

Czech animated works largely pitched and supported this fall

This fall is full and rich for Czech works participating at several industry platforms. Here is a summary of what is important to know.

Anifilm hosted CEE Animation Forum and Animation Espresso

With the contribution from the Association of Czech Animation Film, CEE Animation organized CEE Animation Forum (October 6-8, 2020), the leading regional pitching, financing and co-production event focusing on the animation industry. The Forum gives selected feature films, TV series & specials, short films and a newly also XR projects in the development stage the chance to connect with key animation industry players and boost the projects' international potential, visibility and access to the European and global markets.

The forum was held in parallel to the ongoing Anifilm International Animated Film Festival which takes place for the 11th time, and with more than 70 Czech feature films, shorts, music clips, games, commercials or audiovisual installations of all kinds on board.

This year, Czech animation was represented by 6 projects at the CEE Animation Forum, and two of them succeeded in intense competition.

No Happily Ever After, which is a co-operation of directing duo Gabriela Plačková and Alžběta Göbelová with producer Mária Môtovská of Helium Film, received the main CEE Animation Forum Award in category for series / TV specials, and it was also awarded the Kids Kino Industry Accreditation. This stop-motion mockumentary provides an insight into nowadays' lives and troubles of mythical creatures from the old fairy tales.

A joint project of director Eliška Podzimeková and producer Jiří Sádek of COFILM, ***Baldies***, which focuses on how weird and tough is being a bald kid with cancer, pleased the spectators. The series was given CEE Animation Forum Audience Award (EUR 1000) and it was also named Cartoon Forum 2020 Direct Selection.

Two other Czech series, one majority one minority, appeared on Forum's menu as well. ***A Little Pilot***, a project of producer Petr Babinec (Kouzelná animace) and director Eliška Chytková, is a story of a little girl with big imagination whose desire for adventure causes havoc in the household.

Icelandic producer Thordur Jonsson co-works with Czech companies Hausboot and PFX on Thorey Mjallhvít's ***Omildur the Brave*** – a story of a young girl who came into the world when the glaciers all melted, along with an array of mythical creatures.

Rising star of Czech animation, Diana Cam Van Nguyen (*Apart*, 2018), pitched her short ***Love, Dad*** which is produced by Karolína Davidová of 13ka. An animated documentary about director's complicated relationship with her father will be made with the use of several animation and live-action techniques.

The feature film category presented **Fichtelberg**, an adventure of a young orphaned nobleman who finds his life and love in the mysterious mountains at the Bohemian-German border. Šimon Koudela's family film is produced by Michal Kráčmer of Cineart TV Prague.

In addition, two successful Czech shorts released in the past months, Nora Štrbová's *S P A C E S* and *Sh_t Happens* by Dávid Štumpf and Michaela Mihályi, are presented in the CEE Animation Talents – a programme intended for promotion and alternative distribution of the most talented young animation filmmakers from Central and Eastern Europe.

CEE Animation Forum is not the only pitching platform held during this year's Anifilm. On Tuesday, the Association of Czech Animation Film organized the first annual Animation Espresso, created especially for Czech projects by students, rising stars or experienced animators. Twenty-three works were presented in the festival venue, in the city of Liberec, and the main prize was given to **Forgive** by the FAMU student Alžběta Mačáková Mišejková, Special Mention went to **ELECTRA. A POEM**, directed by Daria Kashcheeva, produced by MAUR film and FAMU.

This short is also pitched at the Polish stop motion forum ANIMARKT (October 6-10, 2020), where Kashcheeva will together with producers Zuzana Křivková and Martin Vandas hold a case study on her film *Daughter*, that brought her a Student Oscar and was shortlisted for the Best Animated Short Film at Academy Awards 2020.

ANIMARKT, which runs with Markéta Šantrochová of Czech Film Center as a juror, presents yet another Czech animation project – feature-length **Even Mice Belong in Heaven** by Denisa Grimmová & Jan Bubeníček. Producer Vladimír Lhoták (Fresh Films) will give an insight on the works in progress in a session called ANIMARKT After Hours.

Czech Film Fund granted the support for development to 8 animated projects

Apart from being presented at these prestigious platforms, numerous Czech animated projects have also applied for support at the Czech Film Fund this fall. The highest amount, CZK 1,5 million (EUR 57 692) in this call was granted to feature film version of already broadcasted TV series Kosmix. The film, titled **Kosmix: A Secret Mission**, is directed by Vojtěch Dudek and developed by Prague-based company Krutart which also produces another supported project in this call, TV series **Dinofables**. Martina Svojdíková's stories of the origin of life, supported with CZK 650 000 (EUR 25 000), will be introduced at Cinekid's Junior Co-production Market (October 22-23, 2020).

The other feature film supported in this call, granted CZK 800 000 (EUR 30 769), is an animated version of Czech fairy-tale classic, **The Proud Princess**, directed by Radek Beran and produced by LUMINAR FILM. Story of a princess is also a theme for Michaela Hoffová in her short horror fairy-tale **A Princess and a Wolf**, produced by Analog Vision and supported with the amount of CZK 350 000 (EUR 13 462).

While producer Jakub Rálek and director Michaela Mihályi (*Sh_t Happens*) were granted CZK 600 000 (EUR 23 077) for **The First One** which focuses on mostly taboo topic of a female menstruation, established Czech company MAUR film (*Daughter*) and director Pavla Baštanová received CZK 300 000 (EUR 11 538) for **About a Cow**, an unconventional short film composed of stories of cows that actually happened.

Hun Tun, a short directed by Magdalena Kvasničková and produced by 13ka, deals with sleep disorders and it was granted CZK 460 000 (EUR 17 692). Last but not least, the support also received

The First Tree, produced by Animation people and created by directing duo Lenka Ivančíková and Anna Paděrová.

Later this fall, the Czech Film Fund will decide for the first time in its history on support for development of animated series. So, stay tuned!

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