

CZECH FILM

Spring 2018

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Czech Film Center

The Czech Film Center (CFC) promotes, represents, and markets the local film industry, raising awareness of Czech cinema worldwide. As an official partner of major international film festivals and co-production platforms, the CFC plays a key role in selecting and presenting Czech films and projects. Services provided include consultation, pitching forums and workshops, specialised publications, and international networking. As of 2017, the Czech Film Center operates as a division of the Czech Film Fund, the primary film institute and main public financing body for cinema in the Czech Republic.



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Jan Švankmajer /

Last film by acclaimed artist, screenwriter, and director, *Insect*, will be screened at the Rotterdam IFF.



Olmo Omrzu /

Talented director presents his road movie *Winter Flies*



Three Czech Films at Berlinale 2018 /

When the War Comes, *Touch Me Not* and *the Interpreter*



Focus /
Minority
Coproductions



Painted Bird /

The first adaptation of legendary novel, directed by Václav Marhoul

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In 2018, the Czech Republic celebrates the 100th anniversary of the first state Czechs truly felt a part of – Czechoslovakia, established in 1918. Our country back then was built on the principles of humanity and respect for human dignity, with an orientation toward western democracy. Although history has brought us many ups and downs since then, if we compare the ideals of 1918 with our film landscape today, I'm proud to say we are not that far from there. Czech film today brings viewers strong human stories and interesting directing, as well as a wide range of international coproductions. You can read about some of them in the following pages.

The iconic master Jan Švankmajer speaks rather skeptically of the Czech national character, and of human nature in general, in his latest film, *INSECT*, which premieres this January at the Rotterdam IFF (see page 4). But there is humor in it too, and this is what has helped us overcome our darker and more challenging moments. It is reassuring to see such experienced filmmakers as Švankmajer next to talented young Czechs with a distinct cinematic language and a strong vision to bring to the world. To name just a few, Michal Hogenauer, Olmo Omerzu, and the tandem Tomáš Weinreb and Petr Kazda are all working on new films. We bring you a closer look at them on pages 24, 10, and 21.

We look forward to following them and supporting them on their journey, and to keeping you updated along the way. So stay tuned!

Markéta Šantrochová
Head of the Czech Film Center
Czech Film Fund



Czech Film Critics' Awards

Filthy, the story of a young girl raped by her teacher, directed by Tereza Nvotová, has more nominations than any other film for this year's Czech Film Critics' Awards, to be held in late January. Also nominated for Best Film are *Ice Mother*, by Bohdan Sláma, and *Little Crusader*, by Václav Kadrnka. /

Seven Czech Projects Supported by Eurimages

Four feature films and three documentaries with Czech participation recently received grants from the Eurimages Fund. Features: *Let There Be Light*, by Marko Škop (Slovak Republic/Czech Republic, €120,000), *The Fugue*, by Agnieszka Smoczynska (Poland/Czech Republic/Sweden, €116,897), *Outside*, by Michal Hogenauer (Czech Republic/Latvia/Netherlands, €120,000), and *Aproprierea*, by Romanian director Tudor Giurgiu (Romania/Czech Republic, €250,000). Documentaries: *Fugue*, by Artemio Benki (Czech Republic/France/Argentina/Austria, €100,000), *FREM*, by Viera Čákanyová (Czech Republic/Slovakia, €53,000), and *My Unknown Soldier*, by Anna Kryvenko (Latvia/Czech Republic/Slovak Republic, €37,000). /



Czech Film



Tomáš Vach

Czechs to attend the Rotterdam Lab, Berlinale Talents, EAVE and ACE

Czech producers successfully take part in the international training workshops. Tomáš Vach (Slothmachine) will join the Rotterdam Lab, a five-day training workshop for promising emerging producers from all over the world, thanks to the partnership between the Czech Film Fund and the Rotterdam Lab. Vach's debut *Schmitke* (directed by Štěpán Altrichter, 2015, DE/CZ) premiered at Busan IFF and was awarded for best debut feature at Cottbus Film festival. Producers Petra Oplatková (Sirena Film, Artcam Films) and Mikuláš Novotný (Background Films) have been selected to participate at the EAVE Producers Workshop 2018. Producer Veronika Kührová (Analog Vision – David, *Kiruna 2.0*, *My Unknown Soldier*) and director Adéla Komrzý (*Teaching War*) will attend this year's Berlinale Talents, the annual summit and networking platform of the Berlin IFF. Director and screenwriter Andrea Culková has been selected for the 2nd European Women's Audiovisual network's scriptwriter residency programme in Berlin with her *Testosterone Story*. Moreover, experienced producer Ondřej Zima (Evolution Films) will take part in ACE's annual programme. /

Drahomíra Vihanová, R.I.P.

In sad news for Czech cinema, director Drahomíra Vihanová passed away December 10, 2017, at the age of 87. Vihanová was a member of the Czechoslovak New Wave. Her debut feature, *Squandered Sunday* (1969), was banned for political reasons, and could not be shown in theaters until 20 years after she made it. Through the 1970s and '80s, she was permitted to shoot documentaries only, returning to feature films only after the fall of communism in 1989. /



Drahomíra Vihanová

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Caravan and The Plague at When East Meets West

Two Czech projects have been selected among the 21 films to be presented during the coproduction forum When East Meets West, January 21–23, 2018, at the Trieste Film Festival: *Caravan*, by Zuzana Kirchnerová Špidlová (produced by nutprodukce – Pavla Janoušková Kubečková), and *Plague*, by Jan Těšitel (produced by Sirena Film – Petra Oplatková, Artemio Benki). In addition, experimental documentary *My Unknown Soldier* directed by Anna Kryvenko and produced by Michal Kráčmer (Analog Vision) has been selected for the documentary work in progress section the Last Stop Trieste. /

Kiruna 2.0 at North Pitch — Below Zero

The upcoming documentary project *Kiruna 2.0* (directed by Greta Stocklassa, produced by Analog Vision – Veronika Kührová) will present at North Pitch — Below Zero, organized by the European Documentary Network, January 17–20, 2018, in collaboration with the Tromsø IFF in Norway. North Pitch — Below Zero is an international pitching session for documentary projects focusing on life above the Arctic Circle. *Kiruna 2.0* tells the story of the Swedish polar city Kiruna, balancing on the edge between progress and destruction. /

Now



© Analog Vision

Kiruna 2.0

ROTTERDAM IFF

JAN ŠVANKMAJER



Jan Švankmajer's INSECT

Director Jan Švankmajer likes to say he is a misanthrope. This probably explains why he took inspiration for *Insect*, his latest (and likely last) feature film, from *The Insect Play*, the misanthropic comedy by Karel and Josef Čapek, written in 1922, when “Adolf Hitler, still sitting in a Munich pub, drank beer while scratching out the Jewish ancestors from his family tree” (as Švankmajer says in the film’s prologue). *Insect* has its world premiere at the Rotterdam International Film Festival, in January.

The picture opens with a group of six amateur actors meeting to rehearse the second act of *The Insect Play*. During the rehearsal, however, their lives begin to merge with those of their characters in the play, and the actors start behaving like insects: The ama-

teur director/Mr. Cricket bullies to death his rival in love, Mr. Fly, and fathers a baby Cricket with the aging Rose/Mrs. Cricket. The railway man Nettle, playing the role of Parasite, devours Miss Jilly/the Larva, while the ever-so-diligent Mr. Forest rolls his ball as the Dung-Beetle.



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*“I let everything I do proceed freely, as it spontaneously arises and evolves, and *Insect* especially was basically created in the editing room. I stand before a finished film the same way as an untouched filmgoer and try to recognize what it is that I have actually filmed.”*

Švankmajer is at it again, commenting caustically on contemporary civilization, which to him seems increasingly to look like an anthill. (Though he hastens to add that his film’s inner core is closer to Kafka’s *The Metamorphosis* than it is to the Čapek brothers’ drama.)

For years, the film treatment of *Insect* was on the backburner, awaiting development: Švankmajer wrote the story for it in 1971, and although the film follows that story quite faithfully, it adds several layers. The main one is documentary footage from the shoot itself, revealing the animation process and creation of special effects. Also, the film includes scenes with the actors out of character, describing their dreams directly to the camera (it is through these relaxed passages that it becomes clear how much their acting is intentionally stylized and stiff in the rest of the film). Finally, there is Švankmajer’s prologue, in which he as author, much like in his previous film, *Surviving Life*, prepares the audience for what lies ahead.

Švankmajer describes the reasons for his approach: “The structure of the film *Insect* is quite complicated. In part, it’s a story of amateur actors, built on the blueprint of the Oedipus complex. Then there is the second act of *The Insect Play* by the Čapek brothers, and finally, the documentary footage from the film shoot. It also includes the retelling of dreams. I chose this form because as a surrealist I consider the creative process more fundamental than the end result. So I opened up the process to let the audience have a peek into it as much as possible without disrupting the drama of the action. In my prologues, I’m mostly attempting to attune the audience to the fact that they’re about to see an imaginative film, where nothing is as it seems, and that it therefore requires their active participation.”

The Power of Imagination

Imaginative films, as Švankmajer calls his works, depict the dark, unconscious, and magical in human beings.

ROTTERDAM IFF

JAN ŠVANKMAJER



“Never work;
always improvise.”

Imagination disturbs the boundary between reality and fantasy, reality and dream. Typically, in his films, a simple story serves mainly as the framework for a journey into the unconscious, where characters are more akin to symbols than full-blooded humans.

Insect continues the line of Švankmajer's feature films that began with *Conspirators of Pleasure* (1996), in which animation slowly gives way to live action with intentionally stylized actors and richer dialogues. From *Little Otik* (2000) to *Lunacy* (2005) to *Surviving Life* (2010), the director increasingly treats the actors as if they themselves were puppets — an emotionless material body.

Švankmajer likes to say that he casts actors in his films by the look of their mouths, tongues, and eyes, and for the shooting of *Insect* he says he asked them to forget their craft. “In an imaginative film, everything has the same importance: the mise-en-scène, the costumes, the actors, the sound, the props — it can all carry meaning. Realistic films prefer dramatic action for the purpose of introducing a psychological dimension. This type of ‘psychologizing’ would be out of place in an imaginative film. An actor-puppet is better suited as the bearer of an archetype, a symbol, or a persona,” Švankmajer explains. He considers David Lynch, David Jařab, Karel Vachek, and the Brothers Quay as other creators of imaginative films.

Final Film With Several Firsts

The 83-year-old Švankmajer says this is his final full-length project, especially in light of his age. “*Insect* is our last feature film. The financing of a new project takes us five or six years on average. For *Insect* it was

seven. Film realization, including pre-production, lasts two years. 83 plus 6 plus 2 equals 91. You can't plan that far ahead,” the filmmaker explains with his trademark self-irony.

Insect may be Švankmajer's last feature film, but it's the first in which he has used digital recording (to document the film shoot), and also his and his crew's first time editing digitally. Another novelty was the decision to shoot special effects and animation scenes on a still camera. Editing ran side by side with shooting, as the Athanor studio in Knovíz near Prague houses both the editing room as well as the film studio. Altogether they spent a year and a half shooting and editing.

Neither Švankmajer nor his crew use a shooting script, and their working method could be described as a carefully prepared improvisation. As the director says in one of his creative Ten Commandments: “Never work; always improvise.”

Švankmajer's partnership with Jaromír Kallista is a truly remarkable one. Kallista is not only his creative partner dating back to the '80s, but is also his producer and co-owner of the Athanor film production company behind Švankmajer's films.

Kallista elaborates on the pair's creative process: “After 40 years working together, we're so used to each other that we just start from the text, with thorough preparation. I keep funds in reserve for any changes and additions that come from inspiration on set, or during the simultaneous editing and work of other crew members. The creative phase doesn't end until the picture and sound edit are finalized. It's all the result of perfect preparations, and thanks to his pictorial visual sense



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ROTTERDAM IFF

JAN ŠVANKMAJER

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Švankmajer has already done the edit in his head even before shooting begins, so he can afford to shoot additional stuff and reshape the film even after shooting has ended.”

Švankmajer confirms that he leaves the creative process open for as long as possible: “I let everything I do proceed freely, as it spontaneously arises and evolves, and *Insect* especially was basically created in the editing room. I stand before a finished film the same way as an untouched filmgoer and try to recognize what it is that I have actually filmed.”

Insect can pride itself with another first in Švankmajer’s filmography as well, in that the filmmakers turned to crowdfunding for the first time to help finance the film, using the Indiegogo platform. After just eight days, they reached 100 percent of their goal, with contributions from 68 countries around the world. The funds from the campaign accounted for 15 percent of the total budget, and according to Kallista, this allowed them to fully cover production expenses for the first time ever, whereas in the past the producer-director duo subsidized the films from their own fees.

Insect is credited as a Czech-Slovak film, as part of the creative team hails from Slovakia (including actress Kamila Magálová in the role of Rose), while the Slovak Audiovisual Fund and the PubRes production company together covered 20 percent of the budget, making Slovakia an official coproduction partner. The total budget came to 46 million Czech crowns (1.6 million euros), with Czech Television providing nearly 20 percent in financial and material support, Athanor 28 percent, and the rest of the circa 17 percent split between the Czech Film Fund and the European programs MEDIA and Eurimages.

“Besides, I don’t consider myself merely a filmmaker. I make drawings, create objects, and write just as intensely. If I don’t make any more films, I’m certainly not going to see it as some sort of fatal blow.”

Cynicism Instead of Pathos

The form and tone of *Insect* make it a black comedy, jeering at our antlike civilization of today, but also at the film itself, with its wooden, stylized acting, with its special effects and animation evoking the illusion of magic while not really magical at all. By pulling the curtain back on his own filmmaking methods, often disclosing his tricks to comic effect, Švankmajer seems to be making fun of the film as nothing but one big lie and illusion — and, by extension, making fun of himself as a director.

Given that this is by design his final film, it is an appealing gesture: Instead of the pathos that one might expect from a director his age, Švankmajer’s last work is full of youthful cynicism. Perhaps it isn’t the end of his creative career, though.

“I’m not giving up the possibility of making a shorter film, including trying to apply automatism to film,” he says. “Besides, I don’t consider myself merely a filmmaker. I make drawings, create objects, and write just as intensely. If I don’t make any more films, I’m certainly not going to see it as some sort of fatal blow.”

Three Czech Films at Berlinale 2018

by Hedvika Petrželková

Three Czech coproduction films have been selected for the Berlinale IFF. The psychological drama *Touch Me Not*, directed by Adina Pintilie, will be included in Competition, while the road movie *Interpreter*, directed by Martin Šulík and starring Jiří Menzel and Peter Simonischek, premieres in Berlinale Special, and Panorama presents the painfully relevant documentary *When the War Comes* by Jan Gebert.



his curiosity, so he decides to find out who exactly his father was before he dies. So it is that the two old men, the ascetic Ali and the bon vivant Georg, embark on a journey together to find the surviving witnesses of the wartime tragedy.

Interpreter was filmed at various locations around Slovakia and in Vienna. In addition to Marek Leščák, the director brought in another long-time collaborator of his, cinematographer Martin Štrba. Alongside the lead duo, Zuzana Mauréry, Eva Kramerová, and Attila Mokos play supporting roles. The film was produced by the companies Titanic (Martin Šulík, Slovakia), IN Film (Rudolf Biermann, Czech Republic), and COOP99 (Bruno Wagner, Austria). The coproducers are RTVS: Radio and Television of Slovakia and Czech Television. The project was supported by the Czech Film Fund and the Slovak Audiovisual Fund.

The film *Interpreter*, a Slovak-Czech-Austrian coproduction, is the work of prominent Slovak director Martin Šulík and the equally noted screenwriter Marek Leščák, who already have several successful films to their names, including *The Garden* (1995) and *Orbis Pictus* (1997). The lead roles were played by the Oscar-winning director Jiří Menzel and the Austrian actor Peter Simonischek, winner of the European Film Award for best actor in 2016, for the film *Tonni Erdmann*.

Interpreter tells the story of 80-year-old Ali Ungár (Menzel) who comes across a book by a former SS officer, describing his wartime activities in Slovakia. Ali realizes that one of the passages recounts the execution of his parents, and sets out to visit the former SS man, who now lives in Vienna. Instead of his parents' murderer, though, Ali finds only his 70-year-old son. Georg Peis (Simonischek) is a former teacher who has distanced himself from his father's past and is now struggling with alcoholism. The interpreter's visit stirs

Touch Me Not

This psychological drama is the feature debut from Romanian Adina Pintilie, who graduated from the Directing Department at the National University of Drama and Film in Bucharest. Her medium-length film *Don't Get Me Wrong*

received the Golden Dove for best documentary at DOK Leipzig 2007. *Touch Me Not* is a film about how human beings can reach intimacy in the most unexpected ways.

The main character, Laura, has worked for years in a mannequin factory, peeking in on other people's intimate lives. She pays to be touched, hiring young boys to create an illusion of intimacy. Tudor is an actor who earns his living as a masseur and wants a woman who rejects his attempts at making contact. One day, Laura sees an interactive show by Tudor and Paul that deeply moves her, and gradually becomes a silent witness to their lives, their solitary longing resonating with her own. In this mirroring process, the walls that she has so skillfully built around her collapse under the torrent of her repressed emotions.

Pintilie wrote, directed, and also edited the final film. The main role is played by Laura Benson, a British actress based in France. The film was shot in Bucharest, Leipzig, and Sofia. *Touch Me Not* was supported by the Czech Film Fund as well as Eurimages. The main producer is Manekino Film (Adina Pintilie, Bianca Oana, Romania), with coproducers Agitprop (Martichka Bozhilova, Bulgaria), rohfilm (Benny Drechsel, Germany), Les Films de L'Étranger (Phillipe Avril), and, on the Czech side, PINK (Radovan Šíbrt, Alžběta Karásková).

When the War Comes

PINK is also the company behind *When the War Comes*, the remarkable



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Touch Me Not

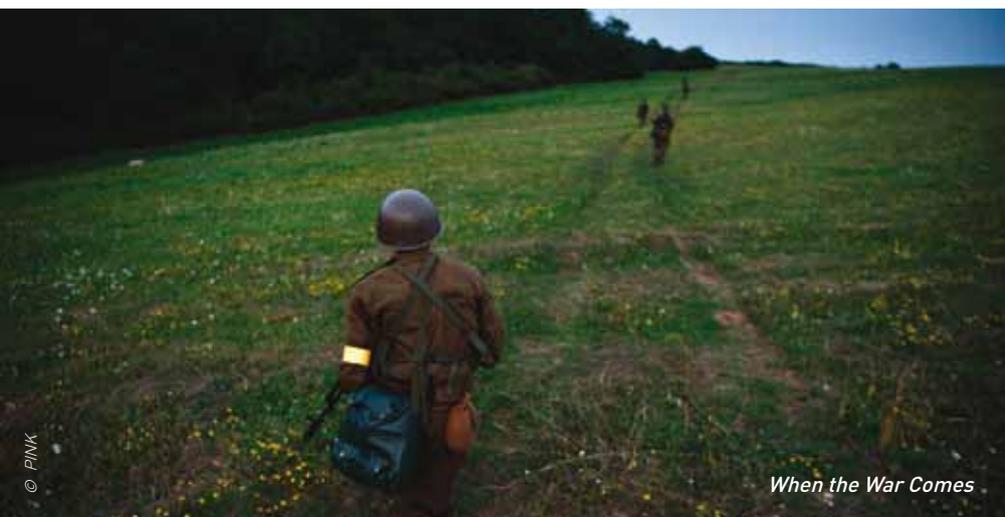
documentary by Jan Gebert appearing in the Panorama section of this year's Berlinale. Gebert follows a fresh-faced university student named Peter, who has a nice car and a girlfriend, but his main interest lies elsewhere: in the forest mountains, with his militia, Slovenskí branci (Slovak Recruits). With 400 young members, most of them teenagers, and units throughout Slovakia, it's one of the largest paramilitary groups in Eastern Europe. Peter himself underwent the same training from the Russian Cossacks as the Ukrainian separatists. The reason? He fears Europe is heading inevitably toward a clash of civilizations, and he is determined to defend the Slavic world with a gun in his hand.

"Most of the militia members looked completely normal at first. I found out they study at grammar schools and universities, they lead normal lives by day. That was actually a bigger shock than if they'd started doing the Nazi salute," says Gebert of his first visit. He describes the situation as similar to

what it was in 1930s Germany, when Nazism succeeded in addressing normal, mainstream society. "The parents acknowledge the militia's activities; the police almost always leave them alone. On TV, the militia members hear politicians like Zeman, Orbán, and Trump, who say and think the same things they do. This just encourages Peter."

According to Gebert, though, Peter has greater ambitions than simply leading the militia: He wants to go down as a great figure in Slovak history. "With the Recruits, he practices working with people, speaking publicly. He's created a kind of model totalitarian society and proclaimed himself chief for life. During training he takes away the Recruits' names and gives them numbers instead. I think he'd like to apply this model to all of Slovakia one day." For Gebert, the film is mainly about the birth of totalitarianism.

Jan Gebert graduated in history and Latin American studies from Charles University in Prague. His directing debut, *Stone Games* (2012), premiered at the Jihlava IDFF and received a Special Jury Prize. *When the War Comes* is a production by PINK, HBO Europe, and Croatian coproducers Hulahop Film & Art Production. The authors presented at a number of international pitching forums (Good Pitch – Britdoc, ZagrebDox, East Doc Platform, DOK Co-Pro Market, and Gap-Financing Market). The film received support from the Czech Film Fund.



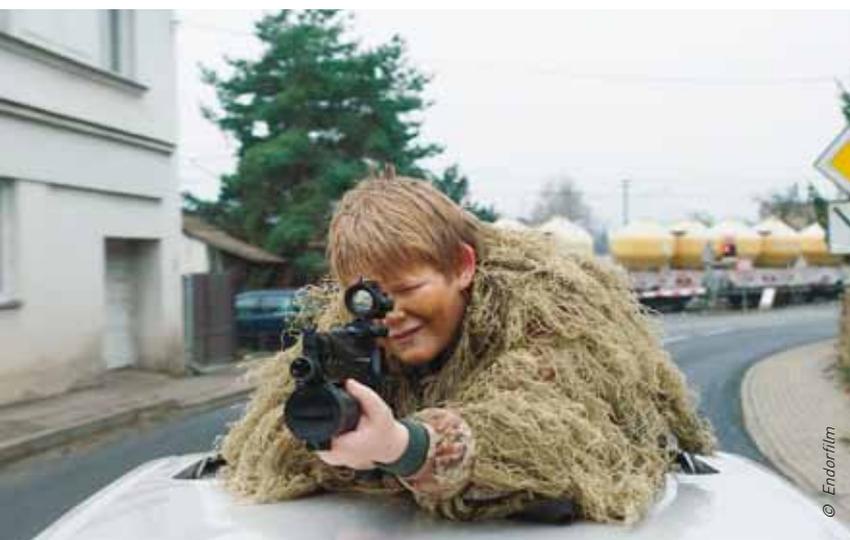
When the War Comes

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Winter Road Movie With Boys and

by Iva Přivřelová

Czech-based, Slovenian-born Olmo Omerzu is a talented young director whose previous films premiered at the Berlinale and San Sebastian. Even as his last feature, *Family Film*, was raking in awards and festival accolades, he was already at work on his next project. Now his road movie, *Winter Flies*, is finished, and Omerzu is ready to hit the festival circuit.



Why is your new film called *Winter Flies*?

It's a winter road movie and there are flies in it. It tells the story of a 14-year-old boy who's caught by police driving a car with a license plate from a different part of the country. When questioned, he tells an incredible story about himself and another boy. The flies are in the police station—there's even a scene with a fly being brought back to life. You don't expect flies in winter, just like you don't expect to see two young boys on the road. I like the slight peculiarity of the title, plus the word "flies" also means "flying," which is connected with joy. Unfortunately, we couldn't come up with an equivalent in Czech, so the Czech title is different.

As in your previous films, the protagonists of *Winter Flies* are children thrown into an adult situation. Only this time the script was written by Petr Pýcha, instead of you.

ovie Flies

Petr writes for radio a lot, but this script was never broadcast, maybe because of some foul language. Later, he sent the screenplay to me, since he felt it had some resemblance to my first feature, *A Night Too Young*. He was right. The mood was similar and the subject matter felt close to me. I wasn't used to working with a screenplay based so much on dialogue, but the dialogues were so lively I wanted to keep them. I needed nonactors for the boys, so we ended up rehearsing for eight months, which was the longest I've ever rehearsed in my life. We spent half a year just improvising, so the boys could learn how to be in front of the camera.

Did you choose the boys based on their personal resemblance to the characters?

Yes. For example, they both come from small towns. And they also had an influence on the film. I wanted them to make their mark on it, since I knew it would only work if it was authentic and intuitive.

Did you use your festival trips with *Family Film* to seek support for your next film?

Not really. I didn't travel that much with *Family Film*, which made my actors happy, since they could go instead. I usually got out of it by saying I was busy preparing my next project. At the time, I felt like the only way my film would be good was if I worked on it all day and gave it 150 percent. Also, I hope by now I have some

credit. *Family Film* was a coproduction, and all the partners were satisfied with the result, so we asked them again. Although not everyone said yes.

Did your previous achievements make it any easier to finance *Winter Flies*? Your debut, *A Night Too Young*, premiered at the Berlinale and won a Czech Film Critics Award as Discovery of the Year. Your second feature, *Family Film*, premiered at the San Sebastian IFF, and won the Best Artistic Contribution Award at Tokyo.

We got money from the Czech, Slovak and Slovenian film funds, then also from the Polish fund, after we presented *Winter Flies* at the pitching forum held by the Czech Film Center at the Finále Plzeň festival. But it wasn't an



foto Marek Bartoš

OLMO OMERZU

was born in Ljubljana, Slovenia, in 1984. He made his first short film at age 13. In 2004, he went to study directing at FAMU in Prague, and after graduating he stayed in the Czech Republic. His feature debut, *A Night Too Young* (2012), had its world premiere in the Forum section of the Berlinale. His second feature, *Family Film* (2015), premiered at San Sebastian, and won Best Artistic Contribution Award at Tokyo. It also won the Czech Film Critics Award for Best Film and Screenplay.



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“I’m interested in the things bubbling under the surface, the things you can’t really write but you can show on screen.”

easy ride. Some of the grants didn’t work out. Plus, winter means shorter shooting days, and we had to start making the film before the boys grew up.

It’s true I have a bit of a name now, but getting money always depends on the screenplay and the project itself. When your script is a little different, like it was for *Family Film*, you have to deal with conservative people judging it based on the standard model. For example, people who don’t like the fact that you don’t have one main hero, but instead a collective hero.

So being original isn’t an advantage when you’re competing for money?

Films that are easy to define, in terms of ideas and genre, are easier to finance. Coproduction funds and sales agents prefer clear labels. The first thing everyone asks is what is it and who is it for. But I enjoy going counter to that, mixing genres. If I had to label *Winter Flies*, I would call it a winter road movie.

Why is it so important to say that it takes place in winter?

The audience should sense that the boys are running from something. Most road movies are set in the summer, when you can sleep outdoors, and the story is about freedom. In winter, the only place you can keep warm on the road is inside your car, and you have to have enough gas not to freeze. So you automatically ask, why is this person traveling, what are they running from, however happy they look. I’m interested in the things bubbling under the surface, the things you can’t really write but you can show on screen.

Do you enjoy the getting-money part of the film-making process?

It’s my least favorite part. I don’t like talking to lots of people and pitching a film, but luckily my producer, Jiří Konečný, does. There are so many directors, it’s never easy getting money. Plus, it always comes with the risk that you’ll have to compromise. Twenty years ago, you got money from a single source and just went and started shooting. All that has changed with multiple-source financing. Now, you often need money from one fund before you can ask the others. It’s a long wait, so to keep myself occupied I polish the script or rehearse with my actors.

What do you gain from the rehearsal period?

Rehearsals let me explore how far we can go and discover something new. After *Winter Flies*, I feel very confident working with actors. Even though we learned a lot about it at film school, what we were taught was more or less useless. It wasn’t until I did a workshop with an expert from the U.S. that I understood you can get a good take even from a bad actor. The thing is, you can’t explain what you want intellectually. You have to find a way to change their motivation or give them a task to do. It’s similar with children who don’t have acting experience. I’m looking forward to my next film, where I won’t be using children, so I’ll be able to play around with the situations more.

Are you looking forward to meeting festival audiences with your new film?

It’s a good experience seeing people’s reactions. I enjoy the post-screening Q&As. Once I finish a film, I want to read reviews and hear people’s opinions. I also think festival turnouts should be added to viewership numbers. With a good agent, you could have a film screened at three or four festivals a month, for a pretty large audience. A successful festival film can be seen by more people than a film that only screens in Czech cinemas. That’s why I don’t like it when people say it’s pointless to make an art film in the Czech Republic, since nobody will go see it in our cinemas.

Sundance World Premiere for Czech-filmed *The Catcher Was a Spy*

by Ludmila Claussová

Ben Lewin's film about Moe Berg, the American baseball player turned secret agent, was shot in Prague in spring 2017. It will have its world premiere in the World Cinema Dramatic Competition at Sundance.



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photo by Dusan Martinec

The film was produced by PalmStar Media, with Animus Films, Serena Films, and Windy Hill Pictures. Filming took place in the Czech Republic during February and March of 2017, in cooperation with the local company Czech Anglo Productions. Czechs made up a large portion of the crew, including executive positions, with Václav Mottl as line producer, Petr Čechák as production sound mixer, Daniel Kutaj as gaffer, and Andrea McDonald as makeup designer. Music for the film was also recorded in the Czech Republic. In total, the production spent around 10 million euros in the Czech Republic and received a 1.4 million euros rebate from the Czech Film Fund.

"We had 30 filming days in the Czech Republic. Ninety-nine percent of the time we used real locations here, and reproduced the motifs of Washington, New York, Tokyo, Rome, the Italian and Swiss Alps, and Zurich. We also built period decorations for the exteriors of Rome, including ruins in the middle of a bombed-out city," says line producer Václav Mottl of Czech Anglo Productions.

Prague shooting took place at sites such as Hotel Evropa on Wenceslas Square,

where the former first-floor restaurant became a New York nightclub and higher floors served as hotel rooms in Tokyo. It was this simultaneous variety and universality of Czech sites that drew praise during filming from one of the producers, Jim Young of Animus Films.

"Our filming was particular in that we have multiple motifs from various countries around the world. Filming in all of those places would be difficult and expensive, so it's amazing that we found all these locations in one country. I can't imagine where else it would be possible to find convincing backdrops for everything from New York to Rome and the Alps so close together. In this, the Czech Republic is simply unique," said Young.

Young also had praise for the Czech crew: "Enthusiasm for working on this film shone through from everyone. It's clear that people here haven't just been making films for the past ten, twenty years, but they have it in their blood.

More than a century of experience is just obvious, and you can tell that filmmaking has a long tradition here. You feel that you are absolutely in the right place with your film here."

The hero of the film is Moe Berg (1902–72), played by Paul Rudd. Berg played 15 seasons in the U.S. major leagues, but may have excelled more in the ivory tower than on the diamond. He graduated from Princeton University and Columbia Law School, and was often referred to as "the brainiest guy in baseball." He spoke several languages fluently, which is perhaps what fated him to his second career, as a spy for the U.S. Office of Strategic Services (precursor to the present-day CIA).

In addition to Paul Rudd, Paul Giamatti (physicist Samuel Goudsmit), Jeff Daniels (OSS boss "Wild Bill" Donovan) and Guy Pearce (military specialist Furman) also filmed in the Czech Republic. Actress Sienna Miller rounds out the ensemble. /



Shooting in Prague

© PalmStar Media LLC,
photo by Dusan Martinec



Happily Married

by Tomáš Stejskal

Czech production companies are increasingly entering into minority coproductions, with projects screening at festivals from Berlin to Cannes.

During a panel discussion on minority coproductions at Karlovy Vary in 2010, Peter Zawrel, head of the Austrian Film Fund, likened this kind of international collaboration to a marriage. Přemysl Šoba, representing the Czechs on the panel, quipped that in that case the Czechs were still on their honeymoon. Seven years later, it seems the honeymoon is over and the marriage is in full swing.

Seven years ago, the Czech Film Fund allocated more than a million euros a year for minority coproductions. Since then, numerous internationally

successful projects have been created with the support of Czech money and expertise. One of the first major achievements was the Danish-Swedish-Czech period costume drama *The Royal Affair* (2012), which, with the exception of two filming days in Dresden, director Nikolaj Arcel shot entirely in the Czech Republic. More than 13 percent of the budget came from the Czech side, with the Czech Film Fund contributing CZK 4 million (€143,000) and incentives reaching almost CZK 13 million (€4.6 million). Not only did local coproducer Sirena Film secure the locations (including the Kroměříž Castle, nearby gardens, and Český Krumlov),

but several Czech actors were cast in the film, including Nikol Kouklová. Most of the crew were Czech, and famed set designer Martin Kurel oversaw the production design. His craft and know-how were a great contribution to the film's authenticity, leading to two Silver Bears at the 62nd Berlinale: Mikkel Boe Følsgaard as male lead, and Nikolai Arcel and Rasmus Heisterberg for screenplay.

The Czech-French Connection

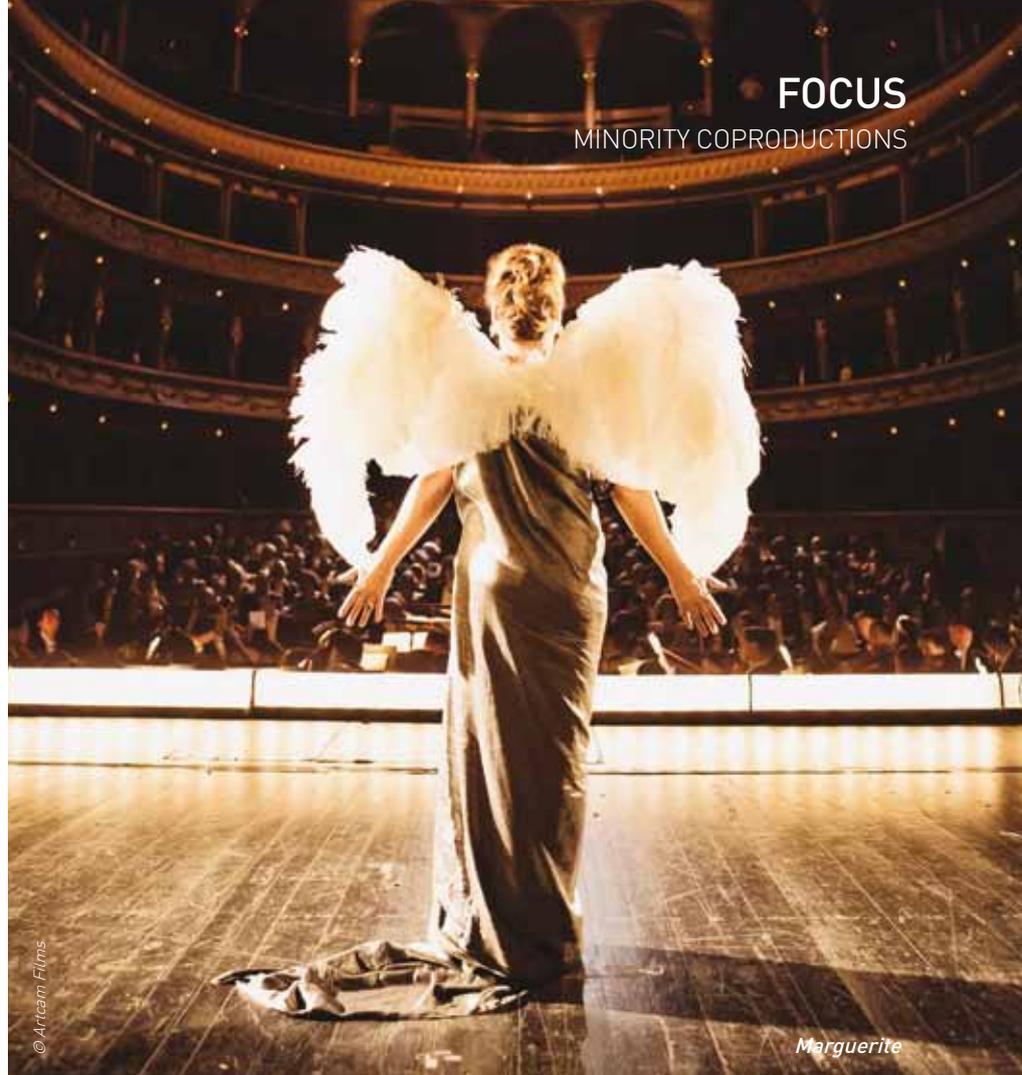
Besides Nordic films, Sirena Film focuses on French coproductions. Producer Artemio Benki has a nose for projects that break through at even the

biggest festivals. The biographical drama *Marguerite* (2015), about “the world’s worst opera singer” Florence Foster Jenkins, was a French-Czech-Belgian coproduction. Director Xavier Giannoli decided well in advance to shoot the movie in Prague. “Years ago, I was walking around Rudolfinum, listening to the Jenkins recordings in my headphones, when it all connected and I knew I was going to shoot here,” he told the Czech magazine Reporter.

“He was completely absorbed in the story, talking about it all the time and stressing how much he wanted to shoot it in Prague,” said Benki. He said he and Giannoli went for walks through the city, hanging out in cafés and discussing this fascinating story of a woman who could not sing, yet performed as an opera diva.

The film, which was shot in several places around the Czech Republic — from theaters in Prague and Brno to the Slapy Chateau, where Marguerite lives with her aristocrat husband — has been sold to more than 125 countries since its premiere at the Venice IFF. The Czech coproduction contribution was 10.3 percent; the film, except for two days, was shot entirely in the Czech Republic; most of the crew were Czech; and Czech production designer Martin Kurel won the César in France for best set design.

Prague’s Art Nouveau architecture also played an important role in another



© Arteam Films

Marguerite

biographical drama coproduced by Sirena Film. But debut director Stephanie Di Giusto didn’t conceive of *The Dancer* (2016), her ambitious project about modern dance icon Loïe Fuller, as just another biopic. She not only presents the original concept of dance with special effects, lights and complex sets, but also gives audiences a story about

the birth of modern art, with the dance pieces, thanks to the great cinematographer Benoit Debie, approaching a whirl of Cubist abstraction. The French actor and singer Soko stars, alongside Gaspard Ulliel, Lily Rose Depp, and Mélanie Thierry.

The key scene of an “ideal dance performance” was shot in Prague, where the production filmed 10 days with Czech actors in supporting roles. The Czech coproduction share was 10.5 percent, the film received CZK 2 million from the minority coproduction budget of the Czech Film Fund, and film incentives amounted to CZK 3.2 million.

“I needed a beautiful hall, but the original Folies Bergère in Paris has been completely renovated,” said Di Giusto. She was looking for the place of Fuller’s dreams for her “ideal performance,” the one contemporary critics were so excited about, including the poet Mallarmé. “I was looking for the place in Europe where Art Nouveau is best preserved. As soon as I saw



© Arteam Films

The Dancer

FOCUS

MINORITY COPRODUCTIONS



Prague's Municipal House [Obecní dům], I knew that was it," Di Giusto said. "That was where I would shoot the scene."

Two years ago, the French-Czech-Belgian project *The Dancer* competed in Un Certain Regard in Cannes, and another minority coproduction with a significant Czech contribution screened there last year. Financially speaking, the Czech share in György Kristof's debut, *Out*, a Slovak-Hungarian-Czech coproduction, was "just" 20 percent. However, according to coproducer Jiří Konečný of Endorfilm, the Czech artistic investment played a role in the movie's selection for Cannes.

"Editing and sound were the key elements," said Konečný, praising the work of editor Adam Brothánek and recording engineer Jan Richter. Image and sound postproduction were handled by the Czech outfits UPP and Bystrouška. The film, with a total budget of about CZK 32 million, received CZK 3.5 million from the Czech Film Fund.

What drew Konečný to the project was the originality of *Out's* seemingly ordinary story. "An older guy loses his job and dreams of being a fisherman. Then one day he goes to work at the shipyards in the Baltic, only to find out it's a scam. I think it's a very courageous idea," Konečný said. He added that he's a believer in producer culture. "A producer's courage, and the decisions

producers make, can shape the whole film environment," he said.

Czechs on the Romanian Road

The increasing flexibility of Czech institutions also helped in a slightly older project, where Konečný took part only in the late stages of production. The Romanian-Czech-Bulgarian "western" *Aferim!* (2015), by renowned director Radu Jude, was post-produced by UPP, a Prague-based outfit that offers world-class post-production and visual effects, with work ranging from major Hollywood productions to festival art films, including *Blade Runner 2049*.

The black-and-white satire *Aferim!*, set in the Wallachian region of Romania in 1835, tells the story of two policemen's search for a runaway Romani serf who has an affair with the local aristocrat's

wife. Sarcasm and sharp social commentary intertwine throughout with soft light landscapes, filmed on classic 35mm material. With CZK 3 million in support from the Czech Film Fund, *Aferim!* was finished, and Jude took home the award for Best Director from Berlinale 2015.

Now Konečný is putting together Jude's new film, *I Don't Care Whether History Remembers Us as Barbarians*, with Romanian producer Ada Solomon. The film tackles the taboo topic of national guilt, telling the story of a young theater director who attempts to stage a dark chapter of history in which the Romanian army, as allies of Nazi Germany, brutally exterminated 20,000 Jews. The project, with a total budget of €1.4 million, was presented at the CineMart coproduction market in Rotterdam, and has already been supported by the Creative Europe MEDIA Program and Eurimages, as well as receiving CZK 3 million from the Czech Film Fund a year ago.

Also last year, several minority coproductions enjoyed success. First, the Slovak-Czech-Hungarian





Little Harbour

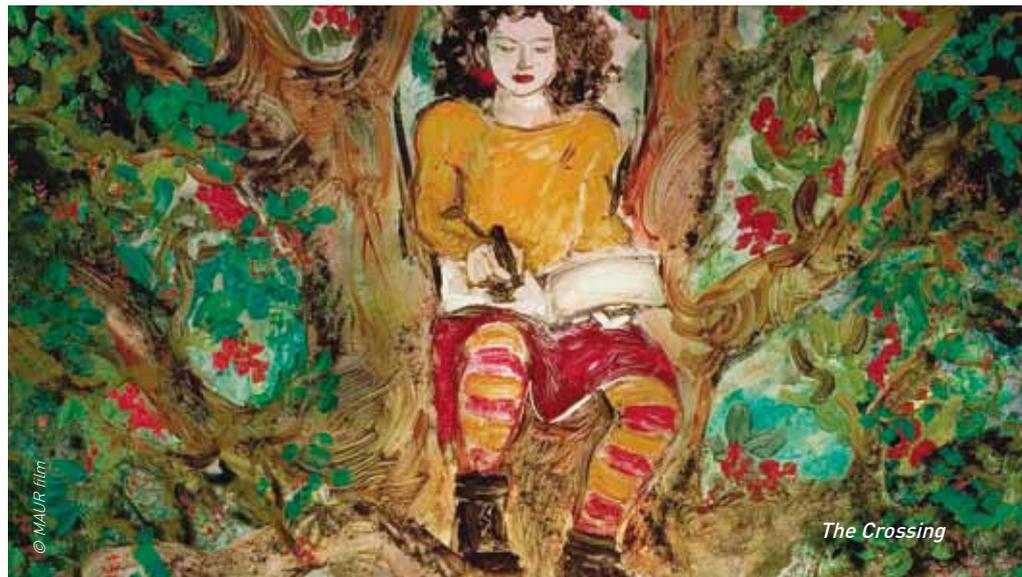
coproduction *Little Harbour* (2017), coproduced by Jiří Konečný of Endorfilm, was named Best Film in the Berlinale's Generation Kplus section. Director Iveta Grófová of Slovakia, working with Czech actors and the set designer Iva Němcová, created a remarkable mix of social drama and lyrical childhood adventure, which appealed to the children's jury. Then, also in Berlin, *Spoor* (2017), by three-time Oscar-nominated Polish director Agnieszka Holland, daringly oscillating between crime, thriller, comedy, and utopian fairy tale, took home the Alfred Bauer Prize for artistic contribution. Czech actor and director Miroslav Krobot was cast as one of the leads of this Polish-German-Czech-Swedish-Slovak coproduction. Czechs handled postproduction, visual effects, and, in scenes with tamed wild animals, played a crucial role in this drama about the conflict between a feminist eco-activist and local hunters. The Czech Film Fund contributed CZK 3 million, and Czech screenwriters Štěpán Hulík and Pavel Hrdlička worked on the screenplay. Holland, a Polish director who studied film in Prague, says this is her most Czech film: "Because the comic side mingles with realistic and even moralistic aspects, I find it has a certain Czech sensitivity." Producing for the Czech side were Pavla Janoušková-Kubečková and Tomáš Hrubý from Nutproduction.

Animation in Good Shape

Animation is doing well, too. Due to increased support from the Czech Film Fund, Czech animators now have more opportunities to build on their rich domestic tradition. At the same time, thanks to Martin Vandas's production

company MAUR film, there are also some great minority coproductions. The Hungarian-Czech-Slovak short film *Superbia*, by director and animator Lucy Tóth, was selected to La Semaine de la Critique in Cannes as the only animated film last year. The project received CZK 540,000 from the Czech Film Fund. Now, after this surrealistic, colorful film, Vandas is participating as coproducer in several feature-length projects in development.

Fritzi: A Miraculous Revolutionary Tale is a German-Belgian-Luxembourgian-Czech coproduction. Based on the Hanna Schott book of the same title, it offers a look at the political events in Leipzig of 1989 through the eyes of



The Crossing

a child. From the start, MAUR film has been involved in funding this project, with a high price tag of about €5.5 million. The Czech contribution is about 10 percent, and Alena Vandasová from MAUR film admits it's getting more difficult to take part in costly animated projects with coproduction partners from Western Europe. *Fritzi*, a 2D cartoon animation, will be partially animated in the Czech Republic, where the music will be recorded as well.

However, there is no lack of creativity among domestic animators. *The Crossing* follows the dramatic escape of two siblings from an unidentified East European country, and is currently being

animated at Demo studio in Prague, using Umton oil paints for the paint-on-glass process. The film is directed by Florence Mialthe, and has been cofunded by MAUR film from the start, five years ago. The French-German-Czech coproduction has a Czech share of about 13 percent, with CZK 1.7 million coming from the Czech Film Fund. Czech Television is also a coproducer.

"The best way is to bring projects like this here and let Czech artists work on them, developing the craft and the animation profession," Vandas said. For the future, he's looking into more joint ventures within Central and Eastern Europe: "Slovakia, Slovenia, Poland," he says.

Finally, one example in the field of documentaries, Radim Procházka is currently coproducing a truly international project. *The Vasulka Effect*, from Icelandic director Hrafnhildur Gunnarsdottir, is mostly filmed in the United States and Mexico, featuring the work of New York-based video artists Steina Vasulka and her partner, Woody Vasulka. These Czech emigrants are portrayed throughout their career, although the movie also looks at their relationship as a couple.

As we move into 2018, here's hoping the Czech coproduction honeymoon has come to a happy end and will continue to grow into a long and fruitful marriage.



Director Václav Marhoul
with Harvey Keitel

The First Adaptation of The Painted Bird

© Jan Dobrovský

by Hedvika Petrželková

Udo Kier, Harvey Keitel, Stellan Skarsgård, Julian Sands – in the new project from director and producer Václav Marhoul, they'll all be speaking New Slavic, a language invented for the cinema adaptation of Jerzy Kosinski's legendary World War II novel *The Painted Bird*, about a Jewish boy trying to survive on his own amid the brutal landscape of Nazi-occupied Eastern Europe.

My film, just like the novel, isn't about the Holocaust. Its message is universal," says Marhoul. *The Painted Bird* is his third work as director, and his previous films were also adaptations: *Smart Philip* (2003) was a parody of film noir, inspired by the Philip Marlowe stories of Raymond Chandler, while his war drama *Tobruk* (2009) was based on Stephen Crane's *Red Badge of Courage*. "I like to read. I love books. When I fall in love with one, I don't think about anything else. It was only by chance that *The Painted Bird* fell into my hands," Marhoul says. "I first read the novel in 2008, and it had such an effect on me that I decided to put all my efforts into obtaining the film rights. In the end, it worked out."

According to Marhoul, the story isn't about World War II. "It's about the otherness of a person. It would have worked just as well if I'd made it a sci-fi with a boy from Venus who landed on Mars. It's about the story, which is universal — at least from my point of view." The hero of the book by Jerzy Kosinski (1933–91) is a six-year-old boy in Poland whose parents send him to live with relatives in the countryside during the war, in an attempt to save him from the Nazi Germans' extermination of the Jews. The boy's aunt unexpectedly dies, however, and the boy is forced to set off on his own. As he struggles through the wild, hostile world, he is witness to a succession of atrocities. In the end he survives the war, but his sorrow doesn't end with it. Kosinski, who emigrated

from his native Poland in the 1950s, first published the book in the US in 1965. Today it is controversial partly for its graphic description of brutalities, including sexual violence, and partly because in the 1980s it emerged that the novel was not autobiographical, despite what Kosinski had led readers to believe.

Marhoul was able to enlist an unprecedented number of foreign stars for a Czech film. "I really didn't believe it would work out," the director recalls of the moment when he reached out to Harvey Keitel, who agreed to be sent the script. "His take on the role is monumental. I have yet to meet anyone else who could dissect his character in advance like that," says Marhoul of his experience with the legendary actor. As with Keitel, the script and the part were also decisive for Julian Sands, who plays a distinctly evil role. "Sedlák Garbos is, without a doubt, the most negative character in the film," says Marhoul.

Also starring are Udo Kier, Stellan Skarsgård, Nina Šunevič, Ala Sakalova, Lech Dyblik, and Jitka Čvančarová. The main child's role is played by a Czech, Petr Kotlár.

By Czech standards, the film has a relatively large budget, around 150 million crowns (5.4 million euros). It's an international coproduction, with involvement not only from the Czech Republic, but also Slovakia, Poland, and Ukraine. Marhoul's company, Silver Screen, is the main producer, with Czech coproducers Czech Television, Eduard Kučera, and Certicon (Vladimír Mařík and Karel Kraus). Foreign coproducers are Igor Savychenko (Directory Films, Ukraine), Zuzana Mistríková (PubRes, Slovakia), Radio and Television of Slovakia, and Stanislaw Dziedzic (Film Produkcja, Poland). The film was supported by the Czech Film Fund, Creative Europe – MEDIA, the Czech Ministry of Culture – OMA, the Ukrainian State Film Agency, and the Slovak Audio-visual Fund.

Coproduction with a Polish Paradox

According to Marhoul, finding coproducers wasn't all that easy. "Many people, producers, were afraid of our



Petr Kotlár

© Jakub Čech

IN PRODUCTION
THE PAINTED BIRD

“It’s about the otherness of a person. It would have worked just as well if I’d made it a sci-fi with a boy from Venus who landed on Mars. It’s about the story, which is universal – at least from my point of view.”

project. To them it was controversial. In the end, everything is about money, and if the producer thinks a project won't make money, they won't get on board. I approached exactly thirty French producers, and not a single one was interested. In Germany I approached fifteen producers, and not a single one was interested." Finally, he was successful in Ukraine, Poland, and Slovakia.

"I met Igor Savychenko, my Ukrainian coproducer, in Cannes; Stanislaw Dziedzic in Berlin; and Zuzana Mistríková and I have known each other for years. So I had a base of coproducers, but of course then there are also plenty of obstacles that come into play along the way, such as the size of your budget, casting actors, and so on," Marhoul says.

Coproductions are risky, he says, in that grants from individual countries may require you to use professionals



© Jakub Čech



Stellan Skarsgard

© Jakub Čech

IN PRODUCTION

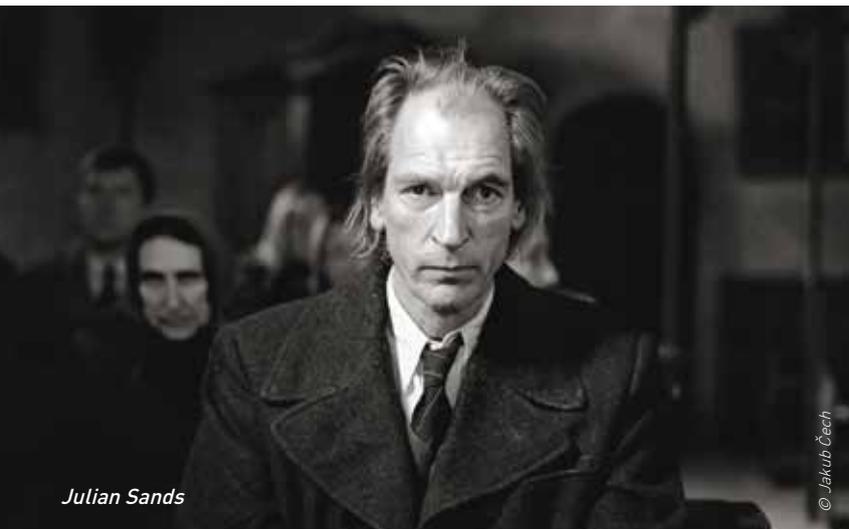
THE PAINTED BIRD

from those countries. This can be problematic if the director is accustomed to a team of their own that they've been working with a long time, as is the case with Marhoul. Luckily, with *The Painted Bird* it wasn't an issue, and the director was able to work with his regular crew.

In the Czech Republic, Ukraine, and Slovakia, the project received national film grants, but not in Poland. Marhoul says he wasn't surprised. "Ever since Law and Justice — a party of orthodox, aggressive Catholics — won the elections in Poland, Kosinski and his book have been public enemy number one. Even though the Polish Film Institute is independent, it was obvious that people in Poland are afraid. After Jarostaw Kaczyński carried out the purges in the media and army leadership, it was obvious no one would dare support our film. My Polish producer nearly had a breakdown, but not me. I knew from the beginning we wouldn't get the support. Even though the story isn't about the Poles. Kosinski says in the book that the story plays out someplace in Eastern Europe, where the people speak a strange vernacular. Polish isn't a strange vernacular — it's the distinct language of 40 million people. Which is also why I chose New Slavic, a constructed language specially created for the film by a language expert."

Original Language

How did all the actors of various nationalities cope with the constructed language? Marhoul explains that first each actor got the script in their own language, so they could grasp the meaning. Then the dialogue was translated into New Slavic, which the actors had to memorize. The film will be shown with subtitles.



Julian Sands

© Jakub Čech

"Harvey Keitel and Julian Sands got a sound recording a month in advance, as well as a video where it's obvious there is completely different lip-syncing, with different lip and mouth movements than if the lines were delivered in their native English," Marhoul says. "Every prep and filming day, Keitel also had his own language coach,



Stellan Skarsgard

© Jakub Čech

“The environment was incredibly bleak, which is exactly what we needed for the film, but it’s really depressing for a human being.”

and he practiced everything ahead of time with him. But in the entire film, he and Sands together barely speak ten minutes, so it wasn't that big an issue."

For potential producers, however, the language was a problem. "Everyone was pressuring me to shoot the film in English. Even the French. But I didn't want to. I'm convinced it would have ruined the film. On the one hand, the market is unbelievably flexible, but it's also conservative. Everyone thinks English will save a bad film. But if a film is bad, even English won't help it. And the reverse is also true: A really good film doesn't need English," Marhoul says. As examples he points to *Son of Saul*, from Hungary, and *Ida*, the Polish film.

As far as the screenplay goes, Marhoul wrote it himself, though he collaborated with renowned editors. "In total I had eight: five Czechs and three Americans," says Marhoul. He connected with a dramaturg in the US through a scriptwriting workshop he did in Cannes, where his screenplay won first prize. "It was a great experience," says Marhoul. "The whole thing happened over a period of eight months. I was in constant contact with the dramaturgs while we worked on the script."

The film wasn't shot on digital, but on classic 35mm film. "We experimented with different materials, but in the end, negative won. There's a kind of indefinable magic to it. It just has something extra, some sort of added value," says Marhoul.

Filming will continue into spring 2018. So far, the most difficult part has been shooting in Ukraine. "The atmosphere really weighed on me," says the director. "The environment was incredibly bleak, which is exactly what we needed for the film, but it's really depressing for a human being. I also had the feeling I was treading on the dead. If you get to know a bit of the history of Ukraine, how many famines and wars they've been through — millions of people died there, it's just awful. I felt like I had literally gone to the end of the world."/>

CURRENT STATUS in development
(draft script)

TOTAL BUDGET €1,300,000

FINANCING IN PLACE 30%

Nobody Likes Me

by Hedvika Petrželková

After the success of their first feature, *I, Olga Hepnarova*, the award-winning writer-director-producer team Petr Kazda and Tomáš Weinreb are now bracing for their new project, *Nobody Likes Me*, to be introduced at the Berlinale Co-production Market.

I, Olga Hepnarova, an intimate portrait of an unlikely serial killer, based on actual events, was successful not only at festivals, but in theatres as well. The movie was released in 15 countries, with licensing for other forms of distribution in Europe, Asia, and North and South America. *Nobody Likes Me* cleaves to a similar, if not identical, line. "Again a female main character, but this time in an urban military environment, with a troubling romantic identity and sexual issues," said French coproducer Guillaume de Seille of Arizona Productions at last year's pitching forum Czech Film Springboard, where the project caught the attention of Martina Bleis from Berlinale Coproduction Market.

Nobody Likes Me tells the story of Sara, an attractive 29-year-old woman who works as a secretary at army headquarters in Prague. Although constantly surrounded by strong young men, she has yet to find a partner. She enjoys solitude, and has come to terms with her position as a detached observer of other people's lives. Then one day she meets the gallant, graceful, soft-faced

Martin, and Sara is fascinated. She wants to take their relationship to a deeper, physical level, but Martin shies away. He has a deep secret to hide. Refusing to accept his unwillingness to open up to her, Sara compels him to expose himself, and when he finally does, it turns out he is intersex, a hermaphrodite. Sara's love remains strong, but when she unintentionally reveals Martin's secret to her family, she discovers that her joy at the relationship has blinded her to the reality of how society deals with "freaks."

"It's always a challenge to avoid clichés when creating a love story," says Kazda. His partner, Weinreb, adds, "Just like Olga in our first film, Sara is looking for love. Her relationship with Martin is based on mutual respect. Subtle looks, rather than words, signify the profound effect their relationship has on Sara, but especially on Martin."

The project is currently in the middle of development, with a likely budget of €1.3 million. Principal photography is tentatively set for fall 2018, and negotiations with Germany, Austria,

DIRECTOR PROFILE

Tomáš Weinreb and Peter Kazda both graduated from the Independent Film College in Písek, as well as from Prague's FAMU. Their debut film *I, Olga Hepnarova*, opened the Panorama section at Berlinale 2016, followed by invitations to 70 festivals around the world and multiple awards.



Poland, and other countries are ongoing. Producers are Petr Kazda and Tomáš Weinreb (Black Balance, Czech Republic), and Vojtěch Frič (love.FRAME, Czech Republic); coproducers are Guillaume de Seille (Arizona Productions, France), Sylvia Panáková (Arina, Slovak), and Spoon (Czech Republic).



Returns to History, Student Oscar and Successful Coprodu

by Hedvika Petrželková

Last year saw several films focused on topics from Czech and world history, including portraits of historical figures (*A Prominent Patient* and *Milada*), the poetic *Little Crusader*, and the experimental *8 Heads of Madness*. At festivals, student films won laurels: *Who's Who in Mycology* even walked away with a Student Academy Award. Coproductions (not only) with Slovakia – *Little Harbour*, *Filthy*, *Nina*, and *Out* – also scored abroad, while the tragicomedy *Ice Mother* garnered kudos both at home and abroad.

The 27-mThe "historic" year in Czech film kicked off with *A Prominent Patient* by Julius Ševčík, a drama about the controversial Czech minister of foreign affairs, which premiered at the Berlinale. Following that, *Milada*, by debut director David Mrnka, a Czech who lives abroad, told the tragic story of politician Milada Horáková, unjustly sentenced to death during the Stalinist show trials of the 1950s.

This year's winner of the Karlovy Vary film festival, *Little Crusader* by Václav Kadrnka, a medieval "road movie" from the 13th century, can also be viewed as a period film. Kadrnka here continues to develop the themes from his debut, *Eighty Letters* (2010), of the quest and the relationship between a father and son. The Karlovy Vary Crystal Globe christened *Little Crusader* on its journey to festivals abroad, including the BFI London Film Festival, the Busan IFF, the Cairo IFF, Rome Film Fest, and others.

In 2017, Jan Svěrák, who won an Oscar for his moving comedy *Kolja* (1996), set in 1970s Communist Czechoslovakia, brought us *Barefoot*, based on a script by his

father, Zdeněk, who has written and/or appeared in most of his son's films, including *Kolja*. The storyline of *Barefoot* precedes the successful *The Elementary School* (1991), recounting a piece of the Svěrák family history from the perspective of 8-year-old Eda, at the time when he and his parents have to move from the town to the country, during World War II.

Jan Hřebejk set his film trilogy *Garden Store* (*Deserter*, *Family Friend*, *Suitor*) in the period spanning the wartime German occupation of the '40s to the rigid communism of the '50s. Most of Hřebejk's films in fact return to recent Czech history, including the Oscar-nominated *Divided We Fall*.

For her debut, Marta Nováková took an original approach to focus on a forgotten chapter of world history. After years of preparation, she directed *8 Heads of Madness* based on her own screenplay, using experimental elements to bring to light the fate of Russian poet Anna Barkova, who spent more than 20 years of her life imprisoned in Russian gulags.



Little Crusader

© CinemArt



Ice Mother

© Falcon

ctions

Ice Mother, directed by Bohdan Sláma, served as Czech ambassador to the Oscars and the EFA candidate in 2017. A present-day tragicomedy, it was a hit at home and was also selected by several international festivals, including Tribeca, where it won the award for Best Screenplay.

Students Score

Students also shared in the success of Czech film in 2017. Kateřina Karhánková's animated *Fruits of Clouds* was selected for the competition of short films for children in Annecy, followed by invitations to numerous festivals. *Fruits of Clouds*' success culminated at Cinekid, where it walked away with the honors as Best European Short Animation. Marie Dvořáková, a graduate of Prague's FAMU currently studying at NYU's Tisch School of the Arts, won a prestigious Student Academy Award from the American Film Academy for her short film



Barefoot

© Biscop

Who's Who in Mycology, the humorous tale of a young musician whose life turns upside down.

Coproductions Catch Fire

This year was rich in coproductions, especially with the Czechs' closest neighbor, Slovakia. The poetic film *Little Harbour*, by Iveta Grófová, celebrated success already in February, at the Berlinale, winning the Crystal Bear from the Children's Jury for Best Film in the Generation Kplus section. Grófová's film, the story of an 11-year-old girl who founds her own little family to compensate for her own mother's lack of interest, won many other awards at international festivals over the course of 2017, including at the Olympia IFF in Greece and the Silk Road IFF. Other Czech-Slovak coproductions that made an impact were *Filthy* (directed by Tereza Nvotová, premiered at Rotterdam), *Out* (directed by Györi Kristóf, premiered at Un Certain Regard in Cannes), and *Nina* (directed by Juraj Lehotský, with an international premiere in Toronto).

Documentaries Deliver

Czech documentaries held their own as well, with three films screening at the IDFA in Amsterdam. *The World According to Daliborek*, Vít Klusák's portrait of a "gentle neo-Nazi," was the subject of extensive debate after its premiere in Karlovy Vary, and showed in the Masters section of IDFA. The First Appearance Competition featured *Nothing Like Before*, by the creative duo Lukáš Kokeš and Klára Tasovská, depicting the life of contemporary teenagers in the Czech-German border region. The third Czech film — selected for the IDFA Competition for Mid-Length Documentary — was journalist Petr Horký's directing debut, *The Russian Job*, which follows a Swedish manager's attempt to revive the famous Russian car manufacturer Lada.



“I Am Fascinated With Manipulation”

© Negativ Film Productions

by Louise H. Johansen

After an extensive writing process, the coproduction suddenly came together, and in less than two months first-time writer and director Michal Hogenauer had to put together a crew and a cast of mainly foreigners for a shoot on location in Latvia. Two weeks after his return, we sat down with Hogenauer for a revealing talk about his doubts surrounding his debut feature, *Outside* (working title), and how he pulled off the production in such a short time.

“It’s my first feature, so everything was a challenge,” Hogenauer says. “No matter how many films you watch, how many film essays and interviews with directors you read, you’re still alone on the set and it’s up to you to figure it out. The only thing you can rely on is intuition, but that’s difficult when you’re under time pressure.”

The Prague-born Hogenauer (b. 1984) treads carefully when asked to describe his film. Recently returned from 25 days on location in and around Riga, the shooting is still fresh in mind and it’s a challenge to get perspective on it. “The story is about a Czech girl named Mia who

goes abroad to work as an au pair for a rich family. She has to take care of the household and a 10-year-old boy, but the family has a strange set of rules.”

It turns out that Mia has entered a religious community who punish their children in order to cleanse and purify them. Hogenauer explains: “As a result of manipulation within the family, she gradually begins to lose her self and abandon her humanity and her relationship with the child entrusted to her. I’m fascinated with manipulation—how people communicate and manipulate each other, and how society manipulates people.”

“As soon as you start digging into manipulation, you come across all these sects and cults and their strategies for manipulation – not only brain washing, but love bombing, too. I spent a year and a half researching and reading a lot of books.”

Researcher at Heart

“As soon as you start digging into manipulation,” Hogenauer says, “you come across all these sects and cults and their strategies for manipulation — not only brain washing, but love bombing, too. I spent a year and a half researching and reading a lot of books. Including on au pairs. I read lots of blogs by teenage girls.”

Eventually, he came across the cult Twelve Tribes, which was established in the 1970s in the US, and then spread to Europe. Twelve Tribes stand out for their medieval methods of punishing children, even babies, to purify them in anticipation of the second coming of Jesus. Everyone in the community “raises” the children collectively. A few years ago, a German journalist managed to document the beatings, and some members moved from Germany to the Czech Republic.

“There are plenty of films about big hippie sects living on farms. That was what the first version of my screenplay was about. Then I realized that the strangeness and evil shouldn’t be visible at first glance, so I changed the concept and created an upper-class family with one kid. When I brought in an au pair, suddenly it all came together,” Hogenauer says. He wrote eleven drafts of the script, and research was key to his process. “I have to read everything. The tree is very wide. Philip Zimbardo’s book on evil and his Stanford prison experiment were the most important part, though.”



Michal Hogenauer

was born in Prague in 1984. His background is in graphic design. During his studies at FAMU film school, he also attended the Academy of Fine Arts in Norway, through the Erasmus program. He graduated from FAMU in 2012 with the mid-length hybrid film *Tambylles*, which, with its incisive new voice, was selected for Cannes’ Cinéfondation. Hogenauer currently serves as artistic director for the Prague film festival Febiofest. *Outside* is his first feature and his first collaboration with Negativ Film Productions.

The theme of manipulation was present already in Hogenauer’s mid-length FAMU graduation film, *Tambylles* which premiered as part of the Cinéfondation selection at Cannes in 2012. Says Hogenauer, “I was fascinated by the manipulation of form — by fiction versus documentary — and wrote my thesis on Peter Watkins around the same time.” Watkins, a British film and TV director, is known for *The War Game* (1965) and *Punishment Park* (1971), works that question so-called documentary reality by creating a feeling of “live” documentary. Today they are considered at the forefront of what is now known as “hybrid cinema.” Besides Watkins, Hogenauer also cites Michael Haneke as an inspiration.

The Action Makes You

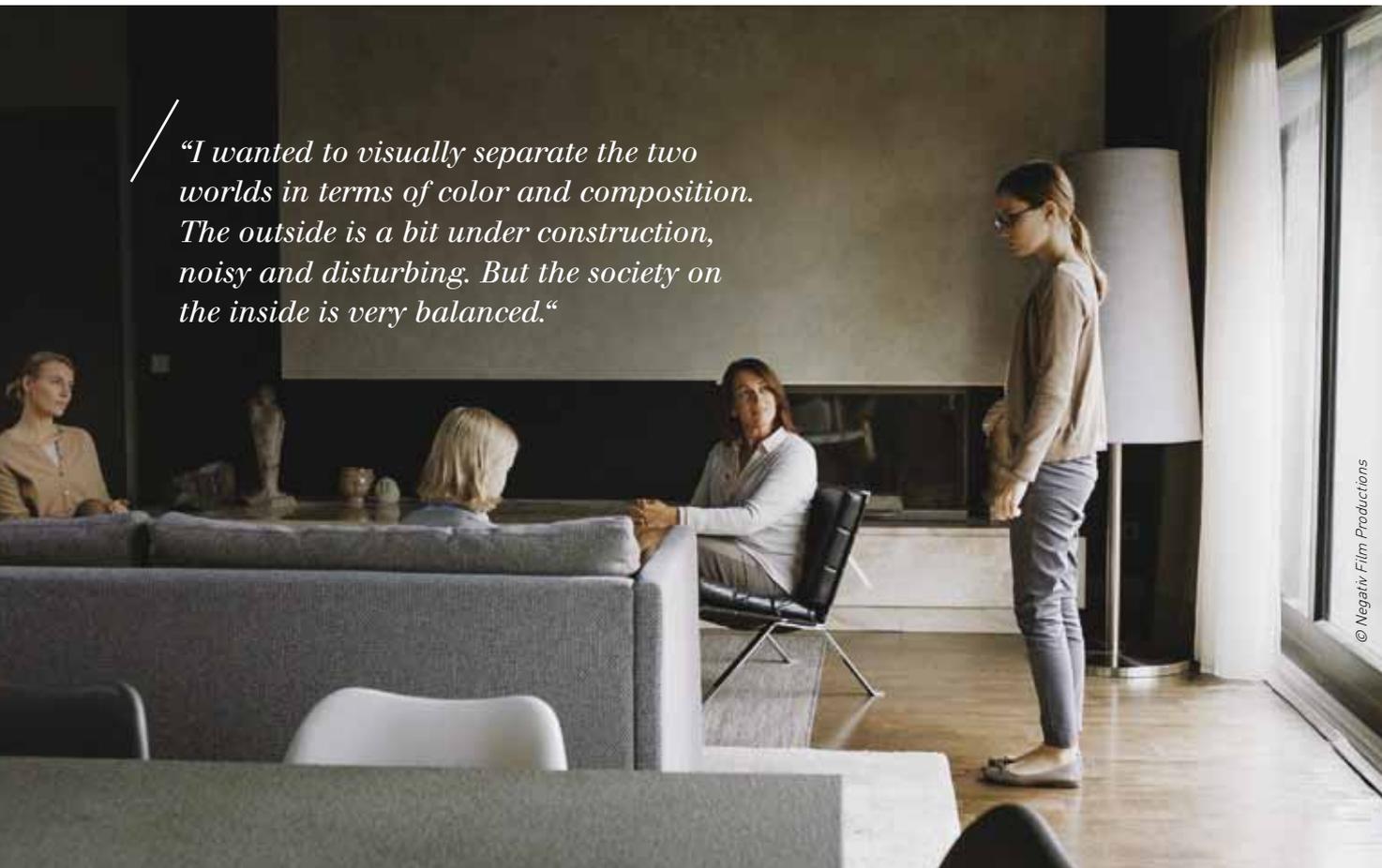
Outside is the eerie story of an au pair a long way from home, fully dependent on the care and trust of her new host family. Slowly, as Mia gets to know them, the viewer gets to know them too. Hogenauer explains his view of the role of the actors: “Things happen in life, and you can’t choose your emotions — wouldn’t that be great! — but what you can choose is your actions, so the characters are what they do: The action makes them. In the end, the character’s there, but it’s in the mind of the audience. Every actor is different, just like every person is different. First, you have to figure out how they work, especially since we were working with a combination of professional A-film actors, actors from the theatre, some of whom didn’t speak English, plus nonactors,



IN PRODUCTION

OUTSIDE

“I wanted to visually separate the two worlds in terms of color and composition. The outside is a bit under construction, noisy and disturbing. But the society on the inside is very balanced.”



© Negativ Film Productions

including a child. It takes time, and that was one thing we didn't have much of.”

Apart from Mia, played by Eliška Křenková (*Family Film, Wasteland*), most of the cast is Dutch. Coproduction funding from the Netherlands was the defining factor that set the project in motion, in summer 2017. “We got funding in mid-July and started shooting in late September,” Hogenauer says. “We had to find all the actors and the main crew within that time frame, as well as the main locations.”

Dutch cinematographer Gregg Telussa came recommended by the coproducers of Circe Films. “He had the right books on his shelves,” Hogenauer laughs. “We talked about films, photographers, painters — you just mention a title and you know right away what the guy is thinking about. We really connected.”

Location as Character

Another defining factor was the coproduction with Latvia's Tasse Film. They brought in production designer Laura Dislere, and serviced the 25 shooting days in Latvia. “There are these two worlds in the film,” Hogenauer explains. “The world of the community, who live in this specific kind of houses, and the external, outside world,

where Mia is from. I wanted to visually separate the two worlds in terms of color and composition. The outside is a bit under construction, noisy and disturbing. But the society on the inside is very balanced.”

Initially, the plan was to go north to Scandinavia, but for funding reasons Latvia became the base, so the director and his producer, Petr Oukropec, had to swiftly adapt. “We went there to find out what it was like, and it looked great. In one corner it felt like you could be in Prague or



© Negativ Film Productions

Berlin, in another it felt like the Baltics and the Nordic countries. Locations have to be chosen like actors. You just feel it and make a choice.”

From Script to Screen

Shooting abroad proved to be a positive experience. What challenged the debut director the most was the development process, when he had to not only distill his story out of the immense research material but to make a foreign reader understand.

“When I count the days of writing, I had twenty-five days of shooting, but just to write the one-page synopsis in English took me two months! The challenge is that you’re using words at that point, but the result is visual, so I was struggling a lot with it. Especially since I use sparse dialogue. Pictures are really my thing.”

Someone to Lean On

Being a foreigner on set is an obstacle from the outset, and Hogenauer and Oukropec had only one other Czech as part of their team: assistant director — or as Hogenauer calls him, his creative assistant — Vojtěch Strakatý. “I wanted to have someone there to have a creative dialogue with. When I shoot, I’m close to the camera, not the monitor. There’s a kind of energy close to the camera, and I’m looking at the actor right in front of me. With my assistant by the monitor, after a good take I could just look at him and we’d nod our heads.”

A set of experienced leads also offered a sense of comfort. “The first time I met with Roeland Fernhout (the father) and Monic Hendrickx (the mother), I asked if they had ever worked with a first-time director before. I told them it might get complicated, since I would be searching and wouldn’t always be completely sure what I was looking for. Roeland said that was one of the reasons they decided to do the project — they wanted to search with me! So that reassured me.”



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Producer Petr Oukropec on the financing process:

“The Czech Film Fund gave us development support, followed by production support in 2015. We had already received MEDIA support in 2013 as part of Negativ’s slate support. After the Berlinale Co-Production Market in 2016, we were very optimistic. We connected with Dutch producers Lisette Kelder and Stienette Blokklopper (Circe), and also made first contact with potential sales agents. A planned coproduction with Denmark unfortunately fell through, and the financing strategy collapsed. We got back on track after Berlinale 2017, where we found the ‘Baltic trail.’ I started searching for the ideal location: a town with a Scandinavian feel and a sea. We started working with producer Aija Berzina of Tasse Film, and she found a way to cofinance with NFC and Riga Film Fund, which resulted in our great experience with the Latvian crew and production background. During production, we received Eurimages support, which was an important sign of the project’s international potential. Finally, the most crucial support came from NL Fonds. *Outside* has been selected for Les Arcs Work In Progress. The budget of the film is 850,000 euros.”



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Maria Theresa



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Progressive Zlín Film Office

Reviving and Expanding Local Film Tradition



After Prague, Zlín is considered to be the second center of the Czech film industry. Filmmaking in Zlín dates back to the late 1920s, when the world-famous footwear manufacturer Baťa began making in-house news programs. Now, the Zlín Film Office, launched in December 2016, is one of the newest additions to the family of regional film offices in the Czech Republic.

Baťa began building film studios in 1935 — the first was a small one for shooting advertising spots — and in the second half of the 20th century, the studio became the country's leading producer of animated films. But that wasn't the only reason Zlín was known as the city of children's film. Since 1961, it has hosted the world's largest animated film festival. Since the privatization of the Czech film industry in

the early 1990s, however, the studio has been repeatedly threatened with liquidation, but one of the goals of the local film office now is to revive Zlín as a filming city and make it a modern, filming-friendly destination.

"From the very beginning, we've been committed to continuing the venerable film tradition of the Zlín region and to getting it back on the film industry map,"

says executive director of the Zlín Film Office Magdaléna Hladká. "There are so many interesting and incredibly nice people working in film here, and in the studios themselves you can still feel the sense of 'genius loci'. You won't experience that anywhere else. And as a 'Baťa-ite', I'm especially thrilled that I can help continue the vision of the Baťa brothers, the founders of the film tradition here in Zlín," she adds.

The Zlín Film Office is responsible for the entire Zlín Region, which offers a wide variety of locations, from modern urban architecture and industrial complexes to stupendous castles, colorful natural scenery, and folk architecture. The city of Zlín lies 300 km east of Prague, and the region itself, one of the smallest in the country, borders Slovakia. The strategic challenge of being located three hours' drive from Prague is overcome by the above-standard benefits, such as waiving shooting fees when filming in public areas or providing accommodation for location managers during scouting trips.

Of the 13 small and large projects that were carried out here in 2017 with the assistance of the Zlín Film Office, two are worthy of special mention. The two-part television period drama *Maria Theresa*, a unique Czech-Slovak-Austrian-Hungarian coproduction for public television directed by Austrian Robert Dornhelm, spent 18 shooting days in the Zlín Region. "A one-hundred member crew filmed the late Baroque scenes from the life of the empress who was the only female ruler of the Habsburg dynasty that ruled Europe for three hundred years. We helped in particular with coordinating contacts with local municipal offices and the Archbishop's chateau in Kroměříž, where many scenes were shot," says Magdaléna Hladká of the role her office played.

The second project the Zlín Film Office is particularly proud of is *The Smiles of Sad Men*, a Czech bittersweet comedy,



The Smiles of Sad Men

© Martin Gazda

currently in post-production, that takes place in an alcohol detox clinic. Over the course of seven filming days in the Zlín Region, nearly all the film's exterior scenes were shot and the film has a few local coproducers, including the city of Zlín itself. The film office arranged financial support for development as well as the production of the film.

"The Zlín Region offers three attractive forms of financial participation. The first is the regional-level Program for Support of Audiovisual Production in the Zlín Region, which has CZK 10 million available to support projects in the pre-production, production, and post-production phases. The city of Zlín founded its own film fund, intended primarily to support development of scripts based on the city's history or present day. And for many years now, the Filmtalent Zlín Endowment Fund has supported students and beginning

filmmakers," says Hladká of the financial incentives available in Zlín.

Finally, the Zlín Film Office also helped found a project that's unique in the Czech Republic: Film Towns. The project's aim is to bring together and promote cities and towns in the region that are eager to support film crews — for example, by providing public locations free of charge, helping clean up trash from film shoots, and assisting with arrangements between the film crews and local police, firefighters, and medical services.

"They're really quite progressive in the Zlín Region. In the year since their founding, they've accomplished a great deal," says Ludmila Claussová, head of the Czech Film Commission, on the regional office's activities. "As the national film commission, we stood behind its founding, and it was clear from the start they wouldn't have it easy in Zlín, since most producers tend to film close to Prague. The significant economic benefits brought by hosting larger film crews seems to make incentives such as waiving some location fees worthwhile, and we can see by the projects that have taken place in the Zlín Region in 2017 that this approach is paying off," she adds.

"Within five years we want to be one of the top three film regions in the Czech Republic. This represents a commitment to our predecessors, who took the Zlín film industry to the very top in their day," concluded Hladká.



Maria Theresa

© Česká televize, Karel Couřil

Czech Short Films 2018

Animation, fiction, experimental – shorts of every genre, on a high artistic level, were made in the Czech Republic last year. The best of them have been selected for the new Czech Shorts collection, now available online at filmcenter.cz.

The films in the annual collections are selected each year by a jury of film professionals, who are in some way connected to short films and experienced in the field. This year's jury consisted of Marek Hovorka, director of the Jihlava International Documentary Film Festival; Karel Spěšný, director of the Prague Short Film Festival; Pavel Horáček, film historian and program director of the Anifilm International Festival in Třeboň; and Dan Vadocký, sales manager at Negativ Film Production. In total, 101 shorts of every genre applied to the Czech Film Center this year, with the jury selecting 13 finalists.

Many of the films have taken part in foreign and domestic film festivals, reaping acclaim and awards. *Fruits of Clouds* by Kateřina Karhánková, a playful animation with a strong message, screened at the Annecy IAFF and won the main prize at Cinekid in Amsterdam. *Bo Hai*, a fiction short by Dužan Duong about a father-son generational clash, set in the rarely filmed milieu of the Czech Vietnamese community, won the Discovery Script Doctoring Award at the Cottbus IFF and the Best Director and Audience awards at the FAMU Film School Festival. *Atlantis, 2003*, directed by Michal Blaško, was selected to the La Cinéfondation section at the Cannes Film Festival.

The new Czech Shorts collection is now available online at filmcenter.cz, with all the films from previous annual collections as well as shorts featured at major international film festivals. The Czech Film Center has been involved in the promotion of Czech short films since 2010, when the first collection was released.



Friendly Sport Meeting
Adam K. Rybanský,
FAMU, 18 min., Fiction

Futnet (also known as football tennis) is a typical Czech sport. Almost every village hosts the occasional amateur tournament. And it isn't just about sports. It's a beautiful summer Saturday in a small village: People are playing futnet, a rump is being roasted, and everybody is drinking beer. Monday and the worries of the workweek are still far away. Until the moment a team called the Jamaicas appears.



Atlantis, 2003
Michal Blaško,
SK/ CZ, VŠMU/ FAMU, 30 min., Fiction

Four years before Slovakia joined the Schengen Area, Martin and Denisija, a young couple from Ukraine, are trying to get to Germany illegally through Slovakia. Neither of them have never been to Germany, and they are ready to sacrifice all they have to reach their dream destination.



Bo Hai
Dužan Duong,
FAMU, 24 min., Fiction

They think like Czechs, speak like Czechs, but look Vietnamese. Bo Hai looks at the relationship between older and younger generations of Vietnamese in the Czech Republic. The parents moved to Europe in the '80s and '90s and started their own businesses. The children, although integrated into majority society, they have lost an emotional connection to their parents and their culture.



Chase
Michaela Režová,
UMPRUM, 12 min., Animation

Based on first-person interviews and archival materials, this animated documentary brings back the glory days of Czechoslovak hockey — but also the dark moments from the year 1950. Chase follows not only the players' personal fates, but also the transformations in society, politics, and culture taking place in the background.



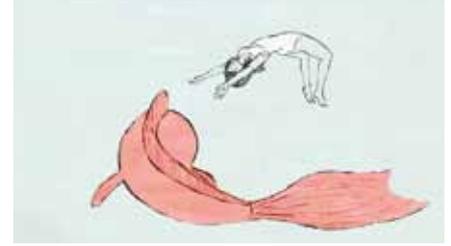
I'm So Tired of Being Alone
Jakub Jirásek,
FAMU, 27 min., Fiction

A 23-year-old closeted gay man reunites with his former best friend, whom he loves platonically. But catching up becomes even more difficult when a third friend unexpectedly joins them on their trip to the countryside.



The Truck
Michal Blaško, Adam Mach,
FAMU, 9 min., Fiction

An abandoned truck sits along the highway, parked by a forest, outside the parking lot. The license plate is foreign. The driver did all he could to prepare for this special journey, but some unexpected events occurred along the way.



The Little One
Diana Cam Van Nguyen,
FAMU, 10 min., Animation

A Vietnamese girl grows up in a European town. As she gets used to what it means to be both at home and a stranger at the same time, her family heads toward a fatal decision. Who will leave? Who will stay? Who is at home here?



The Nettle
Piaoyu Xie,
FAMU, 22 min., Fiction

From the moment Nikola's girlfriend Ana puts the lipstick on Nikola's lips, nothing is ever the same again. No one wants to confront or justify any behavior and the secrets grow as wildly as the nettles in the backyard.



Awaker
Filip Diviak,
Tomas Bata University,
10 min., Animation

This short animated film is set in a cold Nordic country in the early 19th century and tells the tale of an old man who works as an awaker, waking people up. His life is always the same — until one day he gets a shiny old bell.



Everything Has Its Own Time
Viola Ježková,
FAMU, 29 min.,
Experimental, Documentary

How do we come to terms with loss? What do we do with what's left? What is the meaning of memories? When we enter a picture, we leave the frame. We meet ideas of images. And through this encounter we gain a new image: an image of the future.



Fruits of Clouds
Kateřina Karhánková,
MasterFilm/ FAMU, 10 min., Animation

Furry lives in a clearing surrounded by dark woods with a pack of animal friends. Their only food is rare orange seeds that transform into large glowing fruit as soon as they touch the ground. Furry's friends are afraid to venture into the scary woods, but he's bored doing nothing but waiting.



Blueberry Hunt
Alexandra Hetmerová,
Kateřina Karhánková,
Bionaut, 7 min., Animation

Two hungry bears with a craving for blueberry dumplings set out for the forest to look for berries. But on the way, they come down with a case of the hiccups, which complicates their blueberry picking, and even the most sophisticated methods don't seem to help.



The Last Shift of Thomas Hisem
Jindřich Andrš,
FAMU, 30 min., Documentary

"I hope everything turns out OK and you'll get something out of this," says coal miner Tomáš Hisem at the start of his shift in Ostrava's Paskov Mine. With a sense of immediacy and in his own distinctive manner, he captures a particular place at a particular time — one day before the Paskov Mine is closed.

Creative Europe MEDIA: Audience in the Spotlight

by Daniela Staníková

The MEDIA subprogram of Creative Europe is an important source of funding for Czech cultural projects. Every year, the local CED MEDIA publishes figures on the support allocated by MEDIA Programme to Czech projects. But what's behind the numbers? What kinds of projects are going on, and what is the program's impact on audiences themselves?

Compared to other EU programs in the Czech Republic, Creative Europe is definitely a success story. According to Ernst and Young, it is the only EU program in which the Czechs' share of support is almost equal to their share of the EU population, and it is almost double the country's share of EU GDP. The total amount for the Czech Republic in 2017 was more than 2.5 mil. euros: support for development of new films this past year reached a record-breaking 993 000 euros, 329 000 euros went to support training activities for professionals, and nearly 468 000 euros to support film festivals and access to the market. Support to distribution reached more than 659 000 euros."

Distribution and Development: Films to Watch

Support for European film distribution is certainly the oldest and largest funding scheme within the CE MEDIA program. From January to November 2017, Czech cinemas premiered 53 European films with distribution support from the MEDIA program (automatic or selective). The movies were seen by a total of over 530,000 people, with the Italian bitter comedy *Perfect Strangers* the best attended of the bunch of films, that received selective support.

Thanks to distribution support from CE MEDIA, Czech moviegoers have a far

wider range of films to choose from. "Without MEDIA support, we would be much more hesitant, even for a number of interesting titles, whether or not even to distribute them at all," says Radim Habartík of the Aerofilms distribution company, which also runs the Aero, Světozor, and Bio Oko cinemas in Prague. He says Czech viewers are mainly interested in family films, visually appealing documentaries like *Earth: One Amazing Day*, and good comedies. He adds that, amid the flood of titles, big names like Paolo Sorrentino and Lars von Trier reliably serve as a magnet.

One of the most watched areas of the program is support for film



development, which allows new films to emerge. In 2017, three Czech films with past development support from CE MEDIA were released in cinemas: the features *Ice Mother*, directed by Bohdan Sláma, and *Garden Store: Family Friend*, directed by Jan Hřebejk, and *The White World According to Daliborek*, a documentary directed by Vít Klusák, together drawing a total attendance of 214,000.

Festivals With the Audience in Mind

Yet even with strong support, some European titles still can't find distribution, despite that there is clearly an audience for them. In this respect, film festivals play an increasingly important role. CE MEDIA supports four Czech festivals: Anifilm, the International Festival of Animated Films; the Ji.hlava International Documentary Film Festival; One World, the International Human Rights Film Festival; and Febiofest. The festivals' reach is enormous: in 2017, they drew 217,000 viewers.

Czech moviegoers appreciate being able to see films, both domestic and foreign, that they aren't able to see in theaters, for a variety of reasons. In some regions, for example, all they have is multiplex theaters, which generally don't screen the more demanding films.

In order to maximize the festivals' impact, MEDIA emphasizes not only the selection of European titles, but in recent years has also focused more on the audience, going far beyond the traditional post-screening Q&As. Organizers agree that, apart from quality films, the educational dimension is

highly important for the potential of a festival.

Every Czech festival that receives support also reaches out to audiences outside of their main program, with part of the festival travelling to other cities and regions for special screenings at schools or for parents with children.

"Audiences are most interested when there is a discussion connected with the film, so we really emphasize our master classes and open lectures in the Inspiration Forum to the public, where the main guests are figures who are known outside the film world," says Petr Lukeš, director of programming for the Ji.hlava documentary festival.

Ondřej Moravec, program director of the One World International Human Rights Film Festival, shares a similar experience: "The best-attended screenings are the ones where we also have a discussion with the director, experts, or the protagonists of the films themselves."

In addition to live events for spectators on the spot, most festivals also have online projects, allowing people to watch the program virtually, anywhere, anytime. Anifilm, the International Festival of Animated Films, for example, runs ANIONT (Animation Online Theater), a portal for select animated shorts, curated by festival programmers. "ANIONT is becoming an important European platform for short animation. The portal has had a really strong positive response, both from experts and general audiences," says Tomáš Rychec, director of Anifilm. /

ONE WORLD (March 5–14, 2018)

The world's largest human rights documentary film festival, One World works with a broad definition of human rights, also including films dealing with social issues, lifestyles, and the environment. The festival screens films in 32 cities around the Czech Republic in addition to Prague, and also hosts the region's largest and most prestigious pitching forum: East Doc Forum (also supported by CE/MEDIA). www.oneworld.cz

FEBIOFEST (March 15–23, 2018)

The Prague International Film Festival FEBIOFEST presents both international and Czech films, ranging from small-country new releases to low-profile titles that normally aren't shown in cinemas. The program includes a competition for young Europeans, children's films, and selected films from Asia, the Balkans, and Scandinavia. After Prague, the program travels to other cities, within the special selection of movies. www.febiofest.cz

JIHLAVA IDFF (October 25–30, 2018)

The Ji.hlava International Documentary Film Festival is the largest event of its kind in Central and Eastern Europe. The organizers approach documentaries as unique artworks dealing with significant topics. Ji.hlava is proud not to follow the common festival model, and refuses the pragmatic approach to program selection. Its industry program includes Emerging Producers, a showcase for the up-and-coming generation of European producers, and Festival Identity, which brings together festival organizers and programmers from around the globe. www.ji-hlava.com

ANIFILM (May 1–6, 2018)

International Festival of Animated Films presents the latest trends, methods, technologies, and techniques in animation. It supports works in progress as well as brand-new projects with their authors, producers, and distributors. The festival also plays host each year to the Visegrad Animation Forum, a pitching competition open to animated shorts, series, and specials in development (also supported by Creative Europe/MEDIA). www.anifilm.cz



Main Theme for Czech Film Fund in 2018 = Coproductions

One of the CFF's key long-term goals is to support more international coproductions, both with majority Czech participation and as minority coproductions. Here, the chairman of the Czech Film Fund's council, Přemysl Martinek, shares the fund's plans for 2018.

Each year, the Czech film industry produces roughly three dozen feature-length fiction films and some 20 documentaries. Very few of them, however, reach the international market. Now, along with opportunities for automatic support through incentives, the Czech Film Fund aims to make Czech projects more attractive and to enable Czech producers to finance more international coproductions reciprocally.

For the third consecutive year now, the CFF will have at its disposal a budget of nearly €50 million. Of that, roughly €31 million will go toward incentives and €1.5 million toward the funding of minority coproductions (with average support for fiction projects around €150,000). This year will also see the main production schemes opened to a wider spectrum of projects. Previously, only projects that had majority financing from the Czech Republic could apply. However, this year we will also consider projects with at least 40 percent Czech participation on bilateral coproductions,

or 30 percent on coproductions with three or more countries involved, thus opening support to projects that lack a Czech majority share, yet still involve significant contribution from a Czech producer. Around €5 million will be earmarked for these projects.

The CFF council will continue to support the participation of Czech films and minority coproductions in international festivals. Grant requests will still have to be submitted by the Czech producer, though the council expects other coproducers and the sales agent to share the costs. Funding is available up to €15,000 for the most prestigious international film festivals.

Funding for training projects is another area that will considerably strengthen relationships between the Czech and other national film industries. One project long in the works is the Script Consulting Incubator, which will support the training of script editors and the development of screenplays for feature-length films.

Among the most prestigious projects in the documentary film arena are ExOriente and Dok.Incubator, not to mention the increasingly successful Midpoint initiative, run by the FAMU film academy in Prague. This is in line with the Czech Film Fund's mission of systematic support for the education of film industry professionals, with a special emphasis on programs in which Czech films and Czech professionals face international competition.

LATEST NEWS:

Minority Coproduction supported by Czech Film Fund

The Czech Film Fund has selected 10 film projects from 31 applications to receive minority coproduction funding. The total allocation was €770,000.

SUPPORTED PROJECTS: *The Disciple*

(CZ producer: Negativ, director: Ivan Ostrochovský), *The Millennium* (CZ producer: Hypermarket Film, director: Vitalij Manskij), *In Love and War* (CZ producer: Film United, director: Kasper Torsting), *City by the River* (CZ producer: 8Head Production, director: Viesturs Kairiss), *The Impossible Voyage* (CZ producer: Kabos Film and Media, director: Noro Držiak), *The Wild Creatures* (CZ producer: MAUR film), *Journey* (CZ producer Animation People), *Wake* (CZ producer: i/o post, director: Matjaž Ivanišin), *Backstage* (CZ producer: Bontonfilm, director: Andrea Sedláčková), *Three* (CZ production: Bio Illusion, director: Wojciech Smarzowski).

Czech Feature Films supported by Czech Film Fund

The Czech Film Fund has allocated a total of €2,357,000 for the production of 8 feature-length films in November 2017. The largest grant, €482,000, went to the coming-of-age story *Kryštof*, by director Zdeněk Jiráský. The other projects supported were *National Street* (Štěpán Altrichter), *Jan Palach* (Robert Sedláček), *Benzina Dehtov* (Vladimír), *Restore Point* (Robert Hlož) and *Mars* (Benjamin Tuček).



Přemysl Martinek with fund's CEO
Helena Bezděk Fraňková.

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FILMS TO COME

Films to come

A

FILMS TO COME

IN DEVELOPMENT

Selected new Czech feature films in development, production, post-production or ready for release.

For more information please contact us at info@filmcenter.cz.

IN DEVELOPMENT

Benzina Dehtov

This is not just a game. It is an escape from everyday life, an escape which is impossible to give up. Benzina Dehtov is a black comedy about a group of men who decided to escape from their everyday lives through role-playing. They pretend to be soldiers of SWAT team, evacuating community centres, dragging unsuspecting people into their game. They are driven by adrenalin and delusion which makes them feel like Robin Hood. Stealing from the rich, giving to the poor. Everything goes smoothly until they find themselves in the wrong place and at the wrong time.

FICTION

original title: Benzina Dehtov

runtime: 90 min

estimated release:

December 2018

director: Vladimír Michálek

produced by: Tomáš Vach –

Slothmachine [CZ]

Bismillah - In the Name Of Allah

In a small bucolic village in the middle of the Bosnian mountains, a humble shepherd Ibrahim Delić's preaching reaches beyond the walls of the local mosque, instigating Balkan and European Muslims to join the ISIS ranks. In the rural areas all around Bosnia young people are embracing the Jihadism, leaving their houses to become foreign fighters. The film is a portrait of contemporary Bosnia, giving glimpses of the everyday lives of several families, amongst them Ibrahim Delić and his radicalized children. Through their conversations and encounters within the intimate setting of their homes, we perceive the ambiguities and complexities of a Bosnia struck by economic impoverishment and religious extremism.

DOCUMENTARY

original title: Bismillah –

Ve jménu Aláha

runtime: 80 min

estimated release: July 2018

director: Francesco Montagner

produced by: Pavla Janoušková

Kubečková – nutprodukce [CZ]

Caravan

DEBUT

Ester is turning 40 next year, and she has nothing going on in her life. That is, nothing more than caring for David (12), her severely mentally handicapped son. David doesn't speak and has to be watched constantly – otherwise he runs away and destroys things. Ester loves David tremendously, but she's worn out from it all – the isolation, the routine, having to do everything herself. A friend who moved to Italy invites Ester over for a visit. It's her first chance ever to take a holiday, but just before she's about to leave, though, it turns out there's no one to watch over her son. So Ester decides to travel to the south, to the sea with her son. On a road trip through Italy, they find out that as long as they are on the road, they're still alive.

FICTION

original title: Karavan

runtime: 100 min

estimated release: April 2020

director: Zuzana Kirchnerová

Špidlová

produced by: Pavla Janoušková

Kubečková – nutprodukce [CZ]

In the Pines

The film will be based on a true story, the case of Viktor Kalivoda, the forest killer. He shot and killed 3 people in Czech forests in 2005. We capture roughly the last year of his life before being apprehended by the police. The story is framed by a pair of main character's suicide attempts, from an unsuccessful one on the Žampach viaduct to a successful attempt while in prison. We follow Kalivoda's actions from his victory in the "Do You Want to be a Millionaire?" game show through the systematic degradation of ethical inhibitions to the commitment of three murders. Seeing that Kalivoda refused to confess to the motivation for his crimes, the film is conceived to be minimalist, thus it does not clarify his motivation, making the issue of what led him to his actions a burning question.

FICTION

original title: Lesní vrah

runtime: 90 min

estimated release: February 2020

director: Radim Špaček

produced by: Jana Brožková –

Vernes [CZ]

in co-production with: Mobra

Films [RO]

Kryštof

Kryštof, a youth approaching adulthood, is living as a new postulant before taking his vows in a community of monks somewhere in Šumava mountains. Not only does he share with the brothers their world of contemplation, but also their role as a link in the long chain of smuggling fugitives from the communist regime across the border to Bavaria. He wanted to flee from the world into a monastery, but in the end he has to flee in order to save his own life and so that he could understand how brutal political power twists character and at the same time gives the last chance to resist and to save a loved one.

FICTION

original title: Kryštof
runtime: 110 min
estimated release: December 2018
director: Zdeněk Jiráský
produced by: Olga Raitoralová – Fulfilm (CZ), Marian Urban - ALEF FILM&MEDIA (SK)

National Street

This used to be a deep dark forest, now it's a housing estate of prefabricated apartment buildings. The home of the protagonist, whom everyone just calls Vandam. He lives alone in an apartment in a housing estate in the suburbs of Prague, a manual worker painting roofs. He works out every day to stay in shape. The evenings are spent drinking beer with his chums at the local pub, the North Star. Vandam's chums from the North Star dub him their "National hero". According to local legend, Vandam took part in the demonstration on the National Street in Prague in November 17, 1989, where – according to legend – he set history into motion by dealing the first blow.

FICTION

original title: Národní třída
estimated release: February 2019
director: Štěpán Altrichter
produced by: Pavel Strnad – Negativ (CZ)

Piargy

MINORITY CO-PRODUCTION

This story is narrated in two-time lines. In the present (spring of 1939), the priest Balaz is called in by the bishop from Banská Bystrica to investigate a mystery of the Antichrist, buried under the avalanche that few weeks ago covered the village of Piargy. But Johanka, the only living witness of this tragedy, is not willing to talk about it although these secrets torture her mind. The second part of the story happens a year earlier and unfolds the story of Julisa. After her marriage with the son of Rohac, the richest farmer in the village, she becomes a part of the tragic love triangle. The story takes place in the village of Piargy, in the town of Kremnica, where Johanka moved after the tragedy, and in Banská Bystrica, in the episcopal seat.

FICTION

original title: Fašiangy
runtime: 100 min
estimated release: June 2020
director: Ivo Trajtkov
produced by: Silvia Panáková – Arina (SK)
in co-production with: Jordi Niubó – i/o post (CZ), Storyscope production (MK)

Restore Point

DEBUT

Europe 2038. After stabilizing the first refugee crisis, accompanied by a number of terrorist attacks, all the citizens of the Free European Federation got a new constitutional law that guarantees „One whole life to live“. With a new technology, everyone has the right of recovery in case of an unnatural death. In this society, "absolute" murder is nearly impossible. Ambitious detective Emma Trochinowska (27) has to solve a murder of a married couple. But the restoration team was able to bring only one of them back to life. Together they try to hunt down the murderer and find out if the second chance, which now is available to everyone, isn't just another easily exploitable instrument that tries to solve the consequences instead of the cause itself.

FICTION

original title: Bod obnovy
runtime: 100 min
estimated release: March 2019
director: Robert Hlož
produced by: Jan Kallista – Film Kolektiv (CZ)
in co-production with: PubRes (SK), Fantastic Film (IRL)

The Plague

DEBUT

Rosa is 13 years old. She has a two older brothers, despotic father and mother, who is for long months in tuberculosis sanatorium in Alps. Mother is supposed to come back home, but she is not. Meanwhile plague epidemic breaks out. Rosa with her brothers, father, dog Tony and housekeeper, remains trapped in quarantine in a claustrophobic environment of their apartment.

FICTION

original title: Mor
runtime: 90 min
estimated release: May 2020
director: Jan Těšitel
produced by: Petra Oplatková, Artemio Benki – Sirena Film (CZ)
in co-production with: Logicalbox (IT), The Backyard (IT)

Wake

DEBUT

MINORITY CO-PRODUCTION

When hearing the news about his brother's death, Dušan Zrim heads off to his home village. At the wake there he sings together with the village people and tells the stories about death. But when we talk about death, we talk also about life, and the stories gradually get livelier and rollicking while the line between reality and fantasy, the present and the past, the live and the dead, gets blurred.

FICTION

original title: Vigilie
runtime: 78 min
estimated release: December 2018
director: Matjaž Ivanišič
produced by: Miha Srnc – Staragara (SI)
in co-production with: Jordi Niubó – i/o post (CZ)

FILMS TO COME

IN PRODUCTION

IN PRODUCTION



DEBUT

FREM

FREM is a documentary essay, a requiem for the vanishing species of Homo Ssapiens. Through the stories of three protagonists, the film maps the situation before the turning point, the last period when we are still human; in the old, nostalgic sense of the word. What are the attributes that characterize us and what are the motivations of people who want to change them and take them to the next level?

DOCUMENTARY

original title: FREM

runtime: 100 min

estimated release: January 2019

directors: Viera Čákanová

produced by: Nina Numankadic – Hypermarket Film (CZ)

in co-production with: Punkchart Films (SK)



DEBUT

Fugue

Martin P. is a young Argentinean piano virtuoso and composer, who has been since his breakdown four years ago a patient of El Borda, the largest and the most notable but also controversial psychiatric hospital in Latin America. The child prodigy and the most promising talent of his generation is now trying to find a way how to overcome his mental disease and come back to life outside the walls of the asylum and on the concert stages, while working on his new composition Enfermaria. *Fugue* tells unique, yet universal story about the obsession with perfection and creation, narrating the evolution of a human being who draws his strength from his own fragility.

DOCUMENTARY

original title: Fuga

runtime: 90 min

estimated release: May 2018

director: Artemio Benki

produced by: Artemio Benki, Petra Oplatková – Artcam Films (CZ)

in co-production with: Golden Girls Filmproduktion (AT), Buen Destino (RA), Petit à petit production (FR), Lomo Cine (RA)



DEBUT

Moments

Contemporary family drama *Moments* is structured around the character of young warm-hearted woman Anežka, who is always there for her family, tries to help everybody and keep her promises. But she learns in the course of the story that one's self-sacrifice has to be limited and that sometimes she also needs to fulfil her own dreams and longings. *Moments* is a film about everyday life, primary emotions, family relations and desire for harmony that we all struggle with.

FICTION

original title: Chvilky

runtime: 75 min

estimated release: March 2018

director: Beata Parkanová

cast: Jenovéfa Boková, Martin Finger, Lenka Vlasáková

produced by: Viktor Tauš – Fog'n'Desire Films (CZ)



MINORITY CO-PRODUCTION

Aproprierea

Adrian is a Romanian poet, who immigrated illegally to Spain in 2002. Rafael, a second-hand car dealer offers him a night guard job at his auto dealership. During the rituals of the magical night of San Juan, Adrian's life changes forever when he meets Maria, a Spanish woman, bass player in a jazz band, married to Javier. They fall in love, but Adrian never tells Maria he is also married back home in Romania. Rafael is torn between bankruptcy and his divorce, but he finds a new girlfriend, Maria-Eugenia. Adrian and Maria-Eugenia become good friends and they try hard to prevent Rafael's drifting. They all run for love and understanding. They all make mistakes. They fight against the evidence.

FICTION

original title: Aproprierea

runtime: 100 min

estimated release: Autumn 2018

director: Tudor Giurgiu

produced by: Amalia Toader – Libra Film Productions (RO)

in co-production with: Pavel Berčík – Evolution Films (CZ)



The Painted Bird

A little boy is sent by his parents to live with a foster mother in a village somewhere in Eastern Europe in an attempt to save him from the mass extermination of the Jews. The foster mother unexpectedly dies, however, and the little boy is forced to make his way all alone in an unfriendly world where only local rules, prejudice and superstition prevail. His attempts to survive after the war are replaced by a different kind of struggle. A struggle with himself, a struggle for his soul, for his future...

FICTION

original title: Nabarvené ptáče
runtime: 115 min

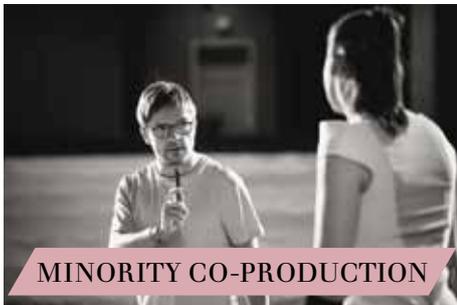
estimated release: March 2019

director: Václav Marhouľ

cast: Petr Kotlár, Nina Šunevič, Udo Kier, Stellan Skarsgard, Harvey Keitel

produced by: Václav Marhouľ - Silver Screen (CZ)

in co-production with: Directory Films (UA), PubRes (SK), RTVS (SK), Film Produkcja (PL), Czech Television (CZ), Eduard Kučera (CZ), Certicon (CZ)



MINORITY CO-PRODUCTION

The Sun Not Always Settle At Sea

Petr runs a small-town theater. He rehearses a new play which should elevate the theater's reputation. The theater's budget is reduced. Petr's lover, actress Karolina, breaks up with him. The situation at home is even worse. His wife suspects something. It is the night of premiere. Petr is proud of his work but the local people don't understand the play and leave the theater. He tries to cheer his actors but finally collapses in his office. His father in law understands him. New play, pressure from the city, the need to be loved and understood. At night Petr and his little son look for his wife. Maybe he never stopped loving her. She comes home with good news. She found finances for his theater. How, she doesn't want to say. They all sleep in one bed and the golden light enters the room.

FICTION

original title: Slunce nezapadá vždy nad mořem

runtime: 100 min

estimated release: May 2018

director: Alejandro Fernández Almendras

cast: Jiří Mádľ, Elizaveta Maximová, Marika Šoposká, Ondřej Malý, Jiří Štrébl

produced by: Guillaume De Seille - Arizona Productions (FR), Veronika Finková - Film & Roll (CZ), August Matte - Jirafa (CL)

IN POST-PRODUCTION



The feature documentary film about the first Czechoslovak entrepreneur, the king of footwear - the founder of the world shoemaking empire, the mayor of Zlin (1923-1932). A reflection of his original methods of production and trade and the system of staff motivation. The main message of the film is to present Bata as the first global entrepreneur of the world.

DOCUMENTARY

original title: Baťa, první globalista

runtime: 90 min

estimated release: June 2018

director: Peter Kerekes

produced by: Kateřina Černá - Negativ (CZ)

Bata, the First Global Entrepreneur of the World



DEBUT

My Unknown Soldier

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE AN OCCUPIER?

When in 1968 the armies of Warsaw Pact invaded Czechoslovakia, not only Czechoslovak citizens were suffering, but also the occupiers, because often they didn't know the purpose of their mission. Almost after 50 years since the unfortunate moment of the European history, we are discovering the surprising humanity of the occupying soldiers. This film isn't about general justice or truth. This is a story about how one becomes unintentionally an "occupier".

EXPERIMENTAL, DOCUMENTARY

original title: Můj neznámý vojín

runtime: 75 min

estimated release: April 2018

director: Anna Kryvenko

produced by: Michal Kráčmer, Veronika Kührová - Analog Vision (CZ)

in co-production with: Baltic Pine Films (LV), Wandal Production (SK)

FILMS TO COME

IN POST-PRODUCTION



DEBUT

Domestic

Roman is a top level cyclist recovering from an injury through hard work and strict regimen. To improve his performance, he even sleeps in an oxygen tent installed in his bedroom. That is a bitter pill to swallow for his wife, Šarlota, whose long-time wish is to conceive a child. And so they both brim with determination, get lost in their obsessions, and improve their bodies to a point where they might even frighten themselves.

FICTION

original title: Domestik

runtime: 90 min

estimated release: July 2018

director: Adam Sedlák

cast: Jiří Konvalinka, Tereza Hofová, Miroslav Hanuš, Tomáš Bambušek

produced by: Jakub Jíra – ShorePoints (CZ)

in co-production with: Punkchart Films (SK)



Get Together

Misty autumn. A man and his wife are about to sell their family cottage. The wife is not sure about the sale and thinks the family should at least spend one last night in the house. Her husband doesn't like that idea. While Grandma hates the cottage, Grandpa doesn't really take notice of reality anymore. Daughter lives in Germany with her German boyfriend and Son was recently left by his girlfriend. But Mother insists, so in the morning of the All Souls Day, the family departs for the cottage. The tensions within the family grow. When they wake up in the morning they find out Grandpa has disappeared. It is not clear whether there will be any sale taking place at all.

FICTION

original title: Chata na prodej

runtime: 90 min

estimated release: May 2018

director: Tomáš Pavlíček

cast: Ivana Chýlková, David Vávra, Tereza Voříšková, Judit Bardós

produced by: Tomáš Michálek, Jakub Mahler – MasterFilm (CZ)

in co-production with: Czech Television (CZ)



Mars

The missions to Mars have been out of fashion for a very long time. No one comes here anymore, the space station is tearing apart, the desolate state suggests coming destruction. The android Bot maintains the settlement in an emergency mode. After years of solitude, Bot finally finds incoming expedition. The mission was paid by a rich tourist from Eastern Europe, who wants to get married on Mars. Bot has lived on Mars alone for years and had enough time to think of matters of life in universe. Are all the new worlds being just colonies, plundering planets forever? Does the human kind have a chance to colonize other planets with real society? Bot doesn't want to stay alone anymore. Even on Mars, life does not come without love.

FICTION

original title: Mars

runtime: 85 min

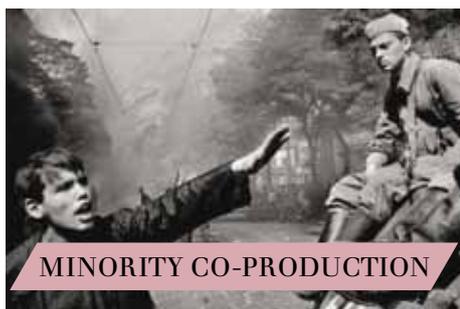
estimated release: April 2018

director: Benjamin Tuček

cast: Petra Nesvačilová, Halka Třešňáková, Tereza Nvotová, Jiří Havelka

produced by: Benjamin Tuček, Zdeněk Janáček – Nyasa Films Production (CZ)

in co-production with: Soundsquare (CZ)



MINORITY CO-PRODUCTION

Occupation 1968

5 countries of the Warsaw Pact occupied Czechoslovakia in 1968. 50 years later, five directors from the same 5 countries are filming their short films about the events of 1968 from the perspective of the occupants.

DOCUMENTARY

original title: Okupace 1968

runtime: 120 min

estimated release: April 2018

director: Evdokia Moskvina, Stefan Komandarev, Linda Dombrowszky, Piotr Stasik, Marie Elisa Scheidt

produced by: Peter Kerekes – Kerekes Film (SK), Filip Remunda, Vít Klusák – Hypermarket Film (CZ)



DEBUT

Outside (working title)

Czech young au pair Mia starts work abroad for a well-off family in a lavish villa. Mia has to look after their ten years old son and follows many strange rules of the household. She slowly begins to gradually and systematically disappear and abandon her humanity and her relationship with child entrusted as a result of manipulation by a radical family community. Mia is suddenly able to express her love by wooden rod.

FICTION

original title: Outside (working title)

runtime: 90 min

estimated release: May 2018

director: Michal Hogenauer

cast: Eliška Křenková, Monic Hendricxs, Roeland Fernhout, Jacob Jutte

produced by: Petr Oukropec – Negativ (CZ)

in co-production with: Tasse Film (LV), Circe Films (NL)



MINORITY CO-PRODUCTION

People from Nowhere

People from Nowhere is the story of a young woman caught in the middle of spy games in which she had to make a choice, a choice that would sever her from her former life for good. She is our principal narrator and protagonist and we will join her on her journey as she searches for the truth about her father and the investigation of a Cold War in which she herself, unwittingly, took part.

DOCUMENTARY

original title: Lidé odnikud

runtime: 85 min

estimated release: March 2018

director: Jaak Kilmi, Gints Grube

produced by: Antra Gaile – Mistrus Media (LV)

in co-production with: Julietta Sichel – 8Heads Productions (CZ), PIMIK (EE), Kick Film (DE)



Snowing!

After her father's second wedding, Tereza (30) and her sister Petra (29) return home to their mother's place. Their mother Ester (52) lives with Granny (81) in a rundown family house in which Tereza decides to outlast the split with her boyfriend František (36). Tereza tries to deal with the rules of the house but some things such as mental health condition of Granny cannot be changed. *Snowing!* is a film about attaining knowledge about the order that rules our world.

FICTION

original title: Sněžil

runtime: 75 min

estimated release: Summer 2018

director: Kristina Nedvěďová

cast: Petra Nesvačilová, Hana Vagnerová, Vanda Hybnerová

produced by: Jitka Kotrlová – Frame films (CZ)

in co-production with: Barrandov studio (CZ), Frame100r (CZ)



DEBUT

The Hastrman

Spanning centuries, myths, and legends *The Hastrman* tells the tale of a strange nobleman returning after years abroad to a small Bohemian village in the beginning of 19th century. The nobleman feels closer to animals despite looking like a human. He is a Hastrman - a water spirit. Water is his element. He loves it, understands it and communicates with it. He needs water not only to sustain his life, but also to gain superhuman strength and dexterity. In this romantic, fantastical, yet ironic story, love brings Hastrman unexpected happiness with an agonizing dilemma: whether to remain a wild creature or to cross the boundaries and get closer to become a human. Vivid and earthy folklore of local villagers brings authenticity to pagan folkways, yet the story ends in present times.

FICTION

original title: Hastrman

runtime: 100 min

estimated release: April 2018

director: Ondřej Havelka

cast: Karel Dobrý, Simona Zmrzlá, Jiří Lábus, David Novotný

produced by: Čestmír Kopecký – První veřejnoprávní (CZ)

in co-production with: Czech Television (CZ), Barrandov Studio (CZ)

FILMS TO COME

IN POST-PRODUCTION / NEW RELEASES



The Magic Quill

For the sake of order in the world, each region has its hell, where a Magic quill writes down human sins. When a sinners folder fill up, a devil squad comes to take them. Lucifer's son Boniface is sent to bring a new quill to Pitchfork, but gets robbed by the greedy Mr. Slime who uses the quill not only to hide his sins, but to enslave the villagers and make them dig for a treasure he hopes to use to charm the beautiful innkeeper Margaret. Boniface is scared and slips a fake quill into hell. As it doesn't work, devils grow lazy. Boniface meets beautiful Margaret and finally admits his mistake and decides to rectify his mistakes. How will things turn out in the end? Will the Good triumph over the Evil?

FICTION

original title: Čertí Brko

runtime: 95 min

estimated release: November 2018

director: Marek Najbrt

cast: Jan Cina, Judit Bárδος, Jan Budař, Ondřej Vetchý

produced by: Martin Hůlovec, Ondřej Beránek – Punk Film (CZ)

in co-production with: Czech Television (CZ), Michal Bauer (CZ), Magiclub (CZ), Trigon Production (SK) Barrandov Studio (CZ), RTVS (SK)

international sales: Global Screen (DE)



Winter Flies

The story begins at a police station with an interrogation of Mára, a teenager who is said to have stolen a car and driven it across the country, and continues with an account of what happened during the car trip.

FICTION

original title: Všechno bude

runtime: 85 min

estimated release: May 2018

director: Olmo Omerzu

cast: Tomáš Mrvík, Jan František Uher, Eliška Křenková, Lenka Vlasáková

produced by: Jiří Konečný – endorfilm (CZ)

in co-production with: Cvinger film (SI), Punkchart films (SK), Rouge International (FR), Koskino (PL), Czech Television (CZ)



MINORITY CO-PRODUCTION

The Cellar

The marriage of Milan and Táňa Labát is going through a crisis. Discontent and vigorous Táňa considers her husband, who avoids resolving any problems, a coward. Their 16 years old daughter Lenka takes their alienation very hard. But one night during the summer holidays, their lives change. Milan leaves to play a concert with his band in a district town while Lenka is celebrating birthday with her friends in a nearby village. However, Lenka does not return home...

FICTION

original title: Pivnica

runtime: 110 min

estimated release: May 2017

director: Igor Voloshin

cast: Jean-Marc Barr, Olga Simonova, Milan Ondřík, Zuzana Vejvodová

produced by: Lívía Filusová – Furia Film (SK), Aleksandra Voronkova – Gate Film LLC (RU), Julietta Sichel – 8Heads Productions (CZ)

NEW RELEASES



DEBUT

Central Bus Station

Yonathan is a guide of one of the most pitiful place in the world - Central Bus Station. The station has become a centre of a ghetto that consists of refugees from over the world. On the endless mazes' corridors, Yonathan's reveals foster home and culturally different inhabitants who became his new family. Everyday rush and the echoes of foreign languages create a contemporary Babel where Yonathan guides those who needs him. The visually experimental documentary shows the station as a character full of stories and people. Despite of the variety the station is very consistent in its nature. And Yonathan as a guide for the audience is soaking into the building.

DOCUMENTARY

original title: Central Bus Station

runtime: 85 min

estimated release: March 2018

director: Tomáš Elšík

produced by: Jitka Kotrlová – Frame films (CZ), Ondřej Šejnoha – Studio FAMU (CZ)



DEBUT

MINORITY CO-PRODUCTION

Touch Me Not

Laura works for years in the mannequin factory. She peeps at other people's intimate lives while hers doesn't seem to function. She pays to be touched, hiring young boys to create an illusion of intimacy. Tudor, an actor who earns his living as a masseur, wants a woman who rejects his attempts at making contact. One day Laura witnesses an interactive show by Tudor & Paul, which deeply touches her. She gradually becomes a silent witness of their lives, their solitary longing resonating with her own. In this mirroring process the walls, she so skilfully built around her, collapse under the flow of her repressed feelings.

FICTION

original title: Ne dotýkej se mě
runtime: 125 min
festival release: February 2018
director: Adina Pintilie
cast: Laura Benson, Tómas Lemarquis, Christian Bayerlein & Grit Uhlemann,
produced by: Adina Pintilie, Bianca Oana – Manekino film (RO)
in co-production with: Agitprop (BG), Radovan Šíbrt, Jakub Pinkava - Pink Productions (CZ), rohlifilm (DE), Les Films de l'Étranger (FR)
sales: CAT&Docs



DEBUT

When the War Comes

Peter lives a seemingly happy life. He drives a new white SUV, has a pretty girlfriend and recently enrolled at university. However, his real life is elsewhere – as the head of a paramilitary called "Slovenskí branci" that recruits hundreds of Slovak teenagers with the silent approval of the authorities. The group's goal is simple – to create a model totalitarian community based on military drill, obedience and fear. Peter dreams that one day he will convince the entire society – as a big shot politician.

DOCUMENTARY

original title: Až přijde válka
runtime: 78 min
festival release: February 2018
director: Jan Gebert
produced by: Radovan Šíbrt, Alžběta Karásková – PINK (CZ)
in co-production with: HBO Europe (CZ), Hulahop (HR)
sales: CAT&Docs



MINORITY CO-PRODUCTION

Backstage

Backstage is a story of a dance group that sneaks into a small town and dreams of a big world. When the door to the shiny world of show business really opens, the relationships and characters in the group are subject to a very hard test. Backstage is a film about dance, music, passion, and above all, it's a film about young people, the power of friendship, their relationships, their lives, their dreams. Backstage is a dance film where choreography and rhythm have the same meaning as a strong and pure story.

FICTION

original title: Backstage
runtime: 100 min
Czech release: 22 March 2018
director: Andrea Sedláčková
cast: Judit Bárδος, Roman Luknár, Ivana Chýlková, Kryštof Hádek, Ben Cristovao
produced by: Silvia Panáková – Arina film (SK)
in co-production with: Ondřej Kulhánek – Bonton Film (CZ), Vojtěch Frič – love.FRAME (CZ)



Insect

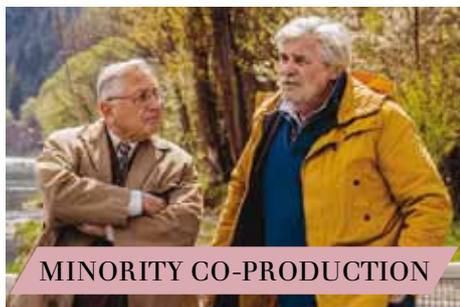
A local pub in a small town. It's Monday and the pub is closed, chairs are turned up on the tables. The place is empty except for six amateur actors sitting in a corner. They've met to rehearse "The Insect Play" by the Čapek brothers. On a raised platform across the room we see a stage, set for Act II of the play. As the rehearsal progresses, the characters of the play are born and die with no regard to time. The actors slowly become one with them and some of them experience frightening transformations... Bugs behave as human beings, and people behave as insects.

FICTION

original title: Hmyz
runtime: 98 min
Czech release: 19 February 2018
director: Jan Švankmajer
cast: Jaromír Dulava, Jiří Lábus, Norbert Lichý, Jan Budař, Kamila Magálová, Ivana Uhlířová
produced by: Jaromír Kallista – Athanor (CZ)
in co-production with: Czech Television (CZ), PubRes (SK)

FILMS TO COME

NEW RELEASES



MINORITY CO-PRODUCTION

Interpreter

Eighty-year-old interpreter Ali Ungár comes across a book by a former SS officer, in which the author describes his wartime activities in Slovakia including a passage, which probably recounts the execution of his parents. He sets out to visit the former SS-man living in Vienna. But instead, Ali finds only the Nazi's seventy-year-old son. Georg is a former teacher struggling with alcohol addiction, who had distanced from his father's past throughout his entire life. However, the interpreter's visit stirs his curiosity, and so he decides to find out who exactly his father was. And thus the two old men embark on a mutual journey in an attempt to find surviving witnesses of the wartime tragedy.

FICTION

original title: Tlumočník

runtime: 113 min

Czech release: 15 March 2018

director: Martin Šulík

cast: Jiří Menzel, Peter Simonischek, Zuzana Mauréry, Réka Derzsi, Anna Rakovská

produced by: Martin Šulík - Titanic (SK), Rudolf Biermann - IN Film Praha (CZ)

in co-production with: coop99 (AT), Czech Television (CZ), RTVS (SK)

international sales: Celluloid Dreams



DEBUT

Into the Wind

Have you ever had a feeling that you can do anything, but it ties you down? The siblings Matthias (24) and Natalia (22) deal with this while on the run from all the expectations looking after a sailboat in Greece. Their imaginary ride on the wave of 'real freedom' is interrupted by the sailboat owner's son, John (25), who comes to Greece to make a documentary about the current refugee situation. From the first moment, he holds up a mirror to the couple. The situation worsens when John begins to have feelings for Natalia. Matthias defends his sister like a jealous lover raising John's suspicions about the nature of the relationship between the siblings. Tension among the love triangle culminates one night when reality punches them in their faces. Does it change their perception of freedom and responsibility?

FICTION

original title: Do větru

runtime: 75 min

Czech release: 5 April 2018

director: Sofie Šustková

cast: Vladimír Polívka, Jenováfa Boková, Matyáš Řezníček

produced by: Lucie Gorovoj, Michal Nýdrle - CARTEL productions (CZ),

in co-production with: i/o post (CZ), Studio BEEP (CZ)



Prezident Blaník

Antonín Blaník is one of the most important lobbyists in the Czech Republic. One day, he decides it's time to step out of the political backstage and announces candidature for the president of the Czech Republic. With the help of his secretary Žižala and the assistant Lenka, he leads the campaign full of unrealistic promises but surprisingly, it works. Unfortunately, Antonín's run for president ends even before it has really started when Žižala hasn't managed to deliver the petition sheets in time. But nothing can stop Antonín Blaník. There are many other presidential candidates, he can "support". The film is a sequel to the very popular Czech online series and takes place during the second direct presidential elections in the Czech Republic.

FICTION

original title: Prezident Blaník

runtime: 90 min

Czech release: 1 February 2018

director: Marek Najbrt

cast: Marek Daniel, Halka Třešňáková, Michal Dalecký

produced by: Milan Kuchynka, Pavel Strnad - Negativ (CZ)

in co-production with: Czech Television (CZ), Seznam.cz



Short Cut

Short Cut is a coming-of-age story about young Jakub. When he finds out that his entire life was a lie, he has no choice but to immediately grow up and deal with a loss of his illusions. Or things will take a wrong turn. Nobody can help him. Not his mother, who told him that his father sails the seas and thus can't be with him. Neither his father, who in fact had not shown any interest in him at all. At this point, he gets in touch, but only because his legitimate son does not care about him anymore. No matter what, he is no Captain for sure. In addition, his sister Pavlína at the age of 16 finds out as well that her life is not what she imagined and that breaks her heart.

FICTION

original title: Na krátko

runtime: 90 min

Czech release: 29 March 2018

director: Jakub Šmíd

cast: Petra Špalková - Tichá, Marta Vančurová, Martin Finger, Jindřich Skokan

produced by: Viktor Schwarcz - Cineart TV Prague (CZ)

in co-production with: Czech Television (CZ)

