



10-22 November 2020

**CLOSER TO
EACH OTHER'S
REALITY**

www.verzio.org

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Dear Audience, Partners, and Festival Sponsors!

The 17th Verzió International Human Rights Documentary Film Festival was held 10–22 November 2020 as the first exclusively online film festival in Hungary. While our final decision that screenings should not be held in the cinema came only in September 2020 – due to the risks associated with the COVID-19 pandemic –, we, the festival organizers, had been planning an online scenario since March. We discussed the available online options with our international partners and partner film festivals. Furthermore, we consulted with several online streaming providers, and after months of research, contracted a reliable partner who secured a safe environment for the festival's films and users' data, access to the subdomain of our own website, and a user-friendly interface.

The films were streamed a total of 15,786 times. Based on viewer questionnaires and a very modest estimation, at least 30% of these films were not watched alone (more than one person watched per stream). Therefore, our films reached an audience of over 20,000, while in comparison, the 2019 festival had only 11,000 attendees. Despite all the complications, we are very happy with the outreach results this year; when launching this online edition, we never anticipated having so many streams and viewers. Although we missed the conversations in the cinemas and the excitement of in-person meetings with filmmakers, we are pleased to see new audiences in places where viewers previously could not attend the festival. For instance, many people joined from Győr and hundreds of people watched the films from outside of Hungary, including in Romania and Austria, as seven of the films in our program were not geo-blocked.

All of our accompanying events moved online as well: masterclasses, roundtables and conversations with filmmakers, which nearly 30,000 people followed live on the Verzió website and Facebook page.

This festival was an experiment and a learning process for the whole team, and the result of collaborative work in the best sense of the word. We remain confident that human curiosity and compassion is unstoppable, and that the desire to learn about the world cannot be hampered by physical boundaries; despite all of the barriers we face, we continue to look for ways to stay connected, informed and active.

Oksana Sarkisova Festival Director
& Gyureskó Enikő Festival Coordinator



13 DAYS

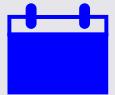
51 FILMS

20,000 VIEWS

films on the festival.verzio.org and industry.verzio.org pages

30,000 VIEWERS

events broadcast on verzio.org and on Facebook



46 events

Opening Night

7 DocPro Events

3 DunaDock Events

12 Q&As

14 Roundtables

6 Student Verzió Discussions

2 DJ Sets

Award Ceremony



3 Competition Sections

International Competition

Student & Debut Competition

Hungarian Competition

4 Thematic Sections

In the Name of Justice

Anthropocene

The Archive of the Planet

Student Verzió

44 Premieres

**31 Non-Hungarian films
subtitled to Hungarian**

132 International Guests

filmmakers, protagonists, journalists,
human rights activists, festival
organizers



13 Media Partners

200+ Media Hits



FOLLOWERS

449 YouTube Subscribers

+200%

3023 Newsletter Subscribers

+320%

1337 Instagram Followers

+140%

10141 Facebook followers

+110%

CLOSER TO EACH OTHER'S REALITY

The festival's visuals and slogan are a central element to our communication campaign, and is renewed yearly.

Over the last four years, copywriters Tamás Persely and Máté Mlinarics, along with graphic designer Ágnes Jekli, have created our thematic slogan and visuals. We wanted to emphasize the commitment of those making documentaries and the power of documentaries themselves, which can bring people closer together — allowing us to get to know and understand each other more deeply. Hence the slogan **Closer to Each Other's Reality** was born, and the same message is reflected in the visual identity of the festival.

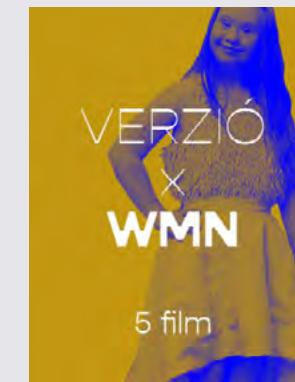


VISUAL IDENTITY 2020

Social media



Festival passes



Festival posters at metro stations



OPENING PERFORMANCE

The Trafó House of Contemporary Arts has hosted the festival's Opening Night for several years. And while we could not celebrate this year with an in-studio audience, we still broadcast the live event, from Trafó, on November 10.

Since its inception in 2004, the festival has traditionally been opened by artists and public figures committed to human rights and social affairs. For the opening of the 17th Verzió, we invited the students of the University of Theater and Film Arts Budapest to join us.

Nearly 40 university citizens (students, faculty and staff) representing the freeSZFE community, one of the most significant protagonists of public discourse in Hungary in 2020, opened the Festival with a special performance and excerpts from a documentary film about the occupied university.

The opening speech by festival director Oksana Sarkisova, and the SZFE students' performance, can be viewed on our website.

[LINK](#)



76 DAYS

Hao Wu, Weixi Chen, *Anonymous*, 2020, USA

Following the opening ceremony, we invited participants to watch the Chinese documentary **76 Days**, which depicts the first months of the pandemic in Wuhan. After the film, viewers had the chance to watch a Q&A with the film's director, Hao Wu, live on our website and Facebook page.



"Instead of an ambitious, global tableau, we get an [...] intimate look at what healthcare workers, patients and their relatives are going through because of the coronavirus. [...] That's why, despite all the uniqueness of the story, it is universal: it takes place in Wuhan, which has acquired symbolic significance, but we still feel that we could actually be in any hospital in any city where the health care system has just reached its limit, be it a city in China or a city on another continent like Madrid, New York, Rome, or even Budapest. [...] It is sure that there will be countless films about the pandemic in the coming years, and there will be plenty of time to draw more far-reaching lessons and connections, but until then 76 Days will remind us that real dramas of real people take place in the shadow of statistics and public debate."

Márton Jankovics, 24.hu

[LINK](#)

The film program included 51 films from 39 countries. Seven of the films were available for streaming outside of Hungary, the rest could only be viewed with a Hungarian IP address. Twenty of the films were offered free-of-charge to audiences: those in the Hungarian Competition, the Student and Debut Film Competition, and *Walls*, a short Belarusian film shot with the relatives of imprisoned protesters. *Terminal Stage*, the most watched film of the festival, won the Audience Award, based on votes gathered at our website. Our juries awarded three films with monetary prizes, and two films with a special mention.

COMPETITION SECTIONS



INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION

The 13 films in the International Competition included stories from Ukraine, Sweden, Spain, the United States, Indonesia, Libya, the Philippines, Mexico and Chechnya, and covered a variety of topics from LGBTQ rights to refugees' hardships and women's equality.

HUNGARIAN COMPETITION

The Hungarian Competition included eight short and feature-length documentaries. Universal lessons and themes appeared in this year's selection, from facing death to coming to terms with childhood abuse, but special works, such as an animated documentary on Russia's drug policy, and the emigration story of a Hungarian musician, Tamás Barta, to the USA, were also included.

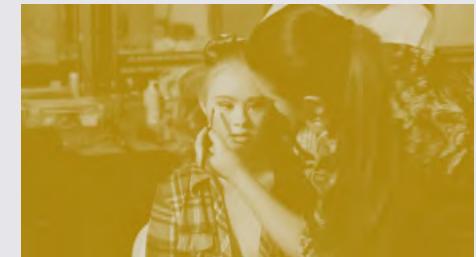
STUDENT AND DEBUT FILM COMPETITION

The ten films in the Student and Debut Film Competition included short and feature-length films from Brazil through India to Central Europe, on a variety of topics, and were created with both experimental methods and a more classical documentary approach.

[THE FULL CATALOG IS AVAILABLE HERE](#)

17TH VERZIÓ — CLOSER TO EACH OTHER'S REALITY

THEMATIC SECTIONS



IN THE NAME OF JUSTICE

The films featured in this section focused on truth and injustice. They present fights against the legal system, from apartheid to corruption cases, from Belarus to South Africa, the Philippines to Kosovo. These films brought to our attention the work of journalists, lawyers and activists, as well as the struggles of ordinary people.

ANTHROPOCENE

The Anthropocene section dealt with the impact of man on our environment through five films. It showed how economic interests and environmental objectives are intertwined, while also delving into the captivating, quiet power of simple and humanistic actions. This section brought our attention to the need to respect nature and protect biodiversity.

THE ARCHIVE OF THE PLANET

Photography and film play an increasingly important role in capturing our everyday lives, and can also help us process huge events and collective traumas. The eight films in this section use the fascinating power of cinema to tell stories from Cuba, Hong Kong, Sudan and Romania. They demonstrate how images shape us and how we shape the world through images.

STUDENT VERZIÓ

In Student Verzió, viewers could choose from four thought-provoking works dealing with contemporary problems. These films address young people in a direct language. They cover the life of well-known climate activist Greta Thunberg; Skateistan, the Kabul skateboarding school; a fashion model with Down syndrome; and child abuse inside a well-known Hungarian children's camp from the 1980's.

AWARD RECIPIENTS

Six films and their creators were awarded by international jurors at the online Award Ceremony on November 20.

Verzió awarded the winners with 3500 euros in total.

A full list of the juries' statements can be read here: [LINK](#)



THE INTERNATIONAL JURY OF THE STUDENT & DEBUT COMPETITION:



Nenad Puhovski
university lecturer,
Director of the
ZagrebDox, member
of the European Film
Academy



Teréz Vincze
university lecturer,
film critic, member
of the Hungarian
department of
FIPRESCI



Giedre Žickyte
Lithuanian film
director and producer

THE INTERNATIONAL JURY OF THE HUNGARIAN COMPETITION:



María Carrión
Director of FiSahara
Human Rights Film
Festival



Csilla Kató
Program Director of
Astra Film Festival,
Romania



Péter Kerekes
film director,
producer, university
lecturer

THE STUDENT JURY OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION:



Marilia Arantes



Bohdan Herkaliuk



Lucie Janotová



Daniel Shah



Kristóf Süll

BEST HUMAN RIGHTS FILM**Welcome to Chechnya**
(David France, USA, 2020)

“David France’s documentary completely captured us with its portrayal of the unbearable brutality and persecution suffered by the LGBTQI+ on a daily basis in Chechnya. This example of extreme and institutionalized violence and its complete impunity speaks of a great danger that any unprotected minority might face due to the global rise of authoritarian practices.”

BEST DEBUT FILM**Sonny**
(Paweł Chorzępa,
Poland, 2019)

“The film, while approaching its subject matter with a modern documentary approach in the best sense, is at the same time authentic cinema in the finest and most traditional form. [...] It is an authentic documentary film in which the best moments emerge from the pure and magical encounter of human with the camera.”

BEST HUNGARIAN FILM**Give Me Shelter**
(Mihály Schwechtje,
Hungary, 2020)

“Based on genuine curiosity, the film becomes a cinematic journey to discover unknown destinies within our society.”

**HUMAN RIGHTS AWARD
SPECIAL MENTION****The Earth Is Blue as an
Orange** (Iryna Tsilyk,
Ukraine, Lithuania, 2020)

“[The film] is a love letter to the craft of cinema and its powerful capacity for social change.”

**BEST STUDENT/DEBUT FILM
AWARD SPECIAL MENTION****Stunned, I Remain Alert**
(Lucas H. Rossi dos
Santos, Henrique Amud,
Brazil, 2020)

“The conscious and reflexive use of personal tone and archive materials have resulted in a powerful film experience.”

AUDIENCE AWARD**Terminal Stage**
(Ilona Gaal, Balázs
Wizner, Hungary, 2020)

Winner by popular vote.

132 invited guests: directors, producers, screenwriters, film distribution specialists, university lecturers, festival organizers, curators, film critics, educators, social workers, sociologists, anthropologists, lawyers, journalists, activists and NGO representatives participated in 46 accompanying programs and discussions.

Viewers had the opportunity to address the program's film directors via the **Vialog** video messaging application, which was integrated into the website. They could directly ask filmmakers questions, at any time, regardless of the organized conversations. This feature allowed for direct contact between festival participants, somewhat compensating for the lack of in-person meetings. A total of **120 questions** and answers related to the **51 films** were received over **12 days**.

After the festival a short video was created to present the experience of the video messaging tool.
[LINK](#)

This year we are introducing a new way to connect Verzió's community!



powered by Vialog

SELECT GUESTS



Atanas Georgiev, editor and producer of *Honeyland* (2019), held a masterclass on making the multi-award-winning documentary.



Nathan Grossman, director of *I Am Greta* (2020), the documentary film offering a glimpse into the life of teenage climate activist Greta Thunberg, was interviewed by environmental communications expert Flóra Hevesi.



Susanne Kovács, director of *It Takes a Family* (2019), showed her film in The Archive of the Planet section, and participated in two online talks: *Female Power in Documentary East/West* and *The Archive Effect: Found Footage and Photography in Documentary Cinema*.



Florencia Santucho, Director of the Human Rights and Environmental Film Festival in Argentina, shared her experience of organizing an online festival in the frame of the discussion *Surviving: Festivals and Pandemic*.

DISCUSSIONS

One of the key features of Verzió is that, in addition to film screenings, it places an equally strong emphasis on discussions — providing an opportunity to discuss the social and human rights issues brought to light by the films. In 2020's changed circumstances, we invited our guests to online talks, some of which were pre-recorded, but most of which were streamed live on our website and Facebook page. The moderators, and some of our Budapest-based guests, checked in from the Verzió studio. In one of the spacious lecture halls of the Nádor Street campus of Central European University, we attempted to create safe conditions for conversation partners and staff alike. With the help of our cinematographers and technicians, we were able to ensure the production of high-quality sound and image recordings, and the organization of smooth, live broadcasts. In total, 42 conversations reached more than 30,000 people online. The three most popular videos were: the Opening Event broadcast live from Trafó, with a performance by the students of the Academy of Theatre and Film Arts (SZFE); a discussion on *Return to Epipo* with director Judit Oláh, Gábor Miklósi and cinematographer Mátyás Gyuricza; and finally, the Award Ceremony with the participation of the Jury members and the Award Winners.

[LINK](#)



ROUNDTABLES AND Q&AS

Discussion about Tamás Barta - Hurry, Mom's Waiting at Home [LINK](#)

Director Eszter Hajdú, historian György Majtényi, and musician Gábor Presser participated in the discussion moderated by György Báron, film critic, teacher at SZFE and curator of the Hungarian Competition. The participants discussed the story of the legendary Hungarian rock band, LGT, the artists' lives, emigration during the socialist era, and beliefs about the American Dream, all of which were topics touched upon in the documentary.

Freedom of Speech and Thought [LINK](#)

Roundtable on the French film *The State Against Mandela and the Others* (Nicolas Champeaux, Gilles Porte, 2018)

Documentary film director Ibolya Fekete, associate professor at ELTE Media and Communication Department Katalin Orbán, and animation film historian at the Hungarian Film Archive Anna Ida Orosz, participated in the discussion moderated by Renáta Uitz, lawyer. They discussed the relationship between animation film and archival footage and their functions in documentary film, referring to prominent works in the field (Waltz with Bashir), and mentioning artists who deal with political and social affairs, and historical traumas in their works, be it film or cartoon (Joe Sacco, William Kentridge).

Belarus: Experience of Resistance [LINK](#)

This roundtable was held to discuss the Belarusian short film *Walls* (Andrei Kutsila, 2020), and the Sakharov Prize winning Belarusian opposition, with the participation of Olga Zubkovskaya and Almira Ousmanova, moderated by Csaba Tibor Tóth. The discussion touched on the current situation of the protesters in Belarus, police violence, the horizontal organization of the movement, the central role of different types of communication channels that protesters have used for circulating information, and how women have taken on political roles in the movement.

Racism Globally and Locally [LINK](#)

Roundtable on *17 Blocks* (Davy Rothbart, USA, 2019), with Luca Wilson, cultural anthropologist and editor of MiaFemme Podcast, Ádám Kanicsár, a LGBTQ journalist and activist, and Judit Ignácz, civil activist. The discussion was moderated by Dezső Máté, a Roma LGBTQ activist and social sciences researcher, and touched on topics such as mechanisms of oppression in the context of events in the USA and Hungary. They also posed the question: "Is there solidarity with minorities in Hungary?"

DOC PRO & DUNADOCK

The DocPro and DunaDock discussions were organized with the participation of national and international documentary film professionals in the fields of filmmaking, financing, distribution and festival organization.

The Association of Hungarian Documentary Filmmakers (MADOKE) and DunaDock were Verzió's partners in organizing these conversations.

Most of the online discussions are still available on our Youtube channel.

[LINK](#)

7 DocPros

- **Masterclass with Peter Kerekes: Road Movie of Ideas:** How to transfer the images inside the director's brain to the brain of the audience [LINK](#)
- **Get Your Audience:**
New Modes of Documentary Film Distribution [LINK](#)
- **Masterclass with Nenad Puhovski: Human Rights Documentary: A Personal Take** [LINK](#)
- **Financing Documentaries in Europe** [LINK](#)
- **Female Power in Documentaries East/West** [LINK](#)
- **Surviving Pandemia: Festivals and the Global Challenge** [LINK](#)
- **Case Study by Atanas Georgiev - Honeyland** [LINK](#)



3 DunaDocks

- **Return to Epipo (HBO Documentaries) Masterclass** [LINK](#)
- **Documentary Poetry. Masterclass by Tue Steen Müller** [LINK](#)
- **Lockdown. Covid Shorts Masterclass** [LINK](#)

DISCUSSIONS

STUDENT VERZIÓ

The screenings of the Student Verzió ([LINK](#)) were also fundamentally reshaped by the pandemic situation this year. High school students, the target audience for student screenings, switched to digital education again in November. Thus, we replaced the usual post-screening conversations with interactive, online film clubs.

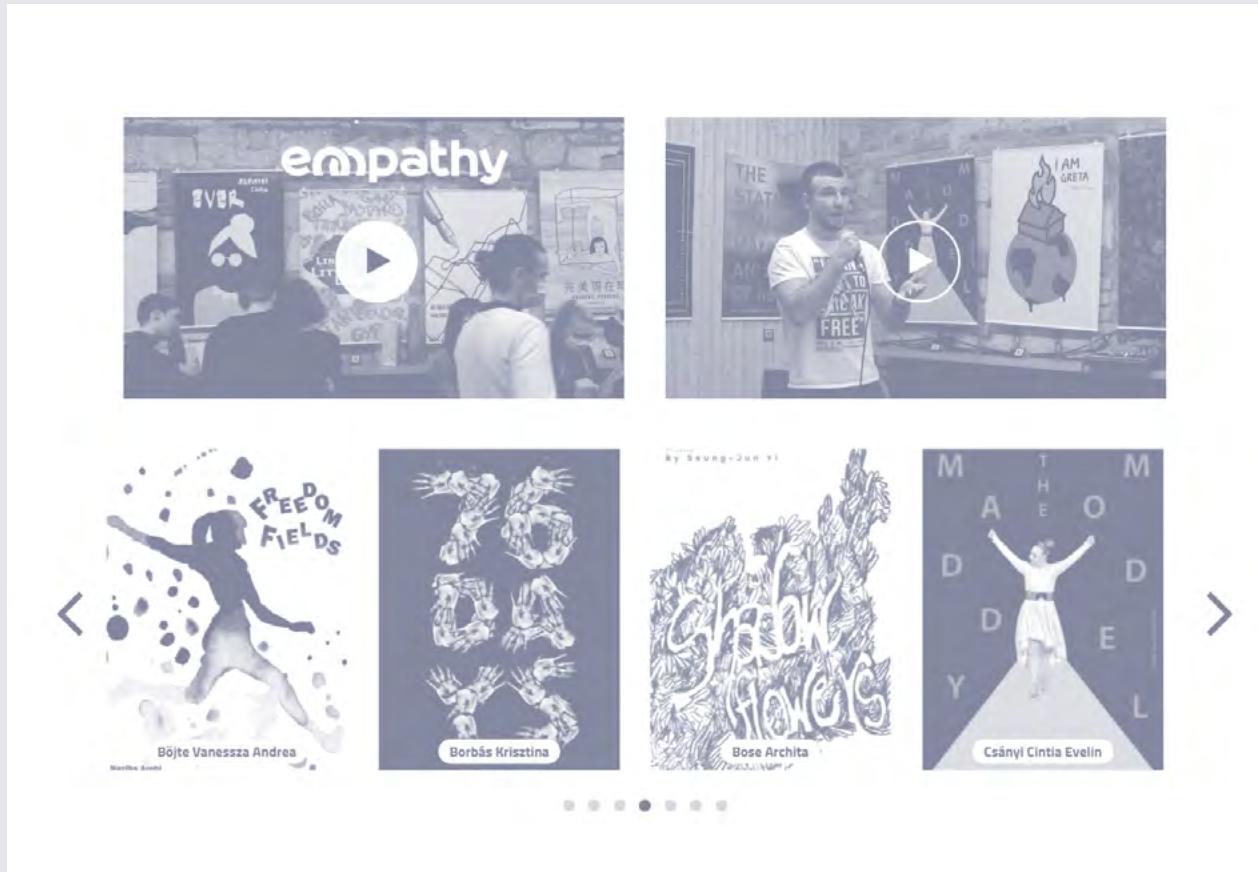
We invited experts to talk about the films *Return to Epipo* (Judit Oláh, 2020), *Maddy, the Model* (Jane Magnusson, 2019), *I am Greta* (Nathan Grossman, 2020) and *Learning to Skateboard in a War Zone (If You're a Girl)* (Carol Dysinger, 2019), and broadcast the discussions live on the website for students to follow. [LINK](#)



Poster Exhibition

The poster exhibition, held at Empathy Café for the third year in a row, was unfortunately closed immediately after its opening, due to restrictive measures related to the pandemic. However, the opening event with a performance by Noár, and the students' posters, can be viewed at our website. [LINK](#)

The posters were designed by METU Masters students in Graphic Design, under the guidance of Ducki Krzysztof. The opening event and the organization of the exhibition were organized by Design Culture students, under the mentoring of curator Gabriella Uhl.



DJ Sets

Two DJs, both of whom have been involved in Verzió parties for quite some time, curated exclusive sets for the festival, which participants could listen to at home. On November 14 (Saturday), Verzió-goers could chill at home to the set of the **INTERNATIONAL LOVE AFFAIR** DJs, and in the evening, following the Award Ceremony, celebrate to the beats of **DJ INFRA GANDHI** multicultural set.

Blog

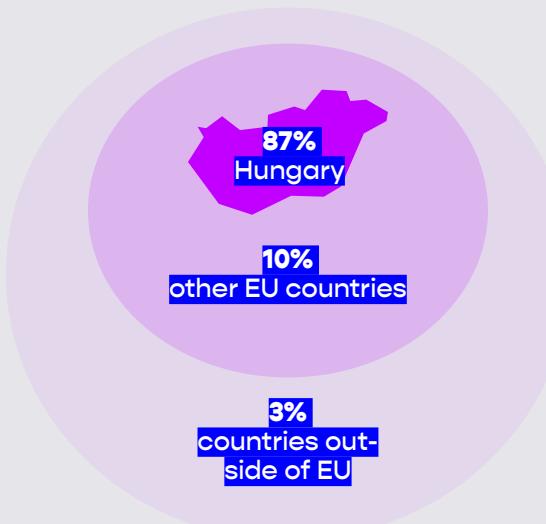
Articles from young film critics were also published: on **Master and Tatyana** (Giedre Žickyte, 2015), **Welcome to Chechnya** (David France, 2020) and **Return to Epipo** (Judit Oláh, 2020).

One of the films, **The Fantastic** (Maija Blåfield, 2020), inspired several authors, and **Hungarian** and **ENGLISH** language reviews have been published about it as well.

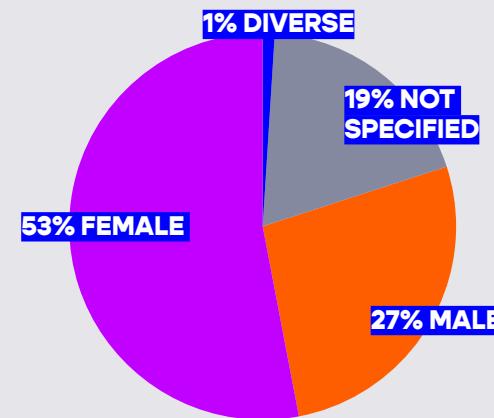
THE VERZIÓ AUDIENCE

In previous years, the audience was primarily composed of people from the capital, Budapest, with an upward trend in the number of spectators in Pécs, Szeged, Debrecen, Kecskemét and Szombathely. This year, however, to our great pleasure, we managed **to reach a much more diverse audience**, with a greater number of participants coming from outside of Budapest; **the proportion of participants in Budapest decreased to 65% in favor of those from other Hungarian towns and villages**. Those outside of Hungary also took advantage of the opportunity to join the festival, mostly in countries with a larger number of Hungarian inhabitants.

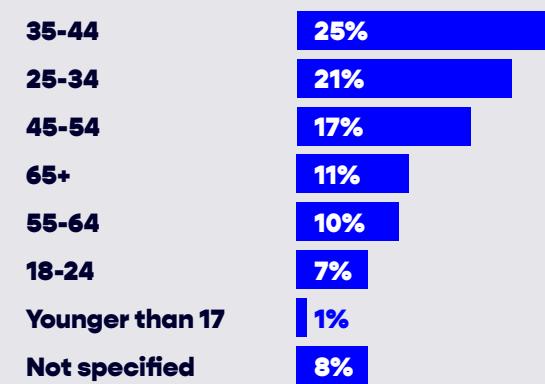
Audience by geography:



Audience by gender:



Audience by age:



(data from and by the registered users of festival.verzio.org)

FEEDBACK FROM THE AUDIENCE

“I’m very happy that, even in this difficult situation, a great film festival can take place, bringing thought-provoking films to even more people.”

“I really like the festival, I’ve never watched as many Verzió movies and conversations as I did this year, from home.”



“Without Verzió, I would have had a much harder time in the last two weeks because of the regulations. It was a big help in staying at home.”

“Excellent film festival with a great program, and 50 films for 8,000 HUF are really worth it. You are a great team, keep going. :) ”

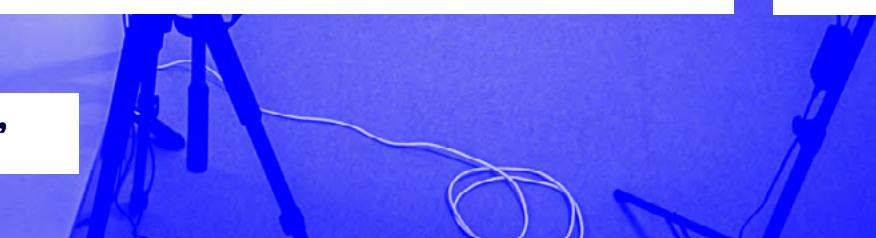


“I’m glad I found the festival. I didn’t know about it before, but I will follow it in the future. It got me more interested in documentaries.”

“It was great to be able to watch a lot of movies I couldn’t have seen before. The real festival experience, being in the cinema, of course, was missing, but it would be very useful if there was always an online platform in addition to the physical screenings... ”

“My husband and I weren’t big documentary film fans, but that has changed this year. Thank You! :) ”

“Thank you very much. You are great! :) ”



“My heartfelt congratulations for conducting the whole event.”

“It was a great experience. Thank you so much! During the restrictions, we could travel to remote parts of the world thanks to you, and what’s more, we gained deeper insight into them. ”

“It was wonderful. Thank you! Again, you have expanded my perspective a lot. ”



!!!444!!!

Még felmondani is alig tudnak a tatabányai kórházban, ahol eluralkodott a káosz | Magára hagyott ország

Lehet-e szupermodell egy Down-szindrómás?

Földi Kitti - FILM - 2020. november 14., szombat 12:07 · 1109

Több 444 videó? | SZERETNÉM

Maddy, a modell címmel dokumentumfilmet készítettek a világ első Down-szindrómás szupermodelljéről, a most 22 éves Madeline Stuartról (Maddy), amit a Verzió Filmfesztiválon is bemutatnak.

A Maddy, a modell nem az a dokumentumfilm, amivel egy csomag zsebkendővel kell készülni, mert annyira megható lenne, ahogyan anya és Down-szindrómás lánya próbálják megvalósítani a lány álmát, hogy

hvg.hu

Főoldal | Itthon | Világ | Gazdaság | Tér | Választás | Sport | Alkot | Vállalkozás | Kult | Előre-Studio | Hírlap | BrandChe



2020. november 20. 21:02 | KULT

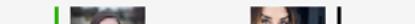
Áadták a 17. Verzió Filmfesztivál díjait, mutatjuk a nyertes dokumentumfilmeket

Az online filmfesztivál vasárnap estig tart, addig minden film elérhető még, a díjnyertes alkotásokat is megtékinthetik az érdeklődők. A fesztiválnak idén több, mint húszszor virtuális nézője volt, ami minden eddig a Verzió fesztivált és a szervezők várakozásait is felülmutta.

A Verzió Filmfesztivál online jellegének köszönhetően a filmek idén minden eddiginél több emberhez jutottak el. Nemcsak szerte az országból, de a világ minden tájáról érkeztek virtuális látogatók. A 17. Verzió kiemelten népszerű Magyarország mellett az Amerikai Egyesült Államokban, Romániaban, az Egyesült Királyságban és Ausztriában. A péntek esti díjátadó ceremónián hat díjat adtak át a szervezők.

Ha reggel bedobsz egy kevéske LSD-t, tényleg boldogabb leszel, de ennek a droghoz semmi köze

MŰSORVEZETŐK



START :: A FILMEKEN KÍVÜL IDÉN IS LESZNEK KEREKASZTAL BESZÉLGETÉSEK, KÖZÖNSÉGTALALKOZOK



START :: A FILMEKEN KÍVÜL IDÉN IS LESZNEK KEREKASZTAL BESZÉLGETÉSEK, KÖZÖNSÉGTALALKOZOK

Business Doc Europe
The voice of the European documentary trade

"THE BEST DOCUMENTARY OF THE NOTTURNO

HOME NEWS INTERVIEWS FEATURES REVIEWS IDFA 2020 HOME

17th Verzió FF (Hungary) goes online

2020.11.20 — 2020.11.22 | 17th Verzió FF (Hungary) goes online



Verzió Film Festival, Hungary's only human rights documentary film festival will run online 10-22 November. The festival kicks off 76 Days, which provides an account of the early days of the COVID pandemic in Wuhan, China. Despite these risks and health hazards, documentary filmmakers have plunged into the world and remain on the frontline, collecting testimonies on the changes and challenges we as humankind are going through," she continues. "Despite all the barriers, we continue to look for ways to stay connected and informed — ready to be exposed to each other's pains and joys."

This year's opening film, 76 Days, offers a lasting imprint of our current pandemic for generations to come, and an outstanding example of the reflexive abilities of documentary films, the festival says in a statement. Director Mao Wu, Weiwei Chen and Anonymity, offer a raw and disturbing insight into the early days of the outbreak in Wuhan, China. This rough, yet intimate production, captures the struggle of patients and frontline healthcare workers against COVID-19. The film premiered in Europe only two weeks ago, and Verzió will be the first to screen it in Hungary.

FILM CATALOG



OPENING FILM



76 DAYS

Hao Wu, Weixi Chen, Anonymous, USA, 2020,
93min, Mandarin Chinese, English & Hungarian
Subtitles

HUNGARIAN PREMIERE

On 23 January 2020, China locked down Wuhan, a city of 11 million, to combat the emerging COVID-19 outbreak. Set deep inside the frontlines of the crisis, *76 Days* tells indelible human stories at the center of this pandemic—from a woman begging in vain to bid a final farewell to her father, a grandfather with dementia searching for his way home, and a couple anxious to meet their newborn, to a nurse determined to return personal items to the families of the deceased. These raw and intimate stories bear witness to the death and rebirth of a city under a 76-day lockdown, and to the human resilience that persists in times of profound tragedy.

INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION



17 BLOCKS

Davy Rothbart, USA, 2019, 95min, English,
Hungarian Subtitles

HUNGARIAN PREMIERE

17 Blocks is a dramatic family saga of an African-American family living in Washington D.C. Emmanuel Sanford-Durant was nine years old in 1999 when he met Davy Rothbart, who began to follow and film the family in the US capital's most dangerous neighborhood. Soon Emmanuel and his siblings also started filming: from intimate family moments to street violence, their honest and blunt recordings document two decades of their lives. After an unexpected tragedy, the family's dreams and plans fall to pieces. The disaster illuminates deeply-rooted systemic problems, but the recordings, done over several years, give it new meaning.



FREEDOM FIELDS

Naziha Arebi, Libya, UK, Netherlands, USA, Lebanon, Qatar, Canada, 2018, 97min, Arabic, English, English & Hungarian Subtitles

HUNGARIAN PREMIERE

Following the Arab Spring in Libya, director Naziha Arebi closely observed what stood in the way of a women's football team. She followed a group of determined women for several years in this empowering film, as they fought for their right to play in the competitive world of football dominated by men. The struggles and hardships risk the integrity of the team, and perhaps not everyone will be able to save their dream.



GOD'S CHILDREN

Ekain Irigoien, Spain, 2020, 70min, Spanish, English & Hungarian Subtitles

HUNGARIAN PREMIERE

Javier and Romerales, two homeless veterans, sleep under one of the cornices surrounding Madrid's tourist-packed Plaza de la Ópera. Together, they are on a long journey around the busy streets of the capital, where surviving without giving in to madness becomes an art. Their friendship and outlandish lives make this film a hymn to life, death and dignity.



IMMORTAL

Ksenia Okhapkina, Estonia, Latvia, 2019, 61min, Russian, English & Hungarian Subtitles

HUNGARIAN PREMIERE

In Murmansk, Russia, boys are trained to use weapons while girls practice ballet. Told in a minimalistic aesthetic, defined by the dim lights of the Arctic Circle, this film observes social norms frozen in time in this cold, northern town.



LINDY: THE RETURN OF LITTLE LIGHT

Ida Persson Lännerberg, Sweden, 2019, 72min, Swedish, English, Romani, English & Hungarian Subtitles

HUNGARIAN PREMIERE

Lindy grew up in a small town in Sweden, where he was mocked by other children for being different. With the help of his imagination, Lindy created coping mechanisms which later became the foundation for his artistic career. As a boy, he was Little Light, who could spread light across the world. As an adult, he performs in stage shows. But when he receives an unexpected offer, to play himself on stage, he is not sure he is ready.



MADDY THE MODEL

Jane Magnusson, Sweden, 2019, 95min, English, English & Hungarian Subtitles

HUNGARIAN PREMIERE

Madeline Stuart is a fashion celebrity who has walked the runway at the New York Fashion Week, has more than a million followers on Facebook and Instagram combined, and is covered by the media worldwide. This documentary follows Madeline as she challenges our perception of identity, beauty and disability on her journey to becoming the world's first professional supermodel with Down syndrome.



OVERSEAS

Sung-A Yoon, Belgium, 2019, 90min, Tagalog, Ilonggo, English, English & Hungarian Subtitles

HUNGARIAN PREMIERE

In the Philippines, many women choose to go work abroad as domestic workers or nannies to support their own families. Many feel forced to leave their own children behind and throw themselves into the unknown. In one of the training centers dedicated to domestic work that can be found in the Philippines, a group of trainees are preparing for both homesickness and the potential abuse lying ahead. During role playing exercises, they act out both the role of the employee and the employers. Overseas brings to light the question of modern servitude, while emphasizing these women's determination, their sisterhood, and the strategies they utilize to face the ordeals that await them in the near future.



ROBOLOVE

Maria Arlamovsky, Austria, 2019, 79min,
Japanese, English, Spanish, Korean, German,
Chinese, English & Hungarian Subtitles

HUNGARIAN PREMIERE

Robolove reflects on the strategies of men and women involved in the creation of humanoid, android robots. While the differences between humans and androids is gradually diminishing, the tension between technology and social responsibility is growing just as utopian visions are expanding. Out of this mosaic, a tense ambivalence emerges that questions futuristic technologies.



THE EARTH IS BLUE AS AN ORANGE

Iryna Tsilyk, Ukraine, Lithuania, 2020, 74min,
Ukrainian, Russian, English & Hungarian
Subtitles

HUNGARIAN PREMIERE

The Earth Is Blue as an Orange is a film about a film — one which children, and their mother, are shooting to distract themselves from the everyday reality of war in Donbas. In spite of the war, some things do not change: the kids go to school, do their homework, apply to university, play with their pets and quarrel with each other over seemingly unimportant things. There are other things, though, which are harder to articulate, that do change. Nastja admits she has become more irritable and harder to get along with since the outbreak of the war. Myroslava, on the other hand, says that war is like a void. With their collective filmmaking effort, they attempt to pull their lives out of this void and create a new reality shaped by imagination.



THEY CALL ME BABU

Sandra Beerends, The Netherlands, 2019, 78min,
Indonesian, English & Hungarian Subtitles

HUNGARIAN PREMIERE

This subtle montage film reveals the invisible story of Indonesian nannies through private footage of Dutch families living in colonized Indonesia. These young girls, or pembantus, served wealthy families in Dutch-controlled Indonesia in the 1940s. Succeeding in life as a nanny meant dependence on the colonists, but also implied the promise of freedom, which there was little possibility of obtaining. Whilst Alima's character is fictional, the entire film is based on archival footage. Real life stories and personal accounts divulge a life full of twists and turns as Alima tries to find a balance between her identity and solidarity towards her Dutch family.



VIVOS

Ai Weiwei, Germany, Mexico, 2020, 112min,
English, Spanish, English & Hungarian Subtitles

HUNGARIAN PREMIERE

On the night of 26 September 2014, 43 students disappeared in Mexico. Since then, their families have been trying desperately, but unsuccessfully, to find out what happened to them. Ai Weiwei's film focuses on the families and survivors, but points to a much more serious problem — the tens of thousands of people who have disappeared in Mexico without a trace. In the background we see the conscious neglect of the authorities, systemic injustice and police violence, while the film patiently and meticulously puts together the puzzle pieces. The families, helpless in the face of the abuse of power, struggle against the emotional burden of disappearances through collective protest, organizing demonstrations and mutual support.



WAKE UP ON MARS

Dea Gjinovci, Switzerland, France, 2020,
74min, Albanian, Swedish, English & Hungarian
Subtitles

HUNGARIAN PREMIERE

Furkan is the youngest member of a Roma family from Kosovo. He was quite young when the family fled to Sweden, where they live now, waiting in limbo for their pending asylum request. Furkan's sisters, Ibadeta and Djeneta, have been in a coma-like state for several years. Traumatized by the fear of being sent back to Kosovo, a mysterious illness, "resignation syndrome", has befallen them. Furkan decides to try to save his sisters in his own way: he starts to build a spaceship to travel to Mars.



WELCOME TO CHECHNYA

David France, USA, 2020, 107min, English,
Russian, Chechen, English & Hungarian
Subtitles

In the Russian republic of Chechnya, LGBTQ people are seriously threatened. A group of activists are determined to help them flee the country and find a safe home, even if it means putting their own lives at risk. The unimaginable and deadly brutality that LGBTQ people suffer is shown raw and direct in the film, but the anonymity of those involved is protected through the use of a new, AI-generated digital technology.

HUNGARIAN COMPETITION

Old Stories

This year's Hungarian competition happens to consist primarily of old stories, or more precisely, stories that occurred years ago that are being told from a modern perspective. I have considered why we should retell these tales in a time when there's no shortage of new stories about our restless world. Right now our concept of liberal democracy (whatever we mean by that) is in a deep crisis. Reckless swindlers and criminal lunatics appear at the helm of leadership or in close proximity to it. Destructive ideas, such as impatience, racism, chauvinism and implacable hatred are on the rise — ideas to which the better half of the world has already bid farewell. And to add insult to injury, the second wave of the coronavirus is presently attacking at full speed, causing the deaths of so many. Meanwhile, at an occupied university in Budapest, a group of students presents us with a prime example of civil courage as they watch over the flickering flame of their freedom. By doing so, they show us the "other Hungary" — a place for quality and taste, the Hungary that Géza Ottlik wrote about, where there can be light in these dark times.

The reason this year's films center around old stories is partly because things now happen at a dramatic pace, but time and distance are needed to process today's news or the rapid-fire images spread across social media. Documentary film does not capture an audience like snapshots of a Member of Parliament ostentatiously posing in front of voters, or of a former colonel blocking the entrance of a university in lockdown, or in wider contexts, the fight of Belarussian women defying violence, or American presidential candidates hastily rebuking each other.

This year's selection lures us not with topicalities, but with stories that have been filtered through time, giving them a wider, at times eternal, meaning. *Return to Epipo* is the story of the present-day impact of harassment that happened 30 years ago, from the point of view of the child victims. *Hurry, Mom's Waiting At Home* replays the mysterious death of the rock legend Tamás Barta, and brings forth from the shadows the Kádárian cultural politics wherein dissidents were punished for generations. The unforgettable message of *Stones* recalls Hungary during the Holocaust, while the animated documentary *Kostya Proletarsky* depicts psychiatry in the service of Russian politics. *Migration Studies*, the most recent film in the section, captures the hard fate of refugees — a story buried in today's mayhem, but one which aches and resonates within us. And finally, two enduring pieces: *Terminal Phase* and *Ever*, about sacrifice, and loyalty and love. The protagonists in these films are everyday heroes who prove that redemption is possible, even in a sleazy ward or small nursing home room, if not for all of humanity, then for those whom we love.

György Báron

Curator of the Hungarian Competition



EVER

Csaba Szekeres, Hungary, 2019, 85min,
Hungarian, English Subtitles

Anna and Antal have been married for forty-five years. They live in a beautiful environment, far from the city, in Péliföld, Hungary. They are passionate about history and literature, so they set out on a trip abroad to discover new cultures every year. They live a harmonious life until one day, Anna starts to behave peculiarly, and is eventually diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease.



GIVE ME SHELTER

Mihály Schwechtje, Hungary, 2020, 89min,
Hungarian, English Subtitles

HUNGARIAN PREMIERE

Social worker Renáta Toszecky manages a women's shelter in Hungary, operated by Hungarian Baptist Aid. The clients in the shelter are victims of human trafficking who were once forced into prostitution. Social workers at the shelter are trying to help redirect these women's lives and enable them to start anew with their children. The film follows Renáta as she carries out her everyday tasks supporting three battered women, and gives us a glimpse into the challenges of social work.



KOSTYA PROLETARSKY

István Gábor TakácsLili Rontó, Hungary, 2020, 30min, Russian, English & Hungarian Subtitles

Kostya Proletarsky, a drug user and HIV/AIDS activist, died of tuberculosis on 19 July 2009, in Botkin Hospital, in St. Petersburg. His early death was caused by torture at Penal Colony no. 4, in Karelia, and from being denied medical treatment. In Russia, treatment for drug use is almost completely inaccessible, and most commonly, users are sent to prison as a "solution". These institutions offer no cure, on the contrary, they have caused the deaths of several people in need of treatment. This hand-drawn animation documentary uses original interviews with Kostya and his mother, Irina, to raise awareness of inhuman prison conditions.



.Migrations Studies

András Surányi, Hungary, 2019, 50min, English, English Subtitles

In May 2017, George Mason University students attended the Budapest semester program, New Borders in a Borderless Europe: Refugees, Minorities and National Identity. The students traveled to Serbia to visit refugee camps, and met with asylum seekers and international aid workers. Some of the students are members of third-generation migrant families in the USA, and the absurdity of the border fence, the harsh conditions of the refugee camps and the people hiding in the woods from police, touched them on a personal level.



Return to Epiro

Judit Oláh, Hungary, 2020, 83min, Hungarian, English Subtitles

There was a summer camp in Hungary in the 1980s where children could escape, for a few weeks, the regulated world of state socialism and become citizens of an imaginary state, Epiro. The memory of Epiro is full of contradictions: some remember it as the best time of their lives, while others recall painful memories, offensive remarks, humiliations, and even worse, abuse. Together with the director, former citizens of Epiro try to find an explanation for the actions of the charismatic camp leader, Pál Sipos, and to decipher how this closed, mystical world functioned.



Stones

György Dobray, Hungary, 2020, 83min, English, German, Spanish, Hungarian, English & Hungarian Subtitles

A two-week camp is organized in Budapest with the participation of young Europeans from different backgrounds, who volunteer to clean up neglected graves in a Jewish cemetery. Meanwhile, German artist Gunter Demnig makes 74,000 stumbling blocks in memory of Holocaust victims, in 26 countries across Europe.



TAMÁS BARTA - HURRY, MOM'S WAITING AT HOME

Eszter Hajdú, Hungary, USA, 2020, 80min,
English, Hungarian, English & Hungarian
Subtitles

Tamás Barta, of the Hungarian band Locomotive GT, is regarded as one of the most legendary Hungarian rock guitarists. In 1974, at the peak of his career, Barta surprised his friends and family when he did not return to Hungary after the band's tour in the USA. Separated from her only son, his mother, Edit, led a lonely life and never stopped waiting for his return. For several years, Edit and Tamás sent cassettes of taped audio messages to each other between the USA and Hungary. Their frank, and at times heated, conversations reveal the differences between Edith's life behind the iron curtain, and Barta's new American life in Los Angeles: one bound to the idea of communism, the other bewitched by the American dream.

TERMINAL STAGE

Ilona Gaal, Balázs Wizner, Hungary, 2020,
30min, Hungarian, English Subtitles

HUNGARIAN PREMIERE

Tamás is a sixty-year old, terminally-ill cancer patient. This passionate man who reveled in life, faces death calmly, without taboos, and passes on this attitude to his family. The film presents Tamás's last three days at the Hospice House and guides the viewer through the spiritual process of reconciling with death. Can you laugh at someone's deathbed? Can you be angry with someone who is dying? The film helps viewers ask and answer the most intimate questions related to death.

STUDENT & DEBUT COMPETITION

The Verzió Student and Debut Competition returns in 2020 with a selection of fresh and exciting works from a debuting generation of filmmakers. Unlike previous years, however, the 2020 Student and Debut Competition will only be screened in a virtual space, without the intimate, shared presence created in the cinema. While this may mean fewer participatory discussions and immediate debates on the films, it does provide young filmmakers with an excellent opportunity to reach a wider audience and raise greater awareness on their topic.

The program for this competition is both relevant and unique; these films give us a glimpse into, or reminder of, the problems the world faced pre-pandemic — of which, there were many. These problems have remained and have been compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic, which — along with the physical threat it poses — has changed interactions, communication, and the way we view films. We have had to re-evaluate a number of things in these circumstances, especially in terms of local and global issues. The general crisis impacts everyone in a specific way, while local conflicts and individual struggles have become general, and thus a new experience of involvement has appeared.

The films in the 2020 Verzió Student and Debut program tackle global issues like water scarcity and its dramatic consequences in India, the economic influence of giant corporations, and gender equality, as shown through the story of Silvia, who is fighting her own war of independence among the Masai. From two distant corners of the world, Brazil and Central Europe, come two films dealing with corruption and political violence: the former (*Stunned, I Remain Alert*) using experimental methods and the aesthetics of found footage, the latter (*Never Happened*) with a more traditional, documentarist approach. In *The Secretary of Ideology*, we meet a 16-year-old activist working to recreate Russian state socialism. And in *The Vibrant Village* we visit an unusual village in Hungary where people make a living mass-producing sex toys. Other films zoom in on global themes seen at the local level. *For Your Sake*, a film about Nepalese youth preparing to move abroad, follows the process of letting go, while *Saudade*, focuses on homesickness in the Brazilian diaspora in Germany. And moving from the public to the private comes the story of Marcin and his relationship with his alcoholic parents in *Sonny*.

The methods used to tackle these topics vary from film études to experimental solutions, to larger formats worked out in small detail. But behind each of these works is a filmmaker exhibiting a fresh, brave and critical approach to their stories. These stories connect in online space and thus acquire a new dimension recognizing the joint task of their creators and audience.

Janka Barkóczi

Head of the Student & Debut Competition Selection Committee



FOR YOUR SAKE

Ronja Hemm, Germany, 2020, 37min, Tamang, English Subtitles

HUNGARIAN PREMIERE

Four women from three generations converse with each other in a Nepalese-Tamang family. The teenage daughters are preparing to study abroad, but are full of doubts; the Japanese university seems so far away from their village in every possible way. However, their mother and grandmother had limited opportunities living in the village, and studying abroad seems to promise a better life.



NEVER HAPPENED

Barbora Bereznáková, Slovakia, Czech Republic, 2019, 82min, Slovak, English Subtitles

HUNGARIAN PREMIERE

In 1995, the son of the Slovakian president was kidnapped and beaten unconscious in Austria. An investigation into the kidnapping led to the highest political circles — the Slovakian secret service. Oskar F., witness to the kidnapping, breaks his silence and testifies, but has to leave the country in fear of his life. Shortly after, his friend and only connection to his home country, Robert, is found dead under suspicious circumstances. With the help of Oskar, and documents from the years in question, the film attempts to reconstruct what happened.



SAUDADE

Denize Galiao, Germany, Brazil, 2019, 30min, German, English, Portuguese, English Subtitles

HUNGARIAN PREMIERE

An old Brazilian legend says that Saudade was created by the African gods to ensure that enslaved people wouldn't forget their loved ones and their homeland. Triggered by her father's illness, the Afro-Brazilian filmmaker, Denize Galiao, explores her deep feelings for her home and her roots, which she does not want to lose after 20 years of living in Germany. The word Saudade, which cannot be translated into any other language, is the red line through the story of a family that lives between two different cultures.



SILVIA IS MY NAME

Max Benyo, Germany, 2019, 63min, Maa, Kiswahili, English, English Subtitles

HUNGARIAN PREMIERE

Silvia lives in southern Kenya, in Maasailand, and fights for women's rights. She helps young, pregnant girls and raped women. She talks about the dangers of female circumcision to the elders. She regularly faces resistance, as traditional patriarchal thinking is hard to let go of. But even though she encounters many obstacles, she continues her struggle for women's rights and equality.

SONNY

Paweł Chorzępa, Poland, 2019, 40min, Polish, English Subtitles

HUNGARIAN PREMIERE

Marcin was taken away from his parents as a child and raised in state care. With his mother dead and his brother moving abroad, his father remains the last relative he can count on. On the brink of adulthood, Marcin decides to return to his father's home to fix their relationship.

STUNNED, I REMAIN ALERT

Lucas H. Rossi dos SantosHenrique Amud, Brazil, 2020, 15min, Portuguese, English Subtitles

HUNGARIAN PREMIERE

With the help of archival footage, Dermi Azavedo recalls working as a journalist in Brazil's military dictatorship three decades ago. Under Bolsonaro, he is witnessing the return of the same practices that he once reported on and believed had been left behind forever.



TALKING TO THE WIND

Akshaya Sawant, India, USA, 2020, 60min,
Marathi, English Subtitles

HUNGARIAN PREMIERE

Maharashtra state in India was hit by a three year long man-made drought, that led to community-wide despair. And while climate change was a catalyst, it was not the only reason behind the mass suicides. Intimate and eye-opening, *Talking To The Wind* shows the social and psychological effects of climate change as it impacts identity, the idea of masculinity, and the pressures of social structure.



THE GOLDEN LAND

Dominik Jursa, Slovakia, 2020, 63min, Slovak,
English Subtitles

HUNGARIAN PREMIERE

Set on the backdrop of a seemingly unassuming dispute between the citizens of three small villages in Eastern Slovakia and a big American oil company, we observe how the voice of one individual transforms from a droll yelp to a fundamental attitude towards life. The earth is full of treasures, yet everyone sees values in something else. For the locals, true wealth lies in simple cohabitation with the earth, but for investors, it lies hundreds of meters below it. The locals are bound by their desire to protect their sanctuary. The investors want to drill for oil. What will come out of this clash?



THE SECRETARY OF IDEOLOGY

Yuriy Pivovarov, Russia, 2019, 50min, Russian,
English Subtitles

HUNGARIAN PREMIERE

Ivan Komendantov is only 16 years old, but he is already a very active secretary of ideology at the local Komsomol committee in Moscow. He wants to grow up as soon as possible, so he takes on any task, be it the rise of world economy or seducing a girl.



THE VIBRANT VILLAGE

Weronika Jurkiewicz, Poland, Hungary, 2019,
6min, no dialogue

In a quiet Hungarian village, men gather at the bar while the women are busy at work, contributing to the mass production of sexual satisfaction.

IN THE NAME OF JUSTICE

Justice is a man-made product. And so is injustice. Some of our protagonists crossed the line — against their will, while others try to hold it — at times against the odds.

In 1964 Nelson Mandela told a South African court that “the ideal of a democratic and free society” is one “for which I am prepared to die.” He was sentenced to life in prison for sabotage and conspiracy. *The State Against Mandela and the Others* centers on the audio recordings of this trial. Directors Nicolas Champeaux and Gilles Porte take us to the courtroom with adding powerful animation and interviews to the soundscape of apartheid at work.

Cameras capture drama unfolding in the courtroom of Judge Marie Tuma in Kosovo, where an international court — EULEX — is trying to try a popular politician and war hero for corruption. *Patriotic Highway* by director Carline Troedsson follows a judge in distress, surrounded by witnesses who are hard to believe and lawyers who are hard to trust. At the doorstep of the EU, the unfinished courthouse appears to be more solid than the justice system it is meant to house.

In *Shadow Flowers* director Seung-Jun Yi patiently follows Ryun-hee Kim, a North Korean mother who ended up in South Korea as a result of a series of misunderstandings. There the bureaucracy of a constitutional democracy prevents her from returning to her husband and daughter. She seems to be vanishing in the maze of odd jobs and fruitless passport applications, only to be preserved in the eye of the camera as she campaigns against oppression.

Director Marc Wiese resorted to the conventions of a high-paced thriller to show what it takes to defend press freedom in an authoritarian regime. *We Hold the Line* follows Maria Ressa, an internationally re-known journalist and her team at the news site Rappler through press conferences and sites of extrajudicial killings in the Philippines. When adverse action meets the editorial staff in their offices, the cameras became witnesses of the boiler-room of 21st century censorship.

Outside the Walls only rumors and fear remain, as director Andrei Kutsila captures relatives of protesters in the August sun. They wait to find out what happened on the streets of Minsk to those who dared to claim their freedom. Our freedom.

Renáta Uitz
Program Curator



PATRIOTIC HIGHWAY

Caroline Troedsson, Sweden, Norway, 2019,
68min, Swedish, English, Albanian, English &
Hungarian Subtitles

HUNGARIAN PREMIERE

EULEX is The European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo under which international judges and prosecutors are bound to support the establishment of independent justice system free from any political interests. In a trial of major importance Marie Tuma EULEX judge confronts Fatmir Limaj Kosovar politician with corruption charges, however she also has to face unexpected difficulties.



SHADOW FLOWERS

Seung-Jun Yi, South Korea, 2019, 109min,
Korean, English & Hungarian Subtitles

HUNGARIAN PREMIERE

What is freedom worth if everything you have ever known and loved is on the other side of an impenetrable border? Ryun-hee Kim is kept in South Korea against her will. She has been trying to return to North Korea for seven years. While she fights authorities who are reluctant to let her return, she fears that the long years away from her family has made her a shadow in their lives.



THE STATE AGAINST MANDELA AND THE OTHERS

Nicolas ChampeauxGilles Porte, France, 2018,
108min, English, English & Hungarian Subtitles

HUNGARIAN PREMIERE

While no video footage has been preserved of the trial against Nelson Mandela and his eight companions, archival recordings have recently been recovered of the 1963–1964 hearings, which, along with animated inserts and recollections of the indictees, have been used to reconstruct the historical trial. The uncompromising and upright stance of Mandela and the eight others who faced death sentences sets an outstanding example that is permanently etched in world history. As a significant milestone in the fight against apartheid and racial-based repression, these courageous statements still carry an enormous impact that resonates with us decades later.



WALLS

Andrei Kutsila, Poland, Belarus, 2020, 17min,
Russian, English & Hungarian Subtitles

HUNGARIAN PREMIERE

Belarus, 2020. Not so far away, history is in the making. While a whole nation is standing up, united for their truth, demanding free and fair elections, police violence erupts and peaceful protesters are put in jail. Andrei Kutsila's documentary provides live, fresh reporting on these events from the perspective of those outside the prison walls, who spend every day hoping for the return of their loved ones.



WE HOLD THE LINE

Marc Wiese, Germany, 2020, 92min, English,
Tagalog, English & Hungarian Subtitles

HUNGARIAN PREMIERE

Maria Ressa and her co-journalists persist like sentries during the worst of Duterte's dictatorship in the Philippines. There are no checks and balances left to control the president, who openly commits and incites violence, and whose "war on drugs" relies entirely on police and military forces. Ressa, whom the government has repeatedly attempted to incarcerate, leads the team at Rappler, a news portal, and has recently gained worldwide popularity as an uncompromising and fearless journalist. Despite being constant targets, she and her editorial office refuse to surrender or fall silent, but remain to fight against the lies and violence. The film captures their struggles, and even confronts some of the assassins at large.

ARCHIVE OF THE PLANET

The ancient desire to capture and reproduce the world in images was instantly accelerated and enhanced by the emergence of the photographic medium. Along with the rapid spread of photography, followed by cinema, came the urge to archive and preserve these early “montages of attractions”. As early as 1909, an ambitious archival endeavor was launched by Albert Kahn, a French banker and philanthropist. Kahn hired numerous photographers and cameramen with the utopian aim to record and preserve fleeting moments across the globe. Spanning until 1931 and christened the “Archives de la Planète”, this inspired undertaking generated a collection of 72,000 autochrome photographs and 183,000 meters of film. The images were designed to remain unedited, and by and large unseen — stored for posterity.

Throughout the 20th century, image archives grew in size and number. Due to the digital turn at the end of the century, the amount of images made and added to online and offline collections skyrocketed. The resultant abundance of image archives continues to be a source of inspiration for artists and their complex creative endeavors.

Verzió’s “Archive of the Planet” section brings together recent creative documentaries that repurpose and reflect on the role of image archives. These films not only speak to the diverse origins and content of such repositories, but also

demonstrate the range of approaches towards mining primary sources, and the complex epistemic reflections on the nature and consequences of visual documentation. This section includes films that explore the depths of the photographic medium as document and testimony, as well as compilation works that experiment with (re)ascribing meaning to the appropriated moving images.

Susanne Kovács dedicates her debut feature, *It Takes a Family*, to her own family history. In it she combs through the conflicting and silenced stories of the past as they unravel through images of her grandparents – Jewish Hungarians who survived the Holocaust, her German mother and her father, a Danish Jew. Her work raises questions as to whether contained national versions of history are possible. Likewise, Radu Jude and Adrian Ciofăncă’s *The Exit of the Trains* taps into a collectively silenced, traumatic experience. The filmmakers painstakingly reconstruct the 1941 deportations and murder of Jews in the Romanian town of Iași by juxtaposing studio portraits with the unsettling stories of those who survived. Giedre Žickytė’s *Master and Tatyana* explores the entanglement of the individual and the political through the personal drama of a creative personality in a repressive environment via the heritage and legacy of Lithuanian photographer Vitas Luckus.

Like still photography, found footage can become a window into distant, inaccessible, and often imaginary worlds. Maija Blåfield’s *The Fantastic* demonstrates how Hollywood images on a discarded VHS tape imported to North Korea as waste becomes a portal through which locals clandestinely discover the outside world.

Shengze Zhu’s compilation film *Present. Perfect*, explores the persistent search for a virtual community and the allure of voyeurism through a series of self-portraits of YouTube live streamers in China. Suhaib Gasmelbari’s film, *Talking About Trees*, gives the screen to the first generation of filmmakers in Sudan as they revisit their 1960s post-colonial debuts and strive to reanimate a long-closed cinema with a potent name: “Revolution”. Hubert Sauper’s Sundance-winning film, *Epicentro*, takes us on a double journey to the real and imaginary Cuba. The film goes to the core of cinematic power to both create and undermine utopian constructions that exoticize and subdue, document and manipulate images of the Other. Another persistent explorer of the power of image, Rithy Panh, creates in *Irradiated* a profound and distressing essay on the visual traces of past catastrophes and their afterlives in our shared memory.

Rather than aligning with Albert Kahn’s early pursuit of a totality of representation, the films in this program highlight the fragmentary, elusive, malleable, subjective and shifting meanings of visual traces. The selection foregrounds the multiple possibilities of working with archival still and moving images, and invites an in-depth, reflexive viewing. The online program is accompanied by panel discussions with the filmmakers, where their approaches to working with visual imagery is further discussed and placed in a comparative context.

Oksana Sarkisova

Program Curator, Festival Director



EPICENTRO

Hubert Sauper, Austria, France, 2020, 108min,
Spanish, English, English & Hungarian Subtitles

HUNGARIAN PREMIERE

The latest documentary from Oscar-nominated director Hubert Sauper guides us to the American continent, and draws the immersive portrait Cuba through its relationship to the USA. Sauper draws comparison between imperialism and cinema, the power of images and empire. Cuba, living under centuries of colonialism, unfolds through the eyes of its inhabitants. In this free-flowing and episodic film, the concepts of imperialism and racism are explained by children, locals enthusiastically misinterpret the meaning of enigmatic buildings, and even Chaplin's granddaughter shows up for a scene.



IRRADIATED

Rithy Panh, France, Cambodia, 2020, 88min,
French, English & Hungarian Subtitles

HUNGARIAN PREMIERE

What it is to be a survivor cannot be put into words. But you need to live and approach that irradiation, which may not have cause, or of which you might not have any knowledge, any possible protection. You need to, for the sake of mankind, experience and understand various forms of evil—from trenches to atolls, from camps to silence. Evil irradiates. It hurts even future generations. But innocence lies beyond.



IT TAKES A FAMILY

Susanne Kovács, Denmark, 2019, 60min,
English, Danish, German, Hungarian, English &
Hungarian Subtitles

HUNGARIAN PREMIERE

It Takes a Family is a family drama about secrets and repressed memories. Director Susanne Kovacs is the grandchild of Jewish Holocaust survivors, and the daughter of a German mother and Danish Jewish father. Her grandparents saw her as a child of the enemy and a constant reminder of their tragic past. When Susanne starts asking difficult questions, she discovers that the war never really ended in her tormented family; somehow, the horrors of the past were always present as a deafening, yet unspoken, trauma.



MASTER AND TATYANA

Giedre Žickyte, Lithuania, 2015, 84min,
Lithuanian, English Subtitles

Some called him a madman, others, a genius. He kept a live lion in his apartment. He was the first to go beyond the surroundings of Lithuania and document the spontaneous reality of the Soviet Republics. He worked a lot and drank a lot. He lived in Vilnius with his beautiful wife, Tatyana. They were the most vibrant couple of the '60s, and their home was equally vibrant—always full of people, wine, all-night conversations, guests from the furthest corners of the Soviet Union. Vitas Luckus was engulfed by his passion for truth and photography.



PRESENT.PERFECT.

Shengze Zhu, USA, Hong Kong, 2019, 124min,
Mandarin Chinese, Different Chinese Regional
Dialects, English Subtitles

HUNGARIAN PREMIERE

Far beyond the gleaming lives of popular Chinese live-streaming anchors, another world emerges of ordinary broadcasters conveying their not so ordinary struggles. Creating a unique visual world in her black and white compilation film, Shengze Zhu shows us a man suffering from a rare disease, a single mother working in a factory, and other lonesome and isolated heroes who pour their hearts into a hollow, virtual space, hoping to satisfy the craving for human connection that is sorely missing from their real lives.



TALKING ABOUT TREES

Suhaib Gasmelbari, France, Sudan, Germany,
Chad, Qatar, 2019, 93min, Arabic, English,
Russian, English & Hungarian Subtitles

HUNGARIAN PREMIERE

Ibrahim, Soliman, Manar and Altayeb—intensely humane idealists—have been filmmakers and friends for more than 45 years. Reunited after long years of distance and exile, they plan to revive their old dream: to make cinema a reality in Sudan. They are determined to leave their mark and inspire a love for cinema. Throughout the images they create, the ones they lost and the ones remaining only a desire, the beautiful and horrific faces of their country appear.



THE EXIT OF THE TRAINS

Radu Jude, Adrian Cioflâncă, Romania,
2020, 175min, Romanian, English & Hungarian
Subtitles

HUNGARIAN PREMIERE

The Exit of the Trains, an essay film directed by Radu Jude and Adrian Cioflâncă, uses archival materials to reflect on the massacre of Jewish people in Iași, Romania, on 29 June 1941. The film consists of two parts, the first of which is composed of photographs of some of the 10,000 people who were murdered, accompanied by testimonies and excerpts from interviews and diaries. The second part of the film, which is shorter than the first, is a montage of photographs taken by German soldiers of the massacre itself.

THE FANTASTIC

Maija Blåfield, Finland, 2020, 30min, Korean,
English, English & Hungarian Subtitles

HUNGARIAN PREMIERE

Can you imagine, if you had never seen a Hollywood movie, what you would think of them? What image would you have, based on these films, about a place you could never visit? In *The Fantastic*, North Koreans talk about secretly acquired American films which have become for them a passage to another dimension—a fantastic world coming to life in their imagination. Their image of Westerners has been formed on the basis of these videos—which has led to strange, sometimes funny, sometimes distorted assumptions about behavior and culture in the West.

ANTHROPOCENE

Has the pandemic overshadowed the green movement? Have we lost focus of one of the most acute issues of our time, or have we just softened our tones?

The films in this year's Anthropocene section examine specific issues that rationally point to the very core of these problems and their solutions — no small talk or relativized justice, just investigative activists, identifiable responsibility, traceable facts and well-articulated expectations. If we only accomplished as much for our environment as these documentarians have managed, the ecosystem of the Earth would be headed in the right direction at astonishing speed.

I am Greta is a classic documentary and a must-see this year. The director has a genuine flair for presenting the life and activism of Greta Thunberg, as well as the ever-increasing media attention that universalizes not only Greta's life, but the film's message as well.

Wood starts mysteriously, somewhere in the East, in a far-away forest that is hidden from the mass media, where corrupt and illegal logging can be carried out. Bribed forest managers and paid-off loggers work for unknown "investors". With the aid of hidden cameras, investigative journalists and legal experts play their part in decisively uncovering the capitalist clients.

Is it possible to make anything delicious out of acorns, moss and weeds? The protagonist of the Korean documentary, The Wandering Chef, cooks entirely from foraged food. He prepares food for the elderly, and at the film's crescendo, makes a 108-course funeral feast.

Smog Town displays the struggles of a civil servant and his assistant as they venture to put an end to the massive industrial pollution in their town, just 40 kilometers outside of Beijing. Together they try to find a balance between centralized, totalitarian red tape and the interest of the locals, no easy task as the steel factory employs much of the town. Their everyday battles are documented from their weekend lunches to their encounters with power.

The Red Line - Resistance in Hambach Forest exhibits how the modern German economy holds up against some of society's more extreme members. Local activists take to squatting in treehouses to protect the Hambach Forest, while capitalists align with politicians in a bid to destroy what has become their home in order to excavate lignite. Support for the protestors grows, however, and a series of demonstrations are organized in solidarity with the activists.

Mária Takács

Program curator



I AM GRETA

Nathan Grossman, Sweden, 2020, 98min,
Swedish, English, English & Hungarian Subtitles

HUNGARIAN PREMIERE

The world-famous climate activist, Greta Thunberg, began a one-person school strike that led to her appearing before the multinational UN climate summit and posing on the cover of Time magazine as Person of the Year, 2019. But what is this shy teenager, the most recent icon of the environmental movement, like when she's not in the spotlight? Nathan Grossman's documentary includes unseen footage of a timid girl, before she became famous for speaking courageously and directly to politicians. We see, with close and honest moments, a girl who finds it hard to fully integrate with her own peers.



SMOG TOWN

Meng Han, China, South Korea, The Netherlands, 2019, 89min, Mandarin Chinese, English & Hungarian Subtitles

HUNGARIAN PREMIERE

Langfang, about 40 kilometers from Beijing, is one of the most polluted cities in China. The city is laced with smoke and exhaust fumes. The local environmental protection bureau is caught between a rock and a hard place; it ought to clamp down on industrial polluters, but they ensure the livelihood for most of the inhabitants. The film confronts us with a burning question of global importance: how can we negotiate the conflict between economy and ecology?



THE RED LINE - RESISTANCE IN HAMBACH FOREST

Karin de Miguel Wessendorf, Germany, 2019, 115min, German, English & Hungarian Subtitles

HUNGARIAN PREMIERE

With its rare flora and fauna, the Hambach Forest in North Rhine-Westphalia is one of the most unique and valuable forest areas on the European continent. Despite being a rare, primeval forest dating back more than ten thousand years, the Hambach belongs to RWE, a German electric utilities company that has started to deforest the area in order to operate the country's largest open-pit lignite mine. The film follows local residents and environmental activists as they try to hold their ground against riot police and bulldozers, some doing so while perched in treehouses, to stop the destruction of this precious land.



THE WANDERING CHEF

Hye-Ryeong Park, South Korea, 2019, 85min,
Korean, English & Hungarian Subtitles

HUNGARIAN PREMIERE

Jiho Im, a Korean celebrity chef, specializes in preparing traditional, local food with unorthodox ingredients. His search for special ingredients takes him to remote mountain villages where he cooks with and for elders. His respect for the elderly and nature can be traced through the simplicity and subtleness of the food he makes. Having lost both his biological and adoptive mothers at a young age, he forges a truly unique bond with one of the seniors, and pays tribute to her and his mothers by creating a ceremonial Buddhist feast.



WOOD

Monica Lăzurean-Gorgan, Michaela Kirst, Ebba Sinzinger, Austria, Germany, Romania, 2020, 97min, English, Spanish, Romanian, German, Russian, Mandarin Chinese, English & Hungarian Subtitles

HUNGARIAN PREMIERE

Alexander von Bismarck, the head of the Environmental Investigation Agency, is on a quest to unveil the corrupt and illegal timber trading practices that destroys forests all over the planet. This gripping docu-thriller follows each and every link in the chain between harvesting and marketing. It takes us through forests across the globe, in Russia, Peru, China and Romania. With the aid of hidden cameras, the American activist and his local helpers expose the endless exploitation of nature and the reality of “washed” products on the market. Will documenting the chain of unlawful activities be enough to reverse the processes of an untraceably complicated network of illegal logging?

STUDENT VERZIÓ

I AM GRETA

MADDY THE MODEL

RETURN TO EPIPO

**LEARNING TO SKATEBOARD
IN A WARZONE (IF YOU'RE A GIRL)**



LEARNING TO SKATEBOARD IN A WARZONE (IF YOU'RE A GIRL)

Carol Dysinger, UK, 2019, 39min, Dari, English & Hungarian Subtitles

HUNGARIAN PREMIERE

Skateistan began as a skate school in Kabul, in 2007, and grew into a multinational educational initiative. It focuses on recruiting girls from impoverished neighborhoods to not only teach them to skateboard, but to help them gain courage and life skills that will transcend skateboarding and the classroom, to help them thrive and adapt to the challenges that lie ahead. Over the course of the school year, the girls grow and become empowered through the joy of skateboarding, and the warmth and inspiration of the women who teach them.

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being part of Verzió
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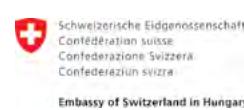
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