**Prague, December 15., 2017**

 **Jan Švankmajer’s INSECT
to Premiere at the Rotterdam Festival**

**The latest film by acclaimed artist, screenwriter, and director Jan Švankmajer, *Insect,* will be screened at the prestigious International Film Festival Rotterdam, which will be underway from Jan. 24 to Feb. 4, 2018.**

The Czech director is a regular guest at the Rotterdam festival, where 11 of his films in all have been presented in recent years. His previous film, *Surviving Life*, also premiered in Rotterdam after being presented at the CineMart co-production market there in 2006. *Insect* has been a long time in the making and comes eight years on the heels of his last work.
The film will be screened as part of “Signatures”, which present new work from established makers, auteurs and festival veterans in the [Deep Focus section](https://mail.filmcenter.cz/owa/redir.aspx?C=BKYP0ecww_YKuq0Sw-XYHpvoJNgilvpZkil3QHkHr4D9VpF7l0PVCA..&URL=https%3a%2f%2fiffr.com%2fen%2fdeep-focus) of the festival.

“*INSECT has a relatively complicated structure: On the one hand there’s a story of amateur theatre actors grounded in the Oedipus complex. Then there is the second act of the play by the Čapek Brothers,* The Insect Play*, and finally documentary scenes from the shooting of the film itself. Dreams are also narrated in it. I chose this format because, as a surrealist, I consider the creative process itself more important than the end result. And so, I opened this process up and let the viewer take a look inside as much as possible, without disrupting the drama itself*,” says Jan Švankmajer.

**Jan Švankmajer** (1934, Prague, Czechoslovakia) studied stage design at the College of Applied Arts and Puppetry at the Prague Academy of Performing Arts. In 1964, he made his first short film. His fantasy-filled animated pictures, such as *Alice* (1987) and *Faust* (1994), have won many prizes, for instance in Cannes and Berlin.

In 1993, Švankmajer won the Golden Bear at the Berlin International Film Festival for his short film *Dimensions of Dialogue*, he participated twice in the Cannes festival where he presented *Faust* in the *Un Certain Regard* section in 1994 and won third prize in 1965 for his short film *Johann Sebastian Bach: Fantasy in G minor.* In 1994, *Faust* won the Special Prize of the Jury at the Karlovy Vary IFF, where the director would later win the Crystal Globe for Outstanding Contribution to World Cinema in 2009. He is an artist and writer as well as a filmmaker.

**INSECTS: Director’s note:**The Čapek brothers’ play *The Insect Play* is a misanthropic play. My screenplay only extends this misanthropy, as man is more like an insect and this civilization more like an anthill. One should also remember the message behind Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*. The Čapek brothers’ play was written in the 1920s, but its misanthropic mood is as topical today as it was then, thanks to the exploitative character of modern civilization. In our film, however, the play forms no more than a background to the actual story, which in effect is closer to Kafka and his Metamorphosis than it is to the Čapeks.
We are not aiming to create a ‘political’ film, but an imaginative one, open to many possible interpretations. This is because, for us, imagination is still, to use Baudelaire’s phrase, the ‘queen of human faculties’.

In terms of form, we again envisage a combination of animation and live action, though we cannot yet say in what ratio these techniques will be used. That will become clear as the screenplay is developed. The type of animation we choose, as well as the overall design concept, should emerge from the formal experimentation we must conduct before we start shooting. What I can say is that we will not be using computer animation (about which I have strong reservations), but relying, as in my previous films *Lunacy* and *Surviving Life*, on traditional or ‘classic’ animation.

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