

*Naratyvas in association with Artysta presents
A film by Romas Zabarauskas*

THE ACTIVIST



THE ACTIVIST ★ Robertas Petraitis as ANDRIUS 📷 Lukas Šalna

PRESS KIT

Thriller / Film Noir / Drama

Lithuania / 2025 / 94 min. / 1.85:1 / ARRI ALEXA 35

Made on location in Vilnius and Kaunas, Lithuania / Budget: 536.300 EUR

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Produced using the Film Tax Incentive of the Republic of Lithuania

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LOGLINE

A young man infiltrates a radical neo-Nazi group to find the killer of his LGBT+ activist boyfriend.

SYNOPSIS

Twenty-something printing house worker ANDRIUS is skeptical about his boyfriend DEIVIDAS' activism and worried about being threatened by neo-Nazis. Deividas is the head of Rainbow Kaunas, a group organizing the first Pride in Kaunas, the second biggest city of Lithuania. One night, coming back after a fight, Andrius finds Deividas murdered. Seeing indifferent reactions from society and the police, Andrius takes on a new mission: to find the killer himself.

PITCHED AT:

Tallinn Goes to Cannes 2024 @ Marché du Film – Festival de Cannes ★ FEST – New Directors | New Films Festival - Pitching Forum 2024 ★ EAST, MATCH, GO co-production hub 2023 @ BEAST IFF

MARKETING STRATEGY WORKSHOPPED AT:

Market Ready @ The International Screen Institute

SOCIAL MEDIA

Facebook: facebook.com/activistmovie | Instagram: instagram.com/theactivistmovie

PRESS

Screen (2024): [Romas Zabarauskas' neo-Nazi thriller 'The Activist' boarded for sales](#)

Screen (2024): [Tallinn selects eight emerging actors for Black Nights Stars showcase](#)

Screen (2024): [Tallinn Black Nights to present five projects at Cannes market](#)

Variety (2023): [Zabarauskas Opens Screen Doors for LGBT Storytelling in Eastern Europe](#)

Screen (2023): [Zabarauskas unveils second two films in queer genre-driven trilogy](#)

Cineuropa (2023): [New first-look image from the set of Romas Zabarauskas's The Writer](#)

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

I wanted to allow the queer characters to be both the heroes and the villains in *The Activist*, letting them dominate this unapologetic cinematic fantasy. And what is cinema for me? Lush colors? Cheap thrills? Nuanced political debate? Subdued, sophisticated yet melodramatic dialogue? Close-ups bigger than life, eroticism, a sense of danger and adventure? Yes to all of this. That's the kind of cinema I love, inspired by great European queer filmmakers all the way from Visconti to Almodóvar and Honoré, but also Hollywood classics from the 50s-60s that so often coded complex social topics into story driven films.

The current world feels complicated. Our societies are divided, and growing nationalism keeps gaining stunning allies both in Europe and across the world, including within the LGBT+ community. We need to talk about this. Only by understanding the intricacies of the modern far-right can we fight it. Only by admitting the shortcomings of some of our liberal leaders can we build an effective vision for the future.

This doesn't mean I call to be overly critical or cynical. *The Activist* is a positive film, showing that the institutions of a liberal democracy can work, as long as there are brave "activists" fighting for it. It's a hopeful celebration of civic society.

I come from Eastern Europe and my generation saw progress is possible. It's our experience as well as an intellectual position – in the world of fake news, truth matters and can't be written off as an outdated concept. The fact that things are complicated shouldn't obfuscate our mission to be more truthful and just.

In terms of a cinematic challenge, *The Activist* offers a fresh take on film noir. While the original noir centered *femme fatale* characters in reaction to fears of growing women's independence, our film similarly exploits the current homophobic and transphobic discourses. It's only a matter of changing focus, really, as queer coded characters were already present in the original noir: Waldo Lydecker in *Laura*, Joel Cairo in *The Maltese Falcon*, Bruno in *Strangers on a Train*... Visually, our cinematography borrows some classic elements such as gloomy urban panoramas, chiaroscuro lighting and complex mise-en-scenes, but we do retain the colors, allowing green to dominate, representing the duality of human nature.

ROMAS ZABARAUSKAS (Director, Writer, Producer)

Romas Zabarauskas established himself as a provocative Baltic storyteller with a politically engaging and visually lush body of work. Zabarauskas holds a BA in film (2009-2012) from Saint-Denis University (Paris) with an exchange year at Hunter College (New York), and an MA in communication (2014-2016) from KSU (Vilnius). Currently, Zabarauskas is pursuing a PhD in film at the National Film School of the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre. Romas is based in Vilnius with his fiancé Kornelijus.



Romas Zabarauskas 📷 *Arcana Femina*

FILMOGRAPHY

THE ACTIVIST (2025, Thriller, 94 min.)

THE WRITER (2023, Romance, 87 min.) youtu.be/h5IXvu3Jh9k

THE LAWYER (2020, Drama, 97 min.) youtu.be/KGidKSrfWnk

YOU CAN'T ESCAPE LITHUANIA (2016, Road movie, 80 min.) youtu.be/YXKWJMitrks

WE WILL RIOT (2013, Coming-of-age, 79 min.) youtu.be/Orw-kE_dvIQ

PORNO MELODRAMA (2011, Drama, 30 min.) youtu.be/7hBwno9Gac0

CAST

ROBERTAS PETRAITIS - Andrius

Based in Vilnius, Robertas graduated in acting from the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre in 2022. In addition to The Activist, the up-and-coming actor starred in a key role in the hit Lithuanian comedy Southern Chronicles, released in 2025. In 2024, Petraitis received the Black Nights Stars Discovery Campus ICDA Award and joined the acting troupe at the National Kaunas Drama Theatre.

VASLOV GOOM - Bernardas

London-based model turned actor, Vaslov has amassed a dozen credits over the past decade, starring in international shorts and series. Notably, he guest stars as a Russian Lieutenant in the 9th episode of Apple TV's Masters of the Air, and appears as Leonid in the final episode of the Swedish TV series Vargasommar (Cry Wolf).

TEKLĖ BAROTI - Laima

Based in Vilnius, Teklė graduated from the Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts. In addition to a range of roles in cinema, TV and theater, she is also an acknowledged classical pianist and the finalist of the Lithuanian version of the international television hit show The Voice. She currently stars in the lead role of Margaret in Cat on a Hot Tin Roof at the VMT theater.

SIMAS KULIEŠIUS - Jonas

Based in Derby (UK), Simas holds a BA in Media performance (2015 - 2018) from University of Bedfordshire. His most recent work includes starring as Howie Corbett in Lace Market Theatre's production of Rabbit Hole by David Lindsey - Abaire (Nottingham, UK). As an out trans actor, Simas cares deeply about challenging perceptions of human experience.

KEY TEAM

NARVYDAS NAUJALIS (Cinematographer)

The Activist marks the 10th feature film shot by Narvydas and 4th from Romas Zabarauskas. Narvydas Naujalis has graduated in cinematography at the Lithuanian Theatre and Music Academy (2006-2010) and joined the Lithuanian Association of Cinematographers (LAC) in 2013, heading it in 2017-2018. Narvydas was awarded with the Lithuanian National Film Award for best cinematography for his work on Isaac (2019), nominated as best Discovery at the European Film Awards. He has also shot the Venice Horizons Award winner Piligrimai (2021), and the Tallinn Baltic Competition winner Runner (2021).

MARC DAVID JACOBS (Writer)

Marc David Jacobs is a British film nerd and writer whose past careers include performance art and music, freelance film exhibition and technical work, captioning and audio description, arts journalism and administration, and co-founding the Scottish Queer International Film Festival. His collaborations with Romas Zabarauskas began in 2014, and since then he has played various roles in Zabarauskas's productions, most recently making his screenwriting debut on The Writer (2023).

VITALIJA LAPINA (Writer)

Based in Vilnius, Vitalija Lapina shares a dual career as a lawyer and a screenwriter. She has been writing for feature films and TV series since 2010.

IEVA MARIJA BARANAUSKAITE (Composer)

Composer, vocalist, manager, and keyboardist Ieva Marija Baranauskaite graduated with a classical composition master at the Lithuanian Theatre and Music Academy (2014-2016). The prolific artist founded a jazz band In Albedo, collaborates with various artists such as Tie Geresni and Migloko, and composes for theater and film. She has created original music for previous Zabarauskas' films The Lawyer (2020) and The Writer (2023).

GLENN ELLIOTT (Producer)

Glenn Elliott is a British producer of comedy and drama. Born in Newcastle, UK he has over a decade of experience working with independent filmmakers in the USA and Europe. He now lives in Berlin, Germany where he runs the production house Artysta. The Activist is his fourth collaboration with director Romas Zabarauskas.

CAST AND CREW

Starring

Robertas Petraitis *as Andrius*
Vaslov Goom *as Bernardas*
Teklė Baroti *as Laima*
Simas Kuliešius *as Jonas*
Elvinas Juodkasis *as Deividas*
Redita Dominaitytė *as Rolanda Markevičienė*
Lukas Malinauskas *as Vytas*
Karolis Kasperavičius *as Mykolas*
Elžbieta Latėnaitė *as Miglė*

Producers

Romas Zabarauskas
Glenn Elliott
Gabrielė Misevičiūtė

Written by

Romas Zabarauskas
Marc David Jacobs
Vitalija Lapina

Directed by

Romas Zabarauskas

Cinematographer

Narvydas Naujalis

Composer

Ieva Marija Baranauskaitė

Production Designer

Giedrė Valeišaitė

Casting Director

Dalia Survilaitė

Sound Designer

Vytis Purnas

Costume Designer

Lukas Juodis

Editor

Ignė Narbutaitė