



**PRESS RELEASE**

**Prague, October 11, 2018**

**THE PROGRAMME OF THE 22<sup>ND</sup> JI.HLAVA IDFF HAS BEEN UNVEILED**

**The 22<sup>nd</sup> annual Ji.hlava International Documentary Film Festival will be kicking off in two weeks. What does have to offer? Film portraits of Gorbachev and Putin, a look inside a ‘Noah’s Ark’ beyond the arctic circle and a story of a dilapidated greenhouse in Ukraine. As always, it will include competition films, as well as a wide selection of cinéma vérité films and virtual reality worlds.**

Altogether, the programme will have 327 films on offer. ‘I’m surprised that documentary films still remain overlooked, even though they are some of the most interesting cinema out there. Compared to narrative films, they more accurately reflect our own questions, doubts, joys and failures. Documentary films aren’t meant to be an escape from our own lives – they are a way for us to better understand them,’ says Marek Hovorka, the festival’s director. ‘The true struggle of cinema happens in documentaries which open up new possibilities, topics and perspectives. I am pleased that, this year, the Ji.hlava Festival will bring viewers a unique selection of films they can’t see anywhere else,’ he adds. **This year’s show will feature 100 world premieres, 23 international premieres and 17 European premieres.**

**Cinéma Vérité: An Inspiration for Kubrick**

Alongside the usual assortment of competition sections, this year’s event will offer a large selection of films under the category of **Direct Vérité**. ‘There will be productions from three countries – Canada, France and the United States – in the Direct Cinema and cinéma vérité sections. This selection of twenty-five films will offer viewers a unique chance to watch key works which characterise each developmental stage of the two genres,’ describes David Čeněk, the section’s dramaturge. The retrospective will include the works of **Jean Rouch**, **François Reichenbach** and **Richard Leacock**, as well as those of Czech representatives **Evald Schorm** and **Radúz Činčera**. ‘We will screen some of the most important works of cinéma vérité such as *An Insight into Madness* or *Les marins*, which inspired the opening scene of Stanley Kubrick’s *Full Metal Jacket*, or the documentary portrait of the Nobel Prize winner Bob Dylan, *Don’t Look Back*, which is the essence of American direct cinema,’ adds Čeněk. Marcel Carrière, an 83-year-old Canadian film director, will be this section’s special guest.

**The Dream, Iran and a Camper Van**

The **Opus Bonum** section, which is dedicated to world documentary film, will include seventeen films this year from countries like Portugal, France, Canada, Belgium, but also the Philippines. The Belgian film *Vacancy*, directed by **Alexandra Kandy Longuete**, will have its world premiere at the festival. The film tells the story of four people staying at a run-down American motel in a Lynchian style. ‘It’s a film about the death of the American dream:

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exhausted truck drivers, ageing prostitutes, disappearances,' says Petr Kubica, the festival's dramaturge. A sort of counterweight to *Vacancy* could be *De Sancto Ambrosio* by Antonio Di Biase, who placed a camera onto the belfry of a church in a small Italian town and used it to record local life. A wedding, a funeral, tourists napping on benches, voyeuristic views of the windows below. The French film *Western, Family and Communism* will transport the viewers to Iran, where the director travelled in a camper van with his wife and two young daughters.

### **The Crimean Grandma and the Winter Garden**

**Between the Seas**, which is an exhibition of some of the most interesting films from Central and Eastern Europe, will have fifteen entries. In its world premiere at the Ji.hlava Festival, *My Granny from Mars* by Alexander Mihalkovich will tell the story of his Ukrainian grandmother, who is uncertain about whether she should or should not leave the annexed Crimea because of the current political climate there. *The Winter Garden's Tale* by Simon Mozgovyi also takes place in Ukraine and shows the struggle of a desperate gardener who wants to save a dilapidated winter garden. *The Good Death* by Slovakian director **Tomáš Krupa** is a film about the euthanasia of terminally ill Janette.

### **Debuts: The Battle and Paradise**

This year's festival will once again include the **First Lights** section, which will show the films of eleven bold debutants and debutantes. Cyprien Clément-Delmas, a French photographer and filmmaker, is one such debutant and his first film *Boy of War* tells the story of an eighteen-year-old Ukrainian whose greatest dream is to fight for his country. Venezuelan director **Dulce Ferreira Sanchez** will, in a world premiere, present her film titled *The Paradise*, which is comprised of family videos in the background of which we can see the country undergoing political and economic changes.

### **Orbán and Prison**

Thirteen films will be competing in this year's **Czech Joy section**. *Illusion*, directed by **Kateřina Turečková**, describes the political situation in Viktor Orbán's Hungary and uses a simulated computer game to show some of the darker social issues. 'One of the hardest aspects of making the film was not giving in to one's own paranoia, the sort of normalised thinking that is being constantly produced by the people and the system in question,' says Turečková. **Jiří Holba**, a documentary film-maker, in his film *Feral* presents Karel 'Charlie' Soukup, the famous underground songwriter and Charter 77 signatory, who has spent the last thirteen years living as a hermit in the Australian outback. 'We walked around in the outback with nothing but wild cows and other Australian wildlife for forty kilometres around us,' says Holba in describing the film's atmosphere. Soukup himself will be among the special guests at the Ji.hlava Festival. *Enclosed World*, a four-hour film by Karel Žalud which tells the story of three prisoners, promises 'an experience of prison life'. 'The idea was not only to show a vertical slice of the correctional system through the powerful stories of multiple people, each in a different stage of carrying out their sentence, but to also question the notions of guilt, punishment and justice – and whether or not it's truly possible for somebody to correct or change themselves in our repressive system,' says the director. **Martin Páv's** *Vote for Kibera*,

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which captures the life in one of Africa's largest slums where more than a million people live in an area the size of two and a half square kilometres, is bound to contain some impactful imagery. A portrait of the poet and art theorist Vratislav Effenberger by **David Jařab** straddles the line between documentary and narrative film. His *Vratislav Effenberger or Black Shark Hunting* constructs an imagine of this important but unjustly overlooked figure of 20<sup>th</sup> century Czech culture not only through the memories of his son and his friends, but also through the production of Effenberger's unused screenplays. **Jakub Červenka's** film *Talks with TGM* exists on a similar axis between documentary and narrative film. The film uses a screenplay by the historian **Pavel Kosatík**, who based the film's dialogue on President Masaryk's talks with Karel Čapek. 'The Czech Joy section wants to follow all the diverse trends in Czech documentary film-making,' says Marek Hovorka in explaining the selection process.

## Seed Vaults and Killer Robots

Three distinct sections – **A Testimony on Politics**, **A Testimony on Knowledge** and **A Testimony on Nature** – will altogether offer twenty different films at this year's Ji.hlava Festival. One such film is *Path of Blood* which the author, **Jonathan Hacker**, created by combining videos and selfies of terrorists in order to try and 'get inside their heads'. The Lebanese-Norwegian film *Wild Relatives* will take us into a modern-day Noah's Ark – a vault beyond the arctic circle where seeds of all the existing plants are stored, akin to the animals on the ship. Of note is also the American film *The Truth about Killer Robots* directed by **Maxim Pozdorovkin**, which wonders about the future co-existence of humans and new technologies.

## Herzog, Mansky and the Underground

The non-competition section **Special Event** will offer a selection of seventeen films. These will include not only the previously announced new releases from **Jean-Luc Godard** or **Wim Wenders**, but also a new film by the similarly famous **Werner Herzog** – a profile of the last Soviet president titled *Meeting Gorbachev*. 'We wanted to find something about him that doesn't just speak about his own spirit, but the spirit of the entire Russian nation,' Herzog said about Gorbachev. The Russian director **Vitaly Mansky** will then personally present the film *Putin's Witnesses*, which takes an unusually close look at the current Russian president. The director goes back to his footage from the years 1999 and 2000, when Putin first became president with vocal support from his predecessor Boris Yeltsin, and adds up-to-date commentary. The Chinese film *Report* is something only the most patient of viewers will truly enjoy. That is because this profile of the Chinese underground movement is twelve hours long.

## Fascinations: The World Competition and EXPRMTL.CZ

Experimental documentaries also constitute a core element of the festival's programme each year. 'We search through festivals, film and art schools. We look for films from famous experimental minds and artists, but also for those from new and talented people who have a passion for finding unique ways of expression, the possibilities of media and technology. Out

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of twelve hundred films, we selected thirty for the world competition,' says the dramaturge Andrea Slováková. The **Fascinations** section is dedicated to world cinema, while **EXPRMNTL.CZ** focuses on Czech productions. 'You can find anything from lyrical fragments, sophisticated essays, intimate expressions to politically bold collages,' adds Slováková. Her personal recommendation is *Buffer Zone Blues* by Slovakian director **Franz Milec**, who, using Google Maps, collected footage of Czechoslovakian buildings that were potential nuclear strike targets in the fifties.

## Enter Virtual Reality

Another thing featured at this year's Ji.hlava Festival will be the largest exhibition of 360-degree and interactive works in the Czech Republic. Attendees will have a chance to look 'into the film' through virtual projections and enter the world of the protagonists. The programme is divided into cinema and installations. Inside the cinema, the viewers will be seated in free-turning chairs, which will allow them to watch the film from every angle. The installations will give attendees the freedom to move around inside the space they occupy and interact with their surroundings. 'We picked works that were somehow connected to the notion of reality. On one hand, we would like to introduce the attendees to the general trends in the medium of virtual reality, but on the other, by including more complex, hybrid or abstract works, we can show them the massive aesthetic development and diversity in storytelling and worldbuilding in virtual reality,' says Andrea Slováková, who curated the exhibition. Among the installations will be *Unrest*, which simulates the feeling of having muscle atrophy. *Beyond the Typhoon* reconstructs the landscape of the island of Gulangyu, which was turned into a postapocalyptic wasteland by Typhoon Meranti.

## Cuba the Resistant, Hiroshima the Ecological

The 22<sup>nd</sup> Ji.hlava Festival will also include **Documentary Dialogues** as part of the wider **Inspiration Forum**. The moderated discussion will feature four guests. 'I know them through my network in the current documentary scene. I did a shoot in Cuba with the experimental poet **David D Omni** about the local underground scene. I met **Alexander Rodionov** in Moscow thanks to my friends from the exceptional theatrical movement Teatr.Doc and I virtually met **Tadatoshi Akiba**, the mayor of Hiroshima, while making *Anarchism for Beginners* and *Czech Peace*,' explains Filip Remunda, the forum's curator. 'Their lives and works inspire me, seeing their worlds changed mine. The eternal Cuban revolution, the Russian police state and even the corporate Japan are losing their fight against these brave bringers of light,' adds Remunda. The fourth guest will be the Polish writer, historian and the editor-in-chief of *Gazeta Wyborcza*, **Adam Michnik**. In the eighties, he was one of the main figures of Solidarity. He spent six years in prison because of his anti-communist views.

## Masterclass: Zanussi and Video Art

Beside the Inspiration Forum, the Ji.hlava Festival will also offer a traditional masterclass – lectures from professional film-makers. The prominent Polish director **Krzysztof Zanussi** and the Austrian director **Gustav Deutsch** will introduce attendees to their work. Deutsch, for example, is concerned with the phenomenology of film as a medium. The Romanian director

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**Radu Jude**, who won the Crystal Globe at the Karlovy Vary International Film Festival, will talk about working with archival materials. ‘I think that film doesn’t necessarily need to be held together by narrative, in the dramaturgical sense of the word, where one character reacts to the other. You can combine a photograph, some sort of sound, a bit of a melody with archival footage and actors. What you get is an object with a message that cannot be expressed through any other means of artistic expression.,’ says Jude.

## Who Will Be on Jury Duty?

The world documentary competition Opus Bonum will, as in previous years, only have a single juror – this year, it will be Krzysztof Zanussi. Among the five jurors for the Between the Seas section will be the American philosopher and film theorist **Thomas E. Wartenberg** and the British musician and musical theorist **David Toop**. The best Czech documentary will be selected by a jury, which, among others, will include the Academy Award winner **Marie Dvořáková** and the curator of the Brooklyn Museum in New York, **Charlotta Kotíková**. The best debut film from the First Lights section will be selected by representatives of festivals and galleries around the world – including the curator of the Parisian Centre Pompidou **Charlène Dinhut** and the director and curator **Maya Shurbaji**. The best experimental film, as in previous years, will be picked by a family jury - the Ji.hlava Festival will welcome the producer **Marina Kožul** from Croatia, who works for an organization that supports experimental films and the director and producer **Hrvoje Hribar**. Last but not least is the student jury, made up of high school students, who will be selecting the best film from the Czech Joy section.

## Short Joy: Select a Winner and an Academy Awards Longlist Nominee!

Short Joy is a competition section which will show short films from around the world that show the potential and power of documentary film-making. This year, like last year, all the nominated films will be made available online between 15<sup>th</sup> October and 28<sup>th</sup> October on the website DAFilms.cz. The jury for this section is made up of the viewers themselves, who can vote online until midnight on the 21<sup>st</sup> October. The winner will receive 3,000 euros worth of online distribution and promotion and, as in previous years, will be nominated for the Academy Awards longlist in the Best Documentary Short Subject category.

## The Institute of Documentary Film: For Filmmakers and the Public

The Institute of Documentary Film will present its work at the Ji.hlava Festival and award the 10<sup>th</sup> Silver Eye Award. Two expert juries will decide on the winners for the short and feature documentary film categories. The winners will receive a financial award of 2,250 euros intended to help in the film’s distribution and an all-year access to the East Silver Caravan supporting tool for festival screenings worth another 2,250 euros.

This year also marks the 15<sup>th</sup> **East Silver Market**. Film professionals will be granted access to completed Central and Eastern European films for the length of the Ji.hlava Festival. These films will also be available throughout the year on the Institute’s website dokweb.net.

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**The International Ex Oriente Film Workshop** focuses on the development and financing of creative documentaries and is primarily intended for film-makers. The second of the three-week workshops will take place at the Ji.hlava Festival between 24<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> October. It will include individual consultations and lectures from renowned film professionals. The open programme will offer, among other things, a lecture and masterclass from **Mike Bonanno** (*The Yes Men*), **Susanna Baranzhieva**, **Sean McAllister** and others.

The alternative distribution platform and film club **KineDok** will offer a site-specific screening of the film *The Dead Nation* attended by its director, Radu Jude. The screening will take place on 28<sup>th</sup> October at 7PM near the memorial of the burning down of the Jihlava synagogue. Attendees will view the film using the so-called ‘silent film’ system, where they can listen to the film using headphones connected to their phones.

**The 22nd Ji.hlava International Documentary Film Festival will take place from 25<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> October.**

For more information visit our new website: [www.ji-hlava.com](http://www.ji-hlava.com).

To acquire press accreditation for the festival, please contact us at [pressservice@ji-hlava.cz](mailto:pressservice@ji-hlava.cz).

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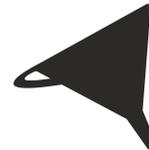
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