

THE BIGGEST PROOF OF LOVE IS TO LET GO.

 69<sup>th</sup> Internationale  
Filmfestspiele  
Berlin  
Forum

JUDITH STATE

CRISTIAN POPA

ALEXANDRU POTOCEAN

ȘERBAN PAVLU

DORINA LAZĂR

# MONSTERS.

A FILM BY MARIUS OLTEANU

PRESS KIT

a PARADA FILM production in co-production with WE ARE BASCA with the support of ROMANIAN FILM CENTER, in collaboration with the Romanian Public Television TVR, with the support of McCann Bucharest, Next Advertising, Havas Media, Jysk, United Media Services, Tuborg, Orange and Electric Plus.  
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# MONSTERS.

Shooting Format Digital / Screening Format DCP / Aspect Ratio 1:1.85 / Sound 5.1 / 116 min. / Color

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## CREW

### SCRIPTWRITER AND DIRECTOR

MARIUS OLTEANU

### DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

LUCHIAN CIOBANU

### SET AND COSTUME DESIGNER

ALEXANDRA ALMA  
UNGUREANU STROE

### EDITOR

ION IOACHIM STROE

### SOUND DESIGNERS

IOAN FILIP,  
DAN-ȘTEFAN RUCĂREANU

### SOUND RECORDIST

MIHNEA BOGOS

### 1ST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

PAUL CIORAN

### CASTING DIRECTOR

SIMONA GHIȚĂ

### HAIR AND MAKE-UP ARTIST

ELENA TUDOR

### COLOURIST

LAURENT MOREL

### PRODUCERS

CLAUDIU MITCU,  
ION IOACHIM STROE,  
ROBERT FIȚA

### CO-PRODUCER

MARIUS OLTEANU

### DELEGATE PRODUCER

CARLA FOTEA

### EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

RĂZVAN LAZAROVICI

## CAST

### MAIN CAST

JUDITH STATE  
CRISTIAN POPA  
ALEXANDRU POTOCEAN  
ȘERBAN PAVLU  
DORINA LAZĂR

### OTHER CAST

GABRIEL RĂUȚĂ  
ALINA BERZUNȚEANU  
ROLANDO MATSANGOS  
RODICA LAZĂR  
SMARANDA CARAGEA  
ALINA TARBĂ  
RALUCA AXON



## SYNOPSIS

Dana and Arthur, wife and husband in their forties, have been together for almost 10 years. They are a couple that society, family, friends seem to love together, but despise separately. Because of their needs, their beliefs, their life options and their inner monsters, the day comes for them to decide if letting go is the biggest proof of love.



## DIRECTOR'S NOTES

In the last scene of **"Monsters."**, Dana asks Arthur "Why did you stay with me all these years?". To which he replies "Why did you stay with me? Why are you still staying with me?".

**"Monsters."** explores the clash between social values and the individual choice via bisexuality, the rejection of motherhood, and challenges the traditional concepts of love.

The film happens in Bucharest in 24 hours and it is structured

in three parts: one about Dana, one about Arthur and one about the two of them together. The first two parts occur on the same night, when the protagonists, separately yet simultaneously, avoid going home, preferring the company of strangers. Dana goes to the length of paying a taxi driver to stay with her in the car for the night, while Arthur wanders around the city and decides to meet a man through a dating

app. However, the following day, as much as they have tried to avoid it, they must now face reality.

And sometimes the biggest proof of love can be to let go of one another.

The project started as a series of interviews with long-time married couples - interviews about love, about the need to be with someone, about what one is willing to do for love, about what you do when love is gone, about compromise. I found this married man who desperately tried to fit in, to behave, to be a good orthodox, and who aimed for the standard of the perfect family, even though that was all that he was not and thus, made him really unhappy. A very quiet, introverted man. Arthur. I have never met his wife and I chose to entirely develop her side of the story from my imagination. Dana. In Arthur I have seen a metaphor of the values and limitations of society - Romania

being both, in spirit and letter, very traditional and restrictive. The clash between the values of my characters and the social values is subtle yet always present.

I wrote the script as organically as possible, questioning every bit of fiction in it and trying to find what was most humane in my characters' desperate quest for love, always choosing not to eliminate the dissonance, the absurd and the humour in what is an utterly sad situation.

The casting has been tough - given the reluctance to play a gay character in Romania, it was quite a struggle to find the right actor. In this sense, this film is an absolute first in Romanian cinema. Dana was also a tough character to cast, because of the delicate mix of strength and fragility.

For this film, I have tried to do something I have never done before: after explaining the characters to the actors

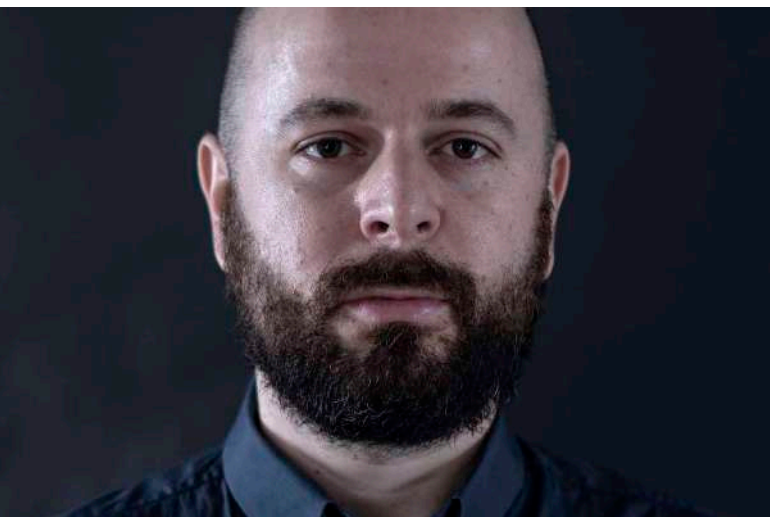


and going through extensive rehearsals, I took them to couple counseling sessions and asked them to stay in character to see if they can improve their relationship. The results were stunning and we all found out things that made us deal with the script in more depth. Results that also revealed things we didn't know about ourselves. We shot in continuity and I permanently rewrote the script based on the discoveries made on set, seeking the truth of each scene. That is why it was very important to me to have "fresh" actors, people who were open to actually becoming the characters not only playing them well.

I had already established a creative team during the film shoot of my short film **"Tie"** (2015), which was the starting point for this feature. Together with the DOP and production designer, we made a journey from word and meaning to the visual, trying to give an identity and a voice to each space and each moment. Together with the DOP and the production designer, we made a journey from word and meaning to the visual, trying to give a voice to each space and each scene. We aimed for a unique and compelling visual identity for **"Monsters."** The design of the apartments, for example, covers a time span of almost 50 years and expresses

a subtle yet powerful backstory on the characters who inhabit them. We wanted to make an X-ray of the Romanian society through the homes and spaces the characters live in. The communist apartments of the 70's and the 80's, the lack of style and coherence of the '90, the pretentious and stylized interiors of the last 10 years - all of that is reflected in the characters. Also, I wanted to establish Bucharest as an additional character. Bucharest is a monster too, a place that is struggling. Dana and Arthur are in a sense products of this city and so are the people they encounter. There is a sense of make-believe and struggle in all these characters.

**"Monsters."** is shot in different aspect ratios, depending on whether the protagonists are separated or together. The picture is complete only when Dana and Arthur are together and how a narrow view always makes you lose perspective. In a climate of increasing intolerance towards people who are different, I intend to challenge the viewer's perception by questioning the gap between what we are projecting and who we really are. Hopefully **"Monsters."** is a film that will encourage people to question their own lives and be more tolerant towards themselves and the people around them.



## MARIUS OLTEANU

### DIRECTOR AND SCREENWRITER

After graduating from NFTS, United Kingdom, with an MA in Fiction Film Directing, **Marius Olteanu** has chosen to focus on the clash between private and social life and the boundaries that arise. His last two shorts, **"Tie"** (2015), which was the starting point for his feature debut **"Monsters."**, and **"No man's land"** (2017) were selected in more than 30 festivals – Busan IFF, Tallinn POFF, Namur FIFF, TIFF etc. These films show his interest in exploring what lies beyond the perfect surface of things and finding new cinematic ways to convey the struggle with one's own limits. Marius worked as an assistant director for the award-winning film **"Sieranevada"** (2016) by **Cristi Puiu** and is also a published photographer.

### Filmography

**"Monsters."** (2019), feature film, fiction, 116 minutes, 4K, 1.85:1, colour

**"No Man's Land"** (2017), short film, fiction, 20 minutes, 2K, 2.35:1, black and white

**"Tie"** (2015), short film, fiction, 29 minutes, 2K, 2.35:1, colour

**"Why don't you dance?"** (2008), short film, fiction, 30 minutes, 35mm, 2.35:1, colour

**"Sunday Afternoon"** (2007), short film, fiction, 30 minutes, Beta, 1.85:1, colour.

## **CLAUDIU MITCU**

### **PRODUCER**

**Claudiu Mitcu**, born in Romania in 1976, graduated from The Bucharest Academy of Economic Studies. In 2004, he started his own production and post-production company **We Are Basca** with **Robert Fița** and **Ion Ioachim Stroe**, and in 2010 co-founded the production company **Parada Film**. He directed and produced several documentaries, **"The Merry Circus"** (2009) and **"Australia"** (2009) produced by HBO Romania, **"The village called sands"** (2008), **"Two of us"** (2011), **"Maria"** (2013), **"The Network"** (2015), **"The Trial"** (2017). In 2010, he received an Honorable Mention by the Australian National Union of Filmmakers, the Human Rights Prize of the French Embassy in Romania for **"Australia"** (2009) and **"Two of us"** (2011). In 2013, **"Maria"** (2013) won Best Film at dokumentART Filmfestival in Neubrandenburg, Germany.

**Claudiu Mitcu** has also produced the short films **"Bad Penny"** (2013), **"Kowalski"** (2014) and **"Ramona"** (2015) by **Andrei Crețulescu** which were awarded with the CANAL+ award in the Semaine de la Critique Section in Cannes 2015, as well as the short film **"Tie"** (2015) by **Marius Olteanu**. In the past years, the shorts produced by **Claudiu Mitcu** gained international recognition at festivals such as Cinemajove Valencia (Special Mention for **Ion Ioachim Stroe's** short film **"November"** in 2017) as well as **Radu Potcoavă's** short film **"Miss Sueno"** (2018), which received the Grand Prize at Huesca Film Festival in 2018 and screened in the official selection at The International Festival of Francophone Film Namur, at Vilnius International Film Festival and Trieste Film Festival (all in 2018). **"Monsters."** is the first feature fiction film produced by **Claudiu Mitcu**.







**CARLA FOTEA**  
DELEGATE PRODUCER

**Carla Fotea** is a young producer working for **Hi Film Productions** and **Micro Film Romania**. She has worked in different roles for films such as **“I do not care if we go down in history as barbarians”** by **Radu Jude** (KVIFF 2017 - Crystal Globe for Best Film), **“Graduation”** by Cristian Mungiu (Cannes 2016 - Best Director), **“6.9 on the Richter Scale”** (2016) by **Nae Caranfil** and multiple other acclaimed shorts and features.

As executive producer, she is currently involved in the production of the upcoming features of **Radu**

**Jude, Ivana Mladenovic** and the debut documentary of **Adrian Pîrvu**. She is also producing the debut feature of young director **Ana-Maria Comănescu**, which is in development.

Carla holds an M.A. in Film Production from the National University of Theatre and Film in Bucharest and is an alumna of Talents Sarajevo 2016 and IDFA Academy 2017. She is an EFA member and was nominated in the Young Hope Category of the Romanian Film Industry Awards in 2017.

**“Monsters.”** is her first collaboration with director **Marius Olteanu** and producer **Claudiu Mitcu**.



## JUDITH STATE

### ACTRESS

Professional dancer and choreographer with a classical ballet foundation and a foreign languages bachelor degree in English and Spanish. Initiator of DaDans and Flashmob Romania projects through which she organizes professional training stages directed at professional and amateur dancers and urban interactive performances in Romania. ISVP dance scholarship holder at the Broadway Dance Centre in New York in 2011, and danceWEB scholarship holder of the ImpulsTanz Vienna International Dance Festival in 2014.

Casted in directors **Cristi Puiu's** film "**Sieranevada**" that premiered in 2016 at the Cannes Film Festival, and Gopo Awards Nominee for Best Female Actress. In 2018, she again collaborated with Puiu for the film "**The Manorhouse**", and was casted for the leading role in "**Monsters.**", the feature film debut of director **Marius Olteanu**.

## CRISTIAN POPA

### ACTOR

Born in 1979, **Cristian Popa** graduated from the Theater Faculty within the University of Arts Iași, Romania (1997 - 2001). He attended the Sanford Meisner and Michael Cekhov Method workshops led by **Eugene Buica**, founder and professor of the Acting Corps, LA, USA (2006, 2007). He also participated in **Radu Penciulescu's** acting workshop in 2008. He acted on several stages of the Romanian Theatre, such as the Toma Caragiu Theater in Ploiești, The Maria Filoti Theater in Brăila, The Ioan Dacian Operetta Theater, Act Theater and Small Theater in Bucharest. He also performed in several TV Series - among which we mention "**Comrade Detective**" (2017) by **Nikita Ionescu**, as well as shorts - "**my Baby**" (2013) by **Luiza Pârvu**, "**Stuck on Christmas**" (2010) by **Iulia Rugină**, "**27**" (2006) by **Hadrian Marcu**, and feature films - "**Il Traduttore**" (2016) by **Massimo Natale**.





## ALEXANDRU POTOCEAN

ACTOR

**Alexandru Potocean** studied Ion Cojar's acting method under **Ion Cojar** and **Mircea Gheorghiu** at the National University of Theatre and Film in Bucharest. He has started an international film career with supporting roles in movies like **Cristian Mungiu's** critically acclaimed **"4 months, 3 weeks, 2 days"** (2007) or Peter Weir's **"The Way Back"** (2010), **"The Whistleblower"** (2010) by **Larisa Kondracki** and **Constantin Popescu's** **"The Portrait of the Fighter as a Young Man"** (2010) as well as the lead in several Romanian productions such as **"Silent Wedding"** (2008) by **Horățiu Mălăele** and **Cătălin Mitulescu's** **"By the Rail"** (2016). Over the years, he has also acted in numerous shorts. Alongside film, **Alexandru Potocean** has been working on many theatre productions.

## ȘERBAN PAVLU

ACTOR

Born in 1975, **Șerban Pavlu** graduated from the National University of Theatre and Film in Bucharest in 1997 and had his theatre debut with a play by **Felix Alexa - "Roberto Zucco"**. His breakthrough performance, however, came with the role of Nicu in **Lucian Pintilie's** **"Terminus Paradis"** (1998) and the role of a director in **Radu Jude's** **"The Happiest Girl in the World"** (2009). Following this first collaboration, he subsequently played in several films by **Radu Jude**, such as **"Everybody in Our Family"** (2012), for which he received a Gopo Award for Best Actor, as well as **"Aferim!"** (2015), **"Scarred Hearts"** (2016), and **"I do not care if we go down in history as barbarians"** (2018). Throughout the years, he has acted in over 30 shorts and feature films, such as **"Ramona"** by **Andrei Crețulescu**, winner of the Canal+ Award in Semaine de la Critique at the Cannes Film Festival 2015, as well as in the hit HBO Series **"Shadows"**.





## **LUCHIAN CIOBANU**

**DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY**

Born in 1980, **Luchian Ciobanu** is a young Romanian director of photography who graduated from The National Theatre and Film Academy in Bucharest in 2009. He worked on several long and short features as well as documentaries.

His filmography is influenced by the aesthetic of documentaries and cinema verité features and includes collaborations with some of the most important Romanian directors: **Cristi Puiu** - "**Aurora**" (2010), "**Trois exercices d'interprétation**" (2013), "**Das Spektrum Europas**" (2014), **Marius Olteanu** - "**Tie**" (2014), "**No Man's Land**" (2017), "**Monsters.**", **Cristi Iftime** - "**Marița**" (2016), "**A Rash on the Chest**" (2018), **Ana Lungu** - "**One and a Half Prince**" (2017), **Ivana Mladenovic** - "**Turn off the Lights**" (2009), "**Soldiers. A story from Ferentari**" (2017).

## **ION IOACHIM STROE**

**EDITOR**

Born in 1979, film editor, director, graphic designer, **Ion Ioachim Stroe** edited feature films and documentaries by some of the most important Romanian directors such as **Cristi Puiu** and **Cătălin Mitulescu** - Films that in the past 15 years were selected and won awards at the most prestigious festivals in Europe (Cannes, Venice, Locarno, Karlovy Vary, etc).

As a director, he worked on internationally acclaimed campaigns for clients such as MTV Networks and Discovery Channel. His first short film, "**November**" (2016), was screened and awarded at Cinema Jove Valencia festival.





## **ALEXANDRA ALMA UNGUREANU STROE**

SET AND COSTUME DESIGNER

With a B.A. in Scenography from the University of Arts Bucharest, Faculty of Decorative Arts and Design, **Alexandra Alma Ungureanu Stroe** worked as an art director and costume designer with renowned Romanian directors such as **Marian Crișan, Călin Netzer, Tudor Jurgiu, Cătălin Mitulescu, Cristi Iftime, Constantin Popescu, Marius Olteanu** and **Hadrian Marcu**.

In 2011, she received the Costume Design Award of the Romanian Filmmakers Union (UCIN) and a GOPO Awards nomination for the feature film **"Morgen"** (2010) by **Marian Crișan**. The Romanian Filmmakers Union awarded her for the films **"Medal of Honor"** (2009) by **Călin Netzer** and **"Rocker"** (2012) by **Marian Crișan**.

## PRODUCTION COMPANY

### PARADA FILM

**PARADA FILM** has produced the **“Child’s Pose”** (2013), directed by **Călin Peter Netzer**, winner of the Golden Bear and FIPRESCI award at the Berlin International Film Festival 2013. Subsequently, the production house co-produced the Turkish feature film **“Album”** (2016), directed by **Mehmet Can Mertoglu**, which premiered in Semaine de la Critique at Cannes Film Festival 2016 and won the France 4 Visionary Award. **PARADA FILM** continued its co-production line-up with **“Ana, mon Amour”** (2017), a French-Romanian co-production directed by **Călin Peter Netzer**, which premiered at Berlin International Film Festival 2017 and received the Silver Bear for Best Artistic Contribution.

### We Are Basca

**We Are Basca** is a production and post-production company based in Bucharest, Romania.

**We Are Basca** is the producer of the short film **“Tie”** (2015) by **Marius Olteanu**, selected at Busan International Short Film Festival, Transilvania International Film Festival, Tofifest International Film Festival and awarded at Next International Film Festival with the VillaKult Award and with a Special Mention in Short of the year 2015 contest. In the past years, the shorts produced by **We Are Basca** gained international recognition in festivals such as Cinemajove Valencia (Special Mention for **Ion Ioachim Stroe’s** short film **“November”** in 2017) as well as **Radu Potcoavă’s** short film **“Miss Sueno”** (2018), which received

the Grand Prize at Huesca Film Festival in 2018 and screened in the official Selection at The International Festival of Francophone Film Namur, at Vilnius International Film Festival and Trieste Film Festival (all in 2018).

The company co-produced short films such as **“Bad Penny”** (2013), **“Kowalski”** (2014) and **“Ramona”** (2015) by **Andrei Crețulescu** (CANAL+ award in the Semaine de la Critique Section in Cannes 2015). The company is currently producing the documentary film **„Team building”** directed by **Adina Popescu** and **Iulian Manuel Ghervas**. The feature film **„Monsters.”** directed by **Marius Olteanu**, is the first feature film production of the company.

### WE ARE BASCA

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