

Who Are the Filmmakers Celebrated in the 3x3 Section at TIFF.24

Cluj-Napoca, May 9, 2025 – Essential works by three contemporary directors from Spain, Estonia, and Kazakhstan will be showcased at the 24th edition of the **Transilvania International Film Festival (Cluj-Napoca, June 13–22, 2025)**. **Rodrigo Cortés, Rainer Sarnet, and Adilkhan Yerzhanov** will be honored in the festival's 3x3 section. All three directors will attend TIFF to meet with the public.

Tickets and passes for TIFF.24 are available online at tiff.eventbook.ro

3x3: Rodrigo Cortés

Rodrigo Cortés' filmmaking journey began in his teenage years when he borrowed a Super 8 camera from his uncle and started experimenting. After a series of award-winning short films, he made his feature debut with ***The Contestant*** (2007), a dark comedy about a university professor who wins the lottery only to discover that, after taxes, he doesn't have enough left to pay off his debts. The film will screen at TIFF.24 in the **3x3** section.

At Cluj, film lovers will have the chance to explore the eclectic filmography of the Spanish director through titles such as ***Buried*** (2010), an intense, claustrophobic thriller about an American truck driver (played by Ryan Reynolds) who wakes up buried alive in a wooden coffin in the middle of Iraq with only a few objects by his side, and ***Escape*** (2024), his latest work, telling the story of a highly unusual character—a man willing to do anything to end up in prison. The film is produced by none other than Martin Scorsese, one of Cortés' idols.

Rodrigo Cortés' presence at TIFF is made possible with the support of the **Embassy of Spain in Romania**.

3x3: Rainer Sarnet

Known for his unique cinematic vision blending magical realism, Baltic folklore, and visual experimentation, **Rainer Sarnet** is one of the most intriguing voices in contemporary Eastern European cinema. As part of a broader focus on Estonia, TIFF.24 dedicates an extensive 3x3 portrait to Sarnet, offering audiences a rare opportunity to explore the universe of a filmmaker who defies conventions and classical cinematic language.

The Idiot (2011) is a contemporary, personal reinterpretation of Dostoevsky's famous novel. ***November*** (2017) leads viewers through the snow-covered forests of Estonia in a haunting fairy tale shot in hypnotic black-and-white. ***The Invisible Fight*** (2023) combines death metal and martial arts in a delightfully bizarre story about a border guard between the Soviet Union and China striving for enlightenment.

Rainer Sarnet's films at TIFF are part of the Focus Estonia program, supported by the **Embassy of Estonia in Romania** and the **Estonian Film Institute**.

3x3: Adilkhan Yerzhanov

Poetic, absurd, yet deeply rooted in the social realities of his homeland, Kazakh director **Adilkhan Yerzhanov** has created a compact body of work filled with cinephile references and homages. TIFF.24 will host a mini-retrospective featuring three of his most recent films.

Moor (2024) is an urban drama with thriller elements and moments of visual poetry, following a nameless mercenary haunted—literally—by the ghosts of his victims as he tries to rescue his sister-in-law from a trafficking ring. ***Yellow Cat*** (2020), which premiered in Venice, is a tragicomic tale of a former convict obsessed with cinema who dreams of opening a movie theater in the mountains. ***Cadet*** (2024 – Berlinale Forum) takes a horror-tinged look at the toxic and violent world of a military academy rocked by a series of mysterious deaths.

From Yerzhanov's prolific filmography (17 films in 14 years), TIFF previously screened ***Steppenwolf*** (2024), and as a warm-up to the June retrospective, TIFF Cinematheque at Cinema Victoria in Cluj will show ***Herd Immunity*** (2021) at the end of May—a rural comedy and absurd take on corruption during the pandemic.

The full program of TIFF.24 will be announced soon.

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The Transilvania International Film Festival is organized by the Romanian Film Promotion Association and the Transilvania Film Festival Association.

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