

Films we'll see at the 16th Mastercard OFF CAMERA. We know the first titles!

The 16th Mastercard OFF CAMERA will feature almost one hundred titles from forty countries, in eight festival sections, which gives over two hundred screenings. It's time to present the first eight films which the audience will have a chance to see in Krakow cinemas as part of the "Best of Fests" and "It Runs in the Family" sections. Get ready for the May getaway in Krakow. The Festival will be held between 28th April and 7th May 2023.

A well known section – film novelties from the festival world

In the "Best of Fests" section, Master OFF CAMERA each year showcases best productions – films most appreciated by critics and most loved by audiences at international film events. In Krakow, they are presented usually for the first time. The organizers are already introducing the first four titles to be screened in festival cinemas.

- ***The Happiest Man in the World*** by an acclaimed Macedonian director Teona Strugar Mitevska
- ***America*** about Eli, a man fleeing from the past, who, after the death of his father, decides to return from the United States to his country of origin and face the ghosts of the past.
- A story of a 12-year-old ***Dalva*** who is unaware of the fact that the "love" she receives from her father goes far beyond normal parental affection.
- A Japanese story of great pain, guilt and helplessness, ***Love Life***, telling about a six-year-old boy Keita growing up in a patchwork family.

Today's family is more than blood ties

Apart from the screenings held within the regular program of Mastercard OFF CAMERA, the Festival will present films in four new sections. The new sections are prepared for each subsequent edition of the festival and they provide a commentary on the present state of the world and the subjects raised by filmmakers all over the world.

In 2023, one of such themed sections is "It Runs in the Family". It concentrates on modern family formations which today are not necessarily based just on biological consanguinity. The first four films in the section are:

- A situation comedy and a thriller in one, which reveals the fragility of relations between the members of a Yugoslavian family in the late '80s and tells a story of ***The Uncle***.
- A night expedition of three queer adolescent friends who make up a "chosen family", through the streets of Toronto presented in ***Soft***.
- A collapsing business, a Danish baker, an Iranian cleaning lady – ***The Cake Dynasty*** – a satire on a privileged family from the Western world, told with a little tongue in cheek, by a debuting director Christian Lollike.



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- A French story of Rachel, a seemingly happy with her life woman who, at the age of forty, becoming involved in an affair with Ali and through the relation with his daughter, starts to feel her, so far uncovered, maternal instinct, in ***Other People's Children*** by an acclaimed French director Rebecca Zlotowski.

This year's edition of the Mastercard OFF CAMERA International Festival of Independent Cinema will feature the films presented above and many other titles from around the world.

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You are welcome to report if you'd like to film talking head videos and commentaries with Grzegorz Stępiak, the Artistic Director of the Mastercard OFF CAMERA Festival.



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Detailed information on individual films

The Happiest Man in the World

The protagonist of the new film by an acclaimed Macedonian director Teona Strugar Mitevska is a woman named Asja. She is a legal advisor in her forties, living in Sarajevo, who just needs true love to be fully happy with her life. Encouraged by her mother, she decides to attend a blind-dating event organized in her hometown. She is matched with a seemingly staid banker named Zoran who is, however, hiding the real cause for his taking part in the event. An ambivalent courtship dance soon develops between the two, emotions are mixed up with a secret, painful past and open wounds. "This is a story about precariousness of life, about chance encounters that bring together the aggressor and the victim; this is a story of impossible connections, of love and absurdity" – the director said in one of interviews. The film location – a brutalist-style hotel from the 80s, a silent witness of the history of former Yugoslavia – is not to be missed.

Director: **Teona Strugar Mitevska**

Screenplay: Teona Strugar Mitevska, Elma Tataragic

Cinematography: Virginie Saint-Martin

Cast: Jelena Kordić Kuret, Adnan Omerović, Labina Mitevska, Ana Kostovska, Ksenija Marinković

Country: North Macedonia/Denmark/Belgium/Slovenia/Croatia/Bosnia and Herzegovina

Release date: 2022

Running time: 100 min/color

Awards: **Les Arcs EFF – Grand Prize of the Jury, Young Jury Prize; Palm Springs IFF – Special Mention**



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America

Five years ago, in one of the Festival themed sections, we presented a well-known film by Ofir Raul Graizer – *The Cakemaker*. The story of a German pastry maker who travels to Jerusalem in search of the family of his dead lover, pleased not only the Krakow audience but it was received with great acclaim at many other festivals, which translated into numerous awards. *America*, one of the films to be screened in this year's edition of Mastercard OFF CAMERA, to a great extent continues the thematic area of interest of the Israeli-born film director. The protagonist of the film is a Chicago-based swimming coach named Eli. When the man receives information about his father's death, he decides to return to his homeland, at least for some time. Eli reunions with his childhood friend Yotam who is running a small flower shop, together with his fiancée Iris. The apparently innocent situation will set a series of events in motion, that will greatly affect lives of the three characters, and at the same time prove Eli that he cannot run away from the past forever.

Director: **Ofir Raul Graizer**

Screenplay: Ofir Raul Graizer

Cinematography: Omri Aloni

Music: Dominique Charpentier

Cast: Oshrat Ingadashet, Michael Moshonov, Ofri Biterman, Moni Moshonov, Irit Sheleg

Country: Israel/Germany/Czech Republic

Release date: 2022

Running time: 127 min/color

Awards: **Jerusalem IFF – Best Actress (Oshrat Ingadashet); Miami Jewish Film Festival – Critics Prize; Philadelphia Jewish Film Festival – Audience Award**

Dalva

One of the biggest hits of the last festival season puts a twelve-year-old girl at the center of the narrative. Despite her young age, Dalva (a towering performance by Zelda Samson) who lives alone with her father, behaves like a grown woman. Starting from the way she dresses, through heavy makeup, to the tiniest gestures. All that makes her somewhat withdrawn and brands her as an outsider among her peers. One day, due to police intervention, for reasons completely incomprehensible to her, Dalva is separated from her father. Her world stops turning. The girl starts to gradually experience a totally different reality, with great help from her new roommate – teenage Samia and social worker Jayden. Once she trusts them more and more, she begins to realize that the 'love' she received from her father could go far beyond normal parental affection. Acclaimed, among others, in Cannes, debut feature by French director Emmanuelle Nicot handles extremely difficult and uncomfortable theme. From the perspective of a child protagonist, the director portrays with deep sensitivity Dalva's unconditional love for her father. Confrontation of children's innocence with the rotten world of adults brings about an electrifying effect.

Director: **Emmanuelle Nicot**

Screenplay: Emmanuelle Nicot

Cinematography: Caroline Guimbal

Music: Frederic Alvarez

Cast: Zelda Samson, Alexis Manenti, Fanta Guirassy, Marie Denarnaud, Sandrine Blancke

Country: France/Belgium

Release date: 2022

Running time: 83 min/color

Awards: **Cannes IFF – FIPRESCI Prize, Rising Star Award (Zelda Samson); Cairo IFF – Best Director, Best Actress (Zelda Samson); Hong Kong IFF – Best Director, Best Actress (Zelda Samson)**



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Love Life

Taeko, her husband Jiro, and six-year-old Keita – Taeko's son from her previous marriage, enjoy a peaceful family life. After the boy's tragic accident, the balance in everyday lives of the protagonists of the new film by acclaimed Japanese director Kôji Fukada, is disturbed forever. The accident also brings the boy's long-lost biological father back into Taeko's life. In addition to not being able to come to terms with what happened, the Korean-born man seems completely lost in Japanese society. The event, that would be deeply traumatic for every parent, paradoxically draws the two together, letting them try to understand their deeply hidden emotions. In his new film, the Japanese director handles topics well known from his previous works. He tells about great pain, guilt and helplessness, as universal human feelings, creating a harrowing story about life in the shadow of tragedy. *Love Life* stays with viewers long after the screening, also thanks to an excellent, nuanced performance by Fumino Kimura.

Director: **Kôji Fukada**

Screenplay: Kôji Fukada

Cinematography: Hideo Yamamoto

Music: Olivier Goinard

Cast: Fumino Kimura, Kento Nagayama, Tetta Shimada, Atom Sunada, Hirona Yamazaki

Country: Japan/France

Release date: 2022

Running time: 123 min/color

The Uncle

The debut feature by David Kapac and Andrija Mardešić is set in 1980s Yugoslavia. Parents and their only, almost grown-up son are making the final preparations for Christmas Eve dinner. They are impatiently and eagerly awaiting the title uncle – a visitor from “better, Western world”. The man is parking his, luxurious for that time, Mercedes in front of the house, manifesting himself to the family as a true “king of life”. His visit triggers a series of absurd and unpredictable events that ruthlessly expose the fragility of relationships and the hypocrisy of the depicted world. The directors balance on the edge of thriller and farce, to depict a potential toxicity of family ties. At the same time, they skillfully create an atmosphere of threat and oppression, and their film evokes, well-known to Polish audience, Michael Haneke's aesthetics, stressed by intense and sometimes deliberately exaggerated performances by the four lead actors.

Director: **David Kapac, Andrija Mardešić**

Screenplay: David Kapac, Andrija Mardešić

Cinematography: Milos Jaćimović

Music: Miro Manojlović

Cast: Predrag Miki Manojlović, Ivana Roščić, Goran Bogdan, Roko Sikavica, Kaja Šišmanović

Country: Croatia/Serbia

Release date: 2022

Running time: 104 min/color

Awards: **Karlovy Vary IFF – Special Mention (Proxima Jury); Pula IFF – Best Screenplay, Best Costume Design**



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Soft

In the debut feature by Canadian director Joseph Amenta, three queer teens spend their summer break roaming wild in the streets of Toronto. Julien (Matteus Lunot) is a runaway, now under the care of a trans woman – Dawn (Miyoko Anderson), who guides him through the challenges of carving out space for himself in the world, becoming a mother figure for him. Together with his friends, he is determined to sneak into one of the local gay bars. Otis (Harlow Joy), somewhat attracted to him, patiently accompanies Julien on his adventures. Whereas a young trans girl Tony (Zion Matheson) is optimistic about the future which is uncertain for all three. Amenta portrays his young protagonists, who are very supportive to each other, even in the most difficult moments of growing up as queer. By showing a network of dependencies and relationships that could be called a “chosen family”, *Soft* provides a unique insight into the lives of young LGBTQIA communities, for whom it’s often the only way to survive.

Director: **Joseph Amenta**

Screenplay: Joseph Amenta

Cinematography: Liam Higgins

Music: Casey Manierka-Quaile, Sky Vemane

Cast: Matteus Lunot, Harlow Joy, Zion Matheson, Miyoko Anderson, Krista Morin

Country: Canada

Release date: 2022

Running time: 87 min/color

Awards: **Chilliwack FF – Jury Award**

The Cake Dynasty

Niels is an aging pastry chef and owner of a local cake factory, in a serious life crisis. Nothing works the way he had hoped: his business is on the verge of bankruptcy, he can’t keep pace with the changing times and trends, and his own family makes him crazy almost at every step. He even fails to commit suicide. While his wife and daughter together with her boyfriend try to modernize the firm by introducing diet pastries, the man starts a relationship with a cleaning lady of Iraqi origin. Fascinated by her confectionery skills, he believes her sugary pastries will rescue the factory and himself. Debuting director Christian Lollike in his bitterly wicked comedy examines serious-sounding themes as: family relations, culture clash and the contemporary obsession with healthy diet. The seemingly razor-sharp satire on a somewhat privileged family, unexpectedly reveals quite great degree of fondness and understanding for the lost protagonists.

Director: **Christian Lollike**

Screenplay: Sigrid Johannesen, Christian Lollike

Cinematography: Manuel Alberto Claro

Music: Karen Krogshøj, Jonas Struck

Cast: Nicolas Bro, Bahar Pars, Tina Gylling, Emma Sested Høeg, Andreas Jebro

Country: Denmark

Release date: 2022

Running time: 109 min/color

Other People's Children

The protagonist, Rachel, (an excellent performance, as always, by Virginie Efira) is a 40-year-old teacher of English at a local high school. At first sight she seems perfectly happy with her life, marked by



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meetings with her sister, helping her aging father and attending guitar lessons. But all that changes when she falls in love with Ali – a middle-aged man and a father of four-year-old Leila. Rachel starts to spend more and more time with the girl. Their walks, evenings spent together and having fun, completely unexpectedly for herself, make the woman realize that perhaps her maternal instinct is stronger than she had thought. Presented in the Main Competition at the 2022 Venice Film Festival, the new film by Rebecca Zlotowski is, as the director says herself, extremely personal. It doesn't just examine doubts and maternal dilemmas of a middle-aged woman, it also makes her – a type of character marginalized in cinema – the central figure. And beyond making the viewers aware of potential risks of the so-called patchwork families, above all, the film paints a full of empathy and understanding portrait of a mature woman who is recognizing her needs.

Director: **Rebecca Zlotowski**

Screenplay: Rebecca Zlotowski

Cinematography: George Lechaptois

Music: Robin Coudert

Cast: Virginie Efira, Roschdy Zem, Chiara Mastroianni, Callie Ferreira-Goncalves, Yamée Couture

Country: France

Release date: 2022

Running time: 103 min/color

Awards: **Seville EFF – Best Editing**



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