

For Immediate Release

HEAD OF ROMANIAN FILM CENTER ATTACKS ROMANIAN CINEMA

On September 15, 2022, the head of the Romanian film fund (hereafter referred to by its Romanian acronym, CNC), Ms Anca Mitran, gave an interview in which she positions the CNC in conflict with Romanian filmmakers, rather than as a supporter and ally of local film productions.

Ms Mitran begins by attacking art films: “Lately all of our directors make festival art films. And so we acutely miss audience films that have no pretensions for festival awards.” She waxes poetic about the kind of films that she would like to see in cinemas — films about great Romanian historical figures, broad comedies and love stories — then nostalgically nods to several titles produced and promoted during the Ceaușescu era as examples of what Romanian filmmakers should offer audiences, stating that she has “a different conception of film.”

A civil servant’s “conception of film” does not matter under Romanian law. Yet time and time again in this interview, Ms Mitran indicates that she sees herself — and the CNC, as an extension of her own agenda — as an arbiter of taste, sole originator of artistic production, and maker of her own rules: “We make the entire film production. We make both shorts and documentaries, which are not meant for cinemas,” she says. Neither the CNC nor its Director make films; the CNC as an institution partly finances productions. And it is certainly not up to the CNC nor its Director to decide that entire film forms should be excluded wholesale from theatrical release. Yet Ms Mitran insists that “the law is meant to finance productions for theatrical release. Documentary film is not meant for cinemas.” This is just one of the misrepresentations of the Romanian cinema law that Ms Mitran makes in the interview.

Not even the simplistic box office yardstick against which Ms Mitran chose to measure all Romanian productions holds up upon closer examinations. “In the last 10 years we made over 100 documentaries. How many have you heard of that performed?,” she says. Well, according to the CNC itself, in 2020 alone, 9 of the top 20 Romanian films with theatrical distribution were documentaries. The sole Romanian film that got nominated for an Oscar (not in one, but in two categories) is a documentary — *Collective*. Yet when confronted with these facts, Ms Mitran dismisses them, suggesting once more that her conception of “performance” has less to do with measurable outcomes than with content.

Several times during the interview, Ms Mitran comes close to saying that Romanian artists are supposed to follow directions from the head of the CNC. Indeed, the entire interview reveals a feudal mentality in which the CNC is not seen as a public service whose mandate is to support Romanian filmmaking, but rather as an art benefactor disappointed with her commissions.

Ms Mitran’s statements disqualify her from holding the position of Director of the CNC. Her mandate has been extended although she reached retirement age — though it is not clear why the Ministry of Culture has decided to do so, given that under Ms Mitran the CNC: failed to revamp Romania’s theatrical distribution system and to reopen the cinemas it seems so eager to fill; vanished for a year and a half during the pandemic, leaving the Romanian industry with no

support in the midst of a crisis; and failed to adapt and modernize beyond punch-hole files until 2022. The latest interview only further clarifies that the Director of the CNC does not see herself or the institution she leads as a supporter and ally of the Romanian film industry, but rather as an oppositional, censorious force.

We demand that Ms Mitran resigns from her position as Director of the CNC, which has become untenable under these circumstances. We demand that the CNC be led by a qualified appointee who is open to collaborating with those who work in the film industry and whose vision of Romanian cinema is in keeping with the evolving realities of the 21st century.

Signed,

Dana Bunescu, film editor and sound designer

Ioana Țurcan, filmmaker and cultural producer

Gabriela Forfotă, filmmaker

Eliza Zdru, filmmaker

Mona Nicoară, filmmaker

Andreea Lăcătuș, filmmaker

Andra Tarara, filmmaker

Paula Oneț, filmmaker

Alexandru Solomon, filmmaker

Laura Căpățână, documentary filmmaker

Nora Agapi, filmmaker

Ruxandra Gubernat, filmmaker and researcher

Roxana Andrei, filmmaker

Andrei Dăscălescu, filmmaker

Carmen Tofeni, DoP and filmmaker

Dragoș Hanciu, filmmaker and photographer

Andrei Tănăsescu, festival programmer

Cristina Haneș, filmmaker

Daniel Barnuti, filmmaker

Anelise Sălan, filmmaker and researcher

Mihai Dragolea, filmmaker

Elena Martin, producer

Cătălin Cristuțiu, film editor

Andra MacMasters, film producer

Alexandru Paul, photographer, videographer

Bogdan Mureșanu, screenwriter and filmmaker

Raluca Durbacă, documentary filmmaker

Alexandra Gulea, filmmaker, visual artist

Dorin Moldoveanu, filmmaker

Irina Trocan, film critic
Melinda Blos-Jáni, film scholar
Flavia Dima, film critic and curator
Călin Boto, film critic and curator
Andra Chiriac Hera, film director
Radu Jude, fiction documentary filmmaker
Alexandru Maftai, film director
Tudorița Soldănescu, cultural manager
Raluca Hașu
Tudor Cristian Jurgiu, filmmaker
Radu Muntean, filmmaker
Razvan Radulescu, screenwriter, filmmaker
Carla Fotea, producer
Tudor Platon, director of photography
Cristina Elena Iliescu, experimental documentary filmmaker
Alexander Nanau, filmmaker
Monica Felea, film distributor
Ștefan Bradea, film distributor
Alexandru Gherman, filmmaker
Maria Salomia, film editor
Vlad Petri, filmmaker
Anca Păunescu, festival programmer
Ruxandra Ghițescu, screenwriter, filmmaker
Alex Pintică, film editor
Paul Dogioiu, cultural manager
Iosif Prodan, film critic & journalist
Florin Iepan, curator
Andreea Dumitriu, filmmaker
Anton Groves, filmmaker
Călin Peter Netzer, filmmaker
Ana Lungu, filmmaker
Mihai Mincan, filmmaker
Alexandru Radu, film editor
Stere Gulea, filmmaker
Dumitru Budrală, filmmaker
Simona Constantin, filmmaker & curator
Raluca R Gorgos filmmaker
Andrei Butica, director of photography
Radu Gorgos, director of photography
Andrei Ujică, filmmaker
Elena Vladareanu, writer

Oana Ghera, film curator
Cătălin Neagoe, UPM
Sophie Reiter, film editor
Ioana Bogdana, producer and scriptwriter
Eva Todică, scriptwriter, director and producer
Mihai Grecea, filmmaker
Marco Meneghin, researcher and film curator
Ruta Kiaupaite, documentary filmmaker
Marion Molinari, documentary filmmaker
Stefan Mihalachi, photography and documentary filmmaker
Matteo Giampetruzzi, filmmaker and festival programmer
Letiția Popa, filmmaker
Andreea Chiper, film critic, documentary filmmaker
Dan Angelescu, cultural manager
Andrei Gorzo, film critic and scholar
Imam Hasanov, festival director DokuBaku
Farhad Hagverdyev, film editor
Shorena Tevzadze, Filmmaker
Jaskirat Singh, filmmaker
Duhyun KO, Documentary Filmmaker
Juyeon YANG, Documentary Filmmaker
Adrian Sitaru, filmmaker
Luiza Pârvu, filmmaker
Andreea Cristina Borțun, filmmaker
April Ibinceanu, filmmaker
Nino Gogua, documentary filmmaker
Lucian Mircu, documentary filmmaker
Iulia Necșulescu, film critic
Mariam Chachia documentary filmmaker
Nicolae Constantin Tanase, filmmaker
Elene Mikaberidze, filmmaker, Georgia