

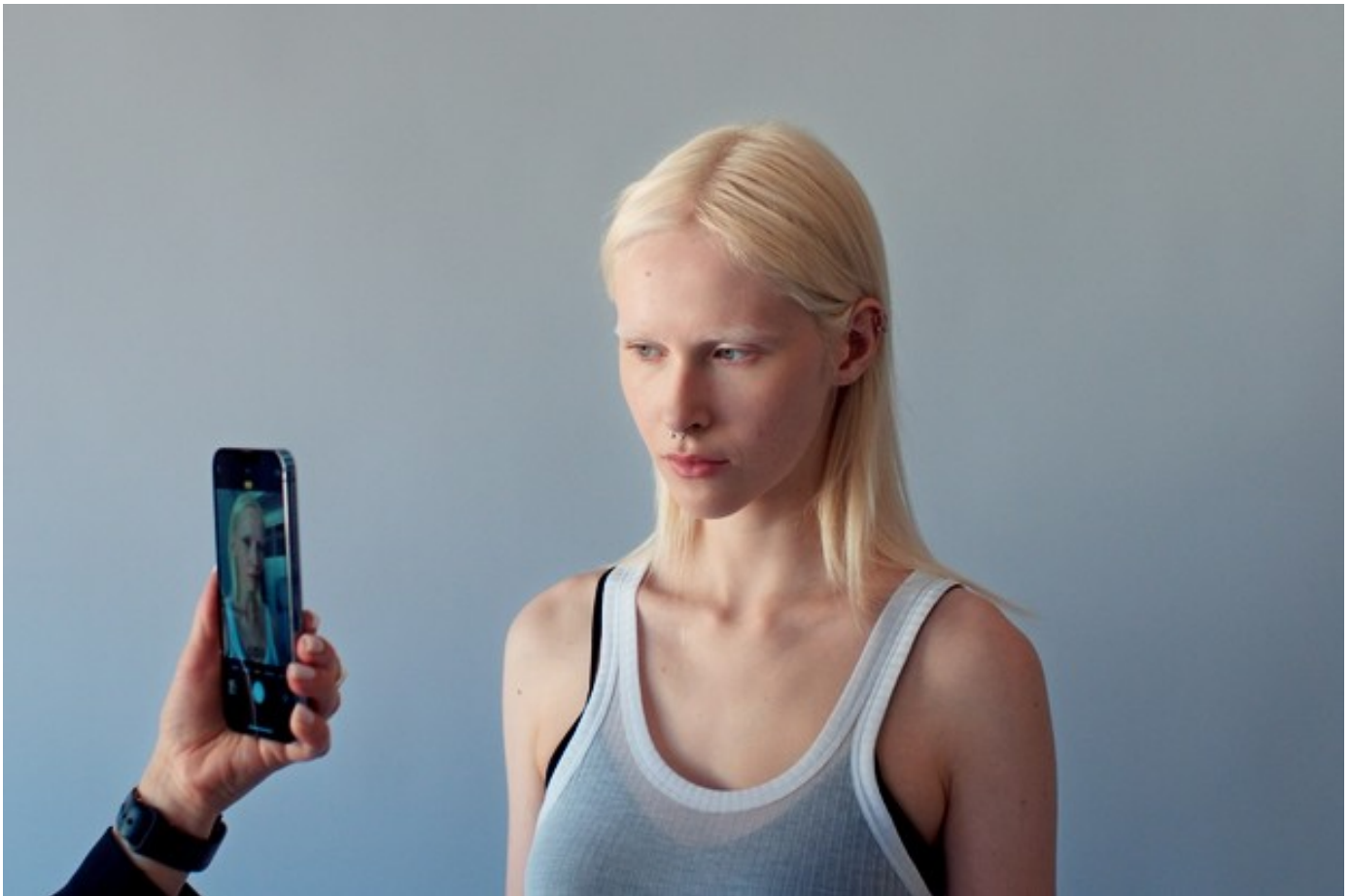
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LOCARNO 2025 Competition Review: *White Snail*

by [VERONICA ORCIARI](#)

11/08/2025 - Elsa Kremser and Levin Peter merge a tale of intimacy with strikingly atmospheric visuals as a model and a morgue worker forge an unexpected bond in Belarus



Marya Imbro in *White Snail*

Masha (**Marya Imbro**) and Misha (**Mikhail Senkov**), already complementary in their names, are an extremely unusual couple. She is an aspiring model, pursuing her dream of a career in China. He works at a morgue on night shifts, but is obsessed with painting and fills his house with his own art (the paintings seen in the film are Senkov's actual creations). Based on two true stories, acted out by the same people who lived them, [White Snail](#) [\[+\]](#) is a powerful example of achieving the right blend between a great plot idea and appealing cinematic qualities. Screening in the [Locarno](#) main competition, the movie, penned and directed by **Elsa Kremser** and **Levin Peter**, also has another ace up its sleeve: it's set in Belarus, a country that is a character in itself, enhancing the sense of loneliness and isolation felt by the two protagonists.

Thanks to the impressive use of light and the slick cinematography work by **Mikhail Khursevich**, *White Snail* boasts visuals that capture the audience with ease, despite it lacking a truly particular style per se. In fact, the peculiar story, mixed with the extremely realistic acting, is paired with a moody tone, with an emphasis on shots that highlight the physical presence of bodies, both living and dead. Misha and Masha themselves are memorable for their looks and physiques, and the repeated presence of snails – Masha's pets – gives the feature a distinctive feel.

The most interesting element of the writing lies in the subtle yet extremely effective way in which the two characters meet and share a fraction of their lives together. The fact that the screenplay doesn't veer towards a trivial love story, which would have weakened the power of the two as individuals, proves a successful choice, and enhances Misha and Masha's appeal for the audience. Imbro and Senkov's performances feel deeply authentic, stemming from the fact they are portraying their own stories, as well as remarkably convincing, as if they had spent a lifetime in front of the camera. The right amount of fiction is added to these two characters, which are perfect for the screen and only needed some capable hands to direct them.

Stephan Bechinger's editing aids the flow of the story through the use of a parallel gaze on the two protagonists' lives, which smoothly stitches together the scenes, in which Misha and Masha have a fully rounded presence while that of the other characters (such as Masha's dad on the phone and her modelling friends) is minimal. The only real strong physical presence accompanying the two is represented by the corpses that populate the morgue. The pair thus bond over the course of the sleepless nights they spend with each other, with Misha showing her how he makes a living and Masha sharing her suicide attempt, which led her to become so interested in the fine line between life and death. All in all, the balance between the technical elements and the strong emotional component of the story helps to make the movie stand out.

White Snail was produced by Austria's [Panama Film](#) and [Raumzeitfilm](#), in co-production with Germany's [ma.ja.de. Fiction](#). [Intramovies](#) is handling its international sales.

more about: White Snail



Interview: Elsa Kremser and Levin Peter • Directors of *White Snail*

“These two people never had the privilege of being truly understood, and that's the reason they need to meet”

The Austrian directors discuss their film dealing with urban isolation and poor mental health and starring the real-life protagonists of the true stories it's based on ►

11/08/2025



Wind, Talk to Me scoops the Heart of Sarajevo

Stefan Đorđević's docufiction has won the top feature fiction prize, while other awards went to *Sorella di Clausura*, *Fantasy* and *Yugo Florida*, and *DJ Ahmet* took home the Cineuropa Award ►

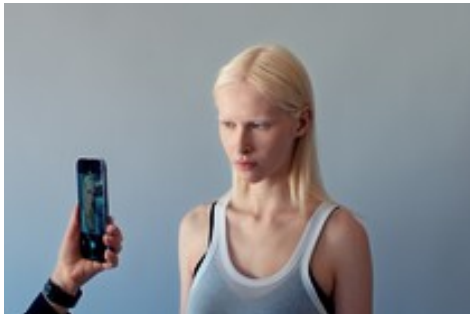
25/08/2025 | Sarajevo 2025 | Awards



Locarno's Golden Leopard goes to *Two Seasons, Two Strangers*

The festival has rewarded the sheer poetry of Sho Miyake, whose film featured on the podium alongside *Tales of the Wounded Land*, *White Snail*, *God Will Not Help* and *Dry Leaf* ▶

18/08/2025 | Locarno 2025 | Awards



Review: *White Snail*

Elsa Kremser and Levin Peter merge a tale of intimacy with strikingly atmospheric visuals as a model and a morgue worker forge an unexpected bond in Belarus ▶

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Eurimages supports 24 co-productions

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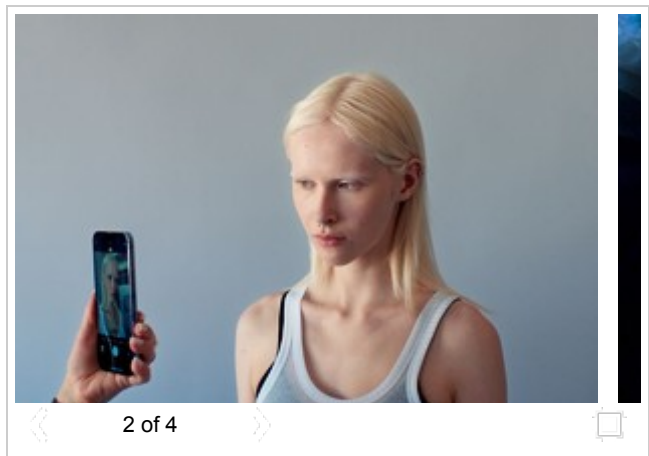
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international title: White Snail

original title: White Snail

country: Austria, Germany

sales agent: Intramovies

year: 2025

directed by: Isa Kremser, Levin Peter