



MILK TEETH PRESS KIT

Produced by **deFilm** [Romania], in co-production with Remora Films [France], Ström Pictures [Denmark], Studiobauhaus [Greece], Screening Emotions [Bulgaria]

World sales by **CERCAMON**, International press **MARIJANA HARDER**, International marketing by AlphaPanda, Romanian press ANCA MACOVICIUC

VENICE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL - Orizzonti

Press & Industry Screenings: THU, 28 August, 19:00, Sala Volpi
THU, 28 August, 22:00, Sala Casinò
World Premiere: FRI, 29 August, 17:00, Sala Darsena
Screening: SAT, 30 August, 14:15 PM, PalaBiennale

TORONTO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL – Centrepiece

Press & Industry Screenings: THU, 4 September, 12:25, Scotiabank Theater Toronto
N. American Premiere: WED, 10 September, 17:30, TIFF Lightbox
Screening: THU, 11 September, 19:00, Scotiabank Theater Toronto

CREW

- Genre - drama, mystery, fantasy
- Duration - 1 hour, 44 minutes
- Digital, DCP, colour, 5.1
- Director – Mihai Mincan
- Scriptwriter – Mihai Mincan
- DOP- George Chiper-Lillemark
- Editing- Dragos Apetri
- Producers – Radu Stancu, Ioana Lascar
- Co-producers - Cyriac Auriol, Monica Hellstrom, Konstantinos Vassilaros, Poli Angelova, Nikolay Todorov
- Associate producers: - Carmen Rizac, Vlad Rădulescu, Orfeas Peretzis, AKP21: Rémi Burah - Olivier Père, Mikuláš Novotný
- Original score - Marius Leftărache
- Additional music - Nicolas Becker
- Sound Design - Nicolas Becker
- Re-recording mixer: Cyril Holtz
- Sound: Benjamin Laurent, Ange Hubert, Frederic Dabo
- Production design - Anamaria Țecu
- Costumes - Dana Păpăruz
- Make-up - Dimitra Fafaliou
- Hair Stylist - Sotiris Paterakis
- Casting director: Florentina Bratfanof

CAST

- *Maria Lucaciu* - Emma Ioana Mogoș
- *Cezaria Lucaciu* - Marina Palii
- *Petre Lucaciu* - Igor Babiac
- *Valentin Prisecaru* - István Téglás
- *Adrian* - Victor-Ioan Rogobete
- *Alina* - Lara Maria Alexandra Comănescu
- *Simona* - Maia-Victoria Boboc
- *Nasta* - Albert Ciută
- *Andreea* - Karina-Ziana Gherasim
- *Photographer* - Ada Lupu
- *Strange man* - Cătălin Filip
- *Policeman* - Tudor Morar
- *Teacher* - Mihaela Rădescu
- *Filip* - Luca-David Că răvan
- *Florentina* - Ingrid-Maria Tirintică

LOGLINE

In the final days of Ceausescu's Romania, a ten-year-old girl becomes the last witness to her sister's mysterious disappearance, and must find the courage to grow up in a collapsing world.

SHORT SYNOPSIS

Romania, 1989. During the last days of Ceausescu's dictatorship, in a small, isolated town, Maria, a ten-year-old girl, becomes the last witness to her sister's mysterious disappearance. Torn apart by the loss, she is trying to make sense of a new, terrifying reality. Can she summon up the courage to grow up in a collapsing world?

Director's statement - *Mihai Mincan*

The first image of "Milk Teeth" came to me in 2019: a young girl listening in total silence, with her right ear pressed against a cement wall. It was a dream, one of the many I started having after reading a Militia Romanian Communist Police file, from 1989, about the disappearance of a 11 years old girl from a small town. I wanted to make a film about a kind of muteness, about the inability to articulate, to describe in words an inner universe that is in constant danger of bursting into flames. Over the years, I twisted and changed this idea several times, somehow trying to find the film's own "voice". It became a coming of age story about the aftermath of a tragedy. A film about a young girl who tries to make sense of a confusing and cruel world that suddenly opens in front of her eyes. Caught between two dimensions - reality and fantasy, political oppression and the rise of the so-called „new world" at the beginning of 1990 - this little girl represents the "lost generation of children", the same generation I belong to. The children who believed in freedom, only to discover that our voices will not be heard by anyone. This is how "Milk Teeth" became what it is now: a film that chose not to speak directly about a child struck by muteness, but about someone who gathers words in her mind, waiting for the right moment in which she can shout out those words to the entire world.

Producers statement – *Radu Stancu & Ioana Lascar*

The film is the transformation of a deeply personal memory — growing up in the final years of communism — into a vivid cinematic reflection. The childhood fear of darkness, born from the frequent blackouts of that era and the years just after, becomes in the film a powerful metaphor for oppression and uncertainty, showing how such moments leave an imprint on a child's soul. Infused with mystery and touches of fantasy, the story unfolds against a turning point in history — the years before and after the 1989 revolution — offering an emotional rather than factual lens on the transition from dictatorship to freedom. Blending personal memory, political context, and universal themes of loss, alienation, fear, and coming of age, the film resonates strongly with today's social and political realities — reaching far beyond the borders and the era in which it unfolds.

The production team behind "Milk Teeth", the second feature film by Mihai Mincan, is largely the same as that of his debut film, "To the North", which premiered in the Orizzonti (Horizons) competition at the Venice Film Festival in 2022. Both in terms of structure and co-production partnerships, four out of the five previous co-producers have returned for this feature - Cyriac Auriol from Remora Films, Konstantinos Vassilaros from StudioBauhaus and Poli Angelova from Screening Emotions. With the addition of a new partner, Monica Hellström from Ström

Pictures in Denmark, an Oscar-nominated producer - the film was brought to life through this collective effort.

DOP statement - George Chiper Lillemark

Working with Mihai is an explorative process. Always starts from the text. Questions and debates arise. We gradually enter into the field and at one point in the process we feel it: We found our gaze.

We want to travel back into our childhood. How was this or that? How do you remember your mother? When you close your eyes do you see your mother from down upwards, her chin and nose? Or do you see her eye level? How do memories work? Do we want to reconstruct a world or the memory of a world?

Can you remember your child's gaze? How did your eyes lay upon what was near?

What textures, colors, photographic qualities? How not to fall into the boredom of photographic representation. An embodied camera follows Maria with care, curiosity and anxiety. It never wanders too far... because it can't.

Editor's statement - Dragos Apetri

The first thought that I had when I watched the first images of the movie was confusing. On the one hand, the way everything unfolded followed almost to the letter the cinematic grammar thought out and prepared beforehand, on the other hand, there was something completely unexpected about Emma (the young actress who plays the main character, Maria) and the energy she brought to the screen.

We realized relatively quickly that the way in which we would begin to (un)bind the film would be influenced not necessarily by the narrative thread of the script (which we kept well in control) but rather by the way Maria's character unfolded before us.

Each frame, each new take brought with it a power that hovered over the film and over the classical rigors of a cinematic construction. Putting together, in the first phase of the editing, almost mathematically, the script and the cutting, we were not a little surprised to find that everything we knew and knew very well about the character of Maria, her mother (Marina Paliu) and father (Igor Babiuc) was changed and increased by their mere presence on the screen. So the decision to detach from what we thought we knew was simple, but by no means easy.

A certain kind of approach has grown on us with the movie; the fact that we, as authors, viewers, storytellers, will never know, nor should we pretend to know, what exactly is going on with the characters and their thought process, with what they feel, what they experience and how they understand the things they experience is and I think should remain unknown to us.

I experienced a brief paradox that I (re)discovered in a text I recently read; the more you verbalize, narrate or describe certain things in more detail, the more they lose their contours, become detached from reality and become less, almost disappear. But when many things remain unspoken, 'unnamed', they retain their edges more easily, and the image received through the movie screen reveals itself elsewhere, inside the spectator, in something untouchable, something known, felt and experienced only by him.

All we can do in editing and in storytelling is to lead and let ourselves be led by the mysteries of the unnamed.

ABOUT THE DIRECTOR – Mihai Mincan

Mihai Mincan graduated from the University of Philosophy in Bucharest and later pursued an MBA at the University of Poitiers. He worked as a journalist for some of Romania's leading newspapers and magazines. His transition to filmmaking began in 2008, when he wrote his first script, "The Palm Lines" – a short film that went on to be selected at prestigious international festivals including Locarno, Rotterdam, and Cottbus. Over the years, Mihai has written and directed short films, all of which premiered at notable festivals in Europe and Romania, and also co-directed several television documentaries. His debut feature, "To the North", premiered in the Orizzonti Competition at the Venice Biennale in 2022. "To the North" involved 5 co-producers, was filmed in 3 countries, spoken in 5 languages, by actors from 4 territories. It won the Bisato D'oro award offered by the Independent Critics Association in Venice. The film has subsequently been selected at over 25 festivals including Karlovy-Vary, Haifa, Seattle, Jeonju, Thessaloniki.

FILMOGRAPHY:

- MILK TEETH (2025) / 2nd feature film / director & screenwriter / produced by **deFilm** [RO] / co-produced by REMORA FILMS [FR], STROM PICTURES [DK], STUDIOBAU-HAUS [GR], SCREENING EMOTIONS [BG]
- HUNTERS IN THE SNOW (2025) / director & screenwriter/ produced by SAGA FILM [RO] / ANONIMUL Independent Film Festival;
- TO THE NORTH (2022) / 1st feature / director & screenwriter / produced by **deFilm** [RO] / co-produced by REMORA FILMS [FR], STUDIOBAUHAUS [GR], SCREENING EMOTIONS [BG], BACKGROUND FILMS [CZ] / Independent Critics Award at Venice Biennale Cinema 2022; FIPRESCI Award at AL ESTE Film Festival Peru 2022; Audience Award at la Les Films de Cannes à Bucharest 2022 etc. FESTIVALS: Venice Film Festival, Karlovy Vary Film Festival, Ghent Film Festival, Jeonju Film Festival, Thessaloniki Film Festival, Seattle Film Festival, Munich Film Festival, Sofia Film Festival etc.
- IDYLL (2020) / short film /director & screenwriter / produced by **deFilm** [RO] / Transilvania International Film Festival (TIFF) 2020;
- EMIGRANT BLUES: A ROAD MOVIE IN 2 1/2 CHAPTERS (2019) / TV documentary/ co-director & co-writer/ produced by **deFilm** [RO];
- THE MAN WHO WANTED TO BE FREE (2019) / TV documentary / co-director & co-writer / produced by **deFilm** [RO];
- THE COMET (2017) / short film /director & screenwriter / produced by **deFilm** [RO] / Official Competition Gent Film Festival 2017;
- BONDOC (2015) / TV documentary / co-director & co-writer/ produced by **deFilm** [RO];
- ALASKA (2014) / short film/director & screenwriter / produced by **deFilm** [RO];
- THE PALM LINES (2009) / short film / screenwriter / directed by George Chipper-Lillemark / produced de UNATC [RO] / Official Competition Pardi di Domani at Locarno International Film Festival 2009 etc.

ABOUT THE PRODUCERS

Radu Stancu graduated film production, editing and sound design at UNATC 'I.L. Caragiale' in Bucharest. He's member of ACE Producers Network, alumnus of EAVE Producers Workshop, EAVE Ties That Bind, EAVE Marketing Workshop and selected for Producer on the Move Cannes 2023. He has been involved in an array of cinematic productions, short and

feature-length, ranging from fiction or animation to documentary, that were presented and awarded in major international festivals and markets while connecting collaborators and partners from Europe, Asia, or Latin America. He participated in various policy-making groups affiliated with the Romanian Ministry of Culture, representing the audio-visual sector, and played a key role in initiating and leading a group of film professionals dedicated to revising the National Cinematography Law.

Ioana Lascăr Romanian producer with a BA in Cinematography, MA in Film Production, wrapping her PhD research in creative film production and marketing. She's Associate Professor at Babes-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca, Romania, where she's in charge of the Film Production, Film Development and Marketing & Management classes. Ioana is alumna of several international programs including EAVE Producers and EAVE Marketing, EWA Series Accelerator, MIDPOINT Series Launch, CEE Animation, APostLab. In the last 11 years, she's been professionally producing at deFilm and became a partner, building up a diverse portfolio of ambitious productions including shorts, animations, documentaries and features. Her previous works have been selected in acclaimed festivals such as Cannes, Venice Biennale, Locarno, Karlovy-Vary, San Sebastian, IDFA. As creative producer, her mission is to search for artistic and formal approaches in order to construct innovative & socially responsible images in these complicated audiovisual times.

ABOUT THE DOP - George Chipper-Lillemark

George Chipper-Lillemark is a Romanian cinematographer and director based in Copenhagen. His graduation film, "The Palm Lines" (2009), was selected for renowned festivals such as the Locarno International Film Festival and Rotterdam International Film Festival (IFFR). He shot Gabriel Achim's debut feature film, "Adalbert's Dream" (2011), and then traveled to Turkey to collaborate with Emin Alper on Beyond the Hill (2012). Together with Erol Mintas, he shot the short film "Snow" (2010) in remote Kurdistan, near Mount Ararat, returning a few years later for the same director's debut feature film, "Song of My Mother", which won the Grand Prize at the Sarajevo Film Festival in 2014

His long-standing collaboration with Mihai Mincan includes co-directing the films "The Comet" (2017) and "The Man Who Wanted to be Free" (2019), as well as his cinematography work for Mincan's feature film debut, "To the North" (2022), selected for the Orizzonti section at the Venice International Film Festival (Biennale Cinema). Ten years after their first collaboration, he worked again with Adina Pintilie as director of photography for his feature film debut, "Touch Me Not" (2018), which won the Golden Bear at the Berlinale. He also shot and co-directed with Monica Stan the feature film "Immaculate", winner of the Luigi De Laurentiis Award for Best Debut at the Venice International Film Festival in 2021.

ABOUT THE EDITOR - Dragoş Apetri

Dragoş Apetri is a film editor, graduate of the National University of Theatrical and Cinematographic Arts "I.L. Caragiale". He was a trainer at the film education workshop "Zero la Purtare", co-organized by SUPER and One World Romania for 3 years and at the Moldox documentary film festival. After graduating in 2009 and attending the Master's program in the same faculty, he started working in sound and editing, later focusing only on the editing side. Thus, he collaborated on more than 20 fiction feature films (e.g. "Povestea unui pierdere-vară"/ "The Story of a Summer Lover" - dir. Paul Negoescu, 2018, "Malmkrog" - dir. Cristi Puiu, 2020, "To the North" - dir. Mihai Mincan, 2022, "Animal" - dir. Sofia Exarchou, 2023) and documentaries (e.g. "The Man Who Wanted to be Free" - dir. Mihai Mincan and George

Chiper-Lillermark, 2019, "Between Revolutions", dir. Vlad Petri, 2023) and over 25 short films selected at festivals around the world.

ABOUT THE MAIN SOUND TALENTS

Nicolas Becker is an internationally renowned sound designer, composer and sound engineer, who strives to find an original process for each project or film. He has collaborated with filmmakers including Amos Gitai, David Cronenberg, Chris Nolan, Guillermo Del Toro, Mathieu Kassovitz, Andrea Arnold, Alain Resnais, Gaspard Noé, Chantal Akerman, Raoul Ruiz, Christophe Gans, Danny Boyle, Philippe Parreno, Marco Ferreri, Alex Garland, Alfonso Cuarón, Manoel De Oliveira, Joao Salgado, Gerard Depardon, Philippe Grandrieux, Darius Marder, Denis Villeneuve, Pascual Sisto and many others. His encounter with conceptual artist Philippe Parreno years ago opened the door to the world of sound installation and Sound Art. Since 2009, he has been responsible for the sound design and musical direction of all Philippe Parreno exhibitions worldwide, including a permanent sound installation at MoMA (New York) and another at the Fondation Luma. During his work with Parreno, with the help of Ircam, Stanford University and Bronze A.I., he carried out extensive research into new practices for producing sound and musical forms using machine learning, AI, augmented composition and data sonification. In 2021, Nicolas Becker won an Oscar and a BAFTA for his work as sound designer and sound supervisor for the film "Sound of Metal", Darius Marder.

Marius Leftarache: During the last 20 years working with sounds, Marius has evolved from a sound aficionado into a mad sound scientist, creating complex soundscapes for features, shorts, series and documentaries. His passion, hard work and lust to experiment, reverberated and turned into awards and nominations at local and international competitions: Gopo Awards, Romanian Union of Filmmakers & International Filmmaker Festival of World Cinema, Milan. His selected filmography includes: "I only rest in the storm" by Pedro Pinho 2025, "Do not expect too much from the end of the world" by Radu Jude 2023, "To the North" by Mihai Mincan 2022, "Boss" by Bogdan Mirica 2023, "Man of deeds" by Paul Negoescu 2022, "RMN" by Cristian Mungiu 2022, "Quo Vadis, Aida!" by Jasmila Zbanic 2020, HBO series "Umbre/Shadows" by Bogdan Mirica 2014-2019, and "Hackerville" by Anca Miruna Lazarescu & Igor Cobileanski 2019.

Cyril Holtz is a French sound artist and re-recording mixer with four César Awards for Best Sound, earned for *Sur mes lèvres* (2002), *Gainsbourg, vie héroïque* (2011), *The Sisters Brothers* (2019), and *Emilia Pérez* (2025). His work on *Emilia Pérez* also brought him an Academy Award nomination for Best Sound at the 97th Academy Awards. He has contributed to numerous acclaimed films, including *Dheepan* (winner of the Palme d'Or in 2015), *Elle*, and *To the North*, reflecting a career marked by both critical and industry recognition.

ABOUT THE MAIN CAST

Emma Ioana Mogoş is a 5th grade student at Step by Step Gymnasium and her favorite subjects are Romanian Language and Art. In her free time, she likes gymnastics and playing with animals. She is 11 years old (b. February 5, 2014, Bucharest) and this is her debut in a feature film. She fell in love with acting when she saw the first movie of the "Harry Potter"

series. Her favorite actresses are Emma Watson and Nico Parker.

Marina Palii is a film and theater actress who speaks Romanian, Russian, English, French, and Polish. Originally from the Republic of Moldova, Marina graduated from “I. L. Caragiale” National University of Theatre and Film, Bucharest, Romania, in 2017, and has since been involved in numerous projects, both in cinema and theater, mostly in Romania. She made her film debut as Olga in Cristi Puiu's *Malmkrog*. She then went on to work with directors such as Emmanuel Bourdieu, Cecilia Ștefănescu, Mihai Mincan, Ana Felicia Scutelnicu, Andrei Epure, Tudor Giurgiu, Daniel Sandu, and Carina Dașoveanu. She was employed as an actress at the Classic Theater in Arad for four years, where she worked with directors such as Dragoș Musoiu, Cristian Ban, Botond Nagy, and Leta Popescu.

Igor Babiac is a film and theater actor from the Republic of Moldova. He was born in Sîngerei, Republic of Moldova. In 2013, he played his first role in the film “La limita de jos a cerului” (The Unsaved). He is known for his appearances in the films “Ce Lume Minunată” (What a Wonderful World, 2014) and “Dragoste 2. America” (Love 2. America, 2018). He performs on stage at the Mihai Eminescu National Theater in Chișinău, Republic of Moldova.

István Téglás is an actor at the Ion Luca Caragiale National Theater in Bucharest. He collaborates with other cultural institutions, as well as numerous independent venues. In recent years, he has been a constant presence in Romanian films, which have earned him four nominations and two awards. He won the award for Best Supporting Actor at the UCIN Gala for “Malmkrog”, directed by Cristi Puiu, and the award for Best Supporting Actor at the GOPO Awards Gala, for his part in “La Gomera” directed by Corneliu Porumboiu. He is a multidisciplinary artist and activist. Filmography: “Walking With The Enemy” (2013), “Self-Portrait of a Dutiful Girl” (2015), “One and a Half Prince” (2018), “La Gomera” (2019), “Malmkrog” (2020), “Luca” (2020), “Occasional Spies” (2021), “Mammalia” (2023), “Leonora In The Morning Light” (2025).

ABOUT THE SUPPORT

MILK TEETH is supported by Romanian Film Center, Romanian Government - Oficiul de Film și Investiții Culturale, CNC Centre national du cinéma et de l'image animée, Institut Français, Aide aux cinémas du monde, Danish Film Institute, Bulgarian National Film Center, Hellenic Film & Audiovisual Center - Creative Greece / National Recovery & Resilience Plan - Greece 2.0 - Co-production Window, Media Investment Communication, ARTE Kino, Creative Europe Media, ERT SA, TorinoFilmLab Production Award & Green Filming Award, Cinema City, Televiziunea Română, Avanpost, Radio România.

Produced by: deFilm (Romania), **in coproduction with:** Remora Films (France), Ström Pictures (Denmark), StudioBauhaus (Greece), Screening Emotions (Bulgaria). **Participant at:** TorinoFilmLab 2023 - Production Award & Green Filming Award; Baltic Event Co-Production Market, Industry @ Tallinn of Tallinn Black Nights Film Festival 2020; ApostLab Mentorship Program 2023-2024; ECAM FORUM 2025.

The participation in Venice is supported by: Romanian Film Center / Centrul National al Cinematografiei, Romanian Cultural Institute / Institutul Cultural Roman, Uniunea Cineastilor din Romania (UCIN), Asociatia Dacin Sara.

Main producer: deFilm is a Bucharest-based production company founded in 2009. While we started by producing independent shorts that were met with international success, the company has, in time, developed steadily to embrace a diverse portfolio and a growing network of partners as well as financing resources. We engage in all types of cinematic productions,

welcoming diverse approaches and styles that take on the creative stakes that match our values and interests. We enjoy growing together with filmmakers that we can build long-lasting relationships with. Accolades for our work so far include selections or prizes in major international film festivals, such as Berlin [Alis, 2022], Cannes [I Only Rest in the Storm, 2025], Venice [To the North, 2022], Locarno [Parallel State, 2020], or IDFA [Lost Kids on the Beach, 2020]. In addition to our own productions, we are glad to come alongside selected partners and bring full production services for all types of cinematic work. As members of Romanian Alliance of Film Producers (APF), we actively cooperate with board members to improve national film industry policies and facilitate the process of international collaboration.

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