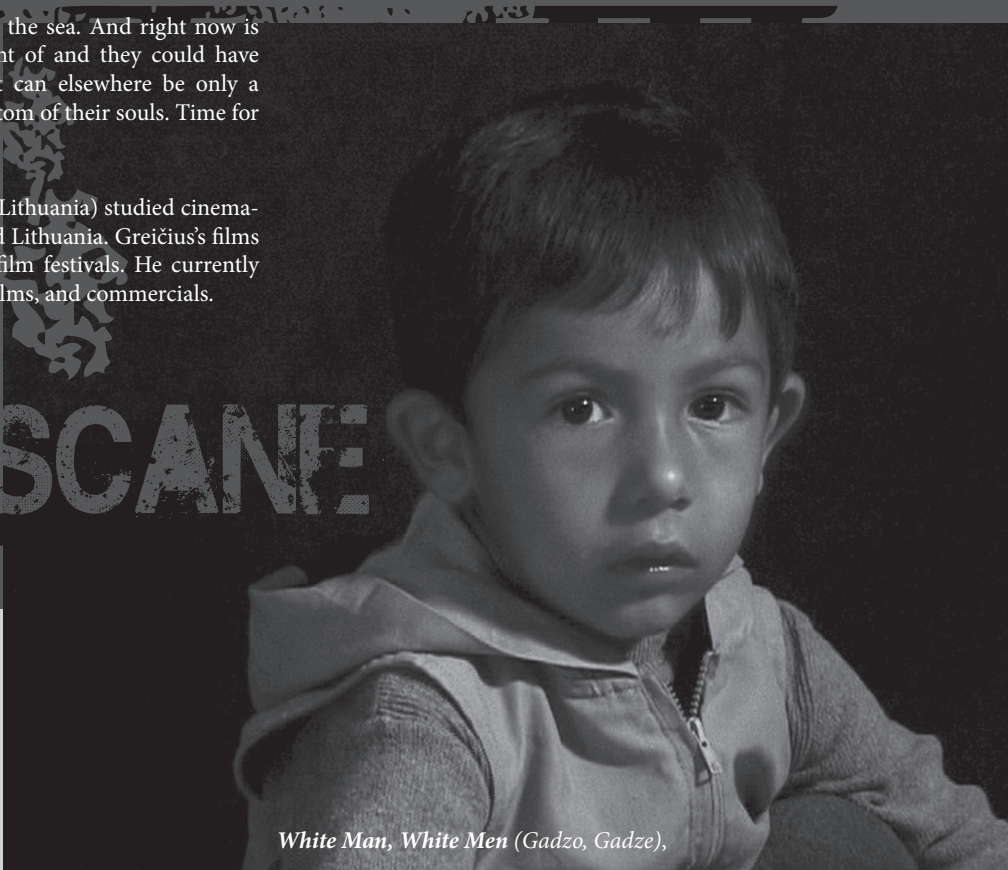
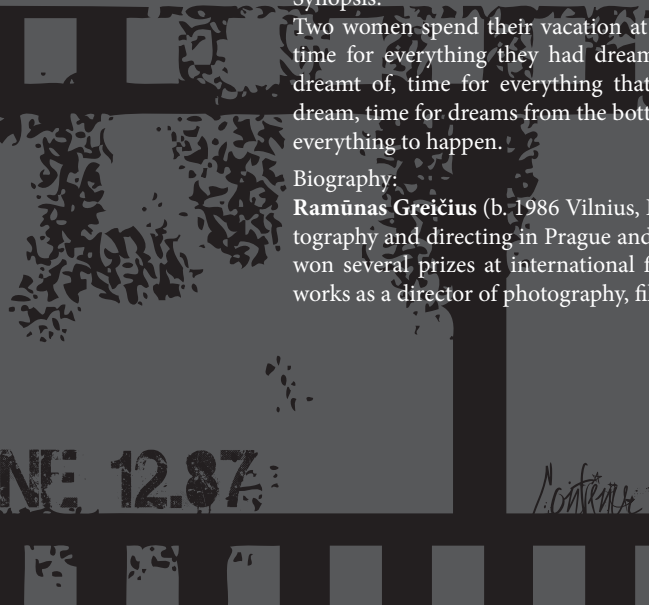
**Synopsis:**  
A sailor's son is cursed to row a rotting boat back and forth across a harbor. Numbed by ineptitude, yet spurred by guilt, tormented by the union between his overbearing mother and weaselly uncle, the boy spirals down a doomed path.

**Biography:**  
**Kenneth Scicluna** (b. 1975) has directed films which have been shown in more than fifty festivals worldwide, and broadcast internationally. Scicluna co-wrote and directed *The Isle*, Malta's short film for the Zentropa/Arte/ZDF pan-European project VISIONS OF EUROPE (2004). *Plangent Rain* won the Best Director award at the Malta International Short Film Festival (2011). Kenneth was selected as a Berlinale Talent in 2013.

**Alexandra** (Radu Jude), Romania, 2007, 24 min, color, Romanian with English subtitles; Production: Hifilm Productions

**Synopsis:**  
Tavi, a man in his late 30's, notes that his four-year-old daughter Alexandra no longer calls him "Dad".

**Biography:**  
**Radu Jude** (b. 1977 in Romania) studied filmmaking at the University of Bucharest. He directed the shorts *The Tube with a Hat* (2006), which won numerous awards, and *Alexandra* (2008). His feature film *The Happiest Girl in the World* (2009) was shown at many international film festivals. His feature film *Everybody in Our Family* (2012) premiered at the Berlinale Forum and received the Heart of Sarajevo Award and the Bayard D'Or in Namur, among other awards. Jude is currently in post-production with the short *Shadow of a Cloud*.



*White Man, White Men (Gadzo, Gadze)*

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