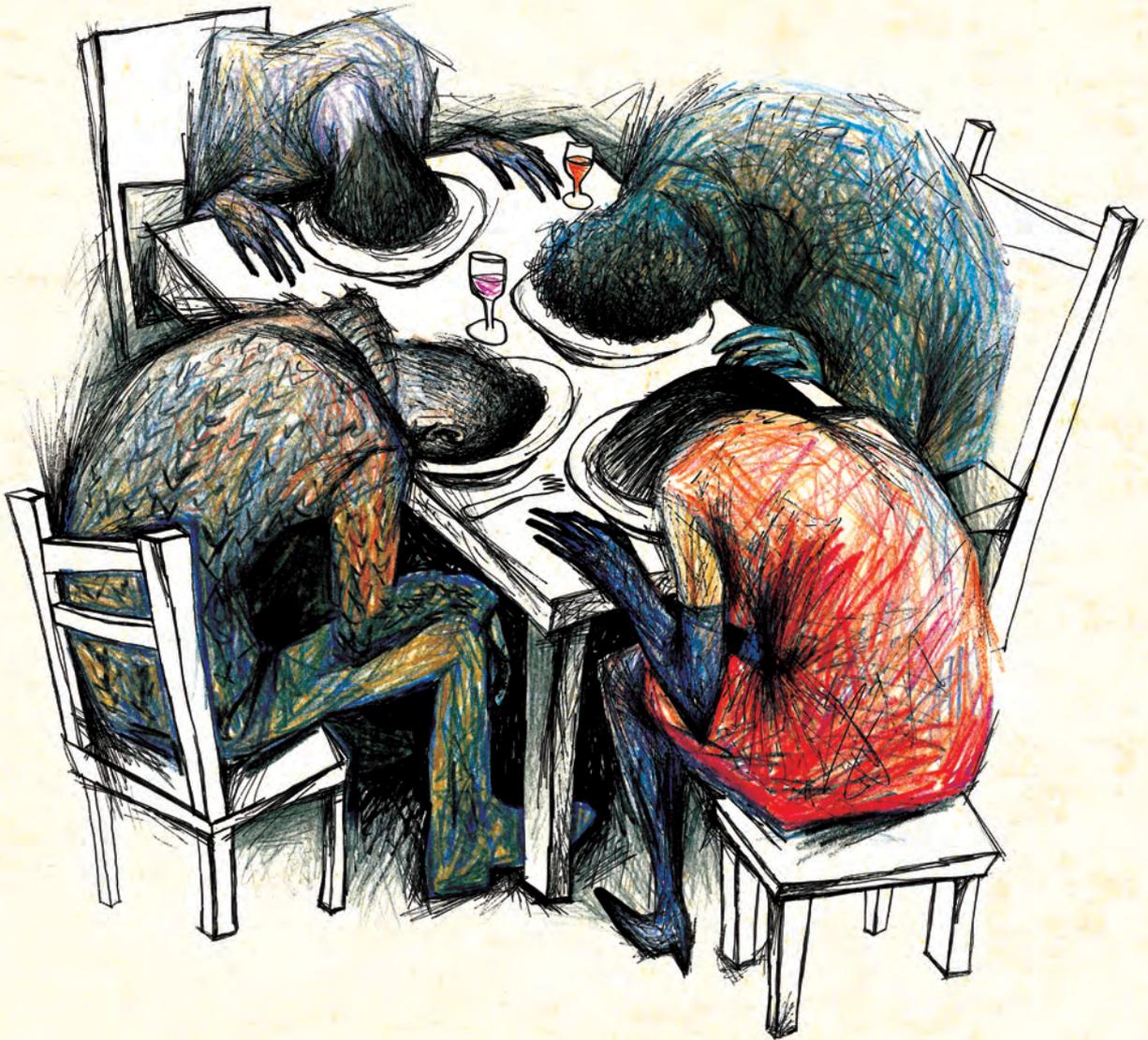


# Ugly

A FILM BY JURI RECHINSKY



PRESSKIT



PAIN. SEX. SUICIDE. BIRTH.

# UGLY

A FILM BY JURI RECHINSKY

Drama | Austria / Ukraine | 2017 | 90 min

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**A production of**

Novotny & Novotny Filmproduktion

Pronto Film

Ulrich Seidl Filmproduktion

**Produced with financial support of**

Austrian Film Institute

FISA – Film Industry Support Austria

Ukrainian State Film Agency

**In cooperation with**

ORF Film/Television - Agreement



OFFICIAL SELECTION  
**INTERNATIONAL  
FILM FESTIVAL  
ROTTERDAM**  
2017

## BRIGHT FUTURE SECTION

Screening dates:

30.01.2017

**WORLD PREMIERE**

In the presence of director Juri Rechinsky and the Main Cast & Crew

Time: 18:30

Location: Pathé 6, Schouwburgplein 101, 3012 CL Rotterdam

31.01.2017

Time: 19:45

Location: LantarenVenster 1, Otto Reuchlinweg 996, 3072 MD Rotterdam

03.02.2017

Time: 22:15

Location: Cinerama 5, Westblaak 18, 3012 KL Rotterdam

04.02.2017

Time: 12:00

Location: Cinerama 3, Westblaak 18, 3012 KL Rotterdam

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## CAST

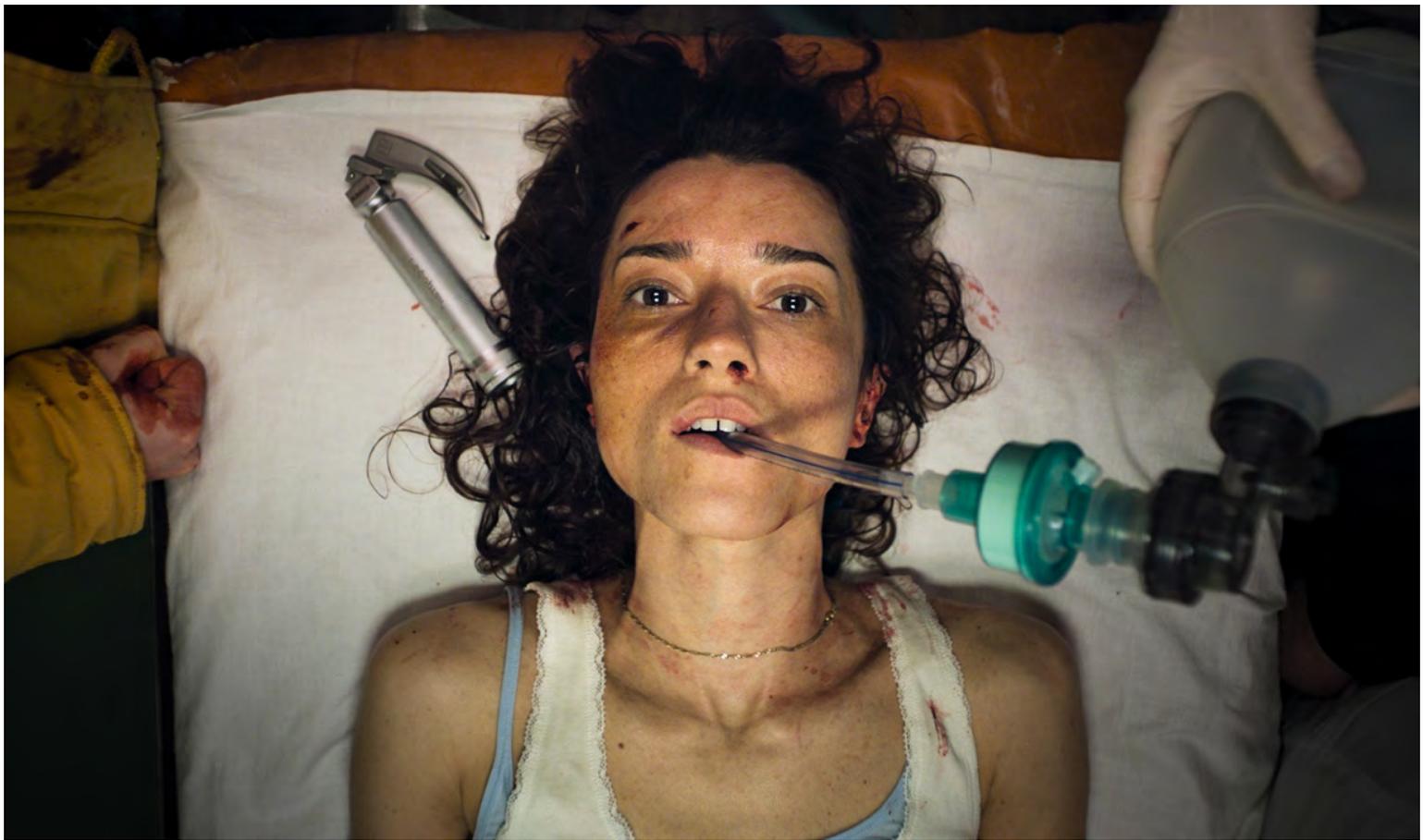
<b>Hanna</b>	Angela Gregovic
<b>Jura</b>	Dmitriy Bogdan
<b>Martha</b>	Maria Hofstätter
<b>Joseph</b>	Raimund Wallisch
<b>Mother</b>	Larisa Rusnak
<b>Father</b>	Vlad Troitskiy
<b>Grandfather</b>	Valeriy Bassel
<b>Katya</b>	Vika Filyuk

## CREW

<b>Director</b>	Juri Rechinsky
<b>Script</b>	Juri Rechinsky Klaus Pridnig
<b>DOPs</b>	Wolfgang Thaler Sebastian Thaler
<b>Music By</b>	Anton Baibakov
<b>Production Design</b>	Conrad Moritz Reinhardt
<b>Editor</b>	Roland Stöttinger
<b>Costume Design</b>	Oksana Melnychuk
<b>Make Up Design</b>	Wiltrud Derschmidt Sam Dopona
<b>Sound Design</b>	Andrii Rogachov Borys Peter
<b>Casting</b>	Eva Roth Natalya Zadorozhnaya Olga Dovgan Bohdana Smyrnova
<b>Line Producers</b>	Johanna Scherz Darya Bassel
<b>Co-Producers</b>	Maxim Asadchiy Ulrich Seidl
<b>Executive Producer</b>	Klaus Pridnig
<b>Produced by</b>	Franz Novotny Alexander Glehr

## SYNOPSIS

A cigarette held in bloody fingers. A woman squirming in a bed, screaming. A man is waiting. A love story. A boat on Lake Neusiedl, a hospital in the Ukraine. A burning field. Another love story. Sickness and the big vanishing into oblivion. Somewhere, death is awaiting. Somewhere else life.



## PRESS TEXT

A young woman (Angela Gregovic) is sitting in a tub, laughing and crying, somebody is giving her a shower. An infinite street, snow blowing over it, leading into a plain full of whiteness. A young woman lying in a hospital bed is getting intubated. Walls of light green. A man (Dmitriy Bogdan) is waiting, his hands are covered in bleeding cuts. He is smoking, clasping his hands. Is he praying? Just thinking? Later, he will fold his arms in front of his body like armor. But he doesn't leave. He stays.

A wheat field in a storm, the ears are turning into waves. A woman (Maria Hofstätter) is suffering from Alzheimer's. There's the guy who loves her (Raimund Wallisch). There are numbers on signs, moved around helplessly. What comes after February? A big party. Two accordion players in horse masks. Fingernails painted in bright red. A young woman on a white piano, she has wet eyes. A heartfelt embrace between mother and daughter. Champagne in long-stemmed glasses.

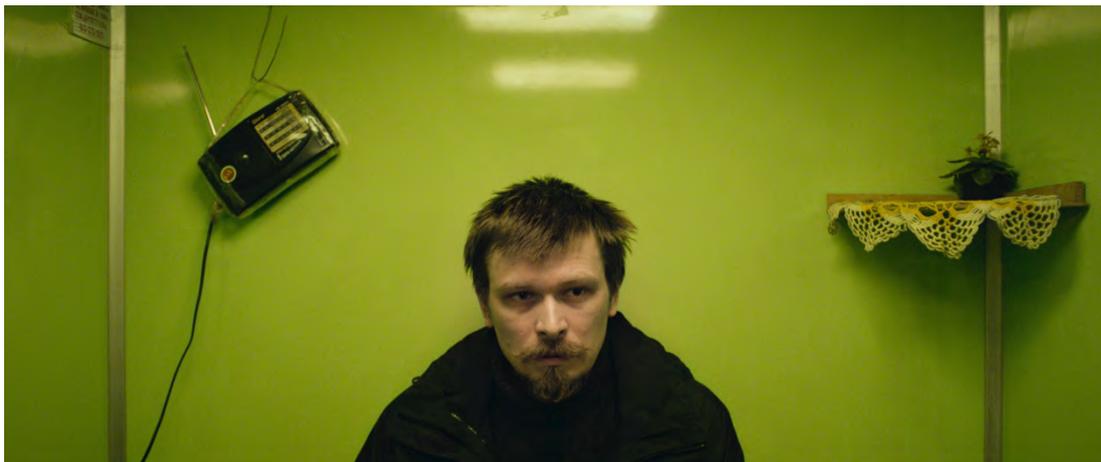
Not much is spoken in this film. A few sentences are uttered, but life is happening somewhere else, not in the dialogue. "Come over, don't go away", somebody says. It's like a motto for the whole movie. „I am afraid“ someone else says. A boat is drifting in Lake Neusiedel, oars are sliding slowly into the water, drifting away. A man is coming out of a door, snowflakes keep falling on his rabbit fur collar. A fire is starting in the reeds. The storm is roaring.

Beauty is lying dormant in the ugly things. One gives birth to the other and vice versa. What does it really mean, ugly? How can it be defined in one human life? In a terse 90 minutes, Juri Rechinsky talks about the labors of existing. He knows: Life is always life-endangering.

Juri Rechinsky is not sparing anybody. Not himself. Not his producers (Alexander Glehr, Franz Novotny, Maxim Asadchiy and Ulrich Seidl himself). Not his actors. Not his audience. During his second film, life interfered.

And love.

„It’s actually a very funny story“, he tells you, and then he talks about his panic. The film had a perfect script, polished until it gleamed. It was fully financed. The shooting in Austria and the Ukraine was backed. All of the fantastic actors were on board. Wolfgang Thaler, favorite cinematographer of Rechinsky’s heroes Ulrich Seidl and Michael Glawogger, and his son Sebastian Thaler were ready for work. And then everything turned out differently. Nothing worked. And the story turned into a wayward mangy mongrel looking for its own peculiar way. Not a stone was left standing before there could be a new beginning (see interview).



Rechinsky is a guy who divides professional movie watchers. “This guy shouldn’t make movies anymore”, a festival selector said. “Cannes is probably not the right place for a film like that” said somebody else. So yes, maybe Juri Rechinsky’s films are getting on people’s nerves. But in a good way. They engrave themselves in your memory. This was already the case with his impressive documentary SICKFUCKPEOPLE about street junkies in the Ukraine, a rough film, crude and also awfully human. People who saw it never forgot it. So Juri Rechinsky is this charming young man. But he is also a totally insane filmmaker. He is fearless and fearful. He likes to look at things very closely. And sometimes he just likes to burn things. It’s perfect like that.

# IT WAS A VERY SCARY PLACE...

Interview with director  
Juri Rechinsky

## **How did the idea for this film develop?**

It started with flashbacks and dreams. I had a somewhat similar experience like the hospital story some ten years ago. It was quite painful. I shot SICKFUCKPEOPLE (editor's note: a documentary about homeless kids with various drug addictions) to escape it.



## **What an escape!**

Well, it was really helping (*laughs*). And then SICKFUCK-PEOPLE was finished and we were waiting for a festival to show it, so I had nothing to do. At a certain point I started to have these flashbacks, some scenes from the hospital. I was about 21 at that time. It was a ground shaking experience for me. At this age you should be something like a real human being, but you're not. It was quite a winter. And then this winter started to come back to me in flashbacks. I was super disturbed by them. I was spending three years in the underground full of junkies in order to forget this and it didn't help. So I just started to write it down and I had a sequence of scenes that looked like a story. Franz Novotny was asking me what I want to do next and I had this story and was just pitching it and they said: Yeah, let's do it.

Then actually SICKFUCKPEOPLE started and all the festivals where it was screened were very helpfully timed. At every fund's decision I was coming

to I could say, yesterday we received a prize in Sarajevo and oh, yesterday we got two prizes at Viennale ... So suddenly I had to make this movie. And it was very, very scary: I had no idea how to make a feature film with actors (*laughs*).

### **So how did you do it then?**

The problems started already at the stage of casting (*laughs*): The main actress was not an Austrian but a Serbian. She had an accent. She was ten years older than she should have been. And I was falling in love with her. I have no idea why she married me and lives with me. My only explanation is that maybe she is this type of woman whose revenge takes time.



### **Working together while falling in love – does it make things easier or more complicated?**

It's making everything completely paranoid. I put her in a real Ukrainian hospital to live there as a patient for one and a half months. She was absolutely isolated from the outer world, she had no internet, and I forbade her washing for more than one month. I was really torturing her. It was a super scary place. From the very beginning I knew I would like method acting. It meant, one actor is going to the hospital for a certain amount of time, another is preparing on Alzheimer, and another one is drinking non-stop for two or three weeks. I think that if you are making a movie, if it is a documentary you should go somewhere where the situation is critical, and if it's a movie with actors you should create circumstances where the situation is becoming critical because only then something relevant is coming out of a human being.

### **Where did you shoot the hospital scenes?**

It is a very special city and a very special hospital. The city was built in the third trimester of the Soviet Union's existence. It's called Kriwoi Rog, it means curved horn but we called it ugly horn. This city is one of the longest in Eastern Europe, it has incredibly long streets which are curved. But in a 200km radius around this city there is nothing. No normal world. It's a ghost city because it was built for at least five million people and now they ended up with only one million. When building it they thought it would be the center of a very big industrial region. There's actually a road in the city that is so wide that airplanes can land. And this hospital is one of the biggest ones in the Ukraine. But only 60 % of it are functioning because they aren't enough people. The rest of the hospital has been closed for 20, 30 years.



### **How were you able to shoot there?**

It took quite some time, effort and money. It was incredibly hard to make any kind of deal. Just as an example, at the playground, we spent two months to finally be able to remove something temporarily for one evening. When we arrived to shoot, people who were living in the house were almost beating us up when we were touching something to remove it. We actually had to hire security to shoot there. It's a sad thing, it's this ghost city and there is quite a large amount of unhappy people. They are all leaving because the industry has left and most of the districts are sleeping districts for industry workers. It is generally a very violent place.

**Why this hospital? Did you do a hospital casting?**

Yes of course. We were going through every city in the Ukraine which has a population bigger than half a million and checked every hospital.

**The soundtrack is very special. Did you have ideas about it beforehand?**

I've been working with the composer for a very long time. The hardest thing in all long-term artistic projects is a common language. We are quite lucky to be at this stage where there's absolute trust and a lot of understanding. I was doing this movie without music at all. I was trying to polish it to the stage where there was no need of music. The idea was to give it to a composer who would do whatever he deems right. He could have said there should be no music and I would have been totally fine with it. What actually happened after two and a half years of editing and a bout of depression: My composer literally kicked me out of bed. We were having drinks and decided to start again from scratch. It was a completely crazy experience because when we started to edit this movie, it was not only me and the editor but it happened together with a composer. It's a completely different movie. A lot of scenes are working because of his sense of tempo and rhythm and his ideas about music. I think I am very lucky regarding the people that surround me. I don't know how I deserve something like that.

**Do people still go for drinks with you?**

A very lucky few (*laughs*).



**Did you start out with two stories that found a way to each other or was it the other way around?**

I started with a perfectly polished script of a completely different movie. But if I would have managed to shoot the movie which was planned I would not be a happy person anymore.

**How did Maria Hofstätter come on board?**

I am a big fan of her. Like me she is extremely scared on the set. Which is making her work quite outstanding. I think that she is quite a maniac in what she is doing because she is spending an incredible amount of time and preparation for her character. Every weekend she visited a place for people suffering from Alzheimer. If she would be a documentary filmmaker, we would now have a fantastic movie made by her. She had everything. She got access to the place, the people, their relatives, she was getting interviews, it's crazy what she was doing.



**And Raimund Wallisch?**

We actually met in a café by accident. We had this idea of Maria having a companion. And then we found Raimund Wallisch and something started to pop up and it became a story and he became not only a full but a fantastic character. I am completely in love with this guy. The way he can improvise is pure madness.

**The first line of dialogue is spoken after 15 minutes and it is almost a whisper. Was that something you did on purpose?**

No. When I started to shoot the movie, the one no one will ever see, the perfect movie, I realized I had a problem because I didn't like and I didn't believe in what I was seeing in the frame. I had to find another way. We were trying different approaches. On the seventh day I was out of ideas on how to make it work. Then we started the pain attack scene with a minimal crew, everybody was hiding, and the actors were not supposed to stop. After eight hours of almost non-stop shooting and almost being thrown out of the hospital, we knew we had found our way how to do this film. Necessarily, the script was immediately going into the garbage bin. Because this way of shooting cannot have such a story and such scenes. I couldn't rewrite it, because when you are shooting you're in the middle of a machine. The biggest deficit during this time is minutes when you can be alone and where you can think about what to do next. The rest of the time you have to spend with people giving them the impression that you know what you are doing. We made it up from scratch.

**What's your favorite film? Or the one that made you fall in love with filmmaking?**

There actually was the right movie at the exact right moment. I was still in school and had been facing a lot of violence towards me. Right after the first outbreak of violence I was in the hospital. I stayed at home for two months to recover. I was thinking about what to do. Should I go back to this school? Should I continue this circle of violence, really hurt someone badly? It feels quite serious when you are 14 years old. Because it actually is quite serious. And it was also very serious for my parents. They didn't know what to do. I remember I was sitting there with my father late in the evening. We turned on the TV because he didn't know what to say to me. And I was this absolutely uncommunicative teenager. And suddenly there was "American History X" about this circle of violence and what can happen if you answer violence with violence. It was the first time I was crying after watching a movie. Since then I am doing it quite often.

Regarding filmmaking, the movies by Michael Glawogger had a huge impact on me. I was watching his movie on the train on the way from Kiew to

Odessa to my first shooting. I was blown away. I didn't know that there was another way to do movies. He is a very important person in my life. Still. And then there was Victor Kossakovsky. I love this guy and I love his movies. In all art history we are standing on the shoulders of giants. And it's very important to find your giant. For me such giants were Glawogger, Kossakovsky, Ulrich Seidl, Lars von Trier.

**When you started the fire in the film, did you ask? Should you have asked?**

Well (*grins*) ... we wanted to ask! But we didn't have the time. We shot it in the Ukraine. There was an extremely powerful dry stormy wind. Before burning the field we wanted to get at least one fire engine, we knew it could get out of hand very quickly. Unfortunately, we couldn't get one because they were all treating a huge fire catastrophe in the middle of the city. So the whole field was burning but it was somehow slowly burning down.



**You are a lucky guy.**

I wouldn't say that. Maybe in the end. But to reach this point you always have to die a couple of times.

Interview: Julia Pühringer

# JURI RECHINSKY

Born in Turkmenistan.

Raised in Kiev.

Lives and works in Vienna.

2013 - 2017

**“UGLY”**

2010 - 2013

**“SICKFUCKPEOPLE”**

## **Festivals (selection):**

HotDocs

Sarajevo Film Festival

Raindance Film Festival

Viennale Film Festival

DOK Leipzig

Festival dei Popoli

Thessaloniki International Film Festival

Mill Valley Film Festival

## **Awards**

Heart of Sarajevo for Best Documentary Film  
(Sarajevo Film Festival, Bosnia and Herzegovina)

Best Documentary Feature  
(Raindance FF, London)

Best International Documentary  
(DocsDF, Mexico)

Vienna Film Award, Best Documentary  
and  
Erste Bank More Value Film Award  
(Viennale, Vienna)

Best European Independent Documentary  
(European Independent Film Festival, Paris)

Grand Prix  
(Human Doc Film Festival, Poland)



STATEMENT BY PRODUCER  
FRANZ NOVOTNY

After "Sickfuckpeople", the film that captured the immeasurable suffering arising from the neoliberal economic system and introduced the transformation of a solidified society into cruelty, Rechinsky confronts us with another disturbing and oppressive work. His feature jumps down your throat.

UGLY throws a young, unburdened couple into a world of ordinary horror.

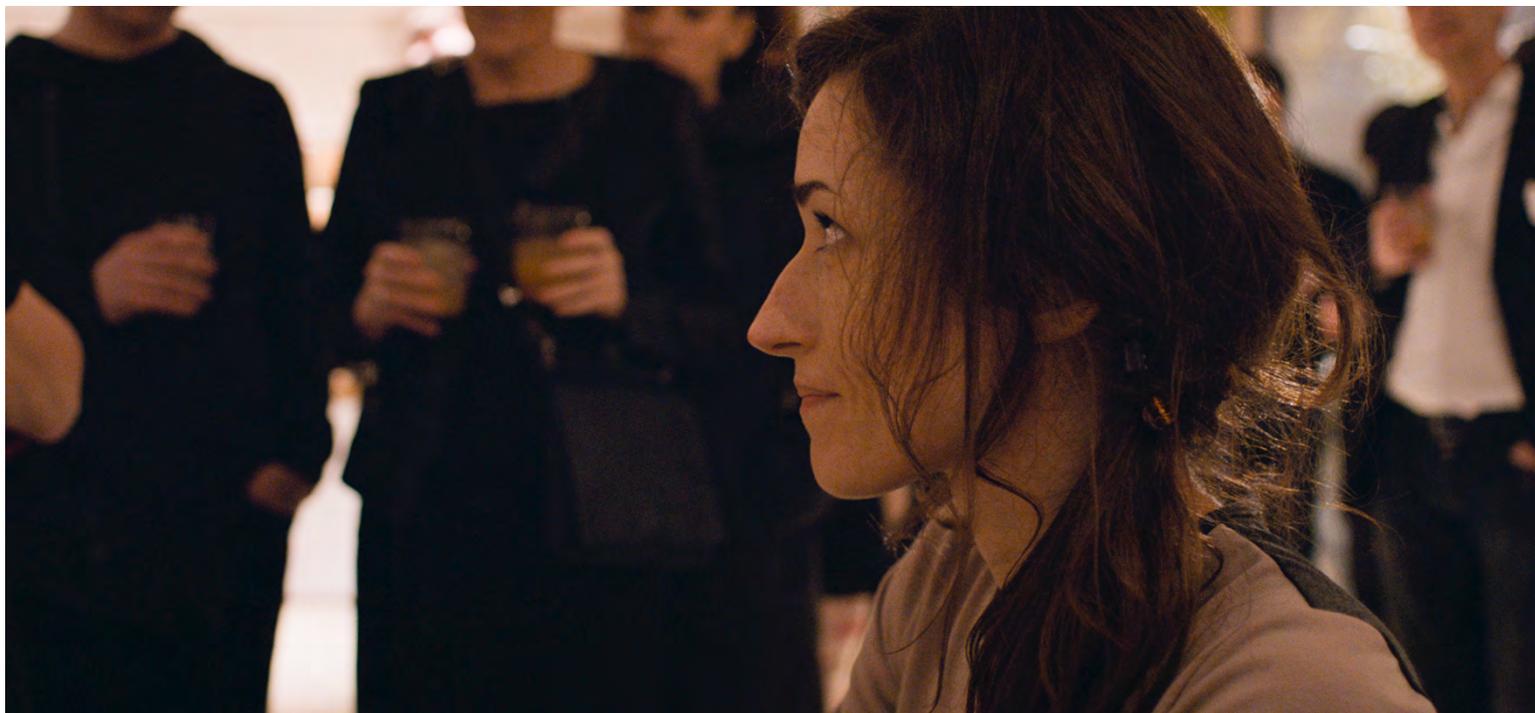
It may be that one is sitting in the cinema where the impetus caused by the motion picture does not abrade like Teflon, one who will overcome their shudder and work with many others in solutions that do not exhaust themselves in anger, compassion or perplexity.

UGLY is one of those sparks that help ignite the extinct flame of humanitarianism.

Or not.

"UGLY", Rechinsky's first feature film. You can only love it or hate it, there is no inbetween. "To the happy few" (Stendhal)

Uncompromising, tart and true.



# ANGELA GREGOVIC

HANNA

She was born in Belgrade, Serbia. In 1999 she graduated from University of Arts, Faculty of Music Belgrade, with B.A. degree Professional Musician – Concert Pianist. Gregovic took postgraduate courses at IUAV University, Faculty of Design and Arts, Venice, Italy, getting M.A. degree in Theatre Sciences and Techniques (2007). She studied acting with Gordana Maric, Susi Stach, Sam Schacht and Alithea Phillips. Since 2009 teaching at Department of Stage and Film Design, University of Applied Arts Vienna, Austria. Assistant Professor to Bernhard Kleber and teacher for performance.

## Filmography

- |      |   |
|------|---|
| 2015 | TATORT<br>TV-series, one episode, director: Thomas Roth   |
| 2011 | BRAND - EINE TOTENGESCHICHTE<br>feature film, director: Thomas Roth<br>nominated for “Best Actress”, Austrian Film Awards |
| 2004 | GLITTERATI<br>feature film, director: Roger Avary   |



# DMITRIY BOGDAN

JURA

Dmitry Bogdan was born in Sevastopol in 1985. At the age of 19 he attended The Boris Shchukin Theatre Institute. Since 2005 he works as an actor at the Theater Near Stanislavsky House in Moscow. He made his film debut in "City Scape" and by the age of 23 he starred in The Shapito Show. In 2012 he was working at the Taganka theatre. Together with young director Vadim Valliullin he founded a film production company. In 2016 the company produced the short film „The Credit“, it was awarded on Kinotavr film festival. Currently Dmitry Bogdan works in theatre, producing and as an actor in films while starting a new musical project.

## Filmography (selection)

2016	SOLAR CIRCLE
2016	SOMETHING WRONG WITH PARENTS
2015	LAST CIGARETTE (SHORT)
2015	30 DATES
2015	DEAD LUCKY
2015	BLACK WATER



# MARIA HOFSTÄTTER

MARTHA

Maria Hofstätter was born in 1964 in Linz. She is an Austrian film and theater actress and received several international awards for her performances such as the Austrian Film Award for “Best Actress” and the Special Prize of the Jury at the Festival Internacional de Cine del Gijón.

## Filmography (selection, cinema)

2015	DIE WILDE MAUS director: Josef Hader
2012	SUPEREGOS director: B. Heisenberg
2011	PARADIES director: Ulrich Seidl Special Prize of the Jury, Venice 2012
2006	DICK director: A. Svoboda
2005	IMPORT/EXPORT director: Ulrich Seidl Cannes 2007
2004	SOPHIE SCHOLL director: S. Rothemund



# RAIMUND WALLISCH

JOSEF

Raimund Wallisch was born in Graz in 1969. He is especially known for “Vier Frauen und ein Todesfall” (2005), “Nacktschnecken” (2004) and “Contact High” (2009).

## Filmography (selection)

2015	ALTES GELD director: David Schalko
2012	SCHNELL ERMITTELT TV-series
2010	DIE MUTPROBE director: Holger Barthel
	3FALTIG director: Harald Sicheritz
2009	DER FALL DES LEMMING director: Nikolaus Leytne
	CONTACT HIGH director: M. Glawogger
2006	IN 3 TAGEN BIST DU TOT director: A. Prochaska
2004	NACKTSCHNECKEN director: M. Glawogger



## KLAUS PRIDNIG

### EXECUTIVE PRODUCER & CO-WRITER

Born in 1967 in Austria, lives in Vienna and St. Petersburg. Left Vienna Filmacademy in 1995. Works as Producer, Executive Producer, Scriptwriter, Dramaturg, Fixer, Production Manager, Assistant Director (Ulrich Seidl, Michael Glawogger, Barbara Albert, Fraziska Buch and many more), Actors Agent.

#### Filmography as Producer (selection)

2014/15	UGLY Juri Rechinsky, Ukraine
2013	THANK YOU FOR BOMBING Barbara Eder, Jordan
2012	SICKFUCKPEOPLE Juri Rechinsky, Ukraine
2007	ALIVE Artan Minarolli, Albania preparation
2005-2007	IMPORT-EXPORT Ulrich Seidl. Ukraine, Czech
2001/02	ANTARES Götz Spielmann, preparation

#### Filmography as Scriptwriter

2014/15	HOTEL EMBRYO (DOC.)
2013	UGLY
2012	A LITTLE PIECE OF SUN

#### Filmography as Production Manager

2016	ELYSION
2015	VAYA CON DIOS
2013-2015	THANK YOU FOR BOMBING UGLY



## NOVOTNY&NOVOTNY FILMPRODUCTION

Novotny & Novotny Filmproduktion is a Vienna-based film production company, founded by Franz and Karin Novotny in 1995. Since 2010 the company is run by the producers Franz Novotny and Alexander Glehr. Over the last two decades we produced award-winning feature films, documentaries, commercials and TV-series.

### Filmography (selection)

2016	EGON SCHIELE Dieter Berner	2013	TAKING IT BACK Andreas Schmied
	WE USED TO BE COOL Marie Kreutzer		SICKFUCKPEOPLE Juri Rechinsky
	CODENAME HOLEC Franz Novotny	2012	THE STRANGE CASE OF W. REICH Antonin Svoboda
2015	THERAPY FOR A VAMPIRE David Ruehm	2011	THE FATHERLESS Marie Kreutzer
2014	A MOMENT OF LIFE (Doc) Anita Natmeßnig	2010	JEW SUESS- RISE AND FALL Oskar Roehler
	SUPEREGOS Benjamin Heisenberg		

## PRONTO FILM

### CO-PRODUCTION

Pronto Film is the award-winning Ukrainian production with over 10 years of experience in making films, TV series and commercials, helmed by experienced producer Maxim Asadchiy. Pronto Film provided shooting in Ukraine for international films (Import /Export by Ulrich Seidl; The Debt by Assaf Bernstein; In Zeiten des abnehmenden Lichts by Matti Geschonneck), as well as producing some of the most important Ukrainian films, like “The Guide” (nomination for Grand Prix in Warsaw; Ukrainian submission for Foreign Language Film Oscar) and “Brothers. The Final Confession” (Best Actress and critic’s prize at Moscow IFF; nomination for Grand Prix at Goa IFF). Its latest production is documentary “Breaking Point: The War for Democracy in Ukraine” co-directed by Academy Award-winning director Mark Johnathan Harris.

## ULRICH SEIDL FILM

### CO-PRODUCTION

Ulrich Seidl Film Produktion was founded by Ulrich Seidl and Veronika Franz in 2003 following the international success of Seidl’s “Dog Days” (2001). On the one hand to produce his own films, and on the other, to provide filmmakers with different means for creating films than in conventional production companies. “Import Export” (2007), the first theatrical feature produced by Ulrich Seidl Film Produktion, premiered in competition at the 2007 Cannes Film Festival. Followed by the acclaimed film trilogy “PARADISE” (2012). The three films celebrated their premiere in the competitions of the world’s most important film festivals in Cannes, Venice and Berlin. At the 2014 Venice Film Festival two films produced by the company celebrated their world premiere: Ulrich Seidl’s film essay “In the Basement” (2014) as well as “Goodnight Mommy” (2014), the fiction feature debut by Veronika Franz and Severin Fiala, who previously made the documentary “Kern” (2012) about the director and actor Peter Kern.