



61 Zlín Film Festival

61st International Film Festival
for Children and Youth

Díl první / Part One
28/5 — 1/6/2021

Díl druhý / Part Two
9/9 — 15/9/2021



PRESS RELEASE

April 28, 2021

The 61st Zlín Film Festival Has Unveiled the Film Program of Its Spring Segment

Zlín – Exactly one month before the start of the first part of the 61st Zlín Film Festival, its organizers have made public the film program, which will be available online for the first time this year on the festival website. However, it will be territorially limited only to audiences in the Czech Republic. Exceptions to this will be a section of the program for film experts and a section in which animated films for the youngest audiences will be shown in specific countries. The spring part of the festival will take place from May 28 to June 1, while its traditional form will take place in the autumn from September 9 to 15, 2021. The theme of both parts will be "Literature in Film."

The oldest and largest film festival for children and young people will have its big premiere this year during its traditional term. From May 28 to June 1, it will provide a varied film and supporting program for the whole family, audiences big and small, schoolchildren, and film professionals via the www.zlifest.cz website. „As part of the film program, the spring part of the festival will give audiences not only festival films, but also ČT: D programs with literary themes, screenings of the best awarded animated films shot by children and youth from all over the Czech Republic and Slovakia within the ANIMÁG 2021 competition, and even this year's TA ČR film awards," says the festival's artistic director Markéta Pášmová.

The film part of the Zlín Film Festival's online program consists of 15 feature films that were awarded in 2020 or that impressed the program organizers. Children and parents can look forward to, e.g., the winner of last year's festival – a Norwegian film about brave children **The Crossing** and the Australian festival hit **H is for Happiness**. Other awarded films of the 60th ZFF are dedicated to teens: the Spanish story about a first love **Life Without Sara Amat**, the British drama **Rocks**, and a Spanish film full of life, energy, and a hot summer **The Innocence**. For more mature audiences there are films that draw attention to the often difficult situations in the lives of children and adolescents. These include the Swiss-Belgian film **Beyond the Horizon**, the French drama **The Dazzled**, Canadian film **Kuessipan**, and more.

There will also be a taste of this year's student works, accompanied by professional lecturer introductions. "In the online Zlín Dog we will offer premiering films which will be included in this year's competition. We firmly believe that we will also see these 8 candidates on the big screen in Zlín cinemas during the September live part of the festival," said Markéta Pášmová and outlined the content of the animated film section: "The smallest members of our filmgoers can look forward to two series of short animated films, one of which – with Czech films – will also be seen by children at foreign friendly festivals in India, Japan, South Korea, Mexico, Turkey, Cuba, and Ukraine, as part of a project called "Check the Czechs". The hour-long set of animations for small children called Warm Star and other animations will be looking back at the last 60th Zlín Film Festival and its competition including the main awarded films - **The Bird & the Whale** by Carol Freeman and **The Witch & the Baby** by Evgenia Golubeva."



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The supporting program of the spring part of the 60th ZFF is also focused on creative film workshops, interactive discussions, a virtual tour of festival zones, and much more. At the turn

of May and June, the organizers will invite everyone to the gallery of the Zlaté Jablko shopping center for the exhibition of this year's 24th annual Clapperboard Salon and to see drawings done by children and young people with visual impairments from the project "Joy of Creation". Fans of the Zlín Film Festival will have a chance to see the history of the 60th year of the festival through a virtual gallery located on the main square, Náměstí Míru, in Zlín.

The autumn part of the 61st Zlín Film Festival should take place from September 9 to 15 in its usual format, i.e. with traditional screenings of competition and other films and a supporting program corresponding to the main theme of this year's festival, which is "Literature in Film".

The Zlín Film Festival – International Film Festival for Children and Youth is the oldest and, currently, largest film festival of its kind in the world. Its prestige increases every year not only in the Czech Republic, but also abroad. This is evidenced by a number of invitations and the participation of ZFF representatives to sit in the juries of international festivals in Russia, Latvia, Germany, Poland, Greece, India, and other countries of the world and the enormous amount of interest in the festival's film dramaturgy.

The festival received an important award at the end of 2019 in Tokyo, Japan at the KINEKO International Children's Film Festival, where it won the KINEKO HONORARY AWARD for its contribution to cinematography for children and youth.

The festival's mission is to present international film productions for children and teenagers, to make them accessible to the child audiences, and offer a high-quality alternative to commonly available audiovisual content. An important aspect of the festival is to educate young audiences through the medium of film, expand their awareness of the outside world, and develop their aesthetic, social, and moral feelings. The aim of the program is to systematically contribute to the development of Czech cinema for children and youth. The organizer of the festival is the company FILMFEST, s.r.o..

You can find out more at www.zlinfest.cz.

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FILM PROGRAM of the 60th ZFF Part 1 - May 28 - June 1, 2021

FEATURE FILMS

Children and parents can look forward to the winners of last year's festival – an adventurous and emotional film about brave children, **The Crossing** (Norway, 2020), and the Australian festival hit **H Is For Happiness** (2019), chosen by a children's jury as its winner. Also worth a look are an extraordinary action family film containing an essential morality tale **The Club of Ugly Children** (Netherlands, 2019), and the witty and adventurous French **The Fantastic Journey of Margot and Marguerite** (2018), which works with the theme of time travel. The collection of films for the whole family will close with the thrilling animation **The Bears' Famous Invasion of Sicily** (Italy, France, 2019), which tells a funny and moving story from the days when bears still ruled the Sicilian mountains...

Three films are dedicated to youth, all of which were awarded by the expert jury of the 60th Zlín Film Festival. The winner of the main prize, the Spanish film **Life Without Sara Amat** (2019), is a pure and poetic story of adolescence and first love in the hot Spanish countryside. The British drama **Rocks** (2019), awarded by the ecumenical jury, depicts the difficult journey of a teenage girl, Rocks, who fights for her family in a multiethnic London society. The third title in this section is **The Innocence** (Spain, 2019), a film full of life and relaxed energy, for which the jury also appreciated its visual aspect.

Titles that draw attention to adult audiences and highlight often difficult situations in the lives of children and adolescents also have a significant footprint in the festival program. The variety of themes, and cultural and geographical environments offer an enriching mix of genres, experiences, and knowledge. A good example of this is the film **Beyond the Horizon** (Switzerland, Belgium, 2019), which introduces audiences to the hot-scorching countryside of the 1970s in which a teenage boy is confronted with the long-hidden secret of his beloved mother. The theme of children's lives in a fanatical religious community is presented in the French drama **The Dazzled** (2019). In a story of friendship, love and identity, the Canadian film **Kuessipan** (2019) describes the difficult process of cultural assimilation in the Inuit community living in the eastern part of Canada. How hard life is for Mexican refugees in the US who went there for a better life is shown by the extremely sensitive and award-winning film **Los Lobos** (Mexico, USA, 2019). The strong representation of Spanish films in the programme has its merits, as evidenced by the film **The Girls** (Spain, 2020), winner of many festivals and winner of the Spanish film Goya Awards, which depicts with undisguised grace the entry of 11-year-old Celia into a new phase of life – adolescence. The drama **Just Kids** (France, Switzerland, 2019) describes the feelings experienced by three siblings – Jack (19), Lisa (17) and Mathis (10) – who suddenly become orphans. Iranian director and women's rights activist Mahnaz Mohammadi in the film **Son-Mother** (Iran, Czech Republic, 2019) processes the difficult life of a widow in contemporary Iran, who is faced with a crucial life choice.



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STUDENT FILMS – ZLÍN DOG

Two series of student films makes it clear to audiences that Zlín Dog is a very specific dramaturgical part of the festival. It is not only focused on young filmgoers. The Czech Republic is represented by the live-acted film **Breaktime** from Tomas Bata University. It just proves the popularity of the sci-fi genre and comic books can even be managed very successfully in a student work. With regard to the film **Under the Skin** the director wrote that "it's a documentary film that lies, but you can also take it as a live-acted film". It was for this unique approach that this film was added to the spring part of the festival. The animated film **Little Fish** will please everyone who supports the good old-fashioned method of writing your homework on pieces of paper. The Dutch film **Leaving** sensitively interviews several children whose parents have voluntarily decided to leave the world.

The second series of online films is lead by the animated documentary **Girls Talk about Football** with its distinct combination of various animation techniques, archival footage and words from female football players about the sport, which is increasingly perceived as the domain of men. **At the Bowling Alley** audiences will feel the tension as they watch what happens to a decent boy, Jules, when things start to get out of hand. Audiences will go from a tense atmosphere to something a bit lighter with the film **Happy Easter**, which is full of chocolate bunnies, eggs, and gangster hens. The entire online journey will be closed by the film **The Boredom of Young Greta**, about a girl with a special talent for improvisation, cynical behavior, and a weakness for little white lies.

CHECK THE CZECHS

India, Japan, South Korea, Mexico, Cuba, Turkey, and Ukraine. In May, 10 Czech animated films for children are heading out to these parts of the world. The project "Check the Czechs" was created in cooperation with seven international festivals, which will take on the role of promoter and thus create a unique opportunity to promote Czech culture abroad. The online part of the 61st Zlín Film Festival will take place from May 28 to June 1, 2021, and aside from Czech children these films will be seen by their contemporaries in the aforementioned countries.

This section contains 65 minutes of animated art, humor, and fantasy. All of the above titles have participated in competitions during previous years of the Zlín Film Festival. Audiences can look forward to unique and internationally very successful films by Zlín animation students, including the winner of the Golden Slipper award from 2019, **Cloudy**, directed by Filip Diviak and Zuzana Čupová. The film exhibition will also bring back the award-winning work of Jakub Kouřil **Little Cousteau**, which is a tribute to the famous French oceanographer and conservationist. Of course, there will also be a representative from the televised Czech bedtime story series, **Little Rainworms**, by Jaromír Gál. Together with this will be a reminder of the participation of two filmmakers in the Zlín festival jury, Nora Držiak and Anthony Wong, with their joint animated grotesque from 2014, **Wildlife Crossing!**

Partner festivals:

Kineko International Children's Film Festival Tokyo (Japan)

BIKY – Busan International Kids & Youth Film Festival (South Korea)

Smile International Film Festival (India)



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Dytiatko - Int. Children's Media Festival (Ukraine)
La Matatena Festival Internacional de Cine para Niños (Mexico)
MICE La Habana (Cuba)
Universal Kids Film Festival (Turkey)

WARM STAR AND OTHER ANIMATIONS

The hour-long set of animations for small children called Warm Star and other animations will be looking back at the last 60th Zlín Film Festival and its competition including the main awarded films. The Irish film **The Bird & the Whale** by Carol Freeman got The Golden Slipper „for a tight and impressive artistic elaboration of a dramatically clean storyline with a deep mission and a sensitive grasp of the topic, which is also important for children.“ The original comedy **The Witch & the Baby** by a Russian director Evgenia Golubeva which won Hermína Týrlová Award, is „fresh and spirited film full of energy, dynamic animated acronym and humor, for a friendly, loving point and playful art suitable for children.“