

## PRESS RELEASE

**Crossing Europe Film Festival Linz****Press Release #3/24, 20 March 2024**

- ❖ **Tribute 2024: Aliona van der Horst (NL)**
- ❖ **First Look: Architecture and Society**
- ❖ **YAAAS! Youth Program: School Screenings – YAAAS! Competition**

In today's press release, we are presenting the Dutch documentary filmmaker **Aliona van der Horst** as this year's guest in the **Tribute program section**, a section that each year is dedicated to a prominent figure of contemporary European cinema. Also, we are offering a first look at the film series **Architecture and Society**, which this time carries the title "Transformation" and shines a light on the different realities of life in times of change. Moreover, the three films from the **YAAAS! Competition** that will be offered as **school screenings** in the context of the youth program have been confirmed.

**Tribute 2024: Aliona van der Horst (NL)**

*Aliona van der Horst is a master of cinematography. She can, like no other, tell a story in which image, sound, music and – often sparse – conversations complement and reinforce each other. She finds beauty in places where you wouldn't expect it. (Nicole Santé, businessdoceurope.com)*

Crossing Europe dedicates its **2024 Tribute program section** to the Dutch filmmaker **Aliona van der Horst**, one of the most impressive exponents of European documentary film.

Van der Horst was born to a Russian mother in 1970 and grew up in her Dutch father's home country. The politically inflicted wounds within Russian society but also her own roots are recurring subjects of her personal, essayist works. For instance, **LIEFDE IS AARDAPPELEN / LOVE IS POTATOES** (NL 2017; CE18) sees her make a moving journey to her mother's childhood in a Russia shaped by Stalinist terror. **TURN YOUR BODY TO THE SUN** (NL 2021) portrays the stirring life story of a Tatar soldier and POW of the Nazis in World War II. Van der Horst accompanies his daughter Sana in her efforts to comprehend the past and with it her father's taciturnity. While digging in film archives, she unearths tracks of the millions of Soviet soldiers who became the victims of two dictators at once, Hitler and Stalin. By re-appropriating archive material, she brings to light the traces of millions of Soviet soldiers who fell victim to the two dictators Hitler and Stalin, and reveals a story that was left out of the war narrative. In **BORIS RYZHY** (NL 2008; CE10), she searches for answers regarding the suicide of the title-giving young poet and, in the process, tells a story about poetry, the Russian mafia, love, and the tragedy of perestroika.

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But van der Horst's oeuvre goes beyond geographical and biographical borders. **WATER CHILDREN** (NL 2011) brings her to Japan and is both a portrait of the celebrated pianist and visual artist Tomoko Mukayama and a complex meditation on fertility, birth, and menstruation. **VOICES OF BAM** (NL 2006) carefully documents the ramifications of an earthquake in 2003 that destroyed the greater part of the Iranian city of Bam and claimed the lives of 43,000 people. The film gives the survivors a chance to speak while they try to resume their lives, an effort marked by grief and feelings of guilt, but also by an indomitable vital force. The film was co-directed by **Maasja Ooms**, who has been a close collaborator of Aliona van der Horst as a cinematographer and editor on many other projects and has had two of her own directorial efforts shown at Crossing Europe (CE22: JASON; CE20: ROTJOCHIES).

Van der Horst's latest work **GERLACH** (NL 2023, co-directed by Luuk Bouwman), which is also presented in the program section Architecture & Society, has the filmmaker following one of the last traditional farmers in the Netherlands, who braces himself against the surrounding and ever-more harassing industry with an unswerving devotion to his work. The film was awarded the IDFA Award for Best Dutch Film at the 2023 International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam.

In more than 25 years of filmmaking, her poetic approach to the narrative and to pictorial composition has made Aliona van der Horst create **a cinematic language that is as independent as it is clear** and that demands to be experienced on the big screen. She succeeds in capturing moments of great intimacy and simultaneously in telling stories that are both touching and universal. Since the beginning of her cinematic career, her films have won **multiple international awards**, including the Special Jury Prize at the Tribeca Film Festival in New York and the Award for Best Documentary at the Edinburgh International Film Festival. Other than her work as a filmmaker, she is also a frequent lecturing guest at film academies and festivals.

At Crossing Europe, she is going to **personally** present a selection of her films and will provide insights into her work during a **Tribute Talk**.

**Films by Aliona van der Horst in the 2024 festival program:**

- ❖ **GERLACH** (NL 2023), 77 min, co-directed by Luuk Bouwman  
– Austrian premiere; also part of the program section Architecture & Society
- ❖ **TURN YOUR BODY TO THE SUN** (NL 2021), 93 min – Austrian premiere
- ❖ **LIEFDE IS AARDAPPELEN / LOVE IS POTATOES** (NL 2017), 90 min – Crossing Europe 2018
- ❖ **WATER CHILDREN** (NL 2011), 75 min – Austrian premiere
- ❖ **BORIS RYZHY** (NL 2008), 60 min – Crossing Europe 2010
- ❖ **VOICES OF BAM** (NL 2006), 90 min; co-directed by Maasja Ooms – Austrian premiere

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In co-operation with Crossing Europe, GERLACH und LIEFDE IS AARDAPPELEN / LOVE IS POTATOES will also be shown at the **Austrian Film Museum in Vienna** on **8 May**.

## Architecture and Society: Transformation

In co-operation with the [afo architekturforum oberösterreich](#), Crossing Europe presents the 15<sup>th</sup> edition of the documentary film series Architecture and Society that examines social co-existence in the context of underlying architectural, geopolitical or ecological conditions. Against the backdrop of the climate crisis and the associated call for socio-ecological and economic policy change, the program section, titled “**Transformation**” this year, sheds a light on the different realities of life in times of change. For the coming-of-age documentary **PLANEET B / PLANET B**, director **Pieter Van Eecke** accompanied for more than four years the growing-up of two Belgian youths who skip school for the climate cause. The development process of a sustainable city for 600,000 inhabitants in the Nepalese Kathmandu Valley is depicted in **TEHTÄVÄNÄ PARATIISI / A PLAN FOR PARADISE** by Finnish documentary director **Kati Juurus**, who will attend the festival in person.

### Announcement of the first films from the Architecture and Society section:

#### **PLANEET B / PLANET B** (BE/NL 2023)

Directed by: Pieter Van Eecke, 74 min, documentary / Austrian premiere

*How does one grow up on a planet that is in the process of being destroyed by humankind? The film goes on a search for answers to this urgent question, introducing us to the two youths Bo and Luca. These close friends are enthusiastic in their fight for the climate while growing up together in a suburb in Flanders. They share a close connection through their activism and sometimes also skip school for the climate cause. Pieter Van Eecke accompanies their growing-up – with all its contradictions and surprises – for more than four years, creating from it a loving portrait of Generation Z – coming-of-age at its best!*

#### **TEHTÄVÄNÄ PARATIISI / A PLAN FOR PARADISE** (FI 2023)

Directed by: Kati Juurus, 75 min, documentary / Austrian premiere – *in the presence of the director*

*After winning a competition, the Finnish architecture office Helin & Co sets out to plan a sustainable city for 600,000 inhabitants in an almost pristine valley outside Kathmandu. What follows is a clash of different cultures – a thoroughly structured western way of thinking meets traditional life in small structures in Nepal. The film pointedly uncovers deeply rooted differences between the two worlds and depicts the Finnish architects’ persistent efforts.*

As mentioned previously in this press release, the film **GERLACH** by Aliona van der Horst and Luuk Bouwman will be presented both in the Tribute program section and in the film series Architecture and Society. The other two films of the section will be announced during the program press conference on

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18 April and can be found online on [crossingeurope.at](https://crossingeurope.at) from 19 April. The program section was curated by Lotte Schreiber (filmmaker, artist).

## YAAAS! Youth Program: School Screenings – YAAAS! Competition

A main component of the **YAAAS! Youth Program** that once again this year provides a holistic and practice-oriented offering for young people at Crossing Europe is the competition section **YAAAS! Competition**: Six recent European feature films that deal with the life reality of youths and young adults have been selected by the [YAAAS! Young Programmers 2024](#). Three of these films will be offered as **school screenings**, followed by talks with present film guests. In addition, Crossing Europe provides specially designed school materials for these works as free downloads available to be used to prepare or follow up.

**The following films from the YAAAS! Competition are offered as school screenings:**

### **LOST COUNTRY** (RS/FR/LU/HR 2023)

Directed by: Vladimir Perišić, 98 min, OV with English subtitles, feature film / Austrian premiere  
School Screening: **30 April, 10:15**

*Serbia, 1996. Together with his friends, teenaged Stefan finds himself in the middle of protests in the streets of Belgrade against the corrupt regime. He feels torn when finds out that his beloved mother is engaged in pro-regime propaganda.*

*The destructive power of political pressure becomes apparent not only in the streets of the city but also inside Stefan's closest relationships. He is forced to face politics even in private life, which leads to conflict. A palpably autobiographical film by Vladimir Perišić.*

– Aleksa Jovic, YAAAS! Young Programmer

### **VALOA VALOA VALOA / LIGHT LIGHT LIGHT** (FI 2023)

Directed by: Inari Niemi, 91 min, OV with German subtitles, feature film / Austrian premiere  
Distributed in Austria by: [Salzgeber](#)  
School Screening: **2 May, 10:15**

*Something's in the air: In April 1986, a reactor explodes in Chernobyl and in the very same spring, 15-year-old sheltered Mariia meets the mysterious new girl at her school. Mimi is from a broken home and now lives with her aunt in her run-down house. Following some initial scepticism, Mariia becomes fascinated by Mimi, whose presence wraps her life in an increasingly more radiant light. Their growing feelings make them depend more and more on each other until it becomes impossible to imagine a life without the other. 20 years on, Mariia returns and revels in memories marked by regret and melancholy.*

– Florentina Gruber, YAAAS! Young Programmer

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**ELLBOGEN / ELBOW (DE/TR/FR 2024)**

Directed by: Asli Özarslan, 86 min, OV with German subtitles, feature film / Austrian premiere  
School Screening: **3 May, 10:15**

*Young. Motivated. Frustrated. Hazel from Berlin would be ready to dive into the working world – if it wasn't for the constant everyday racism. After her eighteenth birthday with her girlfriends escalates to violence, she flees Germany and seeks refuge with an internet acquaintance in Istanbul. Despite feeling accepted in this new city, the fear of being wanted in Germany plagues her. When the police arrive at the door of her friend's apartment, she is forced to go and search for yet another home. Based on Fatma Aydemir's novel, Hazel's gripping story is brought to the big screen by Asli Özarslan. – Lina Eberhart, YAAAS! Young Programmer*

Registration for the YAAAS! school screenings is open until **17 April** via [yaaas@crossingeurope.at](mailto:yaaas@crossingeurope.at). The school material for the preparation and follow-up of the festival visit will also be available on our website by 11 April at the latest. The other three films of the YAAAS! Competition and the festival guests can be found online from 19 April on [crossingeurope.at/en](https://www.crossingeurope.at/en). All details about the youth program available on <https://www.crossingeurope.at/yaaas>.

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**Festival dates:** 30 April to 5 May 2024

**Program press conference:** Thu., 18 April 2024, 10:00 a.m., Movimiento Linz + live stream

**Program online:** Fr., 19 April 2024

**Advance ticket sales start:** 22 April 2024

**End of accreditation period:** 3 April 2024