

Associations, union, organizations and other institutions in the field of culture

Questions:

1.

From your point of view how would you characterize the pros and cons of the cultural development in the given period?

2.

What notable results have been reached in your field? What are the most important works of art there? Which most prestigious awards were obtained home and abroad in your field?

3.

What in your opinion is the priority or the hottest issue in need of urgent solution?

4.

Which sources should be used to finance culture or public cultural services and why?

National film archive

PhDr. Ivan Klimeš, the Head of Department of Film Theory and History in NFA

1.

The audiovisual culture is a specific area because it combines artistic aspects of culture with its industrial and business aspects that are of a major influence with respect to art production results as well as in respect of audience expectations. This is the most significant feature in the field of cinematography since 1990s. At the same time there has very often been a fundamental discrepancy between the expectations of commercial and cultural results.

In the film production area it is remarkable in a positive sense that the home cinematography still annually produces around fifteen to sixteen movies despite the fact that the production costs are growing and the local market is too small to ensure profitability. That enhances a need of foreign coproduction partners to naturally expand the distribution scope for individual projects.

From a distribution and wide audience point of view it is apparent that the home audience is still interested in the Czech movies; but this fact can not be taken for granted. The wide range of home film festivals such as the International film festival Karlovy Vary, Summer Film School, FebioFest, Jihlava International Documentary Film Festival, Academia Film Olomouc, One World Festival and others get plenty of attention from the wide public and an enormous attendance especially from younger audiences.

As a drawback we ought to mention the fact that there are still no certain plans regarding the cash flow principles in the whole cinematography area between the public and private sector. Otherwise even cinematography largely reflects a bizarre transformation of so called research and development model, when Ministry of Culture has been forced to act only in the field of so called applied research. (Apropos the European Union is no more using the term "applied research" and works with the terms "basic" and "industrial".)

2.

During the past five years there have been plenty of films produced that celebrated success with experts or the wide public. The most prestigious award, the Czech lion award get the most attention at home; to name at least the category the best movie of the year *Something Like Happiness* (Bohdan Sláma, 2005), *I Served The King Of England* (Jiří Menzel, 2006), *Some Secrets* (Alice Nelis, 2007), *The Karamazovs* (Petr Zelenka, 2008). In the field of the documentary movies the awards were handed over during the Jihlava Documentary Film Festival; the awarded movies were the following: *Vierka* (Miroslav Janek, 2005), *A Low-Level Flight* (Jan Tříska, 2006), *Poustevna, Das Ist Paradies* (Ondřej Provazník, Martin Dušek, 2007), *Ivetka And The Mountain* (Vít Janeček, 2008), *I Love My Boring Life* (Jan Gogola Jr., 2009). There were time-lapse documentary movies directed by Helena Těšíková or Pavel Koutecký, documentaries by Miroslav Janek or Kristýna Vlachová, a series *Private Century* by Jan Tříska using material from so called family movies and a unique series by Lukáš Píbil: *Forgotten Transports*.

There are many foreign awards, to name at least some of the titles that obtained those: *The Source* (Martin Mareš, 2005; MDR Award for the best Eastern European document in Leipzig 2005), *Tales Of Ordinary Madness* (Petr Zelenka, 2005; FICC award "Don Quijote, Moscow 2005), *A Little Piece Of Heaven* (Petr Nikolaev, 2005; Norrköping Festival Award /Sweden/ 2005; Gold in the Eastern European movies category, IFF Cleveland /USA/ 2006), *Beauty In Trouble* (Jan Hřebejk, 2006; Gold for the best movie, IFF Denver /USA/, 2006; Gold for best foreign movie, IFF Santa Barbara /USA/ 2007), *Something Like Happiness* (Bohdan Sláma, 2005; Grand Prix of the Jury ex aequo, Angers /France/, 2006), *The City Of The Sun/ Slnečný štít* (Martin Šulík, 2005; FIPRESCI Award, Festival Go-East, Wiesbaden /SRN/, 2006), *Skřítek* (Tomáš Vorel, 2005; Gold in the European movie category; The Syracuse International Film and Video Festival, New York, 2006), *Beauty In Trouble* (Jan Hřebejk, 2006; Grand prix for best movie, IFF Denver / USA/, 2006), *I Served The King Of England* (Jiří Menzel, 2006; Igric Awards, Bratislava 2007; FIPRESCI Award, Berlinale 2007), *Pleasant Moments* (Věra Chytilová, 2006; Igric Award, Bratislava 2007), *Returnable Bottles* (Jan Svěrák, 2007; festival award SIGNIS, IFF Hongkong 2008; Golden dolphin for the best movie of the year, Festroia Film Festival, Setúbal /Portugal/, 2008; Gold in the feature film category, Damascus International Film Festival, Syria 2008), *A Country Teacher* (Bohdan Sláma, 2008; Queer Cinema Award, MFF, Reykjavík 2008), *The Karamazovs* (Petr Zelenka, 2008; Don Quijote Award at the Polish Federation of Film Clubs, 33. Polish Film Festival, Gdynia /Poland/, 2008).

In the last five years a serious publishing event in the field of cinematography was an issue of the fifth volume of the graphic catalogue of bilingual film *Czech Feature Films in 1971-1980* (2007) or a three part encyclopaedia *Czech actors* by Miloš Fikejz (2006-2008), in the academic sphere then an anthology *Cinema all the time. An anthology of Czech Film Theory and Criticism 1904-1950* (editors Petr Szczepanik and Jaroslav Anděl, 2008), that was also published in English. The director of the National Film Archive received international appreciation by being presented the Reinhold Schüntzel Award in 2008.

3.

An essential and urgent problem is obviously a question of culture financing that is an overall model of financing. If we are to compare the financing model of the Czech Republic with foreign standards then culture is traditionally underfinanced over the long run and not just in times of crisis but also prosperity. That proves that it does not have its well deserved position in our political circles.

4.

Culture should be financed from all available sources while the principle of common financing ought to be developed to the largest extent. The reason of financing culture is indeed simple; we are a small country that can only stand out and draw attention in the world by its irreplaceable and unique characteristics. Those are just and only of a cultural nature. Everything else is for sale and replaceable. A pragmatic reason is the fact that the state uses cultural goods for its international representation and reputation.

National Gallery in Prague

Prof. Milan Kníflák, Director General

1.

The political change in 1989 began a new spiritual climate. Art lost its privileged status that the communists were artificially keeping and its position in the value system was taken over by economical success and consumers' lifestyle where at least design has its solid position. Unfortunately the general public opinion is that the art is something people can quite easily live without, that it is an extra luxury that feeds off the public budget finances. Paradoxically it was only after the fall of communist regime that the social reality fully reflected the theory of culture as a superstructure above the economic base. This state has got same as other material matters its time character and undoubtedly will spontaneously change sooner or later change. As for a spiritual and historical process the existence of the Ministry of Culture is irrelevant regardless of the quality of its actual work and functioning.

2.

As follows from the above stated, current times do not favour any extraordinary cultural performance. Only the future will tell whether there have been any special artworks actually created. Public success and appreciation hardly ever bear any relation to the true quality of the artwork. Too often appreciation and success are simply a reflection of an effective media promotion (to name a single example, I would mention David Černý's *Entropa*). Art does not and cannot have clear quality criteria and therefore is out of public control. Both parts take advantage of this fact; artists believe that they can produce irresponsible works with impunity and the wide public does not bother to consult the National Library about reasonable criticism and either indiscriminately refuses the artwork or blindly admires any nonsense.

3.

To realize why art is needed; that is to sustain our creative and innovative thinking. Only science and art directly cultivate this ability; it's only due to them we don't live in the Stone Age and will not go back that way. Politics make the biggest mistake by transforming cultural values into the economic ones which goes against logic (for example evaluation according to

attendance or evaluation of revenue linked to certain cultural events etc.) It is necessary to direct ourselves towards appreciating culture in the given space that is in its general and spiritual environment. It is a matter of education to change the situation and that is a political issue.

4.

Because creative performance (art and basic scientific research) cannot be fundamentally directly economically productive but are essential for the well being of a civilized society, it will never be possible to leave those areas completely without any public financing. In time the ratio of public finances could be decreased. Twenty years after the fall of communism is still a short enough time to establish a fully functional civic society with an effective sponsorship system.

This is the current vision: culture (cultural public service) ought not to be fully dependant on the state budget but there should be other financial sources. The state ought to contribute to a certain percentage (my current estimate is around 65 % - 70 % out of total costs) for expenses related to the main organization material and operational costs. Other financing resources should come from organization's own income, grant and subsidy programs and last but not least, donations. The last two sources ought to be used exclusively for activities according to the status of individual cultural organizations (for example, the National Gallery for exhibition activity, acquisition, lecturing programs, scientific activities etc.).

Czech National Library

Mgr. Pavel Hazuka, Director General

1.

The negative sides of our area are the following: low salary levels, lack of financing of certain functions of the National Library directly from the activity allowances, but rather through annual projects (internet connection, running national applications), deepening lack of finances for acquisition of magazines and books (electronic sources are ensured for the projects, but even that is wrong). Further there is a continuing lack of clarity regarding the National Library classification as a research unit for the needs of Science and Research, which threatens the future development; generally to develop the National Library means to increase operational costs and these finances are not always available. In the area of communication technology there were problems with low level of financing of digitization and digital protection and availability.

On the positive side there is the fact that the Ministry of Culture programs were mostly sustained and developed further; a higher rate of participation in European projects played a positive role here.

Problems persisted for ensuring future building development of the National Library.

In general it is wrong that the Ministry of Culture relies on the finances provided by the international programs, but that is not solely a problem of the Czech Republic; European projects but especially the so called Norwegian and structural funds in the case of digitization. Despite many resources which could suffice for a while, in future the Czech state will have to deal with unpleasantly large costs for sustaining and continued availability of the data and that is the harsh reality.

2.

In 2005 the National Library of the Czech Republic became the first institution in the world ever to obtain the UNESCO/JIKJI Award for the program World Memory for contribution for protection and availability of the cultural heritage kept in the documents as a common heritage for the whole of humankind.

In 2007 UNESCO agreed to nominate two collections of the Czech National Library into the world list of document heritage that is the Collection of Middle Age Manuscripts from the Czech reformation era and the Collection of Russian, Ukrainian and Belorussian newspapers and magazines that were issued between both world wars by the first wave of the Russian emigration that left Bolshevik Russia and spread all over the world (Slavic Library).

In 2006 the Czech National Library became part of the European library TEL.

In 2009 the digital library Manuscriptorium were asked to become an international sub aggregator for the Europeans mainly in the area of manuscripts in Europe. Manuscriptorium is a product of a long-term cooperation with the National Library and the company AiP Beroun; its international integration efforts and leading position were strengthened by the solution of the European project at ENRICH, coordinated by the National Library during 2007-2009.

3.

The level of financing of statutory activities of organizations was increased to ensure their functioning and development; see negative sides of development above and sources below.

4.

The sphere of culture where the National Library is active should be primarily financed from the state budget. The state should also appeal to large private organizations that are active in the Czech environment to additional finances to make the digital cultural heritage widely available.

The National Museum

PhDr. Michal Lukeš, PhD., Director General

1.

In the museum field there was a positive development mainly because plenty of development and investment actions were prepared or started running that will have a major influence on its future development. To mention the most important event, which was the reconstruction of the National Museum and establishing a program called the National Cultural Treasure.

2.

This question is difficult to answer in the field of museums but during the whole period the quality of exhibitions essentially improved and a number of significant exhibition projects appeared.

3.

The most important is to enforce a change for grant supported organizations to become public service institutions. I consider the current state obsolete.

4.

Such public services that the state orders from individual organizations and care for intangible heritage financed from the state budget such as Scientific grant projects. Cultural projects

ought to be considered also from the marketing point of view as to their profitability. Relevant legislative and operational conditions have to be established for business activities.

Czech Film Center

Markéta TMantrochová

2.

In the field of cinematography undoubtedly the Czech movies succeeded in participating at important foreign festivals and winning many awards.

MFF Berlinale 2007 ó 5 films in almost all festival sections ó in the main competition ó I Served The King Of England by Ji í Menzel, Grandhotel by David Ond í ek in the Panorama section, It Is Going To Get Worse by Petra Nikolaeva in the Forum section and On Three Sisters And A Ring by Vlasta Pospí-ílová and Sea, Uncle, Why Is It Salty? by Jan Balej, last two in the Generation section. The film by Ji í Menzel won the Fipresci Award in Berlin.

In 2008 Berlinale program enlisted the movie Citizen Havel by Pavel Koutský and Mirek Jane ek; the film was shown in the Forum section.

In 2005 the film Something Like Happiness by Bohdan Sláma celebrated a success when it was chosen for the San Sebastian festival and won several prizes; the Gold for the best feature film and a prize for Anna Geislerová for the best actress.

The Cannes festival lately showed student movies in Cinéfondation section ó in 2005 there were film of FAMU students Grimur Hákonarson, Slávek the Shit, done in coproduction of the Czech Republic, Iceland and Estonia and a film by Jan Bohuslav, The Conscience. In 2007 a film Naus by Luká- Hauser and finally in 2009 film Bába by Zuzana TMídllová, that celebrated a great success by winning the sections' grand prize.

In 2008 the Czech Republic was represented in Venice festival by the Country teacher by Bohdan Sláma in the Venice Days section. This year there was a film Little Foxes by Mira Fornay competing in the Critic's Week section for the beginning film makers.

Amongst other festivals there is a Toronto festival where the Czech movies are represented almost every year (except 2006), and in 2005 and 2007 even two movies. Since 2004 there was a film competing every year in the South Korean Pusan, in 2008 even two films ó Children Of The Night by Michaela Pavlátová and the documentary, René, by Helena T e-tíková.

The last film celebrated a massive success in 2008 when Helena T e-tíková was presented a European Film Academy Award.

3.

In the film area a new concept is being prepared at the moment that deals with the main issues ó the strategy of film production and its support system. Another problem represents an insufficient connection of individual organizations and institutions in the film sector.

In addition, there is a non-existent film industry support system problem that would be an incentive for film makers. Right now the problem is addressed by the film industry support program so let us hope that the new program will come into effect early in 2010.

4.

Based on foreign experience it is obvious that no cultural field can flourish without state support. Besides state finances it is possible to subsidise film area with the direct resources, for example sale of authors' rights, lottery, television advertisement, sale of tickets etc.

PEN Club

Jiří Dědek, the Head of the Czech Centre of the International PEN Club

1.

This is a period of a stormy development of music and literary websites, which on one hand encourages graphomania and amateurism but on the other hand also allows for a development of cultural activities outside state line of rigid values and kitsch. Thanks to the internet as well as outside of it, there is a growing wave of antiestablishment sentiment, which to a large extent reflects the tragic separation of citizens and politicians or it takes inspiration from it as the live underground. I personally like it but from the society's point of view it is not a positive thing.

2.

The Czech Center of the international PEN Club aims at expressing its ideas on quality literature through presenting annual awards (Karel Čapek's Award in even years and PEN Club's Award "In your own way"). Names of the following laureates of our awards answer your question: works of Ludvík Vaculík, Václav Havel, and Bohumila Gregerová. I am sure you have a good idea about the state literary award as well as foreign ones.

3.

The biggest problem is the gradually decreasing level of taste and cultural style you can see all around us. That is in close connection to a total degradation of the term "culture"; with a reprehensible attitude of political elites towards art as goods; with pitiful level of basic and secondary education; with the last and detested position that the Ministry of Culture takes today amongst other governmental departments etc.

4.

Culture should definitely be financed from the public sector because that is the only proper way to do it. Only through state budget financing there can be a new system to support a conceptual work.