

Alen Drljević's MEN DON'T CRY wins Europa Cinemas KVIFF Label

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MEN DON'T CRY by Alen Drljević has won the Europa Cinemas Label as Best European film in the Karlovy Vary International Film Festival, it was announced Saturday by a jury of four exhibitors from the network. 2017 marks the twelfth time the Label has been awarded in Karlovy Vary. **MEN DON'T CRY** will now receive the support of the Europa Cinemas Network, with additional promotion and incentives for exhibitors to extend the film's run on screen.

The jury issued the following statement: "Europe has learned throughout its difficult history that wars, particularly those that have seen neighbour fight against neighbour, do not end when the violence stops. There are difficulties to be faced in healing a divided society, when bitterness and anger must be set aside in favour of compromise and forgiveness in the name of reconciliation. In Arlen Drljević's powerful 'Men Don't Cry', a disparate group of former combatants, representing all factions of the Balkan War of the 1990s, gather in a deserted hotel to begin this process. Common ground is found, but hard-gained trust is easily and quickly lost when old resentments come to the surface. The jury was struck by the film's non-judgemental stance on the characters' different perspectives, brought to vivid life by its fine cast, the universality of its theme of the value of forgiveness not just of others, but of ourselves, for past actions, its relevance to Europe's future as a community, and its subtle

commentary on the negative aspects of masculinity. We are proud to present 'Men Don't Cry' with the Europa Cinemas Label Prize at the 2017 Karlovy Vary International Film Festival.”

MEN DON'T CRY is a **Deblokada** production by Jasmila Žbanić and Damir Ibrahimović, and a Iridium Film (Slovenia), Produkcija Živa (Croatia), Manderley Films (Germany), This&That Production (Serbia) and CinePlanet coproduction, with ZDF/Arte and bosnian Federal TV participation.

Bosnian filmmaker Alen Drljević's first fiction feature, *Men Don't Cry*, features an all-star team from the male Balkan acting scene, including Leon Lučev, Boris Isaković and Emir Hadžihafizbegović.

The script is by Alen Drljević and Zoran Solomun. Erol Zubčević is Director of Photography. Editing by Vladimir Gojun with Artistic Direction by Mirna Ler. Music by Dado Jehan.

Although the armed conflicts of the 1990s visibly violated the land of the former Yugoslavia, they created the deepest wounds in the memory of each belligerent nation. There are as many different interpretations of that bleak past as there were countries affected. And so when a diverse group of veterans gathers at a remote mountain hotel less than two decades since the war ended to undergo days of therapy, it's hard to expect absolute harmony. On the contrary, each unthinking word spoken or just a seemingly dirty look can suddenly ignite the dangerously explosive admixture. That's because the former soldiers, obstinately holding on to their fundamental masculinity and their prejudices, refuse to expose the inhumanity of the events, whether perpetrated by them or by someone else. This brilliantly directed drama, about the ability to forgive others only after we have forgiven ourselves, presents the pinnacle of the Balkan male acting scene. In addition to the diehard pacifist therapist played by Sebastian Cavazza, the film features the excellent Emir Hadžihafizbegović, Leon Lučev, Izudin Bajrović, Boris Isaković, Ermin Bravo, Boris Ler, and Ivo Gregurević.

Alen Drljević (b. Sarajevo, Yugoslavia), member of the European Film Academy, graduated from the Academy of Performing Arts in Sarajevo with the picture *The Paycheck (Prva plata, 2005)*, nominated for a European Film Award for Best Short Film. He focused his first feature-length documentary *Carnival (Karneval, 2006)* on the dramatic events of the 1990s that marked the former Yugoslavia through a series of conflicts. Treating the illegal expulsion of Bosnian refugees from Montenegro, the movie screened in the debut competition at IDFA, the world's largest doc fest. He worked on a variety of successful films as assistant director, including a trio from Jasmila Žbanić: *Grbavica: The Land of My Dreams* (2006, Golden Bear at the Berlinale), *On the Path* (2010), and *For Those Who Can Tell No Tales* (2013). *Men Don't Cry* is Drljević's feature debut.

The Europa Cinemas jury consisted of four network exhibitors:

- **Marijana Bosnjak** - Kino Urania, Osijek – Croatia
- Kevin Coyne** - Irish Film Institute, Dublin - Ireland
- **Zachary Ioannidis** - Cine Paradisos, Korydallos – Greece
- **Stein Sørensen** - Konsertpaleet, Bergen – Norway

The Label is also awarded in Berlin, Venice, Cannes, and will be awarded for the fifth time this year at Locarno. Recipients of the Label honoured at Karlovy Vary in the past include: *Just between us, Piazza Fontana, The Notebook, Free Fall, Babai* and *Original Bliss* last year.