

FNE at Ji.hlava IDFF 2020: Emerging Producers

Zora Jaurová - Slovakia

Zora Jaurová is participating in the 2020 [Emerging Producers](#) programme of the [Ji.hlava International Documentary Film Festival](#), which runs 27 October - 8 November 2020.



Zora Jaurová is a film producer, cultural and creative industries policy expert, and politician. She studied theatrical dramaturgy at the Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava. She is the President of the Slovak Creative Industry Forum and member of Ateliers du Cinéma Européen. She is a partner in the [Mphilms](#) production company, which was founded in 2010.

FNE: How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected your work over the past six months?

Zora Jaurová: We were lucky to finish a major shooting work on our big project *Power* by the end of February, so during the lockdown we had time to do the editing and prepare postproduction. However, the cinema release of our feature documentary *Earthly Paradise* was postponed from March to October and one week after it entered cinemas, they were closed again. The most difficult part of these days is planning, since the situation changes every day.

FNE: Emerging Producers provides a networking platform for young documentary producers. But as the COVID-19 pandemic has had the effect of cutting off international collaboration, has this changed your approach to networking with colleagues in other countries?

Zora Jaurová: It is very difficult to develop new projects and collaborations in these days. The very fact we cannot meet in person even during the Emerging Producers session tells it all. There are some exceptions for filmmakers moving around, so we have been able to do some work with our colleagues from the Czech Republic and Hungary. But apparently, this situation is going to last months and even years, so it will definitely have an effect on European coproductions in the coming years.

FNE: Do you expect the landscape of documentary filmmaking to change because of COVID-19?

Zora Jaurová: Exceptional circumstances of a global nature like this will definitely influence not only the content and topics of documentary filmmaking, but also the way films will be realised. I expect more introspective cinematography, looking for the very basal issues of human existence. But also new formal approaches, using digital platforms and technologies.

FNE: Are you working on any projects that are directly related to this crisis? Why or why not?

Zora Jaurová: The idea of the political thriller *Power* we are just finishing was conceived more than five years ago and the final version of the script was ready long before the Covid-19 pandemic started. But somehow, the slightly dystopian background of the film, which deals with moral dilemmas of people with and without power in the world stricken by drought, has got an entirely new level of meaning in the pandemic situation.

[Zora Jaurová](#)
[Mphilms](#)

Slovakia 2.0 (2014), omnibus, Producer

Ex-Prime Ministers (2018), documentary TV series, Producer

Earthly Paradise (2019), feature documentary, Producer

Power (2021), feature, Producer

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[Ivan Perić - Croatia](#)

Ivan Perić is participating in the 2020 [Emerging Producers](#) programme of the [Ji.hlava International Documentary Film Festival](#), which runs 27 October - 8 November 2020.



Perić is from Split, and holds an MA in Sociology and an MA in Film and Media Arts. He is the producer and director of several awarded films, shorts, features, documentaries and experimental films. He is the organiser of several international multimedia exhibitions and he also exhibits his own multimedia works. He's participated in numerous film workshops and film festivals around the world. He also works as a producer and lecturer at the Academy of Arts in Split.

FNE: How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected your work over the past six months?

Ivan Perić: COVID-19 has affected my work over the past six months a lot. In March, we were shooting in Paris at the beginning of the pandemic and you could already feel the influence of the virus that is about to spread. I had also planned to go for a shooting to Italy but now that has been cancelled because of COVID. There were also a few premieres of films that I worked on in previous years and they were held but in limited circumstances.

At this year`s edition of Ji.hlava IDFF there is a world premiere of the documentary film directed by Bruno Pavić *Landscape Zero*, that we worked on for four years. It is a feature documentary without talking; it relies on strong visuals and the premiere will be on line. I think that films are made for the cinemas but the situation now is not in our favour and we need to adapt like everyone else.

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Ivan Perić: I am not a big fan of online meetings. I prefer face to face. It`s not just what someone is saying, It's also about the energy of the person you`re talking too. But I am still very happy and looking forward to learning something new and to meet colleagues, and I hope we will meet in person soon.

FNE: Do you expect the landscape of documentary filmmaking to change because of COVID-19?

Ivan Perić: I think that people now feel more cautious and are more aware of how the world is fragile and how new danger could be just one rotation of the Earth away. Films will probably be streamed more online and topics could change, too. We could see more topics about health and about the way society works in the crisis and in general.

FNE Are you working on any projects that are directly related to this crisis? Why or why not?

Ivan Perić: The film *Landscape Zero* is a film about the relationship between humans, society and the environment, so that project in a way is connected to what is happening now. I don't plan to work on COVID-19 related topics further. I think it's too early.

[Ivan Perić](#)

[Kazimir, Dream Division Production](#)

Discovering Gea (2021), documentary - director, producer)

Landscape Zero (2020), documentary - director Bruno Pavić, producer

Tereza 37 (2020), narrative - director Danilo Šerbedžija, line producer

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Iva Plemić Divjak - Serbia

Iva Plemić Divjak is participating in the 2020 [Emerging Producers](#) programme of the [Ji-hlava International Documentary Film Festival](#), which runs 27 October - 8 November 2020.



Following her studies of production in Belgrade and Paris, Iva gained experience in production coordination of fiction features (*Love and Other Crimes*, *The Big Picture*, *The Raven*). She produced the first ten editions of the Magnificent 7 - European Feature Documentary Film Festival, then turned to documentary production. In 2017 she joined Horopter Film Production and produced two feature documentaries, directed by Mladen Kovačević: *4 Years in 10 Minutes* (Special Jury Mention at Visions du reel 2018) and *Merry Christmas, Yiwu* (Heart of Sarajevo 2020). She is a member of DokSerbia and the Serbian co-representative in the Eurimages Board of Management since 2016.

FNE: How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected your work over the past six months?

Iva Plemić Divjak: Our plans for principal photography of a multi-lateral coproduction shot around the world (*Beginnings*, which underwent an inspiring final development at Eurodoc 2019) transformed into days of clearing personal archives, HDD clutter and finally watching all the friends' films that I said I would. But then Mladen Kovačević and I started with our walking and talking "production office" routine at Kalemegdan Park, and new ideas have sparked.

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Iva Plemić Divjak: If anything, there's a sense of shared experience. The thread that connects us, as the crisis is ultimately global. I so miss the carefree comings and goings at festivals; the lightness of being, which seems to be gone. Yet, people do get used to literally everything, and so the virtual communication with colleagues is intense, regular and vital.

FNE: Do you expect the landscape of documentary filmmaking to change because of COVID-19?

Iva Plemić Divjak: The landscape of documentary filmmaking will be reshaped inevitably, and not necessarily for the worse. Turning to local stories that transcend borders (mentally and emotionally, as the physical ones are off limits) might give us all an exercise in the core values of filmmaking, relieved of escapism and randomness.

FNE: Are you working on any projects that are directly related to this crisis? Why or why not?

Iva Plemić Divjak: The idea to start developing a feature documentary on the '72 smallpox epidemic in Yugoslavia was conceived as a direct reflection of the current state of the world and the lessons we, as a civilization, (could) have learned. This event got back into focus quite naturally, while its fantastic cinematic potential, access to protagonists and exclusive archives keep unfolding and even rewarding us, I'd say, for adapting our ambitions to the new reality. In this spontaneous production endeavor amidst the Covid-19 crisis, we are full-heartedly supported by our national coproducers, Cinnamon Film and Serbian Radio Television, who share our awareness that we are bound to cooperate in order to adapt and overcome.

[Iva Plemić Divjak](#)
[Horoptyer Film Production](#)

Cinema Komunisto (2010), Producer/Distributor
4 Years in 10 Minutes (2018), Producer
Merry Christmas, Yiwu (2020), Producer

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[Ildiko Kosztolni - Hungary](#)

Ildiko Kosztolni is participating in the 2020 [Emerging Producers](#) programme of the [Ji-hlava International Documentary Film Festival](#), which runs 27 October - 8 November 2020.



Ildiko Kosztolni is a creative producer at the first Hungarian broadcast investigative programme *Blank*. She earned an MA degree in European Audiovisual Management and Film Production at the MEGA Plus programme (Media Business School) in Spain. She assisted in the work of the European Commission as a media expert in post-war zones worldwide. She is the founder and producer of iamnewhere.

FNE: How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected your work over the past six months?

Ildiko Kosztolni: My work was not directly affected by the pandemic, rather by the vacuum of the film supporting system. There was no application call after the National Film Fund broke off by the end of 2018. Due to the lingering, all-out structural and institutional change,

namely, the centralisation of the film and TV funding system, I had no new projects to work on in the course of the past six months.

The first calls for application were announced only by spring 2020, but none of my project proposals, nine, in total, were funded. Nonetheless, I do hope that even if I am going through a quite difficult period of time as an indie film professional recently, my projects would gain recognition sooner or later. I had only one documentary in the postproduction phase (the final cut was scheduled for mid-March 2020, so we had a huge delay already), but the largest part of the workflow of such kind could go without particular difficulties, except for editing, since we had to shift online, proceeding remotely, which is one of countless ways the coronavirus emergency is impacting the documentary space.

This latest of my films, *The Game of Nerves* directed by the highly acclaimed Árpád Sopsits, was completed recently and is set to have its TV premiere late in the autumn of 2020. Besides, we were fortunate to have had three international successes during the last two months, even if two of the festivals could only offer a virtual but great experience.

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Ildiko Kosztolni: I have a few projects, including nonfiction features along with some fictional content in different stages of production, mainly in development, so it was crucial to step forward with all of them; i.e. I didn't stop approaching potential partners abroad despite the coronavirus. The truth is that I am scrambling to keep my projects going under dramatically altered circumstances.

Since I had to cancel an upcoming shoot for a self-financed film on photography and visual memory, I aimed at making progress on all other fronts where it is possible. Given the fact that two of my films had a powerful run on an international level, I am sure that the positive outcome they had can further broaden both my professional network and visibility.

The festival attendance and premiere of the nonfiction projects is of utmost and particular importance, before everything else in terms of promotion and real professional connection. It's the biggest reward when the documentary can finally be seen and appreciated, or even sold, as a best case scenario.

FNE: Do you expect the landscape of documentary filmmaking to change because of COVID-19?

Ildiko Kosztolni: I see a special role for documentary filmmakers in this time of immense change. We're in a slightly different position than most of other industries in the sense that part of our mission is to observe or to document the reality itself. And so we have to be attentive to that and also to the need to push forward.

However, we can say that the documentary film landscape had similar preexisting conditions; almost no indie filmmakers I know were able to make a living from their work before COVID-19 either, even if they didn't get into documentaries to make money, for sure. All of us, we signed on to make films with a nonprofit ethos. But another aspect of this question

might also be raised. In the past six months the documentary community faced urgent questions not only about the monetisation of their work, but the future of their form, since the public televisions which played the main role in sponsoring documentaries for decades, suddenly had to alter their overall media strategy too. So, it's an unusual and disturbing challenge of the pandemic, to innovate alternative and sustainable distribution as well as a production model, new platforms and immersive technology for the factual contents dedicated to broadcast TV, not to mention the socially-distanced production arrangements.

The other severe challenge we need to cope with is also posed by COVID-19: the urgent need of a new work ethic while representing a socially distanced society. Actually, it requires a more fundamental assessment of whether there is a sufficient public interest in filming and whether the risks are proportionate. Making a documentary with real human beings is a contract and the terms have changed dramatically; confidence and transparency are on hold. What I promised is no longer possible. When you introduce a camera into a situation, it changes things.

But what happens when the world itself is dangerous? Definitely, we have to take into consideration these facts before starting to work on any new project under such circumstances. Reality has been rewired, and it's quite hard to adapt. But, it doesn't mean that the documentaries themselves will ever go extinct. In my opinion, only the screen will change, but the content of documentaries, the reality itself can draw the biggest audience, irrevocably. In fact, we may see even more hours of nonfiction getting released by the big streamers and powerful production companies like Netflix, Amazon and so on. I have no doubt that the pandemic will inspire prodigious creative solutions that can have, in general, a favourable impact on documentary filmmaking.

FNE: Are you working on any projects that are directly related to this crisis? Why or why not?

Ildiko Kosztolni: In Hungary there is not an extensive range of support dedicated to factual film. Nowadays, after a long shutdown in film financing, there are numerous unprocessed historical traumas, and untold stories which take high-priority over every other topic even if the COVID-19 is considered to be the major issue in the „market of ideas” worldwide.

Shortly, if there is a project on such a topic already given resources for its production, there is no way for another one to be supported, due to the considerably limited target audience and committed domestic broadcasters available. The decision-making „philosophy” behind is so called portfolio-based; ergo two projects on the same subject can very rarely fit in this agenda.

After all, I have a project that I started developing six years ago. In the lack of any grant for production received, I decided to go forward on my own. The film unfolds the story of a Gypsy community living in the renowned settlement of the Tokaj wine region, which was locked under quarantine by the outside world due to an atrocious crime in 2006. The shooting was scheduled in mid-October, on the very same day when the lynching of a geography teacher happened. While the victim was not killed because of his ethnicity, racial tensions reached an all-time high. Olaszliszka became the justification for a series of brutal Roma-murders in 2008-2009 resulting in the deaths of six people.

Based on the above detailed backstory, my actual aim is to see how a whole community already stigmatised can survive a double isolation, what if another danger is threatening the

collective of „outlaws”? The village is alone with its tragedy. Should anyone break the curse or is there no chance left for the past to be processed ever, particularly, under the constant fear of an ultimate and irreversible expulsion?

Ildikó Kosztolni

iamnewhere

<https://vimeo.com/user16323533>

Ghetto Balboa (2018), Producer

Order and Soul (2019), Producer, Screenwriter

Under the Dance Floor (2020), Creative Producer

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Ieva Ūbele - Latvia

Ieva Ūbele is participating in the 2020 [Emerging Producers](#) programme of the [Ji-hlava International Documentary Film Festival](#), which runs 27 October – 8 November 2020.



Ieva Ūbele holds a degree in history from the University of Latvia and Executive MBA from IEDC-Bled School of Management (Slovenia) and is currently pursuing her MA studies in social anthropology. Ieva joined the audiovisual industry in 2006, and has produced more than 20 audiovisual projects. In 2019 she launched her own production company Baltic Balkan Productions and is currently living between Latvia and Serbia. In addition to producing, Ieva runs Rucka Artist Residency in Cēsis, Latvia, and is Head of Industry at IDFF Beldocs in Belgrade, Serbia.

FNE: How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected your work over the past six months?

Ieva Ūbele: Like all people working in the film industry I have been forced to give up travelling to festivals and pitching forums and accept the Zoom reality and deal with the challenges it creates, but it has not changed my plans drastically. I have been able to go on working on the projects I coproduce, pitching one project and working on editing on another one, in September we ran the Beldocs IDFF Industry section online, and I even found a new project to work on in an online setting. I think the pandemic is mostly affecting the shooting process. I have been forced to cancel all plans for shooting in other countries on an international environmental film project because of travel restrictions and requirements for

self-isolation upon return. The project and deadline for completion of the film have been extended but it affects the cashflow of my company.

FNE: Emerging Producers provides a networking platform for young documentary producers. But as the COVID-19 pandemic has had the effect of cutting off international collaboration, has this changed your approach to networking with colleagues in other countries?

Ieva Ūbele: I come from a small country and the audience on the national level, especially for documentary films, is very small. Films are made to be seen, thus I think that working internationally is a key to reaching out to the audiences worldwide, and networking and building partnerships is crucial in this process and we should not let obstacles like Covid-19 keep us from doing that. I actually do have a beautiful experience from this time. I met a young director from Moldova during DocuDays UA online, we have not met in person yet, but we have managed to apply with the project *Dniester. The Irreversible Flow of Life* and get accepted to this year's edition of Ex-Oriente and we are working on developing it. We have long talks online, we talk about our film, what should be done. Of course, I miss meetings in physical space, but I am glad that technologies allow us to keep working together even if we do not particularly enjoy this format.

FNE: Do you expect the landscape of documentary filmmaking to change because of COVID-19?

Ieva Ūbele: I think documentary filmmakers are positively crazy people, they will go and film in all kinds of situations and conditions, and Covid-19 is not really an obstacle, not in the long run. What could change though is that people will start appreciating and highlighting stories from their own surrounding, their own countries as opposed to travelling to somewhere distant. This is more the case of Western Europe; in Central and Eastern Europe we tend to tell stories from our countries.

FNE: Are you working on any projects that are directly related to this crisis? Why or why not?

Ieva Ūbele: No, because if we look at the history of humanity this is a relatively small event. The Covid-19 epidemic brings to the surface tensions, from a personal to a political level, but the big questions of life do not change. People still love, fight, have kids, grow old, lose their loved ones. A friend of mine once said that all situations in life can be characterised with three words "It Will Pass". I think it applies to this one as well.

[Ieva Ūbele](#)
[Baltic Balkan Productions](#)

Nistru. Calea ireversibilă a vieții / Dniester. The Irreversible Flow of Life (in development), producer

Inga dzird / Inga Can Hear (2018), producer (as Ieva Goba)

homo@lv (2010), producer

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Anda Ionescu – Romania

JHLAVA: Anda Ionescu is participating in the 2020 [Emerging Producers](#) programme of the [Ji-hlava International Documentary Film Festival](#), which runs 27 October - 8 November 2020.



This Romanian with an MA in Corporate Communication in Denmark started freelancing as a producer for the Romanian companies [Alien Films Entertainment](#) and FilmLab. Since 2018 she has been a producer and managing partner at [Tangaj Production](#).

FNE: How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected your work over the past six months?

Anda Ionescu: The past few months have been driven by uncertainty and changes, but I tried as much as possible to go about my work with finalising several projects in postproduction or about to be released in festivals. The work pace is still intense, however the perspective has changed quite a lot: releasing my films in 2020 was more than challenging, we postponed the shooting for one of our feature films for next year, financial perspectives are scarcer than ever, industry financiers or key players are also changing their ways, so on a wider scale, there was a lot to consider.

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Anda Ionescu: Since this year has been governed almost entirely by online interaction, industry platforms and their organisers made efforts to quickly adapt to the new rules. Some industry events work quite well in the online environment, I think for markets and one-to-one meetings, using online tools proves to be quite productive and time saving, cost-effective.

However, workshops and events that normally assume networking amongst participants, sharing experiences, are highly limited by the online medium. It's much harder to bond with peers over Zoom or have fruitful group discussions with tutors, so I am very much hoping and looking forward that Emerging Producers will be held in physical form, at the end of October 2020, in Jihlava. (Editor's note: After this interview, the festival announced it would take place entirely online.)

FNE: Do you expect the landscape of documentary filmmaking to change because of COVID-19?

Anda Ionescu: Things can hardly be the same after such an impactful event as COVID-19, the environment is changing surely and rapidly. New doors could open for innovative formats

and content, in the documentary landscape and not only, platforms and the online are key, viewers are changing their habits. The hustle would get harder, with festivals, cinemas and financing being challenged, especially for freelancers and independent filmmakers. Some of the changes were already on their way and they now get accelerated. At the same time, the hustle would get harder, with cinemas, festivals and financing being challenged. Everyone has been shaken and, in Romania, the film industry landscape and the financing perspectives for 2021 are not at all optimistic, unfortunately.

FNE: Are you working on any projects that are directly related to this crisis? Why or why not?

Anda Ionescu: As the past few months were mostly dedicated to completing several films in postproduction and dealing with projects that were already in development, I haven't taken over any new project for now, related or not to the crisis. I think it is a challenge to deal in a unique way with this topic now, in a - probably - multitude of projects that are being initiated on this subject, but it might be easier and more relevant to watch such stories at some point, looking back, when we are out of the woods. Particularly on the topic, I am consulting Andrei Dăscălescu's latest documentary *Videograms of a Pandemic*, a collective diary of very intimate stories during the lockdown months.

[Anda Ionescu](#)
[Tangaj Production](#)

Holy Father / Tatăl nostru (2020), Producer

Otto the Barbarian / Otto barbarul (2020), Delegate Producer

Us Against Us / Noi împotriva noastră (2020), Producer

Mia Misses Her Revenge / Mia își ratează răzbunarea (2020), Producer

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[Agnieszka Skalska – Poland](#)

Agnieszka Skalska is participating in the 2020 [Emerging Producers](#) programme of the [Ji-hlava International Documentary Film Festival](#), which runs 27 October - 8 November 2020.



Agnieszka Skalska has been working at [Koi Studio](#) since 2014. She runs film PR. As a producer, she debuted with a documentary film directed by Matej Bobrik, *Our Little Poland* (premiere at Warsaw FF 2019). Earlier, she was part of

promotional campaigns for documentary and feature films. She is now working on documentary films such as *Together* by Marek Kozakiewicz (Doc Accelerator Prize / Dok Leipzig 2019), *The Current* by Rafał Skalski (Hot Docs Forum 2020) and *Guest Worker* by Matej Bobrik.

FNE: How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected your work over the past six months?

Agnieszka Skalska: The pandemic affected my life in every sense, including professionally. At Koi Studio, the company I work for, it first and foremost introduced concerns about our future - we are not a large company and we were afraid of what else awaited us. Fortunately, the first lock down didn't find us during any film shoot, so I think we were lucky. We spent the first months of the pandemic at home, trying to combine family and work responsibilities, and then we slowly began to return to the old mode. After the first shock, I resumed shooting for a new documentary by Matej Bobrik, which was in development at the time, and in September we launched *Triple Trouble* in cinemas, so we started working in accordance with what the new normality dictates.

FNE: Emerging Producers provides a networking platform for young documentary producers. But as the COVID-19 pandemic has had the effect of cutting off international collaboration, has this changed your approach to networking with colleagues in other countries?

Agnieszka Skalska: It is interesting and also a bit sad, because this year I was supposed to take part in a few events that were supposed to expand my network of contacts in the international industry. In the end, I took part in them, but virtually, which is not half as effective and enjoyable as similar live meetings. In the first days of the lockdown, together with Marek Kozakiewicz, the director of the film *Together*, I took part in the ZagrebDox industry events, which was one of the first such events on the ZOOM platform. Everything was completely new and a bit "for a test", I had no feeling that it was really happening, that this was real pitching and real decision makers were watching it. Later I participated in the Hot Docs Forum, with the project *The Current* by Rafał Skalski, which was very interesting because the whole event lasted a month with meetings with people from all over the world at very different times, due to the time difference. On the one hand, I probably wouldn't have had so many meetings in the "real world", on the other hand, our industry is a "people business" and it is impossible to replace direct contact with a short meeting via Zoom or Teams.

FNE: Do you expect the landscape of documentary filmmaking to change because of COVID-19?

Agnieszka Skalska: Nobody really knows what might happen. I think that cinemas and blockbuster films will be particularly affected by the pandemic. For documentary filmmakers, the pandemic creates an "opportunity" to tell new stories, to capture those extraordinary events that are happening before our eyes, and in this sense there is no better medium than documentary cinema to remember these moments and talk about them with those who come after us. As for the industry itself, I hope that what's best about it, i.e. interpersonal relationships, will remain. And that there will still be a chance and money to make beautiful films that will win their audience.

FNE Are you working on any projects that are directly related to this crisis? Why or why not?

Agnieszka Skalska: One of my documentaries, for which we were supposed to start shooting in April 2020, has protagonists scattered all over the world - in the USA, South Africa, the UK, Canada and Peru. For obvious reasons, the shoot for this project has not started and we do not know when it will start. However, with each of our projects, we try to look for solutions that will allow us to continue the production and creative processes, regardless of the pandemic. In the case of this particular project, we have started working with archives, which will also be part of it, and thus the work will not stop, but it will definitely be extended in the end. Covid also affects all other projects - because we don't really know what awaits us, both in terms of financing and the fate of our protagonists. In Poland, we often say "may you live in interesting times" and these have probably come.

[*Agnieszka Skalska*](#)
[Koi Studio](#)

Together (Koi Studio) directed by Marek Kozakiewicz, in production; producer. Human story. Premiere planned for the beginning of 2022.

The Current (Koi Studio, documentary) directed by Rafał Skalski, in pre-production; producer. Live action documentary. Premiere planned for mid-2022.

Our Little Poland (Koi Studio) directed by Matej Bobrik, 70 min, Poland, 2019; producer.

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