

SERIAL KILLER

Serial Killer Festival 2024 knows its winners

The seventh edition of the International Serial Killer Festival of TV and Web Series, which focuses on quality European series production, once again presented the award to the best TV series of Central and Eastern Europe. The best short-form series was awarded as well.

The international jury selected from five titles. This year's winner and winner of the **Primetime Killer Award** is the series **Operation Sabre** by the writing, producing and directing duo of Serbian filmmakers Goran Stanković and Vladimir Tagić from This and That Productions. The jury highlighted the excellent craftsmanship of the series – both technically and emotionally. It noted that the script, cinematography, editing and sound were truly exceptional.

Based on real events, the series tells the story of Zoran Djindjić, a former dissident who was a key figure in the revolt against former President Slobodan Milošević in Serbia. He was not given enough time, though to change the country after the Milosević era. For a large number of today's Serbs, it was the moment of his death that changed not only the politics there, but also, to a large extent, their lives.

With a perfect balance of documentary detachment and empathy, the series describes the events from the moment of the first attempt to take Djindjić's life. Following his shooting, it selects several characters in different settings who were touched by or had something to do with the murder to present a picture of a state in which the Milosević era did not end with his death. This title suggests that Serbia is still grappling with the same power structures today.

"Following the excellent miniseries Family (Porodica) about Milosević's departure from the political scene, which won the top jury prize at the 2021 Serial Killer festival, comes further proof from Serbia that quality television here is a perfectly controlled platform for dealing with recent traumatic history. The series, which also won a special prize at the Canneseries, reconstructs a history that is often almost unknown to the rest of Europe, but which says a lot not only about Serbia today," says Táňa Zabloudivá, the programme's dramaturge, about the winning series.

The jury also decided to award two special mentions this year – for the Czech series **Daughter of the Nation**, they awarded exceptional set design and for the title **I Know Your Soul** from Bosnia and Herzegovina, they awarded an honourable mention for a complex script that gave equal weight to the story and the characters.

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It was the creator of the latter title, Bosnian director, screenwriter and producer **Jasmila Žbanić**, who took home the **Progressive Killer 2024 Award** for outstanding TV personality from the CEE region at this year's festival. Žbanić is also known to audiences as the director of the Oscar-nominated film *Quo Vadis, Aida?* or the sixth episode entitled *The Family* from the successful series *The Last of Us*.

This year, the **Quick Killer Award** for best short-form series went to the Polish-Belarusian webseries **Processes** by Andrei Kashpersky, from the jury and world expert in this category Joël Bassaget.

The title is a political satire on the current Belarusian regime with elements of the grotesque, absurdity and black humour. Due to overcrowded prisons, law enforcement officers are forced to take some political prisoners home – which turns out to be a good idea in the end, as they can vacuum, clean and entertain children, all for free... The dystopian series is an artistic reflection on today's Belarus and its future.

This year, the Serial Killer Festival presented 35 series from 19 countries. The TV Days conference featured nearly 70 speakers. Among them were Carrie Holt de Lama, American producer of the successful series *The Bear*, Gillian Rose, former Senior Vice President of TV and Film Distribution at NBCUniversal in New York, Veronika Kováčová from Beta Film in Germany, and Alexandre de Piel and Virginie Padilla from ARTE France.

The **eighth edition** of the international **Serial Killer festival** will take place next year in Brno from **23-28 September 2025**.