



HIVE



A FILM BY BLERTA BASHOLLI

KINÉ STUDIO & INDUSTRIA FILM IN CO-PRODUCTION WITH ALFA FILM, BLACK CAT PRODUCTION, ALBASKY FILM, RTS, RADIO TÉLÉVISION SUISSE
PRODUCED BY YLL UKA, VALON BAJGORA, AGON UKA CO-PRODUCED BY BRITTA RINDELAUB, TOMI SALKOVSKI, KRISTIJAN BUDROVSKI, PASKAL SEMINI
SCREENPLAY AND DIRECTED BY BLERTA BASHOLLI. CAST: YELKA GASHI, ÇUN LAJÇI, AJRITA AGUSHI, KUMRËJE HOXHA, ADRIANA MATOSHI
CINEMATOGRAPHER: ALEX BLOOM EDITOR: FÉLIX SANDRI & ENIS SARAÇI ART DIRECTOR: VLADKO CHACHOROVSKI SOUND DESIGNER: PHILIPPE CIOMPI
COMPOSER: JULIEN PAINOT COSTUME DESIGNER: HANA ZEQA, FJORELA MIRDITA MAKE UP: FIONA ABDULLAHU



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SHORT SYNOPSIS

Sundance triple award winner HIVE is a searing drama based on the true story of Fahrije, who has battled grief and financial struggle since her husband went missing during the war in Kosovo. In hope of providing for her family, she launches a business selling hot pepper preserves, a controversial act of independence that scandalizes her patriarchal village. Amid doubts of her husband's return, she struggles not only to keep her family afloat but against a hostile community who seeks to violently undermine the independence and sisterhood she is determined to gain.

LONG SYNOPSIS

Sundance triple award winner HIVE is a searing drama based on the true story of Fahrije, 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 Eastern Europe's 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 pithy, devastating portrait of loss and our uphill journeys to freedom.

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 colors, 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**

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 screened and was awarded at the First Run Film Festival 2011; Dokufest 2011; Skena Up 2011; Tirana International FF 2011; Pogradec Food and Film Festival 2011; 9/11 Film Festival 2012 (Best Actress Award). Her short film GJAKOVA 726, 2008, was shown at the Rotterdam Film Festival 2009 shorts program, Busho Film Festival 2009– official selection, Doku Fest 2009 - official selection 2009, Toffifest 2009- official selection, Filmmor Women's Film Festival 2009 - official selection. Her documentary MIRROR, MIRROR..., 2006, was officially selected at the Sarajevo Film Festival 2006; New York International Independent Film and Video Festival 2016; Tirana International Film Festival 2006; Balkan Black Box Film Festival 2006, Berlin.

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

DIRECTOR'S FILMOGRAPHY:

<i>Hive (Zgjoj)</i>	feature film, 2021
<i>Lena and Me</i>	short film, 2011
<i>Gjakova 726</i>	short film, 2008
<i>Mirror, mirror...</i>	documentary film, 2006

MAIN CAST BIOGRAPHY

Yllka Gashi is an Albanian award-winning actress, born and raised in Prishtina/Kosovo. She started her acting career when she was 17 after being cast on her first ever audition in 1999. Throughout the 2000s she appeared in many theater productions, short and feature films, as well as TV series.

As a onetime refugee, Yllka served both as a Goodwill Ambassador for UNICEF and Artist Ambassador for Save the Children in Kosovo. She immigrated to the United States in 2015 and had her American stage debut in May 2018 in an off Broadway hit show “Women on Fire-Stories from the frontlines”- written and directed by Chris Henry at Royal Family Productions in New York City. Yllka resides in the Greater New York Area with her family. HIVE is her debut as a lead actress in a feature film.

Çun Lajçi, or Çun Alia Lajçi, is an Albanian musician, author, theater actor, film actor, drama teacher and activist. He is famous for reciting “The Highland Lute” (Lahuta e Malsisë). He is also a lahuta player. Lajçi has played over 200 roles and has been in 30 movies. He has been nominated twice as best actor in Serbia in the theater organization "Joakim Vujiq". He received the prize "Naim Frashëri" from the Albanian presidency. He has released two books, "Zjarr në Pashuar" and "Fjalës nesër i bëhet vonë”.

Lajçi was born in 1946 in Drelaj, Rugova, Kosova. He started school in Drelaj, and continued in Prizren at the drama school. He then proceeded to Prishtina. In 1970, he worked as an actor in Prishtina's city theater. He is known for his roles in movies such as: YEAR OF THE MONKEY; VIRUS: EXTREME CONTAMINATION; THE SONATA; ENKLAVA; THE HERO; AGNUS DEI; KODI I JETËS; THE WEDDING TAPE; THE FORGIVENESS OF BLOOD; ALBANAC; DOSSIER K, and many more.

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CAST

Yllka Gashi — Fahrije
Çun Lajçi — Haxhiu
Kumrije Hoxha — Nazmije
Aurita Agushi — Zamira
Adriana Matoshi — Lume
Molikë Maxhuni — Emine
Blerta Ismaili — Edona
Kaona Sylejmani — Zana
Mal Noah Safçiu — Edoni
Xhejlane Tërbunja — Melisa
Astrit Kabashi — Bahri
Adem Karaga — Rasimi
Armend Smajli — Agimi
Shkëlqim Islami — Ardiani
Illir Prapashtica — Instructor

CREW

Director: Blerta Basholli
Scriptwriter: Blerta Basholli
Cinematographer: Alexander Bloom
Editor(s): Félix Sandri & Enis Saraçi
Sound Editor: Philippe Ciompi
Composer: Julien Painot
Still Photographer: Astrit Ibrahimimi
Executive Producer(s): Yll Uka, Valon Bajgora, Agon Uka

TECHNICAL DETAILS

International title: *Hive*
Original Title: *Zgjoj*
Genre: Drama
Production Year: 2021
Month of start & end of shooting: June-July 2019
Country of Origin: Kosovo, Switzerland, Macedonia, Albania
Shooting Locations: Janjevo, Prizren, Prishtina
Language Spoken: Albanian
Duration: 01:23:34
Shot On: Arri Alexa Mini
Aspect Ratio: 1.66:1
Format: 4K
Sound Format: 5.1
Co-producer & Company/Country:
Britta Rindelaub - Alva Film Production/Switzerland

Tomi Salkovski - Black Cat Production/Macedonia

Paskal Semini - Albasky Film/Albania

Production Companies: Ikonë Studio & Industria Film