



## PRAGUE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL – FEBIOFEST 2021

For the 28<sup>th</sup> time, Prague International Film Festival – Febiofest, which will take place on 17–24 September, will present the very best of contemporary cinema of both Czech and international production. More than 100 films will be screened in Prague at Cinema City Slovanský dům, as well as other locations. This will be followed by the regional edition, which will take the films to cinemas all around the Czech Republic. The programme was released on September 7 and tickets are available for pre-sale since September 8.

The opening ceremony of the 28<sup>th</sup> edition will kick off on September 17 with *Rifkin's Festival*, the latest Woody Allen film, and it will close with the screening of Academy Award winning film *The Father*, starring Anthony Hopkins. This year's **Kristián Awards** for contribution to cinema will go to famous Czech actor **Jiří Lábus**, Slovakian actress **Božidara Turzonovová** and producer **Mike Downey**.

The quality of this year's selection is supported, among other things, by the fact that eight of the films are also included in Part 1 of the European Film Awards 2021 Feature Film selection (Part 2 will be announced later in September): *Ammonite*, *Fabian*, *Forest – I See You Everywhere*, *Night of the Kings*, *Nowhere Special*, *Supernova*, *The Father*, *The Whaler Boy*. European Film Awards, which have been presented annually since 1988 by the European Film Academy, are sometimes referred to as the European Oscars.

### COMPETITION AND OUT-OF-COMPETITION SECTIONS

There are four competition sections of the 28<sup>th</sup> Prague IFF – Febiofest: The **Main Competition** presents talented filmmakers' debuts and second film. The **Comedy Competition** brings exceptional comedies from around the world. The **Amnesty International Febiofest Award**, bestowed in cooperation with the Czech branch of Amnesty International, recognizes pictures with human rights themes. Amateur filmmakers are competing in the **You're the Filmmaker!** section – this year's theme is My City.

Out-of-competition programme sections are as follows: **Eastern Delights**, which covers cinema of Central European and East European countries, the Balkans, former Soviet Union countries and Middle East. The popular section **Queer Now** presents the very best of contemporary queer cinematography. This year's **Planet Dark** is dedicated to horrors, claustrophobic thrillers, gloomy dramas and styled gory films shot by new voices of genre cinema, and it includes *Repulse*, a new Czech film. **Generation** has a programme for the entire family. For the first time, **Panorama** is divided into two sub-



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sections: **Icons** presents films made by renowned directors, while **New Currents** gives space to young creators whose films resonated at various world festivals.

**Culinary Cinema**, a special, popular section that connects contemporary cinematography with an extraordinary culinary experience, will serve up a document called **Funke** about Evan Funke, American chef who mastered the art of homemade pasta. The **Docs** section, dedicated purely to documentaries, is about to be adorned by the world premiere of **Nasima – the Most Fearless**. The title character is the first female surfer in Bangladesh, where it is frowned upon for women to *swim* in public, let alone ride around on a surfboard. The **Girls in Film** section, co-presented with the platform of the same name, will introduce new films made by the incoming generation of talented female filmmakers. Other sections, such as **TV Now**, **Profiles** and **Special Screening: Jury**, will present themselves the way they are known and loved, too.

This year's novelty is the **VR Cinema** section. Virtual reality films in 360° format are to be screened in special VR cinema at the DOX Centre for Contemporary Art during the festival weekend in three thematic slots: **Anima**, **Art** and **Docu**.

## NEW FILMS OF CZECH PRODUCTION AND CO-PRODUCTION

### ***Kryštof***

The 28<sup>th</sup> edition of the Prague IFF – Febiofest will host a world preview of the Czech film ***Kryštof***. Director Zdeněk Jiráský cast Mikuláš Bukovjan and Alexandra Borbély in the lead roles; the latter being the winner of the European Actress Award for her part in Hungarian drama *On Body and Soul*.

***Kryštof*** takes you to the Czechoslovakia in the era of the harshest Stalinism. Young Kryštof lives as a fresh postulant in a community of monks. In addition to silent prayers, he is also involved in the illegal transfer of people fleeing to Germany. During one of the events, he witnesses a brutal police crackdown on students and decides to help them. He has no idea that Operation K is underway to destroy the male religious orders. Returning to the monastery, Kryštof becomes a witness to their transport without being able to help. The place onto which he pinned his hopes is destroyed. Before, he had wanted to flee the world and hide in a monastery, but now he must flee to save his own life. He has the last opportunity to rebel against brutal political power and to save his beloved...

### ***A Minute of Eternity***

Director and screenwriter Rudolf Havlík travelled to Iceland to shoot the intimate adventurous drama *A Minute of Eternity* in the extreme conditions of Iceland's wild nature. The two protagonists are played by Jiří Langmajer and Martina Babišová. „*There is also a third main*



character in the film: the Icelandic landscape. Iceland's nature is unique, wild and raw. The inland is full of lava fields, geysers, waterfalls and glaciers, but also meadows and mountain ranges tinted with colours unlike anywhere else in the world, thanks to the specific climate," Rudolf Havlík said about the film.

### **Repulse**

Balancing on the border line between horror and thriller, *Repulse* is the feature-length directorial debut by Emil Křížka. The intellectually disabled protagonist Viktor is played by Štěpán Kozub, whose performance in Křížka's short film *Ruchoth Raoth* won him an award at an independent horror film festival in Los Angeles in 2018.

Kateřina, stuck in an unhappy marriage with cold and indifferent Robert, has been gathering the courage to leave him. The situation comes to a head when Robert finds his wife with another man after coming home early from a business trip. This could present a way out for Kateřina, but Robert refuses to let her go. The circumstances change completely when Robert and their daughter Sára are both seriously injured in a car accident. Little does he know that this accident has also had an impact on Victor, a intellectually disabled boy abused by his own mother...

### **Karel**

If you come to Prague IFF – Febiofest, you're in for a rare treat: an opportunity to see the long-awaited documentary on the life of iconic Czech singer Karel Gott! There will be two screenings, one in Prague and the other in Ostrava.

Feature-length documentary *Karel* offers a unique look into the private life of the Czech singer. Renowned director Olga Malířová Špátová filmed Gott over the course of a full year, and thanks to his openness, honesty, and humour, created an unusually intimate window to the life of the legendary singer – one that the public, including his most faithful fans, has never had before. Gott's famous grace and humour are not lacking from the documentary.

### **Lost in Paradise**

Partly autobiographic, the feature debut by Fiona Ziegler – the first ever Czech-Swiss co-production – is inspired by her own experience of life between two different worlds.



Born and raised in Switzerland, thirty-something Evžen decides to move to Prague. Despite his adult age, Evžen finds it difficult to stand up to his dominant father, who considers Prague a part of a long-forgotten history. Evžen, on the other hand, opens a music club in Prague, as he had dreamt; he also meets his great love there – as well as his great misfortune – and it seems that in the end, he might have to make one more visit to Switzerland after all.

## MAIN COMPETITION

The jury consists of the screenwriter and director Ivan Ostrochovský, whose film ***Servants*** won last year's Main Competition; Mahnaz Mohammadi, director of the drama ***Son-Mother*** and winner of last year's Amnesty International Febiofest Awards; and Czech actor and director Jiří Mádl. Along with the other spectators, they are about to see seven spectacular films.

***Listen*** / Directed by Ana Rocha de Sousa

A realistic story of a family of five Portuguese immigrants trying to make a London suburb their new home. After their daughter's hearing aid breaks, they clash with the fatal shortcomings of the British social-security system. A consequent misunderstanding at school jeopardizes the future of all the children in the family. However, their parents Bela and Jota are willing to do anything to save them.

***The Whaler Boy*** / Directed by Philipp Yueyev

Lyoshka, a 15-year-old Russian boy, works as a whale hunter in the easternmost outpost of Russia. Isolated from civilization, he falls in love with the only girl he has access to – a young woman in the US who makes a living as a “camgirl” via online streaming. However, he discovers that the gap between the real and the imaginary is greater than the distance between Chukotka and Detroit. The comedic plot is the basis for a visually stunning and atmospheric film poem about desire, heightened by the bleak tundra of the Arctic setting.

***The Bright Side*** / Directed by Ruth Meehan

Kate has made a name for herself as a stand-up comedian whose hard-edged jokes spare nobody, including herself. Her trademark black humour does not desert her even in hospital, when she learns she has breast cancer. We discover though that her toughness masks a sensitive soul, without which she would never have a chance to understand her surroundings and begin to heal. Her journey through this challenging situation with an uncertain outcome is shown through a mixture of comedy and tragedy.

***Any Day Now*** / Directed by Hamy Ramezan

The Mehdipour family has fled their home in Iran to seek safety in Finland. The couple and their two children are now living in a hostel along with other families in similar



predicaments, waiting to see if they will be granted asylum. In spite of the difficult situation, the Medhipours do not fall into depression but spend their time in a loving family circle and with friends, like anyone else. Their story is low-key in its portrayal, but one filled with hope, a mosaic of fleeting moments of poetry and poignancy.

**Charter** / Directed by Amanda Kernell

Alice has not seen her two children since the moment she left her husband, Matthias, who consistently thwarts all her efforts to contact them. It appears the chances an imminent court ruling will grant her custody of the children are also pretty slim. When her son's tearful voice comes over the telephone one evening before the call is abruptly cut off, Alice decides to take action. Will she succeed in gaining access to her children? And are they really in danger from Matthias, as she fears?

**Home** / Directed by Franka Potente

Marvin returns to the small American town where he grew up after spending seventeen years in prison for murder. Although in terms of the law he has paid his debt to society, his victim's family remains unable to forgive him. To make things more complicated, his mother's health is deteriorating. But Marvin does not give up hope; forgiveness and redemption can come from the least expected places. Kathy Bates excels as the ailing mother in this moving drama.

**Souad** / Directed by Ayten Amin

Nineteen-year-old Souad lives with her parents and younger sister in the north of Egypt. Although physically she may be grown-up, she struggles with her role in society, torn between her Muslim faith and the contemporary reality of social media, which opens unprecedented (and dangerous) opportunities – especially in terms of dating older men. Shown from the perspective of three characters, the story offers a subtle and sympathetic glimpse of life today in the Arab world.

## COMEDY COMPETITION

The jury, headed by Czech singer and composer Michael Kocáb in the role of honorary chair, comprises of 33 film buffs, picked out from registered candidates by the Festival's honorary president Fero Fenič.

**Dinner in America** / Directed by Adam C. Rehmeier

Punk rock band frontman and troublemaker Simon finds himself on the run after a series of acts on the edge of the law. A temporary refuge from the omnipresent police is provided to him by Patty, an unassuming outsider and devoted fan. The unlikely couple finds themselves on the journey of a lifetime through the desolate American Midwest. The humorous and sensitive portrait of two uprooted souls united by their desire for freedom is not only about finding one's own identity.



***Goodbye Soviet Union!*** / Directed by Lauri Randal

Johannes has just reached the verge of puberty, but he has already experienced several moves, his uncle's departure for Afghanistan, and a strange incident with a radioactive liquid that caused him to lose half of his hair. When the Soviet Union starts collapsing, he and his crazy hippie mother embark on an adventure in search of Western freedom. The affectionate and satirical glimpse into growing up in unconventional circumstances explores the universal longing for freedom.

***Rosa's Wedding*** / Directed by Icíar Bollaín

When Rosa, a 45-year-old film costume designer, wakes up one day with the horrifying realisation that she has never enjoyed life to the fullest, she decides to get off the tiresome treadmill of her demanding work and even more demanding care for her slightly eccentric family. However, she does not expect that her awakening will be completely misunderstood by those around her. Rosa has to go on an adventurous and a bit crazy journey to convince those closest to her that starting over is possible at any age.

***Patrick & Sebastien vs the Fake News*** / Directed by Mouloud Achour & Dominique Baumard

Patrick and Sebastien are pretty ordinary dudes nobody cares about – at least until their stereotypical lives of slacking off are turned upside down and they become the most hated men in France. The reason is as simple as it is absurd. A well-known TV presenter has decided to jump on a journalistic sensation involving a stolen Gameboy, a popular rapper fresh out of prison, and the two protagonists. Never mind that there's not a shred of truth to it.

***Parents vs Influencers*** / Directed by Michela Andreozzi

Paolo, a widowed philosophy professor, has always cherished his close relationship with his young daughter. It is an unpleasant surprise for him when 15-year-old Simone starts to drift away, preferring YouTube videos to his company. To win back her attention, the elderly professor decides to become one of "those influencers", naturally under the strict supervision of his daughter. A whole world of undreamt-of possibilities begins to reveal itself to him, taking the audience along on a journey to bridge the generation gap, told with kindness and humour.

***Bert's Diary*** / Directed by Michael Lindgren

Bert doesn't look like a typical heartthrob – lanky, bespectacled, and a bit of a nerd. Despite this, he believes he is irresistible, and won't settle for just any girl. At the moment, he has set his sights on Leila. It is his good luck that he is in the same class as her younger sister, whom he can use to gain access to Leila. But wait: isn't Amira actually far more interesting than her sister? Based on a popular series of books, the film is a formally inventive and zany comedy about the travails of first love.



## **AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL FEBIOFEST AWARD**

This year, Amnesty International celebrates its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary, as well as 30 years of activity in the Czech Republic. To accentuate the jubilee of the largest international organization for protection of human rights, Prague IFF – Febiofest organized following side events: the Art for Amnesty project will be presented in the Passage of Czech Design and a nearby café Art-n-Coffee will host a photo exposition to mark Amnesty's jubilee, mapping the milestones of its activity.

For the sixth time now, various films selected across all sections are fighting to win the valuable trophy. The films must deal with themes of freedom, human rights, freedom of speech and fight for dignified life. *"We see compliance with fundamental human rights as a society-wide topic and we believe that the war on injustice cannot be won without attention and urging from the entire society. Films have the ability to point these problems out, which in turn starts the conversation on their solution,"* said Linda Sokačová, Director of Amnesty International's Czech branch.

The winner will be chosen by the jury: violoncellist Terezie Vodička Kovalová, film director Vít Klusák and Jiří Bejček, head of Amnesty ČR's Department of Human Rights' Education.

## **OFF PROGRAMME**

Prague IFF – Febiofest comes with a rich OFF PROGRAMME. In September, even before the beginning of the festival, there will be screenings at the open-air cinema of Kasárna Karlín. During the festival, visitors will be able to experience the world of virtual reality cinema in the VR Cinema project at the DOX Centre for Contemporary Art. If you want a place to rest, look no further than to the garden of Slovanský dům, where you can find a special CHILL ZONE with film-inspired drinks, coffee, and various music programme. Whether you love food on movie screens or your own plate, Culinary Cinema is precisely for you. A special four-course menu created at the renowned Italian restaurant La Finestra in Cucina – Orlando Bloom's favourite restaurant – will be served at the Municipal House Restaurant.

The popular group Tři tygři (Three Tigers) will stage a fun event titled Tiger Night to introduce three short films from their production, which will be followed by a debate with the viewers. The aforementioned Art for Amnesty project and photography exhibition in celebration of Amnesty International's jubilee will take place at the Passage of Czech Design and the adjacent café Art-n-Coffee. The festival will end with a final soiree at the Červený jelen restaurant hosting a concert by the dynamic Circus Brothers, and a subsequent party.



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## Contacts

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