

23rd annual Ji.hlava IDFF is over, with a record number of visitors

The 23rd edition of the annual Ji.hlava IDFF closed its doors yesterday. The festival programme showcased 277 films in nine screening halls, hosting almost two hundred discussion sessions. The overall attendance again exceeded 40,000 visitors; with 5,330 accredited visitors and guests.

“I am very proud of our quality festival programme, unveiling especially the face of the up-and-coming filmmaking generation raising new topics and techniques in the context of filmmaking. It is enriching to see this concentration of creative diversity at a single place. **Our aim was to have this year’s Ji.hlava IDFF reflect the world around, provoke us to become active and open up a space for a dialogue.** And we are pleased to see it happen”, says Festival Director Marek Hovorka.

This year’s Ji.hlava IDFF hosted 5,330 accredited visitors. Out of 277 screened films, 91 were shown in their world, 17 in their international and 47 in their European premiere. This year, films competed in 11 sections. Films were shown in 8 screening halls in Jihlava and one in Třešť. **The programme offered 130 discussions in the form of Q&A sessions, and almost 40 debates as part of the Inspiration Forum.** This year the platform took place during six festival days and focused on topics such as crisis of democracy, women in the third millennium or contemporary China. This year, the Inspiration Forum hosted four hundred guests from across the globe: including American climate expert Bill McKibben, Afghani human-rights activist and presidential candidate Fawzia Koofi and future generations commissioner in Wales Sophie Howe.

Among the films that impressed the audience was *The Cave* by Feras Fayyad about an underground hospital in Syrian city of Ghouta. The film also won the award for the best film in section **Testimony on Politics**. Among other successes was the investigative documentary *The State Capture* by Slovak director Zuzana Piussi presenting a devastating portrayal of contemporary Slovakia thirty years after the fall of the Communist regime. Section **Fascinations: Eroticism** also attracted much attention showcasing a retrospective of various forms of representation of physical desire, attraction and manifestations of physical love. The VR zone offering the VR-cinema and installation was a very popular feature.

Five hundred children enjoyed the Ji.hlava for Kids programme. The six-day platform for kids offered twenty-four blocks with workshops, nineteen film screenings and other off-screen events.

Ji.hlava’s this year’s topic was environmental protection. The climate crisis issue was the main focus of one full day of the Inspiration Forum as well as the Closing Ceremony with the presentation of the awards. During the Ceremony, representatives of Czech and foreign environmental initiatives (Istituto Terra, Greenpeace, Fridays for Future) made their appearance. Chief curator of Tate Modern Gallery, Andrea Lissoni, and environmental ombudsman of the Ji.hlava festival, Luboš Slovák, talked about the possibilities of changing the attitude of large institutions in this respect. “Unfortunately, in Czechia, the climate crisis is discussed more by its deniers. **The situation is so serious that the topic should pervade all of our activities including film festival award ceremonies.** This was also one of the reasons why we invited Extinction Rebellion who brought a dead tree on the stage as a symbol of climate crisis in Czechia and invited the government and Czech people to take action and prevent environmental collapse,” says filmmaker Tereza Nvotová who was the host of the evening together with Jan Foukal.

The festival spot was made by Kazakhstani filmmaker Sergei Dvortsevov and the festival trophy was designed by Chinese artist and activist Ai Weiwei.

Dozens of activities also took place as part of the **Industry Programme, intended for 1,163 attending film professionals** from both the Czech Republic and the whole world. The festival again hosted the educational workshop Emerging Producers, Festival Identity, Conference Fascinations focusing on experimental film distribution. “This year’s edition has proven that Ji.hlava is becoming more and more

popular as a destination for film professionals. **Many of them appreciate not only the vibrant festival atmosphere, but also the quality Industry Programme.** Ji.hlava is a meeting point of talents which fosters unexpected collaborations and original documentary projects,” said Head of Industry, Jarmila Outratová.

The Jihlava IDFF was this year attended by 5,330 accredited participants, including 1,163 film professionals, 146 festival guests and 300 journalists. Out of the total of 277 films, 91 will be shown in their world, 47 in their international, and 17 in their European premiere. 3,700 films altogether have been registered for the Ji.hlava IDFF 2019.

The 23rd Ji.hlava International Documentary Film Festival will take place on October 27–November 1, 2020.

<http://www.ji-hlava.com/>

Reports from the 23rd Ji.hlava IDFF by selected media partners of the festival:

[Variety – 23rd Jihlava Daily \(October 25, 2019\)](#)

[Variety – 23rd Jihlava Daily \(October 27, 2019\)](#)

[Variety – 23rd Jihlava Daily \(October 29, 2019\)](#)

[Cineuropa – 23rd Ji.hlava IDFF news report](#)

[Film New Europe – Special edition from the 23rd Ji.hlava IDFF](#)

<u>Winners of the 23rd Ji.hlava International Documentary Film Festival</u>
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OPUS BONUM

Opus Bonum is a competition section for the documentary films from all around the world, with the price for the Best World Documentary Film.

Jury: [Cristi Puiu](#)

● **Best World Documentary Film 2019:**

[Fonja](#) (Ravo Henintsoa Andrianatoandro, Lovatiana Desire Santatra, Sitraka Hermann Ramanamokatra, Jean Chrisostome Rakotondrabe, Erick Edwin Andrianamelona, Elani Eric Rakotondrasoa, Todisoa Niaina Sylvano Randrialalaina, Sitrakaniaina Raharisoa, Adriano Raharison Nantenaina, Alpha Adrimamy Fenotoky, Lina Zacher, Madagascar, Germany, 2019)

Jury statement:

For the warmth, the intuition, the trust, the courage and generosity that are holding together a film that keeps on reaffirming the power of the innocent gaze while echoing the voices of the old masters.

● **Special mention:**

[Fonja](#) (Lina Zacher, Madagascar, Germany, 2019)

Jury statement:

For the intelligent and inspired use of the cinematographic device in her search for the ineffable.

BETWEEN THE SEAS

Between the Seas is a competition section for the countries and nations of Central and Eastern Europe, including their historical, political, and cultural interrelationships.

Jury: [Timothy Corrigan](#), [Kapka Kassabova](#), [Srđan Keča](#), [Isabella Salton](#), [Alessandro Stellino](#)

● **Best Central and East European Documentary Film 2019:**

[TEACH](#) (Alex Brendea, Romania, 2019)

Jury statement:

This is an essential film that needs to be seen around the world. A math teacher working on the fringes of a failing educational system becomes a transformative mentor for a group of young students. Through his dedicated tuition, these young people discover the most important lesson in life: you must fall "tragically in love with what you do". For its celebration of the unconventional, for its embrace of messiness, imagination and passion in teaching Between the Seas award goes to TEACH.

→ The winner will receive an award of 10,000 EUR

BETWEEN THE SEAS: STUDENT FILM COMPETITION

The most significant student films from the Eastern and Central Europe.

Jury: [Timothy Corrigan](#), [Kapka Kassabova](#), [Srđan Keča](#), [Isabella Salton](#), [Alessandro Stellino](#)

● **Best Central and East European Documentary Student Film 2019:**

[Life could be so beautiful](#) (Filip Jacobson, Angelika Herta, Poland, Germany, 2019)

Jury statement:

Starting off as a geographical and cultural bicycle road trip through France, on the trail of a Polish war time writer from the 1940s, the real journey of this film becomes a witty exploration of the dynamics of a relationship. For its free-flowing, unpredictable style, which subverts the conventional narrative of a masculine adventure, and for its wry, open-ended enquiry into the nature of historical trauma and memory

→ The winner of student competition will receive an award of 2,000 USD (in cooperation with the Current Time TV)

● **Special mention:**

[Daily manure](#) (Nikola Krutilová, Czech Republic, 2019)

Jury statement:

Using minimal cinematic means, in a series of intense and poignant sequences, this film reveals the

moral dimension of the global environmental crisis and our inescapable need to confront it. In the course of four seasons we witness the cycle of a cemetery of human consumption and overproduction.

CZECH JOY

Czech Joy is not only a prestigious competition for the best Czech documentary, but also a celebration of the diverse range of new topics and the adventurous spirit of cinematic expression.

Jury: [Zuzana Kirchnerová Špidlová](#), [Monika Kompaníková](#), [Adéla Kubištová](#), [Martin Šrajer](#), [Karel Žalud](#)

Student Jury: [Ludmila Cimburová](#), [Matyáš Janíček](#), [Filip Konvalinka](#), [Marie Musilova](#), [Alice Waisserová](#)

● **Best Czech Documentary Film 2019:**

[Solo](#) (Artemio Benki, Czech Republic, France, Argentina, Austria, 2019)

Jury statement:

We appreciate the lightness, nonviolence and concentration used by the author to portray a strong human story of a suffering person and to get as close as possible without disturbing formal effects and pathos.

→ The winner will receive an award of 10,000 EUR

● **Special mention:**

[Lost Coast](#) (Jiří Zykmond, Czech Republic, 2019)

Jury statement:

An unobtrusive insight into the lives of outsiders attached to the past and a place that, despite dramatic changes, is still their home. The film moderately examines the basic questions of human being in an upside-down landscape. It is a metaphor of a world that is falling apart and that we are no longer able to understand.

→ The authors of the film awarded with special mention will receive camera NIKON, Z series

● **Student Jury Award:**

[Kings of Šumava](#) (Kris Kelly, Czech Republic, Ireland, 2019)

Jury statement:

The film The Kings of Šumava objectively deals with the issue of heroism in a relatively recent time, greatly important to young people. The opinion of the hero's actions is distorted by the contemporary ideology and generally perceived in a negative way. The document states this fact and subsequently offers the views of both the parties dealt with to the same extent, so the document fulfils its primary function, i.e. it is an objective testimony. Thus, it becomes a great teaching material. The artistic and information value is of the same quality. The realistically conceived animation, which is artistically well done, depicts memories that can no longer be captured and the pictorial component of the film portrays the atmosphere of the time.

● **Student Jury Special mention:**

[Apparatgeist](#) (Marie-Magdalena Kochová, Czech Republic, 2019)

Jury statement:

Several shorter documentaries, all made by young filmmakers, have a different position in the list of films. These documentaries should be rated differently than longer formats and they also deserve a special award. Of these, the 11-minute Aparatgeist, which has the potential to evoke various responses, was the most appealing. Its well-styled execution intensifies the stories from smartphones, whose individuality and apparent incoherence perfectly illustrates the issue of disseminating information. The topic requires taking a stand, but this was not even the director's concern. Her relaxed commentary on the film after the screening evidently showed a fresh talent.

FASCINATIONS

Fascinations is a large factory for experimental filmmaking that takes films based on reality and strips them of all that weighs them down, thus significantly expanding the possibilities of filmic expression.

Jury: [Carlos Casas](#), [Andrea Lissoni](#)

● **Best Experimental Documentary Film 2019:**

[Action, Almost Unable to Think](#) (Haonan Mao, China, 2018)

Jury statement:

For its visionary and dramatic approach to world-making, 'Actions, almost unable to think' transforms a real life story into an apocalyptic cinematic journey. Collapsing cutting edge art imaginaries and gaming-CGI techniques Mao Haonan gives shape to a stunning audiovisual experience.

● **Special mention:**

[abiding](#) (Ugo Petronin, Netherlands, 2019)

Jury statement:

A stunning short that unravels and rediscovers the magic and the power of cinema through a personal new technique.

FASCINATIONS: EXPRMNTL.CZ

Exprmntl.cz is a competition survey of the latest Czech experimental films that touch upon reality and never cease in their search for new ways of expressing reality through classical and digital film.

Jury: [Carlos Casas](#), [Andrea Lissoni](#)

● **Best Czech Experimental Documentary Film 2019:**

[Moréna Rex](#) (Marie Lukáčová, Czech Republic, 2019)

Jury statement:

For its inventive and fresh approach and critic to the yet to be exhausted subject matter of how

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capitalism infiltrates and conditions everyday life. Combining genres and styles from advertisement to videoclip, from documentary to doodling graphics, Morena Rex is an ironic attack to the patriarchal financial institutions and their impacts on societies.

→ The winner will receive an award of 50,000 CZK (in cooperation with the Art Zone 8smička)

● **Special mention:**

[Abstract Horror](#) (Franz Milec, Czech Republic, 2019)

Jury statement:

We decided to give a special mention to Abstract Horror by Franz Milec for its outstanding imagery, otherworldly music and sound design. Based on an interview with one of the most controversial thinker of our times this science-fiction journey collapses motion graphics -3d imagery, in an innovative and uncanny way.

FIRST LIGHTS

First Lights focuses on the first great works of beginning documentary filmmakers. Three selected films offer a different view, allowing us to answer questions related to the history of documentary film, its changing topics and styles.

Jury: [Emilie Bujès](#), [Kyungsoo Han](#), [Simon Kilmurry](#), [Meghan Monsour](#), [Peter van Hoof](#)

Student jury: [Hana Dufková](#), [Branislav Kern](#), [Denisa Langrová](#), [Magda Olivová](#), [Petr Vašků](#)

● **Best Feature-Length Documentary Debut Film 2019:**

[Aphasia](#) (Jelena Jureša, Belgium, 2019)

Jury statement:

For its powerful ability to provoke a visceral response. For its capacity to elicit the violence it explores. This film succeeds in translating content into form and experience. This film focuses on the collective silence surrounding brutal historical crimes and the fragmentation of history.

● **Student Jury Award:**

[Aphasia](#) (Jelena Jureša, Belgium, 2019)

Jury statement:

The student jury awards the film Aphasia. It especially appreciated its creative grasp of form as well as the advanced essayist style, forcing the viewer to rethink the boundaries of their past thinking and perception. Based on an analysis of collective and individual inequalities, it makes people accept responsibility for how they have behaved and will continue to behave.

SHORT JOY

Short Joy is a selection of documentary shorts, with the price for the Best Short Documentary Film.

● **Best Short Documentary Film 2019:**

[Shendy Wu: a Diary](#) (Ingrid Pokropek, Argentina, 2019)

Selected by visitors of DAFilms.com online platform.

[A TESTIMONY ON POLITICS](#)

A Testimony on Politics creates space in which voices and visions overlap with images and rhythms, the urgency of the content with formal intransigence. A competition section screening this year's most important political documentaries.

Jury: [Clifford Coonan](#), [Daniel Prokop](#), [Fatima Rahimi](#)

● **Best Testimony on Politics 2019:**

[The Cave](#) (Feras Fayyad, Denmark, Syria, Germany, United States, Qatar, 2019)

Jury statement:

The Cave: "Why don't they stay and help out there?" were often the words said by opponents of receiving refugees during the war in Syria. Firas Fayyad's documentary "The Cave" shows the heroism of the doctors and medical staff who worked in the surrounded and bombed town of Ghouta. They had saved thousands of lives in their underground hospital, although they had limited equipment and had to face distrust and gender prejudice. Despite their high commitment, they were eventually forced to leave the town, facing an ongoing military campaign. The documentary shows human dedication and solidarity that cannot be broken even by the tragedy of war.

[A TESTIMONY ON KNOWLEDGE](#)

A Testimony on Knowledge is a competition section offering a new definition of scientific documentary. The boundaries of human knowledge, the boundaries of the portrayable – and the possibilities of crossing them.

Jury: [Clifford Coonan](#), [Daniel Prokop](#), [Fatima Rahimi](#)

● **Best Testimony on Knowledge 2019:**

[The Other Side of Mars](#) (Minna Långström, Finland, 2019)

Jury statement:

The film shows that even scientific photos of the planet Mars which we might perceive as a pure representation of reality are actually reshaping the reality into something we understand and expect. The extreme example of scientific picturing of an object which we have no direct experience with makes the audience ask: How are the pictures from all the current problems on the Earth reshaped by our expectations and ability to understand.

[A TESTIMONY ON NATURE](#)

A Testimony on Nature is a competition section featuring this year's documentaries that hold conversations on the creation and destruction, on threats and challenges, about man as part of and as a mortal enemy of nature, all through the refined medium of film.

Jury: [Clifford Coonan](#), [Daniel Prokop](#), [Fatima Rahimi](#)

● **Best Testimony on Nature 2018:**

[Anthropocene: The Human Epoch](#) (Nicholas de Pencier, Jennifer Baichwal, Edward Burtynsky, Canada, 2018)

Jury statement:

This film by Edward Burtynsky, Jennifer Baichwal and Nicholas de Pencier puts a human face on global destruction. Humans are affecting nearly all forms of life on the planet. With stunning visual imagery, stories from the people, and with the amazing animals that share this world with us, the filmmakers explain the complexity of our environment and warn about what could be a mass extinction. It's as fast and brutal as the change that overwhelms is. A cry for help. A call for change.

AUDIENCE AWARD

● **Audience Award of the 23rd edition of Ji.hlava IDFF**

[Two Roads](#) (Radovan Šíbrt, Czech Republic, 2019)

CONTRIBUTION TO WORLD CINEMA AWARD

● **Sergey Dvortsevov**

AUDIOREPORT

● **Best audiodocumentary:**

Dobrá vůle - Matěj (Tereza Reková, Czech Republic, 2016)

SILVER EYE

Jury: Heleen Gerritsen, Karin Rywkind Segal, Luisa Schwamborn

● **Silver Eye Award feature length category:**

Transnistra (Anna Eborn, Sweden, Denmark, Belgium, 2019)

Jury statement:

Beautifully shot on 16mm, this is a powerful film that captures an in-between moment, at the end of

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adolescence, a play of youth and light located in a rural place, in an unrecognized country. A very loving view on a dynamic group focused around an unusual and unforgettable female character

● **Special mention:**

The Wind. A Documentary Thriller (Michal Bielawski, Poland, Slovakia, 2019)

Jury statement:

Through mystical images and enigmatic protagonists the filmmaker suggests an extreme connection between human faith and fortune, nature and the weather. Often Lynchian, the director's filmmaking achieves a true thriller as the title suggests.

Jury: Ingrid Beerbaum, Laurence Boyce, Matthew Lloyd

● **Silver Eye Award short length category:**

Pripyat Piano (Eliška Cílková, Czech Republic, 2019)

Jury statement:

To a poetic film that is a compelling combination of sound, image and tone. In dealing with the effects of a tragic event whose resonances are still felt today, the film explores ideas of absence and loss while also being a paean to the power of music, the resiliency of the human spirit, the need to survive and the refusal to forget. A remarkable technical achievement, an embodiment of brave filmmaking and symbolic exploration of hope amongst destruction.

● **Special mention:**

Waiting for a Miracle (Aljona Surzhikova, Estonia, 2019)

Jury statement:

The filmmakers demonstrated extraordinary bravery and presence of mind in keeping the camera rolling in the face of terrible personal tragedy. For its fearless honesty, the jury wish to give the Special Mention to *Waiting for a Miracle* by Aljona Surzhikova.

BEST FESTIVAL POSTER

● **Festival Identity:** [Karlovy Vary International Film Festival](#)

● **Audience Award:** [International Short FF Zubroffka](#)