PRESS FIFF

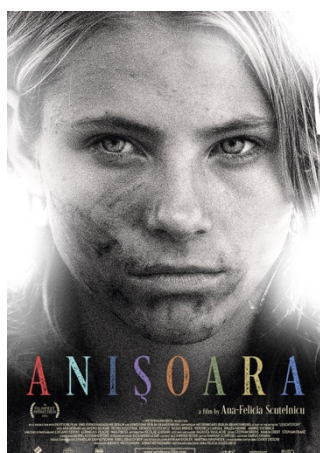## FESTIVAL INTERNATIONAL DU FILM DE FRIBOURG

Between irony and poetry: the Republic of Moldova at FIFF

The Fribourg International Film Festival unveils the *New Territory: Republic of Moldova* section

Anişoara (Ana Felicia Scutelnicu, Republic of Moldova/Germany, 2016)

The Soviet Garden (Dragos Turea, Republic of Moldova/Romania, 2019)

Carbon (Ion Borş, Republic of Moldova/Romania/Spain, 2022)

Festival International
du Film de Fribourg

Esplanade de l'Ancienne-Gare 3
1700 Fribourg

17th – 26th March 2023
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FESTIVAL
INTERNATIONAL
DU FILM
DE FRIBOURG

Press release
Fribourg, Monday 6th February 2023
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
New Territory: Republic of Moldova

With a little more than a month before the 37th edition begins (17th–26th March 2023), the Fribourg International Film Festival, presents its *New Territory* section, which every year celebrates little-known filmmaking cultures. With the war in Ukraine dominating headlines over the last 12 months, FIFF turns its spotlight on the Republic of Moldova, a landlocked country bordered by Ukraine and Romania. With three feature films (including *Carbon*, the Moldovan entry in the 2023 Oscars) and four documentaries, as well as two programmes of recently released short films, the line-up is an immersive tour of the irony- and poetry-imbued cinema created by the latest generation of talented Moldovan filmmakers. The full programme of the 37th FIFF will be unveiled on 1st March.

After dedicating its *New Territory* section to Angola in 2022, FIFF turns its attention to the Republic of Moldova, offering a sweeping view of Moldovan cinema. This world first came about from a chance meeting with producer **Ion Gnatiuc**, which piqued the interest of FIFF Artistic Director Thierry Jobin: "The Republic of Moldova, which has fewer than 3 million inhabitants, has clearly realised that there is nothing to be gained by imitating foreign filmmaking. The country, which shares a border with Ukraine and has grown accustomed to the presence of Russian troops in Transnistria, confirms the rule that the more local a film is, the more universal its message becomes. And what brilliant films they make! Sometimes bucolic, often metaphorical, they deploy subtle humour to transcend the absurdities of political quagmire." Gnatiuc, who agreed to curate this year's *New Territory* section, and a delegation of other Moldovan filmmakers will take part in a FIFForum roundtable on the (re-)emergence of Moldovan cinema.

The Republic of Moldova has undergone several major geopolitical upheavals that have also had a profound impact on its film industry. Today, there is a war raging on its doorstep and the country finds itself contending with a massive influx of Ukrainian refugees and rolling power cuts. Several decades before, there was the collapse of the Soviet Union and the subsequent decision of the Transnistria region to break away from the rest of Moldova. Yet, it was under Soviet rule that Moldovan cinema experienced its first renaissance. Starting in the 1960s, it enjoyed about a decade and a half of successful and highly productive years that included the creation of several major studios. USSR disintegration, however, led to a period of stagnation for the Moldovan film industry, and it all but disappeared after the country declared independence in 1991 and funding dried up. But a talented young generation of filmmakers is emerging and making impressive inroads in the industry, as evidenced by the many brilliant Moldovan films that have been made in the last decade.

2023 is proving to be a great year for Moldovan cinema, which has entered the race for the Oscar for Best International Feature Film with Ion Borș' *Carbon* as national candidate – a film which will also be screened at FIFF. There is also the impressive *Pigeon's Milk,* the first film shot in the pro-Russian, self-proclaimed republic of Transnistria that depicts a world where milk tankers are filled with red wine to alleviate the soldiers' boredom. *The Soviet Garden* is an extraordinary documentary that investigates the secret plan by the Khrushchev regime between 1958 and 1964 to turn what is now the Republic of Moldova into a huge experimental garden to study the impact of atomic energy on local agriculture. Moldovan cinema is also not short of combative female protagonists. One of the most recent examples is the powerful and poetic *Anişoara* by Ana Felicia Scutelnicu, whose earlier film was shown at FIFF 2017. One of the two short film programmes is also suitable for young audiences (12+) and is included in the *Make it family time* section.

The full programme of the 37th FIFF (17th–26th March) will be unveiled on Wednesday 1st March 2023.

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Feature films (fiction)
• *Anişoara*, Ana Felicia Scutelnicu, 2016
• *Pigeon's Milk*, Eugen Marian, 2021
• *Carbon*, Ion Borș, 2022

Feature films (documentary)
• *The Soviet Garden*, Dragos Turea, 2019
• *Goodbye, Olegovici!*, Eugeniu Popovici, 2020
• *Please Hold the Line*, Pavel Cuzuioc, 2020
• *Maluri*, Lucia Tăut, 2021

Programme 1: Moldovan Short Films
• *Ana*, Natalia Shaufert, 2013
• *Lazarus Syndrome*, Eugen Damaschin, 2018
• *My Uncle Tudor*, Olga Lucovnicova, 2020
• *Salix Caprea*, Valeriu Andriută, 2018

Programme 2: Moldovan Short Films
Also included in the *Make it family time* section (12+)
• *Sigh*, Vlad Bolgarin, 2019
• *Paparuda*, Lucia Lupu, 2016
• *Aripi*, Dimitri Voloshin, 2019
• *Ce zici?*, Ioana Vatamanu-Margineanu, 2021
• *Colectia de arome*, Igor Cobileanski, 2013
• *Daydream*, Igor Cobileanski, 2019

FIFForum round table: meeting with Ion Gnatiuc and the delegation of Moldovan filmmakers (free entry)

MEDIA INFORMATION

• **Interviews**: Please contact the FIFF Press office
• **Download HD film stills and trailers**: fiff.ch/en/press-2023
• **Press accreditation**: as of now on fiff.ch/en/accreditations-fiff-2023

PRESS CONFERENCE

**Wednesday 1st March 2023
at 10:15 am**
Crapule Club, Grand-Places 14, Fribourg

Presentation of the full programme
Registration: simone.jenni@fiff.ch

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