



## Lithuania Aukšė Kancerevičiūtė

Lithuanian cinema is currently struggles for its financial legacy. The new version of the film law is still being debated in parliament, which could finally establish a National Film Centre and provide guaranteed financial support for the local film industry.

In 2011 only one locally-produced feature film was released. Domestic funding remained the same as 2010, with approximately €1million from the government. The Lithuanian Ministry of Culture supported the production of three features: **Santa**, by Marius Ivaškevičius (just over €260,000), **Lošėjas**, by Ignas Jonynas (€1.1million) and **Dovydo akmuo**, by Šarūnas Bartas (€200,000). A documentary budget came in just shy of €250,000.

Yet the year also offered much encouragement for the industry. Lithuanian filmmakers and producers are increasingly pursuing the potential of co-productions with foreign investors and institutions. For the first time, the Lithuanian film industry was featured in the European Film Market at the Berlinale. The stand was organised by the Ministry of Culture, the public company Eksportuojanti Lietuva and MEDIA Desk Lietuva (the International Cultural Programme Centre).



Donatas Ulvydas' **Tadas Blinda. Beginning**

More than twenty enterprises and organisations have made themselves available to represent Lithuania, including Kino vilkai, which is a collection of eight enterprises based in Vilnius, Tremora Era Film, Monoklis, organisers of festivals such as the Vilnius International Film Festival 'Cinema Spring' and Kaunas International Film Festival, as well as representatives from Skalvija and Pasaka cinemas.

Donatas Ulvydas' **Tadas Blinda. Beginning** (*Tadas Blinda. Pradžia*), an historical action drama about a Lithuanian folk hero, broke all records at the local box office. Tadas Blinda (1846–77) first appeared on the screen forty years ago and has often been compared to Robin Hood. According to film producer Žilvinas Naujokas, the film not only depicts the adventures of the eponymous hero, but also the struggle of ordinary people against their oppressors, blending action, romance and humour. It has so far racked up 278,000 admissions since its national premiere on 20 September.

Mantas Kvedaravičius made a powerful debut with the documentary **Barzakh**, produced by Finnish director Aki Kaurismäki. The Lithuanian-Finnish co-production played at DocPoints – Helsinki Documentary Film Festival, as well as the Panorama Dokumente programme at the Berlinale, where it was awarded the Amnesty International award and Ecumenical Jury prize. The film investigates cases of torture and disappearance in the North Caucasus. It was made over three years in Chechnya, offering a detailed chronicle of suffering, which avoids sentimentality. The film also received the FIPRESCI prize at Tallinn Film Festival, the Grand Prix in the International Programme of the BelDocs Documentary

Film Festival, the Silver Crane Award for Best Lithuanian Documentary and the Best Baltic Documentary Film award at Vilnius Documentary Film Festival.

Mindaugas Survila's **The Field of Magic** (*Stebukly laukas*, 2011) a docu-poem about people living in the Buda forest near the defunct Kariotiškės dump, was enthusiastically received by local audiences in Lithuania. Survila also produced the film, which she worked on for four years, over time capturing the increasingly disparate community of 'unknown' people, highlighting the lack of humanity in contemporary society.



Mindaugas Survila's **The Field of Magic**

Audrius Stonys, the famous Lithuanian documentary filmmaker, who skilfully uses metaphor to draw out meaning in his work, directed **Ramin** (*Raminas*), about the lost love of the 75-year-old Georgian wrestler Ramin Lomsadze, who once won seven matches in 55 seconds. It details the old man's final, toughest fight – with loneliness. It opened the Vilnius Documentary Film Festival and participated at Festival dei Popoli in Florence.

Lithuanian National Radio and Television, the country's public broadcaster, produced the documentary **How We Played the Revolution** (*Kaip mes žaidėme revoliuciją*), which was directed by Giedrė Žickytė. A story about the people who fought for the independence of their country, was co-produced with Gilles Perez and Treize Au Sud (France). From a group of architects who, in 1984, jokingly formed a band, the film details the rise of the social movement that



Mantas Kvedaravičius's **Barzakh**

grew into the Rock Marches and became the Singing Revolution, which helped forge the country's future.

### The year's best films

**Barzakh** (Mantas Kvedaravičius)

**The Field of Magic** (Mindaugas Survila)

**Tadas Blinda. Beginning** (Donatas Ulvydas)

**How We Played the Revolution** (Giedrė Žickytė)

**Ramin** (Audrius Stonys)

### Directory

All Tel/Fax numbers begin (+370)

#### Independent Producers Association of Lithuania

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#### The Ministry of Culture of Republic of Lithuania

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#### Lithuanian Filmmakers Union, Vasario 16-osios

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#### Lithuanian Film Studio, Laisvės pr. 3, LT - 04215

Vilnius. Tel: 5 276 3444, 5 276 3444 Fax: 5 276 4254. [info@lfs.lt](mailto:info@lfs.lt) [www.lfs.lt](http://www.lfs.lt)

#### Lithuanian Central State Archives, O. Milasiaus

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