



25th Ji.hlava IDFF will soon reappear on the big screen!

Preparations for the anniversary 25th edition of the Ji.hlava festival are now in full swing! Its packed programme will include actress Charlotte Gainsbourg's directorial debut, the story of LSD populariser Timothy Leary, a unique focus on Romanian experimental cinema and a retrospective of Slovak-Czech ethnographer Karol Plicka.

This year's Ji.hlava starts in six weeks, returning to cinemas after a year-long break caused by the pandemic. *"We are looking forward to resuming cinema screenings! We also cherish the opportunity to meet again for inspiring discussions. The festival will bring the faces of the film's audiences to the venues, and an intense shared experience to the viewers,"* says Marek Hovorka, Director of Ji.hlava IDFF. One of the festival's cinemas will therefore offer a selection of films released last year. *"The authors were excited by this idea, and they are very much looking forward to Ji.hlava's audience,"* adds Marek Hovorka. However, Ji.hlava is not giving up the online potential. **After the live part of the festival in Ji.hlava's cinemas, a fortnight-long online part of the festival will follow starting on November 1.** *"Each space – the physical and the digital one – has its own specifics, and their programme will be different. Some films will only run in cinemas, the internet will offer bonus features that you won't see in cinemas,"* explains Marek Hovorka. Festival passes, which are now on sale, provide access to both the live and the online part of the festival.

What will be on the programme of the jubilee 25th Ji.hlava IDFF? In line with tradition, the festival will offer classical and experimental creative documentary cinema and themed retrospectives, plus a number of off-competition sections, including Special Events.

Czech Joy announces its first films

The Czech Joy section, which focuses on Czech documentaries, will this year offer, for example, a reflection on the local political landscape. *Votes for President or Attempted Counterrevolution* by Martin Kohout captures the social and political events leading up to the 2018 presidential elections. Documentarian Jan Látal invites viewers into the world of aging singer-songwriter Jan Nedvěd. *This era is not for us* follows the popular Czech musician on what may be his last tour.

This year, Czech Joy will also present animated documentary *Love, Dad* by director Diana Cam Van Nguyen, whose previous student films *The Little One* and *Apart* shone at Czech as well as international festivals. *"Film Love, Dad is based on letters written to me by my dad between 2004 and 2005, during his year-long stay in the Pilsen-Bory detention centre. The letters are full of love that seems to have disappeared... As an adult daughter, this is my reply to his letters and a reflection on our relationship,"* the director explains.

Jane Birkin and the working class

The Constellations section showcasing the **best of films shown at festivals over the past year** will treat us, for instance, to *Jane* by Charlotte. In her directorial debut, British actress Charlotte Gainsbourg explores her complicated relationship with her mother, actress, singer and 1970s fashion icon Jane Birkin. *"It was complicated. I didn't want to be brutal or provocative in any way. I just wanted to ask her a lot of questions,"* said the director after the Cannes premiere.



The history of the working class will be recounted in the film *Returning to Reims* by French director Jean-Gabriel Périot. The film adaptation of Didier Eribon's memoir, *Returning to Reims*, reflects on the current distrust of intellectual elites, the ruling classes and pro-European politics.

LSD and meditating nuns

The story of Timothy Leary, the American psychologist, philosopher and popularizer of LSD, whom Richard Nixon called “the most dangerous man in America”, will be presented in the **Testimonies competition section**. The documentary *My Psychedelic Love Story* by Oscar-winning documentarian Errol Morris looks at Leary through the eyes of his lover Joanna Harcourt-Smith. “*It is actually the story of a little girl who falls in love and becomes a part of a nightmare,*” the film's director told *The Guardian*.

The section will also feature a documentary by Chinese filmmaker Jin Huaqing entitled *Dark Red Forest*, which depicts monastic life on a plateau in Sichuan province. Once a year, ten thousand Buddhist nuns gather here to build small wooden huts where they spend the 100 coldest days of the year – seeking enlightenment.

Karol Plicka and Romanian underground

Festival retrospectives will also be packed with exciting film titles. For example, the audience can look forward to **an extensive showcase of films by the Slovak-Czech ethnographer and filmmaker Karol Plicka**. It will offer fifteen works, including the famous film *The Earth Sings* (1933), winner of Venice Film Festival in 1934. The films will be screened from classic 35mm film reel. “We see the figure of Karol Plicka as an inexhaustible source of inspiration providing an insight into Czech-Slovak traditions and folklore. The selection of films represents a unique showcase of anthropological documentary films, which were produced in the first half of the 20th century under very unfavourable financial conditions,” says Adriana Belešová, programme manager of Ji.hlava IDFF, about the retrospective.

The audience will be introduced to the traditionally unique experimental and underground filmmaking of Eastern Europe. Last year's spotlight was on Poland and this year's attention will turn to Romania. For seven years in a row, Ji.hlava has been mapping experimental and underground film production from the countries of the so-called Eastern Bloc and in 2021 we will present **a remarkable retrospective featuring 24 experimental films created in underground conditions in Romania during the period 1968–1989**. The *Conference Fascinations: Romania* retrospective at this year's Ji.hlava IDFF will bring many cinematographic revelations including a poetic film set in an industrial environment, *The Alert* (1969) by Mircea Săucan which will have its world premiere in Jihlava.

Ji.hlava Awards have been revamped!

The main novelty of Ji.hlava's this year's edition is the innovated award procedure. After several years of preparations, we have been revamping our competition sections, our jury structure as well as the festival's award categories. **Aside from the main award for the best film, the jurors will also hand out prizes for the best cinematography, editing or sound design, and highlight outstanding formats, such as the best film essay**. The jury will also grant an award to the most significant debut film and the most outstanding title from the region of Eastern Europe. The cash prizes accompanying the awards will total 20,000 EUR.



Intimate with music

And what about the festival's music programme? "*Intimacy will be the informal theme of this year's accompanying music programme on the experimental stage and in the traditional festival tent,*" says Pavel Klusák, the music dramaturge of the festival.

In our **traditional music section, The Siren Test**, will present an immersive and surprising journey into the epicentre of black African-American pop – *Summer of Soul*, an irresistible lesson in 80s pop culture – *Italo Disco*, as well as *A Symphony of Noise*, a film about British producer Matthew Herbert and his travels during which he samples sounds with political connotations. *Delia Derbyshire – the Myths and the Legendary Tapes* is dedicated to the female pioneer of electronic music.

Inspiration Forum will discuss women's rights and climate change

The twenty-fifth edition of Ji.hlava will again feature the Inspiration Forum, which will take place for the eleventh time this year. Visitors will be treated to five days of live discussions and lectures, followed by an online programme. "*The Inspiration Forum brings together film professionals with figures from outside the film world thus becoming a place for discovering and initiating new themes for documentaries,*" says Tereza Swadoschová, the Head of Programme of the Inspiration Forum. "*This year we will be looking at **mental health, the relationship between humans and nature, equality and how digital technology can help create a fairer world,***" she adds. The online programme will focus on the challenges facing the Czech Republic after autumn's parliamentary elections.

What will be the Forum's guests? Among this year's guests will be Polish women's rights activist Marta Lempart, one of the initiators of the of the National Women's Strike (Ogólnopolski Strajk Kobiet) movement. American psychiatrist Bruce D. Perry, author of the award-winning book *What Happened to You?* (2021), will speak about the impact of trauma on individuals and society. "Together with the book's co-author Oprah Winfrey they are exploring how early childhood experiences affect us," says Tereza Swadoschová. Digital technologies will be the focus of Canadian philosopher and writer Nick Srnicek, author of successful book about the future of labour called *Inventing the Future* (2015).

The 25th Ji.hlava IDFF will take place on October 26 to 31, 2021. A contribution of 50 CZK will be made from each festival pass purchased by September 20 to the rebuilding of the tornado-damaged Hrušky Elementary School in Southern Moravia. The still discounted accreditation is now available for 650 CZK. Visitors can give a higher contribution to the afore-mentioned cause with any amount paid on top of the 600 CZK. More information at www.ji-hlava.com and on the festival's [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) profiles.