

Byzanfest: The world's first online Orthodox Christian short film festival



Established in 2014, Byzanfest is the world's first and only online festival that screens short-films made by Eastern Orthodox Christian filmmakers.

The Festival goes live from Sunday 21st July until 4th August 2019, running concurrently with live venue screenings which are hosted by Global Screening Partners.

„As the world's media and entertainment have become increasingly on-demand and interwoven with social media, Byzanfest saw the opportunity to venture into an emerging concept: the online festival”.

„New and innovative, such an event is not limited by the physical constraints of traditional venue-based festivals. Byzanfest looked ahead towards the future of entertainment and wanted to engage globally with both Orthodox and non-Orthodox audiences”.

„The Festival encourages interactivity where viewers can share through all social media platforms. The Festival showcases films which reflect Orthodox Christian themes, beliefs, culture and values, as well as being artistically creative. It is worth mentioning all funds raised from this Festival will go towards funding small individual Orthodox film and art projects”, Chris Vlahonasios, the founder of the

festival explains.

Twelve short films have been shortlisted for this year's Byzanfest, ranging from three to 25 minutes long, with entries from Orthodox filmmakers across Australia, Greece, the USA, Canada, Georgia, Romania and Serbia.

Titles include 'Christmas Anti-fable' a Greek sci fi/noir film by Efthimious Hatzis, 'The Gloater of Notre Dame' from Serbian director Bojan Teodosijevic, along with sci-fi/comedy 'M.A.R.C' and comedy 'The Lonely Scientist' by American Nick Shaheen.

In the Drama category there is 'The Alternate', the only Australian film, by brothers Stephen and Andrew Robinson, and 'A Cup and Bread' by American director Nicholas Loper.

The line-up also features a number of documentaries, including from Canada 'Fr. Tanase's Sanctuary for the Hurt' and 'The Making of Orthodox Wooden Icons' both by director Andrei Russu, and 'The Middle Way' by Luca Tarantini; as well as 'Icons' by American director Craig DiRienzo, and 'Under the Archangels' Wings' by Dinu Cristian from Romania, Neo Kosmos reports.

About the Founder

Born in Melbourne, Australia, Chris belongs to the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia. Whilst attending Melbourne Grammar School, Chris discovered his love of cinema, but pursued higher studies.

At Victoria University, he graduated with Bachelor of Laws (Hons)/Bachelor of Marketing degrees, majoring in Intellectual Property Law. Whilst at university, Chris made several short-films and worked on the sets of many others. Chris established the Queen St Film Festival (in honour of his law campus) where he directed and was patron from 2005-2009.

Chris is the founder and owner of TRANSFIGURE MEDIA. Operating since 2008, TRANSFIGURE has become the world's biggest media and arts network exclusively for Eastern Orthodox Christians. The organisation's goal is to showcase, distribute, network, mentor and fund the art of Orthodox Christians working in various creative industries.

He is also a member of Vatopedi Monastery's International Association of Digital Media and Orthodox Pastoral Care (DMOPC). In June 2018, Chris, the only Australian representative, was invited to give a presentation at the DMOPC

Conference in Crete, entitled: Jacob's Digital Well: how a single online media house can strengthen the faithful and help evangelise the world.

Chris also writes a column about media, culture and faith in TO VEMA, the monthly newspaper published by the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia.

Chris' major interests include: film, intellectual property, Orthodox culture, Byzantine art, freedom of speech, protection of religious rights, digital marketing and human communications.

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