

## **5th International Forum of UNESCO Creative Cities of Film – “Sustainability and Eco-practices in Film and Creative Industries”**

Culture and creativity have increasingly been recognized as a key to sustainable urban development. Cities have evolved into living laboratories, devising actions and policies that further leverage the impact of creativity to make cities better places to live and improve people's lives. The UNESCO Film Cities Network stretch across the entire world, from Japan to South America, bringing together this international and prosperous sector, encouraging partnerships and the exchange of ideas. Each film city carries a unique cinematic heritage defined by the different histories of the cities themselves, the great minds that inhabit or originate from them, and the inspirational innovators who created cinema and paved the way for today's moving images.

The designated UNESCO Film Cities share similar characteristics: important cinema-related infrastructure, such as film studios and film landscapes/environments; continuous or proven connections to film production, distribution, and commercialization. The film cities work together to achieve a common goal: putting green solutions in film and creative cultural industries at the heart of local engagement for responsible urban communities and prioritizing cross-border cultural collaboration towards sustainable development. The network aims to stimulate international cooperation, especially with other member cities, highlighting environmental and social sustainability in Film and Creative industries as a driving force for sustainable urban development, social inclusion, and cultural radiance.

Considering these priorities and the fact that film and television productions account for significant carbon dioxide emissions, the film cities have come together to address carbon footprint reduction within the film and creative industries and to support productions to achieve greater environmental sustainability. The film industry impacts on the environment through many areas with key ones being transport, waste, catering and energy. The film industry is a successful driver for growth across countries and an important contributor to the creative industries

within the country's economy. While sustainable filmmaking initiatives are on the rise in some of the UNESCO Creative Cities of Film, there is still progress to be made in terms of widespread adoption and standardization of practices. Challenges such as budget constraints, lack of awareness, and logistical hurdles can hinder the implementation of sustainable practices across the industry. Studies show that the audiovisual sector contributes substantially to carbon emissions. For example, a single high-budget film can produce up to 2,840 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub>.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by the international community in September 2015 underlines the importance of culture and creativity as a driver of urban and sustainable development of cities. In particular, Goal 11 which states “Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable”. In this regard, the Creative Cities Network, of which Bitola is now a member, will continue to be key to contributing to the implementation of this international agenda.

Considering all above mentioned and in continuation to the networking between the member cities of the UNESCO Creative Cities network, Film Center Bitola is organizing the 5th International UNESCO Creative Cities Forum with a focus on Sustainability and Eco-practices in Film and Creative Industries from 5th to 7th December 2024 in Bitola. The event will reconnect cities from the UNESCO Creative Film Cities network to advance their partnerships by commitment towards eco practices, as well as the exchange of future new ideas and collaborations in the direction of building inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities. The Forum will serve as a steppingstone in the acceleration of the socio-cultural, socio-economic and technological transformation of the city of Bitola.

## BITOLA

Located in the south of North Macedonia, Bitola is second largest city in the country with around 100,000 inhabitants. The city's film heritage originated from the early 20th century with the film industry now representing the backbone of the city's creative economy. Bitola's history with film dates back to the Manaki brothers, Yanaki and Milton who as film and photography pioneers, brought to Bitola – formerly named Manastir – the Bioscope 300 film camera. The brothers famously filmed the very first motion pictures shot in the Ottoman Balkans. Bitola is mostly known for the Manaki Brothers International Cinematographers Film Festival and Non Professional Documentary Film Festival - Camera 300 which celebrated 40 years in 2019. Also, the city is recognized as an open studio and thanks to its famous for the beautiful locations, in and around the city, a lot of films are shot each year in Bitola and the surrounding villages. Near Bitola is Heraclea Lyncestis. It was an ancient city in Macedon, ruled later by the Romans. Its ruins are situated 2 km (1.2 mi) south of the present-day town of Bitola. It was founded by Philip II of Macedon in the middle of the 4th century BC. The city was named in honor of the mythological hero Heracles. The name Lynkestis originates from the name of the ancient kingdom, conquered by Philip, where the city was built.

Bitola became a UNESCO City of Film in 2015, joining 180 members from 72 countries. As a Creative City of Film, Bitola envisages:

1. Nurturing the vibrant role of film in Bitola's creative economy, notably by expanding the scope of the programme Film Center Bitola through public private partnerships involving public cultural centres, universities, academia and private production companies;
2. Fostering the city's cultural offerings through exhibitions, festivals, workshops and other events especially based on the film heritage of the Manaki brothers;
3. Positioning Bitola as an international hub for film creations;
4. Exchanging experience and knowledge with other Creative Cities of Film



Bitola is one of 26 Cities of Film in the network. As part of the network, Bitola gets new opportunities for promotion and further development of the film story of the city. This year 2024, this potential was recognized by UNESCO, through the “Culture and Creativity for the Western Balkans” (CC4WBs) project, funded by the European Union and the Ministry of Culture and tourism of North Macedonia. Namely, in 2019 a first forum was held with the participation of representatives from other cities on the UNESCO film city network. In 2020, the second Forum of Creative Cities from the UNESCO network in Bitola was held, with a focus on various topics from the creative industries and film, sharing experiences, workshops and similar. In 2021, the Third Forum managed to gather more than 30 domestic and foreign participants with the support within the UNESCO Participation Program for 2020-2021. In 2022, the Fourth Forum edition was held with focus topic the role of women in audiovisual media. With a leap of a year, this 2024 the 5th edition of the International Forum is as follows:

# PROGRAMME

## 5th December – Day 1

Arrival of guests

**19:45** - Get-together dinner

**20:30** - Evening screening of the short film from Gdynia UNESCO City of film, Poland  
“House of sand” dir. Paweł Wyszomirski

## 6th December – Day 2

**09:30 - 10:00** Registration of participants

**10:00 - 11:00** Official opening

### **Welcome speeches**

- Representative from the Ministry of Culture and tourism
- Representative from the City of Bitola
- Kristina Hristova Nikolova, Bitola Film Center
- Lejla Beslagić, expert associate, City of Sarajevo

### **UNESCO project “Green Film Cities: Empowering Sustainable Creative Cities” presentation**

- Ines Radić, project manager, Obala Art Center Association, Sarajevo UNESCO City of Film
- Zoja Tarevska – Petrushevskaja, project manager, Bitola Film center

**11:00 - 11:15** Short break

### **11:15 -12:15 Panel-discussion: Sustainability in Film and Creative Industries Towards Building Sustainable Cities**

Moderator: Magdalena Popović, coordinator Sarajevo City of Film

Panelists from the UNESCO Creative Cities of Film Network

- Brian Barrett, Senior Executive Officer, Economic Development, Tourism and Culture Management, Galway City Council
- Loreto Arenales, Head of the International Tourism Department at Valladolid City Council
- Diana Andreeva – Popyordanova, Sofia City of Film

### **12:30 - 13:20 Practices Presentation and Sharing Good Examples and Experience: “Sustainable living through films and science”**

- Menche Hadzi-Kosta Milevska, Center for Culture Bitola
- Marija Dzidzeva, film director North Macedonia
- Damjana Patcheva, filmologist, Cinemateque of North Macedonia
- Jordi Hernández Prat, Director of Audiovisual Projects at Parc Audiovisual de Catalunya and Terrassa City Council Terrassa UNESCO City of Film

### **13:20 - 13:45 “Green Audiovisual Sector – Fostering Local Eco Practices for Sustainable Eco Film Production Presentations”**

- Presentation of a good example from UNESCO Creative City of Film Potsdam Germany, Ms. Korina Gutsche, Senior Consultant Sustainability Media industry & Sustainability, Controlling UFA
- Presentation of the situation in N. Macedonia - Ognen Antov, film producer and president of the Macedonian Association of Film Producers MAFP Skopje, N. Macedonia

**13:50 – 14:00** Wrap up session with conclusions and recommendations

**14:00 – 15:00** Lunch

### **15:00 – 16:00 Lessons Learned and What’s Next?**

Closed session with representatives of UNESCO Creative Cities of Film Network

**16:00 – 17:00** Networking sessions

### **19:00 – 21:30 Evening Screening of Films on Sustainable and “Green” Production**

- “Attraction” dir. Aleksandra Szczepaniak
- “Sky Above Zenica” dir. Nanna Frank Møller & Zlatko Pranjić
- “GAIA” dir. Nermin Hamzagic i Enis Cistic
- “Hot Stuff” dir. Pascal Schuh & Jonas Riemer

**21:00 – 23:00** Cocktail

## 7th December – Day 3

Breakfast gathering UNESCO Creative Cities of Film Network

Departure of guests

\*presentations and discussions at the Forum will take place in the House of the Army (2nd floor)

\*film screenings will be held at the Manaki Cinema

## UNESCO Creative Cities Network

Created in 2004, the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) aims to make creativity an essential driver for sustainable urban renewal and development. As of today, the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) comprises 350 cities from over 100 countries, working together towards common objectives: placing creativity and cultural industries at the core of development plans at the local level, and actively cooperating through inter-city partnerships at the international level. To foster partnerships and synergy, the UCCN cities are designated in one of the seven creative fields covered by the Network: Crafts and Folk Arts, Media Arts, Film, Design, Gastronomy, Literature and Music.

*“The cities in our Creative Cities Network are leading the way when it comes to enhancing access to culture and galvanizing the power of creativity for urban resilience and development.”*

Audrey Azoulay, Director-General of UNESCO

The Network is a key partner of UNESCO. It is a forum for brainstorming the role of creativity as a driver and an enabler for sustainable urban development, and a platform for action and innovation towards integrating culture into the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Bradford was made the first UNESCO City of Film in 2009, and ever since, cities from around the world have aspired to receive this lifelong accolade. One of seven art forms within the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN), each City of Film commits to innovative thinking and creative development. UNESCO Cities of Film span the globe, bringing this international and thriving sector closer together and encouraging partnerships. Each City of Film brings a unique film heritage defined by our varied histories, filled with great minds and inspiring innovators who led cinema and the moving image to what it is today.

These cities are recognized for their contributions to the film industry, including production, education, and preservation. They work together to promote sustainable practices, cultural exchange, and innovation in filmmaking. The UNESCO Creative

Cities of Film network which started in 2009 with the designation of Bradford, United Kingdom, has grown significantly over the years. In 2010, Sydney, Australia joined, followed by Bristol, United Kingdom in 2012. The network expanded in 2014 with Busan, South Korea and Galway, Ireland. Bitola, North Macedonia also became part of the network in 2015 alongside Rome, Italy, Santos, Brazil, and Sofia, Bulgaria. Cannes, France became a part of the network in 2016. 2017 marked the inclusion of Gdynia, Poland and Qingdao, China, following with Terrassa, Spain joining in 2018. The year 2019 was a particularly significant one, adding Kathmandu, Nepal, Łódź, Poland, Mumbai, India, Ouarzazate, Morocco, Penedo, Brazil, Potsdam, Germany, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sofia, Bulgaria, Valladolid, Spain, Wellington, New Zealand, and Yamagata, Japan. The network continued to grow with the addition of Asaba, Nigeria, Vicente López, Argentina, and Kathmandu, Nepal in 2023. Today the Film Cluster is consisted of 26 cities.



## SARAJEVO, BOSNA AND HERZEGOVINA

Sarajevo is the capital city of Bosnia and Herzegovina, situated at the crossroads between East and West. As a cultural and creative centre, the city is home to international film festivals, film archives, film schools and major production companies. With its turbulent history visible in diverse architecture, Sarajevo is an attractive filming location where 90% of national film production takes place. Sarajevo's film history dates back to early 1900s with pioneering screenings and filmmaking. The rich archives provide possibilities for research work for scientists, students and film lovers as well as for regular screenings of films, including old and nearly forgotten films. Sarajevo is home to the Sarajevo Film Festival, the leading film festival in Southeast Europe, shining an international spotlight on regional films and talent. The Festival draws over 3,000 accredited guests and over 100,000 admissions of general audience. Sarajevo's annual international film festivals Al Jazeera Balkans Documentary Film Festival, Human Rights Film Festival, Youth Film Festival Sarajevo, Viva Film Festival and WARM Festival offer diverse screen content, and draw local, national and international audiences. Sarajevo brings together over 1,000 professionals from all spheres of film industry who come to attend the CineLink Industry Days every year. The Cinelink Industry Days are a regional platform for the development of high-quality projects, short and feature films, documentary films and TV series made by filmmakers in the region.



### Ines Radić

Ines (Mostar, 1996) graduated from the Academy of Performing Arts in Sarajevo, majoring in Production. During her studies, she produced various student films and has just completed her documentary graduation film, "Mlada." She was a member of the Student Association of the Academy of Performing Arts, where she worked as the executive producer of the Theater Student

Festival – POSTFEST. The short film in development, "Dar" directed by Isidora Ratković and produced by Ines Radić, won the Best Project Award at the pitching forum of the Youth! Industry, held as part of the 18th ZFF. She worked for three years at the Ponta Lopud Festival as a coordinator for the DOP Masterclass. From 2020 to early 2022, she worked as the manager of Cineplexx Mostar. She is working as the festival manager for Slano Film Days. Currently, she is working as a producer on the development of the series "OJUŽILO" with director Bobo Jelčić and as a producer on the development of the short movie "USPAVANKA" with director Karmen Obrdalj. She worked as a professional associate on the script for the TV series "Tender," created by Srđan Vuletić. She has been working at the Sarajevo Film Festival as an assistant for Avant Premiere. From 2020 to 2022, she was the program coordinator of the SFF in Mostar, and in 2023, she worked as the Location Manager for the largest Open Air location at the festival. She is currently the Head of Protocol at the SFF and project manager for "Sarajevo City of Film – UNESCO". She is project manager of Sarajevo city of film UNESCO.

### Magdalena Popović



Magdalena (Sarajevo, 1976) graduated in English Language and Literature from the School of Philosophy at the University of Banja Luka. She spent over ten years working as a translator and assistant for international organizations (OSCE, UNHCR, UNDP), and as a coordinator on development projects funded by the European Union and the Government of Japan in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

She joined the Sarajevo Film Festival as an assistant for VIP guests and protocol in 2016. Currently she works as a sustainability coordinator for the Sarajevo Film Festival, and as a coordinator for Sarajevo UNESCO City of Film. Magdalena is a sustainability coordinator for the Sarajevo Film Festival.



### **Lejla Bešliagić**

Lejla Beslagic was born in 1988 in Sarajevo, where she completed her primary and secondary education. She holds a degree from the Faculty of Public Administration, an affiliated member of the University of Sarajevo. Lejla began her career in the private sector, gaining valuable experience in the food industry. For the past eight years, she has been working as a civil servant in the City

of Sarajevo. As a Project Manager and Expert Associate, where she has developed extensive expertise in the field of sustainable development, successfully managing and implementing projects that align with the city's long-term environmental and developmental goals.

## **Graduates and Young professionals**

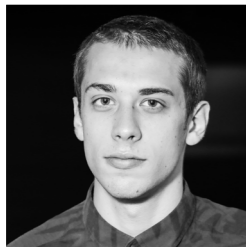


### **Mia Avdagić**

Mia Avdagic (producer) was born and raised in Sarajevo. She graduated from the Academy of Performing Arts, specializing in production and management. Mia is also a part of the Sarajevo Film Festival team; as the Talents Sarajevo Project Coordinator and CineLink Industry Days Training & Skills Coordinator. She is also

involved in the organizational team of the Slano Film Days as Head of Programming. Additionally, she worked as a coordinator on the APostLab Workshop project and was part of the organizational team at the AJB DOC Festival - Industry. Mia has produced multiple short fiction films and has experience working on local film sets. She is a member of the Association of Film Workers of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Currently, she is developing two feature debut films and a documentary.

### **Ishak Jalimam**



Ishak Jalimam (producer) has graduated at the Academy of Performing Arts in Sarajevo, Department of Production and Management. He currently works at the Sarajevo Film Festival, where he heads CineLink, the regional co-production market and project development workshop, and coordinates Dealing with the

Past program. He is also the producer at the Sarajevo War Theater. He works as a producer of the International High School Theater Festival: Juventafest, and was a technical director of the International Theater Festival MESS. He has worked on many films in various positions, screened at these festivals: Sundance Film Festival, La Biennale di Venezia, Sarajevo Film Festival, Dokufest, Nashville Film Festival, Wisconsin Film Festival, Doxa Documentary Festival, HotDocs International Film Festival etc. Founder and President of Realstage productions and founder of the Students Association of Academy of Performing Arts in Sarajevo. He is the recipient of the Young Producers Award at the Sofia Film Festival – Sofia Meetings 2020.



### **Elmedina Tirić**

Elmedina Tirić (producer) was born in Vareš in 1995, where she completed her primary and secondary education. In 2023, she graduated with a degree in Production and Management in Performing Arts from the Academy of Performing Arts in Sarajevo.

Elmedina has produced several student graduation short films, including JUSTINE (2022) directed by Luka Vlaho and WHERE

DO LOST CATS GO (2023) directed by Amar Komić. She also produced the short documentary-experimental film THANK GOD IT'S FRIDAY (TGIF) directed by Šejla Kamerić, which is currently in post-production, and the short film BONACA (2024) directed by Luka Vlaho, which had its world premiere in the Short Film Competition at the 30th Sarajevo Film Festival. From 2017 to 2020, Elmedina worked as an Assistant for International Relations at the Academy of Performing Arts in Sarajevo. Since 2018, she has collaborated with the Sarajevo Film Festival in various roles: Welcome Desk Coordinator (2018-2019), Festival TV Coordinator (2020-), Creative Production Coordinator (2021-), and Executive Producer (2023-). In 2022 and 2023, Elmedina served as a script consultant for the second and third seasons of the series TENDER, which are currently in distribution. She has held various production roles in numerous student and professional films from 2016 to 2024. Since 2020, she has been an active volunteer with the Association for Research, Education, and Psychosocial Support TAVAN. Elmedina is currently developing two new projects as a producer and screenwriter: the short film LULLABY, an adaptation of the short story by Bosnian-Herzegovinian author Magdalena Blažević, and the feature film OUR WONDERFUL MOON, which she is writing and developing with director Luka Vlaho.

## POTSDAM, GERMANY

Potsdam is the first German city to be named a UNESCO City of Film. Located right outside Berlin, Potsdam is home to Babelsberg Studios, the oldest large-scale film studio in the world, which has produced films since 1912. Many national and international actors and directors have worked in Potsdam and at Babelsberg Studios. "Der Blaue Engel" (The Blue Angel) with Marlene Dietrich was shot there, as was Fritz Lang's "Metropolis". The city hosts a number of film festivals and events, including The International Film Festival Sehsüchte, now Europe's largest student film festival, the Moving History Festival, specializing in historical films, the Jewish Film Festival Berlin-Brandenburg, and the Festival of Environmental and Nature Films.



### Korina Gutsche

Korina is Speaker, Teacher, Senior Consultant Sustainability Media industry & Sustainability Controlling UFA. She studied environmental engineering during the 80s, did environmental impact assessments in the 90s and became a freelance eco film production manager in 2011 based in Berlin and Potsdam. As an Ocean & Wildlife Conservationist and Entrepreneur on global issues and with a Vision 2020: Babelsberg Goes Green, she did

pioneering with a holistic concept the long term transformation to shift values in Film production. Through leading youth film workshops about green storytelling along the Agenda 2030 Goals in Potsdam, teaching master classes for film professionals in the Region Berlin-Brandenburg, organizing panels at Film fest Events, raising awareness on the annual Potsdamer City Climate Award, developing the arthouse cinema initiative 'Kino.Natürlich' funded by the German environmental Ministry and became a guest lecturer at the Film University Potsdam Babelsberg in 2017 on environmentally friendly film production methods. As Sustainability Consultant she supported a huge variety on film producers like SKY, ZIEGLERFILM, Made for Film, Wiedemann & Berg, UFA and in 2022/23 the Berlinale and the European Film market. Since Summer 2024 she works as Sustainability Controller in at UFA in Potsdam and oversees all their CO2 Data. From the early stages on she supported with her green film expertise and passion for films the application for Potsdam as UNESCO Creative City of Film.

HER FOCUS: ACTION PLEASE! WE LOVE MAKING MOVIES SUSTAINABLE!





## GALWAY, IRELAND

Galway City is the capital of the West of Ireland and the gateway to Connemara in western Ireland, facing the Atlantic. A busy economic and artistic hub, Galway's tight streets and winding canals are a hive of creative activity, with film audiences heading to the Pálás, and bustling film festivals throughout the year.

Galway City has featured in filming as far back as 1905. Galway's strong production history is now well known and a plethora of films have been shot in the region in the last 20 years including *The Guard* with Brendan Gleeson and Don Cheadle, and historical period drama, *Black '47*. Over the last 30 years, Galway has become the de facto national centre of Film in Ireland. TG4, the only Irish Language TV station which serves the whole of Ireland, is based in the city, as well as Screen Ireland, formerly the Irish Film Board. Galway has strong resources in film making, film education, and film distribution. Running for over 30 years, the Galway Film Fleadh is one of the most celebrated festivals in the country. Two universities in Galway, GMIT and the Huston School of Film and Digital Media, both specialise in film. In addition to three commercial cinemas, Galway welcomed new arthouse cinema Pálás in 2018, adding a space with new and exciting screening opportunities.



### Brian Barrett

Brian Barrett, an innovator, project manager, problem solver and fund raising machine, is Head of Economic, Tourism and Cultural Development with Galway City Council. He previously worked as a Director of Service with responsibility across the spectrum of local government operations including Corporate Services and Governance, Community Development, Climate Change, Economic

Development, Tourism, Culture, Planning Water Services and Housing. His current role involves overseeing the Galway City Arts Office, Town Hall Theatre, Galway City Museum and Leisureland Events Centre, Tourism and Economic Development Sections, the Creative Cities network and Galway's UNESCO designation as a City of Film. He played a key role in the establishment of the WRAP Regional film fund in the West of Ireland.

Brian is a graduate of the University of Galway with a Bachelor of Commerce and Master of Arts in Community Development. He has worked as an external lecturer with the University of Galway on programmes including the MA in Community Development, Masters in Rural Development and various diploma and degree programmes within the University. For the past 30 years he has worked across the local, regional and rural development sectors in Ireland and Europe, employed in the public, private and community sectors. In his spare time, he relaxes by Climbing Mountains, Kayaking Lakes, rivers and Seas and bodyboarding in the wild Atlantic Ocean.

### Eoin Butler Thornton

Eoin is a Facilitator and Coordinator of film and video game events and initiatives at Ardán. He is also the Project Coordinator for Galway UNESCO City of Film. He has a long history of arts involvement in the West of Ireland and is an avid supporter of local practitioners in various media including film, game development, theatre, music, and literature.



## TERRASSA, SPAIN

With its first film screening held in 1887, Terrassa had already begun to establish itself as one of the pioneer cities in Spain for the film industry. Reinterpreting the industrial modernism on which its growth was based during the 20th century, the city set about consolidating its film industry in the first few years of the 21st century through the development of an educational ecosystem with audiovisual training and the building of the Centre for Conservation and Restoration of the Catalan Film Archive, which spans one hundred years of regional cinema history. The city has, over the last decade, witnessed the development of a major amateur film movement, led in particular by the architect Jan Baca and the painter Antoni Padrós, who approach cinema as a new, cross-cutting and universal language. In addition to being one of the most important centres of audiovisual creation in Spain, Terrassa is the location of the Escola Superior de Cinema i Audiovisuals (ESCAC) which counts among its alumni Juan Antonio Bayona, the director of *The Impossible* and *The Orphanage*, which was awarded the Goya Prize. Working jointly with the municipality, ESCAC is behind the Base Film Festival, an event interspersed with screenings of the first films of young talent. Terrassa is also home to the Catalonia Audiovisual Park (Parc Audiovisual de Catalunya - PAC), a major production centre composed of a number of film studios, an incubator for the creative industries and an enterprise cluster.



### Jordi Hernández-Prat

With over 18 years of experience in the audiovisual field, Jordi is the Director of Audiovisual Projects at Parc Audiovisual de Catalunya and Terrassa City Council. Throughout his career, he has strived to combine the technical rigor of a multimedia engineer with the creativity of a filmmaker, leveraging these tools to tackle complex challenges with innovative solutions in the creative industries.

Jordi is also a professor at the University of Barcelona and serves as the focal point for UNESCO's City of Film in Terrassa, where he works to make audiovisual literacy accessible to everyone. His commitment extends to volunteering with the Red Cross, conducting workshops on media culture to promote critical understanding and

reasoning about audiovisual content among diverse user communities. Additionally, as a jury member for the Xiaomi Imagery Awards, Jordi brings expertise and forward-looking insight into the phenomenon of (post)photography. In recent years, Jordi has delved into research on generative AI, exploring its impact on visual imagery and its role in shaping new cultural identities, including the implications of AI hallucinations.



## VALLADOLID, SPAIN

Historic capital of Spain, Valladolid has a centuries-old cultural heritage that is the bedrock of the modern-day city. Home to one of the oldest film festivals in Europe, the Valladolid International Film Festival, also known as SEMINCI, the festival screens some 100 long and short films from different countries each year. One of the oldest universities in the world, Universidad de Valladolid, can be found here, with sites dating back to the 1400s. The Valladolid Film Office coordinates filming in a city famous for welcoming Orson Welles to film 'Mr Arkadin' in 1954, an experience shared by Spanish novelist and journalist, Miguel Delibes in 1985. Valladolid hosts a variety of accessible cultural events, including public open-air screenings, the Rodinia Short Film Festival and the International Exhibition of Cinema and Sexual Diversity.



### **Maria Loreto Arenales Gomez**

With extensive international experience in marketing and tourism, Loreto Arenales currently heads the International Tourism Department at Valladolid City Council, promoting the city as a leading destination around the globe. One of her competences is overseeing the Valladolid Film Commission, ensuring the success of audiovisual productions by managing locations, permits, and green shooting policies, while fostering connections between institutions and local professionals. Her work aims to strengthen the local industry and promote Valladolid as a top filming destination, creating synergies that drive both tourism and industrial growth.





## ŁÓDŹ, POLAND

Situated in the heart of Poland, Łódź is the third most populous Polish city and a film capital of the country. Basing on a splendid heritage of the Feature Film Studio, where the greatest masterpieces of the Polish film were made, a half thousands of creative enterprises operate here in the film industry, and Łódź Film Commission ensures comprehensive assistance to producers. Three public art academies provide professional staff for the industry. The world-famous Łódź Film School polishes talents of the most outstanding artists of Polish and world cinema. The Academy of Fine Arts educates future props masters, costume designers, scenographers, lighting designers, animators, multimedia designers and art critics. The Academy of Music offers studies in film music composition, sound production and music in the media. The History and Theory of Film Department at the University of Lodz is the longest-operating university-based film research centre in Poland. The Central Film Education Cabinet offers courses for children and youth. Łódź is also home to numerous film-related festivals, among which the Festival of Film Critics Kamera Akcja, the Cinergia Forum of European Cinema, the Man in Danger Media Festival or the International Nature Film Festival gather both local and international audiences. The Film Museum offers unique collections of exhibits, and the newly established National Centre for Film Culture, upon completion of the construction work in 2019, will bring to life spectacular expositions devoted to the audio-visual technologies, the process of filmmaking, and the history of Polish film culture, as well as a multimedia research lab and learning spaces.



### Filip Grzędowski

Cinema programmer in National Center for Film Culture at EC1 – Łódź City of Culture. His work includes arranging film repertoire, holding conversations with cast and crew and organizing a film discussion club. Graduate of film studies at the University of Łódź. For a period of time, he was the leader of the University of Łódź film students' academic circle, where he organized introductions and discussions in Łódź's art cinemas. Enthusiast and contributor to many film festivals. He is passionate about the cinema of the New French Extremity, Jerzy Skolimowski and Werner Herzog.

## SOFIA, BULGARIA

The history of cinema in Sofia dates back to the beginning of the twentieth century. Over the decades, Sofia has become the center of the Bulgarian film industry. Movies produced in the city have on many occasions been presented at international festivals. As a part of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network, Sofia will maximize its potential and broaden its outreach as a City of Film. Sofia is home to a wide variety of cultural enterprises and an active service sector focusing on the film industry. Many professional organizations bringing together film directors and producers are also based in Sofia. The municipality of Sofia has therefore decided to target the expansion of the film industry as a strategic factor for the city's sustainable development, with special focus being given to the stabilization and growth of small cultural enterprises. Bulgaria's biggest film school (NAFTA) is located in Sofia. It has gained wide attention through the organization of several international student film festivals. Over the past eighteen years, the Sofia Film Festival has emerged to become the Balkans' largest and most important film festival. Furthermore, the National Film Archive, focusing on the rich history of film in Bulgaria, is also located in Sofia.



### **Diana Andreeva – Popyordanova Ph.D.**

Dr. Diana Andreeva - Popyordanova is director of the Observatory of Cultural Economics (OCE), an organization for independent research in cultural economics in Bulgaria. She is a lecturer in the University of National and World Economy/UNWE/, Department "Media and Public Communications"- UNESCO Chair on Media and Information Literacy and Cultural Policies for Sustainable Development and National Academy of Theatre and Film Arts. She is co-editor of the Bulgarian profile of cultural policy in the Compendium of Cultural Policies and Director of the Centre for Media Research, Audiovisual Policy and Cultural Industries „Assoc. prof. Dr. Bilyana Tomova” in UNWE, Sofia. Diana Andreeva is part of the research team of the international Horizon 2020 CICERONE/Creative Industries Cultural Economy Production Network/ project.



## Participants from North Macedonia



### Menche Hadzi-Kosta Milevska

Menche Hadzi-Kosta Milevska is a Film Programmer at the NI Center of Culture in Bitola, North Macedonia, where she has been actively contributing since 2013. She organizes and plans the film program and coordination of 3D Kino Bitola, along with organizing diverse cultural events such as film festivals, concerts, and exhibitions. Menche has an active role in the organization of the

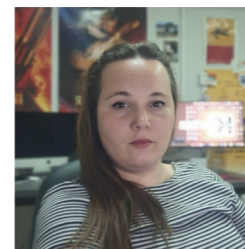
film festivals happening in Bitola, like the Manaki Brothers Film Festival and the International Ethnographic Film Festival "Ilinden Days." She has extensive experience collaborating with international institutions, including embassies, and is involved in the UNESCO Creative Cities of Film initiatives. She is a graduate in Marketing Management from the University of St. Kliment Ohridski, her work bridges culture and sustainability, promoting Bitola as a hub for creative collaboration and city of film art.



### Marija Dzideva

Marija Dzideva is a filmmaker with over 25 years of film experience. She works as a screenwriter and director of creative documentaries and feature films. Author of "Toni Mandza's List", "Look at Life through My Eyes", "The Pursuit of Luck", "Some Other Stories", "Second Chance". Renowned for her realistic and emotional storytelling, her works have been selected and awarded

at various international film festivals. Also, she works on TV documentary projects, bringing different genres, from history to real-life stories to the screen. In addition to her film career, she is an active film lecturer and educator. She worked as a professor at the Film Academy of the "Goce Delchev" University in Shtip. She has created and implemented numerous educational film workshops for students, promoting film literacy among children and young people.



### Damjana Patcheva

Damjana Patcheva was born on August 27, 1987 in Skopje. She graduated from the Department of General and Comparative Literature at the Faculty of Philology "Blaže Koneski" in Skopje. After completing her undergraduate studies, from 2010 to 2012 she worked as a journalist in the Culture and Entertainment Department of the daily newspaper "Vreme". In November 2012,

she volunteered at the National Film Archive of Macedonia until 2015, when she became an external collaborator of the Film Archive of Macedonia. In December 2016, she was employed as a filmologist at the Cinematheque of Macedonia, where she still works as the editor of the film program at the Cinematheque of Macedonia, and in 2020 she received the title of senior filmologist as well as the title of master in general and comparative literature at the Faculty of Philology "Blaže Koneski" in Skopje, Department of General and Comparative Literature. In 2016, she completed the Summer School for Film Restoration in Bologna, where she received a diploma for a final course in film restoration. Since 2015, she has been part of the team organizing the IFFK "Manaki Brothers", and is also an external collaborator at many domestic film festivals. As a filmologist, she is part of the Laboratory for Development of Innovation and Audience for Cinematographers organized by Europa Cinemas in Seville (2021) and Bologna (2022). Since 2020, she has been the project coordinator of the CLASSIC FILM SEASON in North Macedonia at the Cinematheque of North Macedonia, a project aimed at attracting a younger audience to share the film cultural heritage. And since 2024, she has been the project coordinator of FilmED, a film education project of the Cinematheque of North Macedonia and the Goethe-Institut Skopje, funded by the MEDIA sub-programme of the European Union.



### **Ognen Antov**

Ognen Antov is a highly regarded film producer with over 20 years of experience in the industry. A graduate of International Marketing, he founded Dream Factory Macedonia in 2007, a company dedicated to producing feature films, TV productions, and documentaries. Throughout his career, Ognen has produced award-winning documentaries such as Seamstresses and Grandmothers of Revolution. He has also worked as an associate producer on "Punk Is Not Dead" and co-produced "Mission London". His co-productions "Not an Ordinary Monday" (2014) and "Monument to Michael Jackson" (2014) gained global attention. Ognen's Macedonian debut AMOK (2016) became the biggest hit in Macedonia that year, securing festival success. In 2021, he produced Macedonia's first children's film, Stela, and in 2022, his film Vera Dreams of the Sea, directed by Kaltrina Krasniqi, competed at the Venice Film Festival. He is also the founder and president of the Macedonian Film Producers Association.



### **Kristina Hristova Nikolova**

Kristina Hristova Nikolova, MA is a Macedonian actress. Since 1998, she has been working as an actress at the National Theatre - Bitola, where she has successfully played over 30 roles. Now, she is part of the NI Theater Komediya ensemble. Also from 2010 to the present, she has worked as a screenwriter for several short films and TV series, and from 2011 to the present, she has worked as an Assistant Professor of Dramaturgy and Film Scriptwriting at the first private University in the field of audiovisual arts in Macedonia, the University of Europa Prima. From 2011 to 2016, Hristina was the Executive Director of the International Festival of Mobile Films "Mobile Festival", [www.mobilefestival.net](http://www.mobilefestival.net), founder of the competition for the best Macedonian "Website of the Year" in Macedonia, board member of AFP Macedonia Skopje (Association of Film Professionals and TV Collaborators), member of the jury of the short film competition at the Tirana Film Festival 2014 as well as the protocol organizer of the 36th edition of "IFFK Manaki Brothers" 2015. Kristina Hristova Nikolova has produced or co-produced 4 feature films, three short films and one short animated film. She has interest in multimedia projects, new media and globalization.

## **Students / Young Professionals**



### **Jovan Angeleski**

Jovan Angeleski is currently completing his studies in photography at the University "Europa Prima" in Skopje, with only three exams remaining before graduation. As a professional photographer, he has amassed extensive experience capturing various events. Notably, he served as one of the two official photographers for the 30th OSCE Ministerial Council held at the Boris Trajkoski Arena in 2023. Since 2022, he has been the photographer for the prestigious annual event Zlatna Bubamara, as well as the A1 Game fest, an annual gaming festival he has covered since 2021. Jovan holds certificates from the "Fotosofia" photo seminar led by Damir Hoyka (2022) and the WordPress photo seminar in Skopje (2022). His expertise extends to film, serving as the director of photography for the short films Elka by Luka Jovanoski and Nur by Marija Perchinovska. With over eight years of experience at "Foto Zoran," he specializes in wedding, event, and studio photography.



### **Ana Marija Tikova**

Ana Marija Tikova, digital content creator and student at the "Faculty of Film Arts" in the Film and TV Editing department at "Europa Prima" University. Born on 12.12.2003 in Bakirkoy, Istanbul. She completed primary school at "Tosho Arsov" primary school, secondary school at "Slavcho Stojmenski" and primary music school at "DMUC Sergej Mihajlov" in Shtip. She is fluent in Macedonian, Vlach, English and Serbian, and has basic knowledge in German and Turkish. She has work experience in making jewelry from polymer clay and epoxy resin, as well as in television editing at the Macedonian National Television.



## **Svetislav Podleshanov**

Born on 29 of September 1992 in Bitola, Macedonia. Graduated film directing on University of Audio-Visual Arts, ESRA-Skopje. Later he continued his studies in master degree of Film and TV Production. He is co-founder of "OPIUM Film" production company based in Skopje. His interests about cinematography shown up in his youngest age, he started to make films since he was 12 years

old. As writer and director he has worked on many film projects including the feature fiction "Theosis" (2016) and the short documentary "The water" (2018). In the past six years he is working on feature-length documentary with a working title "Ironman", which was developed on through many European workshops and festivals. He has two projects in development: "The soil" - short environmental documentary and "Wild child" - feature fiction film. During the last 8 years he has also worked as a mentor for creative documentary films for high school and primary school students. Since 2022 he has been an organizer/producer of the event "Center for Interdisciplinary Activities".

## **Films**

### **"House of sand" dir. Paweł Wyszomirski**

40' / Poland

A bitter-sweet documentary comedy. Maciej is building a house out of trash and tires. He deals with the climate crisis but more importantly, he is looking for a medicine to loneliness in his life

### **"Attraction" dir. Aleksandra Szczepaniak**

2024, 19' / Poland

Hot summer holidays in the countryside put to the test the close relationship of teenage siblings. Charmed by her younger brother, Ania fights for his feelings.

### **"The Sky Above Zenica" dir. Nanna Frank Møller & Zlatko Pranjić**

2024, 1h 30' / Bosna and Herzegovina

Sarajevo Film Festival's 2024 Environmental Awareness Award, The Sky Above Zenica is an exposé on the environmental degradation caused by the corporate ironworks in Zenica, Bosnia and Herzegovina, portraying the disconnect between the plant's public persona as an eco-friendly entity and the grim reality of its operations.

### **"GAIA" dir. Nermin Hamzagic i Enis Cisić**

2024, 11' / Animation, Sci-Fi/ Bosna and Herzegovina

The year is 2040 and Sarajevo is covered with thick clouds and relentless plastic rain. Sara has a chance to save the city when she feels a connection with the emerging black soil.

### **"Hot Stuff" dir. Pascal Schuh & Jonas Riemer**

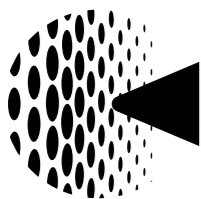
2023, 2' / Germany



## Organizer

Founded in 2017, FILM CENTER BITOLA is a non-profit organization dedicated to the development of film as an artistic medium in Bitola. It was founded by a group of professionals in the field of culture, as well as film lovers and professors. As to this end, it co-ordinates Bitola's activities related to the statute as a creative city of the film within UNESCO, as well as a number of activities related to Bitola as a UNESCO Film City, as well as other film activities that emerge from the specificity of Bitola as a film center of the Republic of North Macedonia.

The main goal is to help in the realization of existing projects and manifestations organized by the City of Bitola, especially in the field of film. The association provides services for the city's film-related activities and relations with the film industry, develops the awareness of the public, the benefits and significance of the film industry in Bitola and the wider economic area.



Здружение на филмска уметност  
ЦЕНТАР ЗА ФИЛМ БИТОЛА

### ORGANISATION COMMITTEE

Film Center Bitola  
Shirok Sokak 37  
7000 Bitola  
+389 (79) 233 176  
centarzafilmbitola@gmail.com  
bfc.mk

## Venues

### HOUSE OF ARMY (OFICERSKI) IN BITOLA

"Oficerski" or The House of Army (Офицерски дом) in Bitola, according to its historical and architectural aesthetic values, has the status of a monument of culture in the Republic of Macedonia. The construction of the building started in 1909, and in 1912 the building was covered. Its construction was completed after the First World War. The architectural expression of the building is typical of the period of historicism in European architecture in terms of plan, decoration, and composition tables, with the highlighted Oriental elements. The emergence of these elements in Bitola is normal when it comes to objects built during the period of Turkish rule. Conceptually the object is built as a synthesis of a palace and fortress. Elements of the palace are in the conception of space and masses, and the fortress is visible in the elements in monumental space and secondary decorative plastics derived in the form of cannon tubes. Officer's house was a location for the Turkish, Serbian, Bulgarian, Yugoslav, and Macedonian army. Here once the door was opened only for generals and officers and this was the only preserved ballroom in Bitola. Marshal Tito stayed here, Suleyman Demirel, chess player Karpov and others.

### MANAKI CINEMA

In 1921, the brothers Janaki and Milton Manaki bought a yard on Shirok Sokak with the intention of building a cinema hall and founded the Manaki Cinema. The first cinema screening was shown in the summer garden in August, and in the spring of 1922 the construction of the building began. In 1933, the bankruptcy of the cinema was announced, which gave the bank the right to dispose of it, and in 1939 the building was affected by a fire and burned to the ground.

Today's cinema Manaki is built on a location close to the former, with the support of the EU Funds and funds from the Ministry of Culture and the Municipality of Bitola. Only in the part of the front facade resembles the former cinema of the Manaki brothers, but increases the capacity of the Municipality of Bitola for development of cinema culture and sends a strong message to the people of Bitola and the world, that tradition and living cultural heritage are part of local cultural policies and identity.

**This brochure is made with the support of the project “Green Film Cities: Empowering Sustainable Creative Cities” supported by UNESCO, through the “Culture and Creativity for the Western Balkans” (CC4WBs) project, funded by the European Union. The project is focused on fostering dialogue in the Western Balkans by enhancing the cultural and creative sectors for increased socio-economic impact. Over a 48-month period, the CC4WBs project aims to improve the performance of the cultural and creative sectors in order to enhance skills, knowledge, access to financial aid to increase competitiveness and sustain co-production and circulation of goods and services in the Western Balkans.**

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