

## Chateau – Felberova 1/2, Liberec

**Accreditation, Ticketing, Festival shop**  
8<sup>30</sup> – 20<sup>00</sup>

**Game Zone & Brainz VR Cinema,  
School of Animation, Chill-out Zone**  
9<sup>00</sup> – 18<sup>00</sup>

## Festival daily

Festival daily is published by Anifilm on the occasion of Anifilm 2023 – International Festival of Animated Films.

**Redaction** Malvína Balvínová,  
Natálie Kozáková, Tomáš Hubáček  
**Translation** Lukáš Wicha  
**Design** Jan Šimsa

## Exhibitions and Installations

**Kōji Yamamura: Four Flashing Figures**  
Liberec Regional Gallery  
10<sup>00</sup> – 17<sup>00</sup>

**Filip Pošivač: Anifilm 2023**  
Chateau – Foyer  
8<sup>30</sup> – 18<sup>00</sup>

**IOGI: 11 Stories from Everyday  
Life in Japan**  
Chateau – Redern Wing  
8<sup>30</sup> – 18<sup>00</sup>

**Darkening – VR installation**  
Liebieg Villa  
10<sup>00</sup> – 18<sup>00</sup>

## Festival Partner Businesses

A gastronomic heaven in Liberec! Here's a selection of partner festival bars and restaurants. When you present your festival pass, you will get a bonus or a discount on selected foods and beverages – coffee, pastry, main dishes, cocktails, beer and more. Let's get out and give it a try!



## Festival daily Wednesday — 3. 5. 2023

## Alfons Mensdorff-Pouilly: „I see animation as a unique experience“

*Yesterday, at Anifilm's opening ceremony, animator Alfons Mensdorff-Pouilly received the Lifetime Achievement Award. In the following interview, he talks about his beginnings at Jiří Trnka's studio and many other things.*

*You have been working in animation for over fifty years. When did you first come into contact with this branch of filmmaking?*

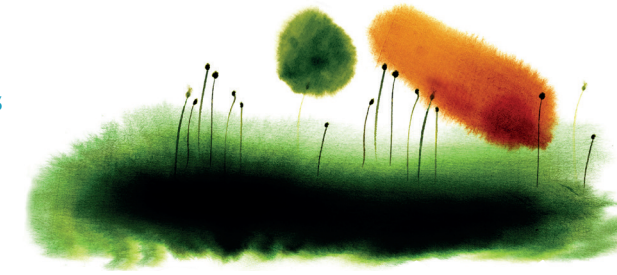
While I was studying the Toys, Puppets and Souvenirs programme at the Secondary School of Arts and Crafts in Žižkov, Prague, I made props for the Czechoslovak Television series *Hup & hop* by Alexander Zabletal. Although I only had experience making puppets for theatre, not for animation, they seemed satisfied with my work. I enjoyed our lessons by the then professor Viktor Fixl, so I thought I would enjoy working as a prop maker, and I managed to get employed at the Jiří Trnka Studio. However, the reality of the studio was completely different from my expectations. I was immediately approached by Vlasta Pospíšilová, who was filming the deer hunting scene for *Svatopluk and His Sons* and needed someone to help her animate the bushes in the shot, so she explained to me how to move them. I had never seen anything like it before, but that's probably when it caught my attention. And then the head of the studio, Jiří Vaněk, asked me if I would like to take the test to become an animator. I took it, not even knowing how many frames per second an animated film should have. I thought it was supposed to be 16 because

we were using the 16 mm format. (laughs) Of course, it was supposed to be 24 frames, so my part was too fast, but they approved it anyway. Mr Látal asked me to reshoot it so that it would have 24 frames per second, which I did, and I was promised that they would hire me. I had to wait a year, but in 1969, they took me on, and I've been animating ever since. It's a nice job. It hasn't driven me mad yet, but it can be very demanding at times. If I didn't enjoy the work, I couldn't do it.

*How have animation practices changed since then?*

Basically, the technology has changed entirely. Whereas before, we would use regular cameras for stop-motion animation, today, you can check your work immediately. You couldn't do that then. You had to wait for about two weeks, during which time you could do nothing but worry if everything would work out as it was supposed to. Everything has been sped up and I suppose simplified to some extent. You have the →

# ANIFILM



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- Pivovarský dvůr
- Stereo
- Výběp
- Switch Bar & Café
- Beer Warehouse
- Knihkupectví Fryč

**Festivalová mapa / Festival Map**

- 1 festivalové centrum
- 3 festivalové místo
- partner festival partner
- ubytování festival accommodation
- parkování
- MHD terminál MHD
- autobusové nádraží
- veřejné toalety
- městské informační centrum
- nemocnice hospital
- výhled na Ještěd
- tramvajová linka
- partner festival partner: jídlo
- partner festival partner: zmrzlina
- partner festival partner: bar
- partner festival partner: káva
- partner festival partner: knihy



Photo: Eva Kořínková

## Tips for today

**Pojar and Štěpánek's centenary**  
13<sup>00</sup> → North Bohemian Museum

This year, we are celebrating the centenary of the birth of two prominent filmmakers, who helped shape the style of Czechoslovak animation and steer its development. These two remarkable artists gave us, among other things, the cult series *How They Met at Kolín*. This afternoon, we will be screening a selection of several episodes of this series in a block entitled *How They Met at Kolín and Went Swimming*.

**Animation by Alfons**  
17<sup>00</sup> → Varšava Cinema

Yesterday at the opening ceremony, Alfons Mensdorff-Pouilly received the Lifetime Achievement Award, and today, he will present to our visitors a special programme representing a sort of a cross-section of his films. From the dozens of films he has contributed to, he has selected those that he personally holds dear or the making of which has been particularly memorable for him.

**Mirai's abstract worlds**  
19<sup>00</sup> → Varšava Cinema

Master of abstract and non-narrative animation, guest and juror of this year's Anifilm Mirai Mizue will personally present his work tonight at his masterclass. In addition to his renowned, colourful and thrilling abstract animated pieces, you will also see an excerpt from his upcoming feature film *Journey to the West*.





Photo: Ivan Vít

option to fix a lot of things after the shoot just using the computer and without having to reshoot the scene. On the other hand, I think it's a pity that there is no big studio today, like Jiří Trnka's Studio loutkového filmu, because there are not enough resources and people. Still, I think that even now there are many capable animators who like this work. Another thing that has changed a lot is the screening of shorts before feature films. Before, animated shorts were commonly screened as these "pre-films", allowing people going to the cinema to find out about them, but this formerly widespread practice has been abandoned, and today, viewers interested in animated shorts can encounter them primarily at film festivals.

#### Can animation still surprise you?

When I was starting, I was very moved by how the puppets would come to life. That is no longer the case, but I still see animation as a unique experience. I think a lot of animators see it the same way, even experienced ones.

#### How do you feel about modern animation technologies, e.g. 3D animation, are you familiar with them?

When you work in this field, you have to follow new technologies. Today, it's basically required. We are getting to the point when puppets can talk or, to be more precise, in some cases are required to talk. There are even special computer programs that can change puppets' faces. I have to say that I'm not really a big fan of that. I think a puppet should remain a puppet and should speak with its entire body. Of course, it can have different expressions, but everything should be kept in the same artistic style in which the puppet was created. Unfortunately, computers often interfere with the art style of puppets and change their appearance. We recently discussed this issue with director Michal Žabka, but in his case, computer interference

is not such a big deal because his art style is quite expressive in itself. He told me that I was "old-school like Trnka", which I took as the highest praise. (laughs)

#### You have always worked mainly as an animator. Have you ever been tempted by the idea of directing or taking on some other filmmaking role?

When you think about it, when you work as an animator, you're basically also an assistant director most of the time. You have to constantly make sure that you're fulfilling the director's wishes even when they ask you to do things that don't seem entirely realistic. As for directing itself, I've been offered to take the director's chair several times, but I've never dared to do it. I prefer to work with my hands rather than my head.

#### What qualities should a good animator have?

Above all patience because some shots can take up to three days to film, and visual memory as well as observational and manual skills are useful. For example, I had the advantage of having the opportunity to work with wood and fabrics in secondary school, and I also learned to sew. So whenever there's nothing to shoot, I make props. You have to know not only what the prop you're making is supposed to look like but also what it has to be able to withstand, and you have to adapt to that. You can't always use any material you like. I think that's also one of the parts of our job that we animators enjoy a lot, and when you then get to manipulate your own puppets or props and see what they can or cannot withstand, you learn a lot.

#### You have worked on a number of projects from shorts to features, from films for the youngest viewers to films for adult audiences, and you have collaborated with a number of prominent directors (such as Václav Bedřich, Jiří Barta, Ivan

#### Renč, Vlasta Pospíšilová, Lubomír Beneš, Jan Balej, etc.). Which projects do you remember the most fondly and whose directorial style did you like the most?

I have enjoyed working with all the directors whose films I have had the opportunity to work on. Even with those whose art style took me some time to get used to. When you get your hands on a new puppet, you have to play around with it for a while because that's how your subconscious gets acquainted with it, and from then on, its smooth sailing. But my favourite person to work with was probably Jiří Barta. I always found his films very interesting in terms of the form as well as the content, e.g. *The Vanished World of Gloves* or *The Pied Piper*. I have worked with him from the very beginning – on his graduation film *Riddles for Candy*. And we're still working together today. We're currently waiting to see how the situation with *Golem* is going to develop. I also enjoyed working with Václav Bedřich on his horror films, including *The Deadly Perfume*, and with Jan Balej, with whom we made various short and feature films. I also had a great time working with Vlasta Pospíšilová on all three *Fimfárum* films. And I had a lot of fun collaborating with Lubomír Beneš, with whom we shot – besides *Pat & Mat* – for example, a very good short film called *The King and the Goblin* or the series *Little Devil Lucifuk* for a Slovak television station.

#### Do you have any special memories of any of the films mentioned?

I do. In the last scene of *The Vanished World of Gloves*, fire consumes the town. And to shoot the scene, we actually set the animated town that we had built on fire, and we filmed it on multiple cameras simultaneously. So there was this huge burning pile in the studio in Bartolomějská Street with flames shooting all the way up to the ceiling. We all stood around to make sure nobody would get hurt, and once we were done shooting and Mr Barta was satisfied, he told us that we could put it out. But all the fire extinguishers were empty. So we had to use a fire hydrant, and as a result, the studio got a bit flooded. We were able to keep a lid on it for a while, but it eventually got into the papers anyway. But we didn't get into much trouble. That's a memory with a capital M. I also remember about that shoot that I had to walk right through the middle of the sets and animate between my legs. I almost fell over a couple of times doing so. I wouldn't dare do that anymore.

#### Which animated character or puppet have you grown fond of the most?

For example, the police gloves in a grotesque scene right at the beginning of the

film I just mentioned, *The Vanished World of Gloves*. It was a pair of real gloves with wire frames. I also liked the hippos from Jan Balej's *The Hippopotamus Family*. The puppets used in the *Yaya and Paya* series were great, as were those used in *Pat & Mat*, of which there are now some 150 episodes already.

#### How did you get to work on Pat & Mat?

Luboš and I had been a team for a long time when we opened a studio together and together we then got to work on the series. I think that originally, the first episode was even banned in Czechoslovakia. But Luboš Beneš was such a diplomat that he went to Bratislava and was able to get it approved, and that's why many people still think that *Pat & Mat* is originally a Slovak series. Both Luboš and the series' art designer Vladimír Jiránek were a treat to work with – as was, in fact, the whole team. But more animators have worked on the series than just me.

#### Few people know that you have also worked on many co-production projects – Finnish-Czech films by Katariina Lillqvist, Jiří Barta's short film Yuki Onna – Snow Woman, which was co-financed by a Japanese producer, or the Canadian-Czech short Narkoblues by Břetislav Pojar and Ivan Vít. Did this type of collaboration differ in any way from classic Czech film production?

It wasn't any different from my standard work. I was brought in as an animator and worked on the projects here in the Czech Republic. But you know what, I would have almost forgotten about Katariina's films. She's an amazing director. I taught animation with her in Finland, and she interpreted everything I was saying. The last film we made together was *Babybox* in a studio in Tábor, in a beautiful gothic house.

#### Which animators inspire you, whose work do you like to watch?

Vlasta Pospíšilová was definitely a great inspiration for me. It was her who got me

hooked on animation on the first day we met. Stanislav Látal, Bohuslav Šrámek, Jan Karpaš, Břetislav Pojar... Actually, the whole crew from Bartolomějská Street.

#### Do you also follow current films by young animators?

Not much, I admit. I don't have enough time. But of course I'm glad when I do get to watch one, and I admire them very much. I'm happy that our craft is still alive and even often doing well. At one point, I was worried that animation would not survive, but now I see a hopeful light at the end of the tunnel – it's clear that people are interested and that it's working out. I think that new technologies are helping too. With the old cameras, exposition used to take 8 seconds, in which you would forget what you had done; now you get to see everything immediately and you can keep working.

Full Interview at [www.anifilm.cz/en](http://www.anifilm.cz/en).

## WUNDERBAUM The Best Czech Series !!!



film  
animation  
theory

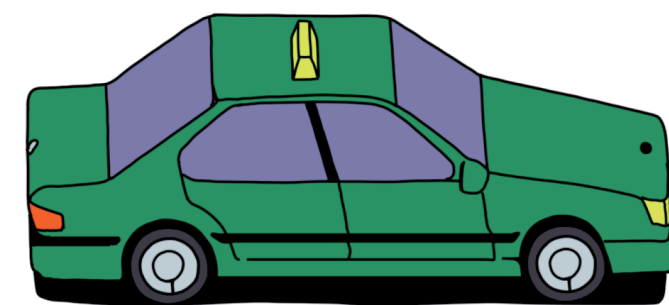
### Taxi driver Ruslan made it! Episode *The Gem* scored and Wunderbaum became the best series in the Czech Horizon category.

What does taxi driver Ruslan experience during his never-ending shift? Fragments from his life are presented through six-part series created for Czech Television's iVysílání at UMPRUM. The creative directors Thanh Mai Tran and Matej Mihályi directed the first episode and supervised the other five. Their film *The Gem* opens the entire series. Each episode plays with different television and film genres and various artistic approaches. Main character Ruslan Khassanov from Kazakhstan drives a taxi in Prague and experiences all sorts of adventures...

#### What can you say about your collaboration?

MM After the first meeting, we decided that I would be the good cop and Mai would be the bad one, but in the end we were both the good ones.

MT Apart from the fact that I'm partly deaf and I have poor Slovak vocabulary, our cooperation went quite smoothly.



#### What is your favorite episode?

MM Why do you think that ours is the first one?

MT I have some favorite moments in each episode, I enjoy the visual collage in the second one, I love the dance of the aliens in the third episode, I adore the smoking naked man and running dogs in the fourth one, the sixth episode is excellently narrated. But when I watch episodes in a row, the fifth one always gets me.

#### Did the award make you happy?

MM+MT Yeah...

You can watch the entire series, including bonuses, online:

[ceskatelevize.cz/porady/15007159282-wunderbaum/](http://ceskatelevize.cz/porady/15007159282-wunderbaum/)

other special festival content such as podcasts, reports and interviews can be found at [f-a-t.cz](http://f-a-t.cz)