

Czech films in the making: Fall 2021

The second half of the year brought several achievements for Czech projects in all stages of the making so far. Promising Czech films and professionals have been awarded in Tallinn, Thessaloniki and Cottbus, and also took part in various key industry events all over the world. Here is the summary of what is important to know.

The Word was spoken in Cottbus and Bethlehem Light shone through Tallinn

Connecting Cottbus co-production market (held at the beginning of November) honored Beata Parkanová's upcoming film **The Word** with the D-Facto Motion Works in Progress Award – with EUR 35 000 (in-kind services) plus EUR 5 000 for additional expenses. Parkanová's second feature is a portrait of the common life of Czech family between the summer of 1968 and 1969, disrupted by the Soviet invasion, and its premiere is set for 2022. The production team consists of Vojtěch Frič / love.FRAME, Ondřej Kulhánek of Bontonfilm studios and Maroš Hečko & Peter Veverka of Azyll Production (SK) in co-production with Polish Kijora Film, Czech Television and Studio BEEP.

Industry@Tallinn & Baltic Event, traditionally held during the Tallinn Black Nights Film Festival in November, showcased forthcoming Czech comedy **Bethlehem Light** within the International Works in Progress. Jan Svěrák's story of well-known and now aging writer, whose everyday existence is enlivened by characters from his stories, impressed the jury and won the Baltic Event Works in Progress Award (associated with EUR 2 500). The prize is intended to cover the promotional costs of a theatrical release in Baltic countries. The film, produced by director's own Biograf Jan Svěrák in co-production with British Portobello Productions, is currently looking for distributors and sales agents.

Head Nurse was a busy project last months. After winning the Midpoint Feature Launch workshop in August and after the presentation within our Czech Film Springboard programme in September, Jan Vejnar's upcoming debut was showcased at Thessaloniki's Agora Film Market at the Crossroads Co-production Forum. Dark comedy, set in a Czech hospital where the staff is caught in comical micro-situations, trying to get away with the help or against the will of the head nurse, received a full scholarship for the MFI Script 2 Film Workshop. In addition, the producer of **Head Nurse**, Kamila Dohnalová of Last Films, was awarded Thessaloniki EAVE Marketing Workshop Scholarship.

In October, the C EU Soon showcase of the MIA market in Rome hosted a presentation of Michal Blaško's feature debut project, **Victim**, about how one small lie can unleash a wave of hatred and violence. The film is made in Slovak-Czech-German co-production, with nutprodukce and Czech Television attached on the Czech side.

Back in September, two Czech animated works were pitched at Polish Kids Kino industry forum. **Happily Never After**, Czech animated series in development, which provides an insight into nowadays' lives and troubles of mythical creatures from the old fairy tales, is directed by Gabriela Hlož & Alžběta Göbelová and produced by Mária Môtovská of Helium Film. **The Websters** (Works in Progress) – both live-action and animated film/series, which follows the (mis)adventures of a spider family, is directed and produced by award-winning animator Katarína Kerekesová (Fool Moon) in co-production with Czech partners Karolína Davidová & Anna Vášová of 13ka, PFX and Czech Television.

Czech producers also participated in important industry programs during this fall. Julietta Sichel of 8heads Productions and Martin Vandas of MAUR film took part in newly established Producers LINK programme for emerging producers of children's content. First Session took place at Kids Kino Industry in Warsaw, the second stop was held at the CINEKID Festival in Amsterdam.

Last but not least, producers Tomáš Hrubý of nutprodukce and Peter Badač of BFILM were selected to join ACE Network after completing the 31st edition of its Annual Programme. Hrubý and Badač attended two workshops this fall and will finish the ongoing edition next year.

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