**Twenty-third Ji.hlava IDFF will kick off with a tribute to Věra Chytilová and Jaroslav Kučera**

**Only two days are left until the start of the twenty-third documentary Ji.hlava. The festival will kick off with the world premiere of** [***Jaroslav Kučera A Journal***](https://www.ji-hlava.com/filmy/jaroslav-kucera-denik)**by Jakub Felcman. The Opening Ceremony will feature the presentation of the award for best short documentary film; this year’s awards were designed by Chinese artist and activist, Ai Weiwei. The following festival days will offer virtual reality, discussions as part of the Inspiration Forum, or the possibility to join the planting of an orchard.**

**Felcman’s opening film is a tribute to Jaroslav Kučera, one of the most original cinematographers of the Czech New Wave**, and his wife, director Věra Chytilová. “*They would have turned ninety this year. We are very happy that we can pay tribute to their anniversary with this personal and revelatory movie,*” says Marek Hovorka, the Festival Director. The soundtrack was composed by Czech musician Aid Kid.

“*It is a real film diary that comprises both scenes from a family life, both visual experiments and tests. It resembles a message inserted in a bottle for many years – until we discovered it. We tried to keep it intact, not deformed. We were listening to the material, and tried to keep Jaroslav Kučera’s world as it used to be*”, says Jaroslav Felcman about his film.

**The Ji.hlava festival awards will this year have a new design, made by Chinese artist Ai Weiwei.** “*We approached him with the suggestion to design this year’s festival awards because Ai Weiwei is not only a distinctive figure of the artistic world, but also an activist and a filmmaker. His filmmaking work was introduced in 2012 when he was held under house arrest by the Chinese regime*,” says Marek Hovorka. “*In his films, Ai Weiwei connects ordinary people with art and art with politics, in which he stubbornly reintroduces social and human-rights themes. His work of art is also very diverse, excelling in sculptural or architectural realizations. The person behind all this is Ai Weiwei, a man with a digital hand-held camera which turned into one of the last available weapons of the unequal struggle with the Communist regime as we know it from his film Disturbing The Peace, shown at Ji.hlava seven years ago,*” adds Marek Hovorka.  The award will be presented at the festival’s Opening Ceremony – the first category will be the Short Joy section. The winner will be selected based on viewers’ votes on the Dafilms.cz portal offering competition films in this section.

**Sergey Dvortsevoy to receive the Award**

**The Contribution to World Cinema Award will be granted to Kazakhstani director Sergey Dvortsevoy,** the author of this year’s Ji.hlava festival spot. “*Exactly twenty years after his film Bread Day won the historically first award of the Ji.hlava IDFF Dvortsevoy will introduce Ji.hlava audiences to his comprehensive retrospective and accept another award*,” says Marek Hovorka. “*His contribution is undisputable. In the 1990s, Dvortsevoy was the initiator of the trend of merging documentary and scripted films. In his documentary films, he managed to build powerful images in utterly mundane moments, whereas his scripted films feature authentic scenes with non-actors to achieve maximum realness. He is an inconspicuous master who is making what seems to be the same film over and over again, centred on an unprivileged person fighting for his or her life with constantly present dignity, humour and inner beauty,*” says Marek Hovorka about the laureate.

**Virtual reality of modern slavery**

This year’s Ji.hlava will also invite visitors to step into virtual reality. It will offer **the largest showcase of VR works in the Czech Republic** – both [VR Cinema, and installations](https://www.ji-hlava.com/akce/prekrasne-nove-svety-vr-instalace): presenting linear 360° films in four composed blocks, along with interactive experiences (their installations have six spaces reserved in DKO). “*The VR-zone will feature works that build on the impression of realness and underscore the experience of testimony in a specific time and space,*” says the programme composer, Andrea Slováková, about VR documentaries, such as the Nigeria-made *Daughters of Chibok* about the kidnapping of almost three hundred young women by the terrorist group Boko Haram in 2014, or American film *Ghost Fleet* about the phenomenon of modern slavery on fishing ships in Indonesia. “*We have also prepared installations that develop real stimuli through imaginary implications; they invite viewers to interpret visual art works, providing super-real experiences referencing philosophical or existential issues or creating unique worlds built from the elements of reality. For example, the installation Re-Animated conjures up an entire world of its own*,” adds Andrea Slováková. Accreditation holders can purchase a day pass into the VR-zone for 80 CZK, those without the accreditation will pay twice as much.

**Climatic crisis and women in the third millennium**

**Climageddon, Women in Change, Re:Democracy, God & Co., Made in China – and most of all: How Not to Be Afraid.** These are the main topics of this year’s [Inspiration Forum](https://www.ji-hlava.com/inspiracni-forum). In the course of six festival days, its ninth edition will open up **six key topics and present over one hundred guests from all over the world, in more than thirty discussions.** “*Live discussions following the screenings are an integral part of the Ji.hlava IDFF and often the reason why many directors and visitors keep on coming back. However, the Inspiration Forum gave the festival a brand new dimension, interconnecting the educated and inquisitive festival audience with inspiring personalities in a focused discussion format,*” says Marek Hovorka, the founder of the forum.

What will you find on this year’s programme? Bill McKibben, a notable American environmentalist, will talk about the climate crisis as a challenge. His book *The End of Nature* published in 1989 provided a visionary account of today’s climate situation. He will be followed by Isabella Salton, the head of Brazilian environmental organization Instituto Terra that is fighting to save the Brazilian forest and Jihlava’s native Aleš Palán whose book of interviews with loners from the Šumava Mountains *Better to Go Crazy in the Wild* has become a bestseller.

One day will be dedicated to the position of women in society. The topic of Women in Transformation will be discussed by Fawzia Koofi, an advocate for women rights and a candidate for the president of Afghanistan, Dagestani writer, Alisa Ganieva. Her debut, *Salaam, Dalgat!* had to be published under a male pseudonym to avoid the label “a story for women”.

**Democracy and drones in Africa**

Another major topic of the ninth Inspiration Forum is the crisis of the democratic society. And who will be the debaters? For instance, Sophie Howe, who has for three years been in office as the ‘future generations commissioner’ in Wales. Another guest will be the political scientist and NATO’s strategic communication specialist, Jonathan Terra, who worked as a diplomat in Afghanistan. As a political analyst and commentator he writes about the state of democracy in the USA.

Environmental disasters, fake news, wars for water and resources, terrorism, end of the world. These catastrophic scenarios are slowly becoming an integral part of our everyday existence. This year, the Ji.hlava IDFF will also discuss “how not to be afraid” of these visions and not to be paralysed by fear. The guests will include British futurologist Jonathan Ledgard, author of the cargo drone and droneport concept for Africa, and an American of Mexican descent, writer and former border guard Francisco Cantú, or the director of Ji.hlava’s Horácké Theatre, Ondrej Remiáš.

Another sphere of interest of this year’s Inspiration Forum is China. Norwegian political scientist Stein Ringen or Czech analyst Tomáš Rezek who is engaged with cyber safety and criminality will be among those answering the questions. A day block called God & Co. will then focus on the topic of Catholic Church, its role in today’s world, and its further development. The guest will be the first Czech army chaplain, Bishop Tomáš Holub. He is one of the more progressive Catholic representatives: clearly denouncing nationalism just as the “building of ideological barricades against gender”.

**And apples and pears!**

Do you like fruit? The Ji.hlava IDFF will this year, in collaboration with the Jihlava City, plant a fruit orchard that will annually be extended. The orchard comprising apple, pear, plum and walnut trees will grow in a green area on Rantířovská Street. “*The act of planting an orchard can be perceived as a symbolic gesture inviting to the transformation of places in which we live and which will be increasingly less inhabitable with the ongoing climate change, unless we find a new way of living with nature and in nature*,” says Ľuboš Slovák, this year appointed the first environmental ombudsman of Ji.hlava. “*Several trees will indeed not change the world or the city – that is a matter of a deep systemic change. We hope that the festival will contribute to the public discussion which can foster similar seedlings of change in the society*,” adds Ľuboš Slovák. The planting will take place on October 25 in the morning. For detailed information please go to [www.ji-hlava.com](http://www.ji-hlava.com/) or our [Facebook profile](https://www.facebook.com/jihlavaIDFF/).