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HBF+Europe 2022 selection, directors portraits

PRESS RELEASE

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HBF+Europe 2022 selection

Six co-productions will each receive €60,000

The Hubert Bals Fund (HBF) of International Film Festival Rotterdam (IFFR) announces the recipients of the HBF+Europe: Minority Co-production Support scheme for 2022. Out of 25 applications, six projects by filmmakers from Argentina, Egypt, Guatemala, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Yemen have been awarded a contribution of €60,000 each through their European co-producers in Austria, Belgium, France, and the Netherlands.

"Urgent stories told by distinct voices"

— Bianca Taal



Stills from the selected projects

Bianca Taal, head of the Hubert Bals Fund: “Thanks to our strong relationship with Creative Europe we’re able to provide increased support to these six remarkable projects. This is a selection full of urgent stories told by distinct voices – voices that don't shy away from diving into complex political arenas and equally complex characters.”

Four of the selected projects are debut features, including **Mongrel** by Singaporean filmmaker Wei Liang Chiang. In his feature debut, an illegal Thai migrant gets caught up in a human trafficking operation, supposedly a care-giving scheme, in rural Taiwan. His short and VR work has been shown in Berlin and Venice, and **Mongrel** has been developed at Cinéfondation Résidence, Talents Tokyo, and TorinoFilmLab, with development funds also from the HBF.

In **The Station** by Yemeni-Scottish filmmaker Sara Ishaq, the war in Yemen looms over a women-only petrol station, where the relationship between two sisters is pushed to breaking point amid a fuel crisis. The project’s development was previously supported by the HBF, and it was presented at IFFR’s co-production market in 2020 where it won the Wouter Barendrecht Award.

Vimukthi Jayasundara is the selection's most prolific filmmaker – supported for his latest feature **Turtle's Gaze on Spying Stars**, set on a mysterious resort where main character Ananda must quarantine and reckon with his past on his return to Sri Lanka. Jayasundara's debut feature **The Forsaken Land**, also supported by the HBF, won the Camera d'Or in Cannes 2005. César Díaz's civil-war themed debut **Nuestras madres** also won the Camera d'Or in Cannes in 2019. He is supported in this round for **Fidelidad**, the story of a love triangle set on Lake Atitlán in Guatemala.

A reformed gang of hard-boiled thieves are the stars of **La escuela pesada**, the latest project from Argentinian filmmaker Hernán Rosselli whose social-realist take on a Buenos Aires hustler, Mauro, screened at IFFR 2015. Mohamed Rashad explores labour abuses in Egypt in **The Settlement**, where the sons of a father who dies in a blade factory struggle for compensation. The project was presented at CineMart in 2021 as part of the BoostNL programme.

HBF+Europe: Minority Co-production Support 2022 complete selection including applicant producer:

- **La escuela pesada**, Hernán Rosselli, Argentina/Austria/Chile, Nabis Filmgroup GmbH
- **Fidelidad**, César Díaz, Guatemala/Belgium, Lemming Film Belgium
- **Mongrel**, Wei Liang Chiang, Singapore/Taiwan/France, Deuxième Ligne Films
- **The Settlement**, Mohamed Rashad, Egypt, France and Germany, Caractères Productions
- **The Station**, Sara Ishaq, Yemen, Jordan, France, the Netherlands, Keplerfilm
- **Turtle's Gaze on Spying Stars**, Vimukthi Jayasundara, France/Sri Lanka, House on Fire

Through the HBF+Europe scheme, the HBF works with the Creative Europe – MEDIA programme of the European Union to encourage European producers to participate as a minority co-producer in film projects by filmmakers from regions where the HBF targets its support: Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Middle East and parts of Eastern Europe.



International Film Festival Rotterdam