

Ariadna Grădinaru
Dragoș Tudor

THE YOUNG THE NEW THE DARING

Best Romanian Feature Film Debuts



ROMANIAN CULTURAL INSTITUTE



We would like to thank the directors and the production companies for the materials kindly provided.

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This publication is not for commercial purposes.

To their credit, the Romanian bunch have chosen
to walk where angels fear to tread,
adopting a sense of duty toward reality. [...]
For that we salute you.

Dimitri Eipides,
Toronto International Film Festival, 2007

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ARGUMENT

This volume is not a history of Romanian cinema over the last 20 years. Nor is it the result of a subjective selection performed by the authors. Nor, again, is it the book of a *generation* of filmmakers, since the directors here presented claim no explicit common ground and there is little to recommend them as a *group* with a shared artistic discourse.

What, then, is the present volume? It is a project intended to bring together, for the first time, all the directors who made their feature film debut after 1989 and whose achievements were acknowledged through national or international awards.

Were we, however, to look for shared characteristics, they are fairly easily noticeable in the straight-forward cinematographic language, in the realistic stories (quite a few of the directors also signed their own scripts) that make reference to contemporary social or historical realities. The metaphor, frequent with the “classics” of Romanian cinema, was discarded in favour of a simple, to-the-point approach and a natural, street-wise, language.

The directors are presented in strict alphabetical order, making use broadly of the material kindly provided by the production companies and the directors themselves. The volume is accompanied by a DVD showing the film trailers (where available) and photo galleries. Together they offer a more complete picture of the subject.

THE CRITIC'S PERSPECTIVE

"The Romanian cinema needs to start again from scratch," wrote Romanian film critic Eugenia Vodă in the early 1990s. "It has to regain a sense of everyday reality and it has to learn how to render truthfully an important slice of recent history which has been horribly falsified. A blast of Neorealism is practically a moral obligation for our cinema at this time in its history." This plea rings out again and again from the pages of Vodă's invaluable collection of film reviews, *Cinema și nimic altceva* (*Nothing Else but Cinema*), and part of what makes that book so sad is the fact that almost none of the films considered there (most of them released between 1990 and 1995, a fair number of them directed by newcomers) encourage hope that it will ever be answered.

Romanian cinema had emerged from the aesthetic and ideological straitjacket of Communism with some very bad habits: stilted, unspeakable dialogue; overdramatic, declamatory acting; a weakness for the hazily allegorical and the self-consciously arty; half-educated notions of art and primitive notions of entertainment; and weakened professional standards all around. It had also emerged crazy, confused by all its new-found freedom to show sex and to use swear words and to get hysterically angry about the state of things, and this freedom quickly produced a new set of bad habits to go with the old ones. Rigour and discipline were completely discarded. Critical distance was as unattainable for most Romanian filmmakers, veterans and newcomers alike, as it was for most other Romanians in those chaotic days.

The power to choose which films were to be made (on state money, of course) was wielded by a bureaucratic and artistic élite that had established itself before the 1989 Revolution and which did not have to account for its decisions. And its decisions were consistently disastrous.

If Eugenia Vodă's front-line survey of early post-Communist filmmaking makes such sad reading, that is also because of the fact that almost none of the new filmmakers considered there got past their first picture. The great exception is Nae Caranfil, whose *È pericoloso sporgersi* (premiered in Cannes in 1993 and released in Romania two years later) was an exceptionally clear-eyed and well-crafted debut, and who continued to make films that were both distinctively personal and universally entertaining. From the first wave of Romanian directors who were able to begin their careers in freedom, he is the only one who survived.

After the year 2000, he was joined by what became internationally known as the New Wave of Romanian filmmakers: Cristi Puiu, Cristian Mungiu, Radu Muntean, Corneliu Porumboiu, Cătălin Mitulescu, the late Cristian Nemescu and all. And with them came the long-awaited Neorealist purification. This doesn't mean that the new filmmakers were anything like a "movement" or a "school".

What bounded them (in the beginning, at least) was not a shared aesthetic, but a shared determination to bring professional standards back into the Romanian cinema, and to restore its broken bond with the audience. Beyond that, everyone was on his own, looking for his own way. The filmmaker whose way proved to be the way ahead in Romanian filmmaking was undoubtedly Cristi Puiu, with his (and co-writer Răzvan Rădulescu's) method of shaping and staging a story so that it would feel exactly like real life recorded on camera, while also summoning a thrillerish urgency and a sense of momentous moral stakes. Puiu's *The Death of Mr. Lăzărescu* is certainly the centerpiece of the Romanian Film Renaissance. This is not to say that it acted as an inspiration for everything that followed it. But the taut, morally-charged sense of reality that first came to Romanian films through the work of Puiu quickly became one of the greatest strengths of Romanian cinema.

Andrei Gorzo

Nae Caranfil was born in 1960 in Bucharest. He graduated from the Theatre and Film Academy in 1984. He shot a number of short features, some of them winning awards in international festivals.

NAE CARANFIL

È Pericoloso Sporgersi - 1994
(È Pericoloso Sporgersi)

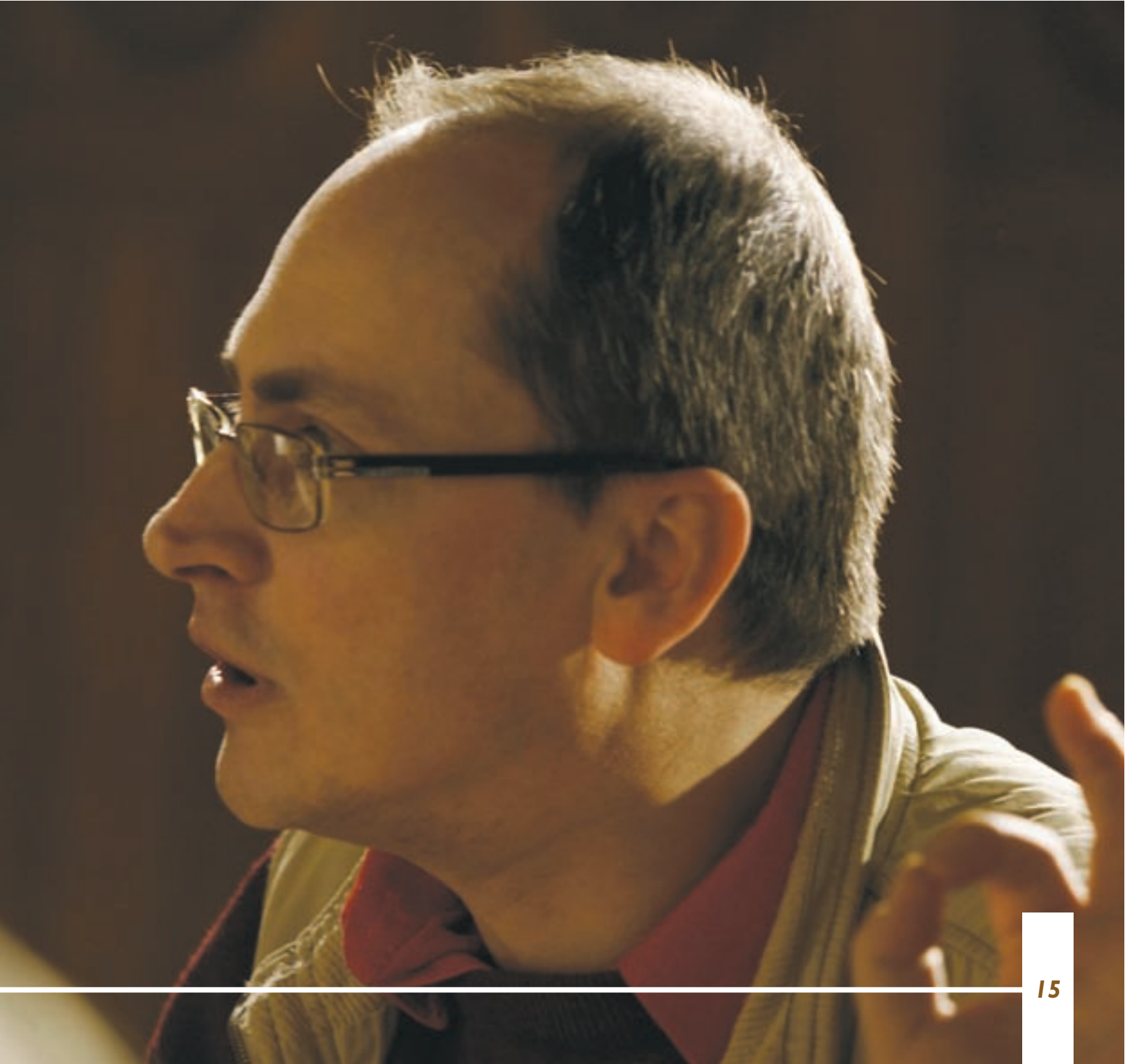
Asphalt Tango - 1996
(Asfalt tango)

Dolce far niente - 1998
(Dolce far niente)

Philanthropy - 2002
(Filantropica)

The Rest Is Silence - 2007
(Restul e tăcere)

In 1989 he enrolled in Frank Daniel's Scriptwriting Lab at FEMI, in Brussels and in 1991 attended the FEMI workshop for young filmmakers in Paris. Between 1989 and 1991 he wrote several screenplays for the French production company Compagnie des Images. His filmography includes the features *È pericoloso sporgersi* (1994), *Asphalt Tango* (1996), *Dolce far niente* (1998), *Philanthropy* (2002 – a box-office hit in Romania), *The Rest Is Silence* (2007), for which he also wrote the scripts. He wrote the music for *Asphalt Tango* and even played small parts in the 1987 production *I Miss You Everyday*, as well as in his own *Philanthropy*.





1993 – Michel Perez Award - Montpellier Film Festival
 1993 – Official selection, Quinzane des Réalisateurs, Cannes
 1993 – Best Script, Romanian Film Association
 1993 – Grand Prix, Bratislava Film Festival
 1994 – Special Award of the Jury, Baule

SYNOPSIS

In a small town where, in 1989, political and sexual frustration became intertwined, a schoolgirl, an actor and a conscript soldier dream about fleeing the town that offers them no freedom. In the end they leave, but they do not find what they are looking for. As the film progresses, their lives too, appear to become intertwined. "The Student," "The Actor," "The Soldier": three perspectives on the same story. "A happy film about sad people who dream without daring to hope." (Nae Caranfil)

CREDITS

È Pericoloso Sporgersi / (È Pericoloso Sporgersi)

Romania, 1994

Running time: 104 min.

Director: Nae Caranfil

Producer: Constantin Popescu

Screenplay: Nae Caranfil

Director of Photography: Cristian Comeagă

Music: Nae Caranfil, Anton Şuteu

Main cast: Nathalie Bonnifay, George Alexandru, Marius Stănescu

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Distributed by: Filmex



REVIEWS

"[an] exquisitely crafted portmanteau comedy."

Andrew James Horton, 43rd International Thessaloniki Film Festival

"Nae Caranfil, one of the few important newcomers in the post-communist period, burst onto the Romanian film scene in 1992 as a tornado, as a promise of a new wave.

Even though *Don't Lean Out of the Window* (*È pericoloso sporgersi*, 1994) also looks back at Ceausescu's Romania, it does so tenderly and is based on a solid and clever story, filtered through personal experience, in which the elements of communist imagery are used for a maximum impact."

Mihai Chirilov, film critic



1996 – Best Director, Romanian Film Association

SYNOPSIS

Take eleven gorgeous Romanian girls, have them foster dreams of glory, add a dubious impresario and a foreign business woman, get the lot on a bus headed for Paris and launch a desperate husband in pursuit of the bus. The result is a “road movie” which, given the condition of the roads in early 90s Romania, could only be a comedy. Tired of a reality in which money is always in somebody else’s pocket and happiness is constantly postponed, Dora, Felicia, Valentina and the rest of the girls leave for Paris, to dance as strippers in shabby cabarets. But they reckoned without Andrei. Dora’s husband would shrink from nothing in order to get his wife back. But Marion is not about to lose her prey...

CREDITS

Asphalt Tango / (Asfalt tango)

Romania-France, 1996

Running time: 100 min.

Director: Nae Caranfil

Producers: Marc Ruscart, Cristian Comeagă

Screenplay: Nae Caranfil

Director of Photography: Cristian Comeagă

Music: Nae Caranfil, Anton Şuteu

Main cast: Mircea Diaconu, Charlotte Rampling, Florin Călinescu, Constantin Cotimanis

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REVIEWS

"An affable romantic comedy in the guise of a road movie, *Asphalt Tango* brings a light French touch to its story of a busload of Romanian girls headed West for what they expect will be careers as 'exotic dancers.' Tango of the title refers to the leisurely paced chase by a heartbroken mechanic trying to win back his wanderlusting wife before the bus crosses the border.

A crowd-pleasing date movie for grown-ups, [director Nicolae Caranfil's second feature] generally moves things along at a nice clip, with laughs evenly sprinkled throughout the 90-odd minutes."

Cathy Meils, *Variety*



- 1998 – Golden Bayard Award for Best Script and nomination for Best Film, Namur International Festival of French-Speaking Film
 1999 – Nomination for the Crystal Globe Award, Karlovy Vary Film Festival

SYNOPSIS

The (almost) fictional story of a Stendhal (for now known as Henry Beyle) in search of his own identity in Italy, where he meets two wonderful women, and an arrogant young maestro, Rossini. Comedy, love and writer's block. The film starts as a surrealist story and ends with novels, operas and ... a couple of dead bodies. The film is scattered with references to Stendhal's work in the form of nationalistic epic, philosophical discourse, witty dialogue and romance. A film based on Frédéric Vitoux's *La Comédie de Terracina*.

CREDITS

Dolce far niente / (Dolce far niente)

Romania-France-Italy, 1998
 Running time: 119 min.

Director: Nae Caranfil

Producers: Antoine de Clermont-Tonnerre, Rossanna Seregni

Screenplay: Nae Caranfil

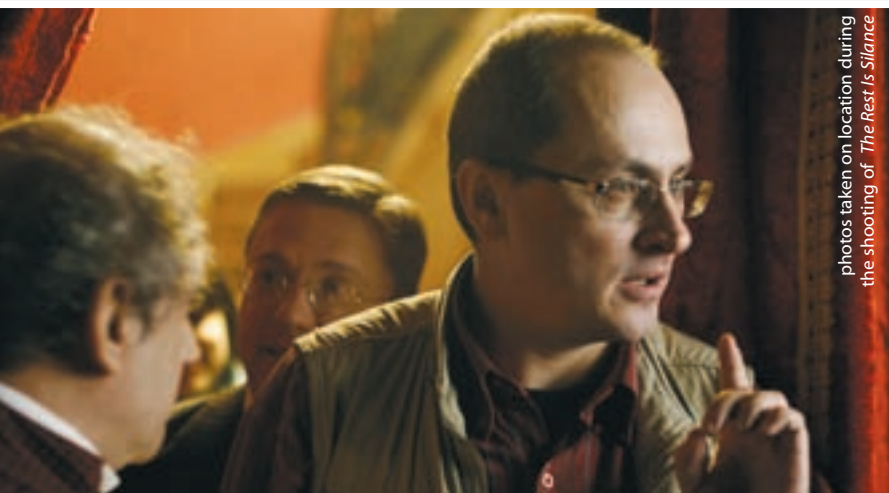
Director of Photography: Cristian Comeagă

Music: Nicola Piovani

Main cast: François Cluzet, Isabella Ferrari, Margherita Buy

A LE STUDIO CANAL+ Production

Distributed by: UGC International, Paris



photos taken on location during
the shooting of *The Rest Is Silence*



REVIEWS

"[...] the most graceful and most underestimated of Caranfil's films. [...] To those who suspect Caranfil of not being deep and 'heavy' enough, the answer is *Dolce far niente*, a deep study of heavy-lessness.

The action takes place in Italy under Austrian occupation and the protagonist, a French traveller and former soldier in Napoleon's army, has more than enough opportunities to fulfill himself as lover and, at a certain point, as martyr. The 'heavy' stuff, from erotic intrigues to historic turmoil, is constantly around the corner, ready to spring on him, to fill his life with meaning. And that's where they stay, around the corner, or else pass him by in comical shems, without touching him.

And all that's left for him to do is to shut himself in his house and write some books, as Stendhal."

Andrei Gorzo, film critic



2001 – Best Film, Best Script, Romanian Film Association
 2002 – Audience Award, Paris Film Festival
 2002 – Special Prize of the Jury, GoEast Film Festival, Wiesbaden
 2002 – Audience Award, Montreal
 2002 – Special Prize of the Jury, Bratislava
 2003 – Best Script, Newport Beach

SYNOPSIS

Once upon a time there was a city whose inhabitants were either "princes" or "beggars". Between these two worlds, all you could find was stray dogs. They formed the middle-class.

Going out with a beautiful woman in 21st century Bucharest is a risky financial investment. Ovidiu - a highschool teacher and struggling writer who lives on a meager salary and has recently self-published a collection of short stories - could not possibly afford it. And yet he needs to, because he has fallen head over heels for Diana, a 20 years old would-be model. In desperate search for a more substantial income, Ovidiu dives into a fabulous world - a cleverly staged beggars' mafia...

CREDITS

Philanthropy / (Filantropica)

Romania, 2002

Running time: 110 min.

Director: Nae Caranfil

Producer: Antoine de Clermont-Tonnerre

Screenplay: Nae Caranfil

Director of Photography: Vivi Dragan

Music: Marius Mihalache

Main cast: Gheorghe Dinică, Mircea Diaconu, Mara Nicolescu

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REVIEWS

"A biting satire that entertains every step of the way, *Philanthropy* cleverly indicts the many ways in which 'freedom' has further constrained the beleaguered citizens of Romania while providing a field day for scam artists and the nouveau riche. Insidious bittersweet comedy by writer-director Nae Caranfil is boffo in Bucharest, has earned exclusively positive notices in Gaul and belongs on fest slates and discerning arthouse screens far and wide. The central character's blackly comic trajectory will hit a nerve wherever the accepted virtues of hard work and intellectual pursuits have been supplanted by the allure of easy money and flashy consumption."

Lisa Nesselson, *Variety*

"As films go, *Philanthropy* is far above *Asphalt Tango* from the point of view of the topic, is much more inciting than *Dolce far niente* and the stakes are far greater than with *E pericoloso sporgersi*. [...] With this latest film he manages to leave the sphere of the privately-sentimental and, armed with a clockwork script and with the previous exercise in literary impersonalization he had managed with *Dolce far niente*, ventures successfully into the sphere of social comedy, which he had rather scamped with *Asphalt Tango*. *Philanthropy* is at once popular entertainment, a subversive film and a (paradoxical) author manifesto: of the kind through which a director proves he can make quality films while preserving both his public and his individuality."

Alex. Leo Șerban, *Observatorul cultural*



2007 – Official selection, Locarno International Film Festival

SYNOPSIS

19 years old Grig is the son of an enormously popular Romanian actor from the early 20th century. But his own record is somewhat disappointing. Too short for the stage, too shy with women, too excessive in his lifestyle, he is about to make the ultimate mistake: direct a moving picture! He wants it to be the biggest, the longest, the most spectacular ever. Crazy patron of the arts Leon, becomes Grig's financier. Successively he also turns into his protector, his teacher, his substitute father, his traitorous partner and his lifelong enemy. But will Gaumont, the French company that controls the Romanian market, accept an independent production behind its back? And if so, will this victory earn Grig his father's respect? A true story.

CREDITS

The Rest Is Silence / (Restul e tăcere)

Romania, 2007

Running time: 140 min.

Director: Nae Caranfil

Producer: Cristian Comeagă

Screenplay: Nae Caranfil

Director of Photography: Marius Panduru

Music: Laurent Couson

Main cast: Marius Florea Vizante,
Ovidiu Niculescu, Mirela Zeta

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REVIEWS

"The Rest Is Silence comes like a breath of fresh air at a time when it's easy to assume, from fests' picks, that (currently 'hot') Romanian cinema is all grungy, DV-shot, miserabilist dramas. Lively, witty widescreen costumer, about the making of the country's first feature-length movie, is an intelligent crowd-pleaser made with affection for its characters and era."

Derek Elley, *Variety*

"Filmmaking hasn't changed much in almost 100 years if the events depicted in Nae Caranfil's enthralling period epic *The Rest Is Silence* are to be believed.

Based on the true story of the making of a two-hour silent film titled 'The Independence of Romania' in 1911, the colorful 140-minute production should be required viewing for moviemakers and movie buffs who wish to complete their cinema education. [...] It's a rollicking story told in splashy terms with boisterous performances and lots of tall tales."

Ray Bennett, *The Hollywood Reporter*

Siniša Dragin was born in 1960 in Kula, Yugoslavia. He graduated from the School of Higher Economic Studies, Subotica, Yugoslavia in 1984 and from the Theatre and Film Academy in Bucharest in 1991.

SINIŠA DRAGIN

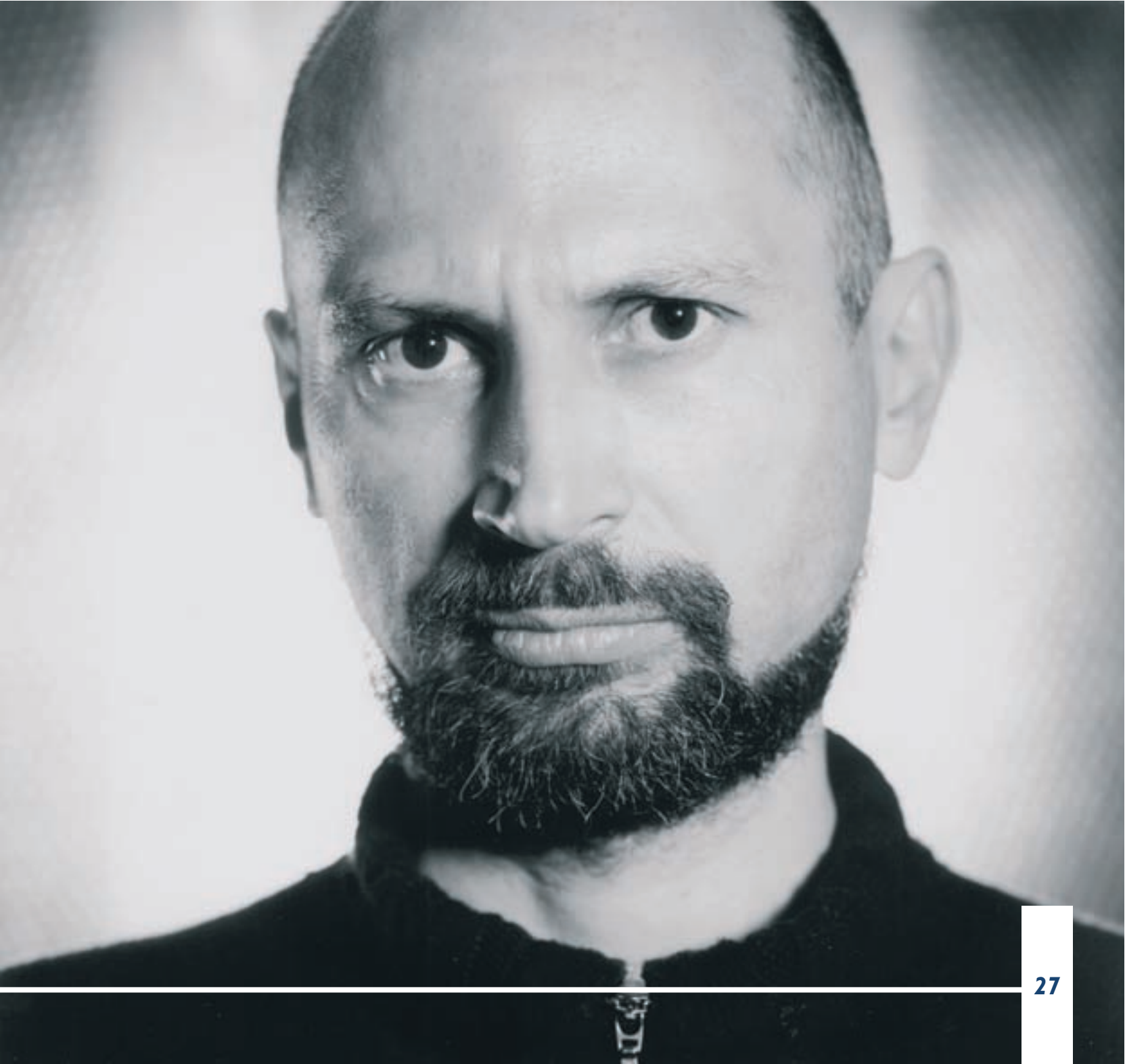
**God Kisses Us on the Mouth
Every Day - 2001**
(În fiecare zi Dumnezeu
ne sărută pe gură)

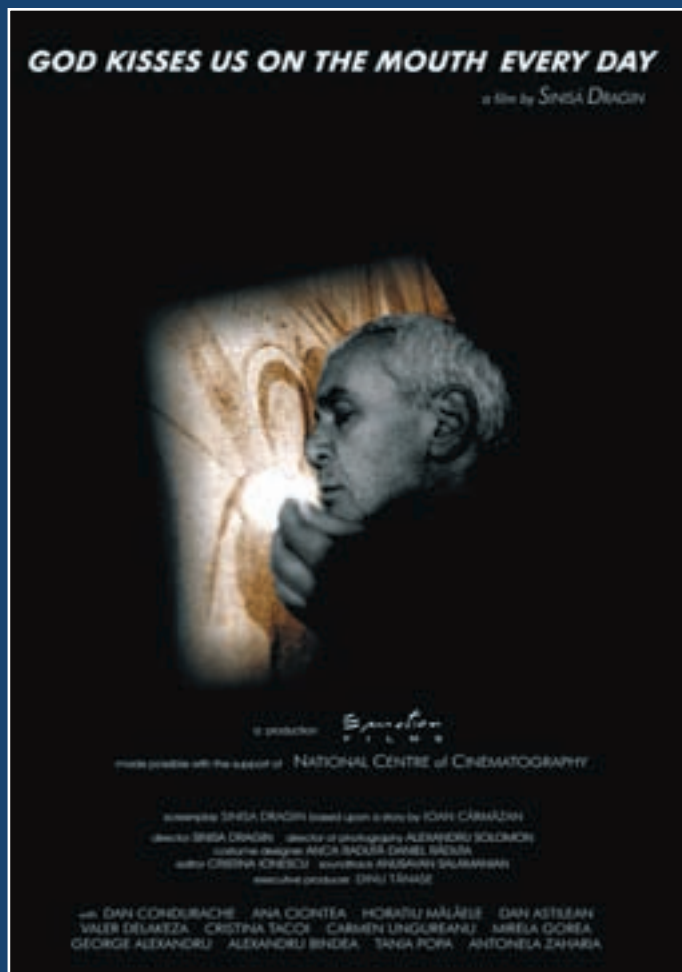
The Pharaoh - 2004
(Faraonul)

Since 1992 he has been working as a cameraman for Reuters TV International News Agency.

His filmography includes *The Sorrow of Black Gold* (1994, short documentary - Grand Prix, Oberhausen Film Festival, First Prize, La Palma), *The Rain* (1995, short feature – Special Mention, Ravenna), *Sun is Shining over Tichilesti* (1995, short documentary), *Long Journey by Train* (1998 – winner of numerous awards in international festivals) and the features *God Kisses Us on the Mouth Every Day* (2001) and *The Pharaoh* (2004).

In 2000 Siniša Dragin published the novel *Spring Is Another Country*.





2001 – Best Director and Special Award of the Jury
(the Golden Pyramid), Cairo
2002 – Tiger Award, Rotterdam
2002 – Best Film, Belgrade
2002 – Best Director, Alba, Italy

SYNOPSIS

The one who kills animals is known as a butcher and the one who kills people is known as a killer. Dumitru is both ... He is an apparently simple man, from a village close to Bucharest. He's just got out of jail. On his way home he kills again, in self-defense, though. Then he finds out his wife is pregnant and the father of the child is none other than his brother. A fratricide follows. Dumitru is already a serial killer. Life becomes unbearable. When he wants to die he finds out he can't. God has a plan for him.

CREDITS

God Kisses Us on the Mouth Every Day /
(În fiecare zi Dumnezeu ne sărută pe gură)

Romania, 2001

Running time: 93 min.

Director: Sinișa Dragin

Producer: Mihai Gheorghiu

Screenplay: Sinișa Dragin

Director of Photography: Alexandru Solomon

Music: Taraf of Clejani, Frunză Verde

Main cast: Dan Condurache, Ana Ciontea, Horațiu Mălăieles, Dan Astilean, Tania Popa

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Distributed by: Romania Film



REVIEWS

"It is redolent with imagery and running metaphors that are deeply relevant to Romanian politics and social structures, but to an outsider they make the film seem beautifully surreal. All of this is aided by Condurache, who is simmering and dangerous, effortlessly conveying the pain and confusion of the drunken Dumitri, maintaining a rapt tension throughout."

George Williamson, *eyeforfilm.co.uk*

"Every bit as odd and intriguing as its title, *Every Day God Kisses Un On the Mouth* is a dark parable about a butcher driven by conflicting urges to love and kill, who in his blackest hour is unexpectedly redeemed from on high. Displaying a distinctive, original voice, a boldly rough-hewn narrative style and a striking visual sense, Romanian director Sinisa Dragin creates an arrestingly murky universe, brutally grim yet lightened by bitter humor and bizarre surreal touches."

David Rooney, *Variety*



SYNOPSIS

Costache Nicolau, nicknamed the Pharaoh, is an elderly tramp. His only possession is a simple set of scales. He spent 40 years as a political prisoner in Siberia, but he can hardly remember anything about it. Nonetheless, his story attracts the attention of a young reporter. The Pharaohs were absolute rulers, God on earth. Costache Nicolau is like them a little in a strange way. The puzzles surrounding his person are minor in comparison with the great mysteries of this world. The young journalist's attempt to unravel them is also an attempt to solve that one major puzzle. Could the answer be found in religion?

CREDITS

The Pharaoh / (Faraonul)

Romania, 2004

Running time: 82 min.

Director: Sinișa Dragin

Producer: Sinișa Dragin

Screenplay: Sinișa Dragin

Director of Photography: Alexandru Solomon

Music: Grigore Leșe

Main cast: Adriana Butoi, Olga Tudorache, Ștefan Iordache

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Distributed by: Mrakonia Film



REVIEWS

"Shot as a documentary, [the film] is a visual testimony about Rumania in the transition period between the Communist regime and current day. [...] Dragin combines sequences in color with others that are in black and white, probably as a reference to a historical past that is never resolved, suspended in air as a way of creating awareness in the young. From this there is a recurring association of images between the majestic Egyptian monuments, such as the Sphinx of Giza, and that old man alienated by the passing of the years and the heavy weight of his past. The director proposes returning to more genuine values, especially to the Christian idea of love as the essential foundation for new generations."

Adriana Schmorak

"It's a film that, like Orson Welles's *Citizen Kane*, uses a journalist's investigation to unravel the mysteries of a life. [...] On a more literal level, the use of a TV journalist as the main character allows a more literal exploration into everyday life in the country now. As much film essay as narrative drama, *The Pharaoh* is thoughtful in its exploration of its themes."

Andrew James Horton, Kinoeye

Tudor Giurgiu was born in 1972 and graduated from the Theatre and Film Academy in Bucharest in 1994. He attended various international seminars in filmmaking held by prominent foreign directors and producers. Early in his career he worked as first assistant for filmmakers such as Lucian Pintilie and Radu Mihaileanu.

TUDOR GIURGIU

Love Sick - 2006
(Legături bolnăvicioase)

He directed and produced pop videos and commercials, including several award-winning ones. In 2002 Giurgiu founded Transylvania International Film Festival, the first international event of its kind in Romania. He was president of the festival until 2005 and is currently honorary president. Between 2005-2007 he acted as President-Director General of the Romanian National Television. His filmography includes the short films *Neighbours* (1993), *(S)He's Alone in the World* (1995) and *Popcorn Story* (2000). He also signed the documentary *Hausmeister* (2000) and made his feature film debut with the 2006 *Love Sick*. In 2004 he produced the highly acclaimed documentary *The Great Communist Bank Robbery* (directed by Alexandru Solomon).





2006 – Official Selection, Berlin Film Festival,
 2006 – Official Selection, Cottbus International Film Festival
 2007 – Official Selection, Palm Springs Film Festival

SYNOPSIS

Alex and Kiki meet at the university where they are both studying. At first they are just good friends. Despite their obviously different natures they become inseparable and their relationship quickly develops into a love story. Kiki and Sandu are sister and brother. In reality, they are lovers. *Love Sick* is about all their stories.

"I wanted to make a straightforward, sensitive film. [...] a Romanian film of a more personal kind, rather than one with social or political implications." Tudor Giurgiu

CREDITS

Love Sick / (Legături bolnăvicioase)

Romania, 2006
 Running time: 85 min

Director: Tudor Giurgiu

Producer: Oana Bujgoi

Screenplay: Cecilia Ștefănescu

Director of Photography: Alexandru Sterian

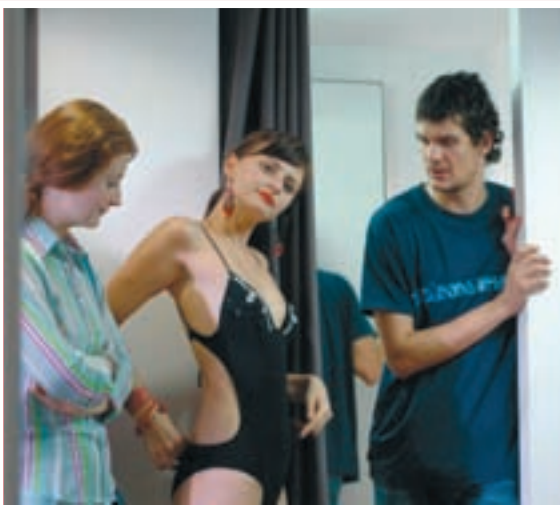
Music: Vlaicu Golcea

Main cast: Maria Popistașu, Ioana Barbu, Tudor Chirilă

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Distributed by: 2006 Libra Film Productions
 Multi Media Est, Transilvania Film



REVIEWS

"In the international pool of films that make waves on the festival circuit, *Love Sick* will only make a ripple, but it's a clear and sweet one. [Alex's and Kiki's] love story is captured in poetic, handheld detail akin to the tenderness of Erick Zonca's *La Vie Rêvée des Anges*, as director Tudor Giurgiu beautifully explores the confusion and delights of young love. [...] Indeed, the film itself can be seen as a coming of age both for the girls, and for Romanian cinema."

The Guardian

"Taking into consideration that it is the first movie on this topic ever to be shot in Romania, one can expect rejection (by many) or acceptance (by a few) – on same grounds. [...] it is a love (and jealousy) story with a twist: lesbianism *plus* incest.[...] *Love Sick* has the great merit of speaking naturally about these things. In fact, it doesn't 'speak' at all: it shows. As much as one needs in order to understand what it is all about. Excellent cinematography, fine music, and an impeccable cast do the rest. A 'normal' movie about some 'different' kinds of loving. Watch without prejudice!"

Alex. Leo Șerban, film critic

"Two college students embark on a sapphic affair that's just like, well, any regular heterosexual romance in *Love Sick*, a slim but refreshingly angst-free item. Complete lack of hangups by the central couple, plus the way in which one girl's incestuous relationship with her brother isn't even made a cause for comment, make this smooth feature debut a quietly offbeat pic."

Derek Elley, *Variety*

Napoleon Helmis was born in 1969 and majored in film directing from the Theatre and Film Academy in Bucharest. He holds a master's degree in the Aesthetics of Film and Audio-Video Advertising and currently teaches film directing at the Theatre and Film Academy.

NAPOLÉON HELMIS

The Italian Girls - 2004 (Italiencele)

He acted as second director for Lucian Pintilie's *The Afternoon of a Torturer* (2000) and was artistic director for several television shows. His filmography as director includes *Gasoline and Diesel Oil* (1994, short documentary – Best Doc, Dakino International Film Festival Bucharest), *Sara-The Diary of a Free World* (1995, short, fiction), *The Misbegotten* (1996, short, fiction), *Challenge Day* (2004, short, fiction). He made his feature film debut in 2004 with *The Italian Girls*.

"I wanted to tell a credible, funny and touching story, rather than make a film per se. When you are on the verge of a cinema debut you are tempted to say everything. The catch is that you risk losing sight of the story. It is important for the viewers to leave the cinema with a story they can remember."





2005 – Miskolc City Special Award at "Cinefest 2"
International Film Festival, Hungary

SYNOPSIS

A story about two Romanian girls who went to Spain and came back from Italy...

The Italian Girls is the story of two young sisters from a village in Oltenia, a historical province in South-Western Romania, who leave home to work in Spain, as illegal strawberry pickers. After one year, they return home with a victorious smile and a western attitude, telling everyone how they found a job not in Spain, but in Italy...

The truth is very different.

A comedy-drama about two strong women who are capable to turn their lives around and start up again from scratch.

CREDITS

The Italian Girls / (Italiencele)

Romania, 2004

Running time: 82 min.

Director: Napoleon Helmis

Executive producer: Ion Mititelu

Screenplay: Napoleon Helmis

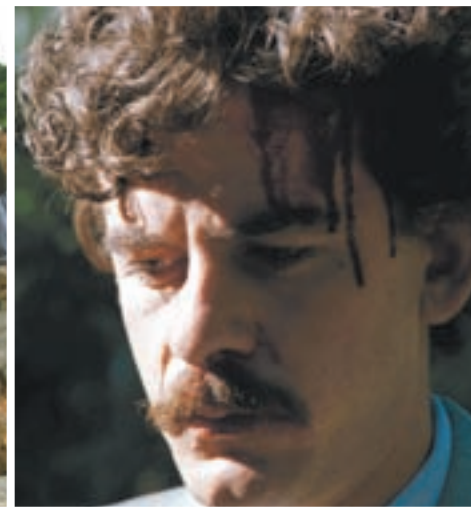
Director of Photography: Florin Mihăilescu

Music: Alexandru Cristian Ionescu

Main cast: Mara Nicolescu, Ana Ularu, Vlad Zamfirescu, Costel Cașcaval, Valentin Popescu

A RO DE FILM Production

Distributed by: Cine TV



REVIEWS

"The Italian Girls is perhaps even more shocking in its discussion of consumerism, of the deficiencies of democracy and the pitiless exploitation of migrant workers. Similar in feel to the bleakly poetic realism of Emir Kusturica, the action bristles with raucous energy and sardonic wit, as Mara Nicolescu and Ana Ularu return to their village in Oltenia having supposedly got rich quick as cherry pickers in Spain. However, their experience turns out to have been anything but idyllic and the brutal truth emerges in a shocking denouement that is impressively handled by the debuting director"

www.bbc.co.uk

"A bitter comedy is not at all a bad debut for Napoleon Helmis, who obviously loves pre-revolution Romanian cinema which almost everyone seems to speak evil of. [...]"

Irina Margareta Nistor, film critic

CĂTĂLIN

The Way I Spent the End Of the World - 2006
(Cum mi-am petrecut sfârșitul lumii)

Cătălin Mitulescu was born in 1972 and studied geology at Bucharest University. Shortly after the 1989 revolution he abandoned his studies and went travelling and working in Austria, Hungary, Poland and Italy.

MITULESCU

He later returned to Romania and in 2000 majored in film directing from the Theatre and Film Academy in Bucharest. His filmography includes the short films *Bucharest-Wien 8:15* (2000) and *17 Minutes Late* (2002), both present in the official selection at Cannes. Hardly any of his shorts went unnoticed in national or international competitions and his 2004 *Traffic* won the Palme d'Or for short films. Mitulescu made his feature film debut in 2006 with *The Way I Spent the End of the World*. "The film is based on my memories, on my nostalgia. On my faith in this world. I made this film because I missed kindergarten, highschool, I missed Romania."





- 2007 – Oscars – Nominated for Independent Spirit Award in the Best Foreign Film category
- 2007 – Audience Award, Innsbruck
- 2007 – Official selection, Berlin International Film Festival
- 2007 – Official selection, Rotterdam International Film Festival
- 2006 – Best Actress, Un Certain Regard, Cannes
- 2006 – Young Audience Award, Valladolid
- 2005 – Best European Project, Sundance / NHK International Filmmakers

SYNOPSIS

Bucharest 1989 - last year of Ceaușescu's dictatorship. Eva is 17 years old and in love for the first time with Alex, son of a much hated Communist Party officer. One day at school, Eva and Alex accidentally break a bust of Ceaușescu. They get caught and have to confess their guilt in front of the class. Forced by his father, Alex humiliates himself and is saved. Eva refuses and is transferred to a trade reformatory school. There she meets Andrei, a rebel, a boy from a family of dissidents. He trains to escape from the country by crossing the Danube. Eva decides to escape with him. Witness of their departure, Lalalilu is devastated and takes the decision of his life...

CREDITS

The Way I Spent the End Of the World / (Cum mi-am petrecut sfârșitul lumii)

Romania-France, 2006
Running time: 102 min.

Director: Cătălin Mitulescu

Producers: Cătălin Mitulescu, Daniel Mitulescu, In-Ah Lee, Philippe Martin, David Thion

Screenplay: Andreea Vălean, Cătălin Mitulescu

Director of Photography: Marius Panduru

Music: Alexander Bălănescu

Main cast: Dorotheea Petre, Timotei Duma, Ionuț Becheru, Cristian Văraru

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Distributed by: Pyramide Internationale, Paris



REVIEWS

"Cătălin Mitulescu's work thus far has already revealed a confident style, and a great capacity to capture moods, reveal the inner emotions of his characters through attention to details, and use those details to take you right into a larger reality where story becomes history."

Martin Scorsese

"As a confession, *The Way I Spent the End of the World* unveils the heart of Romania. For the Romanians to rediscover themselves in peace, for the outsiders to understand the soul of this people. [...] The details are essential in this frozen world."

Sophie Latil, *Le Figaro*

"Mitulescu successfully negotiates the tricky byways of the film's tragi-comic tone, offering the viewer a sense of the era as it was lived by ordinary, unheroic people who fearfully stayed in the shadows until the revolution suddenly overturned their world."

Deborah Young, *Variety*

"Catalin Mitulescu has chosen a style that reminds of Fellini's *Amarcord* with its mixture of instinct and authority and the parodic depiction of a family that sometimes functions and sometimes fails to. At times the film gets a little ingratiating at the expense of seriousness. That can be also because we tend to think we know more about fascism in Italy and its affectation than we do about the multiple sides of communism in Romania."

Jeanette Gentele, *Svenska Dagbladet*

Cristian Mungiu was born in Iasi, Romania, in 1968. He holds a degree in English literature from Iasi University and one in film directing from the Theatre and Film Academy in Bucharest. He worked as journalist for various magazines and published short stories in literary periodicals. During his film studies he worked as assistant director for several foreign productions shot in Romania.

CRISTIAN MUNGIU

Occident - 2002
(Occident)

4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days - 2007
(4 luni, 3 săptămâni și 2 zile)

In 2003 Cristian Mungiu co-founded the production company Mobra Films. He directed several short films – *Mariana* (1998), *The Hand of Paulista* (1998), *Zapping* (2000), *Firemen's Choir* (2000), *Turkey Girl* (2005), *Lost and Found* (2005). His feature debut came in 2001 with *Occident* and in 2007 he presented *4 Months, 3 Weeks & 2 Days*, the first Romanian feature to have received the Palme d'Or. He also signed the script for several of his shorts and his two features and produced the 2005 documentary *Apartment 19*. His 2007 success in Cannes is widely viewed as the confirmation of the expectations created over the last years by the new wave of Romanian filmmakers. In Mungiu's own words: "I'm very happy to thank my colleagues, Romanian filmmakers. Without their successes in the past years, I couldn't have been here. [...] This really gives us a sort of confidence."





2002 – Official Selection, Quinzaine des Réalisateurs, Cannes
 2002 – Debut Prize, Leeds
 2002 – Nova Prize, Montpellier
 2002 – Audience Award, Thessaloniki
 2003 – FIPRESCI Prize, Sofia
 2003 – Grand Prix and TITRA Prize, Mons
 2003 – Grand Prix, Transylvania International Film Festival

SYNOPSIS

Occident knits together several stories about emigration and especially about those left behind. The three protagonists unknowingly influence each other's lives. Luci and his fiancée, Sorina, are suddenly homeless. The two go to Sorina's father's grave waiting for a divine sign. It is in the cemetery that the three stories intertwine. A bride is crying on a bench, a red car passes behind the graves. And still, when the sign does come, it is far from mystical: an empty bottle falls out of the sky hitting Luci on the head. Fortunately, they are driven to the hospital by a well-intentioned Frenchman, who becomes Sorina's only hope, so she moves in with him. In his attempt to win her back, Luci takes a job as publicity mascot...

CREDITS

Occident / (Occident)

Romania, 2002

Running time: 110 min

Director: Cristian Mungiu

Executive producer: Dan Badea

Screenplay: Cristian Mungiu

Director of Photography: Vivi Drăgan Vasile

Music: Petru Mărgineanu, Ioan Gyuri Pascu

Main cast: Alexandru Papadopol, Dorel Vișan, Tania Popa, Coca Bloos

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Distributed by: 2002 Temple Film



REVIEWS

"[a] memorable film, an interesting example of using humour and lightness of touch to make a more depressing comment on society."

Andrew James Horton,

43rd International Thessaloniki Film Festival

"It's a screenwriter's tour de force which might look like 'simple' empty virtuousness – though it is no small feat for a feature film debut! – if Mungiu hadn't filled it with such convincing characters, lines and atmosphere that (despite the numerous twists, one more ingenious than the last) you leave the cinema with the feeling that we actually live in a country brimming with humour and that it leads to the creation of good films – provided you don't see just the empty half of the bottle!"

Alex. Leo Şerban, film critic



2007 – Palme d'Or, Cannes International Film Festival
 2007 – FIPRESCI Prize, Cannes International Film Festival
 2007 – FIPRESCI Grand Prix
 2007 – French National Education Administration Prize

SYNOPSIS

1987, during the final years of the communist regime in Romania. Otilia and Găbița, who share a room in a college dorm, suddenly find themselves facing an overwhelming problem: Găbița is pregnant. With abortion illegal and severely punished, the desperate young women resort to an illicit solution – to terminate the pregnancy at the hands of one Mr Bebe. They arrange the meeting in a cheap hotel, but Bebe refuses to accept money and asks instead to be paid in kind in exchange for his services. *4 Months, 3 Weeks & 2 Days* belongs to a larger project called: *Tales from the Golden Age* - a subjective history of communism in Romania told through its urban legends.

CREDITS

**4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days /
 (4 luni, 3 săptămîni și 2 zile)**

Romania, 2007

Running time: 113 min.

Director: Cristian Mungiu

Producers: Oleg Mutu, Cristian Mungiu

Screenplay: Cristian Mungiu

Director of photography: Oleg Mutu

Sound: Titi Fleancu

Main cast: Anamaria Marinca, Vlad Ivanov,
 Laura Vasiliu

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Distributed by: BAC FILMS / WHY NOT



REVIEWS

"The Romanian film that got the Palme d'Or is a great work. The Romanian people can be proud of this director. It was a pleasure to watch every second of it."

Turkish writer Orhan Pamuk, member of the jury, on Cannes Festival press release

"Mere words can't tell you how brilliantly composed and riveting this film is..."

James Christopher, *The Times*

"Pitch perfect and brilliantly acted, *4 Months, 3 Weeks & 2 Days* is a stunning achievement, helmed with a purity and honesty that captures not just the illegal abortion story at its core but the constant, unremarked negotiations necessary for survival in the final days of the Soviet bloc. Showcasing all the elements of new Romanian cinema [...] Cristian Mungiu's masterly film plays only one false note in an otherwise beautifully textured story."

Jay Weissberg, *Variety*

"Mungiu's probing and absorbing new work unfolds in nightmarish and bleak inferno that's very convincingly drawn and realized. [...] Mungiu eschews any opportunity to alleviate the social tension or dramatic intensity with stabs at humor. He remains throughout remarkably attuned to the interior lives of his two female protagonists, and the movie's intensity and dramatic conviction are forcefully registered in their anguish and torment."

Patrick Z. McGavin

RADU MUNTEAN

The Rage - 2004
(Furia)

The Paper Will Be Blue - 2006
(Hârtia va fi albastră)

Radu Muntean was born in 1971 in Bucharest. He majored in film directing at the Theatre and Film Academy in Bucharest in 1994. Before turning to feature films he directed several shorts and documentaries - *Life is Somewhere Else* (1996, documentary), *The Tragic Love Story of the*

Two (1996, short), *Her* (1994, short), *Lindenfeld* (1994, documentary), *They Are Ours*, *Too* (1994, documentary) - and made an impressive 300 commercials for important advertising companies such as BV McCann Ericsson, Saatchi & Saatchi, Leo Burnett, Graffiti BBDO, winning over 40 national and international awards in various advertising festivals. In 2002 he made his feature film debut, both as director and as screenwriter, with *The Rage*, followed in 2006 by *The Paper Will Be Blue*. He is currently working on a feature to be released in 2008.

"One cannot tackle feature films from the start. [...] I gathered a lot of experience in publicity, I learnt how to express myself in a direct manner."





- 2003 – Best Photography, Transylvania International Film Festival
- 2002 – Best Debut (Opera Prima), Best Actor, Best Photography, Romanian Film Association
- 2002 – Official selection – Montpellier International Film Festival
- 2002 – Official selection – Thessaloniki International Film Festival

SYNOPSIS

In order to enter the illegal car-racing circuit, Luca - a regular con of the neighborhood - and his friend Slice, a mechanic, borrow some money from Gabonu, a gipsy who controls, among other things, the gambling for the car races in the area. Contrary to the understanding, Luca "forgets" to lose a set-up car race so his loan shark ends up with a considerable loss. Luca and Slice find out that their debt sums up to seven thousand dollars, and that they have to return it by the following evening. What follows is their desperate attempt to scrap all the money, which turns their crazy ideas into unusual situations.

CREDITS

The Rage / (Furia)

Romania, 2002

Running time: 90 min

Director: Radu Muntean

Screenplay: Radu Muntean,
Ileana Constantinescu, Mircea Stăiculescu

Director of Photography: Vivi Drăgan Vasile

Main cast: Dragoș Bucur, Andi Vasluianu,
Dorina Chiriac

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Distributed by: MEDIAPRO PICTURES



REVIEWS

"With *The Rage*, his feature debut, Radu Muntean produces the third positive surprise of the year in Romanian cinema – after [Caranfil's] *Philanthropy* and [Mungiu's] *Occident*. However, Munteanu, who is well known mostly as director of commercials and music videos, is closer to Cristi Puiu than to Mungiu & Caranfil.

His picture – a felicitous combination of social apocalypse and 'trash' anti-fairy play – is driven by a combative energy which puts it forth as the most desperate Romanian film since [Mircea Danieliuc's] *Conjugal Bed*, a final blow to society – brutal, direct and well-aimed.

The film steers clear of psychological complexities and borrows from the video format not only the rhythm and a certain instant-typology, but also an image of reality made up of a collage of small significant gestures."

Alex. Leo Șerban, *Libertatea*



- 2006 – Best Director, Cottbus International Film Festival
- 2006 – Best Film, EURASIA International Film Festival, Antalya
- 2006 – Special Mention of the Jury and CICA Award, Sarajevo International Film Festival
- 2006 – Best Film - Balkan Black Box, Berlin
- 2006 – Special Prize of the Jury, Marrakech International Film Festival
- 2007 – Best Young Director, Las Palmas International Film Festival

SYNOPSIS

Lieutenant Neagu's armoured unit is ordered to patrol the suburbs. The unit's radio works intermittently and communications between the different armoured units and fragments of radio and TV broadcasts give vague reports of "terrorist" attacks on the national television headquarters held by anti-Ceausescu forces. Costi, a conscript soldier, believes that it is the duty of every Romanian to fight the supporters of Ceausescu, irrespective of the orders of his superiors. His arrogance and stubbornness bring him into conflict with Lieutenant Neagu and he takes advantage of an altercation to flee. Despite the Lieutenant's threats and pleas, Costi heads for the television station to fight for the revolution...

CREDITS

The Paper Will Be Blue / (Hârtia va fi albastră)

Romania, 2006
Running time: 95 min

Director: Radu Muntean

Producer: Dragoș Vâlcu

Screenplay: Răzvan Rădulescu; Alexandru Baci; Radu Muntean

Director of Photography: Tudor Lucaciu

Sound: Dragoș Stanomir, Electric Brother

Main cast: Paul Ipate, Adi Carauleanu, Dragoș Bucur, Ion Săpădaru

A MULTI MEDIA EST Production

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E: production@mme.ro

Distributed by: Transilvania Film



REVIEWS

"[...] Muntean had the inspiration to shoot everything from that ideal distance that tells genuine Cinema from demonstration and improvisation. A simple zoom on a face, a single insistence on a significant gesture - and it would all have crumbled into making-do and pathetic construction. The emotion pervading the film is real and lasting, but it is clean. In its austerity, *The Paper Will Be Blue* has something of Haneke's *Caché*; at the same time, there's nothing over-elaborate, nothing aseptic. It is a genuine film."

Alex. Leo Șerban, *Republik*

"Using largely handheld camera rigs and overlapping sound, [the film] achieves a high degree of naturalism, creating docudrama feel without ever edging into preachiness. Accent is on showing the confusion of the times from regular folk's point of view, not making a big statement about history in the larger sense."

Leslie Felperin, *Variety*

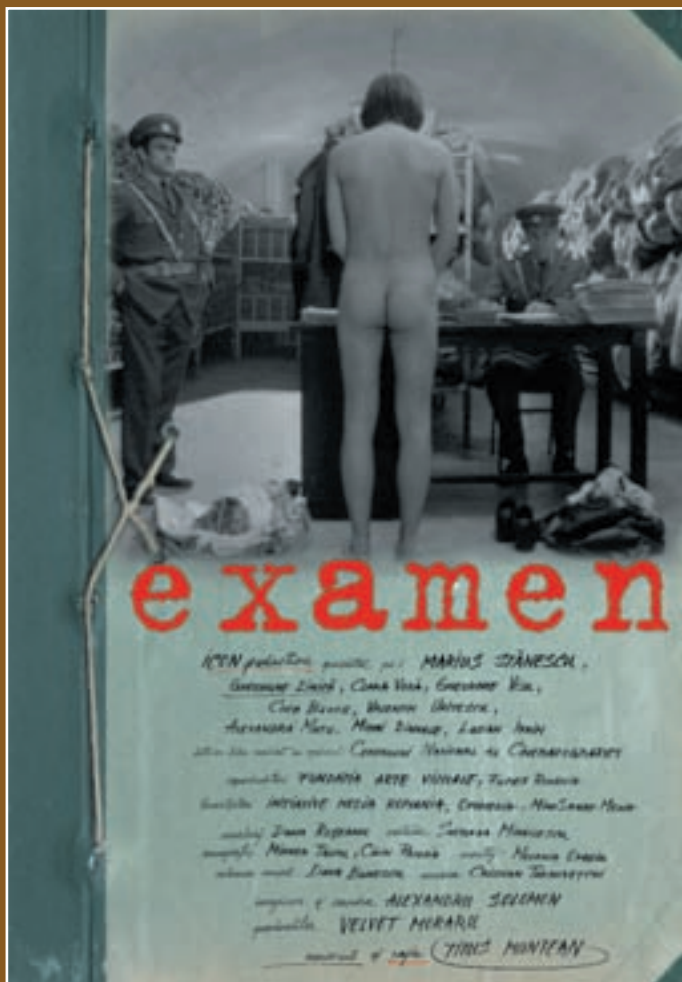
TITUS MUNTEAN

Exam - 2003
(Examen)

Titus Muntean was born in 1965 in Arad. He majored in film directing at the Theatre and Film Academy in Bucharest in 1995, after previously graduating from the Timișoara Institute of Technology.

Before his 2003 feature film debut with *Exam* he directed a number of documentaries - among which *Dragus 2x40*, *Arad*, *My Love* and *Ex nihilo, nihil* - and shorts: *Propatria* (which won a couple of awards at the DAKINO Film Festival in 1993), *It Will Be All Right* (Grand Prix CineMAiubit and DaKINO Film Festivals in 1995).





- 2004 – Best Director, Romanian Film Association
- 2004 – Best Leading Actor, Best Editing, Romanian Film Association
- 2004 – Best Leading Actor - *Anonimul* International Film Festival

SYNOPSIS

In 2000, two film students make video interviews with a certain Cristian Sandulescu, a 50 years old taxi driver. Back in 1977, the young Sandulescu is arrested and accused of a gruesome murder. Released years later when the police find the real murderer and scarred by the terrible experience that cost him his marriage and the lives of his parents, he tries to make sense of what happened. Horrible discoveries, going from framing and witness bullying by the chief prosecutor to pressure from high-up to have the investigation wrapped up quickly, slowly come into the light. Sandulescu is thus faced with a dilemma: is he entitled to revenge or not?

CREDITS

Exam / (Examen)

Romania, 2003

Running time: 87 min.

Director: Titus Muntean

Producer: Velvet Moraru

Screenplay: Titus Muntean

Director of Photography: Alexandru Solomon

Music: Cristian Tarnovețchi

Main cast: Marius Stănescu, Gheorghe Dinică, Clara Vodă, Gheorghe Visu, Coca Bloos

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Distributed by: Icon Production



REVIEWS

"Exam is a film not to be missed. It isn't only a thriller, it is a thriller about the 'Golden Age' of communism, and the stigma that the writing-director Titus Muntean studies through sharp closeups leaves its own specific terrible mark, harder to erase than others. Titus Muntean knows how hell is decorated but he does not linger on these pictures; he does not overcharge them just to get a kick. His idea of a shocker is much more intelligent. More shocking than anything else is the interview a couple of film students make with Sandulescu."

Andrei Gorzo, *Dilema*

"Exam is a remarkable debut. The force of Titus Muntean's talent resides in the effectiveness of the cinematic speech (with a tinge of documentary-like objectivation), in the exact science of choosing an outstanding cast: the great Gheorghe Dinica at his best, a Gheorghe Visu careful to the many facets of a character torn between doing his job and the demands of the communist state. [...]

The film is convincing without the need to resort to harsh scenes, argues without 'theses' and concludes in a possible moral with a detachment worthy of a great author."

Călin Stănculescu, *România Liberă*

"Titus Muntean stubbornly makes us face a past which, to a certain extent, motivates our present. He does it with infinite craftsmanship, restoring thoroughly with small details the atmosphere of those past times."

Gabriela Hurezean *Național*

Cristian Nemescu was born in 1979 and graduated from the Theatre and Film Academy in Bucharest in 2003.

CRISTIAN NEMESCU

California Dreamin' (Endless) - 2007
((California Dreamin' (nesfârșit))

At a very young age he could already boast an important number of awards and participations in prestigious international festivals, including the official selection of his 2006 *Marilena From P7* medium-length film for "Semaine de la critique" in Cannes. His filmography as director and screenwriter also includes *People in Apartment Buildings Are Crazy About Music* (2000, short), *Mihai and Cristina* (2001, short), *C Block Story* (2003, short, nominated as best short film of the year by the European Academy Awards). Cristian Nemescu's first feature film, *California Dreamin' (endless)*, was still unfinished at the time of his death. He was killed in August 2006 in a car crash that also claimed the life of young sound director Andrei Toncu.





2007 – Un Certain Regard Prize, Cannes

SYNOPSIS

1999, during the war in Kosovo. In a small Romanian town Doiaru, chief of the railway station and local mobster, stops a NATO train transporting military equipment. The transport, supervised by American soldiers, is crossing Romania without documents, based only on verbal approval from the Romanian government. The arrival of the Americans turns the hitherto nondescript settlement into the village of all possibilities. A love story is born between Doiaru's daughter, who wants to leave the village at any cost, and one of the soldiers. Meanwhile, the American officer in command stirs the villagers to revolt against the chief. Finally the train moves on, leaving behind a village steeped in anarchy...

CREDITS

California Dreamin' (Endless) / [California Dreamin' (nesfârșit)]

Romania, 2007

Running time: 155 min

Director: Cristian Nemescu

Producer: Andrei Boncea

Screenplay: Cristian Nemescu, Tudor Voican

Director of Photography: Liviu Marghidan

Sound: Cristian Tarnovetschi, Andrei Toncu

Main cast: Armand Assante, Răzvan Vasilescu, Maria Dinulescu

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Distributed by: MEDIAPRO PICTURES



REVIEWS

"Unfinished when the talented 27-year-old helmer died in a traffic accident some six weeks after wrapping the shoot, the picture [...] spins a complex dark comedy of near-Shakespearean proportions."

Alissa Simon, *Variety*

"With a far-ranging scope and a roving camera style, Nemescu stages the culture clash between the Romanians and Americans as a full-out comedy. The former are ravaged by years of deprivation, corruption and bureaucratic disfunction, while the latter are gung-ho and arrogant. The locals meet their arrival to the town with long-percolating expectations of liberation, but the Americans cannot possibly fulfill the mythic saviour role expected of them by the Romanians since the Second World War. Vasilescu is phenomenal as the cynical Doiaru, who manages to play all sides while maintaining a near-regal bearing. Though Nemescu's death was a huge loss to global cinema, he has left us a masterful and ambitious film that honours his great promise."

Michèle Maheux

Peter Călin Netzer was born in 1975, immigrated to Germany while still a child, but returned to Romania to study film directing.

PETER CĂLIN NETZER

Maria - 2003
(Maria)

He graduated from the Theatre and Film Accademy in Bucharest in 1999. His filmography includes *Rag Ball* (1994, video), *Dry Eyes* (1995, short), *Hot Line* (1996, short documentary), *Snow of the Lambs* (1998, short). His 2003 feature film debut, *Maria*, is a development of the 1997 homonymous short. "Just when the audiences have had enough films about the destitute, Călin Peter Netzer has the courage to make a film against the current."
(Iulia Blaga, film critic)





2003 – Grand Prix of the Jury, Silver Leopard for Best Actress and Best Actor, Locarno

2003 – Best Film, Tübingen

2003 – Best Debut, Special Prize of International Film Societies, Cottbus

2004 – Best Film, Paris Film Festival

2004 – Best European Debut, Zlin

2004 – Special Mention for Best Film, Festroia

SYNOPSIS

Maria's seventh child comes into this world in the dark dampness of a basement. Abandoned by her violent, drunkard husband, Maria tries desperately to find work, but nobody helps her. Her only solace is her faith and she finds comfort in church mass. Somebody suggests she sell her newborn child. But Maria would rather sell her own body. When, on being picked up by the police, the reasons behind her decision to become a prostitute are revealed, her case turns into a newsworthy story. But the outcome is far from happy...

CREDITS

Maria / (Maria)

Romania, 2003

Running time: 97 min

Director: Peter Călin Netzer

Producers: Karl Baumgartner, Pierre Alain Meier, Adrian Popovici

Screenplay: Gordan Mihici, Peter Călin Netzer

Director of Photography: Mihail Sârbușca

Music: Petru Mărgineanu

Main cast: Diana Dumbrava, Horațiu Mălăele, Șerban Ionescu, Luminița Gheorghiu

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Distributed by: American Cinema International (ACI) & Media Luna GmbH Germany



REVIEWS

"Maria is a diamond mined from black coal. Looking like the grimmest and grungiest of Central Europe realist dramas, but marbled with a strain of black humor that leavens, without trivializing, its tale of a working-class young woman with seven children, [the film] is surprisingly enjoyable [...]

This first feature by Romanian-born, German-resident helmer Peter Calin Netzer [...] is an extremely clever, calculated piece of work."

Variety

"A searing glimpse into the degrading poverty of postcommunist Eastern Europe, Maria is a heart-rending film of one woman's struggle to provide for her family. No mere sociology tract, director Calin Peter Netzer taps into the resilience of his characters, never allowing the film to strain with political melodrama but rather to reverberate with their individual valor."

The Hollywood Reporter

"Maria is a film situated somewhere between drama and tragical comedy, losing neither its coherence nor the force of its cinematographic discourse."

Călin Stănculescu, film critic

CORNELIU

12:08 East of Bucharest - 2006
(A fost sau n-a fost?)

Corneliu Porumboiu was born in 1975 in Vaslui, Romania. He holds a degree in management from the Accademy of Economic Studies in Bucharest and in 2003 he graduated from the Theatre and Film Accademy, majoring in film directing.

PORUMBOIU

His filmmaking career took off most auspiciously with the short film *Gone With the Wine* (2002), which won several awards at international festivals in Romania and was presented in various festivals abroad. His next short, *A Trip Into Town* (2003) was equally well received, as was his 2003 medium-length *Liviu's Dream*, chosen Best Romanian Film at the Transylvania International Film Festival. His feature debut came in 2006 with *12:08 East of Bucharest*, which he also produced. Porumboiu, who wrote the script for all his films, stated in an interview: "I make films about my native town, about the people there. [...] In fact, I think I make movies about myself."





2006 – Caméra d'Or, Cannes
 2006 – Best Film, Transylvania International Film Festival, Cluj
 2006 – Golden Swan for Best Film, Copenhagen
 2006 – Best Film, Siena
 2006 – Grand Prix, Kiev
 2006 – Special Prize for an Outstanding Artistic Contribution, Cottbus
 2007 – Balkan Survey, Thessaloniki
 2007 – Best Film, Best Script, Best Director and Best Leading Actor, Gopo Prizes, Bucharest

SYNOPSIS

It is December 22. It's been 16 years since the revolution and Christmas is approaching in a small provincial town. Piscoci, an elderly pensioner, is preparing for yet another Christmas on his own. Manescu, the history teacher, is trying to save his salary from his many outstanding debts. Jderescu, the owner of the local TV network, seems uninterested in the coming holidays. For him, it's time to face history. The three men will tackle a question that has gone unanswered for 16 years: "Was there or wasn't there a revolution in their small town?"

CREDITS

12:08 East of Bucharest /
(A fost sau n-a fost?)

Romania, 2006

Running time: 89 min

Director: Corneliu Porumboiu

Producer: Corneliu Porumboiu

Screenplay: Corneliu Porumboiu

Director of Photography: Marius Panduru

Music: Rotaria Group

Main cast: Ion Sapdaru, Mircea Andreescu,
 Teodor Corban, Mirela Cioabă,
 Luminița Gheorghiu

A PERISCOP PICTURES /

42 Km FILM Production

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Distributed by: The Coproduction Office



REVIEWS

"Uproariously funny and biting critical of social hypocrisy before and after Ceausescu, this brilliant movie is easily the best in what, to judge by other regional films at Karlovy Vary, is a burgeoning and fertile effort to come to grips with post-Soviet malaise in Central and Eastern Europe - living proof that when it comes to politics, comedy is the sincerest form of dissidence."

Ella Taylor, *LA Weekly*

"A slightly depressive burlesque, with no flanning, no acrobatics, but with a science of the gesture and the pose that allows us to expect, if the helmer continues along the same lines, some genuinely original cinema."

Jean-Sébastien Chauvin, *Chronic'art* - Cannes 2006

"Romanians are currently making the type of films that used to make Britain the envy of the world when Ken Loach, Lindsay Anderson and Mike Leigh were in their pomp."

BBC

"This small and gentle satire, most of which takes place in a dog-eared television station in a rundown Romanian town, exudes the wry warmth typical of Eastern European filmmakers, wry warmth being one of those oxymoronic characteristics that thrive under absurd conditions... like totalitarianism."

Rex Roberts, *Film Journal International*

Cristi Puiu was born in 1967. He first took an interest in painting and in 1992 entered the painting department of Ecole Supérieure d'Arts Visuels in Geneva. However, after the first year he switched to film studies and graduated in 1996. After his return to Romania he started directing and writing his first films to considerable critical success: *25.12. Bucharest. North Railway Station* (1996, documentary),

CRISTI PUIU

Stuff and Dough - 2001
(*Marfa și banii*)

The Death of Mr. Lazarescu - 2005
(*Moartea domnului Lăzărescu*)

Cigarettes and Coffee (2004, short - awarded the Golden Bear for best short film at the 2004 Berlin International Film Festival) and his feature film debut, *Stuff and Dough* (2001).

He also wrote the script for *Stuff and Dough*, *Cigarettes and Coffee*, Lucian Pintilie's 2003 *Niki & Flo* and the German production *Offset* (2006). Cristi Puiu's second feature, *The Death of Mr. Lazarescu* (2005), was awarded the Grand Prix of the Un Certain Regard section in Cannes and marked a cornerstone in the perception of contemporary Romanian cinema worldwide. The film was intended as the first of a series of six movies entitled *Six Stories from the Outskirts of Bucharest*.





- 2001 – FIPRESCI Prize and Best actor, Thessaloniki International Film Festival
- 2001 – Special Prize, and FINDLING Award, Cottbus
- 2001 – Official selection, Quinzane des Réalisateurs, Cannes
- 2002 – Procirep Award, Angers European First Film Festival

SYNOPSIS

Ovidiu, a young man who runs his own business selling snacks and soft drinks out of his parents' apartment, wants to expand and buy a kiosk, but he doesn't have the "dough." A local mafioso offers him an impressive amount of money for an apparently simple job: he has to take a bag to Bucharest to a specific address. It seems, however, that the things are more complicated than that: the bag contains some "stuff" that concerns other people, too. Convinced at first that he has sold only his services, Ovidiu will understand that the deal runs deeper than he thought and he has in fact sold his soul...

CREDITS

Stuff and Dough /
(Marfa și banii)

Romania, 2001

Running time: 90 min.

Director: Cristi Puiu

Screenplay: Cristi Puiu, Răzvan Rădulescu

Director of Photography: Silviu Stăvilă

Sound: Andrei Pap, Călin Potcavă

Main cast: Alexandru Papadopol,
Dragoș Bucur, Răzvan Vasilescu, Ioana Flora,
Luminița Gheorghiu

A Rofilm S.A Production

Distributed by: Romania Film



REVIEWS

"This first feature by Cristi Puiu actually represents the road movie genre in its purest form. [...] Papadopol, Dragos Bucur as his macho pal and sulky Ioana Flora, as the young woman who finds herself on a dangerous ride, are all effective in this small-scale but remarkably proficient production."

David Stratton, *Variety*



- 2005 – Un Certain Regard Award, Cannes
- 2005 – Silver Hugo Special Jury Prize, Chicago International Film Festival
- 2005 – Grand Prix of the Jury and Best Actor, Copenhagen International Film Festival
- 2005 – Discovery of the Year Award, Reykjavik International Film Festival
- 2005 – FIPRESCI Award for Best Actor, Palm Springs
- 2005 – Special Award of the Jury, Tallin

SYNOPSIS

Mr. Lazarescu, a 63-year-old lonely widower with a history of heavy drinking. One night he feels sick and calls the ambulance. It takes for ever to arrive but it finally does and the doctor deems the old man should be taken to the hospital. But when they get there they decide to send him to another hospital, and then yet another... As the night unfolds he is checked by more and more doctors, and visits even more hospitals, never finding anywhere to get treated, with terrible consequences...

CREDITS

The Death of Mr. Lazarescu / (Moartea domnului Lăzărescu)

Romania, 2005
Running time: 153 min.

Director: Cristi Puiu

Producer: Alexandru Munteanu

Screenplay: Cristi Puiu, Răzvan Rădulescu

Director of Photography: Oleg Mutu

Music: Andreea Păcuraru

Cast: Ion Fiscuteanu, Luminița Gheorghiu, Gabriel Spahiu, Doru Ana

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REVIEWS

"...a thorny masterpiece by the Romanian director Cristi Puiu."

Stephen Holden, *New York Times*

"Two and a half hours of shaky handheld lensing about a man slowly expiring in a succession of hospitals becomes unexpectedly mesmerizing in helmer-scripter Cristi Puiu's sophomore Cannes entry *The Death of Mr. Lazarescu*. The picture's take on the dehumanizing process of medical treatment is leavened by black humor and dialogue that always rings true."

Jay Weissberg, *Variety*

"[...] in Puiu's film, a tour de force of cinema verité with astonishing performances by a huge cast of small players, the good people are too few and too ineffectual, and as the title suggests, their interventions come too late. [...] there are also moments of comedy and a tapestry of small human observations."

Philip Kennicott, *The Washington Post*

"[...] the Romanian film *The Death of Mr. Lazarescu* is a rich, strange and weirdly gratifying odyssey. Characterize the film any of three ways and its qualities sound unresolvable. It is a black comedy, among the blackest."

Michael Phillips, *Chicago Tribune*

RUXANDRA ZENIDE

Ryna - 2005
(Ryna)

Ruxandra Zenide was born in Bucharest, in 1975. She holds a Master's degree from the Institute of High International Relations (IUHEI), Geneva and her film studies include a one year programme at FAMU (Filmová a Televizní fakulata Akademie múzických umení), Prague and an intensive programme in filmmaking at the New York University. She directed the short films *Shoot Me* (1999), *Dust* (2001, selected for various international film festivals) and *Green Oaks* (2003, also present in the official selection at major festivals). She made her feature film debut with *Ryna*, a Swiss-Romanian co-production, in 2005.





- 2005 – Reflet d’Or - Best Film Award, International Festival of Cinema and Television, Geneva
- 2005 – FIPRESCI Award, Geneva
- 2005 – Vague d’Or - Best Film Award, International Festival of Women in Cinema, Bordeaux
- 2005 – Special Award of the Jury for director and leading actress International Film Festival Mannheim - Heidelberg
- 2005 – Special Prize of the Jury, Festival of East European Cinema, Cottbus
- 2006 – Nuovi Sguardi Prize, Squardi Altrove Film Festival, Milan

SYNOPSIS

16-year-old Ryna is the daughter of a poor Romanian who runs a gas station in a small community of the Danube delta. Ryna has been brought up as a boy because her father had longed for a son. The film is about strong family ties, about a daughter’s search for her mother, and about a despotic father slowly losing his grip, but also about poverty, social suppression and the abuse of power by those who rule under the guise of a false freedom. Ryna shows the awakening of a young girl’s soul and the pain that goes with it. Caught between traditional values and materialistic dreams, Ryna finally pays a heavy price in order to preserve her identity.

CREDITS

Ryna / (Ryna)

Romania, Switzerland, 2005

Running time: 93 min

Director: Ruxandra Zenide

Producers: Catalin Mitulescu, Eric Garoyan, Xavier Ruiz

Screenplay: Marek Epstein

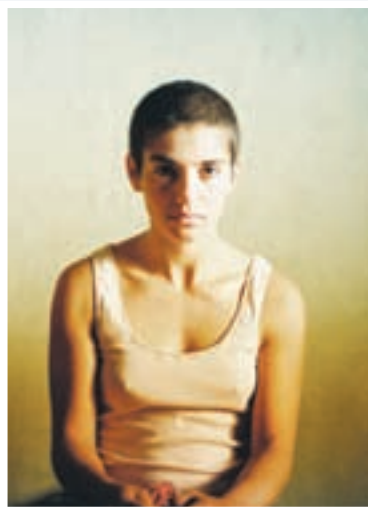
Director of Photography: Marius Panduru

Sound: Alexandru Dragomir

Main cast: Dorotheea Petre, Valentin Popescu, Nicolae Praidă, Matthieu Rozé

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REVIEWS

"[...] *Ryna*, a striking feature debut by Romanian helmer Ruxandra Zenide. Much of the pic's strength is in leaning on the frail shoulders of newcomer Dorotheea Petre, who is insightful and refreshingly contemporary as a boy-girl-woman searching for her identity.

Original plotting and a moody atmosphere should help push the film beyond fest screenings to reach selected arthouse audiences."

Deborah Young, *Variety*

"[...] The great thing about *Ryna* is the way it portrays an individual woman – *Ryna* is played by the overwhelming Doroteea Petre – and at the same time gives a vivid impression of the state of a country and a society [...]"

Thomas Rothschild, FIPRESCI 2005

"*Ryna* starts cutting through the spider web of lies, tries to find the crack in the shell of the world inside which she is a prisoner, and the public starts following her obediently. From this point onwards Ruxandra Zenide's talent as a film director can be glimpsed from the intuition which helps her turn a story from the end of the world [...] into something interesting to the viewer."

Marilena Iliescu

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1994

È Pericoloso Sporgersi / (È Pericoloso Sporgersi)

1996

Asphalt Tango / (Asfalt tango)

1998

Dolce far niente / (Dolce far niente)

2001

God Kisses Us on the Mouth Every Day /
(În fiecare zi Dumnezeu ne sărută pe gură)

Stuff and Dough / (Marfa și banii)

2002

Philanthropy / (Filantropica)

Occident / (Occident)

2003

Exam / (Examen)

Maria / (Maria)

2004

The Pharaoh / (Faraonul)

The Italian Girls / (Italiencele)

The Rage / (Furia)

2005

The Death of Mr Lazarescu /
(Moartea domnului Lăzărescu)

Ryna / Ryna

2006

Love Sick / (Legături bolnăvicioase)

The Way I Spent the End Of the World /
Cum mi-am petrecut sfârșitul lumii

The Paper Will Be Blue / (Hârtia va fi albastră)

12:08 East of Bucharest / (A fost sau n-a fost?)

2007

The Rest Is Silence / (Restul e tăcere)

4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days /
(4 luni, 3 săptămâni și 2 zile)

California Dreamin' (Endless) /
California Dreamin' (nesfârșit)

