

Co-production *The Year Before the War* to premiere in Rotterdam

International Film Festival Rotterdam 2021 gives its floor to world premiere of the Latvian-Lithuanian-Czech fiction feature *The Year Before the War*. A drama by Dāvis Sīmanis which is set in the year 1913 will compete in the Big Screen competition. The Czech co-producer of the film is Radim Procházka and the main character is portrayed by Czech actor Petr Buchta.

At the upcoming IFF Rotterdam (February 1-7, 2021), *The Year Before the War* will celebrate world premiere in the Big Screen section – a diverse competition bridging the gap between popular, classic and art house cinema. Undoubtedly, there is a lot to compete for because the winner of the VPRO Big Screen Award gets a cash prize of €30,000 divided between the producers and the Dutch distributor.

Stylized as a silent film, *The Year Before the War* connects political and philosophical extremes of 1913 in a story of a young man, Pēteris Pjatkovs, participating at the creation of a new world.

Latvian director Dāvis Sīmanis prepared this film about a Latvian mysterious adventurer in co-operation with producer Roberts Vinovskis of Locomotive Productions (Latvia) and along with co-producers Uljana Kim (Lithuania) and Radim Procházka (Czech Republic).

Two other Czech filmmakers made a significant contribution to the film – editor Anna Johnson Ryndová and the lead actor Petr Buchta (*Dukla 61*). Procházka finds Buchta's cast a major success for Czech cinema. "There has not been such a great opportunity for a Czech actor since Béla Tarr cast Miroslav Krobot in *The Man from London*," he said.

The Year Before the War is not the first co-operation between Sīmanis and Procházka. A few years ago, the filmmakers co-worked on a documentary *D is for Division* (2018) that deals with problems at the border between Europe and Russia. Like their previous work, the new one was also supported by the Czech Film Fund – this time with EUR 110 150.

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