

# ALINA SERBAN

## WORK PRESENTATION

Actress, writer and Romania's first Roma film and theatre director.

Founder of Untold Stories Company, a platform that promotes Roma culture and sheds light on untold and marginalized Roma stories, from a Roma perspective.

[WWW.ALINASERBAN.COM](http://WWW.ALINASERBAN.COM)



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# **DOCUMENTING ROMA SLAVERY**

Short film - Letter of Forgiveness

Theatre play - The Great Shame

Exhibitions:

- “My existence is resistance”, UN
- Biennale di Venezia, Roma Pavilion

# LETTER OF FORGIVENESS

2020

**Writer, Director and Producer:** Alina Șerban

**co-Producer:** Cristian Mungiu, Winner of Palme d'OR at Cannes Film Festival

**The first film about the Roma slavery, written from a Roma perspective, based on real events from 1855. Part of a feature film project.**

In the household of a wealthy Romanian noblewoman in 1855, Maria, a Roma-Gypsy slave, fights to obtain freedom for her son Dinca. During slavery time, up until 1856, the Romanian equivalent of the word "forgiveness" was used when referring to freeing someone from slavery (the Roma slave was "forgiven" from slavery).

- 2019 Best Narrative Director at Female Voices Rock, USA
- 2020 Special Mention at Transilvania International Film Festival
- 2022 Best Short Film at Ake Dikhea International Festival of Romani Film
- Nominee at Norwich Film Festival
- Nominee at Eastern Neighbours Film Festival
- Nominee at Imagine India Film Festival

Part of Challenging the Roma Structural Discrimination: Deterritorialization Practices in Romanian Cinema compendium by Simona Mitroiu,

The International Conference "From slavery to Movement and Policies by ERIAC".





# THE GREAT SHAME

2018

*theatre play, film and video-art*

**Writer, Director and Producer:** Alina Șerban



*By whom is history being told?*

**The first theatre play on the topic of Roma slavery, written after extensive research.**

“The Great Shame” (“Marea Rusine”) is the first theater play to address the unknown subject of the 500 years of Roma slavery in Romania and its profound impact on Roma identity. The actors performed historical documents.

The play explores how this history continues to influence the interactions between Roma and non-Roma today and creates an essential platform for discussing historical and contemporary racial discrimination faced by the Roma community in Romania.

“The Great Shame” holds a unique distinction as the first play featuring Roma women to be embraced by a Romanian state theatre (Excelsior, 2018). The project was first developed as a theatre play, then developed into a video-art.

Published in The Palgrave HandBook of Theatre and Race and DOR.

Selected by the prestigious **EURODRAM**, the text will be published in France in 2024 by **Harmatia Collection** at the University of Strasbourg.

# MY EXISTENCE IS RESISTANCE

**2018**

*video - art*

By Alina Șerban

A Roma woman from the past is throwing herself into a well. She can no longer stand the abuse.

A Roma woman from the present is telling her own truth even though her voice is trembling.

A Roma woman from the future is safe. She is giving and receiving love, respect and appreciation.

What Roma kids should know is that they are sons and daughters of survivors.

Our story is not sad. Our story is one of resistance against history.  
To my Roma people, in hope of a brighter future.

**EXHIBITION:**

'Sukar' Exhibition, organized by ERIAC at UN, New York



# LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA

2022



**Exhibitor and performer: Alina Șerban**

Exhibitor at La Biennale di Venezia, “Roma Women: Performative Strategies of Resistance”, Roma Pavilion, Collateral Events at the 59th International Venice Biennale, curated by Iliana Schileru, with:

- “Letter of Forgiveness” film
- “The best child in the world” video-art
- “Eating sunflower seeds” live-performance

**ERSTESTIFTUNG, ROMEA**

# **CONSERVING ROMA ORAL HISTORY**

Collection of Roma folklore stories - Auntie Veta's Roma fairytales

Folklore documentary - Amare Paramića



# CONSERVING ROMA ORAL HISTORY

2016 - 2022

The project started in 2016 with the aim of capturing, preserving, and protecting previously hidden or suppressed Roma oral history stories.

## PUBLISHED:

“Auntie Veta’s Roma fairytales”, a ground-breaking book with a collection of Roma fairytales that explore myths, traditions and legends of the Romani folklore:

<https://www.scribd.com/doc/307896152/Basme-Rome-Povestite-de-Tanti-Veta>.

## EXHIBITIONS:

[Tranzit Exhibition](#)

[Cultural event](#) promoting Roma oral history:





# AMARE PARAMIĆA

2022

**Writer, Director and Producer:** Alina Șerban

An oral history project that contains extracts of Roma people's interviews, documenting Roma folklore. The 5 episodes documentary sheds light on the relationship between the Roma folklore and the Roma community's way of living, by preserving oral Roma family stories and fairytales passed down through generations.

The premiere took place on "The National Day of Romani Language", at the University of Bucharest, The Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literatures, Romani Language section and included a "Safeguarding the intangible cultural heritage of the Roma" panel with Romani language teachers, historians, anthropologists and sociologists.



## Episodes - Links:

<https://fb.watch/n6filw35De/>

<https://fb.watch/n6fm0SzfcN/>

[Romaniapozitiva.ro](http://Romaniapozitiva.ro)

# **DOCUMENTING POST-COMMUNIST ROMA STORIES**

Short film - I matter

Theatre play - The best child in the world

Documentaries about Roma institutionalized youth



# I MATTER

2021

**Writer, Director and Producer:** Alina Șerban

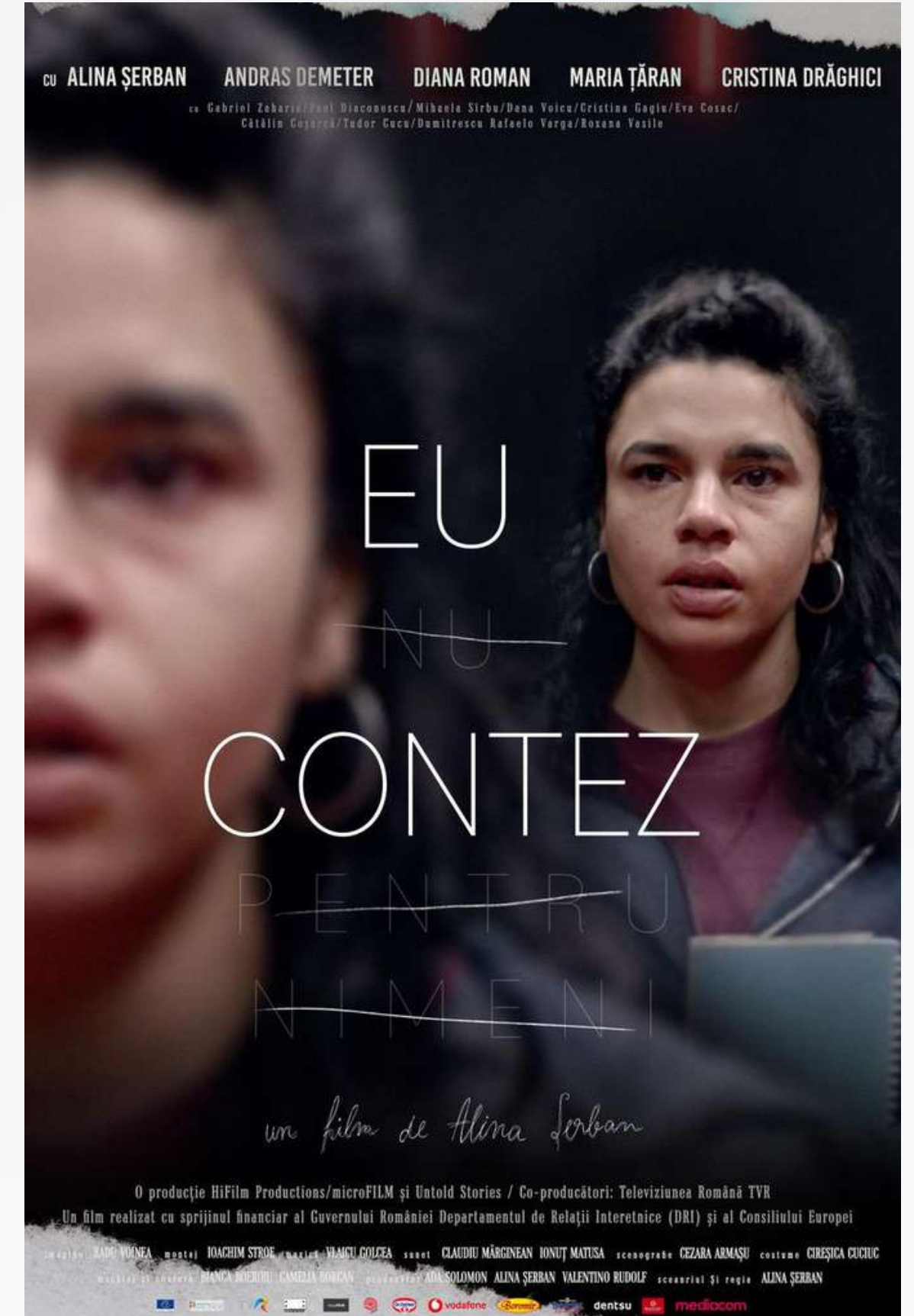
**co-Producer:** Ada Solomon, Winner of The Golden Bear, Berlinale and The Silver Bear

In a seemingly easy theatre exercise, Rebeca, a young Roma woman, student at an elite acting school, is pushed to confront her biggest fear.

The short film “I matter” focuses on the social exclusion of young women at risk and their efforts to fit in society. “I matter” asks the following questions: what does it mean to be a girl, a Roma girl, to be raised in an orphanage and to struggle?

It is being developed into a feature at LIM and Mediterranean Film Institute and will be produced by Ada Solomon.

- 2021 Winner at Torino Short Film Market (Torino, Italy)
- 2023 Winner of “Best Producer of a Romanian short film Award” at Independent Producers Indie Film Festival (Romania, Bucharest).





# THE BEST CHILD IN THE WORLD

2021

Writer, Director and Producer: Alina Șerban

**Alina Șerban became the first Roma director entering the permanent repertoire of the National Theatre of Bucharest.**

A theatre play about the situation of Roma children in the post-communist Romania's orphanages. It sheds light on the real story of a Roma girl who discovers, at a very young age, the differences of race, color and environment, yet manages to navigate through life and transform her complexes into determination and motivation.

*I'm glad I wasn't born during slavery. To have the slave holder sell me at auctions and to end up far away from my mom. I'm glad I wasn't born during the Holocaust, either. To end up on those trains. (...)*

- 2022 Part of La Biennale di Venezia, "Roma Women: Performative Strategies of Resistance", Collateral Events at the 59th International Venice Biennale, curated by Ilina Schileru
- 2023 Representing Romania at The Francophonie Games, Congo
- 2023 Invited by The Romanian Cultural Institute at New York
- 2023 Invited at New Stages South East Festival, Oberhausen, Germany

Euronews Culture,  
NewEasternEurope,  
Romea.cz





# DOCUMENTARIES ABOUT ROMA INSTITUTIONALIZED YOUTH

2023

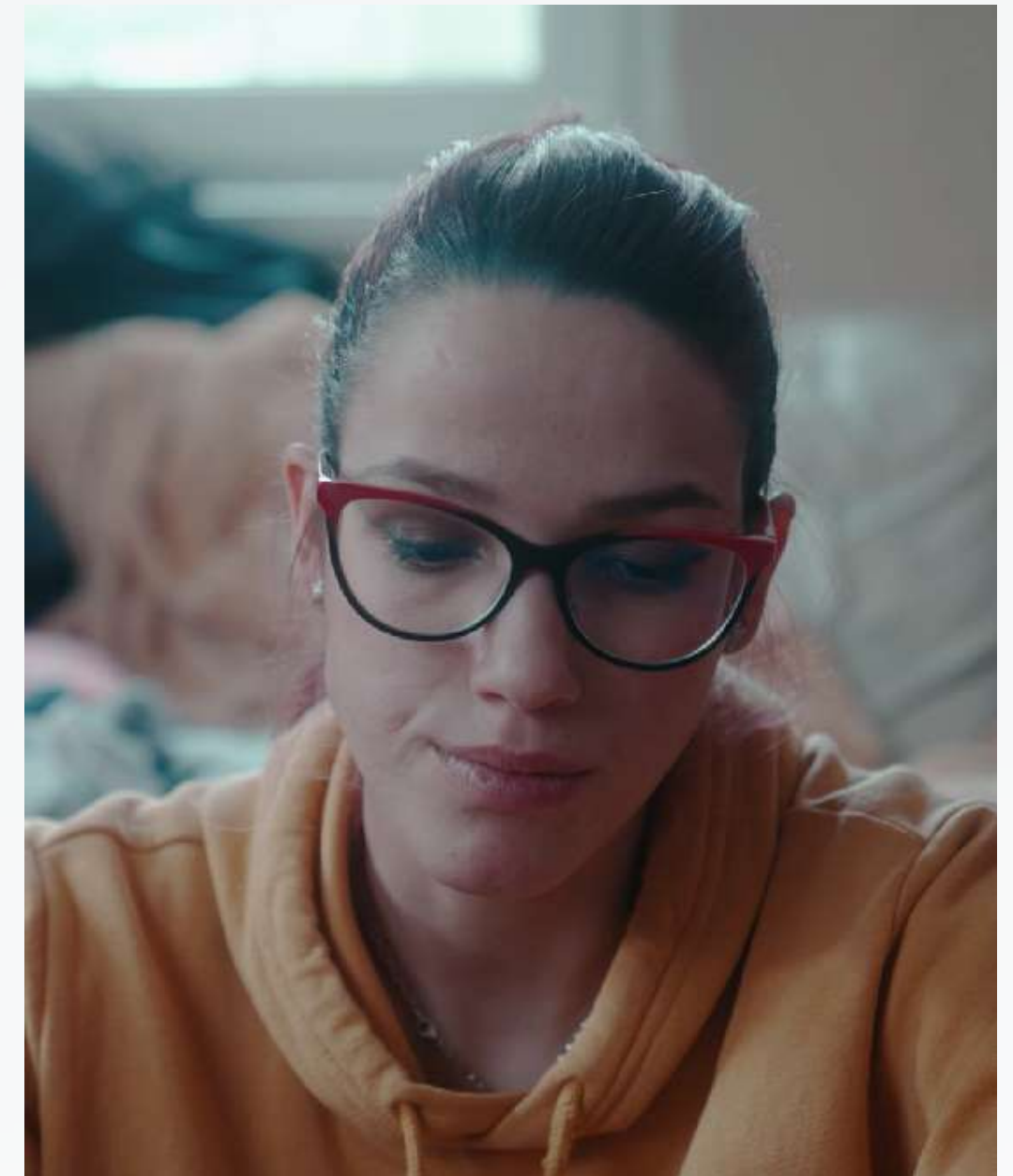
Writer, Director and Producer: Alina Șerban



**I am Nicu**



**About us - Vanessa**



**Fearless**

# **FEATURE FILMS RECENTERING ROMA WOMEN'S STORIES**

Housekeeping for beginners, Biennale di Venetia, 2023

Alone at my wedding, Cannes, 2018

Gipsy Queen, German Film Awards, 2020

# HOUSEKEEPING FOR BEGINNERS

2023

**Script consulting and actress:** Alina Serban

**Director:** Goran Stolevski

**Producer:** Marija Dimitrova

The house of Dita (Anamaria Marinca) is a makeshift refuge for a motley crew of queer people, in the hills of Skopje, North Macedonia. When her girlfriend Suada (Alina Serban) falls terminally ill, the aloof Dita is forced to promise she will raise her partner's two reluctant daughters.

- 2023 Winner of Queer Lion Award, Venice Film Festival
- 2023 Nominee at "Orizzonti" competition, Venice Film Festival
- 2024 Macedonia's choice for the Oscars

Variety Magazine

2nd Variety Magazine review

ScreenDaily





# ALONE AT MY WEDDING

2018

**Director:** Marta Bergman

**Script consultant and lead actress:** Alina Şerban

The story of the insolent, spontaneous, funny Pamela, a young Roma, different from other girls in her community. A single mother, she lives with her grandmother and her little girl in a small hut where the three of them share a bed. How can she reconcile the needs of her two-year old daughter and her dream of freedom?

- 2018 Premiered at Cannes Film Festival
- 2018 Winner Jury Prize Best Actress at International Women Film Festival of Salé
- 2018 Winner RIFF Jury Award Best Actress at Rome Independent Film Festival
- 2019 Nominee Global Images Best Film Award at Cyprus Film Days International Festival
- 2020 Nominee Best First Feature (Magritte du premier film)
- 2020 Nominee Best Film (Meilleur film)

The Hollywood Reporter

Cineuropa





# GIPSY QUEEN

2019

Director: Hüseyin Tabak

Script consultant and lead actress: Alina Şerban

Ali, a courageous woman and single mother of two kids, works with the trainer and owner of a rundown box club in order to provide for her family.

- 2019 Winner Jury Prize - Best Actress - Alina Serban - Tallinn Black Nights Film Festival
- 2019 Winner Ecumenical Jury Prize - Best Film - Tallinn Black Nights Film Festival
- 2021 Winner Special Jury Prize Best Actress - Alina Serban - at Nuremberg Film Festival "Turkey-Germany"
- 2021 Winner Special Prize Audience Award at Ake Dikhea Festival of Romani Film
- 2020 Nominee Film Award in Gold - Best Performance by an Actress in a Leading Role - Alina Serban
- 2020 Winner DSP Award - Best Leading Actress at German Screen Actors Awards
- 2020 Winner Best Actress - Alina Serban - Guenter Rohrbach Filmpreis

ScreenDaily  
Cineuropa

