

poster visual

logo Berlinale

Feb 7 / Sat / 16:45 / CinemaxX 1 (Market Screening)

Feb 8 / Sun / 20:00 / Cubix 9 (World Premiere)

Feb 9 / Mon / 19:30 / CinemaxX 4

Feb 10 / Tue / 12:30 / Arsenal 1

Feb 11 / Wed / 15:45 / CinemaxX 6 (Press Screening)

Feb 13 / Fri / 21:30 / CineStar 8

Former Olympic boxer's journey to his final defeat.

DIRECTED BY Ivan Ostrochovský

PRODUCED BY sentimentalfilm  
endorfilm

IN COPRODUCTION WITH Česká televize  
Rozhlas a televízia Slovenska  
Punkchart films

FINANCIALY SUPPORTED BY Slovak Audiovisual Fund  
State Cinematography Fund  
Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic  
Programme MEDIA of the EU  
Barrandov Studio

SLOVAKIA – CZECH REPUBLIC

feature drama

75 min.

mm filmpresse / Sylvia Müller / +49 176 2425 3309 / mueller@mm-filmpresse.de / www.mm-filmpresse.de

Pluto Film / Patricie Pouzarová / +49 157 8227 4916 / patricie@plutofilm.de / www.plutofilm.de

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| Original title        | Koza   |
| English title         | Koza   |
| Countries of origin   | Slovakia (SK), Czech Republic (CZ)   |
| Year of production    | 2015   |
| Screening formats     | DCP (16:9 / 1:1,78 – 5.1 – INTEROP 24 fps - 2K)<br>Blu-ray (16:9 – 2.0 / 5.1 – 25 fps) |
| Languages             | Slovak<br>Czech<br>English<br>German   |
| Subtitles             | English  |
| Color / Black & White | Color  |

Producers Marek Urban, Ivan Ostrochovský / sentimentalfilm (SK)  
Jiří Konečný / endorfilm (CZ)  
Co-producers Kamila Zlatušková / Česká televize (CZ)  
Tibor Búza / Rozhlas a televízia Slovenska (SK)  
Maroš Šlapeta / Punkchart films (SK)

Peter "Koža" Baláž is a former Olympic boxer. He and his partner, Miša, live in a dilapidated housing estate, constantly struggling to make ends meet. Miša learns that she is expecting a child and decides to terminate her pregnancy. She pressures Koza to get money for the procedure. Koza, who has not trained in a while, steps back into the ring, hoping to earn some much-needed cash and possibly change Miša's mind. He and his manager, Zvonko, embark on a "tour", where success is not measured in victories, but in the amount of blows that Koza can take. The film features Peter Baláž, who competed at the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta, and Ján Franek, Olympic medallist from Moscow 1980, as his coach.

#### DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Koža is a simple guy from a special school for kids with learning disabilities and disorders, but what I really respect about him is that considering the situation he grew up in, he worked his way up. His parents left him with his grandmother and since Koza's father was a boxer, too, Koza wanted to impress his dad and started boxing because of him, hoping the parents would take him back. Koza is a nice person, but he's somehow struggling to get control of his life.

I knew that hiring him to do the film would also make his life a bit easier – he would get paid and would get some extra cash beside the 150 euros he gets as a disability pension. He was glad to have this opportunity and he hoped his life would change.

Of course, nobody can change your life for you. You only can do it on your own. But what helped Koza is that for four years, during the time we were preparing and shooting the film, he was in contact with a different reality, which, of course, influenced him, changed his perception of life, moved him into a different direction.

Koža's story is tough and sad, it deals with several pressing and complicated issues, but that was not the storyline we wanted to emphasize. On the contrary, we even wanted to repress it to avoid the pathos which usually emerges when one stresses pain, misery and misfortune.

To express the "step-back" formally, as well, with cinematographer Martin Kollár we decided to shoot the film with a static camera and in long shots. That gives the audience a bit of a psychological distance and emotional freedom in the film.

Director Ivan Ostrochovský  
Story Ivan Ostrochovský  
Script Marek Leščák, Ivan Ostrochovský

Director of Photography Martin Kollár  
Sound Tobias Potočný

Editors Viera Čákanyová, Maroš Šlapeta, Matej Beneš, Peter Morávek

Producers Marek Urban, Ivan Ostrochovský

Cast

Koza Peter Baláž  
Zvonko Zvonko Lakčević  
Franek Ján Franek  
Miša Stanislava Bongilajová  
Nikolka Nikola Bongilajová  
hitchhiker Tatiana Piusi

IVAN OSTROCHOVSKÝ (1972) / director, producer

Co-owner and producer at sentimentalfilm and Punkchart films production companies. Within Punkchart films, he's developing feature film projects as a majority producer (**Erik** by Juraj Lehotský, **Posol** by Ivan Ostrochovský).

Co-producer of **Made in Ash** (2012) by Iveta Grófová (Slovak National Nomination for the Oscar Best Foreign Language Film Category). His feature documentary debut **Velvet Terrorists**, which he co-directed with Pavol Pekarčík and Peter Kerekes, received the FEDEORA Award at Karlovy Vary IFF in 2013. It was presented at the Berlinale within the Forum section in its international premiere and received the Tagesspiegel Readers' Prize.

His feature debut **Koza** (2015) received the Works in Progress Award for the most promising project at Karlovy Vary IFF in 2014 and is now premiered at the Berlinale Forum. The film was nominated for the Best First Feature Award by the Festival Director.

Filmography (selected)

- 2015 **Koza** (dir. Ivan Ostrochovský)  
fiction film, 75 min.
- 2014 **Pavol Šimai** (dir. Ivan Ostrochovský)  
documentary film, 26 min.
- 2013 **Velvet Terrorists** (dir. Pavol Pekarčík, Ivan Ostrochovský, Peter Kerekes)  
documentary film, 87 min.  
>FEDEORA Award (Karlovy Vary IFF)  
>Tagesspiegel Readers' Award (Berlinale)  
>Special Mention (Planete+ Doc)  
>FIPRESCI Award (Novi Sad IFF)  
>Special Mention of the Jury (Hamptons IFF)
- 2011-12 **Celluloid Country** (dir. Ivan Ostrochovský, Martin Šulík)  
documentary TV series, 9 x 26 min.

MAREK URBAN (1977) / producer

After finishing studies at City University, continued studying documentary filmmaking at the Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava. Co-owner and producer at sentimentalfilm and UN FILM films production companies, focused on feature films, creative documentaries and commercials. In recent years he produced and co-produced various feature films with domestic and international success.

Among our most aspiring projects in development and pre-production are following fiction films **OUT** by György Kristóf, **Swan Bride** by Miro Remo and as a co-producer on **Erik** by Juraj Lehotský.

2015           **Koza** (dir. Ivan Ostrochovský)  
fiction film, 75 min.

2014           **Hostage** (dir. Juraj Nvota)  
fiction film, 110 min.

2013           **Velvet Terrorists** (dir. Pavol Pekarčík, Ivan Ostrochovský, Peter Kerekes)  
documentary film, 87 min.  
>FEDEORA Award (Karlovy Vary IFF)  
>Tagesspiegel Readers' Award (Berlinale)  
>Special Mention (Planete+ Doc)  
>FIPRESCI Award (Novi Sad IFF)  
>Special Mention of the Jury (Hamptons IFF)

2010           **Matchmaking Mayor** (dir. Erika Hníková)  
documentary film, 72 min.  
>Tagesspiegel Readers' Award (Berlinale)  
>Best Documentary (Vukovar FF)  
>Best Documentary (Cinematik IFF)  
>Best Documentary (Shaken's Stars FF Almaty)

2007           **Muzika** (dir. Juraj Nvota)  
fiction film, 99 min.  
>Best Film, Best Direction, Best Script, Best Actor in a Leading Role, Best  
Music, Best Editing, Best Sound, Best Actress in a Supporting Role, Best           Set Design  
(Slovak National Award The Sun in a Net)

JIŘÍ KONEČNÝ (1973) / producer

A Prague based film producer and owner of endorfilm. He is focused mainly on making films for cinema. Graduate from University of Economics, Prague in 2001 and from FAMU, Prague in 2004. Graduate from EAVE in 2007. Producer On The Move – IFF Cannes 2008. His productions were selected for numerous international festivals including four times Berlinale: **Matchmaking Mayor** by Erika Hníková was awarded with Tagesspiegel Readers' Award within the Forum section, **A Night Too Young** by Olmo Omerzu screened in Forum and Berlinale Goes Kiez in 2012 and this year he is very proud

to premiere two co-productions at Berlinale: **Aferim!** by Radu Jude in Competition and **Koza** by Ivan Ostrochovský in Forum.

Other recent productions are **Trabant vs. South America** by Dan Přebáň, a docureality that attracted more than 25.000 admissions in Czech cinemas in 2014, and **Always Together** by Eva Tomanová which premiered in IDFA 2014 Competition for First Appearance and earned the Nomination. Jiří produced also produced two national candidates for Oscar – in 2013 it was **Made in Ash** by Iveta Grófová.

#### Filmography (selected)

- 2015            **Koza** (dir. Ivan Ostrochovský)  
fiction film, 75 min.
- Aferim!** (dir. Radu Jude)  
fiction film, 108 min.
- 2014            **Always Together** (dir. Eva Tomanová)  
documentary film, 75 min.  
>Nomination IDFA 2014 Competition for First Appearance
- 2013            **The Story of Mr. Love** (dir. Dagmar Smržová)  
documentary film, 75 min.  
>Student Award (Finále Plzeň)  
>Special Mention (Finále Plzeň)
- 2012            **Made in Ash** (dir. Iveta Grófová)  
fiction film, 80 min.  
>Golden Angel for Best Director (Tofifest Toruń IFF)  
>Best Slovak Fiction Film (Bratislava IFF)  
>Special Mention (Crossing Europe Linz)  
>Slovak National Nomination in the Best Foreign Language Film Category –  
Academy Awards (Oscar)  
>Special Mention (Neisse FF)  
>Igric for Best Direction
- 2011            **A Night Too Young** (dir. Olmo Omerzu)  
fiction film, 65 min.  
>Discovery Of The Year (Czech Film Critics' Awards)  
>Best Film (Neisse FF)  
>Best Directing (Voices FF Vologda)  
>Best Film (Famufest Prague)  
>Special Mention (Bradford FF)
- 2010            **Matchmaking Mayor** (dir. Erika Hníková)  
documentary film, 72 min.  
>Tagesspiegel Readers' Award (Berlinale)

- >Best Documentary (Vukovar FF)
- >Best Documentary (Cinematik IFF)
- >Best Documentary (Shaken's Stars FF Almaty)

MAREK LEŠČÁK (1971) / scriptwriter

A scriptwriter, script editor and lecturer. Graduated at the department of scriptwriting and script editing at the Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava. Currently, he is a lecturer at the department. He's the president of the Slovak Film and Television Academy and he's a member of the Czech Film and Television Academy.

He was involved in several successful Slovak films in the last 20 years: **Garden**, **Orbis Pictus** and **City of the Sun** by Martin Šulík, **My zdes** by Jaro Vojtek, the Cannes-winning **Blind Loves** and **Miracle** by Juraj Lehotský, **Thanks, Fine** by Mátyás Prikler, all of which were awarded and presented at a number of significant film festivals worldwide.

Filmography (selected)

- |      |   |
|------|---|
| 2015 | <b>Koza</b> (dir. Ivan Ostrochovský)<br>fiction film, 75 min.   |
| 2014 | <b>Slovakia 2.0</b> (The Funeral of the President segment, dir. Martin Šulík)<br>fiction film, 112 min.   |
|      | <b>Children</b> (dir. Jaro Vojtek)<br>fiction film, 100 min.  |
|      | <b>So Far, So Near</b> (dir. Jaro Vojtek)<br>documentary, 80 min.   |
| 2013 | <b>Miracle</b> (dir. Juraj Lehotský)<br>fiction film, 78 min.<br>>Special Mention (Karlovy Vary IFF)<br>>Outstanding Actress Award (Cottbus FF)<br>>Grand Prix (Arras FF)<br>>Best Actress Award (Kino Pavasaris Vilnius IFF)<br>>Best Film FF (Neisse FF)                                    |
|      | <b>Fine, Thanks</b> (dir. Mátyás Prikler)<br>fiction film, 134 min.   |
| 2012 | <b>Made in Ash</b> (dir. Iveta Grófová)<br>fiction film, 80 min.<br>>Golden Angel for Best Director (Tofifest Toruń IFF)<br>>Best Slovak Fiction Film (Bratislava IFF)<br>>Special Mention (Crossing Europe Linz)<br>>Slovak National Nomination in the Best Foreign Language Film Category – |

Academy Awards (Oscar)

>Special Mention (Neisse FF)

>Igric for Best Direction

- 2011      **Gypsy** (dir. Martin Šulík)  
fiction film, 107 min.  
>Special Jury Prize, Special Mention for Ján Mižigár, Don Quijote Award  
(FICC Jury), Europa Cinemas Label Award (Karlovy Vary IFF)  
>Jury Prize (Les Arcs European FF)

- 2008      **Blind Loves** (dir. Juraj Lehotský)  
documentary film, 77 min.  
>Art Cinema Award CICAIE (Cannes IFF)  
>Audience Award for Best Documentary (Trieste FF)  
>Special Mention of the Jury (Play-Doc Tui IFDF)  
>Special Mention for the Cinematographer (Plus Camerimage)  
>Special Mention of the Jury (Reykjavik IFF)  
>Golden Eye for the Best Documentary (Zurich FF)  
>FIPRESCI Award (Motovun FF)

MARTIN KOLLÁR (1971) / cinematographer

Studied cinematography at the Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava. Currently works as an independent photographer, cinematographer and director.

As a photographer, he works on long-term projects and residencies (Eastern Europe, France, Germany, Israel). For his work he received several awards, such as the Oscar Barnack Award in 2014 (Germany), 3PPP Photography Grant (France), Backlight Photography Award in 2008 and 2003 (Finland).

His works were exhibited at galleries around the world, including Maison Européen de la Photographie (Paris), Martin-Gropius-Bau (Berlin), Le Chateau d'Eau (Toulouse), MOCA Shanghai, Guandong Museum of Art, Zamek Ujazdowski (Warsaw). He has published three photography books – **Nothing Special** (Actes Sud, France, 2008), **Cahier** (Diaphane, France, 2011) and **Field Trip** (Mack, UK, 2013).

As a cinematographer, he worked on a number of films, including **Koza** (2015), **Velvet Terrorists** (2013), **Cooking History** (2009), **66 Seasons** (2003) and others. As a director he debuted with the short autobiographical portrait **Autoportrait** (2012), at the moment he's working on his first documentary feature **A Man on a Bike**.

Filmography (selected)

- 2015      **Koza** (dir. Ivan Ostrochovský)  
fiction film, 75 min.
- 2013      **Velvet Terrorists** (dir. Pavol Pekarčík, Ivan Ostrochovský, Peter Kerekes)  
documentary film, 87 min.

- >FEDEORA Award (Karlovy Vary IFF)
- >Tagesspiegel Readers' Award (Berlinale)
- >Special Mention (Planete+ Doc)
- >FIPRESCI Award (Novi Sad IFF)
- >Special Mention of the Jury (Hamptons IFF)

2009            **Cooking History** (dir. Peter Kerekes)  
documentary film, 90 min.  
>Best Documentary (Viennale)  
>FIPRESCI Jury Award (DOK Leipzig)  
>Golden Hugo for Best Documentary (Chicago IFF)  
>Special Jury Prize (Hot Docs)  
>Prix Arte Nomination (EFA)

2003            **66 Seasons** (dir. Peter Kerekes)  
documentary film, 86 min.  
>Best Central European Documentary (Jihlava IFDF)  
>Best Documentary Film (DocAviv IFF)  
>Grand Prix (MediaWave Gyor)  
>Best European Film (Syracuse Intl Film and Video Festival)  
>Best Film (Kinoglaz IFF)  
>Best Director (Navarra IFDF)  
>Best Documentary (Baltic-o-Balkan Paris FF)

VIERA ČÁKANYOVÁ (1971) / editor

Studied scriptwriting at the Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava and also graduated documentary filmmaking at FAMU in Prague. Her student films received awards at various film festivals - **Piraña** (2007) and **Alda** (2009) were awarded at Famufest, **Alda** also winning Regard Neuf at Visions du Réel IFF, **Under Underground** (2006) won the Student Jury Award and a Special Mention at the Etiuda & Anima IFF, **100 Days** (2009) received the Grand Prix of the Early Melons IF of Student Films and the Grand Prix at Etiuda & Anima IFF.

Apart from working on her own films, Viera also works as a script editor and editor, and in 2014 she participated on two omnibus feature films as a director.

Filmography (selected)

2015            **Koza** (dir. Ivan Ostrochovský)  
fiction film, 75 min. - editing

2014            **Nina** (dir. Veronika Obertová, Michaela Čopíková)  
animation film, 17 min. - editing

**Slovakia 2.0** (Rubicapra segment, dir. Viera Čákanyová)  
fiction film, 112 min.

**Gottland** (Flyin. h.rse segment, dir. Viera Čákanyová)  
documentary film, 100 min.

2009 **Alda** (dir. Viera Čákanyová)  
documentary film, 52 min.  
>Best Directing, Best Editing (Famufest)  
>Regard Neuf (Visions du Réel IFF)  
>Golden Key for Best Documentary by Director under 35 years (IDFF Kassel)

2009 **100 Days** (dir. Viera Čákanyová)  
documentary film, 22 min.  
>Grand Prix (Early Melons IF of Student Films)  
>Grand Prix (Etiuda & Anima IFF)  
>Best Cinematography (Ostrava Kamera Oko)

2007 **Piraňa** (dir. Viera Čákanyová)  
documentary film, 26 min.  
>Best Film (Famufest)

2006 **Under Under Ground** (dir. Viera Čákanyová)  
documentary film, 18 min.  
>Special Mention, Student Jury Award (Etiuda & Anima IFF)

IVAN OSTROCHOVSKÝ / DIRECTOR / INTERVIEW

**The actors in the film are all non-professional, and most of the characters are re-enacting themselves. How did you find the main protagonists of the film? Did they bring the story with them, or were you looking for somebody that would fit your concept?**

I grew up in a town called Žilina in the south of Slovakia and so did Koza. He lived down the street from where I used to live. We didn't really know each other when we were kids, but I knew about him. I knew about his boxing and when I was in first year of documentary filmmaking studies, I made a short documentary about him. Since then we were friends and I found him interesting as a character.

**What about the character of Zvonko? Is he really Koza's manager, did they know each other before the shooting?**

No, they haven't. In fact, working with Koza, a non-professional actor, who is basically re-enacting his own life, we thought it would be better to pair him up with a professional actor. We were wrong. We did a few rehearsals, tried the chemistry, but it just didn't seem to work.

The solution – as it often is in life – ended up standing right in front of us. Our friend Zvonko, with whom we've previously worked on other projects and knew from the film school, suddenly seemed like a perfect

fit. We tried it and it worked beautifully!

Zvonko is not a sport manager, nor he has anything to do with boxing. But they completed each other with Koza so well that it seemed like it was meant to be all along. Interesting fact is that unlike Koza, who understood what he's playing, because he was simply playing himself, Zvonko had to learn and develop his character. But I think he handled this task amazingly.

**You previous film *Velvet Terrorists* is a documentary using a lot of elements and directing style known and typical for a fiction film. Why did you end up making *Koza* a fiction film and not a documentary?**

With my co-scriptwriter Marek Leščák we discussed *Koza* to be a documentary for a long time. I didn't think of a fiction film at first. But as the situations when I just could capture particular moments and would have to re-enact them anyway were more and more frequent, I've decided I'll go for a special fiction film – either the protagonists were playing themselves, or we used non-professionals who would be based on their own character and a situation we've observed in his real life.

**So how much reality did you use then? What in the film is and is not real?**

*Koza* really is a former Olympic boxer, living in a Gypsy ghetto, having almost no money at all. A few years ago, he and his partner Miša were expecting a third child, which they really couldn't afford. *Koza* called me and asked for help – he not only didn't have money to raise another kid, he couldn't even pay for the abortion, which usually costs 300 to 400 euros in Slovakia. That was the first impulse to write the script.

The story, even if using real characters and inspired by real situations from *Koza's* life, is completely made up – Zvonko as his manager, the tour around Europe, the stops, the earning money for the abortion, the beating up, a greater part of the matches.

**What about your upcoming projects, are you developing documentaries or fiction films?**

Both. With my co-director from *Velvet Terrorists*, Peter Kerekes, we're preparing a documentary film about various comic forms of censorship around the world called *Censors*. With my co-writer on *Koza*, Marek Leščák, we're preparing a fiction film about a Catholic seminar in Slovakia during the communistic regime, where young students of the seminar try to uncover state police agents among themselves.