

cinderellas

queens &

godmothers

OF
CROATIAN
FILM
2012/2013



Croatian
Audiovisual
Centre
Hrvatski audiovizualni centar

ewa

european women's
audiovisual network

invitation

to

the

ball

In 2008, the year that the Croatian Audiovisual Centre was founded, a round table was held at the Pula Film Festival, where the visibility of women in Croatian cinema was discussed. The numbers didn't look promising: out of 108 feature films that were produced from 1990 to 2007, only 6 were directed by women. 45 films were produced in the next 5 years, three of which have been directed by a woman. Considering that an additional two are being shaped and finalized in post-production, and scheduled for release within a year, we can conclude that things are looking better for women in the filmmaking business, as they are steadily filling the ranks amongst local feature film directors.

However, numbers are not the only indicator of success. Despite the statistics that are still in favour of men, some of the most important achievements in contemporary Croatian cinema can be attributed to female filmmakers - feature and short directors, as well as producers. Their paths resemble a modern take on the classic fairy tale, in which unfortunate circumstances turn to gold by a sudden fortunate twist of events.

A recent box-office success (accomplished by the name you will encounter later on in this brochure) made us think of female feature film directors as modern-day Cinderellas, who just recently came into the spotlight. On the other hand, female directors have been ruling the short film scene for a while. These Queens have been introducing new sensibilities and fresh topics into Croatian cinema with curiosity and confidence. And let's not forget about the producers - the Fairy Godmothers of Croatian film. They are the ones making it all possible by turning pumpkins into magical carriages that take all our filmmakers to the dance.

This brochure is an invitation to the ball where you will meet the Cinderellas, Queens and Fairy Godmothers of the Croatian film industry who, despite the dry reality of numbers and statistics, are making fairy tales come true.

cin

der

ellas

OF FEATURE FILM

When, at the end of 2012, the romantic comedy *Sonja and the Bull*, directed by Vlatka Vorkapić, hit the screens in Croatia and dethroned Hollywood blockbusters *The Rise of the Guardians* and *The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn* at the local box offices, we witnessed a rare occurrence in Croatian Cinema. With 301,975 kunas (39.925 euros) gross earnings in the opening week, Vorkapić's debut feature took over the title of the biggest Croatian film opening in the last decade. Also, *Sonja and the Bull* was an announcement of what was to follow with Vinko Brešan's *Priest's Children* that smashed the local box office, thus reinstating the shattered faith in Croatian cinema and its relevance to the domestic market. In the end, *Sonja and the Bull* generated an unprecedented interest, ending its theatrical run with almost 100,000 viewers.

Although the number of women in feature film directing is still not a reason to brag about, and the share of women applying for state funding for production is still far from ideal, things have significantly changed for female feature film directors since 2008, when a roundtable discussing the visibility of female filmmakers took place in Pula.

While there were no women among the applicants for feature film production grants in 2008 and 2009, the last three years show a slight increase in the percentage of women applying for production grants (9,5% in 2010; 8,3% in 2011; 15,6% in 2012). During this period, only one film directed by a woman received a production grant - Jasmila Žbanić's *The Love Island*. However, women had more success in the grant category for debut feature films. In 2008, out of eight supported films, two of them had a female director attached - *Rules and Exceptions* by Ivona Juka, and *Step by Step* by Biljana Čakić-Veselić. In 2009 and 2010, two out of four films that received funding had a female director. In 2009, it was *Sonja and the Bull* by Vlatka Vorkapić, and in 2010, it was *Zagreb Cappuccino* by Vanja Sviličić.

Speaking of grants, there is another category, introduced in 2010, which helped boost the presence of female filmmakers on the Croatian scene - script development. Thanks to HAVC's support of this vital stage in the filmmaking process, four of the film directors presented in this brochure have received an opportunity to develop the scripts of their feature films so far. We will soon have a chance to see the feature film debuts of two very promising directors: *Zagreb Cappuccino* by Vanja Sviličić, featuring popular theatre and TV actresses Nela Kocsis and Mila Elegović; and *Rules and Exceptions*, an ambitious debutant feature by awarded author Ivona Juka.



vanja

sviličić

Vanja Sviličić began her career as an art photographer, but when she decided to change the lenses of her still camera for those of a film camera, she got accepted in the Berlinale Talent Campus 2008, where her documentary short *On the Square* had its international premiere. Her career took a new turn when her documentary *Am I Happy or What?* (2011) received the Jury's Special Mention at the ZagrebDox Film Festival. In this film, she applied the fly-on-the-wall style to tell a fiction-like story about chambermaids' daily routines in an unnamed hotel in Zagreb. One of the most frequent comments that the film provoked was that her protagonists looked so natural in front of the camera, that they left an impression of a well-tuned acting ensemble. For this young and talented director, expectations run high, as we eagerly await the premiere of her upcoming feature debut *Zagreb Cappuccino*, starring some of Croatia's most popular theater actresses.

After repeatedly applying for state funding without much success, Vlatka Vorkapić famously stated: *The number of scripts I can write is more than the number of times they can turn me down.* Vlatka Vorkapić is an independent artist, screenwriter and director. She has directed over 30 documentaries, two short films, and wrote two stage plays. Her feature film directorial debut *Sonja and the Bull* hit Croatian screens in fall 2012. It was a sleeper box-office success, reaching almost 100,000 viewers in total, which is a number usually reserved for Hollywood blockbusters in Croatia. In *Sonja and the Bull*, Vorkapić translated the topic from one of her earlier documentaries into a classic screwball comedy that revolves around bullfighting, the clash of rural and urban Croatia and, of course, the battle of the sexes. Although it had a solid marketing campaign, the film's success is owed to the word-of-mouth buzz, which is a rare occurrence in Croatian cinema.



vlatka

vorkapić





biljana

čakić

veselić

For many years, Biljana Čakić Veselić was known for her successful documentary *The Boy Who Rushed* (2001), in which she tells the story about the war in Croatia through her personal experience of loss, which was something quite different from the way the topic was dealt with in the Croatian cinema of the 90s. She also directed a docu-biopic of the pioneering Croatian female journalist and writer Marija Jurić Zagorka (*Zagorka*, 2008) and the war drama *Step by Step* (2011).



irena

škorić

Having directed over 20 award-winning short and middle-length documentary and fiction films, Irena Škorić is by far the most prolific Croatian filmmaker. Her best-known short film is *Farewell* (2008) that won 38 national and international awards, followed by an award-winning documentary *The Destiny of Line 13* (2009). In 2011, she wrote and directed her debut feature film *7seX7*, an ode to life and erotica inspired by Boccaccio's *Decameron*.



ivona

juka

Ivona Juka is a scriptwriter and director. Her award-winning creative documentary *Facing The Day* (2006) enjoyed a very successful theatrical run both in Croatia and Macedonia. She is also the author of the award-winning shorts *Garbage* (2004) and *Editing* (2006), selected and awarded at numerous international film festivals. She directed the Croatian segment of the feature omnibus *Some Other Stories* (2010). At the moment, she is finalizing her feature debut *Rules and Exceptions*.



snježana

tribuson

Snježana Tribuson is a record holding Croatian female director with 3 feature films under her belt. Her feature debut *Recognition* in 1996 was a thriller-drama about the consequences of the war crimes, but her next two features - *The Three Men of Melita Žganjer* (1998) and *God Forbid a Worse Thing Should Happen* (2002) - relied more on humor, nostalgia and parody of soap-opera clichés. She is currently developing her 4th feature *All the Best*. Since 2004, she has been teaching film and TV directing at the Zagreb Academy of Dramatic Art.

queens

OF SHORT FILM

In recent years, the Croatian short film scene has been dominated by female filmmakers. Ardently embraced by the audiences, their works continually surpass even the most exalted expectations of domestic festival juries. As solid proof of their quality and artistic merit, their authors often leave these festivals with a Grand Prix in their hands.

Thanks to the buzz surrounding their work, there has even been a significant rise of interest in the short film scene among the online, print and TV journalists and opinion makers, who started to cover it more frequently and with much enthusiasm.

One can't deserve a royal title without a considerable amount of audacity, and that is what the Queens of Short Film have in abundance. With a healthy dose of ambition and curiosity, they explore the subjects and characters that have, up until recently, been left in the background. Their female protagonists, even when entangled in exacerbating love affairs, are treated as more than just objects of somebody's love interest. Rather than being presented as one-dimensional characters, whose problems are solved with the arrival of Prince Charming, they are portrayed through a complex set of circumstances, in which their love life and romantic illusions are only one piece of the puzzle.

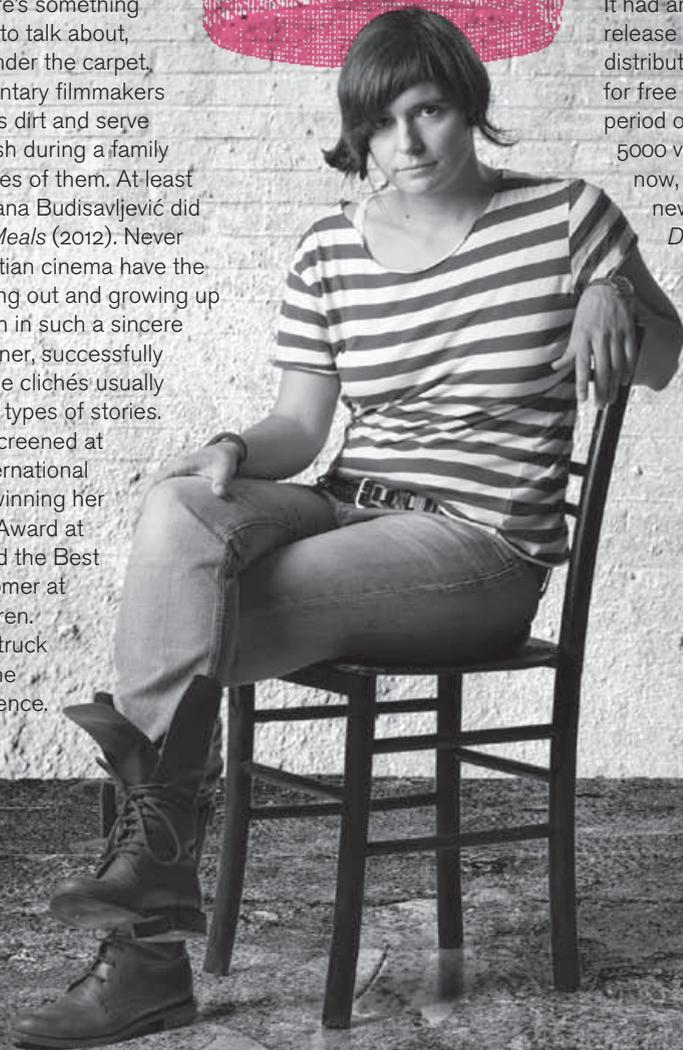
The relationships between mothers, siblings, and girlfriends, female sexual appetite(s) and erotic imagination became the topics of fiction, documentary and even animated films. Exploring new subjects was almost without exception followed by the broadening of the possibilities of storytelling, even of the genre itself. This is especially true for Croatian experimental and animation Queens, who make witty, slightly ironic, and disarmingly charming hybrids that win over audiences, festival curators and juries alike.

In any case, there is a reason why these ladies have a crown on their head. And considering the fact that some of them are developing their first feature projects, their reign might soon expand to other fields as well!

dana
budisavljević



Whenever there's something we don't want to talk about, we sweep it under the carpet. Some documentary filmmakers like to take this dirt and serve it as a main dish during a family meal. Or a series of them. At least that is what Dana Budisavljević did in her *Family Meals* (2012). Never before in Croatian cinema have the topics of coming out and growing up been dealt with in such a sincere and open manner, successfully devoid of all the clichés usually found in these types of stories. The film was screened at a dozen of international film festivals, winning her the Audience Award at ZagrebDox and the Best Balkan Newcomer at DokuFest Prizren. The film also struck a chord with the domestic audience.



It had an art-house cinema release and an innovative Internet distribution – the film was offered for free viewing during a limited period of time, which resulted in 5000 views in 24 hours. Right now, Dana is developing her new documentary project *Diana's List*, a film about an outstanding woman who, together with her associates, launched and conducted a humanitarian operation on an unprecedented scale during World War II. The project was awarded the EAVE European Producers' Workshop Award for Best Project at the WEMW Co-production Forum in Trieste in 2012.

ivana
jurić



While some directors are known for repeatedly working with the same actors, Ivana Jurić is known for repeatedly working with the same – doll. The star of her animated films is Šemsa, a doll she found on a local flea market. Šemsa has one leg and the charisma of a Hollywood diva. Jurić is best known for her animated short *The Room* (2011), an exploration of sex, sexuality and imagination, in which she employed



her stop-motion magic to ignite Šemsa's erotic appetites. *The Room* screened at many international film festivals, including New Directors / New Films Festival at MoMA, and was shown on ARTE television. Her latest work includes character design for Čejan Černić's *The Girl Who Loved Fairy-Tales* (2013), in which her childlike drawings were used to speak about adult-related topics. Jurić is currently working on an animated short *Pupa*.



hana

jušić

Hana Jušić likes to call the characters of her own films 'lovable jerks'. She also likes to put them in situations from which she can squeeze out all the bitterness, leaving them to flounder in their siblings' rivalry and incestuous desires. Her recognizable style is derived from the contrast between the beautiful set design and camera work, and the flaws and delusions of her characters, which enables her to capture the binding mechanisms that ignite their behavior. *Chill* (2011) was screened in competition at the Oberhausen Film Festival, while *Terrarium* is regarded as one of the best Croatian films of 2012. She also wrote the screenplay for *The Mysterious Boy* (2013), the second part of Kinorama's family franchise based on a popular series of children's novels about a boy detective named Koko, written by Croatian writer Ivan Kušan. At the moment she is writing another sequel of the series, as well as developing her own feature debut *Quit Staring at My Plate*, which is selected for participation at the Torino Film Lab 2013.



sonja

tarokić

When it comes to directing, Sonja Tarokić is certainly one of the most articulated young Croatian filmmakers. She relies heavily on the meticulously built mise-en-scene, which she uses to emphasize the patterns of her characters' behavior. The relationships between mothers, daughters, sisters, and girlfriends make the core of her thematic interest, which she very successfully developed in *Red* (2009), *Smart Girls* (2010, co-writer and co-director Hana Jušić), *You Bitch!* (2011) and *I Am a Self-Made Woman*

(2012). Her films have won awards at several national and international film festivals and have been praised by the film critics. Tarokić is currently developing the screenplay for her debut feature *Staff Room* that deals with the schooling system.



**miranda
herceg**

Miranda Herceg is both a graphic designer and a film-maker. It is no wonder that her films reflect the best of both worlds. This is especially visible in her most recent work, the experimental film *From To* (2012), which uses public transportation and waiting room signs in conjunction with a meticulously crafted soundtrack to tell the story of anonymity and anxiety in an urban society. She is currently developing a new film that will expand the urban environments of her previous films into the green-colored scenery of the forest.



**željka
suková**

There are many ways to say goodbye to your beloved ones, but Željka Suková's cinematic farewell to her late grandmother is definitely among the most original ones. *Marija's Own* (2011) is just as funny and charming as the *Dynasty*-inspired costumes and accessories of its protagonists, and it was Suková's international breakthrough. It premiered at Hot Docs and went on to screen at the Toronto IFF and at the Karlovy Vary IFF, where it received the FEDEORA Award. Suková's latest work is the docu-fiction *Winter/Miracle*, co-directed by the Brazilian director Gustavo Beck.



**sara
hribar**

Sara Hribar has written, produced and directed a few independent films (*Let Me Sleep*, 2007, *Libertango*, 2009, *That Little Hand of Yours*, 2012) where she explores the nature of intimate relationships. Her style is distinctive in the way that she uses Croatian pop-songs from the 50s and 60s: they create an intoxicating retro-atmosphere and serve as an important backdrop to her stories. Her latest short *From One Day to Another* is part of the omnibus *Zagreb Stories vol. 2* (2012).



**barbara
vekarić**

Barbara Vekarić directed a number of short films. She is best known for *The First Lady of Dubrava* (2011) that was screened at a number of film festivals, including Zagreb Film Festival and Sarajevo Film Festival. She recently finished *The Little Raccoon* (2013), a film about a girl growing up in war-stricken Dubrovnik, and is currently developing a screenplay for a feature film entitled *Waiting for Aleksí*. Barbara attended the 2011 Berlinale Talent Campus and goEast Young Professionals 2011.



**ana
hušman**

When it comes to the world of short films, Ana Hušman certainly has a distinctive style. She uses animation techniques (especially stop-motion and pixilation) in an experimental manner to deconstruct the mores of everyday life. Whether it's about going to the piazza (*The Market*, 2006), the rules of good manners (*Lunch*, 2008) or playing soccer (*Football*, 2011), her films offer a humorous outlook on the patterns of human behaviour. It is no wonder that their wit and subtle irony charmed the selectors and juries of many Croatian and international film festivals.



**petra
zlonoga**

When Petra Zlonoga started directing, she made a love-letter to the early Soviet-era writer Daniil Ivanovič Kharmis called *Daniil Ivanovič, Marry Me* (2007). In her latest film, *Daniil Ivanovič, You Are Free* (2012), she let him loose. Sounds absurd? Well, exploring all the bits and pieces of absurdity is an artistic mission of Petra Zlonoga. Her animated world is populated with foxes, forests and creativity, and in each of her films she uses a different type of animation techniques.



**renata
poljak**

Renata Poljak is one of the most esteemed names of the Croatian video art scene. Her opus comprises a variety of forms and media: videos, film, installations, drawings and photographs, which were exhibited and screened in art galleries, museums and festivals all over the world, including Centre Pompidou and Louvre in Paris. This year Poljak's exhibition *Uncertain Memories* was showcased at the Stephan Stoyanov Gallery in New York and was dubbed the best show of January by Village Voice.

FAIRY

god

moth

ers

If directing a feature film is still mainly considered to be 'a man's job', when it comes to producing, it's quite a different story. Film production is one of the rare fields of occupation in the Croatian film industry where women are not underrepresented. In the Croatian Producers' Association (HRUP) the Godmother Fairies outnumber the Godfathers by 11.4%: out of 61 registered producers in HRUP, 34 of them are women. This percentage might become even higher in the future, especially if we take the current gender enrollment ratio at The Academy of Dramatic Art in Zagreb as a point of reference. Within the last three years, each generation of 6 enrolled students consists of only one male student.

Even at a quick glance, it is impossible to overlook the ways in which the Fairy Godmothers are magically transforming the Croatian film industry.

Ankica Jurić Tilić from Kinorama incited the creation of the first successful franchise about the adventures of a boy hero named Koko, whose first two installments already attracted a significant number of viewers. There was another important element of Koko's success: it is based on a children's novel series written by Ivan Kušan, a classic that has been bringing together generations of readers for almost 50 years. Making a film out of a template that already has a huge base of potential viewers sounds like something that doesn't require too much hocus pocus, but if so – why hasn't anybody done this before? Well, as they saying goes, to take a complex thing and make it look simple requires a genius – or, in our case, one genius Fairy Godmother.

A similar move was recently made by Suzana Pandek from Kabinet. Together with director Tomislav Mršić, she decided to produce an adaptation of *Cowboys*, a highly popular stage play that is still sold out, even 5 years after its premiere. *Cowboys* are scheduled for cinematic release in fall 2013 and, needless to say, expectations run high.

Fairy Godmothers' magic also works in the field of short, animation and documentary films, with the field of trans-media and cross-media yet to be explored and put on the map of Croatian cinema.

zdenka

gold

When it comes to producing, Zdenka Gold lives up to her last name. She worked as a freelance producer for a decade before setting up her own company Spiritus Movers Production in 2009. Since then, she has produced two documentaries, Silvestar Kolbas' *20 Days in Tibet* (2012) and Marko Stanić's *See You in One Year* (2013), and Bobo Jelčić's feature *A Stranger*, which premiered in the Forum section of the 2013 Berlin

International Film Festival. One of the projects she is currently developing at EAVE is the feature *Family Dust*, with the famous Croatian actress Nina Viočić attached as a scriptwriter/director. Her successful path also brings her to this year's Cannes Film Festival, where she has been selected to participate in the EFP's Producers on the Move initiative, as one of the 29 emerging European producers.

ankica

jurić

tilić

Imagine a production company where quality projects pop up like chocolate candy in Charlie Wonka's factory. This place has actually been in existence in the heart of Zagreb ever since 2003. Its name is Kinorama and it was founded by Ankica Jurić Tilić, and

her colleagues Hrvoje Pervan and Dragan Jurić. Ankica's name is equally associated with short fiction, animated and experimental projects that have been screened from Cannes to MoMA, as with audience-oriented flicks that consistently achieve big numbers at Croatian box offices. Ankica is known for recognizing and developing young talents such as Čejan Černić, Ivana Jurić and Hana Jušić, as well as producing titles by acclaimed directors such as Dalibor Matanić and Lukas Nola. She put the family film genre back

on the Croatian film map with box office successes *Koko and the Ghosts* (Daniel Kušan, 2011) and *The Mysterious Boy* (Dražen Žarković, 2013), while her TV-show *Sunday Mornings, Saturday Nights* (Predrag Ličina, 2012) was a welcome breath of fresh air in the Croatian national TV programme. Ankica is also a graduate from the EAVE programme 2007 and a member of ACE and Producers on the Move 2009. One thing is for certain: whether it comes to features, shorts or TV, Ankica makes things happen!



vera

robić -

škarica



When it comes to the Croatian film and video association scene, Vera Robić-Škarica is THE fairy godmother. She is the legendary secretary of the Croatian Film Association (HFS), where she has been working since 1973. In addition to regular activities pertaining to the Association's programmes, which range from the management of the network of Croatian film and video clubs to education, publishing and film programmes, she initiated the launch of the Association's professional short

film production in 2000. Since then, she has produced over 90 short and three low-budget feature-length films. As the producer of Damir Čučić's *A Letter to My Dad* (2012), she received the Grand Golden Arena for Best Film at the 59th Pula Film Festival. The festival's underdog, this film incarnates all the traits of Vera's producing spirit: a willingness to push the medium to its aesthetic boundaries and a strong sense of authorship.



vanja

andrijević

Vanja Andrijević rocks the world of animation in Croatia. She is the producer and general manager at Bonobostudio, a company focused on the production, distribution and promotion of animated and experimental films. Her recent works include the animated film *Dove sei, amor mio* (2011) by Veljko Popović that was screened at numerous film festivals, and the animated-documentary omnibus *Father* (2012) directed by group of authors that won 20 awards at animation and documentary film festivals.



marina

andree

darija

kulenović

škop

gudan

In 2001, Marina Andree Škop and Darija Kulenović Gudan set up their production company Studio dim. Their first international success was the documentary film *Sevdah* (2009) directed by Marina Andree Škop. This emotional, musical and lyrical journey through the traditional Bosnian folk song - Sevdalinka was screened at a number of international film festivals

and awarded with the Audience Award at the Sarajevo Film Festival. In 2012, they produced the feature film *Night Boats* directed by Igor Mirković. They are currently developing a feature film project entitled *Trampoline*, with Zrinka Matijević Veličan attached as a director.



**helena
bulaja**

Helena Bulaja is a film and interactive media professional with 20 years of experience and owner, director and producer of the production companies My Magical Thoughts Ltd and Alt F4 - Bulaja Publishing. Her award-winning interactive collection of animated stories, cartoons, and games based on a fairytale book *Croatian Tales of Long Ago* (2002) was a pioneering project in cross-media produced by eight international teams. She is currently working on a cross-media documentary entitled *Mechanical Figures_ Inspired by Tesla*, and a cross-platform animated TV-Series *The Cat Time Stories*, supported by MEDIA fund.



**morana
komljenović**

Morana Komljenović is the chief producer at FADE IN, a production company that introduced social activism through documentary filmmaking into contemporary Croatian cinema. Among other things, she produced several episodes of the cutting-edge TV-show *Direkt* and co-produced *Gangster of Love* (2013). Her director/producer credits include *Bosanoga (An Entirely Accidental Death)* (2012), as well as a feature documentary *Shipwreck*, currently in pre-production. She is also producing the upcoming documentaries by Hrvoje Mabić (*Sick*) and Vlatka Vorkapić (*Free*).



**vanja
jambrović**

Vanja Jambrović works as an independent producer and manager for Restart, a production company covering all areas of the documentary film industry, including production, education, distribution, and the running of Dokukino – a small documentary cinema in the center of Zagreb. Her most recent works include the documentary short *Real Man's Film* (Nebojša Slijepčević, 2012), awarded at the Sarajevo Film Festival, and a feature documentary *Gangster of Love* (Nebojša Slijepčević, 2013) that won the Audience Award at this year's ZagrebDox. She was also a participant at the Berlinale Talent Campus 2013.



**suzana
pandek**

Before setting up her own full-service production company Kabinet in 2007, Suzana Pandek worked as a TV and print journalist, and an executive producer for Plan B, where, in the course of nearly a decade, she had produced countless commercials. She is currently producing her first feature film *Cowboys* by Tomislav Mršić, based on the cult Croatian eponymous stage play by Saša Anočić that attracted more than 100.000 theater-goers. The film (currently in post-production) has been the topic of discussion in film circles ever since it started shooting in February 2013.



**anita
juka**

In 2003, Anita Juka founded 4film, a production company that specializes in documentaries, features, animation and advertising. She produced an award-winning documentary *Facing the Day* (Ivona Juka, 2006), as well as several documentary and fiction shorts. She was the associate producer of Zrinko Ogresta's *Here* (2004), the co-producer of Damjan Kozole's *Slovenian Girl* (2009) and Metod Pevec's *Good Night, Missy* (2011), and the producer of the Croatian segment of the omnibus *Some Other Stories* (2010). She is also the producer of Ivona Juka's debut feature *Rules and Exceptions* (in post-production) that is supported by Eurimages.



**olinka
vištica**

Olinka Vištica is one of the most versatile producers on the Croatian cultural scene. She is the founder of Hulahop, a production company that backed-up Juraj Lerotić's award-winning fiction short *Then I See Tanja* (2010) and Dana Budisavljević's documentary hit *Family Meals* (2012). Olinka is also the head producer of the World Festival of Animated Film Animafest Zagreb, but her interests go beyond the world of film. She co-authored the Museum of Broken Relationships, one of the most original and internationally acclaimed Croatian cultural projects.



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