

03 09 2024



‘Underseen’ has its pre-premiere at Impact Leaders in Venice

‘Underseen’, the documentary film about the Museum in the Dark in Ukraine, had its pre-premiere at the Impact Leaders event in Venice. It is the first in a series of screenings across Europe, ranging from mainstream film festivals to impact events, as well as different regional events in Eastern Europe.

A group of close to 100 leading figures from the impact investing space gathered in Venice to take part in a leader’s retreat organised by Impact Europe and hosted by The Human Safety Net. The event aimed to help leaders in the space align on the narrative and future priorities of impact investing. The screening of ‘Underseen’ formed the finale of the event, offering a tangible example of true social impact in a country challenged by conflict.

‘Underseen’ tells the story of Alina, the founder of a museum run by the visually impaired, as she navigates the meaning of her “Museum in the Dark” in the darkness of wartime. Alongside other strong Ukrainian women, she works to build a more socially inclusive future for Ukraine.

One of those women, **Alena Kalibaba**, CEO of the Ukrainian Social Venture Fund, introduced the film to the audience. The Museum in the Dark is one of the enterprises in the portfolio of the impact fund, the first of its kind in the country, set up within the framework of the EU-funded Collaborate for Impact-programme. In her intro, she called the museum “our unicorn – a true role model for how to prepare society for the amount of inclusivity that is increasingly required in Ukrainian society, right now”.

The screening was followed by a panel discussion with contributions from **Věra Jourová**, **vice-president of the European Commission**, **Alina Marnenko**, the founder of the Museum in the Dark, **Raphael Cortes**, the director of ‘Underseen’, and **Mstyslav Chernov**, who won Ukraine its first Oscar with the documentary ‘20 Days in Mariupol’. The discussion was moderated by **Danielle Turkov-Wilson**, co-founder of Think-Film Impact Production.

Some notable quotes from the discussion:

Raphael Cortes:

“There is a certain paradox in making a film about blindness. We intentionally refrained from using archive footage or war footage, and chose instead to use creative techniques to help the audience empathise with the protagonists. The film makes a very conscious choice to focus on emotion first, and detail second.”

Věra Jourová:

“Politicians should be story listeners.

“The disclaimer to the film says that it was partly sponsored by the EU but does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the EU. Thank God it does, though. I am happy to see the EU united in their support of Ukraine.”

“In a time where independent media are struggling to keep the attention of a polarised society, the mix of good journalism, entertainment and storytelling is essential. It is a necessary trend that needs to be supported. However, we need to remain vigilant to not support propaganda.”

“The European Media Freedom Act is a response to the declining independency of media. A culmination of dangerous trends is attached to this, like increased insecurity of journalists, financial insecurity, increased political influence over content, attempts to create state-governed media. The new law package aims to counter these evolutions.”

“There is a need to invest more in education, culture and media: we already invest much into the stomach and the brain, but we can do better in investing in the heart.”

Mstyslav Chernov:

“Nothing is more powerful than a human sitting in front of you, telling a story. It’s stories that are and were essential to human survival – not numbers or statistics.”

“When you spend your life in a comfortable environment as a decision maker, it is equally important and challenging to be able to leave that space and to be transported to that place where your decisions have effect. Film can do that, and it can do it very well.”

“It’s the human stories that become a part of your being, of your core, and not just of your decision”.

“This is a very important film for Ukraine right now. So many veterans, including some of my friends, come back from the war with visual impairments and really struggle to reintegrate. Any film that helps with that is very valuable.”

“An impact is an action that lasts for years. You make the life of communities better. This is how I look at patriotism, too. It is not songs or speeches, but an act that improves lives over a longer time.”

Alina Marnenko:

“The film is very effective in countering some of the prejudices around people with a visual handicap. In that sense, it truly supports our mission of breaking taboos around the topic.”

“The museum makes people more tolerant, and in doing so, it makes the whole society more tolerant, too. It’s a story of making society better, through the museum.’

‘Underseen’ is a production by Impact Europe and DEIA Media, made possible through the financial support of the European Union.



Impact Europe
The Investing for Impact Network
Website | LinkedIn | X | **Join us**
Rue Royale 94 | 1000 Brussels



**Co-funded by
the European Union**