

Female-led stories prevail among the features supported for production by the Czech Film Fund

In the second production call of 2021, altogether EUR 2.51 million were distributed by the Czech Film Fund among seven promising projects which this time feature many strong female characters and current topics, such as – environment or social inequality.

Producer Jiří Konečný of endorfilm and director Ondřej Provozník, who won Best Film and Best Director awards at the Czech Film Critics' Awards 2019 for *Old-Timers*, prepare another fiction feature drama with strong social undertone – **Highlight**. The film, which was supported with EUR 588 000, focuses on newly acquired freedom in the Czech Republic 1990s in the story of a young ambitious female chorister.

Two films about the conflict between two different approaches to life were supported by the Czech Film Fund in this call. **Unnatural** by director and producer Matěj Chlupáček (TV series *Rats*) turns to the past to tell a dramatic story with crime undertones about the complexities of building a new modern Bata town in the poor conditions of the Slovak region in the Tatra Mountains in the 1930s. Chlupáček's Barletta received EUR 550 000 for production and it is planned as Czech-Slovak co-production.

Celebrated auteur Bohdan Sláma (*Shadow Country, Ice Mother, Something Like Happiness*) will make **Drought** (Sucho) – a visually captivating film, set in the Czech countryside, about a conflict between two families, as one of them pollutes the environment. Established Czech company Negativ was granted the support EUR 392 000 for production of the film.

While a rising star of Czech cinema Beata Parkanová (*Moments, The Word* – in postproduction) teams up with producer Vojtěch Frič of LOVE.frame (company received EUR 392 000) for **Little Lightings** to tell a quiet and intimate story of one day in the life of a disintegrating family seen through the eyes of a six-year-old child, established Czech director Alice Nellis (*Some Secrets, Little Girl Blue, Mamas & Papas*) focuses on the opposite period of human existence in **Buko**. The story of a newly widowed woman, who moves to a village and inherits a retired circus horse, is produced by Petr Fořt of Dorian film and backed by the CFF with EUR 196 000.

In *Origin* (Pramen), internationally acclaimed director Ivan Ostrochovský (*Servants, Koza*) will explore the complex fate of women on the margins of Slovak society in the story of a young Agáta, a hospital assistant who enters a life of abortion, sterilization and the poor life prospects of young Roma women in the 1980s. Negativ received EUR 275 000 for the production of the film.

Production company Bionaut prepares **Anna Is Missing** – a continuation of celebrated short-form series *#Martyisdead*, which won the Emmy award in 2020. Director Pavel Soukup, who also stood behind the original series and attracted attention with his student short fantasy horror *Leshy* (2015), will work on *Anna Is Missing* with the support of EUR 118 000.

Press Service:

Jaroslav Kejzlar

Editor & Communication

Czech Film Center / Czech Film Fund

Veletržní 530/27, 170 00 Praha 7

telefon: +420 601 326 883

e-mail: jaroslav@filmcenter.cz

www.filmcenter.cz

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