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***Flowers Are Not Silent* about contemporary Belarus to open the 25th Ji.hlava**

Oliver Stone, Vitaly Mansky and Flatform will have masterclasses

The 25th annual Ji.hlava IDFF is only five days away! The festival will open with *When Flowers Are Not Silent* by Belarusian director Andrei Kutsila that captured the brutal suppression of demonstrations against last year's rigged presidential election in Belarus. This year's Contribution to World Cinema Award will be presented to Czech director Jana Ševčíková. The Masterclass section will host American director Oliver Stone and Russian filmmaker Vitaly Mansky. Ji.hlava's Awards will be given a new look by Federico Díaz, a prominent Czech artist with Argentinean roots.

The anniversary edition of the festival will kick off with [*When Flowers Are Not Silent*](#) by Belarusian director Andrei Kutsila that captures the atmosphere in Belarus after last year's presidential election. Over eighty percent of the votes were gained by the current president, Alexander Lukashenko. The local opposition and the European Union called the vote fraudulent and a large part of the population rejected the results. Peaceful demonstrations were brutally suppressed and political repression became as intense as before the collapse of the Soviet Union. *"The documentary is a brave testimony of the state's violent repression against peaceful protests. It shows how brutally this last European dictatorship resists the transformation of Belarus into a freer society. With this special screening, we want to support the Belarusian opposition and all of the country's citizens who want to live in a free world, just as various initiatives in Western European countries supported the Czechoslovak opposition in the 1980s,"* says Marek Hovorka about the film. *"Both in the Czech Republic and in Poland demonstrations and regular manifestations of freedom of speech are organized but Belarus has nothing like that, except perhaps for some online forums,"* says director Andrei Kutsila, who will introduce the film at the festival's Opening Ceremony. The film is included in the main international competition section [Opus Bonum](#).

Jana Ševčíková to receive the Contribution to World Cinema Award

The Contribution to World Cinema Award will be presented to the prominent Czech filmmaker Jana Ševčíková at this year's Awards Ceremony. The director is currently finishing her eighth film. *"Jana Ševčíková's talent was appreciated mainly abroad,"* explains Marek Hovorka. Her films were shown at festivals in Berlin, Rotterdam, Paris, Nyon and Leipzig, among others, and screened at MOMA or the Harvard University in the USA. And she was also always present at Ji.hlava where she won the Audience Award for *The Rite of Spring* (2002). *"Jana Ševčíková has been ahead of her time. She always clung to her own independence and made films exclusively in her own production, even at a time when this was far from common. Her deep empathy, dedication to the film genre, liveliness and authentic humanism run through her entire film work and are an adornment not only of Czech and not only of ethnographic film,"* adds Marek Hovorka. Her *Old Believers* (2001) will be presented at Ji.hlava on Saturday evening.

Festival awards created by Federico Díaz and artificial intelligence

As of 2021, a renowned Czech-Argentinean visionary artist Federico Díaz will be the author of the design of Ji.hlava's festival awards. *"It will not be the same design every year. This year, Federico Díaz began developing a long-running project in which he teaches artificial intelligence to examine and then transcribe emotional messages into graphic notation,"* says Marek Hovorka, describing the new awards design. ***"This year it's going to be only a sketch, because we're at the very beginning. But I believe that from next year on every award-winning film will have its own particular award – a notation made by artificial intelligence,"*** adds Federico Díaz. *"I'm interested in emotions and emotional intelligence because they can transcend the language itself and reveal the essence of things. It is related to the time when the language was created and therefore it is more universal,"* he adds. The first test of the project has been based on the Twitter account of former U.S. President Donald Trump. *"We chose Donald Trump because I'm interested in political statements that can manipulate the masses. It was fun, too. We wanted to see how our AI would deal with Trump, who is known for his strong statements. The notation is in black and white because the human eye can distinguish most transitions between black and white. Technically speaking, black and white are not colours, but compositions of other colours. And what is fascinating is that, in fact, black and white don't exist. The eye sees the colour black when there is no light coming from the particular direction,"* concludes Federico Díaz.

Oliver Stone revisiting JFK, Vitaly Mansky revisiting Gorbachev

What else does Ji.hlava have in stock? A masterclass by Hollywood director **Oliver Stone** – the three-time Oscar winner, who presented his new film *JFK Revisited* at the Cannes Film Festival this year. Among other things, he will talk about his new film, in which he goes back not only to the assassination of President Kennedy but also to his feature film *JFK* (1991). *"Kennedy's murder was motivated by change: Kennedy was changing things. If he had succeeded, we would have been in a very different place today,"* said Oliver Stone in Cannes. Russian documentary filmmaker **Vitaly Mansky**, whose new film [Gorbachev. Heaven](#) will be presented by Ji.hlava in the competition section Testimonies, will also introduce his creative approach. *"I wanted to look behind the cold marble and see a man who decided to make the world a better place,"* Mansky says about the film. The **artist group Platform**, whose works can be seen, for example, at the Centre Pompidou in Paris, as well as the prominent Czech documentary filmmaker and script editor **Jan Gogola Jr.** will also talk about their creative methods. Creative duo **Ivo Bystřičan** (Czech Republic) and **Sara Pinheiro** (Portugal) will speak about their project *Future Landscapes: Expedition into Sound*. Read more about [Masterclasses](#).

VR zone, brand new Industry Hub and Ji.hlava for Kids

This year's Ji.hlava will also invite visitors to step into virtual reality. The VR zone will newly be situated on Masaryk Square in the very heart of Jihlava. It will bring **a showcase of this year's most remarkable VR projects with documentary elements**. The industry activities will

be concentrated in a new space – in the main hall of the College of Polytechnics (VŠPJ) that will become the festival's Industry Hub. Among other things, there will be a **new programme, [Ji.hlava New Visions Forum](#), which will present 36 new documentary projects** from Europe and the USA.

This year's Ji.hlava will also feature live streams from the festival. The afternoon service will offer a daily programme in English: interviews with filmmakers and guests, film tips, the Ji.hlava programme for children, and the Inspiration Forum. The festival stream will be available via the festival website and Facebook.

Ji.hlava also keeps kids in mind. After a one-year break, Ji.hlava will open its gates to children and invite them to their own full-fledged festival programme. They will be treated to film and fairy tale screenings, performances, concerts, workshops as well as *Fairy Arguments*, in which they will discuss digital technologies, equality and inequality or our relationship to nature with the guests of the Inspiration Forum.

Who will be in the jury?

The winner in the **Opus Bonum section will be selected by six-member jury** composed of: Syrian writer and filmmaker **Orwa Al Mokdad**, Romanian producer **Anamaria Antoci**, Czech-Japanese documentary filmmaker **Haruna Honcoop**, Dutch film critic **Sofie Cato Maas**, Slovenian director **Olmo Omerzu** and Mexican festival programmer and distributor **Pedro Emilio Segura Bernal**.

Czech Joy awards will be in the hands of the last year's winner – documentarian Jindřich Andrš, together with director and cinematographer Tomáš Klein, film and theatre music composer Jakub Kudláč, Slovak editor and musician Monika Omerzu Midriaková, Czech art theorist Tomáš Pospiszyl and Jihlava native and collaborator of the Czech Centre in Paris Marie Sýkorová.

The winners of the awards for the best experimental film in the **Facinations** and **Exprmntl.cz** sections will be selected by a family jury consisting of Daria Kashcheeva, a filmmaker who won a student Oscar for her short film, and script editor and film editor Alexander Kashcheev.

Inspiration Forum: Sahraa Karimi, Judith Butler, David Abram and local personalities

The Inspiration Forum, the discussion platform of the Jihlava festival, discovers new perspectives and brings new questions about the future into the public space. Visitors will be treated to six days of live discussions, interviews and lectures, followed by an online programme. Each day, discussions, interviews and talks will focus on a single topic, with guests from a range of disciplines and experiences, from global thinkers to important local figures. They will be looking at mental health, equality and inequality, how digital technologies can help create a more just and fairer world, the relationship between humans and nature, and the online programme will deal with the challenges the Czech Republic is facing after the Parliamentary election. Judith Butler, a star in the field of humanities, who has given a

completely new direction to feminist and gender thinking and thus contributed to the creation of a more tolerant and equal society and world, will be among the speakers. And it is the world they would like to live in that they will talk about at this year's Inspiration Forum. David Abram, one of the most important ecological thinkers of our time, and Afghan filmmaker Sahraa Karimi will also be among the Forum's guest speakers. The local guests include the Mayor of Jihlava, Karolína Koubová, Vysočina Region Governor Vítězslav Schrek and the director of the Jihlava primary school Ivana Málková.

On the safe side at Ji.hlava

"Last year we couldn't meet in person in Jihlava as the festival had to move online. This year, we appreciate all the more that we can return to the cinemas with live viewers and guests. Of course, we have to stay on the safe side and therefore we have introduced a simple system of rules to create a safe environment during the festival," Marek Hovorka says about this year's safety measures. The anniversary edition requests visitors to use respirators in cinemas and in all other indoor areas. In addition to that, valid infection-free status is a condition for attending the festival programme. A testing site will also be available for the festival visitors. For more information go to ji-hlava.com/faq.

The 25th Ji.hlava IDFF will take place on October 26 to 31, 2021. Festival passes can be purchased at ji-hlava.com and they serve as a full-fledged ticket to the live part of the festival (film screenings, discussions and lectures, off-screen programme). Festival accreditation also provides 14-day access to the festival's online video library (available only in Czechia). Admission to the screening and the accompanying programme will be granted only upon presentation of proof of Covid-19 vaccination, or a valid antigen or PCR test. Let's be responsible and considerate of each other!

More information at www.ji-hlava.com, email: pressservice@ji-hlava.cz and on the festival's [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) profiles.

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