

PRESS RELEASE

JI.HLAVA CELEBRATES 30 YEARS WITH FILMS THAT CHANGED THE WORLD

110,000 EUR WILL BE ALLOCATED TO CENTRAL AND EAST EUROPEAN FILM PROJECTS

Jihlava, 30th June 2026

The Ji.hlava International Documentary Film Festival is celebrating its 30th anniversary and unveiled its visual identity for this year's edition. The festival, which will run for ten days, will mark the milestone with a wide-ranging celebration. Alongside the retrospective programme **Films That Changed the World**, the festival will present a series of special anniversary events, including exhibitions, an audio walk through Jihlava, and a long communal table outside Dukla Cinema. The festival's Inspiration Forum also announced this year's discussion themes, which include corruption, humour and maps.

The festival also announced the **next call of applications to the Ji.hlava / JB Films co-production scheme**. The financial support will have a form of co-production contributions to film projects from Central and Eastern Europe. **Around 3–4 documentary and hybrid films in production or post-production will be supported**. One project can receive up to 40,000 EUR.

The 30th Ji.hlava International Documentary Film Festival will take place **23 October – 1 November 2026**.

Thirty years of Ji.hlava

The festival's anniversary is reflected in **this year's visual identity**.

"Long-time Ji.hlava graphic designer Juraj Horváth transformed the motif of a circle into rippling waves. It beautifully captures the essence of every action spreading outward in concentric circles, like a stone thrown into a pond. The same idea lies behind this year's central retrospective section, Films That Changed the World," says festival director **Marek Hovorka**.

The visual concept also refers to the festival's long-standing motto, **"Thinking Through Film,"** which encapsulates Ji.hlava's curatorial vision.

The retrospective **Films That Changed the World** will present documentaries whose impact reached far beyond the cinema screen.

"I've often been asked whether films can change the world. We decided to take that question seriously and search across the past century for films that truly did. Among them are documentaries that helped free wrongly convicted people from prison, led to changes in regulations, contributed to investment in neglected regions, or even changed legislation. These are

not ideological films, but films that stand alongside ordinary people—individuals, communities and society as a whole," says Hovorka.

The section is presented in partnership with **Pale Fire Capital**, the investment and philanthropic organisation founded by Czech entrepreneur and philanthropist **Jan Barta**, which also becomes the festival's new General Partner for the next three years.

"Documentary film is closely connected to what we do through Pale Fire Capital's philanthropy. For more than a decade we have been addressing social inequality from various perspectives and understand how important it is for society to truly see and understand its consequences. People are naturally far more willing to tackle problems they can genuinely perceive and comprehend.

Documentary film plays an irreplaceable role because it transforms abstract issues into human experience, strengthens empathy and creates space for public debate. Data and analysis are essential, but they are not enough on their own. To create change, they need a broader ecosystem of awareness and education. That is why we want to help strengthen the role of documentary film in society through our partnership with Ji.hlava.

We also recognise that recent developments in cultural funding have brought greater uncertainty to the sector and made long-term planning more difficult. Becoming the festival's main partner this year therefore felt like a natural decision," says Jan Barta.

110,000 EUR to be allocated to films from Central and Eastern Europe

Also in 2026, for the third consecutive year, Ji.hlava IDFF will support outstanding auteur filmmaking from Central and Eastern Europe. **The new call for applications to the [Ji.hlava/ JB Films](#) opens today, with the deadline on August 31.** This co-production support scheme has been running in cooperation with the Czech entrepreneur Jan Barta.

The financial support will have a form of co-production contributions to film projects. Around 3–4 documentary and hybrid films in production or post-production will be supported. One project can receive up to 40,000 EUR.

By contributing to the selected projects, a share of the future profit will be assigned to Ji.hlava/ JB Films and will be subsequently allocated in full to film projects selected in subsequent calls. The aim is to create a tool that will enable repeated support for new films in the region.

"The aim of this new initiative has been to support distinctive auteur projects with distribution potential. The profit that the films will make will be used to support other documentaries in the making," explains the idea Marek Hovorka.

The films supported through the Ji.hlava / JB Films in the past years include *My Dear Theo* by Alisia Kovalenko, *Wishing on a Star* by Peter Kerekes, and other titles.

Anniversary programme includes exhibition of postcards sent by film professionals

The anniversary celebrations are not intended simply as a retrospective. Ji.hlava aims to build on what has defined the festival for the past thirty years and continue developing it.

From its very beginning, bringing people together has been central to Ji.hlava's identity. That is why this year's celebrations will feature a large communal table outside Dukla Cinema.

"The festival wants to be an open space capable of bringing together people from opposite ends of the region, the country and the world, as well as people with different opinions," says Marek Hovorka.

The festival's birthday celebration will take place there on 24 October, marking the day when the first edition of Ji.hlava opened in 1997.

Ji.hlava is also preparing two exhibitions dedicated to the people who have shaped the festival over the years – its audiences, filmmakers and guests.

The first exhibition will be created from photographs submitted by festival visitors. Ji.hlava invites audiences to contribute one image capturing their own personal Ji.hlava experience. Together, these photographs will form a collective portrait of the festival as seen by its audience.

The second exhibition will consist of **postcards from filmmakers and festival guests from around the world** that attended the festival in the past. They were asked to send a postcard to the festival featuring personal messages and memories of Ji.hlava.

To mark the anniversary, the festival is also reviving *My Home Festival*, a project that allows people across the Vysočina Region to host their own Ji.hlava screenings for friends and family. Participants will have the opportunity to invite filmmakers to join discussions after the screenings, connecting home screenings with live dialogue.

Inspiration Forum focuses on corruption, humour and maps

The **Inspiration Forum**, Ji.hlava IDFF's discussion platform, returns for its sixteenth edition with seven days of debates, keynote lectures, workshops and public discussions featuring dozens of Czech and international guests.

Across the festival's two weekends, the programme will focus on four main themes:

- **Maps** (24 October)
- **Humour** (25 October)
- **Corruption** (30 October)
- **How to Change Broken Systems** (1 November)

30th Ji.hlava International Documentary Film Festival

23. 10.—1. 11. 2026

"This year's topics are deeply connected to everyday life. Every day we navigate the world, laugh, encounter power and rules, and wonder why certain things never seem to change even though we know they should. The Inspiration Forum wants to open these discussions to everyone—not just experts. We want the festival to be both an international meeting place and a platform where regional voices are equally heard," says Tereza Swadoschová, Head of the Inspiration Forum.

The 30th Ji.hlava IDFF will take place on October 23 – November 1, 2026. More information at www.ji-hlava.com and on the festival's [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) profiles.