


a film by Andrius Blaževičius

RUNNER

"Žygimantė Elena Jakštaitė proves a force of nature, full of passion and raw energy that virtually leaps off the screen."

EFP Shooting Stars 2021 Jury

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A woman with a tattoo on her chest is running on a city street. She is wearing a red jacket with white stripes on the sleeves, a pink tank top, light blue denim shorts, and grey sneakers with red accents. The background shows a brown brick wall with a window and a black metal railing. A white car is partially visible in the foreground on the right.

scriptwriters: Marija Kavtaradze, Teklė Kavtaradze, Andrius Blaževičius
director: Andrius Blaževičius
producer: Marija Razgutė
co-producers: Vratislav Šlajser, Jakub Košťál
cinematographer: Narvydas Naujalis
production designer: Aurimas Akšys
costume designer: Fausta Naujalė

genre: drama
countries: Lithuania, Czech Republic
year: 2021
length: 87 min
shooting format: 2.35:1, 2K
colour: colour



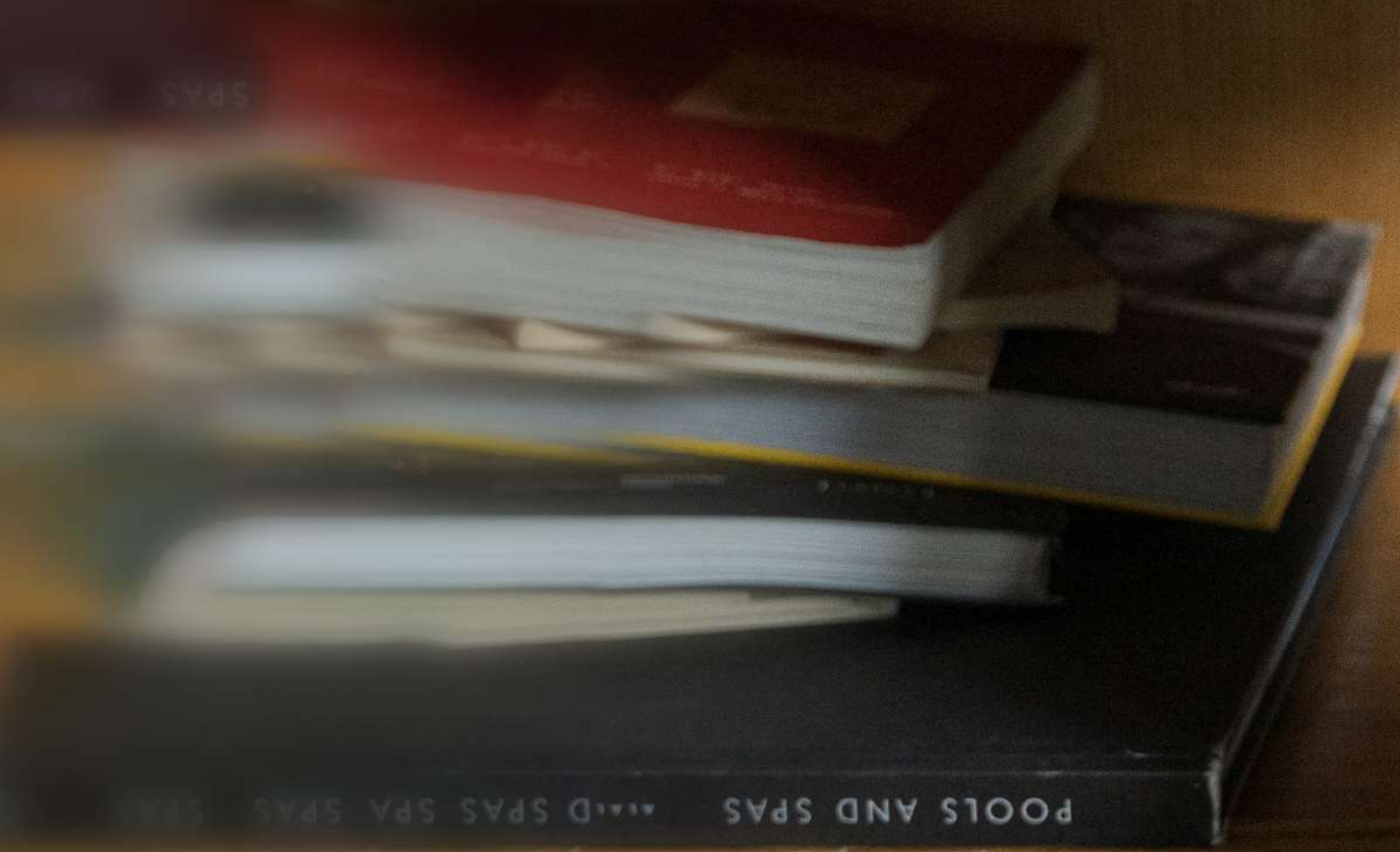
logline

Maria is on a frantic search for her boyfriend who cut loose during his latest psychotic episode - armed with patience and love she chases random clues through the city.

synopsis

After her boyfriend experiences a psychotic episode and disappears, Maria is determined to find and help him. Chasing every clue about his whereabouts, she embarks on a fast-paced odyssey through the city. Always one step behind and against all odds, she fights for both, her love and her freedom.







director's note

My first feature THE SAINT addressed the topics of love and crisis, while the second one, RUNNER, will be about love and freedom. Keeping in mind the threats that loom over Lithuania and the West - the war in Ukraine, Russia's aggressive attitude, the refugee crisis, the rising popularity of the radical right, etc. -, a film about freedom would be relevant like never before. I want to talk about freedom through an ordinary person's everyday struggles. I'm interested in knowing what it means to be free when you're in love, have parents, when fear of war lingers over your country, when everyone's dependent on modern technologies, when Soviet mentality still confines many people's way of thinking, when your body is sick. I'm interested in a person's free will and choice to sacrifice their freedom for something extremely important to them.

Maria, the protagonist, is constantly on the move. She runs, races and solves the many problems that have befallen her that day. She is permanently struggling with her surroundings. The pace of the film will be very fast and chaotic - many short sequences, with the camera constantly moving. In this way, I wish to convey the state our protagonist is in, and to portray the modern person's pace of life, someone who is always in a hurry and never on time. The aspect ratio will be 2.35:1, chosen with the importance of movement in mind.

We will see very little of Maria's boyfriend, who is suffering from a psychotic episode. His illness is important for two reasons. Firstly, other people's reactions to his illness perfectly reflect our society's illnesses - indifference, rejection and fear of the unknown. Secondly, I think that a character who is capable of a breakthrough to total freedom will bring poetry to the film.

Lastly, there is the paralysis of Maria herself - she becomes imprisoned in her own body. There are many layers to this, the main one being that she becomes a metaphor for our ill, immobile society.



debut film
The Saint



director's bio

ANDRIUS BLAŽEVIČIUS was born in Vilnius in 1985 to a Lithuanian-Polish family. After high school, he studied Cultural History and Anthropology at Vilnius University and, after a year, switched to the Lithuanian Music and Theater Academy where he earned his Master's degree in Film Directing in 2011. Andrius completed six short films during his studies, including TEN REASONS (2011), winner of two Lithuanian Film Academy Awards. His debut feature film THE SAINT (2016) premiered at the Busan and Warsaw Film Festivals and received six Lithuanian Film Academy Awards. Andrius works as a freelance director and has also been a programmer for the Vilnius International Short Film Festival since 2010.



producer's note

RUNNER is the second feature film by Andrius Blaževičius, Lithuanian scriptwriter and director, and my fourth feature as a producer. Also it's our third project together following the short film TEN REASONS (2011) and feature THE SAINT (2016). THE SAINT premiered at Busan and Warsaw Film Festivals in 2016 and won six Lithuanian Film Academy Awards. The film reached 46 000 admission in Lithuanian cinemas making it one of the most appreciated independent films of the year. After our successful collaboration Andrius and I had no doubt that we're going to work on his second feature film RUNNER together as well.

RUNNER is a fast-paced drama strongly driven by the main character Maria who is embodied by Lithuanian actress Žygimantė Elena Jakštaitė. For this bold role at the RUNNER she was awarded with Shooting Stars 2021 nomination. This intense story takes 24 hours from one morning till the next one - Maria is looking for her boyfriend who's gone missing after his latest episode. She leaves all of her life aside and grabs any clue to find him. I believe RUNNER tackles an important topic: the thin borderline and the choice between sacrifice and freedom. Too many people of my generation assume they are free and do whatever they want; meanwhile, they don't realise that they're just stuck trying to fit into some social categories or stereotypes. At the same time, a person who has a strong will and consciously decides to stay in a relationship with an ill person, is considered as making a sacrifice.

RUNNER is produced by M-Films (Lithuania) in a co-production with Bionaut (Czech Republic). The film was financed by the Lithuanian Film Centre at the scriptwriting, development and production stages as well as using the tax incentives scheme.





company profile

M-FILMS is a Lithuanian film production company established by producer Marija Razgutė in 2008. At the moment M-FILMS is one of the most active companies in the country focusing on international co-productions aimed for cinemas and TV. The award winning company's editorial line consists of clearly bold and daring stories told by most talented new generation of filmmakers such as Marija Kavtaradze, Karolis Kaupinis, Andrius Blaževičius and Ignas Meilūnas. M-FILMS is crafting critically acclaimed fiction films mostly, but is opening up for animation projects as well.

The latest production NOVA LITUANIA by Karolis Kaupinis premiered at Karlovy Vary IFF 2019, East of the West program, SUMMER SURVIVORS by Marija Kavtaradze premiered at Toronto IFF 2018, Discovery program, THE SAINT by Andrius Blaževičius premiered at Busan IFF 2016 and Warsaw IFF competition programs, awarded by Lithuanian Film Academy in 6 categories, including Best Film, Best Script, Best Director, and etc. At the moment M-Films is in post-production with a second feature by Andrius Blaževičius - RUNNER to be released in 2021. Also, M-Films has been co-producing as a minority co-producer since 2016, now having films with Spain – TRES by Juanjo Giménez & TROTE by Xacio Baño, Germany & Georgia – OTAR'S DEATH by Ioseb "Soso" Bliadze.

m-films





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in co-production with

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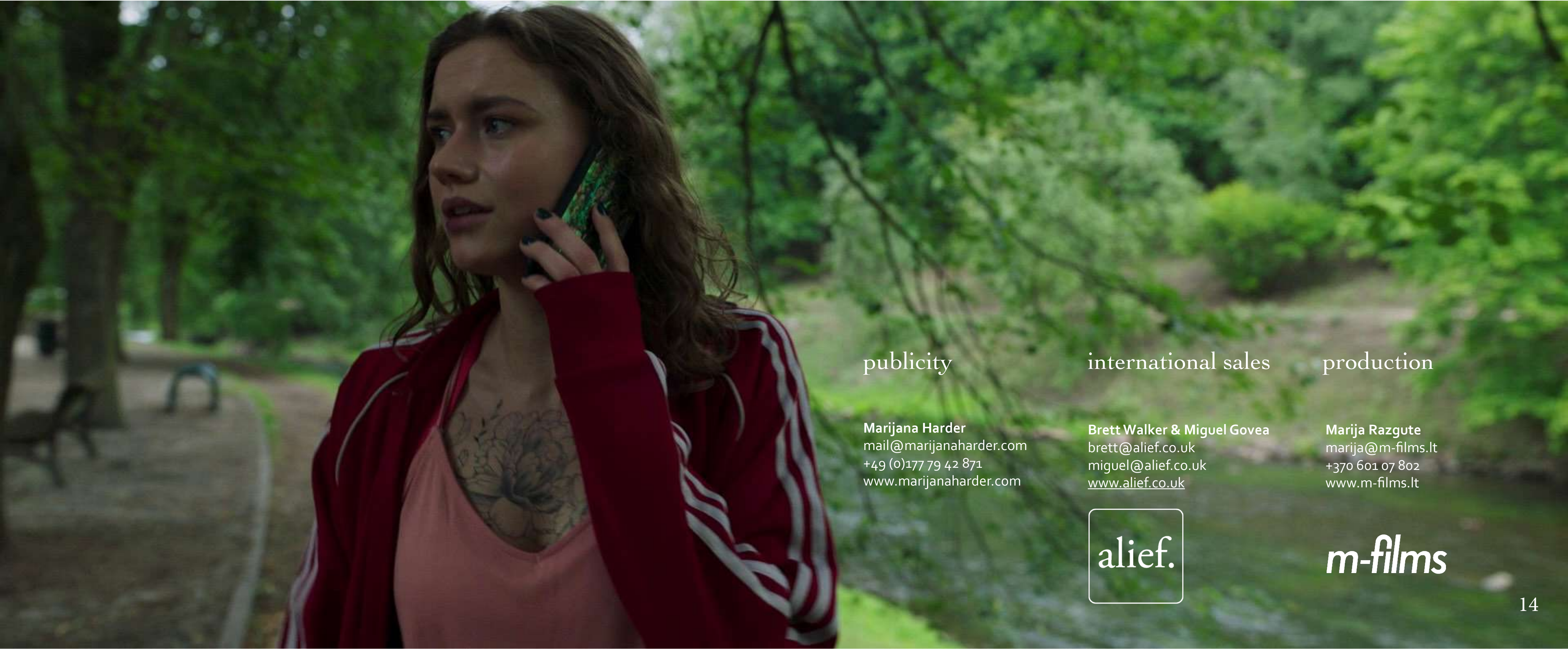
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