

2BRAVE PRODUCTIONS
MESSAGE FILM

in association with
ARTE FRANCE
SEMA UKRAINE & DR. DENIS MUKWEGE FOUNDATION

PRESENT



A FILM BY ALISA KOVALENKO
CO-DIRECTED BY MARYSIA NIKITIUK

TRACES

DESPITE THE DEEP TRACES OF TRAUMA CAUSED
BY SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND TORTURE RESULTING
FROM RUSSIAN AGGRESSION, UKRAINIAN WOMEN
SURVIVORS UNITE TO BREAK STIGMA AND SILENCE—
TRANSFORMING THEIR TESTIMONIES INTO
A POWERFUL FORM OF RESISTANCE.

WINNER
PANORAMA AUDIENCE AWARD - DOCUMENTARY



Internationale
Filmfestspiele
Berlin

PANORAMA DOKUMENTE

TRACES

BY ALISA KOVALENKO, MARYSIA NIKITIUK
2026, UKRAINE, POLAND
WORLD PREMIERE

DATE	TIME	VENUE
16.02.2026	17:30	HAUS DER BERLINER FESTSPIELE (PREMIERE)
17.02.2026	15:30	URANIA
18.02.2026	10:00	CUBIX 7
21.02.2026	17:50	CUBIX 7
22.02.2026	22:30	CUBIX 5

FEATURING / PARTICIPANTS

IRYNA DOVHAN
TETIANA VASYLENKO
LIUDMYLA MEFODIIVNA MYMRYKOVA
GALYNA TYSHCHENKO
OLHA CHERNIAK
NINA

CINEMATOGRAPHY BY

ALISA KOVALENKO

EDITED BY

NIKON ROMANCHENKO
ALISA KOVALENKO
MILENIA FIEDLER

ORIGINAL MUSIC BY

WOJCIECH FRYCZ

SOUND BY

MARIIA NESTERENKO
MACIEJ AMILKIEWICZ
MATEUSZ HULBÓJ

PRODUCED BY

OLHA BREGMAN & NATALIA LIBET

COPRODUCED BY

VIOLETTA KAMIŃSKA, IZABELA WÓJCIK, DARIUSZ JABŁOŃSKI

WITH THE SUPPORT OF

POLISH FILM INSTITUTE — HEBREW IMMIGRANT AID SOCIETY (HIAS) —
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ALEXANDRA BRATYSHCHENKO

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TECHNICAL DETAILS

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN:	<i>Ukraine, Poland</i>
RUNTIME:	<i>85 MINUTES</i>
SCREENING FORMATS:	<i>DCP</i>
ASPECT RATIO:	<i>16:9</i>
CAMERA(S):	<i>Blackmagic Pocket Cinema Camera 6K</i>
LENS USED:	<i>Canon RF 24-105 mm f/4L IS USM</i>
SOUND:	<i>5.1</i>
SPOKEN LANGUAGE:	<i>Ukrainian</i>
SUBTITLES:	<i>English, German, French</i>
CLOSED CAPTIONS:	<i>Yes</i>
PRINCIPLE LOCATION(S):	<i>Ukraine: Kherson city, Kherson region, Kyiv city, Kyiv region; Ireland: Dublin, Dundalk</i>

A STORY OF SURVIVORS, TOLD BY A SURVIVOR

A feature documentary film directed by Alisa Kovalenko; co-directed by Marysia Nikitiuk **TRACES** follows Ukrainian women who, after surviving conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) and torture during Russia's war, refuse to remain silent. At its center is Iryna Dovhan, a former captive turned activist and head of SEMA Ukraine, who documents the testimonies of survivors across de-occupied territories. Through her guidance, the film presents a collective portrait of trauma, resilience, and hope, showing how survivors transform pain into power.

The film highlights survivors who, through mutual support and collective action, reclaim agency, challenge stigma, and insist on justice. Personal experiences shared by women showcase a broader strategy of war: sexual violence used deliberately as a weapon to intimidate, destabilize, assert control over occupied territories, and ultimately to break Ukrainians as a nation. Both women and men, including Ukrainian POWs, have been targeted by the Russian forces, highlighting the systematic nature of these crimes and their long-lasting impact on individuals and communities.

The title **TRACES** captures this multilayered impact — from the visible destruction of lives and communities to the invisible marks left on the human psyche: physical, psychological, and social. More than a record of war crimes, the film is a testament to solidarity and agency — survivors reclaim their voices, challenge stigma, and insist on justice.

By bearing witness and refusing to remain silent, these women — guided by Iryna — create a powerful movement that illuminates the stakes of the ongoing war and asserts the vital importance of memory, accountability, and social transformation.

A BRIEF HISTORY / TIMELINE:

- 2013** Pro-Russian Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovych declines to sign the Association Agreement with the European Union
- 2014** The 'Euromaidan' protests erupt and sets off Russia's invasion
- 2014** Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea is completed 25 March 2014
- 2014-present** Donbas war rages
- 2016** Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union hears first female CRSV testimony against Russian soldiers
- 2019** SEMA Ukraine is formed (NGO to unite women survivors of CRSV at the hands of Russian invaders)
- 2021** Russia masses troops near Ukraine's borders
- 2022** Russia invades Ukraine and demands a ban on Ukraine joining NATO
- 2022-present** Russia invades, and continues to wage war against Ukraine despite international condemnation.
The International Criminal Court (ICC) opens investigations into crimes against humanity, war crimes, abduction of Ukrainian children and genocide against Ukrainians.
The UN General Assembly passes a resolution condemning the invasion; demands a full Russian withdrawal.
Sanctions are imposed on Russia and Belarus by the West and Europe.
The ICC issues arrest warrants for Putin and five other Russian officials
Peace negotiations are stalled.
- 2026** TRACES world premieres at the Berlinale Film Festival.



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT, *Alisa Kovalenko*



The theme of **TRACES** resonates deeply with me, at the core of my own being, as it lifts the veil on conflict-related sexual violence – an experience I have lived through myself. This film speaks about a community to which I belong and with which I maintain profoundly strong ties.

In the spring of 2014, I survived Russian captivity and sexual violence in Donbas. As a young filmmaker in the aftermath of the Maidan revolution, I felt the need to document the rapidly unfolding events in eastern Ukraine – a local uprising instigated and directly organized by Russia. After two weeks of filming in the Donetsk region, then partially controlled by Russian and pro-Russian local forces, I was captured, interrogated, and raped by a Russian counterintelligence officer.

After four days of captivity, the Russian officer released me, saying: “You should thank me for the fact that you weren’t executed”. For over a year, I remained silent. I could not speak about what had happened to anyone close to me – my family, my partner, or my friends. I was afraid of traumatizing them and did not know how to talk about it at all. At some point, I decided to speak up, and in 2016 I testified before the Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union. I later learned that I was the first woman in Ukraine to speak openly and publicly about such a crime.

It was not because I was the only one, but because a thick wall of silence and stigma had trapped those who had lived through this experience. For a long time, conflict-related sexual violence was not discussed in Ukraine. It was taboo at every level – both in society and within the state. In 2019, Iryna Dovhan, a civilian from eastern Ukraine who had also been held captive, invited me to the first gathering of Ukrainian women who had survived sexual violence committed by Russian invaders.

It was a defining moment. We felt a great sense of closeness and sorority. I realized the importance of working together and supporting one another, and I decided to join this newly formed community. Soon after, we became the first non-governmental organization in Ukraine to unite women who had survived CRSV as a result of Russian aggression – SEMA Ukraine.

From our very first meeting, we discussed the importance of making a documentary film – to preserve memory, and to advocate for recognition and justice. At the same time, I was afraid that such a task would be emotionally overwhelming for me and would reopen deep wounds. Then, on 24 February 2022, Russia launched its large-scale invasion of Ukraine, accompanied by a dramatic increase in CRSV. We observed the horrific systematic use of sexual violence by Russia as a weapon of war. I began to change my mind.

In the spring of 2023, during a board meeting of our organization, almost everyone agreed that we should begin work on a documentary film. I felt that I had to overcome my personal fears in order to amplify the voices of other survivors. We received our first small grant. I found great support from my sister members. My dear Iryna Dovhan was tirelessly documenting war crimes in de-occupied Ukrainian territories; I joined her with my camera.

At first, it was extremely difficult. I recorded and listened to hours of horrific testimonies about torture, violence and captivity. At times, I felt like I could not breathe. But as time went on, I witnessed – firsthand – how women heal through community, mutual support, and shared work. I saw how the heroines of the film moved from unbearable pain toward post-traumatic growth. I watched them grow stronger, and in turn, this process helped to heal me as well.

In this sense, I came to define this work as existing on equal terms: both as a director and as a representative of the community of survivors of wartime sexual violence. This is a unique case in which such a story is told from within and resonates symbolically with a core principle of survivor-led organizations: ‘Nothing about us without us.’ After seven years as a human rights activist, **I also see this film as a call to the world – for global action and solidarity – and as a message of hope and strength to all survivors of violence.**

I consider CSRVs to be the proof of the bottomless evil of the utter cruelty and criminal nature of the Russian war machine. In contrast, I believe that ordinary human stories of resilience among survivors are, for me, a litmus test of our collective force in resisting it.

In the summer of 2025, I joined SEMA Global, an international network fighting against the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war. Later that year, I attended the largest exchange session between survivor-led organizations in Uganda. There, I felt very strongly that I am part of a much larger movement, and I hope that this film will contribute to this global struggle for justice and dignity.

CO-DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT, *Marysia Nikitiuk*

When Alisa Kovalenko first invited me to join this film, I paused. It touches one of my deepest fears — perhaps one shared by many women. And then I agreed, without hesitation.

Our film **TRACES** will now be presented in the Panorama section of the Berlinale. It is a documentary about Ukrainian women who survived sexual violence committed by Russian aggressors — in 2014 and again in 2022.

The film is about finding a way out of this trauma, and about what it takes to endure what is happening to Ukraine every day. How does one survive? By supporting one another. By refusing silence. By rebuilding life.

TRCES is a film about pain, dignity, and resilience. It is about reclaiming agency and finding a way forward. I hope it will also contribute to accountability — as expressed by Iryna Dovhan, one of the film's participants who survived public humiliation and violence in Donetsk in 2014 and later founded the organization 'Sema Ukraine' to support others.

As Iryna says in the film, *"Now I have the means to hold them accountable."*



CHARACTER OVERVIEWS

TRACES is guided by **Iryna Dovhan** — a storyteller, witness and survivor-advocate, whose personal experience led her to become a central figure in documenting conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV). After surviving captivity in East Ukraine in 2014, Iryna became one of the first women to speak publicly about the sexual violence committed by Russian soldiers during Russia's war against Ukraine.

Today, as the head of SEMA Ukraine, she supports survivors across the country — both male and female — to safely testify, access support, and demand recognition of these crimes under international humanitarian law. Through Iryna's work, the film opens a space where individual voices come together to form a collective testimony.

The film brings forward the stories of women from different regions of Ukraine — from Donbas to Kherson and the Kyiv region — who endured abuse under occupation or detention.

The protagonists of the film come from diverse personal and professional backgrounds. **Iryna Dovhan** is a former economist and beauty salon owner; **Olha Cherniak** is a civil servant at a district administration; **Tetiana Vasylenko** and **Galyna Tyshchenko** are entrepreneurs; **Nina** is a farmer; and **Liudmyla Mefodivna Mymrykova** is a former Ukrainian language and literature teacher whose school was bombed.

What unites them is the repeated inhuman and brutal behavior they faced when their homes were invaded. Isolated from their families or held in improvised detention centers, these women were targeted not because of who they were individually, but because they were Ukrainian civilians living under Russia's military control.

Their experiences reveal that sexual violence in this war is not incidental but a deliberate tool of intimidation, humiliation, and domination — a method of terror and collective punishment against civilians, aimed at erasing human dignity and breaking communities during wartime.

The women's testimonies expose a systemic pattern of crimes that remain largely invisible, even as the war continues. Together, their voices appeal to support CRSV survivors. United through Iryna's circle of care and solidarity, these women transform personal trauma into a shared act of resistance — insisting on truth, dignity, and accountability for the war crimes.

IN A ROOM



PARTICIPANT STATEMENTS

IRYNA DOVHAN

For me, this film is more than just a film. It is a continuation of my purpose—to ensure that the perpetrators will ultimately be held accountable. It does not simply break the global “silence”; it breaks it so loudly that I hope it will leave a clear and lasting echo around the world.

After everything I went through, the most painful realization for me was understanding that Russia will never extradite the criminals, that they will never be punished. Over time, even those closest to me began to forget my traumatic experience. Only this film gave me hope that memory will not disappear, that our testimonies are now permanently recorded. That I am no longer alone in the world in my fight against evil.



TETIANA VASYLENKO



From the very beginning to the very end, this film accompanied me through a profound journey of change—internal, worldview-changing. During the filming process, we spent a lot of time together, talking, and I rethought many things. That is why this film is so valuable to me. It was a major event in my life. Traces also helped me see myself differently. It is important because it is undeniable proof of what is happening here. From the very beginning, I was certain that this film would be heard—I felt it.

LIUDMYLA MEFODIIVNA MYMRYKOVA

We must preserve this memory for future generations so that it never happens again—so that people know what crimes the occupiers committed while “liberating” the Ukrainian people. I want people to look at Ukraine through different eyes—to feel, not just observe, these horrific crimes.



*When I watched *Traces* for the first time, I thought about all the loved ones I had lost, about all the pain I had endured; I remembered everything. But I also remembered how I met Alisa, Iryna, and all the other women who went through terrible trauma but were not broken, who themselves reached out and offered me help. Thanks to them, I found greater strength within myself.*

OLHA CHERNIAK

*For me, *Traces* is a profound documentary in which women courageously speak about the trauma of conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV). With respect and sensitivity, the film gives voice to those who were long unheard, showing not only pain, but also strength and a path toward healing. It is a difficult but necessary film that fosters empathy and reminds us that behind the statistics of war lie real human lives.*



GALYNA TYSHCHENKO



Filming this documentary was extremely difficult, because each time you immerse yourself again in that horror. But together with the women of SEMA Ukraine, we were able to overcome our pain—for the sake of truth, and out of solidarity with those Ukrainian women who were brutally tortured and who will never be able to share their stories.

*For me, *Traces* is a document of Russian crimes against the Ukrainian people—against our existence, against our identity—and we must resist them. This film is our act of resistance.*

NINA

For a very long time, I was alone. I stayed silent, and it was unbearably hard. But it was also terrifying to speak. I never thought I would be able to tell my story like this. And even now, when it feels as though I am ready to shout about it to the whole world, I am still overcoming fear inside myself. The thought that people will judge me, that they won't believe me.

In our village, the mother of a young girl who was harmed took her and simply left. Here, everyone thinks, "What will people say?". Our society is still not truly ready to listen or to be sensitive. But I believe that the more these stories are told, the more belief there will be. I truly hope that this film will help change our society—will break this silence and give others the courage to speak.



IMPACT STATEMENT

Now there is extensive evidence that crimes of conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) are being used by Russia as a psychological weapon, a way to intimidate civilians in the temporarily occupied territories, and a tool to humiliate and suppress the Ukrainian people. Far from being isolated incidents, these crimes function as a system of intimidation, humiliation, and control in occupied territories and places of detention.

While international attention has increased since 2022, the film **TRACES** makes clear that this violence did not begin with the full-scale invasion — it has been present since 2014, largely ignored, undocumented, and silenced.

Key Impact Goals

1. Break the silence around conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV)

- According to the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine, over 90% of former Ukrainian military and civilian captives reported torture and inhumane treatment by Russian military personnel. The UN Commission on Ukraine and the Special Rapporteur on Torture emphasized that sexualized forms of torture were often involved.
- The Commission also found that Russian torture, including sexualized torture, is so widespread and systematic, and most importantly, sanctioned and organized by the highest political and military leadership of the Russian Federation, that it constitutes crimes against humanity.

Before the full-scale war began, almost no one spoke about these crimes, and there were no serious missions, reports, or investigations. These crimes began in 2014 in Donbas with the start of Russian aggression in Ukraine. Ordinary civilians in the occupied Donbas region with pro-Ukrainian positions were interrogated, tortured, and captured. Most of them experienced various forms of conflict-related sexual violence.

- By the end of 2025, approximately 1,200 reports had been registered from survivors of conflict-related sexual violence in Ukraine, including women, men, and children (according to the report of the *Urgent Interim Reparation pilot project for survivors of conflict-related sexual violence*)

However, these statistics do not reflect the real picture of the situation. According to numerous investigations by international and national human rights organizations and institutions, the number of cases is dozens of times higher. Unfortunately, to date, most women and men survivors do not report CRSV crimes committed against them. There is still stigma, shame and fear surrounding this topic in society, and this is the wall that should be broken down.

For years, CRSV remained a taboo topic in Ukrainian society and beyond — marginalized at the social, legal, and international levels. Survivors were discouraged from speaking out by stigma, fear, and the absence of survivor-centered mechanisms for justice. **TRACES** exposes the consequences of this silence and insists that silence is not neutral — it enables repetition and impunity.



2. Strengthen survivor-centered approaches to justice and support

At the center of the film is a transformative shift led by survivors themselves. Beginning in 2019, women affected by CRSV united through **SEMA Ukraine**, creating a support network that marked a turning point from isolation to collective action. It was only a small group of women gathered together, but in fact, this was already a big victory in moving the CRSV topic forward. With the start of the full-scale invasion, this community of women also began to help newly affected women, whose number began to grow rapidly after the Ukrainian Armed Forces liberated the Russian-occupied Ukrainian territories.

With the escalation of the war and the liberation of occupied territories, this survivor-led movement expanded rapidly, offering support to both – newly affected men and women – and demanding that CRSV be recognized as a serious war crime requiring investigation, accountability, and long-term support.

3. Raise international awareness and accountability

TRACES documents this shift from invisibility to agency. **It challenges the image of the “silent victim,” replacing it with the reality of women as active witnesses, advocates, and agents of change.** Through mutual support and solidarity, survivors reclaim authorship of their stories and participate directly in shaping legal, social, and historical responses to violence. In global practice, CRSV is the most silenced and stigmatized crime in wars and conflicts. The film demonstrates how collective testimony can break stigma, influence policy, and contribute to post-traumatic growth — both individually and socially.

The film also emphasizes the critical importance of preserving memory to advance justice and hold perpetrators accountable. The heroines of *Traces* are willing to sacrifice their privacy, speak publicly, and testify about their terrible experiences for the sake of the common struggle for justice. Their testimonies serve as a reminder of a fundamental truth: without justice for survivors of conflict-related sexual violence, there can be no lasting peace.



4. Reframe survivors as agents of change

A central issue addressed in the film is the transformation of the objectified image of the ‘silent victim’ into that of an active woman capable of influencing her surroundings.

Traces shows how women’s mutual support, solidarity, and collective action help overcome trauma, combat stigma and silence, and contribute to post-traumatic growth.

The film **TRACES** is an act of collective resistance. It calls for sustained international attention to CRSV as a grave violation of human rights and international humanitarian law, advocating for survivor-centered justice, long-term psychosocial support, and effective accountability mechanisms. The impact of **TRACES** lies in its insistence that listening to survivors is not an act of compassion alone – it is a political and moral responsibility.

- Over seven years, survivors within SEMA Ukraine have driven landmark change in Ukraine’s response to conflict-related sexual violence. Through survivor-led advocacy and international cooperation, they helped reshape state policy, advance investigations, and secure the country’s first reparations initiatives. Most notably, Ukraine became the first country in the world to implement interim reparations for CRSV survivors during an ongoing war—resulting in compensation for 1,080 survivors so far (as of January 2026) and establishing a new global model now being shared internationally, including with Syria.
- By breaking the silence around conflict-related sexual violence, **women of SEMA Ukraine inspired civilian men affected by sexual violence in Russian captivity during the full-scale invasion to establish the first survivor-led men’s organization** and foster broader solidarity across survivor communities. In 2024, SEMA Ukraine joined three other survivor-led groups to form a coalition advocating for Russia’s inclusion on the UN “Shame List.” This survivor-driven effort resulted, for the first time in UN history, in an official warning from the UN Secretary-General that Russian-affiliated forces could be listed for the systematic use of sexual violence—an advocacy process that TRACES actively highlights and supports.



DIRECTOR ALISA KOVALENKO

Alisa Kovalenko is an award-winning Ukrainian documentary filmmaker, based in Kyiv. She studied documentary film directing at the *Karpenko-Kary National University* in Kyiv and at the *Andrzej Wajda School in Warsaw*. Her first two feature-length documentaries, *“Alisa in Warland”* (IDFA 2015) and *“Home Games”* (Sheffield Doc/Fest 2018) were both screened over 100 festivals, winning multiple awards. Alisa’s third film, *“We Will Not Fade Away”*, a teenage adventure documentary set in war-torn Donbas, premiered at the Berlinale 2023, won 20 international awards and was named Best Ukrainian Documentary 2023 by the Ukrainian Film Academy. After Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022, Alisa joined a volunteer combat unit associated with the Armed Forces of Ukraine and fought on the frontline for months, before returning to filmmaking. From this existential experience she has drawn a personal documentary, *“My Dear Theo”* (CPH:DOX 2025). Among the awards the film has received are: Best Human Rights Documentary (Dokufest), Audience Award (Nuremberg International Human Rights Film Festival), and Best Documentary in the Central and Eastern Europe Competition Section (Astra Film Festival).

Alisa Kovalenko is also a former captive and survivor of CRSV in captivity in 2014 in the Donbas region controlled by Russian and pro-Russian military forces. In 2019, she became a member of SEMA Ukraine, an NGO of women survivors of conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) caused by the Russian invasion of Ukraine since 2014. Since then, she has been actively involved in human rights and advocacy activities related to CRSV in the Russian-Ukrainian war. Her personal experience and human rights activism led her to work on the documentary film *Traces*, which documents war crimes and amplifies the voices of survivors.

Selected filmography: *MY DEAR THEO (2025), WE WILL NOT FADE AWAY (2023), HOME GAMES (2018), ALISA IN WARLAND (2015).*

CO-DIRECTOR MARYSIA NIKITIUK

Marysia Nikitiuk has graduated from Kyiv Karpenko-Karyi National University. She has been writing scripts since 2012. Her short films were in programs of such festivals as Locarno, Clermont-Ferrand, Cairo IFF, TISFF, Golden Apricot. Her first feature film *“When The Trees Fall”* was premiered at 68th International Berlin Film Festival. In 2019 film *EVGE* by Nariman Aliev, Marysia co-wrote, was premiered in the Cannes Film Festival. Since April 2023, Marysia, together with the *“Voices of Children”* foundation, has been conducting storytelling courses with elements of art therapy for children and adolescents affected by the war.

Selected filmography: *WHAT HAVE WE LOST (2023), LUCKY GIRL (2022), WHEN THE TREES FALL (2018).*



PRODUCER NATALIA LIBET (2BRAVE PRODUCTIONS)

Natalia Libet is a producer and a co-founder of the women-led production company *2BRAVE PRODUCTIONS*. Experienced in co-production and finance, she has produced award-winning features, including Kateryna Gornostai's "*Timestamp*" (2025 Berlinale Competition) and "*Stop-Zemlia*" (2021 Crystal Bear Berlinale Generation 14+), Mantas Kvedaravicius' "*Parthenon*" (2019 Venice International Critics' Week) and Anna Buryachkova's "*Forever-Forever*" (2023 Venice Orizzonti Extra).

Natalia holds a U.S. MBA as a recipient of the 2000 Edmund Muskie Fellowship Award. She is a member of the European and Ukrainian Film Academies, and serves on the Board of the latter. Alumna of EURODOC 2021, Emerging Producers 2022 and Nipkow Program 2023. Natalia also serves as the Head of Tatino Films' First Cut+. In 2024, she became a Film Independent Global Media Makers fellow.

PRODUCER OLHA BREGMAN (2BRAVE PRODUCTIONS)

Olha Bregman is a Ukrainian producer with more than 15 years of experience in film production. She is a co-founder of the women-led production company *2BRAVE PRODUCTIONS*. Her credits include award-winning films such as "*Timestamp*" (2025 Berlinale Competition) and "*Stop-Zemlia*" by Kateryna Gornostai (2021 Crystal Bear Generation 14+ at Berlinale), "*Rules Of Two Walls*" by David Gutnik (2023 Special Jury Prize at Tribeca FF), "*Intercepted*" by Oksana Karpovych (two special mentions at Berlinale 2024), "*Cuba & Alaska*" by Yegor Troyanovsky (2025 Documentary Jury and Audience Award at Brussels Film Festival).

She served as Chairwoman of the Ukrainian Film Academy (2022–2024) and now continues as a member of its Board. She is a member of European Film Academy and an alumna of EURODOC 2018 and Ex Oriente training programs.



PRODUCER VIOLETTA KAMIŃSKA (MESSAGE FILM)

Violetta Kamińska is a Polish producer, co-founder and CEO of Apple Film Production, and co-founder of Message Film. She has extensive experience in international co-productions, having produced or co-produced over 40 films, documentaries, and series, many of which have received international recognition and awards. Her notable credits include *“Aftermath”* (2012), *“Maya Dardel”* (2017), *“Rhino”* (2021), and *“Imago”* (2023), among others.

Through her work at Apple Film Production and Message Film, she has demonstrated a strong ability to navigate complex co-productions and bring diverse, artistically ambitious projects to completion, establishing her as a respected and influential voice in the European film industry.

PRODUCER IZABELA WÓJCIK (MESSAGE FILM)

Izabela Wójcik is a producer and Head of Development at Apple Film Production, and CEO and producer of Message Film. A graduate of the Institut Français de Gestion and the Warsaw School of Economics, she has worked in film production, development, and marketing since 2020. Her films and series have been widely awarded at international festivals. Recent productions include *“Dovlatov”* by Alexey German Jr. (Silver Bear, Berlinale 2018), *“When the Trees Fall”* by Marysia Nikitiuk (Berlinale 2018, Panorama), and the feature documentary *“The Trial: The State of Russia vs. Oleg Sentsov”* (Berlinale Special 2017), as well as the series *“The Passing Bells and Spies in Warsaw”*.

She is General Director and Producer of the Polish Film Academy Awards (Eagles) and a member of the Polish Film Academy and the European Film Academy.

PRODUCER DARIUSZ JABŁOŃSKI (MESSAGE FILM)

Dariusz Jabłoński is a Polish film director and producer; founder and president of *Apple Film Production* (est. 1990). He produced and directed *“The Visit of an Elderly Lady”* (1986), considered the first Polish independent film, and *“Photographer”* (1998), which received numerous international awards, including the Grand Prix FIPA d’Or, Prix Planète in Biarritz (1999), and the Grand Prix VPRO Joris Ivens Award at IDFA in Amsterdam (1998). Jabłoński is the founder of the Polish Film Awards, the Polish Film Academy, and the Independent Film Foundation, which also runs ScripTeast, a training program for screenwriters from Central and Eastern Europe. He is a member of the European Film Academy and served as President of the Polish Film Academy from 2012.

The film’s mission is to give voice to survivors of conflict-related sexual violence through an artistic form that intertwines the visual complexity of nature with the quiet strength of expressing trauma. The film is developed and created by independent filmmakers: two female producers and two female film directors. One of the directors, Alisa Kovalenko, is a CRSV survivor herself. She was the first woman to testify about CRSV from the Russian military after being held captive in Donbas in 2014. All these points combined present a perfect match with Film Independent’s mission of championing creative independence in visual storytelling in all its forms, and fostering a culture of inclusion.

