

2024

**EAST DOC
PLATFORM**
22–28.03

**POLISH
DOCS
PRO**

EAST DOC FORUM

Under His Spell

DIR.: **ŁUKASZ KONOPA** • PROD.: SILVER FRAME • POLAND • DOCUMENTARY • 2026 • 80'

A surreal journey into the life of Dr Kashpirovsky, a man who at the end of the 80s became famous for his remarkable achievements, such as sedating three women through the sheer power of persuasion so they could undergo major surgical operations live on television. But Kashpirovsky's current day-to-day life is only a shadow of his past. Living in a small apartment, he runs a YouTube channel where he live streams speeches, clashes with his haters, and occasionally – produces homemade weight-lifting videos. Despite being once a Soviet icon, he is half Polish and half Ukrainian, living with a Tatar woman from Crimea. He, who claims to have cured millions is now grappling with his own health and mortality, but he still plans to revive his stage career with a grand show in the capital of Kazakhstan. The questions loom: will people show up? Who are they, and what do they expect? When he finally faces the audience, we will discover whether he still possesses his charisma or if he will be exposed as a charlatan.





EAST DOC FORUM

Birdie

EX ORIENTE PARTICIPANT

DIR.: ANETA PTAK • PROD.: STARON FILM • POLAND • DOCUMENTARY • 2024 • 70'

An unexpected series of events throws Aneta off guard and in one sudden blast sweeps away from her life two most important men – her father and her husband. The unwanted breakup of her marriage triggered by the unforeseen death of her dad forced her to search for consolation through the relationship with her camera. This medium, implanted in her by her father, a cinematographer, becomes her witness, therapist and redeemer. She directs the lens on herself and the immediate surroundings and documents her years-long process of realisation that the painful 'celestial coincidence' of both losses, was in reality a blessing in disguise. While Aneta reexamines her life, a terrifying truth comes to the surface. She recognises how oblivious she was to the fact that her once beloved husband is in reality a sexual predator and brainwashing cult leader. Aneta uses her right as the filmmaker to claim the narrative and liberate herself from the influence of false personas of masters.

EAST DOC FORUM

Letters

EX ORIENTE PARTICIPANT

DIR.: ANDREI KUTSILA • PROD.: DOCEDU FOUNDATION • POLAND • DOCUMENTARY • 2025 • 90'

Belarusian activist Vitold Ashurak wrote to his mother: 'My beloved mother! Those people who say that adults do not need a mother are wrong! You alone raised Andrei and me and you wanted us to grow up to be decent people! No one will reproach you for your sons being thieves or swindlers! On the contrary, I was imprisoned precisely because I spoke the truth and urged not to bear with swindlers.' The mother's reply was not delivered to Vitold. It was his last letter from the prison, where he was tortured and died under unknown circumstances. After the emergence of unprecedented peaceful protest by Belarusians in 2020, by now the movement has been put down almost completely. People were killed and wounded, and thousands are in prisons with long sentences. The war in Ukraine again sparked the onset of protests against the war, as well as partisan actions against the Russian military. The repressions have become even harder. The only thing that connects prisoners with the outer world is letters.





EAST DOC FORUM

Keepers of the Ruins

EX ORIENTE PARTICIPANT

DIR.: **MARIIA SHEVCHENKO** • PROD.: NEW KYIV • UKRAINE, POLAND • DOCUMENTARY
• 2024 • 80'

Kharkiv is located on the border with Russia. Missiles reach the city in 30-40 seconds. More than 1 million Kharkovians left for safer places. Since May 2022, we have been watching those Kharkovians who make hopes out of ruins and give the war in the city a new meaning. Kharkiv has its daily rhythm – 'shelling-cleaning-reconstruction'. We breathe in and see a father mourning his son killed by a missile. We see a music teacher who can't teach an online lesson because notes merge with the air raid sound. We breathe out and observe rescuers clearing debris, and utility workers planting flowers in flowerbeds. People return from abroad and gradually fill a familiar yet slightly changed city. Streets named after Russian figures are being renamed. In the morning, children go to school in underground metro stations so they can continue their studying during air alarms.

EAST DOC FORUM

How I Became a Hijacker

DIR.: **ANDREW CARTER** • PROD.: ALEKSANDRA SZCZĘSNA • POLAND • DOCUMENTARY
• 2025 • 75'

After an escape plan goes terribly wrong, a young East German mother hijacks a plane with her daughter on board, and lands in the middle of a Cold War trial. Now aged almost 80, Ingrid longs to find true freedom by healing the emotional scars left by these events, and letting go of the past. So, director Andrew Carter proposes an unusual filmmaking collaboration, immersing Ingrid once again in her past. The documentary takes a 'behind the scenes' perspective, as Ingrid and other actual participants of the events, together with professional actors, replay moments from this extraordinary story.





SILVER EYE AWARD NOMINEE

Fakir

DIR.: **ROMAN ĎURIŠ** • PROD.: BRIGHT SIGHT PICTURES, LONELY PRODUCTION, LUMISENTA FILM FOUNDATION • SLOVAKIA, CZECH REPUBLIC, POLAND • DOCUMENTARY • 2024 • 83'

In the film *Fakir*, director Roman Ďuriš presents the story of Dalibor, a 23-year-old ex-convict navigating a fractured family dynamic. Dalibor becomes an unlikely hero as he protects his younger brother from their abusive father in a gripping custody battle. The film delves into Dalibor's journey, highlighting his resilience and quest for freedom from his troubled past. Simultaneously battling personal demons, Dalibor finds solace as a fakir in a shabby traveling circus, where the agonizing nailbed becomes his haven. *Fakir* captures the tension and vulnerability of Dalibor's struggle for a better future, challenging conventional ideas of healing and showcasing the power of resilience in the inevitable process of breaking the generational cycle of trauma and abuse.



SILVER EYE AWARD NOMINEE

Forest

DIR.: **LIDIA DUDA** • PROD.: LUMISENTA FILM FOUNDATION, LONELY PRODUCTION • POLAND, CZECH REPUBLIC • DOCUMENTARY • 2024 • 84'

Asia and Marek bought an old house near the eastern border of Poland, in the oldest forest of Europe. This is their own paradise – a place where their children can grow up safely, away from the problems of today's world. Yet, one day refugees appear in their forest. Unwelcome neither in Poland, nor in Belarus. The whole family helps refugees, even though it's against Polish law. But how can you not help another person in need? Big politics came knocking on their door and nothing was the same anymore.

EAST SILVER MARKET / EAST DOC MARKET **SELECTION**



SILVER EYE AWARD NOMINEE

The Guest

DIR.: **ZUZANNA SOLAKIEWICZ, ZVIKA GREGORY PORTNOY** • PROD.: PLESNAR&KRAUSS FILMS, AL JAZEERA DOCUMENTARY • POLAND, QATAR, FRANCE
• DOCUMENTARY • 2024 • 84'

Maciek lives in the Polish village close to Belarus. It is winter 2021 and the crisis at the border is intensifying. The whole area becomes a military zone. The district is patrolled by the border guard searching for 'illegals' and pushing them back to Belarus. One day Maciek's mother is letting an exhausted Syrian refugee to their house. His name is Alhaytham. Day by day the men are establishing the bond. Although each single day of hiding puts them both in danger – Maciek could be accused of smuggling people and Alhaytham would be pushed back to Belarus again, which could cost him his life.



SILVER EYE AWARD NOMINEE

Putin's Playground

DIR.: **KONRAD SZOLAJSKI** • PROD.: ZK STUDIO, HYPERMARKET FILM, AGITPROP LTD., DOPPELPLUSULTRA FILM UND TV PRODUKTION, ISME FILM • POLAND, CZECH REPUBLIC, GERMANY, NORWAY, LATVIA, BULGARIA • DOCUMENTARY • 2024 • 92'/75'/52'

A pair of Polish filmmakers travel around Central and Eastern Europe and explore cases of hybrid warfare in this region. They show their investigation and the evidence they managed to produce in Poland, the Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Moldova and Latvia – the countries of the post-Soviet camp. They do it in a cinematic way, creating a documentary in which they reveal what was supposed to remain hidden. They discover that behind-the-scenes activities of Moscow special agents have been carried out regularly since at least 2013. The full-scale military invasion of Ukraine in 2022 is accompanied by intensive covert actions in neighbouring countries which are considered next targets. This seems to be a part of Putin's plan to regain the former Russian zone of influence in Europe.

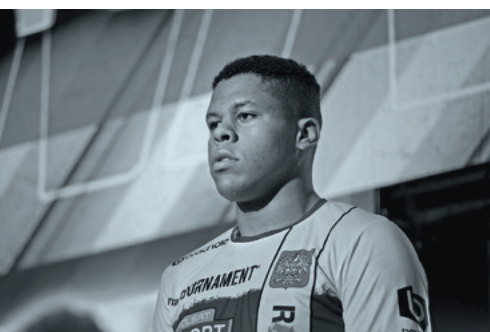


SILVER EYE AWARD NOMINEE

Flowers of Ukraine

DIR.: **ADELINA BORETS** • PROD.: GOGOL FILM, KOSKINO • POLAND, UKRAINE • DOCUMENTARY • 2024 • 70'

Set in the middle of the cement jungle of Kyiv – usually referred to as ‘sleeping quarters’ – we dive into an unexpected oasis of flowers and nature. That is where we find the main character of our film, the 67-year-old Natalia, who is the rebel of the neighborhood, the last one refusing to sell her land. She is full of life and infectious energy, always armed with sense of humour – her strongest shield. When the worst day in Ukrainian history begins, on February 24th 2022, Natalia’s fight for her tiny plot of land only gains momentum and quickly expands way beyond its borders. Everyone is changing as a result of the war. Natalia is no different. Yet, she prepares for her own death, dancing in her funeral dress in the garden among flowers. She will die here and no one can take it away.



On My Own Terms

DIR.: **TADEUSZ CHUDY** • PROD.: SMART FILMS, DJ FILM • POLAND • DOCUMENTARY • 2024 • 60'

When half-siblings Pawet and Julia inherit a flat from Julia’s late father, they see a glimmer of hope to move out from the orphanage and into their first real home. Their quest for stability will test sibling bond and make them face the problems of adulthood.

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Child of Dust

DIR.: **WERONIKA MLCZEWSKA** • PROD.: YA MAN STUDIO, CLUBHOUSE FILMS, GINESTRA FILM • POLAND, VIETNAM, SWEDEN • DOCUMENTARY • 2024 • 92'

One day Sang, a child from the Vietnam war, finds his biological father in the USA. Now Sang's only mission is to meet his dad. He needs to undergo the US program that will grant him a visa, the only rule is that: he needs to leave his daughter behind because she is over 21 years old. Sang's daughter runs away from home, sinks into heroin addiction and abandons her son, leaving him to Sang and his wife. As they cannot leave the grandson alone and leave to America, Sang needs to find his daughter and finally reconcile with her. Sang's reunion with his father is a clash of two worlds that, despite the passage of fifty years since the withdrawal of US troops from Vietnam, are still marked by the stigma of war. Will this journey trigger a new start for both families?



Do Painters Die Elsewhere

DIR.: **MICHAŁ PIETRAK** • PROD.: ORIENT FILM • POLAND • DOCUMENTARY • 2024 • 72'

In Laski there is a house which is dying. We are following the story of an artist, living in a self built house, enclosed inside his opus. The secret of Blok's art craft, is his ability to transform human pain into beauty, which turns his life into a creative process. On the other hand he is a local alien. He rides a bike, proposes acts to married women, occasionally sleeps in the chapel. His house parties are visited by actors, painters, opera and cabaret singers. Still he couldn't help the feeling of loneliness. When his girlfriend Eva suffers from cancer, Bolko combats the death of his love by recording an audio diary for her, so she can 'laugh when it's all over', than to keep her voice with him. When she dies Bolko keeps recording.



EAST DOC MARKET

Divia

DIR.: **DMYTRO HRESHKO** • PROD.: GOGOL FILM • POLAND, UKRAINE
• DOCUMENTARY • 2024 • 70'

With the beginning of military aggression in 2014 and the full-scale invasion by Russia in 2022, the state of the ecology in Ukraine has deteriorated catastrophically. The name of the film, *Divia*, comes from the Slavic goddess of nature, who represents the mother of all living things. The main characters of the film are the nature of Ukraine and the war which brings destruction and death. The film's structure is based on the conflict between those two antagonist forces. It consists of three acts. In the first act, we see nature as a primary system of coexistence of its elements, flora and fauna, with no humans present. In the second act we see the fiery whirlwind of war rapidly destroying natural landscapes. In the third act, deminers, body searchers, ecologists, animal activists are wandering around like ghosts, trying to measure the scale of the tragedy, clean the land and repair lost natural resources.

EAST SILVER MARKET

When Harmattan Blows

DIR.: **EDYTA WRÓBLEWSKA** • PROD.: SK FILM STUDIO • POLAND • DOCUMENTARY • 2024 • 75'

Barbara is 25 and lives in Accra. As an eight-year-old girl she shared the fate of thousands of Ghanaian children who were given away and put to slave labour by their own parents. For years she functioned in a world full of abuse, violence and fear. Although full of anger, she has been supporting the parents and pays for the family, but their expectations keep rising. Together with her brother she returns to her hometown to find a solution. Before that can happen, Barbara has to finally confront the parents.

SILVER EYE AWARD NOMINEE

