



PRESS RELEASE

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SLOVAK POP UP 2026 PROJECTS ANNOUNCED!



ATTENTION WHORES by Alica Bednáriková (Slovak Pop Up 2026)

THE 8th EDITION OF SLOVAK POP UP

A key component of the Pop Up Film Residency in Bratislava, the Slovak Pop Up initiative - launched in 2019 - is now in its 8th edition.

At the Pop Up Film Residency, we were thrilled to receive a **record number of applications** for this 2026 edition: 20 film projects - 15 feature films (among which 2 are documentaries) and 5 short films (among which one is an animated short). This is a clear testimony to the diverse and vivid filmmaking community currently active in Slovakia!

After careful consideration and a series of interviews, **5 promising projects (3 fiction features & 2 documentary features) were chosen to participate in the program** this year, which will consist of project consultations with international mentors: Emma Ancele (France), Sebastian Winkels (Germany) and Yaelle Kayam (Germany, Poland, Israel), taking place in Bratislava from 18 to 20 September 2026.

The Slovak Pop Up continues its commitment to supporting filmmakers active in Slovakia across different generations, formats and cinematic approaches. This year's selection brings together five feature projects, fiction and documentary, that demonstrate both the diversity of contemporary Slovak filmmaking and a shared desire to engage with the realities surrounding us. From intimate relationships shaped by invisible inequalities to adolescence, history and the global circulation of goods, these projects approach complex subjects through distinctive and ambitious cinematic forms.

Two of this year's projects place young women at the centre of stories in which good intentions, social expectations and individual choices collide. In her first solo feature-length documentary, ***The School of Life***, Lena Kušnieriková follows Monika, a talented Roma teenager from a segregated settlement who is given the opportunity to study at an elite high school in Bratislava. Filmed over several years, the project observes what happens when a carefully constructed path towards a different future meets the unpredictability of life. Kušnieriková, whose previous feature documentary *Hanging Without Walls (Pozor, padá SNG!)* travelled to numerous international festivals, turns her long-term observational approach towards questions of education, inequality and the limits of individual intervention.

Adolescence takes a very different turn in ***Attention Whores***, the fiction feature debut of Alica Bednáriková. Sixteen-year-old best friends Johana and Marika turn their rivalry and hunger for attention into an increasingly dangerous game when they compete to seduce their new teacher. Bednáriková, whose short *Liquid Bread* was selected for La Cinef in Cannes, Future Frames and Clermont-Ferrand, has already explored the project through a short version made as her FAMU graduation film and developed the feature at La Résidence du Festival de Cannes, pushing its provocative portrait of teenage friendship into territory where play, power and sexuality become increasingly difficult to separate.

The complicated boundary between care and power is also at the heart of ***Part of the Family***, the debut feature by Emília Ondriašová. Adapted from a novel by Austrian-Slovak writer Susanne Gregor, the psychological drama follows Paulína, a Slovak live-in caregiver working for an Austrian family. What begins as an arrangement seemingly beneficial to everyone gradually becomes a web of favours, expectations and sacrifices, as Paulína grows indispensable to her employer's household while becoming increasingly absent from her own. Moving between Austria and Slovakia, the film examines cross-border care through the intimate relationship of two women who both believe they are acting with generosity and fairness. Following acclaimed shorts including *This Peculiar Day* and *This Room Is Impossible to Eat*, Ondriašová brings her

interest in intimacy, moral ambiguity and the fragile line between love and control to her first feature.

With ***Amigo***, Martin Hnát looks to the final years of communist Czechoslovakia through an unexpected protagonist: a tracking dog serving with the Czechoslovak Border Guard. After Amigo accidentally causes the death of a would-be emigrant and subsequently refuses to obey orders, his handler Marek attempts to conceal the dog's condition from his superiors. The effort gradually pushes this once-loyal border guard towards an unlikely friendship and, eventually, into conflict with the regime he serves. Set along the river Morava in the late 1980s, *Amigo* uses black comedy and the absurd everyday existence of soldiers and civilians at the edge of the Iron Curtain to approach a familiar historical period from a fresh angle. Hnát, whose VŠMU graduation film *The Ballad of Šimon and Tereza* reached the semifinals of the Student Academy Awards, is developing the project alongside his work as a documentary filmmaker and video reporter.

Finally, ***Ports***, the debut feature documentary by Tereza Smetanová, expands the geographical scope of this year's selection towards the vast infrastructure of the global economy. Observing ports as spaces where land and ocean, nature and industry, and local lives and global capital intersect, the film moves between gigantic ships, warehouses and containers and the less visible forms of life unfolding among them: children swimming, birds nesting and sailors stranded far from home. Smetanová, whose short documentaries *seabindness* and *Vale Tudo* have screened and received awards at festivals including Doclisboa, Ji.hlava IDFF, FIPADOC, Thessaloniki IDF and ZagrebDox, approaches this immense system through patient observation, opening a space to reflect on our relationship with global trade, nature and responsibility.

From a family home in rural Austria to a Bratislava high school, from the Czechoslovak borderlands of the 1980s to the immense ports connecting continents, this year's Slovak Pop Up projects travel through remarkably different worlds. What connects them is an attention to the systems, relationships and expectations that shape individual lives, often almost imperceptibly. We are delighted to welcome five filmmakers whose projects combine strong cinematic identities with a willingness to look closely at the contradictions of the world around them.

The projects and participants of the Slovak Pop Up 2026 Edition are:

FICTION

AMIGO

Dir.: **Martin Hnát**

Writer: **Ján Slobodník**

Prod.: **Matej Sotník**

ATTENTION WHORES

Writer/Dir.: **Alica Bednáriková**

Prod.: **Jakub Viktorín**

This project was selected as it won the TATINO Award at the Febiofest in March 2026, in collaboration with Bratislava Industry Days.

PART OF THE FAMILY

Dir.: **Emília Ondriašová**

Writer: **Alžbeta Gertli**

Prod.: **Jozef Štupák**

DOCUMENTARY

THE SCHOOL OF LIFE

Dir.: **Lena Kušnieriková**

Prod.: **Anna Mach Rumanová**

PORTS

Dir.: **Tereza Smetanová**

Writer: **Atila Urbančič**

Prod.: **Anna Mach Rumanová**

EMERGING TALENTS FROM SLOVAK POP UP

Until this 2026 edition, **34 Slovak film projects** have benefited from the program so far, and **6 films were completed**, including:

- **FLOOD** by Slovak director **Martin Gonda** (Slovak Pop Up 2020), which was recently selected to represent Slovakia for the Oscars in the Best International Feature Film category. The film also swept multiple categories at the SLNKO V SIETI Awards, Slovakia's top national film prize, including Best Screenplay, Audience Award, Best Actress in a Leading Role (for Sára Chripáková), Best Actor in a Supporting Role (for Vladimír Čema), Best Sound and Best Production Design.
- **FLIGHT FROM KABUL** by Afghan filmmaker **Sahraa Karimi** (Slovak Pop Up 2022). Karimi — the first woman to head the Afghan Film Organization and director of *Hava*, *Maryam*, *Ayesha*, which premiered at the Venice Film Festival in 2019 — continues her work as one of the most prominent voices in Afghan cinema following her escape from Kabul in 2021. The film has received additional production funding from Italy, with Fandango joining as co-producer, and is set to be released in 2027.
- **COWGIRL** by Slovak Pop Up alumni **Michal Blaško** (Slovak Pop Up 2021). Blaško's debut feature *Victim* (Obet') premiered in the Orizzonti section of the Venice Film Festival in 2022, was selected as Slovakia's entry for the Academy Award for Best

International Feature Film, and won Best Film and Best Director at the SLNKO V SIETI Awards. *Cowgirl*, his second feature, is set to release theatrically in October 2026.

- **INSIDE** by Slovak Pop Up alumna **Dorota Vlnová** (Slovak Pop Up 2024), one of the program's most recent selected projects. This documentary short film is set to have its international premiere in October 2026.

INTERNATIONAL FILM RESIDENTS IN BRATISLAVA IN 2026

The Slovak Pop Up initiative takes place in the frame of the Pop Up Film Residency Bratislava, which is organizing 3 International Film Residencies in Bratislava in 2026. One of them, the residency of a Brazilian writer and director **Nina Kopko**, already took place earlier this year with **Ildikó Enyedi**, one of the foremost figures of Hungarian and European auteur cinema, as Nina's mentor. The rest of the two residencies of an Ethiopian producer **Nahusenay Dereje** and a Slovenian writer and director **August Braatz** are planned to take place in September and October 2026.

The Pop Up Film Residencies Bratislava 2026 are:

- **THE LAST DOG ON EARTH** – Feature Film

Wr./Dir.: Nina Kopko (Brazil)

Residency in June 2026

THE LAST DOG ON EARTH is the feature debut project by Nina Kopko. Her short film *Lunch Break* won more than 30 awards, including Best Short Film at the Havana, Fribourg, Rio, and Brasília film festivals. She has worked with prestigious Brazilian filmmakers such as Karim Aïnouz and Walter Salles on *Invisible Life*, *Motel Destino*, and *I'm Still Here*. She is a mentor at the Cena 15 Screenwriting Lab and a member of Berlinale Talents and Rede Paradiso.

- **THE FORTUNATE** - Feature Film

Wr.: Habtamu Gebrehiwot (Ethiopia)

Prod.: Nahusenay Dereje (Ethiopia)

Residency in September/ October 2026

THE FORTUNATE is a dark comedy and emotionally resonant story about hypocrisy, addiction, and the fragile pursuit of grace produced by Nahusenay Dereje, an Ethiopian film producer and founder of 1960 Films, a production company based in Addis Ababa focused on independent African storytelling.

- **WE ARE STILL SCREAMING** – Feature Film

Wr./Dir.: August Braatz (Slovenia)

Residency in September/ October 2026

WE ARE STILL SCREAMING is an upcoming darkly comedic road movie written and directed by August Adrian Braatz, a Slovenian filmmaker, screenwriter, producer and composer, an AGRFT Ljubljana graduate whose fiction, documentary and experimental films have screened at festivals internationally.

ABOUT SLOVAK POP UP

The Slovak Pop Up programme offers Slovak filmmakers with film projects in the stage of development the opportunity to benefit from the presence of the Pop Up Film Residents and their mentors. The Slovak Pop Up takes place in Bratislava and is financially supported by **Slovak Audiovisual Fund**.

The program is open to feature-length and short films alike, regardless of whether they are fiction, documentary or animation.

The Slovak Pop Up and the Pop Up Film Residency Bratislava are programs managed by **Matthieu Darras, Antonia Girardi, and Ivana Hucíková**.

Organizers: Pop Up Films s.r.o. and Tatino Films

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