

SMART7 in its second year: the bravest European cinema is on tour in seven film festivals across Europe

Summary:

- The films in the SMART7 competition, a European festival network founded last year, have been announced.
- The films created by young filmmakers will be screened at Transilvania IFF in June and in other six festivals. The tour starts this month in Vilnius IFF Kino Pavasaris.
- Romania is represented by *Where Elephants Go* (d. Gabi Şarga and Cătălin Rotaru);

The SMART7 competition returns to **Transilvania International Film Festival** (14 - 24 June 2024, Cluj-Napoca) for the second year with seven films created by young European filmmakers whose voices stand out through authenticity and courage. Transilvania IFF is one of the founders of SMART7, a network of film festivals that aims to develop the festival industry and create space for emerging filmmakers. The joint programme includes seven films produced in each of the SMART7 countries.

All films will be presented in the seven festivals of the network: New Horizons IFF (Poland), IndieLisboa IFF (Portugal), Thessaloniki IFF (Greece), Transilvania IFF (Romania), FILMADRID IFF (Spain), Reykjavik IFF (Iceland) and Vilnius IFF Kino Pavasaris (Lithuania).

The directorial duo **Gabi Şarga - Cătălin Rotaru** (co-authors of the short film **4:15 PM. The End of the World**, which was awarded at Sarajevo and selected at Cannes in 2016) represents Romania in the competition with ***Where Elephants Go***, a black comedy with a complicated story. The two directors explain, "*The film is a pseudo-melodrama with no elephants. It's a story of love and friendship between characters at a difficult time in their lives. And it's a comedy. We are happy that it has been selected in the SMART7 competition. It's kind of a full hand of cards. The film will go to seven major festivals, including Transilvania IFF. We really enjoyed making this film*". ***Where Elephants Go*** has its world premiere this month at the Vilnius International Film Festival in the SMART7 competition.

Poland's entry, ***It's not my Film*** (r. Maria Zbąska), will also premiere in the competition. Trying to mend their relationship, a couple sets off on a walking adventure along the Baltic Sea coast in winter. Lithuania is represented by director Tomas Vengris' second feature film, ***Five and a Half Love Stories in an Apartment in Vilnius***, which won Best Film in the *Rebels with a Cause* competition at Tallinn Black Nights. The story follows several tourists with love problems who stay in the same AirBNB apartment in Vilnius. From Portugal comes a comedy about a young Brazilian student who needs to renew her residence permit: ***Greice*** by Leonardo Mouramateus. The film had its world premiere earlier this year in Rotterdam. Also presented in Rotterdam, ***Natatorium*** (d. Helena Stefansdottir, Iceland) is a thriller about a teenage girl who discovers a dark secret while visiting her grandparents, and ***On the Go*** (d. Julia de Castro and Maria Royo, Spain) is a thrilling road movie about friendship, motherhood and freedom, awarded by the Locarno Youth Jury. From Greece,

audiences will watch a queer comedy about filmmaking: *The Summer with Carmen*, by Zacharias Mavroeidis. The film was screened in Venice in the *Giornati degli Autori* section and won the *Mermaid Award* at the Thessaloniki Film Festival.

SMART7 selection:

- *Where Elephants Go*, dir. Gabi Sarga and Catalin Rotaru, Romania 2024
- *Greice*, dir. Leonardo Mouramateus, Portugal, Brasil 2024
- *Five and a Half Love Stories in an Apartment in Vilnius*, dir. Tomas Vengris, Lithuania 2023
- *Natatorium*, dir. Helena Stefánsdóttir, Iceland 2024
- *It's Not My Film*, dir. Maria Zbąska, Poland 2024
- *On The Go*, dir. María Royo, Julia de Castro, Spain 2023
- *The Summer with Carmen*, dir. Zacharias Mavroeidis, Greece 2023

At the end of the festival season, an international jury of students will decide on the winning director, who will receive a **€5,000 prize**. In 2023, the first SMART7 winner was Telmo Churro for his film *Índia* (Portugal), chosen by a young jury in which Romania was represented by filmmaker **Alma Buhagiar**.

SMART7 is supported by the **Creative Europe MEDIA Programme** and aims to become a channel for the promotion of European films, creating a meeting place for young creators and the public. In addition to the creation of a joint programme of films, the project includes several other activities aimed at developing the international exchange of experience and knowledge in the festival field.

First tickets for the 23rd edition of Transilvania International Film Festival are now on sale - <https://tiff.ro/en/tiff-cards>

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Transilvania International Film Festival is organized by the Association for the Promotion of Romanian Film and Transilvania Film Festival Association.

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