



INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY RECLAIM THE FRAME PREVIEW

Hive

+ pre-recorded Q&A with filmmakers

Hive is a powerful drama based on the true story of Fahrije (Yllka Gashi) who, like many of the other women in her patriarchal village, has lived with fading hope and burgeoning grief since her husband went missing during the war in Kosovo. In order to provide for her struggling family, she pulls the other widows in her community together to launch a business selling a local food product. Together, they find healing and solace in considering a future without their husbands – but their will to begin living independently is met with hostility.

The men in the village condemn Fahrije's efforts to empower herself and the women around her, starting a feud that threatens their newfound sovereignty – and the financial future of Fahrije's family. Against the backdrop of civil unrest and lingering misogyny, Fahrije and the women of her village join in a struggle to find hope in the face of an uncertain future.

Winner of the Audience Award, Directing Award, and World Cinema Grand Jury Prize at Sundance, *Hive* is a touching and inspiring portrait of loss and overcoming injustices in a patriarchal society.

Director's Statement

'A widow should only do housework, respect her in-laws and stay at home.'

These were the words Fahrije Hoti heard every day as soon as she got a driver's license and started to provide for her kids, having lost her husband during the last war in Kosovo.

I was sitting in my apartment in Brooklyn, NY, trying to finish writing my school project while I was listening to a TV show from Kosovo. A woman was talking about getting her driver's license and the whole village gossiping about how she had humiliated her family. At first, I thought it was a joke. It was funny yet very sad, hard and motivating. Fahrije Hoti, a widow and a mother of two, had to do something to survive, and she did. She got a driver's license and got a job. Everyone was talking about it and going crazy, but she did it. One day she opened a little business where she employed other widows and now, she produces pickled vegetables sold all around Kosovo.

Besides being a woman and a mother myself, I was intrigued by her will and power to not only survive, but to achieve something great and never look back. Her positivity and energy are fascinating. That is something I want to bring on screen, a strong female character full of colours, a woman protagonist that needs to be seen by Kosovo and a wider audience. Her decision to continue with her life no matter what was confusing, painful, sometimes even funny, but deeply inspiring.

She accepted that I wrote the script based on her life story and I believe this personal experience of Fahrije and the widows that work with her in trying to build new lives for themselves can become universal and compelling to a wide audience. While the story is quite painful and sad, it is very empowering, it is about beginnings, change, and how funny life can be in the most serious moments.

Blerta Basholli, Production notes

Based on a True Story

The real Fahrije Hoti was born on 18 September 1969 in Rogova i Hasit, Gjakova Municipality. She worked as a tailor while her husband and father of their two children, Bashkim Hoti, worked abroad for three years. Due to the war and his work, Bashkimi and Fahrijia only lived together for six of the nine years of their marriage. Fahrijie's good family life turned into a tragedy in 1998, when Serbian paramilitary forces occupied Prizren and Rahovec. To save the lives of her children, Fahrije immediately left for Albania on March 26, where they stayed for three months and returned at the end of June 1999 to a destroyed village and a new life with her husband missing.

Needing to resume her life after the end of the war and to be able to provide for her children, she founded the 'Krusha' food company, which is led one hundred percent by women and employs around fifty, most of whom were widowed during the recent war in Kosovo. With their locally made products, these women supply about 28 markets in the big cities of Kosovo. Their products are also sold abroad and have been available in the Swiss market since 2014.

Fahrije Hoti has not seen her husband since she fled, and now 20 years after the war ended, she is still searching for him. Together with many other men and young boys, Bashkim remains on the missing persons list from a war that has taken more than ten thousand lives.

Director's Biography

Blerta Basholli is a writer/director with a unique realistic visual style. Her stories touch upon social and gender issues from the country where she was born and raised, Kosovo.

In 2008 she was awarded with the Deans Fellowship at the Film Graduate Program at Tisch School of the Arts at NYU. She lived in New York City for four years where she had the opportunity to work on several film projects as a student. Her short film *Lena and Me* (2011) screened and was awarded at the First Run Film Festival; Dokufest; Skena Up; Tirana International FF; Pogradec Food and Film Festival; 9/11 Film Festival (Best Actress Award). Her short film *Gjakova 726* (2008), was shown at the Rotterdam Film Festival, Busho Film Festival, Doku Fest, Toffifest, Filmmor Women's Film Festival. Her documentary *Mirror, Mirror...* (2006), was officially selected at the Sarajevo Film Festival; New York International Independent Film and Video Festival; Tirana International Film Festival 2006; Balkan Black Box Film Festival in Berlin.

Hive is her debut feature, which she has developed since 2011. In 2011, she returned to her birthplace where she wrote/directed and worked on many short and feature films.

Production notes

HIVE

Directed by: Blerta Basholli
©: Ikonë-Studio, Industria Film, Alva Film Production, Black Cat Production, Albasky Film
Production Companies: Ikonë Studio, Industria Film
In co-production with: Alva Film Production, Black Cat Production, Albasky Film, RTS Radio Télévision Suisse
Supported by: Kosovo Cinematography Centre, Federal Office of Culture (FOC), Cinéforum, Loterie Romande, North Macedonia Film Agency, Albanian National Centre of Cinematography
In coproduction with: Unité Fiction – Documentaires et Séries originales
Produced by: Yll Uka, Valon Bajgora, Agon Uka
Production Manager: Agon Uka
Location Manager: Jetmir Zenelaj
1st Assistant Director: Jehona Berisha
Casting Director: Blerta Basholli
Written by: Blerta Basholli
Director of Photography: Alexander Bloom
Special Effects on Set: Dejan Krajcevski
Editing: Félix Sandri, Enis Saraçi
Editor on Set: Gazmend Nela
Art Director: Vlatko Chachorovski
Costume Designers: Hana Zeqa, Fjorela Mirdita
Make-up: Fiona Abdullahu
Music by: Julien Painot
Sound Design: Philippe Ciompi
Original Sound: Igor Popovski
Sound Mixing: Philippe Ciompi

Cast:

Yllka Gashi (*Fahrije*)
Lajçi Çun (*Haxhi, father-in-law*)
Aurita Agushi (*Zamira*)
Kumrije Hoxha (*Nazmije*)
Adriana Matoshi (*Lume*)
Molikë Maxhuni (*Emine*)
Blerta Ismaili (*Edona*)
Kaona Sylejmani (*Zana*)
Mal Noah Safçiu (*Edon*)
Xhejlane Tërbunja (*Melisa*)
Ilir Prapashtica (*instructor*)
Bislim Muçaj (*waiter*)
Blin Sylejmani (*Edi*)
Shkëlqim Islami (*Ardian*)
Adem Karaga (*Rasim*)
Zarije Jonuzi Çeliku (*Hana*)
Astrit Kabashi (*Bahri*)
Luan Kryeziu (*Selman*)
Valire Haxhijaj Zeneli (*Mihrije*)

Kosovo/Switzerland/North Macedonia/Albania 2020
84 mins

Courtesy of Altitude

IN PERSON & PREVIEWS

Hive+ pre-recorded Q&A with filmmakers
Tue 8 Mar 18:15
TV Preview: Gentleman Jack Series 2 + Q&A with writer Sally Wainwright and actors Suranne Jones and Sophie Rundle
Wed 9 Mar 18:10
GFF International Women’s Day Gala: Happening (L’evenement) + Pre-recorded Q&A with Director Audrey Diwan
Wed 9 Mar 20:40
TV Preview: Inside No. 9 + Q&A with creators Reece Shearsmith and Steve Pemberton, and executive producer Adam Tandy
Fri 11 Mar 20:40
GFF Closing Gala: Murina
Sun 13 Mar 19:00

REGULAR PROGRAMME

Experimenta: Ticket of No Return + pre-recorded intro remembering Tabea Blumenschein with Ulrike Ottinger
Tue 8 Mar 18:00
Film Wallahs: The Beatles and India + intro by co-director Pete Compton and producer Reynold D’Silva
Thu 10 Mar 18:15

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