



## ONE WORLD: FILMS THAT ARE DEFINITELY NOT DISCONNECTED

### Press release

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The shift to the digital world and the challenges and threats this transformation brings – that is the highlight theme of this year's edition of the One World festival under the motto "Connection Lost". The main thematic film category focuses on technology and how it influences both individuals and society. It offers films that examine topics such as the impact that the online world has on our lives, manipulation in virtual environments, or how technology assumes and incorporates human prejudices in its algorithms. Viewers will enjoy three new categories: Russian Standard, Our Daily Sex, and Old Age Rises. This year's festival programme includes 101 films, some of them enjoying their international, world, or European premiere. Some are films acclaimed at festivals abroad and wreathed with international awards. Anyone located in the Czech Republic will be able to watch them thanks to the new One World Online platform. Selected films will be accompanied by live discussions as a part of the One World Live programme. Because of the current pandemic situation, the twenty-third edition of One World will take place online throughout the Czech Republic from 10 May to 6 June.

The festival opens with the Belarusian film **Courage**, which will take viewers to the recent demonstrations in Minsk. This documentary about the Belarus Free Theatre, which has been subjecting Lukashenko's authoritarian regime to daring criticism in its performances for fourteen years, captures the members of the theatre ensemble at a time when the country finds itself at a crossroads. What will be the fate of the members of the Belarus Free Theatre in the coming days and weeks? This emotional film captures the persistence and fortitude of thousands of protesters as they call for changes and democracy, yet still encounter the relentless state violence and arrests that the oppressive regime uses in its dogged effort to remain in power. The film will be screened during the **opening streaming event**, which will also include a discussion and the presentation of the Homo Homini Award. Viewers will be able to watch the stream either on the One World Online platform or via the festival's Facebook page.

In addition to the main category of **Connection Lost**, the festival includes the **three** traditional competition categories (International Competition, Czech Competition, and Right to Know) and another **ten** thematic categories.

The **International Competition** presents the best of current documentary film production, bringing together important themes with exceptional formal handling. This year, there are ten entries competing for the best film and director award, including the opening film **Courage**. The captivatingly filmed **Cuban Dancer** is another film in this category. The next is Danish director Mads Brügger's **The Mole**, which presents the fascinating story of a secret agent who infiltrates the highest echelons of North Korea's politburo. The documentary **Sabaya** is an



adrenaline-filled portrayal of the liberation of Yezidi women enslaved by Islamic State. The theme may seem taken from an adventure novel but it is indeed reality. The same may be said about the stories of parents in China whose children disappeared without a trace. One such narrative is presented in ***The Man Who Was Looking For His Son***, which we are screening in its international premiere.

The films in the competitive **Right to Know** section traditionally reveal human rights violations one should know about, even though they are rarely covered by the media. One of them is ***A Thousand Cuts*** about the Philippine journalist Maria Ressa who surprises with her immediacy and unwavering defence of the free media. Similarly surprising may be the remote islands of reform Islam through which viewers are led by ***Seyran Ateş***, the founder of Berlin's first liberal mosque, which is a thorn in the side of conservative Muslims. The film ***Fly So Far*** also thematises the position of women, in this case women who are punished on the basis of El Salvador's draconian anti-abortion laws. The documentary ***Writing with Fire***, which won the Audience Award at Sundance, tracks an exceptional group of Indian women from the Untouchable caste who break down stereotypes in a society bound by tradition, and work as investigative journalists. The selection also takes viewers to China, as captured by the famous filmmaker Nanfu Wang during the covid pandemic in her film ***In the Same Breath***.

A total of ten films are competing for the best documentary award in the **Czech Competition**, of which two are being shown in their world premiere. The remaining entries include ***A Marriage***, the most recent film by Kateřina Hager, who attracted attention several years ago with her successful ***Children Online***, which we are screening in its European premiere. Another competing entry is ***Housing Against Everyone***, an activist documentary from Brno about the inaccessibility of dignified housing in Czechia. This film by Tomáš Hlaváček will enjoy its world premiere at the festival. It is also impossible not to mention the Formanesque docu-comedy from the Sokol environment – ***On Your Marks!*** – which is another film audiences will be able to see in Czechia earlier than in other countries. One of the films being shown at the festival in its Czech premiere is Helena Třeštíková's latest film, ***Anna***, which captures the life of a charismatic older prostitute, which is full of brief ups and many downs. In addition to new films, the competition includes documentaries that have received much acclaim at festivals over the past several months. The most expressive of these is the film ***A New Shift*** by Jindřich Andrš, which received awards at the festivals in Jihlava and Leipzig.

One of the new categories this year is called **Russian Standard**. The selection of films was not made with the intent of solidifying the usual stereotypes about Russia, but rather in an effort to show how Russian men and women live today – the current Russian standard. The films cover both the internal political situation and the lives of ordinary people in various corners of the country. The film ***Bitter Love*** follows a group of older travellers who set out on a boat trip on the Volga with hopes that during the several day long excursions they will be able to come to terms with the past and find both happiness and their place in the world. The documentary dynamically covers what are probably all of the problems Russia faces. In ***We Are Russia***, we



see the suppression of the political opposition, specifically the volunteers working for Alexei Navalny. The young Chechen man from the powerful film **Silent Voice** must seek refuge in Belgium because of how the LGBTQ community is persecuted – nothing good awaits him at home.

The next category is **Our Daily Sex**. Its name contains a reference to the phrase “Give us this day our daily bread” from what is the best-known Christian prayer. One of the most repeated spiritual and earthly mantras, it calls for satisfying one of the basic human needs (hunger), and hardly anyone finds it disconcerting. And so One World, albeit with a bit of overstatement and symbolism, asks for more effective education regarding sexual issues through this new category. The included films look at the theme of sexuality from various angles. While in **Because of My Body** Claudia, a young woman with a physical disability, discovers previously hidden recesses of her own sexuality, in **Last Days of Summer** Polish teenagers address the question of whether or not it’s all right to sleep with your friends, and in **Phone Line 137** Argentinian psychologists and social workers provide support to victims of sexual violence over a phone hotline. Somewhere in the middle of this spectrum are nuns who fall in love with each other in **Nun of Your Business**, and women who want to give birth in the way they and not the obstetrician choose in **Unseen**.

Through seven documentaries, the category **Old Age Rises** presents the diverse spectrum of possibilities of what later life can be like. The Oscar-nominated film **The Mole Agent** takes a look at a Chilean retirement home. The documentary **Gogo**, tracks the Kenyan protagonist whom the film is named after when, at the age of 94, she decides to start going to school to get an education. In the north of Europe, a charming mosaic of relationships plays out in the film **Still Into You**, which explores love in old age. The documentary **100UP** travels to various corners of the world to visit people who at the age of 100+ still have a zest for life..

As is traditional, the festival once again offers a cross-section of many topics related to ecology, nature and sustainable living in the **UnEarthed** category. This year, viewers will be able to look into the world of animals living in captivity in the unpredictably evolving story about an Iranian tigress named **Maya**. The film **Wood**, whose protagonists came into close proximity to international traffickers with this commodity, offers an engaged look at illegal logging. The theme of energy and the involvement of factories in urban space based on an attractive architectural plan is the subject of the documentary **Making a Mountain**. Last but not least, the section also includes director Suzanne Crocker’s audience-friendly experiment **First We Eat**, which deals with the increasingly topical issue of local farming.

The annual **Long Live Life!** section represents an oasis of relaxation in the festival programme. It is devoted to films that tell stories of unusual hobbies and alternative lifestyles, which make it possible to lead life outside of a predefined box. Several of these thematic circles come together in **Dare to Do Whatever**, which portrays the functioning of a Danish new alternative circus school. Here several young protagonists who have problems with social integration learn not only how to work with their bodies but also how to function in a team of peers. The documentary **Descent** tells the life story of freediver Kiki Bosch, who dives in the extremely cold waters off Greenland and Iceland. A cultural imprint is most deeply evident in **A Year Full of Drama**. Young Estonian Alissija participates in an experiment during which she must visit



all Estonian theatre performances over the course of one year. How might an abnormally high dose of culture affect a person who was never interested in theatre before?

The popular **Panorama** category comprising the greatest hits of the past season once again offers a diverse mix of themes. Three films take us into the midst of community life, with each looking at the phenomenon differently. In **The Fourth Kingdom, the Kingdom of Plastics**, we see how even a dump site for plastic waste can become an original community centre and a safe environment for people who have lost their jobs or homes. In comparison, in **Songs of Oppression** we observe a German community which wanted to establish a new and uniquely cohesive society in faraway Chile after WWII – instead, their life became hell. Films focused on the human psyche are strongly represented. This particularly applies to **Beautiful Something Left Behind**, which lets the camera enter the fragile world of children who have lost a parent or sibling to death, and the musical road movie **The Hero's Journey to the Third Pole**, which strives to achieve greater respect for people with bipolar disorder through guitars and song.

In addition to feature-length documentaries, One World will once again offer human rights audio-visual content in short-length format. One thematic package of films is devoted to this year's theme – Connection Lost – and includes the documentary **E14** showing Great Britain under lockdown. The second package is dominated by powerful human rights themes. For instance, the documentary **Kofi and Lartey** tracks two young boys who work at a Ghanaian electronic waste dump while at the same time, camera in hand, try to present their own story in a detached way. The third and last package comprises films that belong to other thematic categories.

For the most daring who would like to experience new virtual landscapes, One World has prepared a small overview of interactive virtual reality projects that will literally draw visitors into the film. Viewers will have the opportunity to watch how the Dead Sea is drying up in **Once Upon a Sea**, take a stroll through a British housing estate facing the threat of gentrification in **Common Ground**, peek into the tent and memories of an American homeless woman in the documentary **We Live Here**, or find themselves at the boundary between life and death with a senior citizen in a care home in the project **Care(Less)2**.

This year One World Interactive is temporarily moving to the Karlín Barracks, where we can offer a modest virtual exhibition in the safety of an open air environment.

## One World Is Not Just about Film

In addition to films, the festival also offers accompanying events that are loosely associated with selected documentaries from this year's programme. They will take place from 20 to 28 May. Viewers can look forward to two exhibitions. The first, examining the transformations that have taken place in forms of work, will be held in Letná Park. The second, presenting illustrated annotations to the films in the Old Age Rises category made by clients of the Elpida organisation, will take place at the Karlín Barracks. Because the festival wants to offer visitors more than just film experiences, it has created a scavenger hunt that will take participants through the city and using objects associated with the festival will better acquaint them with this year's theme. For those who are interested, there will also be a free walking tour of the



city that will show examples of digital exclusion in the centre of Prague. Other events that may take place if hygiene and government measures allow them include a parkour workshop, a market with local farmers, and a new circus workshop.

## One World in Numbers

- This year's programme will present **101** films in **15** thematic categories.
- We are presenting the **premiere screening of 91 films** (13 in their world and European premiere and 78 in their Czech premiere).
- The festival will visit **all towns in the Czech Republic** this year.
- More than **60 festival guests** have confirmed their participation.
- Although One World 2020 was interrupted twice, it was visited by **48,405** viewers.

## **PRACTICAL INFORMATION**

- Tickets/Vouchers may be purchased for each film on the One World Online website. The ticket price is CZK 90.
- Selected films are in English or they have English subtitles.
- Selected films have open captions for people who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- Selected programme events are interpreted into Czech Sign Language.
- Our info booth will be available to you during the entire festival. Here, you can obtain all necessary information about the festival and purchase festival merchandise, which will also be available from the One World E-shop.

**Photographs and access to films will be provided upon request.**

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