



**TIGER
COMPETITION**

INTERNATIONAL
FILM FESTIVAL
ROTTERDAM
2025

Perla

A FILM BY ALEXANDRA MAKAROVÁ

A GOLDEN GIRLS FILM
IN CO-PRODUCTION WITH HAILSTONE & RUTH BECKERMANN FILMPRODUKTION

Perla

by ALEXANDRA MAKAROVÁ

FEATURE FILM
110 MINUTES
AUSTRIA, SLOVAKIA 2025

PRODUCTION

GOLDEN GIRLS
FILMPRODUKTION &
FILMSERVICES GMBH
Seidengasse 15/20
1070 Vienna
+43 1 8105636
office@goldengirls.at
www.goldengirls.at

CO-PRODUCTION COMPANIES

HAILSTONE, S.R.O.
Vajnorská 6
SK-831 04 Bratislava
+42 1 902 20 40 60
info@hailstone.sk
www.hailstone.sk

RUTH BECKERMANN
FILMPRODUKTION
Marc Aurel-Straße 5
1010 Vienna
+43 1 990 99 45
sekretariat@ruthbeckermann.com
www.ruthbeckermann.com

WORLD SALES

CERCAMON
PO Box 416 207
Dubai, UAE
+33 6 21 71 39 11
hello@cercamon.biz
www.cercamon.biz

DISTRIBUTION AUSTRIA

STADTKINO FILMVERLEIH
UND KINOBETRIEBS-
GESELLSCHAFT M.B.H.
Siebensterngasse 2/12,
1070 Vienna
+43 1 361 81 81
office@stadtkinowien.at

INTERNATIONAL PRESS

THE PR FACTORY
Barbara Van Lombeek
+32486546480
Eugénie Malinjud
+33 762 65 39 08
barbara@theprefactory.com
eugenie@theprefactory.com
www.theprefactory.com

ONLINE MARKETING

ALPHAPANDA
Mathias Noschis
mathias@alphapanda.com
Charlotte Voillequin
charlotte@alphapanda.com





**TIGER
COMPETITION**

INTERNATIONAL
FILM FESTIVAL
ROTTERDAM
2025

Screenings

International Film Festival Rotterdam 2025

Date	Time	Location	
2 Feb 2025	09:45	KINO 4	Press & Industry
3 Feb 2025	21:15	PATHÉ 7	Public
5 Feb 2025	11:30	PATHÉ 2	Public
6 Feb 2025	13:45	PATHÉ 7	Public



Cast

PERLA **REBEKA POLÁKOVÁ**
JOSEF **SIMON SCHWARZ**
ANDREJ **NOËL CZUCZOR**
JULIA **CARMEN DIEGO**
CLAUDIA **HILDE DALIK**
FRAU MICHEJEVA **GRAŻYNA DYLAĞ**
JÚLIUS **IVAN ROMANČÍK**
LENKA **ZUZANA KONEČNÁ**
KOVÁČOVÁ **INGRID TIMKOVÁ**

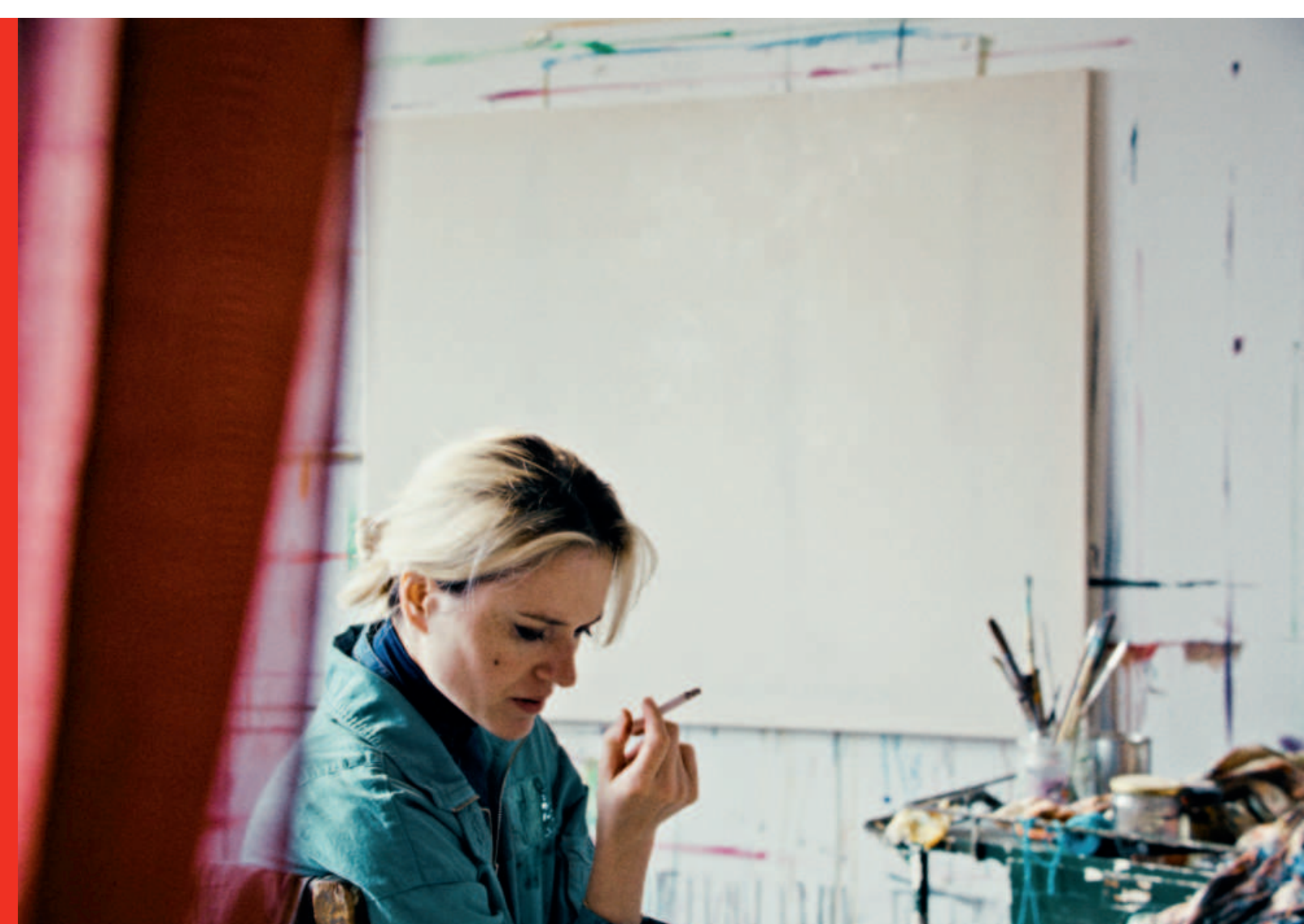
And many more

Perla is a production of Golden Girls Film in co-production with Hailstone and Ruth Beckermann Filmproduktion, produced with the support of the ÖFI+, the Austrian Film Institute, Vienna Film Fund, Slovak Audiovisual Fund Cash Rebate, Slovak Audiovisual Fund, Land Niederösterreich (Department of Art and Culture), in co-operation with the ORF Film/Fernseh-Abkommen and STVR - Slovak Television and Radio.



Credits

WRITER & DIRECTOR **ALEXANDRA MAKAROVÁ**
D.O.P. **GEORG WEISS**
SOUND RECORDIST **JOHANNES BAUMANN**
PRODUCTION DESIGN **KLAUDIA KICZAK**
ART DIRECTORS **BRIGITA TEPLANOVÁ & DOROTA VOLFOVÁ**
COSTUME DESIGN **MONIKA BUTTINGER**
MAKE-UP **SAM DOPONA, VERENA PELLEGRINI**
GAFFER **KIMBER LEE JERRETT**
1ST AD **HANUŠ POLAK JR.**
EDITOR **JOANA SCRINZI**
MUSIC **JOHANNES WINKLER, RUSANDA PANFILI**
SOUND DESIGN **ATANAS TCHOLAKOV**
RE-RECORDING MIXER **RUDOLF POTOTSCHNIG**
COLOR GRADING **ANDI WINTER**
CASTING **EVA ROTH, MARTINA POEL, MONIKA KRČMÁROVÁ, PETRA SVARINSKÁ**
PRODUCTION MANAGER **KARIN SCHMATZ**
PRODUCERS **ARASH T. RIAHI & SABINE GRUBER**
CO-PRODUCER (SLOVAKIA) **TOMÁŠ KRUPA**
CO-PRODUCER (AUSTRIA) **RUTH BECKERMANN**



Logline

In 1980s Vienna, a dissident artist's life is turned upside down when her estranged partner reappears after prison, prompting a perilous journey back to Czechoslovakia that threatens her newfound family.

Short Synopsis

In 1981 Vienna, Perla, an exiled artist and single mother, struggles to support her daughter, Julia, a talented young pianist. When Julia's father, Andrej, claims to be seriously ill, Perla makes the dangerous journey back to communist Czechoslovakia, only to discover that he wants to force his way back into their lives. Pulled between past and present, Perla begins making reckless choices that jeopardise her future with her daughter.



CRUSH MY HEART

(Orig. ZERSCHLAG MEIN HERZ)

scriptwriter & director:

Alexandra Makarová

Co-Author: Sebastian Schmidl

Drama, 99 min, 2018

World Sales: Beta Film

Diagonale, AUSTRIA

Romy Akademiepreis, AUSTRIA

Best Production 2019

Art Film Fest Košice, SLOVAKIA

Best Script

Biberacher Filmfestspiele, DE

Best Script

Internationales Filmwochenende Würzburg, DE

Bolzano Film Festival Bozen, ITALY

South East European Film Festival, LOS ANGELES

Best Feature Film

Ariano Film Festival, ITALY

Best International Film

Fimkunst MV Schwerin, DE

Porto Femme Film Festival, PORTUGAL

Best Feature Film

New Austria Film Festival, MOSCOW, RUSSIA

Mind the Indie Film Festival, PLOVIDV, BULGARIA

Santiago del Estero Film Festival, ARGENTINA

Hong Kong Film Art Int. Film Festival, HONG KONG

Slum Film Festival NAIROBI, KENYA

Portobello Film Festival, LONDON, UK

Lublin Film Festival, LUBLIN, POLAND

Winchester Film Festival, UK

Best Feature Film

SOLA

scriptwriter & director:

Alexandra Makarová

Drama, 20 min, 2013

Diagonale, AUSTRIA

Honorable Mention

Edinburgh International Film Festival, SCO

Créteil International Women's Film Festival

Film + Award

Vienna Independent Shorts

ANOTHER DAY

(Orig.: AN EINEM ANDEREN TAG)

scriptwriter & director:

Alexandra Makarová

Co-Author: Sebastian Schmidl

Drama, 30 min, 2012

Filmfestival Max Ophüls Preis, DE

Cannes Short Film Corner, FRA

**Coups de coeur Canal Plus*

Director's filmography

Director's Biography

Alexandra Makarová, born 1985 in Kosice, Slovak Republic. After the fall of the Iron Curtain, she moved to Vienna to live with her mother, who was a painter, and studied scriptwriting and directing at the Vienna Film College. "Zerschlag mein Herz", a drama about Roma begging in Vienna, was her debut film. Makarová works as a filmmaker in Vienna.



Company profile

Golden Girls

Golden Girls Film is a collective of writer/directors and producers, combining artistic and technical skills. The team around Arash & Arman T. Riahi, Peter Drössler and Julia Horvath is focusing on timeless social and political issues. Golden Girls Film has won more than 200 international awards. Their recent feature film "The Witness" won the Orizzonti Extra section in Venice 2024, "Eismayer" premiered at Venice Int. Critics' Week 2022 and won the Award for Best Film there, as well as the Audience Award at Les Arcs FF. In 2019, their co-production "Born in Evin" won the Berlinale Perspektive Compass Award and "Solo" premiered in Cannes. The co-production "Once Upon a Time in Venezuela" premiered at Sundance in 2020, was Venezuela's official Oscar-entry and won Best Film at Hot Springs FF.

THE WITNESS (SHAHED)
(100'), Feature Film, DE/AT 2024,
Director: Nader Saeivar
co-written by Jafar Panahi

**TO CLOSE YOUR EYES AND
SEE FIRE**

(98'), Documentary, AT 2024,
Directors: Nicola von Leffern,
Jakob Carl Sauer

ANDREA GETS A DIVORCE

(ANDREA LÄSST SICH SCHEIDEN)
(93'), Feature Film, AT 2024,
Director: Josef Hader

EISMAYER

(87'), Feature Film, AT 2022,
Director: David Wagner

THE BUBBLE

(92'), Documentary, CH/AT 2021,
Director: Valerie Blankenbyl

FOX IN A HOLE

(103'), Feature Film, AT 2021,
Director: Arman T. Riahi

**THE MOST BEAUTIFUL PLACE
ON EARTH**

(87'), Documentary, AT 2020,
Director: Elke Groen

**ONCE UPON A TIME
IN VENEZUELA**

(99'), Documentary,
VE/GB/AT/BR 2020,
Director: Anabel Rodríguez Ríos

SOLO

(84'), Documentary,
CZ/FR/AR/AT 2019,
Director: Artemio Benki

BORN IN EVIN

(98'), Documentary, DE/AT 2019,
Director: Maryam Zaree

THE GOOD DEATH

(83'), Documentary, SK/CZ/AT 2018,
Director: Tomáš Krupa

COPS

(98'), Feature Film, AT 2018,
Director: Stefan A. Lukacs

THE MIGRUMPIES

(98'), Feature Film, AT 2017,
Director: Arman T. Riahi

FREE LUNCH SOCIETY

(95'), Documentary, AT/DE 2017,
Director: Christian Tod

KINDERS

(95'), Documentary, AT 2017,
Director: Riahi Brothers

NIGHT OF A 1000 HOURS

(92'), Feature Film, LU/AT/NL 2016,
Director: Virgil Widrich

THE EREMITES

(110'), Feature Film, DE/AT 2016,
Director: Ronny Trocker

KORIDA

(87'), Documentary, AT 2016,
Director: Siniša Vidović

ONE OF US

(86'), Feature Film, AT 2015,
Director: Stephan Richter

EVERYDAY REBELLION

(110'), Documentary, AT/CH 2013,
Director: Riahi Brothers

EXILE FAMILY MOVIE

(94'), Documentary, AT 2006,
Director: Arash T. Riahi



Company profile Hailstone

HAILSTONE is a film production company that was established in 2013 in Slovakia. Their main focus is on creating independent documentaries and art house fiction films for both cinema, TV and VOD. They tackle topics related to society, climate change, social issues and personal stories. Their films are sometimes controversial and thought-provoking, but they are always made with passion and meet the highest cinematic standards. Hailstone takes pride in their success at national film awards and festivals worldwide, but they believe that their upcoming projects will define their true worth.



WE HAVE TO SURVIVE

Documentary, SK/FRA/AT 2025,
Director: Tomáš Krupa
Co-Prod. with YUZU Production and
Golden Girls Film | *(in production)*

**WE HAVE TO SURVIVE:
FUKUSHIMA!**

(13'), Short, SK 2022,
Director: Tomáš Krupa

THE GOOD DEATH

(83'), Documentary,
SK/CZ/FR/AT 2018,
Director: Tomáš Krupa
Co-Prod. with master film and
Golden Girls Film

**GRADUATES:
FREEDOM IS NOT FOR FREE**

(83'), Documentary, SK 2012,
Director: Tomáš Krupa
Co-Prod. With Furia Film and
Family Film

Director's Note

As the title suggests, the film is all about Perla. Her fight for freedom and her resilience are woven into nearly every frame. I dedicated Perla to my grandmother, whose immense passion for life and bold choices inspired the journey of my heroine.

For Perla, the struggle is simple but profound: the right to make her own decisions. It was important to me to use the political setting of the early 1980s as a backdrop rather than the central focus, as the true battle is fought on an emotional level between the characters.

Working with Rebeka Polaková and the rest of the incredible Slovak cast and crew was a cathartic experience for me. On the final day of shooting, as we said our goodbyes, I realised they had helped me build a bridge between my past and a possible future. I hope Perla can do the same—connecting the women of the past with the women I see today.

They exist all around the world, trapped by patriarchal systems that isolate, silence, and control them. Yet I wanted to leave the audience with a powerful message of resistance and hope.



Director's Interview

Your family roots go back to the former Czechoslovakia. To what extent has the history of your family been shaped by political regimes?

ALEXANDRA MAKAROVÁ: My personality has been influenced to a considerable extent by the history of my family. My great-grandparents fled Russia in 1917 after the October Revolution. They had to leave everything behind, and because they took refuge in Czechoslovakia, they were the only ones from their families who survived. That was the beginning of the refugee movement in my family. Two days after Nazi Germany capitulated, my great-grandfather was deported to Siberia; for years afterwards, his family didn't even know whether he was alive or not. Following the death of Stalin, he was returned to his family in 1956 due to the intervention of Alexander Dubček. These traumatic experiences became

anchored so deep within us, they were constant elements of our lives. For as long as I can remember, we would talk about hunger. Having to flee, being expelled or imprisoned; these things are deep inside me. The fear of something similar happening to me is always there, no matter how unlikely it is. I am sure those fears and modes of behaviour were passed on to us. That's why I see the roots of Perla's story in my own family.

You have set the story of PERLA in the year 1981. We now know that the end of the Warsaw Pact authoritarian regimes wasn't so far away at that time. What was everyday life like, what prospects were there for young people such as Perla and Andrej?

I think history is repeating itself right now in Slovakia, in Hungary and in Georgia. People are watched to see if

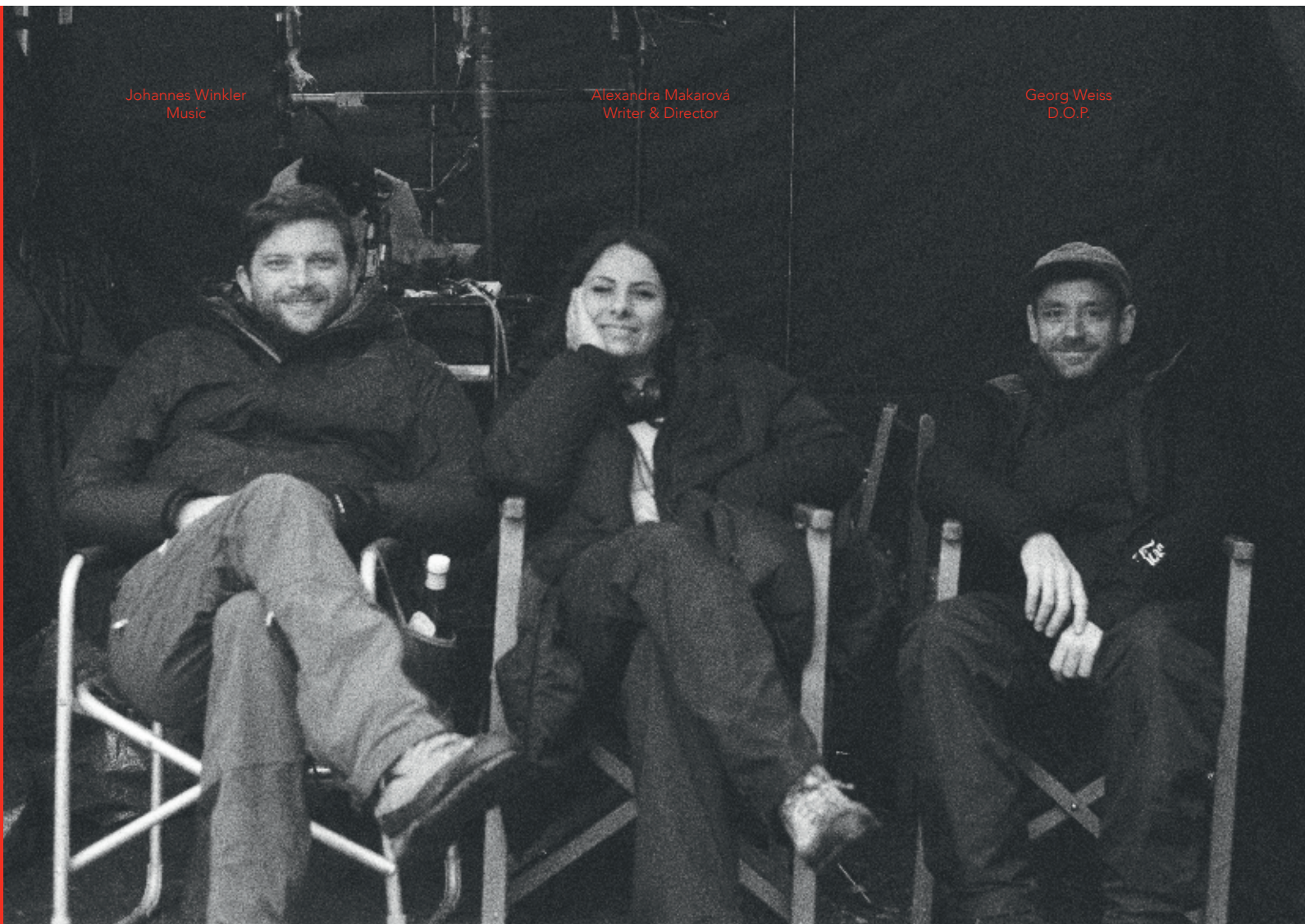
they demonstrate loyalty to the regime, like back then. Children from families who were party members and had contacts could study whatever they wanted, while those known to have parents or grandparents who opposed the regime could not. That also applied to Perla – and to my mother, who applied to art school four times. She was rejected each time and only accepted towards the end of the regime. There were drastic invasions of privacy. You couldn't travel or say what you thought. I chose the early 80s because it was a slightly more hopeful time than the Stalinist 1950s or the period just after the invasions of Warsaw Pact troops.

PERLA is a film that emerged from the screenplay program *If she can see it she can be it*. What aspects of a self-confident female main character did you bring to the fore when writing?

Johannes Winkler
Music

Alexandra Makarová
Writer & Director

Georg Weiss
D.O.P.



The idea behind *If she can see it she can be it* is to encourage female characters that go beyond the clichéd. I put a lot of effort into adhering to this aim – but still I caught myself repeatedly veering away towards clichés. I had to rap myself on the knuckles again and again. What I like about Perla is her resilience and her basic trust in her intuition, regardless of potential losses. That's the way she is. Mother, artist, rebel. She decides for herself again and again, always following her intuition with dogged persistence. Perla isn't unsympathetic, but she makes decisions that many people find incomprehensible. We are all ambivalent. And I think the prevailing image of motherhood really needs to be questioned – in my case too.

To what extent do you subscribe to the idea that children have to bear the consequences of decisions taken by their parents?

A great deal. This brings us back to transgenerational trauma, even in today's world. The decisions taken by

parents always have consequences for the children, for the rest of their lives. Naturally I was influenced by our conversations around the dinner table about camps, hunger and wartime events. So much so that I have made a film about it. Julia, Perla's daughter, also represents children today who end up in Europe, or other regions of the world, due to migration. I am not aware of women starting wars, raping or pillaging. But they are the ones who have to raise a new generation, try to rebuild and pay for the mistakes made by the patriarchy.

PERLA is also a story about the past and new beginnings. Often your shots only show segments, with elements that obstruct the view of the whole, half-open doors. Does this tell us something about a past that is always only half closed, a present with new beginnings that will always remain only half open?

You could say that's absolutely the point. At a relatively early stage it became apparent that we wanted the visual language to have an observational style;

we looked for angles that were not the most obvious ones. We want to show that this woman is always between two worlds, even though she lives in the present, keeps looking ahead and never turns back. We work a lot with mirrors, because she also has to live with her guilt, with the knowledge of what she left behind. At the same time, she has this longing for home that nothing can replace. The cameraman Georg Weiss and I worked together very intensively, with great respect for this project. It took us a long time to decide which colours should dominate, what the collective memory of that period looks like – because it doesn't always correspond to what it actually looked like. One important insight we gained from PERLA is how crucial costumes are for the visual tone, especially in a historical film. Our colour palette focused more on the 50s and Kodachrome.

The Czechoslovakian hotel is one of the most striking places in the film. How hard was it to find locations for a film about the early 80s?



The most obvious idea would have been to convey the dreariness by using prefabricated concrete structures. I didn't want that. It's not true that the whole of Czechoslovakia consisted of prefabricated buildings. I deliberately chose somewhere with faded glamour, partly to show that this world isn't so far from our own; it was just that a border had been erected. We filmed in the spa town of Sliuč, in a hotel that was a prestige project of the First Republic in Czechoslovakia. It was a bit more difficult with the village. We finally found one where everything looked as if time had stood still. The place was so cinematic and mysterious. However, conditions for the team were difficult. Also because of the bears, which weren't far away from us at that time of year. We always had two hunters on set.

Perla is a painter. You show her pictures but also the creative work involved, in the studio. You chose works by your mother for the actual paintings. Why?

It was important for me to show her in a

completely different world. She is all alone in her studio and can do whatever she wants; she can paint the kind of pictures in Vienna that would have been censored in the Czechoslovak Republic. Selecting the pictures entailed a long journey. First, we had to decide which period of my mother's paintings we wanted to take them from, and there wasn't so much left from the early 90s. It seemed natural to me to use my mother's works, because I initially based the character very firmly on her – though that changed considerably over time. The resilience, and also the hardness, that's from my mother, though also from many other women in my family. And at some point that applied to me, too, even if I didn't want to admit it to myself for a long time. It was also important to me that my mother's paintings should feature in the film, because they have the expressiveness and colour intensity that suit Perla.

The film takes on a rather nightmarish, almost unreal quality towards the end, when Perla becomes involved in a

frightening custom in her village. What is this custom all about?

It's a custom that's enacted on Easter Monday. The women have water poured over them by the men or – depending how rural the region is – they are immersed in the river or bathtubs of water in the farmyards. Then they are whipped with canes. It is an incredibly patriarchal custom. The idea is that this procedure keeps women fresh and healthy all year round. It didn't seem to occur to people that it was actually very intrusive. I witnessed it as a child in a village and found it scary but also exciting; I've never been able to forget it. In the film it also starts almost as a joke, so you don't really know which direction it'll go in, but I felt it was important that it should gradually take on a horrific element. That relates to Perla's inner horror when she finds she's yet again being overpowered by men against her will.



Rebeka Poláková is a Slovakian actress. How did you discover her for the leading role? What demands did this part place on the actress?

I didn't have a concrete idea about Perla's appearance. I was completely open, but I wanted an actress with a very indefinable quality. The idea was that you shouldn't know for a long time who this woman really is. Rebeka achieved that in an almost eerie way. She always looks different, she has great presence and distinction, but you can never quite classify her. There is something mysterious about it. PERLA was a challenge for several reasons, because she comes from a theatre background and doesn't speak German. She had to learn German phonetically, which worked incredibly well. And she had to submerge herself in a character who experiences a lot of pain. We often talked about how we'd like to have more of Perla's resilience, more of her strength, even though it borders on madness.

You yourself lived in Czechoslovakia when you were a little child. What did it mean for you to immerse yourself in that time, in that language, and to shoot in the country of your early childhood?

The language wasn't so much of an issue, but the very personal roots of the story became apparent to me. When I want something – I'm not unlike Perla in that way – I don't think much at first about whether it's frightening. I just do it, also because I'm very stubborn. At first, I didn't think about how personal this story is. But it's really based on so many women in my family. I often wondered why I was reckless enough to choose such a personal topic. But it also had a kind of cathartic effect.

*Interview: Karin Schiefer
January 2025*

GOLDEN GIRLS FILM



OFI | OFI
OFFICE OF FILM INVESTMENT

FILM
FONDS
WIEN

ORF

EUROPEAN
FILM BOARD

ERDF

OVF

ALFA ROMEO
LABORATORY

cercamon

MAKING OF
CULTURE

ROGÉRIA

GALANTÉRIA

Bicykle @ stičnastky

OBUY

VEB PECOVI

POD VEDENÍM
SPOTŘEBITELŮ
K SOUČASNÉMU
ROZVOJÍ
DOMOVNÍHO
DŮPRÁVNÍCTVÍ

© Golden Girls Filmproduktion & Filmservices GmbH
Seidengasse 15/3/20, 1070 Vienna, Austria
Phone +43 1 8105636 | office@goldengirls.at
www.goldengirls.at