**State of Affairs Section: 15 Documentaries Outlining Our Reality**

**Zagreb, 18 March** – The **State of Affairs** section of this year’s edition of **ZagrebDox**, which will take place from April 3 to 10 at the Kaptol Boutique Cinema, features 15 documentary film titles that outline the world and the problems we face every day through various topics.

The New Yorkers’ online search for love during the summer months due to the COVID pandemic was documented by director **Pacho Velez** in *Searchers*, which arrives at ZagrebDox after a rich festival tour that includes Sundance, CPH:DOX and the Amsterdam International Documentary Film Festival (IDFA). Dynamically edited, alternately witty and touching portraits of the protagonists point to the diversity of sexual and romantic experiences available on the internet, as well as the diversity of people seeking them. The Polish short film ***Balcony Concert*** by **Diana Kadłubowska** and **Krzysztof Kadłubowski** focuses on adapting to the circumstances of the pandemic. This almost tragicomic depiction of Polish society at the time of the first lockdown follows the occupants of a building who continue to communicate in a new situation, but only through the courtyard balconies.

Ukrainian-American director **Katya Soldak** shows how geopolitical changes affect individuals on a personal level. In her analytical documentary ***The Long Break-up*** provides an insight into the decades’ long fight to relieve her homeland of Russian shackles, as well as her own position and an immigrant. To avoid an arranged marriage, the young protagonist of ***The Other Side of the River*** by **Antonia Kilian** crosses the Euphrates River and finds a new home in the autonomous province of Rojava among a group of Kurdish women fighting both Islamic State and patriarchy. A powerful achievement on emancipation was awarded at the festivals DOK.fest and DocsMX. Following a poor family in Myanmar cultivating an illegal oil field near their home, director Saeed Taji Farouky in ***A Thousand Fires***, which won the Marco Zucchi Award at the Locarno Film Festival, explores the fate and intimacy of a family anchored in the oil industry in a literal, physical way.

The best documentary of the Warsaw International Film Festival ***When Flowers Are Not Silent*** by **Andrei Kutsila** (*Summa*, ZagrebDox 2019) talks about the brutal suppression of peaceful demonstrations after the last presidential election in Belarus. The tense atmosphere of everyday life marked by political repression is presented from the perspective of personal stories of Belarusian families whose members, despite the nearly three-decade-long dictatorship of Alexander Lukashenko, do not lose hope for a better future for their country. Fully composed of archival footage from the late 1960s, the skilfully directed film essay ***Riotsville, USA*** by Sierra **Pettangill** focuses on the process of militarising the police in America, pointing to a history of systemic repression and institutional violence that dates to the present day. Exploring the policies of Britain’s relationship with migrants, ***Hostile*** by **Sonita Gale** provides a humanised portrait of people trapped in a completely dehumanising system that seeks to encourage them to leave voluntarily by creating an inhospitable atmosphere. Although focused on contemporary British politics, the film interweaves the current experiences of migrants and activists with the Commonwealth’s centuries-old colonial history.

In the film ***Father***, crowned the Golden Dove of the DOK Leipzig Festival, about the radical consequences that modernisation has brought to Chinese society and tradition, director **Wei Deng** speaks through personal vision and the difficult relationship between his own father and grandfather. The great personal tragedies that have marked the lives of two generations of the author’s family, and their mutual disputes and different worldviews reflect the political, economic and social turbulence in China’s recent history. A fragment of personal family history, which reflects the broader socio-political picture, is the starting point of the masterfully edited film ***I Am Trying to Remember***. This evocative accomplishment deals with the consequences of the Iranian Islamic Revolution through photographs from the family album, videos from the home archive and still living memories of the author **Pegah Ahangarani**. The Georgian film ***Sunny*** by **Keti Machavariani**, awarded a special prize at the Hot Docs festival, reflects the mentality of the locals through the findings of a former teacher who works as a sociology researcher – in the streets of Tbilisi we witness the citizens’ thoughts and hopes regarding political and civil issues.

The Danish film ***Cannon Arm and the Ultimate Arcade Challenge*** by **Mads Hedegaard** is fascinated by world records and the power of friendship. The film follows laboratory technician Kim, a legend of arcade games, who, with the help of a friend at Copenhagen’s Bip Bip Bar, tries to surpass his previous record and play 100 hours in a row. This witty documentary has won a number of awards, including the Hot Docs Audience Award.

The Dutch short documentary ***Why Didn’t You Stay for Me?***, a graduation film directed by **Milou Gevers**, deals with four children of primary school age united by the fact that one of their parents committed suicide. The film won a student Oscar among numerous awards. A very personal, naked, but extremely touching insight into the self-destruction of young people is provided by the autobiographical documentary of the Norwegian directorial duo **Petter Aaaberg** and **Sverre Kvamme**. ***Young and Afraid*** from the film’s title are two friends and fellow students struggling with depression, insecurities and the pressures of maturing. Wandering the streets of Oslo with a camera in hand, they come across a plethora of charming but fragile characters similar to themselves. The achievement that won the audience of the festival in Haugesund is a bold and distinctive film statement about the importance of the topic of mental health of young people.

A poetic film and musical journey directed by **Jennifer Peedom**, the Australian film ***River*** explores the primordial links between people and rivers and how they shape not only landscapes but also human lives, cultures and imagination. With compositions by Richard Macfarlane performed by the Australian Chamber Orchestra and music by Radiohead and Jonny Greenwood, as well as narration by actor Willem Dafoe, this visually spectacular performance visits rivers in 39 countries on six continents and reveals their magnificent beauty from unprecedented perspectives. It is a kind of sequel to the author’s film *Mountains*, which was a resounding success as the highest-grossing documentary in the history of Australian cinema.

News of this year’s ZagrebDox is available on the official festival website: zagrebdox.net.

**ZagrebDox takes place with the support of the City of Zagreb and the Croatian Audiovisual Centre.**

**MATERIALS**

**FILM STILLS ➜** <https://bit.ly/3KbNnwm>

**TRAILERS:**

**MISSION: JOY – FINDING HAPPINESS IN TROUBLED TIMES ➜** <https://vimeo.com/597449786>

**HOW TO KILL A CLOUD ➜** <https://vimeo.com/572035804>

**LOCKS & KEYS, WATER, TREES ➜** <https://youtu.be/Pxv1IY-ASrw>

**ŽŽŽ (JOURNAL ABOUT ŽELIMIR ŽILNIK) ➜** <https://youtu.be/i-smkNhsD0o>

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