



**RIGA INTERNATIONAL  
FILM FESTIVAL**

**Latvia's largest film event of the year will take place in December**

Welding together Latvian film festivals and film industry professionals, the first Riga International Film festival will be held from December 2 to December 12. The festival will host screenings of more than 120 films as well as an extensive industry section.

“The idea to create a rich and versatile cinema event for the local filmgoers was fuelled by the presence of European Film Awards ceremony in Riga this year. It will be the largest film event in Latvia – uniquely shaped by comprising all the existing festivals and a number of new initiatives with future prospects to expand the program and broaden the industry section year by year,” said Sonora Broka, the director of Riga International Film Festival (*Riga IFF*).

The capital of Latvia has the honour of being the European Capital of Culture in 2014, so Riga with its colourful events is attracting international attention at the moment and getting ready to host European Film Awards (EFA) ceremony that will take place in December. This is considered to be an opportunity to present the Latvian film festivals to wider audience. The cinematographers and film festivals have united their forces to create a splendid mosaic – *Riga IFF* – that will sparkle with European film productions. The first edition of *Riga IFF* will take place prior the EFA ceremony – December 2 – 12, 2014 – and its next edition is expected in 2015, launching an International Competition section.

The creative company behind *Riga IFF* is National film festival *Liela Kristaps*, International film actors' Festival *Baltic Pearl*, Riga International film festival *2ANNAS*, Baltic Sea Forum for Documentaries – international project market for documentary film organized by National Film Centre of Latvia. Sonora Broka, director of *Riga IFF*, is former programmer and, for a two-year period, director of the legendary International Film Forum “Arsenals” that was founded in 1988 and closed in 2012.

The film screenings will take place in almost every cinema in Riga, the Riga Film Museum and the National Library of Latvia. Creative workshops and master classes supervised by film professionals, discussions and press conferences as well as meetings with the filmmakers will serve as a valuable addition to the event.

The National Film Festival *Liela Kristaps* – main focus of *Riga IFF* this year – will praise the best Latvian films and filmmakers for the 26th time already. The competition section will be composed of films selected and nominated for the main award by professional organisations and experts' commission. Films will be evaluated by an international jury, which for the first time will include members of EFA. The local audience will not only be able to vote for the best Latvian film, but also for the best European movie, so one of the awards – statue of the mythical Great Kristaps – will travel abroad. Closing ceremony of *Liela Kristaps* will take place on December 11 and will be broadcasted live on TV. This section of *Riga IFF* will also host *PACKSHOT* – an international visual arts exhibition, entirely composed of artworks created by filmmakers.

The international film actors' Festival *Baltic Pearl* has provided local filmgoers and guests of the capital of Latvia with the opportunity to view Europe's most remarkable films from the range of brand new productions and historically significant ones for over twenty years already. This year it will serve as a great overture to the ceremony of the EFA. The September session will offer a wide program, including a selection of the most recent European titles, thematic subsections and retrospections. The December session

will be entirely devoted to the films nominated for EFA Awards as well as pay tribute to the recipients of the EFA's Lifetime Achievement Award.

International Film Festival 2ANNAS, eager to showcase contemporary avant-garde and films from different genres and years challenging film theory, criticism and curatorial approaches, will celebrate its 19<sup>th</sup> edition, also split in two sessions this year. The October part will continue to explore the themes of cinematic transgressors [of conventional filmmaking], which were at the centre of 2ANNAS 2013 edition. The December session, in its turn will offer an insight of films, made by the most notable Latvian transgressors as well as a selection of 15 EFA nominated shorts. 2ANNAS is also taking part in *Riga IFF* industry section by organising a European Script Meeting - a creative partnership-building event for scriptwriters, producers and directors.

*Riga IFF*'s industry section will provide professionals with master classes, workshops and lectures by leading European filmmakers in order to create an inspiring platform for exchange of ideas and experience, allowing discovering Latvia and its benefits.

In the course of over a hundred year period, the film production in Latvia has formed rich traditions; the filmmakers have developed experience and skills for international production and services. The nation is proud of its cinematographers, working with great aesthetic taste, designers and animation teams.

The most unique trait of Latvian cinematography is embodied by the longstanding tradition of Latvian documentary, famous for its refined visual solutions, attention to details, precise and poetic camera work, sensitive observation of humans and nature.

Abundant in contrasts and closely situated locations – post soviet, industrial, countryside, urban, seashore – through all the 4 seasons are available as well as sound stages and production facilities. The Latvian film service offers highly professional, multilingual, efficient and reliable crews. Such films as “Das Blaue vom Himmel”(partly) (d.i.e. Film GmbH, Sam Film, WDR), “My Way” (Directors, SK Planet, CJ Entertainment) and “Wallander: Dogs of Riga” (Left Bank Pictures, Yellow Bird, TKBC) preferred shooting locations in Latvia and co-operated with the local film service.

The number of co-productions has significantly increased during the last three years. Very successful co-production projects are carried out in animation, to name a few: short films “Villa Antropoff” (Lunahod and Eesti Joonisfilm), short film series “Rescue Team in Europe” (*Animācijas Brigāde* and 25 European partners) as well as full length animations “Lotte and the moonstone secret” and “The Golden Horse” by *Copenhagen Bombay*, *Paul Thiltges Distributiona*, *Rija Films* and *Vilanimos Filmu Studija*. One of the latest feature film co-production projects is Sergey Loznitsa's war drama “In the Fog” by *Ma.ja.de Fiction*, *GP Cinema*, *Lemming Film*, *Belarusfilm*, and *Rija Films*.

*Riga IFF* is organised by the association *Riga International Film Festival*, coalescing teams of Latvian Filmmakers Union, National Film Festival *Lielais Kristaps*, International Film Festival 2ANNAS, International Film Actors' Festival *Baltic Pearl* as well as Latvian Film Producers Association. *Riga IFF* is supported by the Latvian Ministry of Culture, Culture Capital Foundation of Latvia, Riga City Council, National Film Centre of Latvia and foundation *Riga 2014*.

Riga IFF in social media:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/RigaIFF>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/RigaIFF>

Website: <http://www.rigaiff.lv>