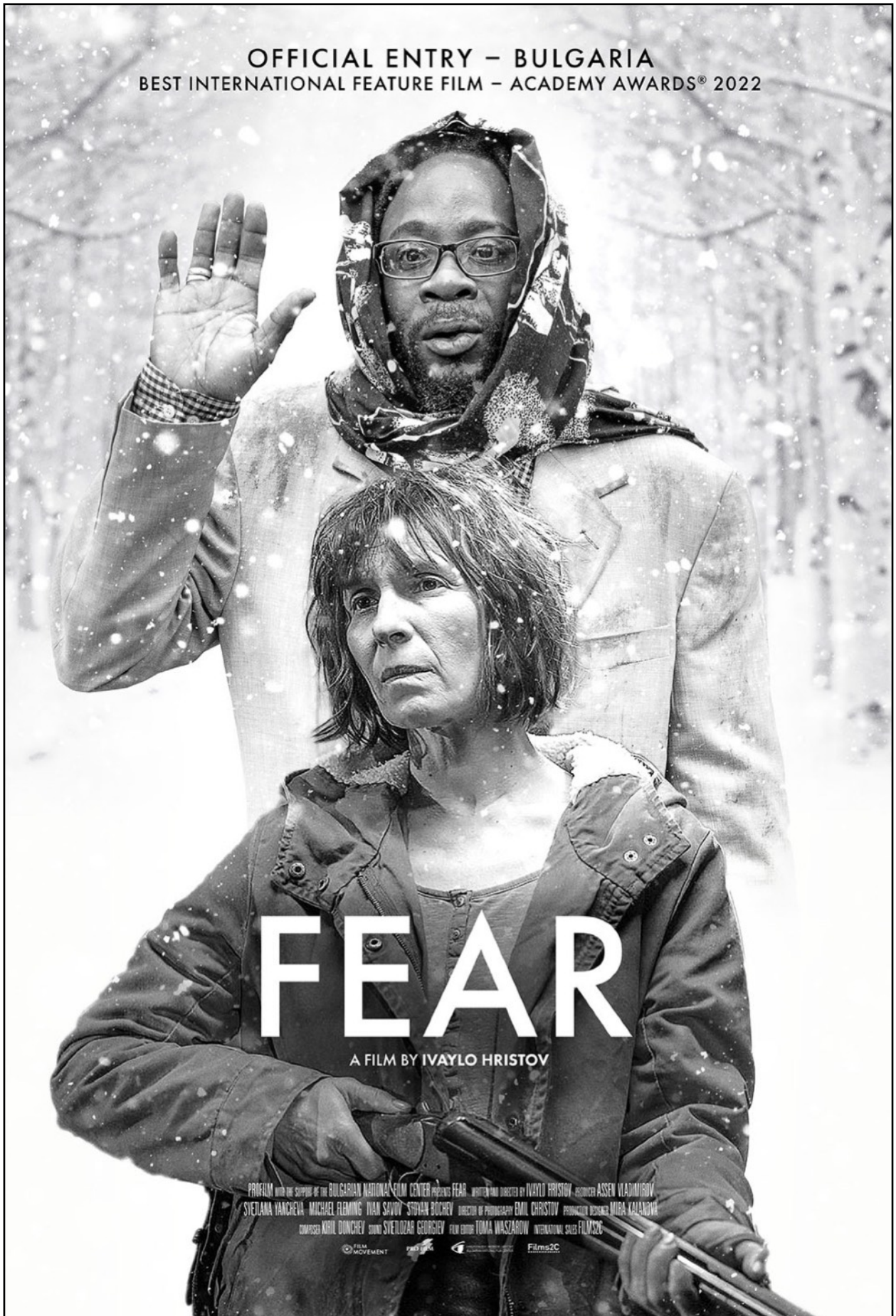


OFFICIAL ENTRY – BULGARIA
BEST INTERNATIONAL FEATURE FILM – ACADEMY AWARDS® 2022



FEAR

A FILM BY IVAYLO HRISTOV

PROFILM WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE BULGARIAN NATIONAL FILM CENTER PRESENTS FEAR. WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY IVAYLO HRISTOV. PRODUCED BY ASSEN VLADIMIROV.
SVETLANA VANCHEVA MICHAEL FLEMING IVAN SAVOV STIVAN BOCHEV DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY EMIL CHRISTOV PRODUCTION DESIGNER MIRA KALANDOVA
COMPOSER KIRIL DONCHEV SOUND SUPERVISOR GEORGIYEV FILM EDITOR TOMA WASZAROW INTERNATIONAL SALES FILMS2C



SYNOPSIS

Svetla, a strong-willed widow, lives alone in a small Bulgarian village close to the Turkish border. She has recently lost her job as a teacher due to the lack of families with young children. One day, while hunting in a forest, she encounters an African refugee, Bamba, who is trying to reach Germany, and will bring about a dramatic turn in her life. Reluctantly, she offers him hospitality, but day after day, a bond develops as Bamba learns the language and takes part in her daily life. Svetla will make life-changing choices that go against her traditional community creating a revolt among the villagers. Absurd, comic and tragic situations ensue as she breaks barriers of loneliness, close mindedness and fear of the outsider.

Drama | 2020 | B&W | 100 minutes
English and Bulgarian with English subtitles



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FEAR

(original Bulgarian title: STRAH)

CAST

| | |
|----------|--------------------|
| Svetla | Svetlana Yancheva |
| Bamba | Michael Flemming |
| Ivan | Ivan Savov |
| Bochev | Stoyan Bochev |
| Gosho | Krassimir Dokov |
| Gogovska | Miroslava Gogovska |

CREW

Produced by PROFILM with support of the Bulgarian National Film Center

| | |
|-------------------------|--------------------|
| Producer | Assen Vladimirov |
| Script | Ivaylo Hristov |
| Director | Ivaylo Hristov |
| Director of Photography | Emil Christov |
| Composer | Kiril Donchev |
| Sound Design | Svetlozar Georgiev |
| Art Director | Mira Kalanova |
| Editing | Toma Waszarow |

SELECT FESTIVALS & AWARDS

Golden Rose Bulgarian Feature Film Festival (Varna, Bulgaria)
WINNER - Best Bulgarian Film, Best Actress (Svetlana Yancheva)

Black Nights Festival (Tallinn, Estonia)
WINNER - Grand Prize for Best Film

Cairo International Film Festival Trieste International Film Festival
NOMINEE - Best Film

Santa Barbara International Film Festival
NOMINEE - Best Foreign Language Film

IVAYLO HRISTOV



Ivaylo Hristov was born in 1955 in Sofia, Bulgaria. He majored in Acting at the National Academy for Theatre and Film Arts, graduating in 1980.

Ivaylo Hristov has played more than 50 roles in theatre, and more than twenty in feature films. He has directed 35 different plays and is the winner of numerous awards.

Hristov is an acting professor at the National Academy for Theatre and Film Arts in Sofia. He is an author of the book "The Actor in Cinema."

He is one of the founders of the prestigious Bulgarian Theatre Awards, *Askeer*.

FILMOGRAPHY

2003 Emigrants – co-directed with Ludmil Todorov

Official Selection: Bulgarian National Film Festival (won Golden Rose for Best Film); Sofia IFF (won Best Bulgarian Film, FIPRESCI Prize, Best Bulgarian Film of Union of Bulgarian Filmmakers); Sarajevo IFF; Cottbus/Germany; Thessaloniki/Greece.

2006 My Friends Call Me Uncle – scriptwriter and director

Official Selection: Bulgarian National Film Festival (won City of Varna Award); International Festival Prix Europa/Berlin.

2010 Footsteps in the Sand – scriptwriter and director

Official Selection: Moscow IFF; Tirana IFF; GoEast IFF; Love is Folly IFF (won Special Jury Prize); Golden Rose Bulgarian National Festival (won Audience Award); Sofia Film Fest (won Best Balkan Film).

2015 Losers (Karatsi) – scriptwriter and director

Official Selection: San Sebastian IFF; Golden Rose Bulgarian National Film Festival (won Golden Rose for Best Film, Bulgarian Critics Award, Best Actress Award, Audience Award); Moscow IFF (won Golden St. George for Best Film, Russian Film Club Federation Award, Russian Film Critics Award); Love is Folly IFF (won FIPRESCI Prize); Warsaw IFF; CinEast IFF (won Audience Award); Sofia IFF (won Bulgarian Film Critics Guild Award); Palm Beach IFF; SEEFest Los Angeles (won Special Jury Mention); Munich IFF; Cyprus Film Days IFF (won Special Mention; NYC Independent Film Festival; Jecheon IFF.

INTERVIEW WITH DIRECTOR IVAYLO HRISTOV

by Ștefan Dobroiu

published on November 24, 2020

<https://cineuropa.org/en/interview/395409/>

“I have always been interested in people who find the courage to state and defend their point of view.”

After winning the top award at the Golden Rose Film Festival, Bulgaria’s biggest gathering for local films, Bulgarian director Ivaylo Hristov’s *Fear* made its international debut in the main competition of Tallinn Black Nights. Here is what the director has to say about his film, which puts a funny spin on the refugee crisis.

Cineuropa: The idea of writing *Fear* came to you after you witnessed a dramatic situation, when refugees traveling through Bulgaria in a van were arrested right in front of you. How did you use this when writing the screenplay?

Ivaylo Hristov: For years now, a few friends and I have been spending every summer holiday in a village near the border with Turkey. In the evening, after the incident with the refugees, we were having dinner at the hotel restaurant and, of course, talked about what we had seen. The conversation was not serious; on the contrary, we were joking about it! You know those conversations with friends where the laughter is directly proportional to the quantity of brandy ingested.

I was joking, too, but I felt like something was wrong, like something had got lodged in my mind and kept bringing me back to the refugee van. What had happened in front of me seemed like footage from a movie. The sequences swirled in my mind: the glowing asphalt of the road, the bright lights of the police cars, the opening of the van doors, and in there – sweaty men's faces, women with burqas on their heads, and huge, frightened children's eyes. Somehow, in this series of shots, my face appeared as well, distorted with horror... Then, I understood! What had disturbed my mind was the feeling of shame. I was ashamed of the fear I felt the moment I saw the van with the refugees in it. It was not sympathy, nor a desire to help, but fear. To overcome that fear, I wrote the script, and I hope the film will help other people as well.

In fact, the refugee topic is just a background, a necessary environment in which to flesh out the plot and bring out the opposition between society and the individual. I have always been interested in people who find the courage to state and defend their point of view, no matter the price for them. The protagonist in the film goes through a difficult change, from a lonely and unemployed provincial teacher to a person who proudly declares to government officials, "According to the law, the state is me!"

What is your personal opinion on the immigrant crisis in Europe, and what do you think Bulgaria's position should be regarding the crisis? Do you think *Fear* is a political film?

I have never believed in building wire fences; moreover, they disgust me. We all remember a wall that divided the world in two, but that fell down, too. It took years, yet it fell down eventually. It is the walls in people's heads that are still the big problem. Fear of the "other" or of the "stranger" is the most serious problem. Unfortunately, politicians generate and fan the flames of this fear. I hate aggressive and xenophobic politics. In that sense, I agree that *Fear* is a political film.

At the end of your film, you play a mysterious character accompanying Svetla and Bamba on their way out of the village. It seems like the film's only two positive characters are practically cast out of the story. Is that a comment on Bulgarian society?

My appearance in the film is, so to speak, a wink, a personal joke with myself. I, as the author, put obstacles in front of my characters throughout the film and set traps for them; sometimes I took care of them, hoping that their love would happen here and now, but I failed, and for that reason, I told them, "I've had it up to here!" and I let them seek their happiness somewhere else in the world – in some beautiful and friendlier place, whether it is Africa, America, or even Antarctica.

Do you have concerns about how your film will be able to reach audiences in the times of the pandemic?

Of course, I worry a lot. For me, cinema continues to be an art, not an industry, and in this sense, I believe that it is the cinema where a serious "conversation" between the viewers and the film takes place. Closed cinemas are a very sad sight, but I am optimistic: we are now very close to the discovery of a COVID-19 vaccine. Long live the scientists!

How would you comment on the solutions found by the Bulgarian institutions to diminish the effect the pandemic is having on the local film industry?

Their intentions are commendable, but first, let us see these solutions come to fruition, and then we can comment.

Are you developing a new feature? What is it about?

Just like many other people, I abide by the epidemiological measures, and I stay at home in front of my computer. While doing so, I have managed to write some new scripts. In one of them, I study the break-up of a family and its consequences. However, it will be some time until the film is made. Let's hope we will be safe and sound!