



Karlovy Vary International Film Festival

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JAN-OLE GERSTER, HONG KHAOU, JONÁS TRUEBA AND DAMJAN KOZOLE TO COMPETE AT THE 54TH KVIFF

The geographically diverse selection in the festival's main section includes ten world and two international premieres.

Chinese director Zhai Yixiang's eagerly anticipated *Mosaic Portrait* offers a diaphanously hypnotic story of a 14-year-old girl in a critical moment of her life. Following his successful debut *Lilting* (Sundance 2014), Cambodia-born British writer and director Hong Khaou will introduce in Karlovy Vary his moving drama about rediscovering one's identity *Monsoon* (starring Henry Golding). Seven years after the premiere of his cult debut *Oh Boy* (EFA's European Discovery Award), Germany's Jan-Ole Gerster returns to Karlovy Vary with another world premiere, the psychological study *Lara*, starring legendary actress Corinna Harfouch.

Also making a repeat appearance in Karlovy Vary is the Philippines' Dwein Baltazar with her subtle drama *Ode to Nothing*. One of the most distinctive Spanish filmmakers of his generation, Jonás Trueba combines lightness and charm with intense existential emotions in the conversation piece *August Virgin*. Meanwhile, American director Martha Stephens takes us back to the 1960s in her charismatic black-and-white drama *To the Stars*, with Kara Hayward in the lead.

Eastern and southeastern Europe are represented by a trio of new films by recognized filmmakers. Damjan Kozole (Best Director at the 2016 KVIFF for *Nightlife*) combines compassion and humor reminiscent of the central films of the Czechoslovak New Wave in *Half-Sister*. Famed Bulgarian directorial duo Kristina Grozeva and Petar Valchanov's intimate family drama *The Father* follows on the footsteps of their award-winning *The Lesson* and *Glory*. And Czech cinema is represented by the Czech-Slovak co-production of Marko Škop's gripping drama *Let There Be Light*.

Belgian debut filmmaker Tim Mielants presents a curious journey towards understanding deeper truths about oneself in the biting yet gentle *Patrick*. All the way from Chile, this year's second feature debut in main competition is Felipe Ríos's psychological road movie *The Man from the Future*. And returning to KVIFF's competition section three years after *My Father's Wings*, is Turkey's Kivanç Sezer with his absurdly humorous look at life crisis in *La Belle Indifference*.



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OFFICIAL SELECTION - COMPETITION

Bashtata / The Father / Otec

Director: Kristina Grozeva, Petar Valchanov
Bulgaria, Greece, 2019, 87 min, World premiere

After losing his wife Ivanka, Vasil believes that she is using his phone to reach him from beyond the grave, so he enlists the services of a psychic to try to make contact with her. His son Pavel tries to bring him to his senses, but Vasil stubbornly insists on doing things his own way... This small-scale family drama, about the difficulties of connecting with those close to us, includes many of the carefully arranged absurd or comic situations typical for the Bulgarian filmmaking duo.

De Patrick / Patrick / Patrick

Director: Tim Mielants
Belgium, 2019, 97 min, World premiere

Patrick is in charge of maintenance at a naturist campsite owned by his father. His workshop is as well-ordered as his life, but nothing lasts forever. The loss of Patrick's favourite hammer has a profound effect on him and sets off a chain of events from which the gloomy lad emerges as a new man. A tragicomedy about the importance of keeping an eye on your tools, about existential nudity, and about people for whom a trailer is their whole world.

El hombre del futuro / The Man from the Future / Muž budoucnosti

Director: Felipe Ríos
Chile, Argentina, 2019, 96 min, World premiere

Michelsen, an elderly truck driver, sets out on his last trip driving freight to the southern tip of Chilean Patagonia. The long and arduous drive through the magnificent, luxuriant natural landscape, past lakes and extensive glaciers, ultimately becomes a recapitulation of his life when he unexpectedly happens upon his adult daughter, whom he hasn't seen since her childhood.



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Küçük şeyler / La Belle Indifference / Maličkosti

Director: Kıvanç Sezer

Turkey, 2019, 95 min, World premiere

Onur is sacked from his job as manager of a pharmaceutical company. He's not too bothered about being unemployed, but the same cannot be said of his wife Bahar. Onur doesn't listen to her and becomes indifferent not only to her anxieties but also to the world around him. He'd rather be surrounded by more zebras. A drama with dashes of absurd comedy about events that are no laughing matter: a personal crisis that impacts their marriage.

Lara / Lara / Lara

Director: Jan Ole Gerster

Germany, 2019, 96 min, World premiere

Lara has just turned sixty; it's a very special day that will culminate in a career-defining piano concert given by her son. Viktor remains elusive, however, and his mother's repeated attempts to get through to him come to nothing. German acting legend Corinna Harfouch stars in this precisely crafted psychological study by one of the most successful German filmmakers of his generation, Jan-Ole Gerster, who here takes up the thread of his critically acclaimed debut *Oh Boy*.

Ma Sai Ke Shao Nv / Mosaic Portrait / Portrét mozaikou

Director: Yixiang Zhai

China, 2019, 107 min, World premiere

A diaphanously hypnotic story conveyed more through contemplative silence than words, in which a pregnant 14-year-old makes a surprising revelation when asked to name the father of her child. The young Chinese director follows in the footsteps of the Sixth Generation filmmakers, taking fragments of impressions and moods to craft an unsettling image of the injured heroine, who remains proud and strong. Yet despite this – or perhaps for this reason – she finds herself mired in a deep chasm of alienation.



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Monsoon / Monsoon / Monzun

Director: Hong Khaou

United Kingdom, 2019, 85 min, World premiere

Kit can't remember much of his native Vietnam. When he returns to the Land of the Golden Star for the first time in over thirty years, he takes in the local surroundings as any Western tourist would; everything seems remote and alien. A subtle film which records one man's journey back to his roots as it evocatively mediates the (re)discovery of his identity.

Nech je svetlo / Let There Be Light / Budiž světlo

Director: Marko Škop

Slovak Republic, Czech Republic, 2019, 93 min, World premiere

A Slovak village is getting ready for Christmas. Forty-year-old Milan travels from Germany where he works to be home with his family. However, the serene and festive atmosphere is unsettled by the suspicion that his son, a member of a paramilitary youth organisation, might be involved in a harrowing event that stunned the local community. This compelling drama, about the strength and fragility of family ties, examines our sense of moral responsibility in a world where xenophobia takes precedence over compassion for those closest to us.

Oda sa Wala / Ode to Nothing / Óda na nicotu

Director: Dwein Baltazar

Philippines, 2018, 92 min, International premiere

It seems as if nothing can upset Sonya's routine. No-one cares about the ageing funeral shop owner anymore, except when she provides discounts on flowers and coffins. One day a body belonging apparently to no-one finds its way to her shop, and Sonya develops a highly unusual relationship with it. An inscrutable, tender and bitterly comic film about the desire for companionship.



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Polsestra / Half-Sister / Nevlastní sestra

Director: Damjan Kozole

Slovenia, Macedonia, Serbia, Croatia, 2019, 105 min, World premiere

Half-sisters who were never that close are forced by circumstance to share a flat in Ljubljana... The leading Slovene director returns to Karlovy Vary with a remarkably precise study of alienation and the inability to communicate, in a film characterised by polished dialogue, plentiful black humour and entirely natural performances.

To the Stars / To the Stars / Ke hvězdám

Director: Martha Stephens

USA, 2019, 111 min, International premiere

Bullied by her classmates, reclusive Iris finds small-town life pure torment; for self-assured Maggie, however, moving to the provinces provides an opportunity to stand out from the rest. A film excelling in finely wrought detail that takes us back to the 1960s, a time when society, bound by gender prejudice, detested the idea of individuality in women.

La virgen de agosto / The August Virgin / Srpnová madona

Director: Jonás Trueba

Spain, 2019, 125 min, World premiere

In the hot summer months, when *Madrileños* leave their homes in droves to escape the insufferable heat, the centre of Madrid is left abandoned. That is, except for the tourists and a handful of undaunted locals – and those who can't see the way forward, like Eva, a charming thirty-something. Told with appealing finesse, the story unfolds during the city's August festivals, when a person's inner turmoil can be soothed by fleeting encounters and unexpected adventures.



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EAST OF THE WEST COMPETITION OPENS WITH DEBUT FILM BY KOSOVO'S LENDITA ZEQR AJ AGA'S HOUSE

This year's East of the West competition is showing eight world, three international, and one European premiere, with eight of the competing films being debuts. The opening film is ***Aga's House***, the feature-length debut by Kosovo director Lendita Zeqiraj, who authentically re-creates the vibrant world of the energetic female protagonists. The competition, this year characterized by a diverse range of genres and distinctive formal approaches, also includes Ukrainian director Antonio Lukich's tragicomic, visually inventive road movie ***My Thoughts Are Silent***; the Slovak hybrid film ***Silent Days***, in which Pavol Pekarčík sensitively weaves together four little stories reflecting the inner life of deaf Romani children; Serbian director Stefan Malešević's conceptual triptych ***Mamonga***; and Serhat Karaaslan's Turkish psychological study ***Passed by Censor***. The Czech Republic is represented by Michal Hogenauer's drama ***A Certain Kind of Silence***.

EAST OF THE WEST – COMPETITION

Akher Ziyarah / Last Visit / Poslední návštěva

Director: Abdulmohsen Aldhabaan

Saudi Arabia, 2019, 76 min, World premiere

On the way to a wedding Nasser finds out that his father is dying. He changes plans and heads straight off with his adolescent son Waleed to his dad's small town. However, the strictly upheld customs they encounter in this rural environment start to affect Waleed and Nasser's relationship. Using the story of a family encounter as its backdrop, the film adopts a realistic approach to discussing Islamic traditions while it examines the true nature of paternal love.

Arest / Arrest / Vazba

Director: Andrei Cohn

Romania, 2019, 126 min, International premiere

August 1983, somewhere in Romania. The bright summer's day that Dinu is spending with his family on the beach is darkened by the arrival of the police and his unexplained arrest. He finds himself sharing a cell with small-time crook Vali, who soon proves to be quite a



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sinister fellow inmate. A formally inventive drama about the chilling absurdity of totalitarian regimes.

Byk / The Bull / Býk

Director: Boris Akopov

Russia, 2019, 99 min, International premiere

Gang leader Anton Bykov, known as the Bull, ends up at the police station after a scuffle with a rival criminal group. He only manages to avoid prison thanks to the intervention of a feared mafia boss, who nevertheless asks him to pull off a risky job in return. A taut feature debut from one-time ballet dancer Boris Akopov, surprising for its maturity and compulsive dynamism.

Görülmüştür / Passed by Censor / Cenzor

Director: Serhat Karaaslan

Turkey, 2018, 95 min, International premiere

Zakir works in a prison as a censor. Each day he reads dozens of letters, carefully blacking out everything not meant for the eyes of those serving time. A photograph inserted into one of the letters disrupts his regular routine, and his interest in the unknown woman in the picture grows into an obsession. A psychological study of an individual who gradually loses his personal and professional integrity while becoming trapped in his own fantasy world.

Hluché dni / Silent Days / Hluché dny

Director: Pavol Pekarčík

Slovak Republic, Czech Republic, 2019, 81 min, World premiere

The heroes of the four stories told in *Silent Days* all have their dreams and desires. But they also have something else in common: they live on the fringes of society in a private world closed off from the outside – even more so since they cannot hear... In a film partaking of both fiction and documentary, hearing-impaired Romany children move about in their own environment as director Pavol Pekarčík deftly textures little stories reflecting their inner lives.



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Mamonga / Mamonga / Mamonga

Director: Stefan Malešević

Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, 2019, 92 min, World premiere

Jovana works behind the counter at a bakery in the small town where she lives with her father. Her somewhat shy peer Marko is supposed to follow in his own father's footsteps and become a truck driver. But the events of one night change both their lives... Serbian director Stefan Malešević debuts with a formalistically distinctive triptych whose loose narrative structure challenges the viewer to actively participate in putting together the pieces of the mosaic.

Moi dumki tikhi / My Thoughts Are Silent / Mé tiché myšlenky

Director: Antonio Lukich

Ukraine, 2019, 104 min, World premiere

Twenty-five-year-old Vadym works as a sound recordist. When a generous job offer comes along which could help him fulfil his dream to move to Canada, he doesn't think twice and sets out to record the sounds of animals in the Carpathians... In his visually inspired road movie, subtly enhanced by its synthesized score, debuting director Antonio Lukich demonstrates a highly unusual talent for constructing tragicomic situations.

Nova Lituania / Nova Lituania / Nova Lituania

Director: Karolis Kaupinis

Lithuania, 2019, 96 min, World premiere

1938. A new war looms on the horizon. Geographer Gruodis comes up with a creative solution to the situation: He proposes creating a "backup Lithuania" overseas, a place where the country's inhabitants could move in case of danger... Working with carefully composed black-and-white shots, debuting director Karolis Kaupinis has recast this original idea into the gripping drama of a man trying to save his homeland and while facing the collapse of his marriage.



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Shpia e Agës / Aga's House / AgÛv dÛm

Director: Lendita Zeqiraj

Kosovo, Croatia, France, Albania, 2019, 107 min, World premiere

A diverse group of women live in a remote mountain location. The only male element in the house is nine-year-old Aga, the son of one of the women. Opening the East of the West competition, Lendita Zeqiraj's debut authentically re-creates the vibrant world of her energetic female protagonists, in which the flow of stories, the sound of singing, and coarse humor cannot mask the dark undertone of their country's wartime past and its enduring ethnic tensions.

Skandinaavia vaikus / Scandinavian Silence / Skandinávské ticho

Director: Martti Helde

Estonia, France, Belgium, 2019, 75 min, European premiere

A brother and sister set out across a silent winter landscape, but after years apart they have difficulty communicating. This minimalist study of a difficult sibling relationship presents three versions of the same story, asking whether time can heal the wounds of the past.

Tiché doteky / A Certain Kind of Silence / Tiché doteky

Director: Michal Hogenauer

Czech Republic, Netherlands, Latvia, 2019, 96 min, World premiere

Mia goes to live with a family as their au pair. As soon as she arrives, however, she discovers that they have strict household rules: breaking any of them will lead to her immediate dismissal. The young woman has to decide whether to preserve her integrity or conform to a lifestyle that is utterly alien to her.



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Zizotek / Zizotek / Zizotek

Director: Vardis Marinakis

Greece, 2019, 92 min, World premiere

After nine-year-old Jason is abandoned by his mother at a folk festival, he takes refuge in a cabin in the middle of the forest belonging to a mute loner named Minas. Although at first the man, who has a questionable profession, won't take him in, a series of circumstances eventually leads them to form a family – something both of them have lacked for a long time. A touching tale of harmony and the yearning for intimacy that will captivate audiences with its dreamlike atmosphere.



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WORLD PREMIERES OF SPOON BY LAILA PAKALNINA AND OVER THE HILLS BY MARTIN MAREČEK IN DOCUMENTARY COMPETITION AT THE 54TH KVIFF

The documentary competition at the 54th Karlovy Vary IFF presents eight world and three European premieres. In ***Spoon***, Latvia's icon of world documentary Laila Pakalnina creates a portrait of the paradoxical contradiction between the long production process and short lifespan of an ordinary piece of plastic – entirely without words but with a subtle sense of humor. Award-winning Czech documentarian Martin Mareček returns with his intimate road movie ***Over the Hills***. The selection also includes Marc Schmidt's ***In the Arms of Morpheus*** and Todd Douglas Miller's ***Apollo 11***, compiled using unique archival footage from the first mission to the Moon's surface. The renewed festival interest in Chinese cinema is illustrated by two films about the transformation of Chinese society: While ***The Fading Village*** shows the decline of the countryside, ***Confucian Dream*** focuses on the urban population's exaggerated return to traditional ways of life.

DOCUMENTARY FILMS – COMPETITION

17 Blocks / 17 Blocks / Sedmnáct bloků

Director: Davy Rothbart

USA, 2018, 97 min, European premiere

The moment nine-year-old Emmanuel received his first video camera in 1999, he began to shoot a chronicle of the Sanford family, warts and all. Ten years later, filmmaker and journalist Davy Rothbart uses his material to tell a disarming tale from Washington, D.C., where the streets are ruled by poverty and violence just seventeen blocks from the Capitol.

Apollo 11 / Apollo 11 / Apollo 11

Director: Todd Douglas Miller

USA, 2019, 93 min, European premiere

Fifty years after the first lunar landing, NASA has opened up its extensive archives and released previously unseen material of amazing audiovisual quality, including a 70mm film of the launch from Cape Canaveral and intimate footage of the otherworldly calm that prevailed in the lunar module. The nine-day mission becomes more than just Armstrong's iconic "giant leap for mankind," growing instead into a fascinating space odyssey.



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Chun Qu Dong Lai / The Fading Village / Mizející vesnice

Director: Liu Feifang

China, 2019, 172 min, World premiere

Unlike the other young people in their forlorn mountain village, Hou Junli has remained with his family instead of leaving for the city. The dilapidated houses continue to resist the snow and rain, but how long will this place exist if there is nobody left to carry on local work and traditions? A long-term observational documentary about a difficult life and the love of one's native soil.

Dálava / Over the Hills / Dálava

Director: Martin Mareček

Czech Republic, 2019, 76 min, World premiere

Father and son Vít and Grisha travel to Russia to visit the boy's mother and sister. Why did their previously harmonious family split in two? A documentary road movie about the distance between two Slavic countries, the difficulties of fatherhood and puberty, and the alienation between people who should, in theory, be the closest of all.

Giù dal vivo / Up to Down / Na okraji

Director: Nazareno Manuel Nicoletti

Italy, 2019, 74 min, World premiere

Naples. City of the unbowed, but also of madmen and paupers, which refuses to lick anyone's boots, let alone stoop to pretense. This documentary bad trip takes us on a tour of the city's dismal suburbs and into the homes of the marginalized and rejected: a man, a girl, and a masked boxer – three protagonists yearning for something else, although they're not quite sure what.



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In de armen van Morpheus / In the Arms of Morpheus / V náruči Morfeově

Director: Marc Schmidt

Netherlands, 2019, 82 min, World premiere

What happens behind closed eyes when we lose consciousness and give ourselves over to dreams? How is our perception of reality changed when the line between waking and sleeping is blurred? Let yourself be taken to a place where the rational laws of daily life do not apply.

Karote / Spoon / Lžička

Director: Laila Pakalniņa

Latvia, Norway, Lithuania, 2019, 65 min, World premiere

The plastic spoon was able to feign harmless unimportance until the moment Laila Pakalniņa, a distinctive international documentary filmmaker, cast her piercing glance its way. Her wordless film, whose humor arises from the surprising possibilities cinema has to offer, sings a dirge for this ornament of our bloated civilization: a piece of cheap plastic that will likely soon fade into history.

Kongzi meng / Confucian Dream / Konfuciánský sen

Director: Mijie Li

China, 2019, 85 min, European premiere

In rapidly developing China, the educational system is geared toward producing competitive and productive workers, but not all parents want to teach their children to devote their life to work. *Confucian Dream* is the story of a mother looking for the right kind of alternative education that will take into account her son's moral development.



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Panorama / Projectionist / Panorama

Director: Yuriy Shylov

Ukraine, Poland, 2019, 70 min, World premiere

Valentin is over sixty and has spent more than forty years working at Kiev's oldest cinema. You don't have to twist his arm to go out drinking and dancing – the eccentric man simply ignores his age. But as with everyone else, life puts new obstacles in his way that he must overcome.

Síðasta haustið / The Last Autumn / Poslední podzim

Director: Yrsa Roca Fannberg

Iceland, 2019, 78 min, World premiere

If the world has an edge, then it is almost certainly visible from Iceland. On the outermost cape, beyond which there is only the inhospitable Arctic sea, lies a farm belonging to Úlfar and his wife. This autumn will be the last time their grandchildren come from the city to drive the sheep back down from the hills. An almost tangible cinematic fabric that weaves a tale of an abandoned place where the mist clings to the steel-blue surface of the sea and where the occasional human visitor is sometimes welcome.

Surematu / Immortal / Nesmrtní

Director: Ksenia Okhapkina

Estonia, Latvia, 2019, 60 min, World premiere

How do the mechanisms of political power directly influence the lives of a country's inhabitants? In seeking an answer to this difficult question, this cinematic essay looks at everyday life in a small Russian industrial city, uncovering along the way how dangerous and furtive an all-permeating ideology can be.



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NEW FILMS IN THE 54TH KVIFF MAIN PROGRAM - OUT OF COMPETITION

Ondřej Provozník and Martin Dušek make their feature-film debut in Karlovy Vary with the world premiere of ***Old-Timers***, the dramatic story of two aging former political prisoners who set out in a camper van with the goal of finding and killing the communist prosecutor who sent the nation's elite to its death. Jiří Schmitzer and Ladislav Mrkvička excel in this unusual road-movie.

Following its successful premiere at Cannes, Helena Třeštíková and Jakub Hejna present the Czech premiere of their biographical documentary about the most important Czech filmmaker ***Forman vs. Forman***. A Czech documentary veteran Olga Sommerová, will present the world premiere of her portrait of the leading figure of Czech culture, ***Jiří Suchý – Tackling Life with Ease***.

Ivan Zachariáš will present an exclusive pre-premiere of the first two episodes of HBO Europe's six-part spy drama ***The Sleepers***, starring Táňa Pauhofová, Hattie Morahan (*Beauty and the Beast*), and David Nykl (*Stargate Atlantis*).

Karlovy Vary will also host the world premiere of the US-based Czech filmmaker Martin Krejčí's long-anticipated feature-length debut ***The True Adventures of Wolfboy***, starring Jaeden Martell, Eve Hewson and John Turturro.

This year's KVIFF President's Award laureate, the outstanding cinematographer Vladimír Smutný, will present an example of his work, Jiří Svoboda's period drama ***The Downfall of the Secluded Berhof*** (1983), which was based on the book by Vladimír Körner.

Australia will be represented out of competition by the European premiere of ***Mystify: Michael Hutchence***, a documentary look at the complicated inner life of the charismatic lead singer of Australian rock band INXS.



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OFFICIAL SELECTION – OUT OF COMPETITION

Mystify: Michael Hutchence / Mystify: Michael Hutchence / Mystify: Michael Hutchence

Director: Richard Lowenstein

Australia, 2019, 108 min, European premiere

A documentary journey into the complicated inner world of Michael Hutchence, the charismatic frontman of the Australian band INXS, whose popularity peaked in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Director Richard Lowenstein elegantly combines home movies and news reports with concert footage and interviews with friends, colleagues, and former girlfriends – those to whom the famous singer revealed his true self.

Stařici / Old-Timers / Stařici

Director: Martin Dušek, Ondřej Provasník

Czech Republic, 2019, World premiere

Vlasta and Tonda don't have much longer to live but they do have one more important task ahead of them – to find and kill the communist judge who sent them to prison in the 1950s. An unusual road movie about two former political prisoners who fight for justice despite every obstacle.

The True Adventures of Wolfboy / The True Adventures of Wolfboy / Podivuhodná dobrodružství Paula Harkera

Director: Martin Krejčí

USA, 2019, 88 min, World premiere

Paul, the protagonist of Martin Krejčí's eagerly anticipated feature debut, is growing up with his father. Making friends is practically impossible because he looks drastically different from his peers: he has the condition known as congenital hypertrichosis, meaning that he suffers from an abnormal amount of hair growth. On his thirteenth birthday, Paul decides to seek out his mother in order to get answers to unasked questions.



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SPECIAL EVENTS

Bez vědomí / The Sleepers / Bez vědomí

Director: Ivan Zachariáš

Czech Republic, 2019, 120 min, World premiere

October 1989. Violinist Marie and her politically engaged husband set out from London for Prague. But was their decision to dive into the pre-revolutionary chaos perhaps a bit too hasty? The communists are still in power, and the couple's anti-communist past can still lead to unpleasant consequences... The first two parts of this HBO Europe spy miniseries are being presented at KVIFF as an exclusive pre-premiere.

Forman vs. Forman / Forman vs. Forman / Forman vs. Forman

Director: Helena Třeštíková, Jakub Hejna

Czech Republic, France, 2019, 78 min

Forman vs. Forman is a comprehensive portrait of the Oscar-winning Czech director. The movie is unique for its ingenious compilation of images drawing on existing footage and also on hitherto unknown shots discovered in the collections of friends and colleagues. On set and in interviews the filmmaker contemplates the notion of freedom and its limitations.

Jiří Suchý – Lehce s životem se prát / Jiří Suchý – Tackling Life with Ease / Jiří Suchý – Lehce s životem se prát

Director: Olga Sommerová

Czech Republic, 2019, 104 min, World premiere

Jiří Suchý. Theatre personality, musician, poet, writer, graphic artist, collector, citizen. One of the key figures of the domestic cultural scene over the last six decades and a tireless campaigner for the enrichment of the Czech language. Olga Sommerová's documentary presents a portrait of an artist and a man – a portrait of our times.



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Zánik samoty Berhof / The Downfall of the Secluded Berhof / Zánik samoty Berhof

Director: Jiří Svoboda

Czechoslovakia, Poland, 1983, 98 min

The war is finally over but the atmosphere is still tense. Ulrika lives in a secluded spot in the mountains near the German border, condemned to coexist with her boorish father after her mother's death. One day a German nun bursts into the house accompanied by three young Wehrmacht soldiers; she has to get them back home whatever the cost. The drama, which draws together characters variously deformed by circumstance, is compelling for its deliberately restrained direction, masterfully paced suspense, and its evocative depiction of an utterly bleak environment.