

# CZECH FILM

Summer 2018



The Czech Film Fund is the main public financing body for cinema in the Czech Republic.

The Fund supports all stages of film production, as well as promotion, distribution and other film-related areas. It also administers production incentives for audio-visual projects made in the Czech Republic.

Apart from financing, the fund also includes two divisions for international activities: the Czech Film Center and the Czech Film Commission.

The Czech Film Center promotes and markets Czech films and the local film industry worldwide. It collaborates with major international film festivals and co-production platforms and utilizes a global network of partners, seeking opportunities for creative exchange between Czech filmmakers and their international counterparts.

The Czech Film Commission promotes the country with its film infrastructure as one of the world's top destinations for audio-visual production. As a comprehensive resource for filming in the Czech Republic, the commission provides incoming filmmakers with consultation, guidance, and contacts.



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**Miloš Forman /**

This April, a great filmmaker unexpectedly passed away: Miloš Forman, the director of Loves of a Blonde, Amadeus, and more



**Cannes IFF /**  
A newly restored version Diamonds of the Night, by Jan Němec, will be screened in the Cannes Classics showcase



**Cannes IFF /**  
Czech minority coproduction, Fugue, to premiere at Semaine de la Critique



**Focus /**  
Czech film in women's hands, minds, and hearts



**Czech Film Springboard 2018 /**  
New faces and established names prepare the Czech cinema of tomorrow

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## EDITORIAL

**C**zech cinema experienced both happy and sad moments this spring. We have lost two big names in our culture: Juraj Herz and Miloš Forman—both great directors, gifted with an authentic way of seeing the world and an original style. They had something else in common, too: Both had their work featured in the Cannes Film Festival. Herz's drama *Petroleum Lamps* competed for the Palme d'Or at Cannes in 1972, while Forman's first American movie, *Taking Off*, won the Special Jury Award in 1971. You can read our profile of Miloš Forman on page 4.

This year, another big name of the Czechoslovak New Wave joins Cannes. A newly restored version of *Diamonds of the Night*, the debut film by director Jan Němec, the New Wave's "enfant terrible," who passed away two years ago, will screen in the prestigious Cannes Classics showcase. Another movie with Czech participation screening in Cannes this year is *Fugue*, a psychological drama about a woman who has lost her memory. Directed by Agnieszka Smoczyńska from Poland, the film was made as a Czech coproduction with Karla Stojáková from Axman Production. Read more on page 6.

Moreover, Czech producer Radovan Šibrť, coproducer of the Berlinale award-winning *Touch Me Not*, will join this year's networking platform at Cannes, *Producers on the Move*. Read his story on page 10. There are also other new promising names in Czech cinema: See pages 26 and 16 for a closer look at up-and-coming talents Adam Sedlák and Tomáš Pavlíček.

Happy reading, and please stay with us, wherever you are!

**Markéta Šantrochová**  
Head of the Czech Film Center  
Czech Film Fund



### Three Czech Projects Supported by Eurimages

One animation project and two feature films with Czech participation recently received grants from the Eurimages Fund. The two minority coproduction projects are *The Disciple*, by Ivan Ostrochovský (Slovakia/Ireland/Czech Republic/Romania, €190,000) and *Pardon*, by Jan Jakub Kolski (Poland/Czech Republic/Slovakia, €270,000), while the animation film is *Even Mice Belong in Heaven*, by Jan Bubeníček and Denisa Grimmová (Czech Republic/France/Belgium/Slovakia, €370,000). /

### Domestic and Other Projects at Vilnius Meeting Point

Three Czech projects were presented to festival curators, film producers, sales agents, and distributors at the international industry event Meeting Point – Vilnius, March 27–29: political drama *By a Sharp Knife* (Slovakia/Czech Republic), directed by Teodor Kuhn and produced by Jakub Viktorín; the promising debut *Domestique*, by director Adam Sedlák, working with producer Jakub Jíra; and *Japan*, by director and producer Pavel Ruzyak. This year's Vilnius platform, designed for debut filmmakers, hosted a total of 23 projects selected from throughout Europe. /

### Damon and Affleck Bought the Rights to the Series by Peter Bebjak

*Justice*, a Czech-Slovak coproduced psychological crime miniseries (director Peter Bebjak, producer Rastislav Šesták) has been purchased for the U.S. market by Pearl Street Films, the firm owned by actors Matt Damon and Ben Affleck. In 2017, *Justice* received the Czech Lion for Best Television Film or Miniseries. /



# Czech Film



Juraj Herz

© Wikimedia

**Juraj Herz, R.I.P.**

Great loss for Czech cinema: director Juraj Herz passed away on April 8, 2018, at age 83. He was best-known for his acclaimed film *Cremator* (1968), based on the novel of the same name by Ladislav Fuks and starring Rudolf Hrušínský as a demented crematorium operator who collaborates with the Nazis during World War II. Banned by Communist censors, the film went unseen in Czechoslovakia until 1989.

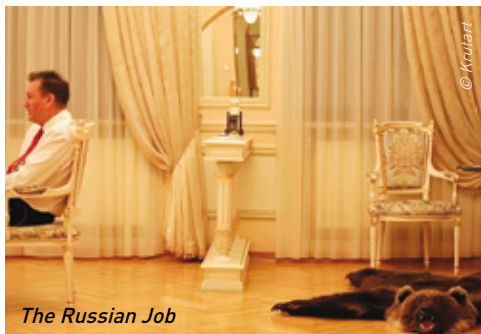
Herz's work in horror and dark drama included the films *Morgiana* (1972), *Beauty and the Beast* (1978), and *Ferat Vampire* (1982). His 1971 drama *Petroleum Lamps* competed for the Palme d'Or at Cannes in 1972. The director's last major work was *Habermann's Mill* (2010), and recently he had begun preparations for a new movie, a narrative fairy tale based on the libretto of Mozart's opera *The Magic Flute*.

**Czechs Meet Nyon**

This year's international competition of the Visions du Réel (April 13–21) hosted the world premiere of the Latvian-Czech coproduction documentary *D Is for Division*, directed by Davis Simanis, produced by Ego Media and Produkce Radim Procházka. Czech producer Radovan Sibrť also scored, with two films in the program: *Touch Me Not*, the Czech minority coproduction and Berlinale Golden Bear winner by Adina Pintilie, in the main competition, and *When the War Comes*, by Jan Gebert, in the Latitudes section.

**Hot Czech Docs in Canada**

Two Czech documentaries were selected to be screened at The Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival, April 26–May 6, as part of a new program called the Changing Face of Europe, initiated by European Film Promotion: *The Russian Job*, by Petr Horký, and *The White World According to Daliborek*, Vít Klusák's stylized portrait of a Czech neo-Nazi. Plus another Czech project was presented in the 2018 edition of the Hot Docs Forum: *Wishing on a Star*, directed by Peter Kerekes, produced by Videomante (Italy), Mischief Films (Austria), Artcam Films, (Czech Republic), and Peter Kerekes (Slovak Republic).



*The Russian Job*

© Krulart

**Ice Mother Dominates 2017**

**Czech Lions**

At the 25th Czech Lion Awards, held March 10 in Prague, *Ice Mother*, directed by Bohdan Sláma and produced by Petr Oukropec and Pavel Strnad (Negativ), took home honors in six categories: Best Film (Oukropec and Strnad/Negativ), Best Director (Sláma), Best Screenplay (Sláma), Best Actress in a Leading Role (Zuzana Krónerová), Best Actor in a Leading Role (Pavel Nový), and Best Actress in a Supporting Role (Petra Špalková).

*Barefoot*, by Jan Svěrák, won four awards, including Best Cinematography (Vladimír Smutný) and Best Actor in a Supporting Role (Oldřich Kaiser).

*Filthy*, by Tereza Nvotová, was awarded for Best Editing, and *Milada* by David Mrnka won Best Costume Design and Best Makeup and Hairstyling. The Lion for Best Documentary Feature went to *Cervena*, directed by Olga Sommerová, produced by Pavel Berčík (Evolution Films). The Magnesia Award for Best Student Film went to Michal Blaško for *Atlantis, 2003*.



*Ice Mother*

**Animation Challenge at Anifilm**

This year's edition of Anifilm IFF, May 1–6, announced a slew of Czech films listed in international competitions: the feature length *Laika* (by Aurel Klimt) in the International Competition of Feature Films for Children; *Charlie the Snowman's Christmas Wedding* (by Petr Vodička) and *Walking and Running* (by Vít Pancíř) in the International Competition of Short Films; plus *Chase* (by Michaela Režová), *Mukumu* (by Pavla Baštanová), *Red Riding Hood* (by Martina Holcová), and *Wandering Bondy* (by Veronika Zacharová) in the International Competition of Student Films.

Now

*Loves of  
a Great Man:*

# Miloš Forman

1932–2018

This April, a great filmmaker unexpectedly took his leave: Miloš Forman, director of such unforgettable works as *Loves of a Blonde* and *Amadeus*, winner of every prestigious film award there is, from the Oscars to the Golden Globes, from Cannes to the Berlinale. He was a brilliant observer of human nature and a storyteller whose films overflowed with his love of people. Maybe that was what made him so loved himself, not only by the Czechs of his native country, but also in America, his adopted second home.

by Irena Kovarova

**W**hen Miloš Forman was a young boy, he and his parents dressed up in their Sunday best and headed over to the cinema in Čáslav for the future filmmaker's first moviegoing experience. They took their seats and the opera *Bartered Bride* began on screen—as a silent film. In Forman's telling of this story, he would always pause when delivering the paradox of this moment. Then he would continue, revealing that to his great delight, the audience, knowing the opera by heart, began to sing along.

From that moment on, cinema was forever fixed in his mind as a communal experience.

Miloš Forman was a remarkable storyteller. For the screen and in person. You'd hear him tell the same stories from his career on many occasions, but you'd never see him bored with his own words. They were perfectly crafted and he was incredibly generous with his audience. He knew the story worked and he was there to bring his listeners joy with his delivery, which in turn warmed his heart.

He was a man larger than life: his baritone voice strong, and his r's rolled and resounding. One believed when in his presence that his first love was for people, and he made sure that everyone around him could feel it.

### Universal Sigh of Sadness

So it was a universal sigh of sadness that reverberated across the globe at the news that Forman had passed away at the age of 86 in the wee hours of April 14. It was a personal loss for many: his wonderful wife and author Martina; his four sons, two sets of identical twins from his second and third marriages; his friends, stars, and every member of the cast and crew of his films; for this writer, who had the



privilege of organizing a retrospective tour of his work in North America, which he graciously joined in several cities. It was almost as personal for the filmmakers to whom he was an inspiration, for film writers, and all his fans—and for just about every grownup in the country of his birth, now the Czech Republic, for whom he was the man who achieved it all and of whom they could be proud. Many on both sides of the Atlantic recalled on this occasion what their first Forman film was and where they were when they saw it, making clear how much his films influenced their careers or their understanding of cinema.

“Sadly, we lost one of the greatest directors in the history of film.”

—Michael Douglas

And cinema was Forman’s great love. His films were full of life and paradoxes, his guiding lights when writing a film. His grand topic: the pursuit of individual freedom. He learned firsthand, after losing his parents to the Nazis during World War II and living for 20 years under a Communist regime, what it is not to be free. Every film he made touched on this basic human need.

He wasn’t one to sit back and be quiet. His zest for life was clear from early photos of film school in Prague. He towered over his colleagues—not just physically, but also with the sheer power of his ambition and achievement. Never aggressively, but with an air of assurance and humor. When asked, upon receiving his second Oscar for Best Director (on *Amadeus*; the first was for *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest*), he said that two

is better than one and having one is better than having none. In public he was rarely nostalgic or sentimental.

In Cannes, he joined French filmmakers in their 1968 protest, pulling his film and those of his Czech peers from the competition, despite the fact that with three films the Czechs stood a good chance of winning the Palme d’Or. It wasn’t his last appearance at Cannes, though. He soon returned with other films, most notably *Taking Off*, which won the Special Jury Award in 1971. He became fast friends with French filmmakers, including Claude Berri, who saved him from sure doom by acquiring *The Firemen’s Ball* after Carlo Ponti pulled his money out of the production, and Jean-Claude Carrière, with whom he made three films.

Forman’s generosity reached far beyond the cinema screen and his audiences. Possibly inspired by the support he received from filmmakers when setting up shop in America—Mike Nichols helped to turn around the Directors Guild after it attempted to bar Forman from working in the country—he repaid that debt years later to his newly arrived fellow Czech émigré Peter Sís, by hiring him to design the poster for *Amadeus*, helping to cement the illustrator’s career.

He was a night owl, a consummate reader of the *New York Times*, a Jon Stewart enthusiast, and a huge sports fan. The Olympic Games would always have him glued to the TV for the duration, his living room in his Connecticut farmhouse, filled with books, films, and light, barely visible through the cigar smoke. His love of sports was a saving grace during the particularly tough period when his American debut, *Taking Off*, flopped in cin-

emas, despite praise from Europeans, as he got the chance to contribute the short titled *Decathlon* to the omnibus feature *Visions of Eight* (now available thanks to the Olympic collection on the Criterion label). He was a bon vivant who loved good food and lively conversation—often both at the same time, as one can glimpse in Věra Chytilová’s portrait of him for Belgian TV (*Chytilová Versus Forman*), where their spirited exchanges threaten to derail Forman’s enjoyment of the famous paella at El Quixote in the Chelsea Hotel, his first New York home.

### One Lifetime, Two Careers

Forman leaves behind an unparalleled body of work. He would be considered a classic even if he had made only his Czechoslovak films: *Audition*, *Black Peter* (which won the main award in Locarno), *Loves of a Blonde*, and *The Firemen’s Ball* (the last two both nominated for Oscars). Each of them brings authentic contemporary lives to the screen in a unique way. Yet his American career by far surpassed his early promise. His first take on American society, *Taking Off*, is a hilarious piece of social comedy that has yet to receive the widespread acclaim that it deserves. Meanwhile, all-around favorites and multiple-Oscar-winning masterpieces *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest* and *Amadeus* are now part of the canon. But to this writer, each and every film from his long career is a tour de force, be it the musical *Hair*, the historical saga *Ragtime*, or Forman’s adaptation of the 18th-century French novel *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, *Valmont*, far more successful and subtle in relaying the atmosphere and sensuality of the book than Stephen Frears’s better-known attempt. Few others would have dared to put the stories of Hustler publisher Larry Flynt and comedian Andy Kaufman on film the way Forman did in *The People vs. Larry Flynt* and *Man on the Moon*. His final film, *Goya’s Ghosts*, brought paintings to life in an unforgettable manner.

He wore his Czech heritage lightly, yet proudly, but to many Americans he was simply just another countryman. For all that, he will be remembered, and he’ll be with us as long as his films stay on screen, big or small.



*Amadeus*



*Loves of a Blonde*

© NFA

Czech Minority  
Coproductio

# Fugue

to Premiere at  
Semaine de la Critique



*Fugue*, a psychological drama about a woman who has lost her memory, is the second movie by Polish director Agnieszka Smoczyńska. Her debut feature, *The Lure*, premiered to acclaim at Sundance in 2015. *Fugue* is one of 7 works that have been selected for the Feature Films Competition at the 57th Semaine de la Critique in Cannes.

by Hedvika Petrželková

**F***ugue* is a coproduction of Poland, the Czech Republic, and Sweden. The lead producer is Agnieszka Kurzydło from the Polish outfit MD4, with Karla Stojáková, from the Czech firm Axman Production, and Jonas Kellagher, from Swedish CommonGround Pictures, acting as coproducers.

"I first came into contact with the project in March 2015, when I read a rough script and immediately fell in love," says Czech coproducer Karla Stojáková. "I met producer Agnieszka Kurzydło thanks to the Czech producer Viktor Tauš. They had worked together previously on the coproductions *Red Spider* and *Red*

*Captain*, then later also on the trilogy *Garden Store*, directed by Jan Hřebejk."

*Fugue* tells the story of a woman's impossible return to family life, infusing the psychological thriller with fantasy. With brilliant directing and powerful acting, the film conveys the insanity-driven anguish that upsets the family balance.

"*Fugue* is a 'feminine film' in the true sense of the word. I was excited not only by the script and the approach of Kurzydło as producer, but also by Agnieszka Smoczyńska, who is a very talented director. It has been great fun from the very start all the way up to the delightful news that the film was chosen for Semaine de la Critique—the culmination of the challenging journey undertaken by this film," said Stojáková.



© Jakub Kijowski

*Fugue*



© Krzysztof Wiktor

© Rafał Paśnik



## AGNIESZKA SMOCZYŃSKA

(b. 1978) is a graduate of the Krzysztof Kieślowski Film School in Katowice in Poland and has also taken master classes at the Wajda Film School. She is recipient of a scholarship from the Minister of Culture and National Heritage for outstanding artistic achievement, the My Talent for Poland prize, and the Golden Pen, awarded by the president of Poland. In 2015 her first feature film, *The Lure*, experimenting with the genres of musical and horror, won the Best Debut award at the Polish Film Festival in Gdynia, and she was named Discovery of the Year at the Polish Film Awards. *The Lure* has received numerous awards at festivals worldwide, including Fantasporto, Sofia, Montreal, Vilnius, and Sundance, where she won the Special Jury Prize for "unique vision and design." In 2017, Smoczyńska was invited by the Sydney Film Festival, Variety, and European Film Promotion to take part in the "European Cinema: Ten Women Filmmakers to Watch" program. She was recipient of a Global Filmmaking Award at Sundance in 2017.

In her director's note, Smoczyńska says: "*Fugue* is about the social taboo concerning motherhood and the fact that women are socially pressured to accept this role without hesitation. What if that weren't always the case? What if a woman could forget giving birth, having a child? Would she choose to do it again?"

*Fugue's* main character is Alicja, who has rebuilt a free-spirited way of life in the wake of a memory loss. After two years, she returns to her former family, against her will, to assume her role as wife, mother, and daughter. Although she looks familiar, she acts like a stranger to her estranged husband and son. Feelings of alienation, love, and revelations rekindle her interior flame.

The star of *Fugue* is Gabriela Muskata of Poland, who also wrote the script, which Smoczyńska says is inspired by a true story: "A few years back, Gabriela and I saw a TV program about a woman who couldn't remember her name or where she was from—nothing. During the broadcast, a man called in to the studio, claiming that he was her father. She didn't recognize the man's voice. She didn't even remember she had a family.

She wasn't sure if she wanted to meet them. So we decided to visit this woman and find out how and why her old self and her old life had been erased from her memory. How did it happen that one day she left home and vanished for months? How come nobody looked for her? How could she have forgotten her own child? How was she able to go back to her former life after such a traumatic experience? How did she come to terms with the fact that she had been somebody else and that one day her love for her husband and son just vanished and she became a totally new person?" These were the questions the director and the writer were looking to find answers to.

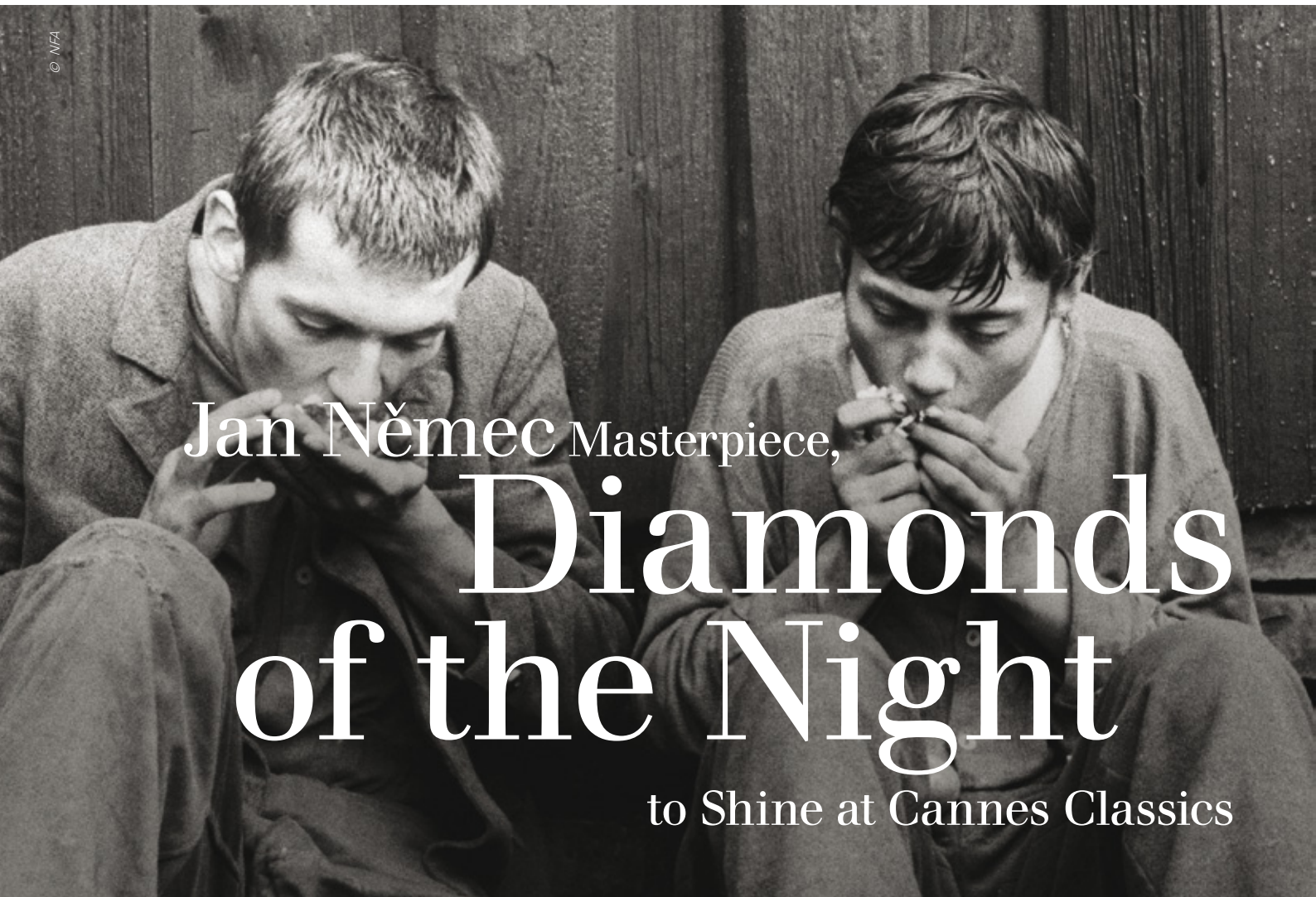
Smoczyńska continues: "We learned that the woman was suffering from dissociative fugue disorder, a rare psychiatric condition that can manifest itself in unplanned travel, leaving the family home, partial memory loss, and change of personality. In a single moment, a life becomes a blank slate again." Together with Muskata, the director explains, she took this condition as the starting point for the character of Alicja.

The film was supported with €100,000 from the Czech Film Fund, and was partly

filmed in the Czech Republic (with Czech music composer Filip Míšek and Czech VFX supervisor Michal Křeček from Magiclub, where all of the film's postproduction is took place).

"*Fugue* presents the remarkable story of a woman who suffers from memory loss and is reunited with her original family. The confrontation between her past and current selves, however, results in complications for all the protagonists. The film has the potential of a distinctive psychological drama, and at the same time, there is humor, insight, and empathy for the characters. Generally speaking, the story deals with the roles that we hold in our 'environments' and the fragility of our existence," said the Czech Film Fund Council, explaining their decision to support the project.

The film also received support from the Polish Film Institute, Eurimages, Odra-Film (PL), the Mazovia Warsaw Film Commission (PL), the Lower Silesia Film Fund (PL), the funds of the City of Wrocław and the Lower Silesia Region (PL), Magiclub (CZ), and Film i Väst (SE). International sales are handled by Alpha Violet.



Jan Němec Masterpiece,  
**Diamonds  
of the Night**  
to Shine at Cannes Classics

A newly restored version of the debut by director Jan Němec, “enfant terrible” of the Czechoslovak New Wave, will be screened in the prestigious Cannes Classics showcase.

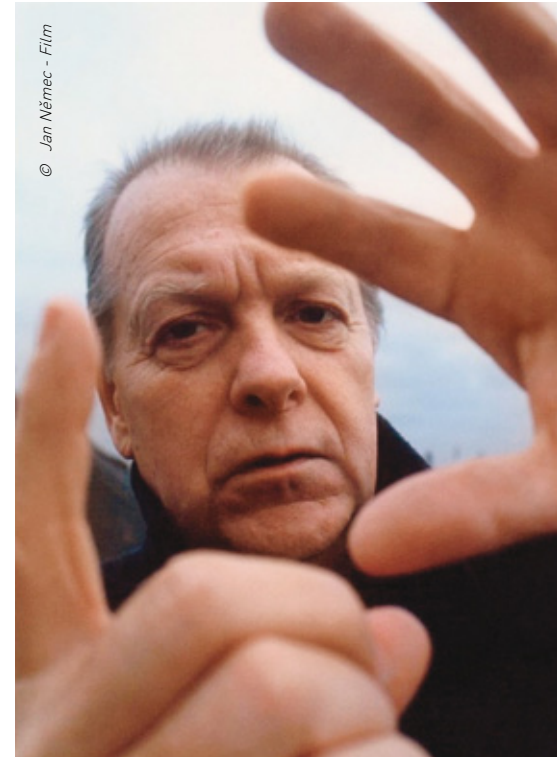
by Hedvika Petrželková, Irena Kovarova

**D***iamonds of the Night*, shot in 1964 in what was then still Czechoslovakia, is adapted from a short story of the same name by Arnošt Lustig, inspired by the author’s personal experience. In Němec’s rendering, the realistically written tale of two boys trying to stay alive after escaping a Nazi death transport, is a radical work of art inspired by surrealism. In the words of film theorist Peter Hames, Němec decided “to make no compromises in the attempt to create a non-realist film.” Rather than simply depicting the

escape and the boys’ experiences, Němec seeks to evoke the mental state of his protagonists by way of stream of consciousness, transposing their internal vision into a mise-en-scène that is stark and imaginatively constricted. The dynamic imagery of the escape is given greater meaning through retrospective incorporation of the boys’ experiences and thoughts, or hallucinations. Hunger, fatigue, angst, fear—by choosing the format he does, Němec allows all these feelings to emerge in near-palpable fashion. The leitmotif of this open-ended

film is the yearning for safety, presented here as a yearning for home.

Critic Eric Hynes, in his *Time Out New York* 4-star review of *Diamonds of the Night*, wrote: “Jan Němec’s debut stunner feels even more potent now that it’s been freed of the expectations and delineations of a national movement. In 64 fleet minutes, we’re utterly and overwhelmingly immersed in a Jewish fugitive’s singular experience, from hunger pains to hallucinatory reveries. Němec’s technique is as emotionally intuitive as it is masterful, pur-



**JAN NĚMEC**  
(1936–2016, Prague)

was a key figure in Central European avant-garde cinema and the Czechoslovak New Wave. He made his debut with the internationally acclaimed *Diamonds of the Night* (1964), then created yet another masterpiece, *The Party and the Guests* (1966), which was competing for the Palme d'Or in 1968, together with Forman's *The Firemen's Ball*, and Menzel's *Capricious Summer*, and got him on the wrong side of the authorities in his own country. After making *Oratorio for Prague* (1968), about the Soviet-led invasion of Prague and the crushing of the Prague Spring, he was definitively banned from filmmaking, and in 1974 he was forced into exile, living in West Germany and the US. After the collapse of the East Bloc, he returned home and shot the majority of his films, mostly via his own company Jan Němec – Film. Throughout his career, Němec never stopped developing his nonconformist vision, challenging the boundaries of artistic freedom and the limits of film as medium, turning to more autobiographical subjects in the last 20 years of his career.

posefully scrambling past and present, handheld realism (a breathless opening tracking shot) and Bunuelian surrealism (fever-dreamed ants colonizing [the boys'] angelic face). It's a torrent of life—and cinema—in the face of death."

Though Němec's feature-film debut undoubtedly ranks as one of the finest ever made in Czechoslovakia or the Czech Republic, the director himself has unjustly been outshined abroad by his more famous peers, including Miloš Forman and Věra Chytilová. Critic Peter Hames, in his book *The Czechoslovak New Wave*, writes: "Němec's films have not achieved the same international reputation as the work of Forman, Menzel and Chytilová. One reason probably lies in their brevity, resolute experimentation and occasional rough edges. Němec admitted that all his films were made in a rush for fear that he would not be allowed to complete them, [yet] the speed with which the films were made gives them an urgent individuality that is one of their most attractive features."

**What Makes Us Free?**

In "Off the Blacklist: The Films of Jan Němec," published during the 2013–14 touring retrospective of Němec's work in North America, Max Nelson, writing in Film Comment, offers a close look at Němec's first three features, describing them as the source text for the Czechoslovak New Wave. "In Němec's cinema, abstract questions — What makes us free? What, if anything, serves as a stable basis for political authority? What makes us unfree: ourselves or others? — are borne concretely out in the movement of bodies: at some moments penned chafingly in, at others set in nervous, unstable motion." Nelson notes that Němec demonstrates this trait from his very first feature, *Diamonds of the Night*, praising the director for his economy of style. Nelson writes that Němec wastes no time on exposition, to "startling effect." He goes on: "It's immediately evident that [the boys are] running for their lives—which, it soon becomes clear, means that they're running primarily for the freedom to keep running."

**Tereza Frodlová of the National Film Archive on the Digitization Process:**

*The image was digitized from the original negative on Agfa and Kodak film stock in 4K. Missing parts were replaced from a duplicate positive. The source of the sound was the sound negative. The goal of digital restoration was to make the film available in a form similar to what audiences would have seen at the time it was first released, in 1964. As a result, various idiosyncrasies originating from the shooting of the film and its laboratory processing have been preserved as evidence of the technologies and creative approaches of the time. A vintage print on Agfa film stock was selected as a reference for color corrections. The tonality of the digitally restored film is based on this print, created at the time when the film was first released.*



# Radovan Sírbrt: I Have to Love the Project

*Touch Me Not*

The successful Czech production company PINK, coproducers of the Berlinale award-winning *Touch Me Not*, and producers of Panorama Dokumente opening *When the War Comes*, have many new projects ahead of them, including a coproduction with Iran and a Polish psychological drama. Plus, Radovan Sírbrt was selected to join this year's edition of European Film Promotions's networking platform Producers on the Move at the Cannes Film Festival.

by Hedvika Petrželková

**P**INK was founded by Alžběta Karásková and Radovan Sírbrt to seek out new talents and produce both documentary and fiction auteur films. Their latest big success was participation in this year's Berlinale with two feature films. They introduced not only the winning film by Romanian director Adina Pintilie, recipient of both the Golden Bear and the best debut feature award, but also the documentary *When the War Comes*, which successfully opened the Panorama Dokumente section and was nominated for the Glashütte Original Award.

*Touch Me Not* is an international, five-country coproduction, and it was PINK's second coproduction experience. Sírbrt says: "Our first coproduction, *Cinema, Mon Amour*, premiered at the Dok Leipzig festival, and during its rollout we met the *Touch Me Not* producers. We also had coproducers

from Croatia during the production of *When the War Comes*, but we were the main producers. At the moment, we're doing a Czech-Iranian film essay production, which we're hoping to realize thanks to coproduction. The pooling of finances, and above all experiences, from different countries seems to be essential these days."

Recently, another of PINK's coproduction features has appeared on the screen in several countries: the three-part documentary project *1968mm*, depicting a revolutionary year through 8mm family archives. "It captures the stories of people who lived through the year 1968, not only in the Czech Republic, but the whole world, so the events depicted include Black Panther protests, the feminist movement, and of course the [Soviet-led] invasion of Czechoslovakia, but also student strikes in France and

Americans in Vietnam," Sírbrt says. *1968mm* is a German-Italian-Israeli-Czech coproduction, and the partner list includes Arte as well as Czech Television. "As Czech coproducers, we were in charge of the filming in Czechia, including preliminary research. Every episode has a significant Czech footprint and a strong story, which gives a new, international historical context to our national trauma," adds Sírbrt.

## The Iran Experience

PINK has been developing a Czech-Iranian project with the working title *Don't Gaze Long Into the Abyss* with the Iranian director Mohammadreza Farzad for a few years now. The theme is based on the story of Jiří Polák, a forgotten Czech director with an interesting fate.

Polák graduated from Prague's FAMU (Film and TV School of the Academy of

Performing Arts) in 1968. After winning the main documentary film award in Oberhausen with his student feature, *The Hospital in Kuks*, he immediately emigrated. He traveled to Iran through Switzerland, then stayed there until the Islamic revolution, living on the island of Hormus, in south Iran, for ten years.

"To me, it's a magical story," says Síbrt. "Back then, artists in Iran, including Polák, were close to the royal family, but he was exiled to the wild island of Hormus after he had an affair with a lady of the queen's court."

While living on the island, the director became an architect and a painter, and he built several buildings that are still standing to this day, protected as historical landmarks. "After the Islamic Revolution, Polák had to flee the country, so he left for France and ended up in a mental hospital in Paris. After the 1989 revolution, he returned to Czechia, where he died several years later, largely forgotten," Síbrt recounts.

The feature, which will take the form of a pseudo-documentary, has garnered €20,000 in support from the Czech Film Fund, and is still awaiting other coproducers.

## Images of Love

Another feature project that Síbrt and Karásková are working on, *Images of Love*, is directed by the Czech-based Polish director Tomasz Wiński. "When Tomasz first approached me with a short synopsis, I felt the story was potent—there was something to work with," Síbrt says.

The film tells the story of a young, successful married couple, Petr and Hana, who own a beautiful apartment, a dog, and a company developing mobile apps. As technology increasingly intrudes on their life, it causes a crisis in their relationship. "One of the main themes of the movie is how we replace life with things that merely simulate life," says Síbrt.

The app Petr and Hana are developing is designed to replace a living partner, anticipating human desires and thoughts. "It's like a child that comes between them and starts to ruin their lives. They have to go back to the beginning and look for the reasons why they're together. Assuming that such a reason still exists."

Wiński and Síbrt began work on the project three years ago and took part in several workshops, including EKRAN+, organized by the Andrzej Wajda Film School. "It was a great experience for us," says Síbrt, "working under the guidance of these great figures, especially Ildikó Enyedi and Krzysztof Zanussi. Thanks to the workshop, we had the opportunity to shoot two scenes from the film, even though we were still in the script-writing phase."

*Images of Love* and its creators also took part in the Midpoint Intensive (2016) and Midpoint Feature Launch (2017) workshops, and presented their work at the Connecting Cottbus coproduction market in 2017. Wiński started writing the original screenplay together with actress Hana Vagnerová, and they were later joined by well-known Czech author Petra Hůlová.



The film was supported by the Czech Film Fund with €24,000.

## Lust for Life


A document about the Czech band the Tap Tap, composed of musicians with disabilities, is also in production, with Síbrt taking the helm as director. "I don't want to make a whiny film about disabled people. I would like it to be a celebration of their energy. I'm fascinated by them as people who fate has not been kind to, by how they can live with their disabilities—they don't complain, they live in the moment. Many of them have a progressive condition, so they don't know for sure how long they'll be here, many of their friends have already passed. So I'd like the film to be about optimism and joy, about not having to have big plans for life, but still living it to the fullest," Síbrt explains. This project was also supported by the Czech Film Fund (€60,000).

There are several more projects PINK is planning to work on, one of them being Adina Pintilie's new picture. "We would love to work more with Adina," says Síbrt. "Her new film will be based on some of the characters and themes that we worked on during the production of *Touch Me Not* but didn't fit into the end result."

"We have to love every project," Síbrt says of how he picks his films. "There isn't much sense in calculating. As soon as you're in it for the money, it doesn't usually end well. You have to believe, because only then can you convince the people around you that it's meaningful to invest money in something. You have to have faith that we need to develop and cultivate the world around us, not just use it to further our own ends." /

*Lust for life*





*Who's Who in Mycology*

© Negativ

Czech Film  
in Women's

Hands,  
Minds,

and Hearts

Women have been playing an increasingly important role in the Czech filmmaking industry recently, especially as directors and producers. They've brought to the screen new perspectives, with a wider range of female characters, and in general more types of storytelling. The change is both inspiring and necessary, since of the 30 to 40 feature films made in the Czech Republic each year, only 10 percent are directed or produced by women.

*by Eliška Děcká*

There's no way to talk about women in the Czech film industry these days without mentioning the most famous Czech female director of all time: Věra Chytilová has served for generations as a role model and inspiration within the Czech filmmaking community and beyond. Even though it's been over 50 years since the premiere of what is perhaps her most influential film, *Daisies*, in 1966 (can you believe it?), she continues to loom large in the minds of contemporary filmmakers here.

"Every now and then, I still find myself in awe of her work. How could she find something so creative and meaningful even in the most banal settings?" says Marta Nováková, writer and director of *8 Heads of Madness* (2017), the much-discussed film based on the incredible but true story of Russian poet Anna Barkova, who spent 22 years of her life in Soviet gulags. "It's also because of [Chytilová], I think, that I totally believe in the importance of not content or form in my work, but the strength of the topic itself."

However, today's female filmmakers don't appreciate Chytilová just for her work, but also for her character: her courage in confronting the Communist regime and her ability to stay true to herself even in the hardest times. Last but not least, Chytilová served for many of them as evidence that it was possible for a young woman to choose a career as a filmmaker and be successful at it.

"We all admired her, ever since we were kids. Then later, when I started my studies at FAMU in Prague, Věra Chytilová was such a big name, such a phenomenon, in Czech filmmaking—even though she was a bit of an exception as a woman director in her day—that it seemed natural to be a woman involved in filmmaking. It never even crossed my mind to think about it," says Andrea Sedláčková, who has directed many successful films, including *Fair Play*, presented at Busan IFF in 2014, and her latest, *Backstage* (2018), a modern story about a teenage dance group, just premiered.

### No More in Chytilová's Shadow

Yet it would be a mistake to think of contemporary women in Czech film as living only in Chytilová's shadow. Times have changed—politically, socially, and especially economically—with the free market creating new challenges as well as new opportunities. Creative-minded Czechs are free to travel and get a quality education, or just gain inspiration, all over the world, while international coproductions have become the core of many independent successes by young, up-and-coming filmmakers.

One of the best examples of this is the short student film *Who's Who in Mycology*, directed by Marie Dvořáková, who after finishing her studies at FAMU Prague moved to New York City to continue her education at the highly regarded Tisch School of the Arts, at NYU. Her 15-minute



8 Heads of Madness

film, celebrating the early-cinema tradition of trick films and special effects, won the prestigious Student Academy Award in 2017, a long 29 years after the last Czech win, by Jan Svěrák with *Oil Gobblers*, in 1988.

### Tereza Nvotová: Sensitive Topics from a Woman's Point of View

Another Czech female filmmaker much in the news lately is Tereza Nvotová. She too, despite being early in her career, already has an international presence, as Nvotová is Slovak-born but has lived in Prague since she was 16, and studied live action directing and documentary at FAMU. Just recently she finished *The Lust for Power*, a feature documentary about the controversial former Slovak prime minister Vladimir Mečiar, and in January 2018 it was awarded the FITES Trilobit Grand Prix from the Czech Film and Television Union. Her debut feature, *Filthy*, is her FAMU graduate work, made as a Czech and Slovak coproduction.

*Filthy* is the shockingly raw story of a teenage woman dealing with the aftermath of rape. It was named Best Film of 2017 at the prestigious Czech Film Critics' Awards, while Nvotová herself was singled out as Dis-



Filthy

covery of the Year. The film celebrated its world premiere at the International Film Festival Rotterdam and garnered praise from foreign critics. “Debuting helmer Tereza Nvotová is an extremely talented filmmaker, sensitive to how her traumatized protagonist is portrayed,” Jay Weissberg wrote in *Variety* magazine.

Nvotová stated in an interview with Czech national radio that she’s interested in observing and getting to know better the intimate space of women. It’s not surprising that *Filthy* is attracting a lot of media attention, given the connection of its subject matter to the Me Too movement. Asked about it by Czech *Elle*, Nvotová said: “The Me Too movement is an important milestone in society, because it’s opened a discussion about what is and isn’t all right. What is sex and what is violence. It’s an important difference that people often fail to see, so rapists are excused on the grounds that they’re men while women tend to stay silent.”

It’s obvious how important it is for stories on topics as sensitive as rape, or sexual violence in general, to be told by women, from a woman’s point of view. But including a women’s perspective doesn’t end with that.

### Zuzana Špidlová: Fragile Heroines, Strong Stories

Another international award-winning Czech female filmmaker, Zuzana Špidlová, also chose gender-specific topics for her first two projects, focusing on complicated female leads and the specificity of their experiences.

The first, *Baba*, a 22-minute psychological drama about a teenage girl forced to take care of her terminally ill grandmother, won first prize in the prestigious Cinéfondation Selection competition at Cannes in 2009. Even back then, the jury statement sensed what was to come: “It seems that future films are in the hands of women. Much about youth and age, loneliness and alienation in these films, and this one looked at the relationship of

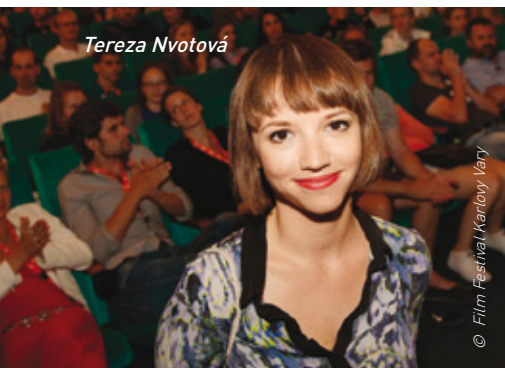
a young girl with her grandmother; she’s both fascinated and disgusted by age. We thought it was so beautifully done and beautifully staged and acted.”

As part of the prize, Cinéfondation commits to premiering the winner’s following film in Cannes. Špidlová is currently at work on her debut feature, with the working title *Caravan* and an estimated release date of April 2020. Once again, she will focus on a complicated female lead.

“It’s a very personal film, about a woman in her thirties who has a son with Down syndrome. Her husband leaves her and she feels marginalized by society,” says the producer, Pavla Janoušková-Kubečková. She is founder of the production company *nutprodukce* and an important woman in Czech filmmaking these days. Another current project of hers, *In the Name of Allah*, a documentary about European Muslims being recruited to join ISIS, received a Sheffield Doc/Fest Award at this year’s East Doc Platform.

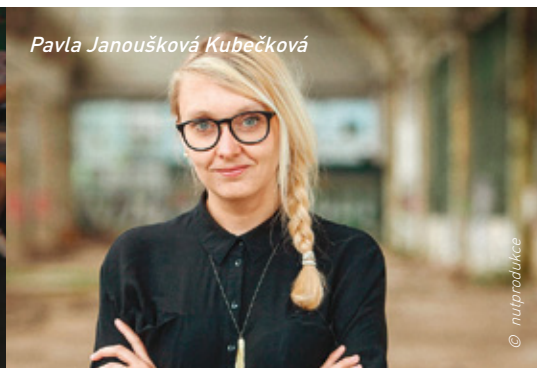
Janoušková-Kubečková made her reputation in 2013, as part of the production team behind the hit miniseries *Burning Bush*, created for HBO by Polish director Agnieszka Holland. Just as many women filmmakers feel inspired by Chytilová, Janoušková-Kubečková said in a recent interview that working with Holland was a great experience for her and her colleagues: “Agnieszka Holland influenced us a great deal. She has her own unique point of view, not just on filmmaking but the world in general. She is truly inspirational, and sets the standard for us.”

Last year, Janoušková-Kubečková also produced Veronika Jonášová’s documentary *Mamma from Prison*, which follows the stories of three women in a prison that decides to experiment by creating a specialized ward where mothers can start their imprisonment together with their children—again, a gender-specific topic deserving a creative woman’s point of view.



Tereza Nvotová

© Film Festival Karlovy Vary



Pavla Janoušková Kubečková

© nutprodukce



Michaela Pavlatová

© Film Festival Karlovy Vary





Andrea Sedláčková



Veronika Lišková



Zuzana Špidlová

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### Veronika Lišková: Uncovering Taboos

The same goes for another upcoming project that dwells somewhere in between the territories of documentary and fiction: *Year of a Widow*, directed by Veronika Lišková (whose last project, the controversial *Daniel's World*, opened the Panorama Dokumente section at Berlinale in 2015) and produced by another up-and-coming woman in Czech film, Petra Oplatková, of Artcam Films (currently also producing the promising documentary *Fugue*, by Artemio Benki).

Based on a true story Lišková read in a Czech magazine, *Year of a Widow* follows a woman as she confronts a labyrinth of authorities, conventions, and emotions after the sudden loss of her husband. In her director's statement, Lišková said she aims to uncover the taboos associated with this subject in Czech society while capturing "the clash between a person's individual perception of a situation and reality, which ruthlessly goes on about its business."

### Michaela Pavlátová: Complicated Relationships

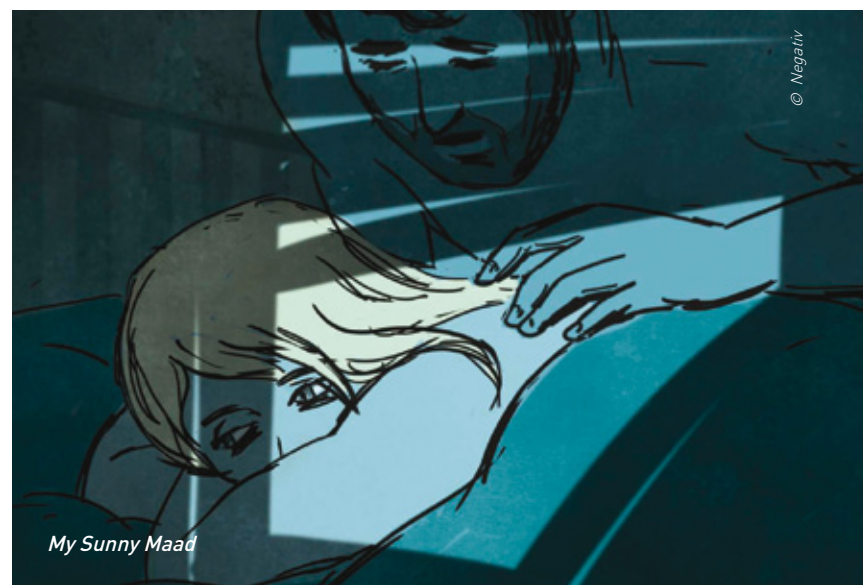
Strong stories about women, made by women, are finding their way into every branch of the Czech film industry nowadays—not only into live action films and documentaries, but even into animation. Michaela Pavlátová, the world-renowned animator and Oscar nominee (*Words, Words, Words*, 1993) whose latest short, *Tram*, was selected for the Quinzaine de Réalisateurs in Cannes in 2012, is now working on her debut animation feature, *My Sunny Maad*, based on the novel *Fresha*, written by Czech journalist Petra Procházková, based on the six years she spent in Afghanistan.

Pavlátová's film, a Czech-French coproduction (Negativ and Sacrebleu), tells the story of a Czech woman who falls in love with an Afghan man, but has no idea about the life that awaits her in post-Taliban Afghanistan, nor about the family she is about to join. Thanks to Pavlátová's personal and original point of view, the story fo-

cuses on the everyday aspects and similarities of relationships around the world, rather than getting bogged down in political and cultural analysis.

"I've always been interested in strong women characters and relationships, mostly relationships between men and women. That's how I'm approaching this film, and that's how I hope people will see it as well—not as a war story or a political story or an exotic story about Afghanistan, but a story about one big family where people love each other but that doesn't stop them from making things hard and complicated sometimes," Pavlátová says.

Perhaps this was the kind of approach the Cinéfondation Selection jury had in mind in 2009, when they said, "It seems that future films are in the hands of women." In any case, nine years later, their statement looks to be visionary. No doubt there's still a lot of work to be done, but it's safe to say that women's voices in Czech cinema are louder, and also better heard, than they were even just a few years ago.



© Negativ

My Sunny Maad



Tomáš Pavlíček:  
Biggest Challenge  
Was to Make a  
“Normal” Film

Following his debut, the playful, highly stylized existential comedy *Totally Talking* (2014), Tomáš Pavlíček (b. 1988) returns with his second feature, *The Get Together*, a comedy about a family who gather in their country cottage the last night before it's sold. The topic touches on a Czech phenomenon that dates back to Communist times, with families spending weekends at a cottage in the countryside. This is Pavlíček's first production outside of film school and his first major project with an all-professional crew.

by Martin Svoboda

Your first feature, *Totally Talking*, came to cinemas four years ago, along with other promising works by young Czech filmmakers. Journalists even talked about a “New New Wave.” Yet today, critics are once again pessimistic about the state of Czech cinema. What do you think?

We knew from the start that the real challenge isn't to make a good debut, but a good, solid second movie. It's

the ultimate challenge for all of us who finished film school. Only now we face the reality of filmmaking outside that safe environment. It also takes a longer time to fund and produce a follow-up project. That's the reason for the gap, and that's why we as viewers are fed up and annoyed with the mainstream. But many of those young filmmakers are now in the final stages of their productions, so better films should soon be on the way.

*“It’s a typical Czech habit to keep a weekend cottage outside the city and go hide away there in your free time.”*

**How do you work, given that limitation?**

In preparation, I collected anecdotes from my personal experience with my own family, who have two cottages. It’s a typical Czech habit to keep a weekend cottage outside the city and go hide away there in your free time. I wrote down all the little stories I could remember, all the feelings—just one great big pile of thoughts, and according to my friends it didn’t quite work as a film. So instead of having two cottages I put them together into just one. Then I added the story about selling it, which gave us a sort of framework: The family has to sell its world, after building it up for decades. But I realize it’s still more a chain of events than a fluid narrative.

**Your style of filmmaking seems to be very intuitive. Did you make a lot of scenes that you then ended up throwing out?**

We tried to be as specific as possible. My cowriter, Lucie Bokšťeflová, and I agreed that since there isn’t perfect continuity in the movie, every scene needs to have its own point. The first version of the screenplay was 107 pages, but the script editor, Jaroslav Sedláček of Czech Television, insisted we cut it down to 90 at most. So we did, and we shot the movie with a screenplay 89 pages long. It might sound chaotic, but our script and our working approach were relatively firm. In fact, so much so that the film ended up only 75 minutes long—10 minutes shorter than the first cut.

**Your film was supported by the Czech Film Fund. Was it easy for you to get support, and did it help that you had already made a successful film earlier?**

By making *Totally Talking* I proved I could finish a production. In that sense, it helped to have a whole film behind me. And I guess the fund’s experts already knew my



*The Get Together*

**Many people say the graduate film is the last chance for filmmakers to freely practice their style. Were you forced to tune down your vision with *The Get Together*?**

No, I wasn’t, though it’s true many people who saw the rough cut told me they expected something different—more playful and stylized. But that was a deliberate choice on my part to make, at least on the surface, a “normal” film. I wanted to evoke an ordinary story, then bend its reality in the end. But not as much as in *Totally Talking*. It will probably be a long time, if ever, before I use such a strong visual style again.

**Was one of the reasons for this shift the fact that it’s easier to fund a more “normal” film?**

That wasn’t part of my thinking, but I guess it is easier to fund *The Get Together* than it would be to fund a movie that looks like *Totally Talking*. More important, I felt I’d already tried every possible stylish gimmick in that film, so it wouldn’t have been interesting to do it again. In fact, to do a more “normal” film is a bigger challenge for me, since I know that writing realistic situations is my weak spot.



*The director Tomáš Pavlíček on the set.*

# INTERVIEW

TOMÁŠ PAVLÍČEK

*“I wanted to evoke an ordinary story, then bend its reality in the end.”*

strengths, especially dialogue. But I would say for the most part we had to work from scratch to get funded. Which I guess is how it should be. Me and my producers, Tomáš Michálek and Jakub Mahler, managed to get support right after our first attempt. Then we got support from Czech Television, and that’s basically all we had. We discussed the possibility of an international coproduction—at one point, I was sure the Slovaks would join—but in the end it didn’t happen.

### Was that abandonment crucial?

We asked the Slovaks for something like 15 percent of the budget, so it was a considerable amount of money. But it was still manageable to survive without it. It sure would have been nice to have, for example, a few more shooting days. After they turned us down, we had to rearrange our schedule, which was a real problem, not because we couldn’t do scenes we needed—we still had a good 35 days—but because of the actors. We had some very famous names, which meant their schedule was full, so it was hard to rearrange it.

### So I guess the support of Czech Film Fund and Czech TV was irreplaceable?

Yes. Without them, the film couldn’t have been made.

If you hadn’t received that support, would you have looked for another source of funding, or would you have given up and tried with a different script?

I would have tried to offer the same script reworked, and then, if they refused again, I would have just looked for a different script altogether. I wouldn’t have tried to make this film without state funding. It just would have been too hard. It could have been made more cheaply if we used amateurs, but not with the actors we had and not under such good conditions.

In *Totally Talking*, you worked with your friends, both in front of the camera and behind it. This time you worked with professional actors and crew, including the director of photography, Jan Baset Strítežský, and your editor, Jana Vlčková, both of whom have much more experience than you.

I really felt it was necessary to work with more experienced people. I don’t know what other actors I could have used. The movie is really delicate and full of nuance, so it needed the best performances possible. It isn’t easy to pay and schedule actors like Ivana Chýlková and Jan Kačer. But it was worth it.

My colleagues behind the camera were also great. All of them voiced their ideas throughout the shoot, and I paid close attention. Even though I had a vision, I wasn’t some big, uncompromising auteur. On the contrary. Jan Baset is an auteur in his own right, and working with him introduced me to a new style of communication on set. Jana is also very demanding in the editing room. So I deliberately stepped away from my friends, professionally speaking, but I think I managed to make new ones.





# New Faces and Established Names Prepare the Czech Cinema of Tomorrow: Czech Film Springboard 2018

The 2018 edition of Czech Film Springboard brings together a balanced selection of newcomers and veterans to introduce their feature film projects in development.

by *Martin Kudláč*

In 2016, there was an overhaul of *Finále Plzeň*, the annual showcase for Czech cinema. One change designed to transform the domestic showcase in order to better meet demand was an expansion of the industry sidebar. This resulted in a new platform titled Czech Film Springboard, a pitching session for Czech projects, organised by the Czech Film Fund / Czech Film Center, and a hub for domestic and foreign film professionals alike. This type of initiative had previously been missing in the Czech film industry ecosystem.

The two previous editions have already borne fruit: The fiction feature debut *Filthy*, by budding director Tereza Nvotová, had its global premiere at the International Film Festival Rotterdam, the Netherlands' largest cultural event, after the project was presented to the Dutch representative in 2016. Nvotová's rape drama enjoyed a long festival life, and became the most attended arthouse film in Slovakia as well as taking the top honor at the 2017 Czech Film Critics' Awards.

# INDUSTRY

## CZECH FILM SPRINGBOARD



The Pack



Sunburn

At the 2017 edition of Czech Film Springboard, auteur Václav Kadrnka presented his third feature-length fiction project, *Saving One Who Was Dead*. Two months later, he won the main prize at the Karlovy Vary International Film Festival for his sophomore feature, *Little Crusader*. He also toured international markets and forums, including the MIA Market, in Italy, and Sofia Meetings, in Bulgaria, not to mention the Hong Kong Asia Film Financing Forum, where he netted an HAF Award for *Saving One Who Was Dead*.

"People who took an interest in my project in Plzeň are following it, tracking its development, and even recommending it elsewhere. *Saving One Who Was Dead* received support from the Czech Film Fund, and I'm negotiating with international coproducers and partners. We're currently finishing the final version of the script," says Kadrnka.

The team behind Tomáš Weinreb and Petr Kazda's breakthrough feature debut, *I, Olga Hepnarova*, which scored awards and distribution deals all over the world, also brought their follow-up project, *Nobody Likes Me*, to last year's edition of Springboard.

"Our project from the last Springboard edition is still in development. Taking part helped a lot, because we needed feedback to decide which way to develop it. Since then, the project has been selected for the Berlinale Coproduction Market, so Plzeň was a helpful first step for sure," says the film's producer, Guillaume de Seille, voicing an opinion shared by other filmmakers who took part in the event.

Even domestic projects with an international dimension receive spotlight recognition at the Czech Film Springboard. Kaveh Daneshmand's *Night of the Whale* is a prominent example. Daneshmand was pitching his project in front of film professionals for the first time and said he appreciated the "useful feedback sessions," which gave him "a very

good idea of what an effective pitch should be like." He said it also gave him an invaluable opportunity to network with professionals from different fields within the film industry.

Daneshmand is currently working on a screenplay for his feature debut, with Ivo Trajkov serving as script consultant. On top of that, he has managed to shoot a short film, titled *Alula*, inspired by the story from *Night of the Whale*, which will serve as a proof of concept for the full feature film.

Other projects featured in previous editions of Czech Film Springboard have also thrived. Olmo Omerzu's highly anticipated feature, *Winter Flies*, which scored a Polish copro-



The Last Race

© Punk Film



ducer in Plzeň, is now finished, while Teodor Kuhn's *By the Sharp Knife* and Mira Fornay's *Frogs With No Tongues* are both nearing completion. Likewise, Tomasz Mielnik's project *Gregorius, The Chosen One* is being developed with the help of the ScriptEast program, where the screenplay was chosen as one of the best submitted by screenwriters from Central and Eastern Europe. In a similar vein, Robert Hlož's sci-fi feature, *Restore Point*, won the Screen International Best Pitch Award at the Baltic Event coproduction market and is now actively seeking coproducers for the project.

Visiting international professionals welcome the opportunity to have a sneak peek at upcoming talent and promising pro-

jects in the pipeline. As Marcin Luczaj of New Europe Film Sales acquisitions said, they consider the event "a guideline to what's coming, what to follow, and which talents are developing."

Omerzu's *Winter Flies* also appeared in the newly minted Works in Progress section of Czech Film Springboard. Presenting a selection of domestic projects in post-production, Works in Progress was created in response to rising demand from foreign professionals, especially sales agents and festival programmers, for interesting domestic offerings that demonstrate the relevance of contemporary Czech cinema to international audiences.



### Emerging Talents on the Horizon

When it comes to the Czech Republic's history and its echoes in general discourse, the new generation of filmmakers all appear to be tuned to the same wavelength. Three up-and-coming directors now have chosen to revisit the complicated relations between Czechs and Germans along their shared border from both a historical and contemporary perspective.

Jan Bušta, prolific director of audiovisual campaigns and the experimental docu-operetta *Television Will!*, is preparing a film called *Bloody Easter*, based on true events from the borderlands in the post-World War II period. "To be successful, it will have to balance on the edge of several genres," says Bušta. To achieve this, he will piece together a mosaic of genre conventions—Westerns, thrillers, coming-of-age stories, and psychological thrillers—creating a drama using both a subjective and objective filming approach.

*Wirbel*, the feature debut by director and composer Tomáš Hubáček, also revolves around the topic of Czechs and Germans in the region known to Germans as the Sudetenland.

# INDUSTRY

## CZECH FILM SPRINGBOARD

Hubáček's interest in landscape, environmental philosophy, and pilgrimages are evident in his film, which he intends as an homage to the Sudetenland countryside: "its genius loci, the people who once shaped it, and the people who want to live there today," Hubáček says. His musical inclinations will also influence the film's form as "an atmospheric audiovisual composition," he adds. In genre terms, *Wirbel* will be a mystery film, an underrepresented genre in Czech cinema. Hubáček says he is looking for a specific Czech form of the genre, merging the two phenomena of "searching for a secret" and "wandering through the country." Post-production is slated to take place in 2020.

Tomáš Hodan, in the sports drama *The Last Race*, his feature-length debut, ventures further back in time, before World War II, to examine Czech-German relations in the region through the true story of two Czech skiing pioneers, Bohumil Hanč and Václav Vrbata, who died in the mountains during a fateful race in 1913. Hodan is convinced that previous accounts of the story have been biased, told "to suit the political and social situation." Thus he has resolved to "clean it of all historical dirt" and narrate it exactly "as it happened," with a German skier interfering in events by attempting to save one of the Czech competitors. Hodan already presented the project at the Berlinale Coproduction Market, and shooting is slated for February to May 2019, with a release year of 2020. Hodan says *The Last Race* will

portray friendship, courage, and bravery "taking precedence over themes of homeland and nation."

Sports and coming-of-age meet in Tomáš Polenský's feature debut, *The Pack*, addressing the issue of bullying. The world of youth sports is one the director knows from personal experience, and his film tells the story of 16-year-old David, who attempts to succeed as goalie on a hockey team where he is being bullied. Polenský says he not only seeks to discourage bullying but also intends the story as an analogy of "contemporary, aggressive society, which lacks empathy for its weaker members, such as refugees or minority groups." Polenský, who has experience directing documentaries too, strives to render the story in a raw style with authentic cinematography and dynamic editing, designed to hold the attention of young people, who are a target audience for the film. Post-production is expected to be complete by the end of 2019, followed by appearances on the festival circuit, mostly at festivals with sections for either youth films or emerging filmmakers.

### Upcoming Projects From Experienced Filmmakers

Tomáš Mašín, director of the big-budget crime comedy *The Wilson City* (2015), joins the young generation in using German-Czech historical ties, in a contemporary drama





about guilt and the past based on the Radka Denemarková novel *Money From Hitler*. In Mašín's story, revolving around the postwar trauma of the former Czechoslovakia, Denis, a respected surgeon, returns to his home village to protect his family's property from claims made by Gita, daughter of the original German Jewish owners. He sees Gita as a Nazi collaborator, while she regards him and the rest of the villagers as the offspring of those who attempted to murder her upon her return from a concentration camp. The director says his goal is to make a nonjudgmental film, leaving viewers to form their opinions. "We aim to tackle a very difficult and complex topic in the most audience-oriented manner," says producer Silvie Michajlova, adding they are not afraid to describe their approach as mainstream.

After the success of *The Snake Brothers* in 2015, followed by *Dwarf*, "a family television series not for the entire family," in 2017, Jan Prušinovský is developing his next feature film, *Mistakes*, written by Roman Vojkůvka. This time out, Prušinovský ventures into new territory with a romance depicting the story of Ema, a young woman who in her teen years appeared in porn videos. The story centers around the backlash resulting from her youthful impetuosity and her liberal upbringing, which Prušinovský considers a national attribute, and how her past affects her relationship with her "true love." The director notes he has never had a female protagonist in his stories before, so he sees the



Director Václav Kadrnka presented his project *Saving One Who Was Dead* during Czech Film Springboard 2017.



© Mimesis Film

Wirbel

new project as "a huge challenge, almost a necessity." He points out that pornography won't be front and center in the story, though it won't be avoided either.

The Serbian-born Prague-based director Slobodanka Radun, together with Bionaut producers Danny Holman and Vratislav Šlajer, is now bracing for an ambitious project with international parameters: *Sunburn*. Their project tells the story of a family's encounter with a young couple living in a villa in Croatia during a heat wave. As the plot unfolds, lies and secrets emerge, leading to tragedy. Holman says the project will bear a distinct resemblance to European psychosexual thrillers such as Deray's *La Piscine*, Polanski's *Knife in the Water*, Ozon's *Swimming Pool*, and Guadagnino's *A Bigger Splash*, all of which cramp a small cast into an isolated location.

*Sunburn* is set up as a Czech, UK, Serbian, and Slovak co-production. Holman described it as Bionaut's most ambitious project yet, "since the project's geographic scope and size are larger than for most traditional Czech movies." He added that the film would interest not only a domestic audience but also an international one. Principal photography is scheduled for September 2019, with the final cut expected by spring or summer of 2020.

# Jiří Trnka:

## The Puppet Master

© NFA

A complete retrospective of well-known Czech animator Jiří Trnka tours North America. The retrospective, presenting all 24 of the artist's films, premiered in April 2018, at the Film Society of Lincoln Center, in New York, before setting off on a six-month tour of North America.

by Irena Kovarova

One of the revelations of the inaugural Cannes International Film Festival, in 1946, was the strong showing of animated films from Czechoslovakia. Among them the festival presented several shorts from the newly founded Prague animation studio headed by artist Jiří Trnka. And Trnka's second film as a director, *The Animals and the Brigands*, took home an award from Cannes. It was a brilliant start to an illustrious film career punctuated by many more awards and bringing Trnka international acclaim, from Cannes to Venice and beyond. His body of work as a director—18 short and 6 feature-length animated

“Trnka—the name is the sum of childhood and poetry.”

—Jean Cocteau

films in total—was rivaled only by Walt Disney Studios in output.

By the 1940s, Trnka (1912–1969) was already known in Czechoslovakia as a prolific artist, author, and beloved book illustrator. He frequently designed theater and film productions, but the art form closest to his heart was puppet theater. Trnka possessed an incredible facility in



“Despite his unparalleled reputation among animators worldwide, Trnka’s stop-motion work is far too little-seen in America. This remarkable series will finally remedy this disheartening situation.”

—Jonathan Marlow, distributor, former animator, and Fandor cofounder

all manners of artistic expression, thanks both to his great talent and to the immense number of puppets and drawings he produced from early childhood. Animated puppet film offered him an opportunity to create fantastic new worlds incorporating every art form in which he excelled. Building on the lively Czech puppet theater tradition, which dates back to the Baroque era, Trnka approached puppet film as a serious art form, adapting literary sources ranging from Czech legends to works by such literary giants as Chekhov, Shakespeare, and Hans Christian Andersen.

Trnka uniquely conveyed the drama and psychology of his characters through his figures’ body language, expressive lighting, and camera movement. Revered as a pioneer of the genre, he had an enormous impact on the development of Czech animation, and his work inspired filmmakers and animators around the globe.

The touring retrospective, titled *The Complete Jiří Trnka*, was produced by Come-

back Company featuring films from the collection of the National Film Archive. It premiered April 20–25 at the Film Society of Lincoln Center, in New York, before setting out on a six-month North American tour. The essential series presents all 24 of the artist’s films, including 11 newly translated works and 2 new digital restorations: Trnka’s Venice Film Festival prize-winning first feature, *The Czech Year*, and *Old Czech Legends*, a breathtaking collection of Bohemian myths.

The lineup also features the Shakespeare adaptation *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*; the subversive, absurdist, anti-authoritarian trilogy *The Good Soldier Švejk*; fairytales *The Emperor’s Nightingale* and *Bayaya*; and shorts programs featuring Trnka’s inimitable early work in hand-drawn cartoons (such as the prize-winning *The Animals and the Brigands*), his magical children’s films, and his later, more formally and politically defiant works, such as his final masterpiece, *The Hand*, about the plight of artists toiling under the restrictions of totalitarianism. /

## THE PUPPET MASTER: THE COMPLETE JIŘÍ TRNKA

North American touring  
retrospective 2018

Screening in variations at the following  
venues:

American Cinematheque  
(Los Angeles)

Gene Siskel Film Center  
(Chicago)

Cleveland Cinematheque/CIA  
(Cleveland)

Lightbox Film Center  
(Philadelphia)

Harvard Film Archive  
(Cambridge, MA)

George Eastman Museum  
(Rochester, NY)

The Cinematheque  
(Vancouver)

Speed Art Museum  
(Louisville, KY)

Cornell Cinema  
(Ithaca, NY)

Cinémathèque québécoise  
(Montreal)

More venues to be announced at  
[comebackcompany.com/JiriTrnka](http://comebackcompany.com/JiriTrnka)

*The Czech Year*



© NFA

“Trnka was a genius  
illustrator, but by far  
an even better filmmaker.”

—Petr Sís, H.C. Andersen  
Illustrator Award winner

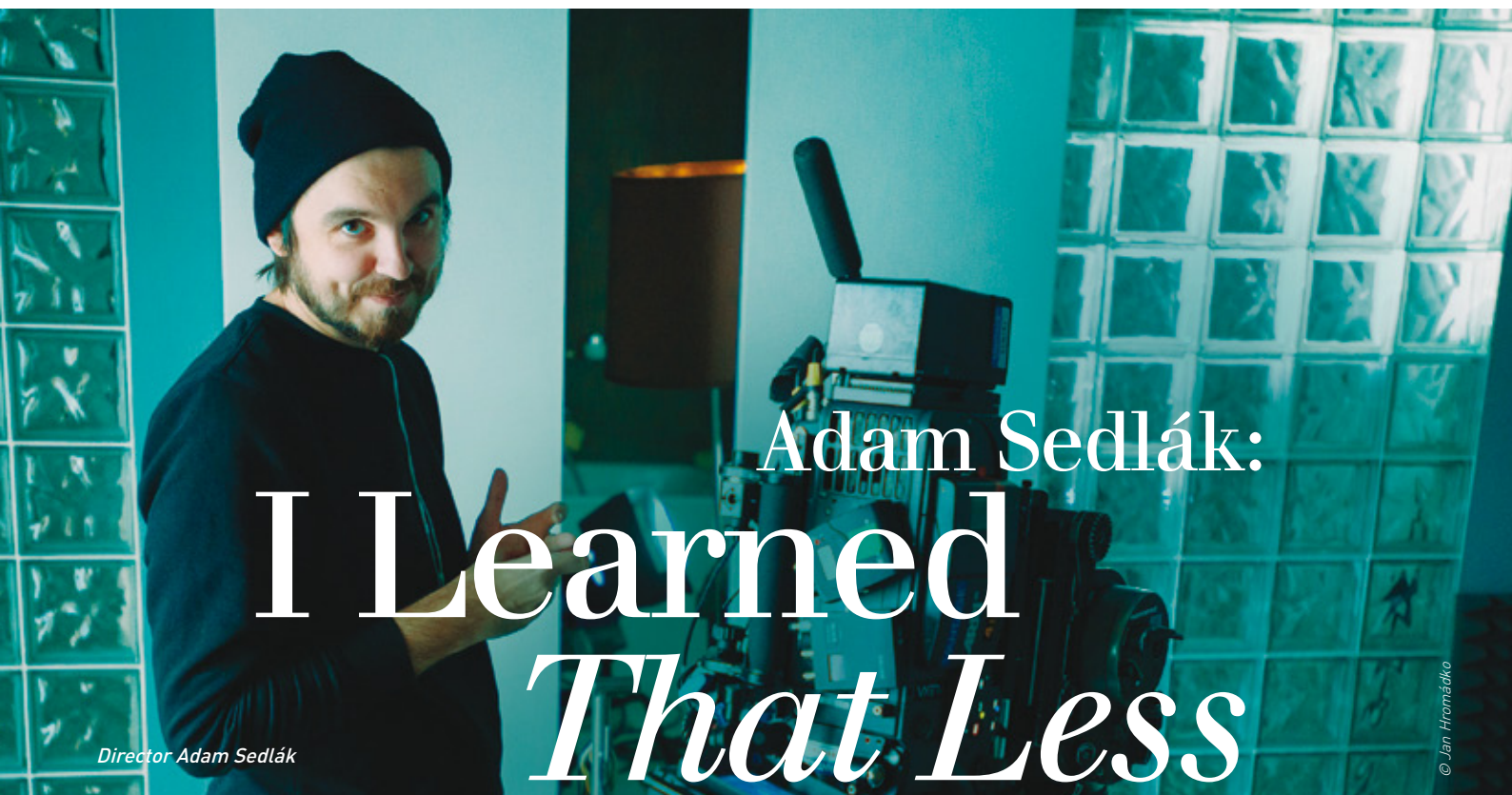
*Jiří Trnka*



© NFA

## INTERVIEW

ADAM SEDLÁK



# Adam Sedlák: I Learned *That Less Is More*

Young director Adam Sedlák (b. 1989) is ready to hit the festival circuit with his debut film, *Domestique*, an unusual story for contemporary Czech cinema. Given the critical success of his web TV series about the millennial generation, *Semester*, which brought him recognition and two nominations for the Czech Film Critics' Awards, his first feature is highly anticipated.

by Pavel Sladký

**Cycling, habits, rituals, and ambitions—these are the elements that define your first feature. Could you briefly describe the story line?**

My main character, Roman, is a professional cyclist with a second division cycling team, and like every athlete who longs for success, his life is dedicated to training. Although his role on the team as domestique, whose job is to support the leading rider, doesn't satisfy him, when his team confronts financial issues, he has to fight even just to keep this role. His own ambitions push him to train ever closer to the limits of physical capacity and common sense. He keeps an oxygen tent in his bedroom and the question of possible doping comes into play. Meanwhile his wife, Šarlota, has a completely different

goal: She is trying to get pregnant and seeks help through a variety of medicines and home rituals. So each partner is trapped in a spiral of their own obsessions, which, both physically and mentally, gradually deforms them.

**The production notes for *Domestique* describe it as a “civilizational horror.” What is the role of sport in your film?**

It provides the basis for the story line and the motivation of the main protagonist, but it could just as well be anything else. For me, though, cycling especially highlights the mechanization and repetition that appear in the story. It's a great tool for exploring these themes.

So do you see mechanization and repetition as characteristics or symptoms of our contemporary lives?

In its structure, *Domestique* could be compared to the fifth episode of my web TV series *Semester*. I enjoy emphasizing the parts that would be edited out in typical Anglo-American storytelling, that is, the waiting and repetition. That was the challenge: to make a film built on this that wouldn't be boring; just the opposite, the waiting and repetition are the sources of the tension.

What is your personal relationship to sports and professional ambitions?

I prefer reading about sports to watching or doing them myself, but the lives of top athletes are incredibly interesting to me. They're completely devoted to the field that they've chosen, and I think this fascination and devotion had a great impact on *Domestique*. It still gets to me. I'm currently thinking about a tennis story that I would like to turn into a screenplay.

In 2015, your screenplay for *Domestique* won an award in the Filmová nadace (Film Foundation's national competition). Did you change anything after that, or was the prize enough to ensure that you were on the right track?

I got the award for a second draft of the screenplay; the shooting script was number seven. So yes, it changed a lot.

Could you be more specific about the changes?

It changed a lot at the end of the story, because I was looking for different ways to express what I wanted to say. And with each new version I learned that less is more.

How big is the budget? Where did you and your producer, Jakub Jíra (Shore Points), find funds?

The budget is around €250,000. A large part was covered by the Czech Film Fund, and also Czech Television. It was a bold decision on their part to fund our project, in my opinion. We give them big props for that. Also *Domestique* is a Czech-Slovak coproduction, so with the help of Slovak producer Ivan Ostrochovský we got some money from the Slovak Audiovisual Fund.

How did you cope with low-budget filmmaking on set? Did you feel some limits?

Writing the screenplay, I knew if I ever wanted to shoot it, it would have to be low-budget, so I stopped thinking of low-budget shooting as a weakness and started to look at it as a strength. The cramped feeling of the film is



conceptual and wouldn't have worked if it hadn't been for the limited number of characters and the humble choice of locations. But of course I felt the limits of the budget once we were shooting. I would have appreciated more shooting days. But I assume this is an urge that every director feels, no matter what size the budget is.

You didn't study at FAMU, which makes a filmmaking career harder in the Czech Republic, doesn't it?

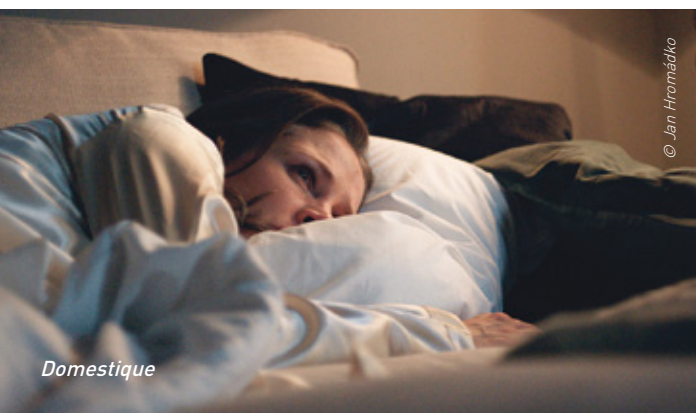
That's right. I didn't study at FAMU, but at FAMO, the Film Academy of Miroslav Ondříček, which is in Písek, in southern Bohemia. No doubt it's considerably harder for FAMO graduates starting out. But the biggest difference is that in Písek there's less ambition to make films. The students from FAMO can get jobs on crews and work in all sorts of positions, but it's much rarer for them to have the ambition to make their own project.

Did the critical acclaim for your *Semester* web TV series change your career?

Yes. At one point, we got so stuck on funding for *Domestique* that we made *Semester* just to take our minds off things. That turned out to be a good idea, since the critical acclaim for *Semester* helped us make progress on funding for *Domestique*. It was very big for me.

*Semester* was what you might call a reflective millennial project. It covers six months in a relationship, which viewers see through computer desktops and smartphones, on the characters' social networks as they multitask their way through their day. It brought a bit of mumblecore into Czech cinema. Now, though, when talking about your feature debut, you mention Roman Polanski. How has he influenced you?

Once, in an interview, I mentioned films that take place in limited space—in a single flat, for example—and Polanski's Apartment Trilogy came to mind [Ed.: *Repulsion*, *Rosemary's Baby*, *The Tenant*]. I wouldn't say I'm directly inspired by them, but there is definitely a connection—with *Rosemary's Baby*, for example, though I didn't find out until afterwards, in the editing room. But Chantal Akerman's *Jeanne Dielman, 23, Quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles* was definitely my biggest source of inspiration for compositions, framing, and the simple fact that her film takes place in a single flat and deals with rituals and repetition. /





© Holiday Films

The Smiles of Sad Men

Recipe for Success?

# Love for the Region and a Can-Do Attitude

The Ústí Region, in the Czech Republic’s northwestern corner, is full of contrasts and diverse locations, offering filmmakers settings for stories and genres of all kinds. The regional film office has been in operation since 2016, and is one of the busiest in the country.

by Ludmila Claussová

**F**ilmmakers appreciate working with the Ústí Region Film Office, led by **Barbora Hyšková**, as evidenced by the fact that it recently received the Film Friendly Region 2017 award, granted each year by the Audiovisual Producers’ Association and the Czech Film Commission. “Our motto is, Nothing is impossible,” Hyšková says when asked why filmmakers are so eager to come back to the region.

**What does the Film Friendly 2017 award mean to you?**

It’s a great recognition and motivation to keep doing the work we enjoy. Sometimes it’s difficult, but it’s wonderful work. We get to meet interesting people and visit places mere mortals usually aren’t allowed to. What makes the award even more significant is it’s decided on not only by the film-

makers themselves, but also by the national film commission—and they know very well what it takes to do this work.

**What are some of the more interesting projects your office has helped out with?**

The projects we’ve worked on so far have been primarily domestic productions: The Czech film *The Smiles of Sad Men* was filmed here last year at the alcohol rehabilitation center in Petrohrad. We worked with the production team from the Czech Television comedy series *Most* (a town in the Ústí Region). And for the film *Jan Palach* we found a “sunny France” location in one of our local vineyards, as well as retro spaces from the 1960s. As far as international productions go, we hosted Keira Knightley in early 2017, when she shot *The Aftermath*, and we’ve also had crews here from China, Korea, and Germany.

**What current project is keeping you the most busy?**

That would be *Rapl (Madman)*, the second season of the very successful Czech Television crime series, which is set in our region. We come up with ideas for locations, communicate with property owners, and sometimes help negotiate conditions. We open the doors to local authorities, we’ve gotten the regional capital Ústí nad Labem



Barbora Hyšková

© Deník, Karel Pech



© Fox Searchlight Pictures

# FILM COMMISSION

## REGIONAL FILM OFFICES

ded locations in neighboring regions, because it would be a shame not to use them when I know they'd be perfect. I see the regional offices as one big family, with the members helping each other out. We get together several times a year, along with the Czech Film Commission, to advise each other and exchange experiences. It's a group of really great people who have something in common: They love their regions. And together we want to show what a great place the entire Czech Republic is.

involved, who have helped tirelessly, and we've sourced various service providers in the region.

### Why is your region experiencing such a filmmaking boom?

Our region has this incredible mix of both beautiful and not-so-beautiful things. You really can find everything here, and the locations haven't been overused. There's also a trend now to film on location rather than in studios. Another one of our advantages is that we're just an hour from Prague, which is great for the crews, which are mostly based in Prague.

### Why are locations in your region so attractive?

We've got an abundance of natural beauty, with our northwest border skirted by the Ore Mountains, replete with canyons and dramatic sandstone formations along the Elbe river. In addition to these unique landscapes, we have a number of historical monuments and architectural sites of interest – castles, chateaus, monasteries, but also industrial and folk architecture. In stark contrast, you can also find socially excluded localities, brownfields, and endless housing estates.

### What about the locals in your region? Have they noticed the increase in filming? Do you get them involved?

It works great and they view filming positively. They've begun sending us ideas for interesting locations. We can double or triple the number of potential local extras for projects shooting here thanks to our contacts. For the film *Jan Palach*, set during the 1960s, we were looking for period chairs and other props. Many people sent us tips, the response was incredible. And we were able to find the chairs we needed right here in our own region. In return, we

invited some of these helpers to the filming. It's important to have the locals on your side.

### How do filmmakers find out about you?

Word-of-mouth works best. When we show how much easier filming is with us, how we can help grease the wheels of bureaucracy, offer suggestions for atypical locations, make connections with the right people and institutions that help save time, energy, and even money, filmmakers gain confidence, recommend us to others, and gladly come back themselves. We also work with the national film commission, which was behind the founding of all our regional offices and puts us in touch with filmmakers. It's great that filmmakers can find film offices throughout the Czech Republic. There's eleven now, two of which opened just this year—in Plzeň and South Bohemia.

### How well do you get along? Have you noticed any competition between the film offices?

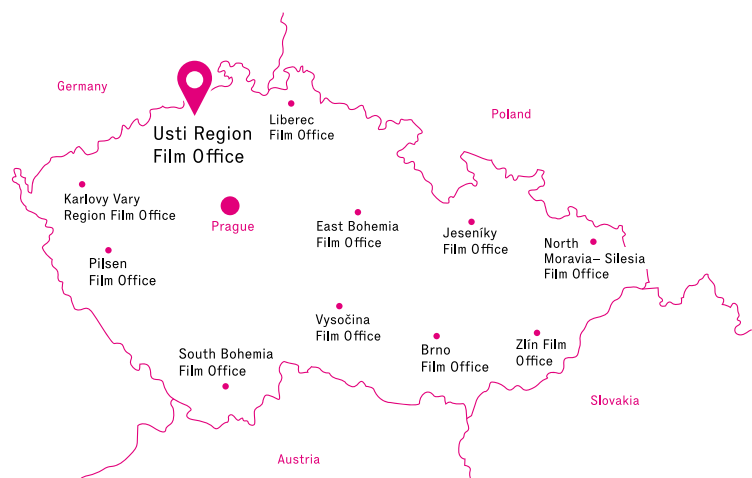
We get along very well. I believe that every corner of our country is unique, and the opportunities are different everywhere. We just help filmmakers find what they need. For many projects, we've even recommen-

### What would you say to foreign filmmakers about filming in the Czech Republic or doing a coproduction with the Czech Republic?

They'll find a concentration of all kinds of locations in a relatively small area. Plenty of high-quality services, good value for money, a rich tradition of filmmaking, great craftspeople, experienced filmmakers. Enthusiasm, creativity, the motto "nothing is impossible," a friendly filmmaking environment, and of course perfect service from the film offices!

### It's clear you enjoy your work. What's your approach? How do you make your job fun?

We always try to do whatever is possible, but never promise anything that's not in our power to fulfil. We communicate openly and straightforwardly, and I think we're very accommodating. Sometimes the challenges give us a bit of an adrenalin rush. It can get wild sometimes, but it's an amazing feeling when we succeed. My colleague Helena Matuščinová and I try to solve issues with a positive attitude and a healthy dash of humor, which is often the key to resolving complications. I think that's why filmmakers like to come back to us.



# Czech Film Fund Supports Four Dozen Feature, Animated, and Documentary Films

by Hedvika Petrželková

In late March 2018, the Czech Film Fund announced its results for support in the field of feature, animated, and documentary films. The fund allocated €355,000 to the development of features, €85,000 to animated films, and €689,000 to the development and production of documentaries. In addition, more than €1,180,000 was allocated for minority coproductions. In all, a total of 52 projects received support.



## Feature Films: Intimate Dramas and Excursions Into History

To fund the development of Czech feature films, the Czech Film Fund divided CZK 9 million (€355,000) among 14 projects selected from 29 applications in the latest grant period. These include upcoming movies by Martin Šulík, Olmo Omerzu, and Václav Kadrnka.

In a statement, the fund's board praised the genre and thematic variety of the submitted projects, noting that directors presented vivid social and emotional themes (for instance, Omerzu's *Admin* tells the story of an accountant working for a big company that embezzles a large sum of money), as well as intimate dramas about the lives of individuals (such as *Saving One Who Was Dead*, directed by Václav Kadrnka).

Several projects also featured historical themes, in particular Martin Šulík's biopic about 13th-century princess Anežka Přemyslovna, and movies set in the 1940s and 1950s, including *Money From Hitler* (directed by Tomáš Mašín based on the Radka Denemarková novel). In *Bloody Easter*, set in post-World War II Sudetenland, director Jan Bušta takes a look at the Czech borderlands and the expulsion of Germans from Czechoslovakia through the eyes of children.

The applications for funding included genre productions ranging from romantic comedies to the postmodern horror detective thriller (*Sisters*, directed by Vojtěch Mašek), as well as a Václav Havel biopic, directed by Slávek Horák.

## Animated Films

In the field of animated film, the fund supported 4 out of the 6 submitted projects under development, for a total amount of €118,000. Two feature films and two short films received backing: *Křišťáloví únosci* (*Crystal Hijackers*,



produced by Alkay Animation Prague), *Vlny* (*Waves*, produced by ARTNOK FILM), *Babu v nočním městě* (*Babu in the Night City*, produced by Produkce Radim Procházka), and *Modrá zahrada* (*Blue Garden*, produced by Hana Aurerová).

### Documentaries in Development: A journey to the Depths of a Soul, and to Somalia

In documentary film, a total of €689,000 was allocated, both to projects in pre-production and films already in production. The board distributed a total of €177,000 to 10 projects in the development category, including films from novice and experienced producers alike, presenting a rich variety of topics, ranging from portraits to current social issues to essayistic works. Intimate themes are explored in works by Lucie Králová (*Nasloucháči snů* / *The Dream Listeners*, about dreams and the collective unconscious) and Kateřina Hager (*Zakázaná láska* / *Forbidden Love*, about the relationship between a Czech woman who uses a wheelchair and her Pakistani husband). Increasingly, Czech artists are choosing to work on topics set abroad, such as Petr Hojda's *Zapomenutá stopa* (*Forgotten Footprint*), which aims to capture the persona of the current king of Cambodia, Norodom Sihamoni, and to use his story to show the relations between Czechia and Cambodia.

In Somalia, Jana Adert is filming and preparing *Doctor Musa*, about children living in the country's capital of Mogadishu. And Artemio Benki maps the issue of human rights for Russian-speaking minorities in the Baltic countries after the Soviet Union's collapse, in *My Private Mongolia*.

### Documents in Production: Forman and Trnka Biopics

A total of 25 projects (with a Czech majority) were submitted in the documentary production category. Out of these, the fund's board chose 14 projects, granting them a total of €511,710. A significant number of submissions deal with biographical or historical themes, and several address specific issues in contemporary Czech political, social, and economic life.

The biographies include *Alchymická pec* (*The Alchemical Oven*, by Adam Ol'ha), about Jan Švankmajer; *Miloš Forman – cesta za svobodou* (*Miloš Forman: The Path to Freedom*, by Helena Třeštíková); *Sny o toulavých kočkách*, about Petr Sís (*Dreams of Stray Cats*, by David Sís); and Jiří Trnka – *Nalezený přítel* (*Jiří Trnka: A Friend Found*, directed by Joël Fargesm). The movie *Bohu žel* (*Unfortunate*, by Saša Dlouhý) deals with the topic of foreigners in Czechia, and Jana Andert's *Mosul* is an account of the war between the Iraqi Army and the Islamic State in the Middle East.

### Minority Coproductions

The fund also supported 13 minority coproduction projects, sharing €1,180,000 among them. The highest amount (€236,000) went to *Warrior of God*, directed by Petr Jákl and produced by Martin J. Barab (Double Tree Entertainment, US), Petr Jákl (WOG FILM) and Cassian Elwes (Elevated Films, UK). The story, set in the Kingdom of Bohemia at the dawn of the 15th century, is inspired by the life of Jan Žižka of Trocnov, one of seven generals in history never to lose a battle. €197,000 went to *Amundsen*, about the life of Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen, directed by Espen Sandberg and produced by SF Studios (Frederick Wikström Nicastro and Tim King) and Film Kolektiv (Pavel Berčík and Silvie Michajlová). €118,000 was granted to *Let There Be Light*, the story of a father who discovers that his teenage son has become involved with a fascist militia and is accused of bullying and killing a classmate. The project is directed and produced by Marko Škop (Artileria, SK), with Petr Oukropec (Negativ) the Czech coproducer. Also receiving backing was *Humorist*, the directorial debut by writer and screenwriter Michael Idov, which follows a week in the life of Boris Arkadiev, a fictional Soviet stand-up comedian, in 1984. *Humorist* is a coproduction between Russia (Artem Vasilyev, Metrafilms), Latvia (Andrey Saveliev, Aija Berzina, Tasse Film), and the Czech Republic (Artemio Benki, Sirena Film). The fund also gave support to the winner of Works in Progress at KVIFF 2017: the Slovak-Czech film *Censor*, directed by Peter Kerekes, produced by Ivan Ostrochovský (SK), and coproduced by endorfilm (CZ) and Peter Kerekes (SK).



### New Project Launched: Script Consulting Incubator

This project, initiated by the Czech Film Fund, is meant as both a training program for script consultants and a form of script development support for filmmakers. Selected script editor trainees will learn the trade from top international experts and at the same time consult on scripts supported by the fund. The program is being organized for the CFF by the MIDPOINT platform.

The incubator's first phase runs from autumn 2017 to 2019. During this time, the fund will provide professional consulting to 12 feature film scripts and intensive training for 8 local script consultants. The chief mentor will be Gyula Gazdag, a Hungarian film director and screenwriter who has served as artistic director of the Sundance Director's Lab since 1997, creative advisor at the Binger FilmLab in Amsterdam for more than 10 years, and has worked with new talent at the Script Station of the Berlinale Talents since 2006.

Other tutors will include Anita Voorham from the Dutch Film Fund; Pavel Jech, former dean of FAMU; Franz Rodenkirchen, who regularly works with the TorinoFilmLab and other projects; and, last but not least, Czech director Jan Svěrák, the incubator's initiator.

In December 2017, the first four screenwriters were selected for training: two graduates of screenwriting and dramaturgy at FAMU, Lucia Kajánková and Vít Poláček; editor and teacher Michal Reich; and screenwriter and author Milada Těšitelová, who is a doctoral student at FAMU and whose comic trilogy *Plague* is currently in pre-production as a feature film of the same name (produced by Sirena Film).

# Training: Added Value for Professionals

Investing in talented European professionals is a core objective of the Creative Europe MEDIA program. In 2017, CE MEDIA supported 53 training activities, ranging from project development, management, and finance to marketing, audience development, and cinema exhibition. The Czech Republic is home to three such projects: two documentary workshops (Ex Oriente Film and dok.incubator) and an educational program for TV production (MIDPOINT TV Launch).

In every project the MEDIA program supports, emphasis is placed on original concepts, innovation, and added value, either in going beyond the scope of regular educational programs or in the projects' international reach.

"The dok.incubator programme is unique—every edit in the editing room changes the marketing strategy and the intended viewer demographic. From the very beginning, everything happens with the viewer in mind," says Andrea Prengnyová, manager of the dok.incubator educational program. She says the workshop's greatest added value is in the projects' reaching beyond the power of international cinematography to bring filmmaking know-how to new countries.

In 2003, the Ex Oriente film workshop was the first project to gain MEDIA's support. "Ex Oriente specializes in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. This makes it renowned throughout Europe, and the final presentation of projects as part of East Doc Platform is attended by representatives of television networks and distributors from both Europe and overseas. Former participants, experienced directors and producers, also return with new projects," says Pavlína Kalandrová, the new program director of Ex Oriente Film. "From the beginning, we have supported a creative, auteur approach to documentary filmmaking. The projects vary in genre, topic, and country of origin."

In contrast, MIDPOINT TV Launch, one of CE MEDIA's newest programs, is a response to the demand for quality television. "The initiative is filling a major niche in the region's entertainment sector. The demand for learning how to write for TV is enormous, particularly because the history of film schools in Eastern Europe has been very focused on arthouse cinema and the auteur approach, which is very different from what works on TV, and there's a lack of that kind of training and education, and that's where we come in," says Katarína Tomková, the program manager.

## MIDPOINT TV Launch

is aimed at the development of miniseries or ongoing, episodic TV series that can sustain multiple seasons. The focus is on content-rich, compelling stories and innovative series concepts, both high-end and low-budget. The program is intended mainly for participants from Central-Eastern Europe, the Balkans, the Baltic countries, and the wider Mediterranean area with a possible background in filmmaking who want to shift to quality television production.

## EX ORIENTE FILM

is intended for documentary professionals from Central and Eastern Europe. Each year, up to 12 projects receive assistance from a wide range of film experts, with each workshop focusing on a different segment of development. The participants are given tailored guidance in developing the subject, narrative and visual style of their projects, making drafts of a financing and distribution strategy, and finding international partners. The course culminates in pitching sessions at the East Doc Forum coproduction meeting.

## DOK.INCUBATOR

is an international documentary rough-cut workshop. For six months, teams of eight selected films from around the world work intensively in the editing room, building a clever, tailor-made distribution plan and marketing strategy, as well as meeting with important international distributors, sales agents, and festival representatives. More than 20 experienced lecturers—producers, editors of award-winning films, and creative PR and marketing experts—are involved in individual mentoring.



Ex Oriente Film

FILMS TO COME

A man in a long green coat and a black hat is walking across a stone ledge above a waterfall. The scene is set outdoors with trees in the background and a cloudy sky. The text 'Films to Come' is overlaid on the image.

# Films to Come

# FILMS TO COME

IN DEVELOPMENT

**Selected new Czech feature films in development, production, post-production or ready for release. More projects in development can be found on page 19, in the article on Czech Film Springboard presentation.**

**For more information please contact us at [info@filmcenter.cz](mailto:info@filmcenter.cz).**

## IN DEVELOPMENT

### A Summer Fair

DEBUT

Eva (37) returns to her home town after a 20 years of absence. Her father has died and the mayor of the town has expropriated a valuable piece of land that Eva claims is her legal heritage. The mayor reacts with aggression, but his daughter Sandra (21) takes a strange interest in Eva. Sandra and Eva both engage intimately with the young entomologist Karel (26), and the mayor's world is torn apart as Karel brings the two women together, not knowing they are, in fact, mother and daughter.

FICTION

**original title:** Pout' v Modré

**runtime:** 100 min

**estimated release:**

October 2019

**director:** Erlend Hella Matre

**produced by:** Andrea Shaffer - Mindset Pictures (CZ)

### Don't Gaze Long Into the Abyss

*Don't Gaze Long Into The Abyss* is a feature-length love-and-hate story of a beatnik fascination into an exotic east and epic drama of an adventurous life and dream shattered by two political events - Prague spring and Islamic revolution of 1978. It is filmmaker's journey into a dark mind and in the steps of adventurous and wandering life of a Czech spoilt genius never made, never released, never believed. A meditative film poem about freedom, mysticism, fate, and exile. The mysticism of a Czech artist seen through an "eastern" oriental eye.

DOCUMENTARY

**original title:** Nehled' dlouze

do propasti

**runtime:** 80 min

**estimated release:** November 2020

**director:** Mohammadreza Farzad

**produced by:** Radovan Sibrť

- PINK (CZ)

### Entangled in War

DEBUT

Hundred years since the end of the WW1, a diverse group of Czech extras is rehearsing a scene on the set of a Hollywood war drama that is being shot in the Czech Republic due to the budgetary reasons. Over the course of the day, the antsy horde must be united and learn the military basics under the supervision of shady instructors, before the film star comes to perform his part. The Czechs fight against each other in both German and American uniforms while their hired countrymen are cheating them on food and working conditions. Eventually the compelling portrait of war despair is not captured, but only lived.

FICTION

**original title:** Účastníci války

**runtime:** 100 min

**estimated release:** October 2019

**director:** Jan Vejnar

**produced by:** Kamila Dohnalová -

Silk Films (CZ)

### Forgotten War

The web documentary *Forgotten War* provides a testimony about a conflict that had raged in the Eastern Ukraine for almost four years now. As a guide, Nazar tries to give objective causes of the war, he leads the viewer through the Donbass area, hinting at the complicated local history and the pride of the local miners. Apart from the historic context, however, he shows the viewers the everyday reality of life in the so-called grey zone, the strip of land directly touching the frontlines. The documentary permits us to view the military conflict from the perspective of the locals and witness the everyday situations experienced by the locals in the unstable region..

DOCUMENTARY

**original title:** Zapomenutá válka

**runtime:** 70 min

**estimated release:** October 2019

**director:** Zdeněk Chaloupka

**produced by:** Radovan Sibrť - PINK

(CZ), Jakub Pinkava, Zuzana Tichá

## Il Boemo

*Il Boemo* is the story of Josef Mysliveček, who rejected his comfortable bourgeois destiny as the eldest son of a Prague master miller to pursue his dream of becoming a composer in Italy. It is a tale of ambition, identity and love. While Josef has no qualms about exploiting the passions his music arouses in women to advance his career, he finds the one woman he truly loves is beyond his grasp. In the late 18th century, "Il Boemo" as he came to be known, was one of the most popular and prolific composers of Italian opera seria. He was also the friend and mentor of young Mozart.

**FICTION**

**original title:** Il Boemo  
**runtime:** 150 min  
**estimated release:** September 2019  
**director:** Petr Václav  
**produced by:** Jan Macola - Mimesis Film (CZ)

## One More for the Road

The movie with a working title *One More for the Road* is a staged documentary and a film meditation which aims to initiate a broader social debate about the topic of alcohol consumption through an open testimony of one particular alcohol struggle, via the point of view of one individual living in the country which is an European "alcohol paradise" where beer is cheaper than water. Drinking is "normal". Non-drinking is ostracising, strange, "abnormal". An ideal environment to develop a fatal disease - an alcohol dependency. It is a painless and therefore not an easily observable process of a person becoming an alcoholic.

**DOCUMENTARY**

**original title:** Do druhý nohy  
**runtime:** 90 min  
**estimated release:** April 2019  
**director:** Bohdan Bláhovec, Jan Foukal  
**produced by:** Jakub Drocár - Punk Film (CZ)

## Saving One Who Was Dead

An intimate family drama of guilt and self-forgiveness is portrayed in day-by-day linear episodes from the lives of a forty-year-old son and his seventy-year-old mother at the time of the father's illness – a severe stroke – and the resultant coma from which they both try to wake him. That awakening and the father's healing require them to overcome fear together, to refuse a senseless sacrifice and acquire absolute belief in a miracle that simply needs not to be impeded. In his choice of autobiographical material, the filmmaker Václav Kadrnka reacts to a concurrence of circumstances, to a resonance of the fundamental experience and the cinematographic depiction.

**FICTION**

**original title:** Zpráva o záchraně mrtvého  
**runtime:** 90 min  
**estimated release:** September 2019  
**director:** Václav Kadrnka  
**produced by:** Václav Kadrnka - Sirius Films (CZ)

## The Prague Orgy

The famous American writer Philip Roth based his book partially on his authentic experiences in 1970's when he used to visit Prague after the Soviet occupation in 1968, in order to help the banned Czechoslovak writers. Despite the political oppression, the social life full of amusement and open relationships were rampant in Prague. The greater the pressure of the regime was, the more people would resort to their free private intimate worlds. The story of *The Prague Orgy* depicts a journey of the famous American writer Nathan Zuckerman who arrives in Prague in 1976. He carries out a mission to save a unique collection of brilliant tales written in Yiddish by smuggling them across the border.

**FICTION**

**original title:** Pražské orgie  
**runtime:** 90 min  
**estimated release:** May 2019  
**director:** Irena Pavlásková  
**produced by:** Viktor Schwarcz - Prague Movie Company (CZ)  
**in co-production with:** Analog Vision (CZ)

## The Ugly Mandarin

DEBUT

Yiou, a Chinese double bass player who is finishing her master degree in the music academy and Greta, a Slovak radiologist, are an interracial couple living in Prague. The story starts when there are 30 days till Yiou's current visa will be expired, if the commission won't make any decision on her partnership visa application, Yiou will have to go back to China right after her graduation concert. And with their relationship at stake, the problems at school, and the xenophobic sentiments in the Czech Republic, Yiou starts to think it doesn't make sense to fight for the partnership visa but still doesn't want to give up so easily. Making the decision of applying for the partnership visa seems for both of them as a big step forward for their relationship...

**FICTION**

**original title:** The Ugly Mandarin  
**runtime:** 90 min  
**estimated release:** August 2019  
**director:** Piaoyu Xie  
**produced by:** Veronika Kührová, Michal Kráčmer - Analog Vision (CZ)

## Three Women

*Three Women* is a loose adaptation of a narrative triptych by legendary author Robert Musil taking place in the 1970s, 1990s and in the present day. Three chapters, called Grigina, Tonka and The Portuguese Lady, tell the story of a man confronted with various types of relationships, death and his own family.

**FICTION**

**original title:** Tři ženy  
**runtime:** 120 min  
**estimated release:** November 2019  
**director:** Matěj Chlupáček  
**produced by:** Matěj Chlupáček, Maja Hamplová - Barletta (CZ)

# FILMS TO COME

IN PRODUCTION

IN PRODUCTION



## A Colourful Dream

An adventure story loosely inspired by Alexander Grin's short novel *The Shining World*. With humour our story deals with the timeless theme of the conflict between unlimited power on the one hand, and the desire for freedom, courage and love on the other. A troupe of travelling performers lands on an island governed by a despotic ruler with strict police control. When, during their performance, a shot fired from a circus cannon goes astray, it triggers a series of unexpected events. A young man and woman, Drin and Tuvi, and Nathan the seagull have to enter into an uneven struggle with totalitarian power. A struggle which eventually changes the fates of all the island inhabitants – both human and feathered.

### ANIMATION

**original title:** Barevný sen  
**runtime:** 73 min  
**estimated release:** December 2019  
**director:** Jan Balej  
**produced by:** Jan Balej - Hafan Film (CZ)

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  
**cast:** Hynek Čermák, Matěj Hádek, Kryštof Hádek, Jiří Vyorálek, Patrik Holubář  
**produced by:** Tomáš Vach - Slothmachine (CZ)

## Benzina Dehtov



## Dog's Love

Documentary film *Dog's Love* is focused on the sport, which isn't very typical for the Czech environment - mushing. Surprisingly, this sport has many Czech representatives and it turns out that Czech musher is considered a favorite in worldwide competition. Each of our characters is doing mushing on a different level. Jana Henychová is a professional, who participates in important foreign races. Tomáš Toman is considered a new talent, who just recently included a new puppy in his pack. Pavel Kučera is organizing the biggest domestic race in Orlice Mountains and his thirteen year old son is planning on participating in this race for the first time in 2019.

### DOCUMENTARY

**original title:** Psí Láska  
**runtime:** 75 min  
**estimated release:** September 2019  
**director:** Linda Kallistová Jablonská  
**produced by:** Kateřina Doležalová - Evolution Films (CZ)  
**in co-production with:** Czech Television (CZ)



## Golden Betrayal

In 1938, Young Czechoslovaks learn to play basketball from American mormons at YMCA camp. When the war starts, their coach is arrested and executed and the team is taken over by young lawyer Franta. After the liberation, Franta visits prison where their coach died, picks up a handful of soil, puts it in a box and fasten it with tricolor stripe. The team carries this talisman to European Championship in Geneva and miraculously, they become the winners. However, everything changes again with the communist coup. The basketball players are persecuted, Franta is arrested. The weak team is still going to the championship in Paris. But will they succeed?

### FICTION

**original title:** Zlatý podraz  
**runtime:** 97 min  
**estimated release:** October 2018  
**director:** Radim Špaček  
**cast:** Filip Březina, Patrycja Volny, Zdeněk Piškula, Ondřej Malý  
**produced by:** Jaroslav Bouček - Buc-film (CZ)  
**in co-production with:** Punkchart films (SK), Czech Television (CZ)



DEBUT

## Last Days of Europe

An analytic essay about today's political situation and position of the Czech Republic in Eastern Europe. Each one of us has his own opinion as to where and how we might improve things. Each one of us is talking about the time for changes. Politic parties, daily life, demonstrations, migration crisis, celebrations of the values of "old Europe". Probably *Last Days of Europe?* Inspired by Karl Kraus' novel *Last Days of Mankind*.

### DOCUMENTARY

**original title:** Poslední dnové Evropy  
**runtime:** 100 min  
**estimated release:** October 2019  
**director:** Martin Kohout  
**produced by:** Jakub Wagner - GPO Platform (CZ)



MINORITY CO-PRODUCTION

## Let There Be Light

A guest-worker in Germany Milan (40) discovers that back home in Slovakia his teenage son has become involved with home guards when he was accused of bullying and killing a classmate. The father starts searching for the truth about what happened, the truth about himself...

### FICTION

**original title:** Nech je svetlo  
**runtime:** 90 min  
**estimated release:** March 2019  
**director:** Marko Škop  
**produced by:** Marko Škop - Artileria (SK)  
**in co-production with:** Negativ (CZ)



MINORITY CO-PRODUCTION

## Love Under the Hood

The film about the oldest motor-cross rider in Slovakia Jitka Válková and her Czech partner Jaroslav, her former classmate from elementary school. He takes care of her race car and provides her the family background. The story unfolds around the attempt to defend the Carpathian Motocross Cup. But this is only one layer of the story. Much more important is the image of their relationship, which is actually restoring the teenage love between them. Change and courage can make the difference and "correct" their lives.

### DOCUMENTARY

**original title:** Láska pod kapotou  
**runtime:** 82 min  
**estimated release:** October 2019  
**director:** Miro Remo  
**produced by:** Miro Remo - Arsy-Versy (SK)  
**in co-production with:** D1film



## Satanic Girls: Women on the Move

Shortly after the Russian invasion in 1968, band members of the first Czechoslovak girl band decided to give it a dare and go for their dream of freedom and fame. Under the provocative title "Satanic Girls" they emigrated to the Mecca of Western pop and liberalism - Sweden. Here, their career took a new direction - they met their manager Roland Ferneborg, who promised them fame and glory under one condition: that they marry six volunteering Swedes, gain access to international passports and record an album in Latin America first...

### DOCUMENTARY

**original title:** Satanic Girls: Ženy na cestě  
**runtime:** 78 min  
**estimated release:** April 2019  
**director:** Bohdan Bláhovec  
**produced by:** Anna Herza Tydlitátová - Telekinetic (CZ)



DEBUT

MINORITY CO-PRODUCTION

## The Impossible Voyage

Animated mockumentary about an incredible life of astronomer, politician, adventurer and general M.R. Štefánik.

### ANIMATION, DOCUMENTARY

**original title:** Cesta do nemožna  
**runtime:** 80 min  
**estimated release:** April 2019  
**director:** Noro Držiak  
**cast:** Tomáš Mischura, Jana Stryková, Petr Vaněk, Václav Neužil  
**produced by:** Michael Kaboš - MEDIA FILM (SK)  
**in co-production with:** KABOS Film & Media (CZ), RTVS (SK), Czech Television (CZ)



MINORITY CO-PRODUCTION

## Warrior of God

The story takes place in the Kingdom of Bohemia at the dawn of the 15th century. It is loosely inspired by the life of Jan Žižka of Trocnov, before he became, one of seven Generals in history to never lose a battle - and always for the rights of his common man. This film tells the story of the brutal and merciless mercenary before all that - who fought for pay instead.

### FICTION

**original title:** Jan Žižka  
**runtime:** 120 min  
**estimated release:** October 2019  
**director:** Petr Jákl  
**produced by:** Martin J. Barab - Double Tree Entertainment (US), Petr Jákl - WOG FILM (CZ), Cassian Elwes - Elevated Films (UK)

# FILMS TO COME

IN POST-PRODUCTION

IN POST-PRODUCTION



MINORITY CO-PRODUCTION

## Putin's Witnesses

Many of us have had an amazing opportunity to witness the beginning of a new millennium. And we all, connected with this epoch-making event, increased expectations, and of course incredible hopes for changes for the better in our own lives. Today after 17 years, it is possible to sum up the first results. Compare the expectations and reality. A tool for traveling to our recent past will be video diaries and professional photos of the author of the film - the director of the documentary Vitaly Mansky.

**DOCUMENTARY**

**original title:** Svideteli Putina

**runtime:** 120 min

**estimated release:** October 2018

**director:** Vitaly Mansky

**produced by:** Natalia Manskaya - Vertov (LV)

**in co-production with:** GoldenEgg Production (CH), Hypermarket Film (CZ)



DEBUT

## Circus Rwanda

Eliséé survived the Rwandan genocide as a child. Today he leads an orphan acrobat group in a country, which heavily relies on foreign aid. He cares for the orphaned children and wants them to be happy, to have some sense in their lives. Rostislav Novák built a worldwide acclaimed circus group in Prague, where he successfully rules with a firm, paternal hand, but has permanently dark bags under his eyes from the workload. The majority of Rwandese thinks that all people in Europe are fairly rich. Many Europeans think that it is necessary to help Africa with everything. What happens, if we merge these two worlds in a film, during the preparation of a joint circus performance?

**DOCUMENTARY**

**original title:** Cirkus Rwanda

**runtime:** 75 min

**estimated release:** October 2018

**director:** Michal Varga

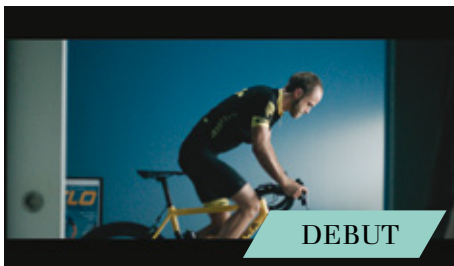
**cast:** Rostislav Novák,

Eliséé Niyonsenga

**produced by:** Marek Novák -

Xova Film (CZ)

**in co-production with:** Czech Television (CZ), nutprodukcia (SK), RTVS (SK)



DEBUT

## Domestique

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:** 120 min

**estimated release:** September 2018

**director:** Adam Sedlák

**cast:** Tereza Hofová, Jiří Konvalinka,

Miroslav Hanuš, Tomáš Bambušek

**produced by:** Jakub Jíra -

ShorePoints (CZ)

**in co-production with:** Sentimentalfilm (SK), Czech Television (CZ)



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:** 100 min

**estimated release:** November 2018

**director:** Artemio Benki

**produced by:** Artemio Benki, Petra

Oplatková - Arcam Films (CZ)

**in co-production with:** Golden Girls

Filmproduktion (AT), Buen Destino

(RA), Petit a Petit Productions (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:** July 2018

**director:** Beata Parkanová

**cast:** Jenováfa Boková, Martin

Finger, Lenka Vlasáková,

Alena Mihalová

**produced by:** Viktor Tauš -

Fog'n'Desire Films (CZ)





MINORITY CO-PRODUCTION

## I Do Not Care If We Go Down in History as Barbarians

military reenactment – Hannah Arendt – show – 1941, “the year that keeps returning”, as seen from 2018 – quotations – firearms – archive footage – the Odessa massacre – 16 mm and video – the Military Museum – negationism – videomapping – burlesque – dialogues – fanfare – Isaac Babel – fragmented narrative – Wenn die Soldaten durch die Stadt marschieren – trivialization by comparison – script by Marshal Antonescu – fire – directed by Radu Jude – featuring Ioana Iacob, Alexandru Dabija, Alex Bogdan – barracks jokes – ordinary people – nunca más! – the present past, the past present.

**FICTION**

**original title:** Îmi este indiferent dacă în istorie vom intra ca barbari  
**runtime:** 140 min  
**estimated release:** Autumn 2018  
**director:** Radu Jude  
**produced by:** Ada Solomon - HiFilm Productions (RO)  
**in co-production with:** endorfilm (CZ), Les Films d'Ici (FR), Klas Film (BG), Komplizen Film (DE), ZFD/Arte (DE), TVR (RO)  
**international sales:** Beta Cinema



DEBUT

## Outside

Czech young au pair Mia starts to 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 relationships 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:** Venku  
**runtime:** 90 min  
**estimated release:** Summer 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

## Pardon

A story of parents of a soldier told from a perspective of their 17-year-old grandson Janek. A film written into the dramatic history of post-war Poland, that still remains universal in its story – a struggle of two parents to regain their dignity and balance in life after losing their child.

**FICTION**

**original title:** Ulaskawienie  
**estimated release:** Autumn 2018  
**director:** Jan Jakub Kolski  
**produced by:** Jan Jakub Kolski - Wytworknia Doswiadczalna (PL)  
**in co-production with:** Centrala Film (PL), Mimesis Film (CZ), Sentimentalfilm (SK)



## 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 sinner's folder fills 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, the 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 Bártos, Jan Budař, Ondřej Vetchý  
**produced by:** : Martin Hůlvec, Ondřej Beránek - Punk Film (CZ)  
**in co-production with:** Czech Television (CZ), Michal Bauer (CZ), Magiclab (CZ), Trigon Production, (SK), Barrandov Studio (CZ), RTVS (SK)



MINORITY CO-PRODUCTION

## The Play

The world of a young theatre director Petr in a small Czech town crumbles after he decides to make his dream come true - adapt an overly ambitious play based on Euripides' Fedra. During the rehearsals he loses his two lead actors. A rescue comes with a young and vivacious actress Karolína. To add to the mounting pressure, municipality threatens to cut the theatre's funding. The entire situation escalates when Petr lets himself to be seduced by Karolína, and his wife leaves him. On the day of the premiere, the play turns out to be a fiasco. Hopeless, Petr tries to regain the last pieces left of his life, finally taking charge, to be there for his family.

**FICTION**

**original title:** Hra  
**runtime:** 100 min  
**estimated release:** Summer 2018  
**director:** Alejandro Fernández Almendras  
**cast:** Jiří Mádl, Elizaveta Maximová, Marika Šoposká, Ondřej Malý  
**produced by:** Guillaume De Seille - Arizona Productions (FR), Veronika Finková - Film & Roll (CZ), August Matte - Jirafa (CL)

## FILMS TO COME

IN POST-PRODUCTION / NEW RELEASES



### Toman

The historical drama about the controversial person of Zdeněk Toman, head of the Department of Foreign Intelligence Agency, which significantly influenced the political development in Czechoslovakia between 1945 and 1948, and which contributed greatly to the taking political power by Communist Party.

#### FICTION

**original title:** Toman

**runtime:** 100 min

**estimated release:** October 2018

**director:** Ondřej Trojan

**cast:** Jiří Macháček, Kateřina Winterová, Kristýna Boková, Stanislav Majer

**produced by:** Ondřej Trojan - Total HelpArt (CZ)

**in co-production with:** PubRes (SK), Czech Television (CZ), RTVS (SK), Barrandov Studio (CZ)

## NEW RELEASES



### Jan Palach

Jan Palach's story is a part of Czech modern history and therefore can only offer a little bit of what the mainstream cinema defines as a story. His journey to the ultimate sacrifice is not bordered by ups and downs, misleading opinions and corrections, trials, clashes with regime forces, unifying and lecturing of the nation or eccentricities and struggles. He was an average nice young man from a slightly persecuted family. One of many happy young faces of the "Golden Sixties", when protests and opposition were a genetic base of the first post-war grown up generation. He does not stand out. But he's the only one who will do it.

#### FICTION

**original title:** Jan Palach

**runtime:** 100 min

**estimated release:** August 2018

**director:** Robert Sedláček

**cast:** Viktor Zavadil, Zuzana Bydžovská, Denisa Barešová, Kristína Kanátová

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

**in co-production with:** Czech Television (CZ)



### The King Skate

The story of beginnings and development of skateboarding in Czechoslovakia during 1975 - 1989. The skateboarding is for the director a starting point in looking for signs of freedom outside the mainstream society controlled by the communist regime. This new western sport became quite attractive and contagious kind of entertainment for young people in otherwise greyish environment of socialist Czechoslovakia. Using some old found footage never shown before, the audience will have a chance to learn more the beginnings of this sport in the region and about this unique community.

#### DOCUMENTARY

**original title:** King Skate

**runtime:** 80 min

**estimated release:** July 2018

**director:** Šimon Šafránek

**produced by:** Kateřina Černá - Negativ (CZ)



### Miss Hanoi

Vietnamese girl Hien (14) was murdered 4 years ago by her classmates in a small border town with a strong Vietnamese community. Because the killers were minors, they were placed in a juvenile detention from where they were released after they reached the age of 18. Now, after their release, one of them is found dead. The other is on the run. At this moment, an experienced criminal investigator captain Kříž appears on the scene. As a stereotypical Czech man, he isn't eager to co-operate with a local Vietnamese policewoman Anh. She is also experiencing pressure from the locals who never quite accepted the fact that she works for the police. Moreover, Kříž is very suspicious about her connection to the victim's family.

#### FICTION

**original title:** Miss Hanoi

**runtime:** 100 min

**estimated release:** August 2018

**director:** Zdeněk Viktora

**cast:** David Novotný, Ha Thanh Špetlíková, Chip Nguyen, Miroslav Hruška

**produced by:** Zdeněk Viktora - SCREENPLAY BY (CZ)

**in co-production with:** Attack Film (SK), Spoon (CZ), Beep (CZ)



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 voják

**runtime:** 65 min

**estimated release:** August 2018

**director:** Anna Kryvenko

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

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



## 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:** Okupácia 1968

**runtime:** 130 min

**international release:** March 2018

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

**produced by:** Peter Kerekes - Kerekes Film (SK)

**in co-production with:** Hypermarket Film (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

**estimated release:** May 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)



## 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 driving it across the country. The boy will not reveal who he is, where he is from, or whether the car, registered on the other end of the country, has been stolen or just borrowed. The cops cannot believe that the boy could have possibly made such a long trip on his own. Gradually, Mára begins to tell a story full of fantastic details. The line between the truth, lies and manipulation is very thin.

**FICTION**

**original title:** Všechno bude

**runtime:** 85 min

**estimated release:** Summer 2018

**director:** Olmo Omerzu

**produced by:** Jiří Konečný - endorfilm (CZ)

**in co-production with:** Cvinger Film (SI), Punkchart films (SK), Rouge International (FR), Koskino (PL)



## Fugue

Alicja suffers from memory loss and has rebuilt her own free spirited way of life. Two years later, she returns to her former family to assume against her will her role as wife, mother and daughter. Her estranged husband and son do not recognize this woman who look familiar and yet behaves like a stranger. Feelings of alienation, love and revelations rekindle her interior flame.

**FICTION**

**original title:** Fuga

**runtime:** 100 min

**estimated release:** May 2018

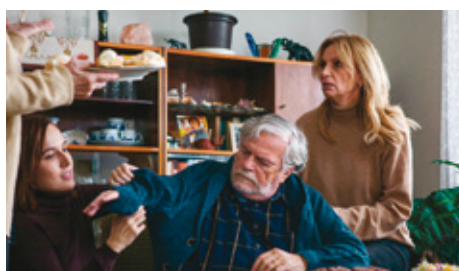
**director:** Agnieszka Smoczyńska

**cast:** Gabriela Muskata, Łukasz Simlat, Małgorzata Buczkowska, Dorothea Kolak

**produced by:** Agnieszka Kurzydło - MD4 (PL)

**in co-production with:** Axman Production (CZ), CommonGround Pictures (SE)

**international sales:** Alpha Violet



## The 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:** July 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)

# FILMS TO COME

NEW RELEASES



## 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:** 98 min  
**domestic 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)



## Trash on Mars

The missions to Mars have been out of fashion for a long 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.

### DOCUMENTARY

**original title:** Mars  
**runtime:** 85 min  
**estimated release:** Summer 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)



## Vote For Kibera

The film *Vote for Kibera* is about people from the largest slum in Africa, who did not allow the hard living conditions to knock them down but have transformed the experience into meaningful activities that help the others. The main character is Don, a young photographer from Kibera, who is deeply dissatisfied with how Kibera is interpreted by people living outside the slum - as a place full of problems which we are supposed to get rid of. His photos and the stories of the people he photographs are supposed to tell the world about the positive aspect of life in a slum, which most of us are not willing to see. Stories of characters will take place against the background of the 2017 Kenyan Presidential Elections. In a time, when the painful question of the future of Kibera is opened once again.

### DOCUMENTARY

**original title:** Vote For Kibera  
**runtime:** 96 min  
**estimated release:** June 2018  
**director:** Martin Páv  
**produced by:** Zuzana Kučerová, Jitka Kotrlová - Frame Films (CZ)  
**in co-production with:** Czech Television (CZ)



## God Forsaken

The Czech Republic has been shaken by a virtual refugee crisis for several years now. This documentary by Saša Dlouhý places the hysteria in sharp contrast to the real picture of the lives of six people who are looking for a refuge in this country.

### DOCUMENTARY

**original title:** Bohužel  
**runtime:** 83 min  
**domestic release:** March 2018  
**director:** Saša Dlouhý  
**produced by:** Martina Šantavá - freeSaM (CZ)  
**in co-production with:** Czech Television (CZ), GoGo Lab (CZ)



## Snowing!

Tereza and her sister Petra join their father second wedding. Tereza is accompanied by her ex-boyfriend František. They doesn't tell anyone about the split. After the wedding all three go to visit the girls' mother Ester who after the divorce lives with Grandma. Tereza decides that it would be better for her to stay there and take care of Grandma and the house. While Tereza is trying to fix things, Ester has finally time for herself and Petra goes for short love adventure. Tereza has time to focus only on Grandma. In the closed atmosphere of the house, Tereza wants to settle all family wounds. When she discover that her Grandpa is "buried" in the kennel, she wants to take care of this as well. *Snowing!* is a mirror of one family, softly balancing at the edge what are our expectations and illusions.

### FICTION

**original title:** Sněžží!  
**runtime:** 75 min  
**estimated release:** Summer 2018  
**director:** Kristina Nedvěďová  
**cast:** Petra Nesvačilová, Hana Vagnerová, Vanda Hybnerová, Alena Mihalová  
**produced by:** Jitka Kotrlová - Frame Films (CZ)  
**in co-production with:** Barrandov Studio (CZ), Frame100r (CZ), i/o post (CZ)



