



directed by DAMJAN KOZOLE

# PEER O



**OFFICIAL  
SELECTION**

INTERNATIONAL  
FILM FESTIVAL  
ROTTERDAM

2023



A homage to life, career and fears of actor Peter Musevski  
(1965 – 2020).



Pero at the Berlinale press conference, 2003  
Pero receiving Heart of Sarajevo Award, 2005



He was always Pero for me, not Peter. In 2002 we shot Spare Parts, and that was the beginning of our great friendship. We then made 6 more films together.

He became an icon of Slovenian cinema, having 55 titles on IMDB. His films received the Lion of the Future in Venice and the Best Director's award in Karlovy Vary, he received the Heart of Sarajevo for Best Actor and numerous other awards. At the end of 2019, we began working on a film about him and his demons. At the beginning of the pandemics in March 2020, before we even started shooting the film, he committed suicide. I felt the need to make this film anyway. As a way of saying goodbye to him.

While working on it, I realized this film is not only about Pero but also about me and about us, and it's not just about a friend leaving, but also about society and the world we believed in, slowly disappearing too.

– Damjan Kozole



Pero in Spare Parts, dir. Damjan Kozole, 2003



“All the roles I acted in films happened to me later in real life.”

– Peter Musevski



Filming of Pero, March 2021



To master a style, an aesthetics or an expression, an artist must devote their life to constantly complementing, perfecting and in ever new variants presenting one single thing, be it a poem, a narrative, a painting, or a character. With the untimely departure of Peter Musevski, we have lost such mastery.

Since the second half of the 1990s, this charismatic actor spent years developing one and the same role, which grew and matured with each new film. He managed to refine the role so that it reached enviable depths and shades. Musevski meticulously sculpted the character of a good-natured, humorous, yet deeply complex man who, under a façade of ordinary light-heartedness, conceals a troubled psychology filled with addictions, lack of self-confidence, a feeling of social worthlessness and fatalism. Be it his resigned, exhausted face in *Bread and Milk* (2001), the fate of a committed trafficker in *Spare Parts* (2003), the weak neighbour in *Suburbs* (2004), the roaming husband in *Tuning* (2005), the excellent, phoenixlike worker in the overlooked *Labour Equals Freedom* (2004) or the loving, but powerless father in *Slovenian Girl* (2009), the characters he sculpted have created some of the most unforgettable moments of Slovenian cinema.

The reason why directors so often cast Musevski as one and the same character can be ascribed to his aura of genuineness and veracity. His realistic performances reached deep into the collective being. Musevski embodied the fallen, helpless father figure who, in the period of transition, was not only lost in his own flaws, but bore the sad fate of a nation unable to face the challenges of the time, whose empty promises of a brave new world produced the very characters he portrayed. Musevski's screen presence gave one the feeling that he expressed more than the narrative conveyed through its written words and actions. Most productions of notable feature films included his face, which is why his filmography reads as a history of Slovenian cinema over the last twenty years. Peter Musevski was more than just an actor – he was an archetype of Slovenian cinema and of its complex national being.

– Film critic Matic Majcen

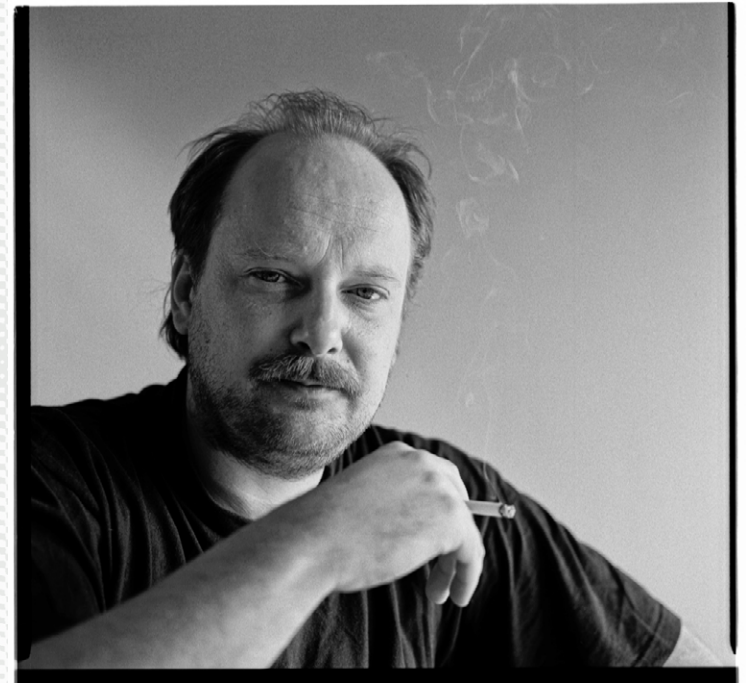
Pero in *Bread and milk*, dir. Jan Cvitkovič, 2001  
Pero in *Suburbs*, dir. Vinko Möderndorfer, 2004  
Pero in *Playing man*, dir. Matjaž Ivanišin, 2017





“My specialty is my face shows everything.  
I don't have the defence mechanisms to stop it.”

– Peter Musevski



Peter Musevski, photo: Jože Suhadolnik, 2001  
photo: Prešernovo Gledališče Kranj



Damjan Kozole is a Slovenian filmmaker whose directing credits include critically acclaimed Spare Parts (2003), nominated for the Golden Bear at the 53rd Berlin IFF 2003, globally released Slovenian Girl (2009); Nightlife (2016), winner of Best Director Award at the 51st Karlovy Vary IFF and his last fiction feature Half-Sister (2019).

Kozole is also a respectable author of many documentary films like Ulay: Project Cancer (2013) and Borders (2016).



Damjan Kozole, photo: Urša Premik, 2020  
Damjan and Pero on the set of Half-Sister, 2018



PERO, 2023, documentary,  
digital DCP 2K, 1,85/16:9, c, 98 min

directed by DAMJAN KOZOLE

producers DANIJEL HOČEVAR and ZALA OPARA

director of photography SAŠO ŠTIH zfs

editor MATIC DRAKULIĆ

sound designer JULIJ ZORNIK

colorist JURE TERŽAN

with PRIMOŽ PIRNAT, TINA ŠČAVNIČAR, MOJCA PARTLJIČ,  
TOMI JANEŽIČ, NINA IVANIŠIN, NINA RAKOVEC, ANJA NOVAK,  
JURIJ DREVENŠEK, NATAŠA BURGER, LIZA MARIJINA,  
MARJUTA SLAMIČ, BLAŽ SETNIKAR, PIA ZEMLJIČ,  
NATAŠA BARBARA GRAČNER

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Filming of Pero, May 2020



Vertigo Ljubljana is a Slovenian production company with a distinctive track record and extensive experience with international co-productions. Its carefully balanced slate, which consists of various formats, from high-end art-house features, socially engaging documentaries, selected shorts and TV series, include films such as THE HAPPIEST MAN IN THE WORLD by Teona Mitevska (2022; Venice FF: Orizzonti, Les Arcs EFF: Grand Jury Prize), WAKE ME by Marko Šantić (2022; Black Nights FF), SMALL BODY by Laura Samani (2021; Cannes FF: Critic's Week; European Discovery – Prix FIPRESCI), RECONCILIATION by Marija Zidar (2021; CPH:DOX, IDFA), OTAC by Srđan Golubović (2020; Berlinale Panorama: Ecumenical and Audience awards), AN EPISODE IN THE LIFE OF AN IRON PICKER by Danis Tanović (2013; Berlinale Competition: Silver Bear – Grand Jury Prize), ALEXANDRIANS by Metod Pevec (2011; Trieste FF: Best Documentary), BREAD AND MILK by Jan Cvitković (2001; Venice FF: Lion of the Future) and HALF-SISTER (2019; Karlovy Vary IFF Main Competition), NIGHTLIFE (2016; Karlovy Vary IFF: Cristal Globe – Best Director), SLOVENIAN GIRL (2009; Toronto IFF, Busan IFF, released in more than 30 countries, incl. France, Germany, Brazil, Japan, Taiwan and USA), and SPARE PARTS (2003; Berlinale Competition) all by Damjan Kozole.



Pero in Slovenian Girl, dir. Damjan Kozole, 2009



Vertigo Ljubljana  
info@vertigo.si  
www.vertigo.si



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KOREKTIF



Pero in Half-Sister, dir. Damjan Kozole, 2019