

# Kickoff for the third edition of SOFA

## Nikolaj Nikitin announces workshop participants and lecturers during the 50th International Film Festival Karlovy Vary

The Europe-wide, one-of-a-kind workshop programme SOFA – School of Film Agents which supports international film professionals and mediators in the realization of film-cultural projects will take place from August 21 – 30, 2015 in the Polish city of Wroclaw. Founded in 2013, the third edition of SOFA's workshop initiative will, again, invite young "film agents" from Central and Eastern Europe, Germany and, for the first time, Central Asia to work together with experts on their projects with the goal of further developing the regional film culture and industries in their respective countries.

Within the framework of the »Works in Progress«-Screenings presented at the 50th International Film Festival Karlovy Vary – the most important industry event for the SOFA-relevant territories – SOFA Director, Nikolaj Nikitin, announced yesterday the names and projects of **eight participants to take part in the third edition of the workshop initiative**. »From an innovative VoD approach to the cultural preservation of cinematic heritage to a transnational network-development-event for young filmmakers right up to the establishing of the first regional film funding body in the Ukraine: the breadth and ingenuity of this year's project ideas impressively reflects the film structural and cultural challenges we are attempting to address in these respective regions«, commented Nikitin. "We are pleased to see numerous solution approaches for the preservation of film history come together in Wroclaw with initiatives addressing a more positive (and not only digital) outlook for the future of cinema and the audio-visual market. Such projects dealing with the future of the medium film in all its forms will play a decisive roll in film cultural development in these regions, especially in times of medial transformation. We are very pleased that six of the eight participating project proposals will be developed by women and, for the first time, Central Asia will be represented with a relevant project from Tajikistan."

In the presence of numerous SOFA partners and former participants, Nikitin presented the following eight participants of the third edition in Karlovy Vary:

**Milica Bozanic, Serbia:** "Criss-Cross Film Lab" – Lab for New Generation of Serbian Filmmakers

**Sergey Chutkov, Tadjikistan:** DuDoFiC (Dushanbe Documentary Film Centre)

**Michal Kráčmer, Czech Republic:** “Cuz We Are Talented” – Film industry project for newcomer professionals

**Dorina Oarga, Romania:** CINEPUB 2nd Life – Digitization of the Romanian National Film University Archives

**Olha Reiter, Ukraine:** Lviv Film Commission and Film Fund

**Hella Rihl, Germany:** möwe. ChildrensFilmDistribution

**Małgorzata Tusk, Poland:** Mobile Centre of Audiovisual Education (Cinebus)

**Katarina Tomkova, Slovakia:** kaleidoscope – Bringing Central European Films to their European Identity

From August 21 – 30, 2015, the eight participants will **work closely together with internationally experienced experts and mentors** in the Polish city of Wroclaw (European Capital of Culture 2016). As in the years before, four expert counsellors will be present for the duration of the workshop, offering continuous support in the areas of development, budgeting and overall project communication strategies. These experts are:

**Oliver Baumgarten** (Programme Manager, Max Ophüls Preis, Saarbrücken/Cologne), **Sibylle Kurz** (Pitching-Expert, Frankfurt), **Ewa Puszczynska** (Oscar Award-Winner, IDA, Opus Film, Lodz), **Renaud Redien-Collot** (Novancia Business School, Paris),

Backed by years of experience and expert Know-How, the following mentors will offer participants intensive one-on-one advisory sessions in 2015 as well as provide consultation beyond the activities of the workshop:

**Claudia Dillmann** (Deutsches Filminstitut, Frankfurt), **Maciej Jakubczyk** (New Horizons Association, Wrocław), **Matthijs Wouter Knol** (European Film Market, Berlin), **Roberto Olla** (Eurimages, Strasbourg), **Kristina Trapp** (EAVE, Luxembourg), **Katriel Schory** (Israel Film Fund, Tel Aviv), **Riina Sildos** (Baltic Event, Tallinn), **Tamara Tatishvili** (Ablabudafilm, Tbilisi).

**Several projects from the first two SOFA editions in 2013 and 2014 have already been or are close to being realized.** For example the Eurimages funded

interactive database “FBO – Festival Box Office” from Serbia was launched at this year’s Berlinale. The elaborate SOFA project “FRONT” that aims to digitize numerous alternative cinema screens throughout Lithuania was able to garner crucial national and European funding sources. The Greek VoD project “OCTAPUS” has found the necessary strategic and financial partners, while the kickoff for the Transilvania Film Fund will be announced in the near future. Further SOFA projects from Estonia, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia have also been successfully initiated. Other special Highlights for SOFA’s third edition this year include a panel dealing with topics relevant to the Polish and European film sectors (panel guests soon to be announced). Additionally there will be a special public film screening open to all SOFA participants, guests and residents of Wroclaw.

SOFA – School of Film Agents is a **joint project** of the **Filmplus gUG (Cologne)** and the **Fundacja Filmplus (Warsaw)** together with the **city of Wroclaw (Breslau)** and the **Polish Film Institute**, funded by the **Foundation for Polish-German Cooperation**, the **German (Federal Foreign Office)**, the **International Visegrad Fund**, the **Film- und Medienstiftung NRW**, the **New Horizons Association** and **EAVE – European Audiovisual Entrepreneurs**, the **Slovakian Film Institute**, **Mozinet**, the **International Film Festival Karlovy Vary** and supported by the **Adam Mickiewicz Institute** in collaboration with the **Goethe-Institut** in Poland (Krakow), Serbia, Romania, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Ukraine and its Head Office in Munich, Germany, as well as the support of the **Film Commission Poland** and the **Wroclaw Film Commission**.

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