



CZECH DREAM

A film about the hypermarket that didn't exist

Directed by Vit Klusak and Filip Remunda
Running time: 87 mins.

www.czech-dream.com

World sales:

TASKOVSKI FILMS Ltd.
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CZECH DREAM (CESKY SEN)

DIRECTORS VÍT KLUSÁK and FILIP REMUNDA

STARRING RESIDENTS OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC

SCREENPLAY VÍT KLUSÁK and FILIP REMUNDA

PRODUCTION FILIP ČERMÁK

EDITING ZDENĚK MAREK

CINEMATOGRAPHY VÍT KLUSÁK

ART DIRECTOR ŠTĚPÁN MALOVEC

MUSIC HYNEK SCHNEIDER

CZECH DREAM ANTHEM lyrics by TOMÁŠ HANÁK; performed by LINDA FINKOVÁ and the
SEDMIHLÁSEK CHILDREN'S CHOIR

SOUND DAVID HYSEK

PRODUCERS HYPERMARKET FILM LTD. – Vít Klusák and Filip Remunda

CO-PRODUCERS

CZECH TELEVISION – Michal Reitler

MIRAGE – Petr Král

FAMU – Michal Bregant

IN COOPERATION WITH

SPI INTERNATIONAL – Ivan Hronec

TASKOVSKI FILMS LTD. UK – Irena Taskovski

SUPPORTED BY

THE STATE FUND OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC FOR THE SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT
OF CZECH CINEMATOGRAPHY

WORLD SALES Taskovski Films Ltd., United Kingdom

Czech premiere: 31 May 2004

Release date in Czech cinemas: 3 June 2004 (12 prints)

Theatrical distribution in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia:

SPI INTERNATIONAL

Theatrical distribution in the USA, UK, Germany, Portugal, Slovenia and Estonia is under negotiations.

Other territories are expected.

CZECH DREAM website

www.czech-dream.com

FESTIVALS

July 2004

- Karlovy Vary International Film Festival 2004, Czech Republic—official selection

August 2004

- 57th Locarno Film Festival, Switzerland—official program—Filmmakers of the Presence
- Copenhagen International Film Festival, Denmark—European Talent Spotting

September 2004

- Vancouver International Film Festival, Canada—official documentary competition
- IndieLisboa, Lisbon, Portugal—official competition

October 2004

- Festival of European Films—Festival on The Wheels, Turkey
- Bangkok World Film Festival, Thailand—World Cinema
- 47th International Film Festival Leipzig, Germany—official competition
- 48th London Film Festival, UK official selection
- 49th Seminci Valladolid International Film Festival, Spain—official competition
- Jihlava International Documentary Film Festival, Czech Republic—official competition
- Aarhus Film Festival, Denmark—official competition

November 2004

- Film Festival Cottbus, Germany
- AFI FEST, Los Angeles, USA (festival is connected to AFM)—official competition
- Seville International Film Festival, Spain—official competition
- Leeds International Film Festival, UK—official selection
- Sheffield Documentary Film Festival, UK—official selection
- Ljubljana International Film Festival, Slovenia—official selection
- 35th Festival dei Popoli Florence, Italy—official competition

January 2005

- Rotterdam Film Festival 2005, Holland—official selection
- Gothenburg Film Festival 2005, Sweden—official selection

* more coming up later in the year.

CZECH DREAM AWARDS

- Aarhus Film Festival, Denmark 2004: **Best Documentary Award**
- International Documentary Festival Jihlava, Czech Republic 2004: **Best Czech Documentary Award 2004 and Audience Award**
- International Film Festival Ljubljana , Slovenia 2004 : **FIPRESCI Award**
- Has been nominated by the Film Academy in Prague for the **student Oscars**

FILM SUMMARY

An original, cheeky treatise on capitalism, with more than a whiff of exploitation, "Czech Dream" follows two film students who used a state grant to promote the opening of an entirely fictitious big-box mega-market in a Prague field. The resulting scandal, alternately hilarious and discomfiting, illuminates the waking nightmare of consumerism in a country still adjusting to the strengths and pitfalls of the concept.

Eddie Cockrell, *Variety*, Jul, 2004

CZECH DREAM documents the largest consumer hoax the Czech Republic has ever seen. Filip Remunda and Vit Klusak, two of Eastern Europe's most promising young documentary filmmakers, set out to explore the psychological and manipulative powers of consumerism by creating an ad campaign for something that didn't exist.

CZECH DREAM – the Hypermarket for a better life!

The campaign (designed by a renowned advertising agency) involved television and radio spots, 400 illuminated billboards, 200,000 flyers promoting CZECH DREAM brand products, an advertising song, a website, and advertisements in newspapers and magazines.

For two weeks, the streets of Prague were saturated with advertising for the fake hypermarket. The ads proclaimed: *Don't Go, Don't Rush, Don't Spend*—drawing over 4,000 people to turn up on the 'opening day'. On the 31 May 2003, they arrived at a green field where, instead of a hypermarket, they found just the dream hypermarket's façade (10m high and 100m wide).

CZECH DREAM is a funny and provocative look at the effects of rampant consumerism on a post-communist society. CZECH DREAM has also caused some controversy, provoking extreme reactions in the Czech people and media and even being discussed in Czech Parliament.

With the recent entry of the Czech Republic and other Eastern European countries to the EU, and, with people's changing attitudes to consumerism and globalisation, it is equally relevant to capitalist societies all over the world.

INTERVIEW with the directors and producers of *Czech Dream*, Vít Klusák & Filip Remunda

10 July 2004 Karlovy Vary Film Festival
by Colin O'Connor

What inspired you to make this film? Was it purely to illustrate the power of advertising or was there more to it than that?

We were also loosely inspired by a happening by the theatre personality Petr Lorenc, who in 1997 distributed without paying a fee several hundred advertising posters for his fictitious hypermarket GIGADIGA. The opening ceremony took place in an empty meadow, where Petr had placed a banner saying "Better to take a walk in the woods instead." GIGADIGA opened at a time when hypermarkets became part of our lives. In the course of a mere five years, foreign investors built 126 of them. In Holland, a country the same size as the Czech Republic, it took them quarter of a century. The Czechs started shopping in these hypermarkets more than people in the other post-socialist countries, and the new edition of the Czech dictionary of neologisms features words like *hypermarketománie*—a pathological addiction to shopping in hypermarkets, the worship of hypermarkets. We were mesmerised by Petr's happening, because it didn't strive to comprehend the problem intellectually but rather poetically. We resolved to undertake a subversive penetration into a world that an ordinary person usually doesn't have a chance to enter, the playground of the CEOs of international corporations, marketing consultants, creative consultants, but also politicians—i.e. a group of people that has a serious impact on the environment we live in. We wanted the viewer to take a look backstage, where all those advertising images and these slogans full of freshness, joy and happiness are produced. We commissioned a campaign to promote nothing, for something nonexistent in reality, if you like, and we were curious to see what the advertising business was going to make of that challenge. Similarly as with judo, we used the strength of advertising so that it's weight was used against its bearer.

How were you able to fund and finance such a huge undertaking as this? Did the project meet with much skepticism?

From the beginning we knew that such a big project could be realized only on the basis of the so-called advertisement principle, which essentially means: you hang our city lights all over town and we put your logo in the credits. Most of the project costs (up to ¾) were covered in this way. If you look at the end credits, all these logos roll for over two minutes, it makes your eyes swim. And in fact the controversial nature of the whole thing excited the managers we approached - they explained that the bigger the scandal, the bigger the advertising effect. The rest of the funding came from the Fund for the Support and Development of Czech Cinematography and from the co-producers, among whom are also Czech Television and FAMU. We really respect them for it—although these are public institutions, they had the courage to participate in our project.

How did you manage to keep the whole event a secret?

The film had several *nommes de guerre* - such as "Hypermarket with a Human Face" - so that some were not even aware of the fact that they were working on the sinister *CZECH DREAM*. The advertising campaign was built on the principle of the so-called teaser—in other words, suspense and mystery. Our adverts said, *Don't Go There; Don't Spend Your Money; Don't Stand in Line—Opening May 31st at 10 am!—Where, you'll find out soon!* We released the address of the site only a few days before the opening. We had to work with a renowned PR agency, which developed a "defensive strategy" in case all hell broke out. At the time when two Czech dailies wrote that *CZECH DREAM* was a fraud, that it was owned by Czech Television and that the ad campaign cost hundreds of thousands of crowns, our PR agency issued a

statement and forced the media to publish it. We claimed, for instance, that the campaign did not cost hundreds of thousands but millions, or that we were not owned by Czech TV. We learned by first hand experience that the “defensive strategy” works.

Was there not a danger that things could "get ugly" once the crowd who turned up for the opening of the hypermarket realised that it was a hoax?

Yes, the danger was there, and in fact a few days before the opening of our hypermarket, army experts on crowd behaviour had been warning us. They estimated that the crowd was going to burn the set, that they would dismantle the scaffold, that they would throw stones, and it was explained that in every crowd of a thousand people there are three hyperactive individuals, and each one of them immediately attracts ten other latent aggressors. The security managers we hired kept warning us an hour before cutting the ribbon that when the first stone came flying, then fifty men would start running. They said that there was no defence from a hailstorm of rocks. As it turned out, nothing happened. Not even a single blow. There were even people who came to thank us, saying that for the first time in a long while they spent their Saturday in a field instead of among supermarket shelves...

Does the film say something about post-Communist Czech society, or is it more universal than that?

We were born in an advertisement free country, with Communist propaganda all over the place. And then it turned the other way around. Perhaps the author of the red slogan of the 1980's, “Sovětský svaz, mírová hráz (Soviet Union, Dam of Peace)” creates slogans for sanitary towels and detergent today. Our film does not present a simple thesis about the power of advertising, but tells a story about the people who collaborate with the advertising Moloch, who are paid for manipulating public opinion, our opinion, who look inside our heads in order to make their slogans penetrate even deeper. The attitudes of the “manipulators“ are confronted in the film with the opinions of the “manipulated“. Both camps are exposed through a seemingly absurd situation, and they are forced to define their attitude towards something that in reality doesn't even exist.

Did you discover anything unexpected while making the film?

The eye-tracking camera. A remarkable device that tracks the exact trajectory of your gaze—this device knows where you are looking. It was originally developed for opticians, but has been most recently used in marketing, and so we had the design of our advertising leaflet “measured“. Several respondents had this kind of star-trek helmet fixed on their head, and were incidentally exposed to several hypermarket mailings, including ours. Then you can see on the monitor that ladies were drawn by the meat, that their eyes flit between the price tag and the photograph of a flank of bacon, that men were attracted to electronics rather than food... All this data was processed and evaluated in detail. Fascinating spying, in the service of business. The experts handling the device tried to console us: “... but so far we have no way of knowing which of the things they have seen people actually remember...” and they recommended that we enlarge the slogan, “A surprise for everyone on the first day!”

What has the response to the film been like, both at home and abroad?

The film generated a lot of feedback right after we launched our hypermarket. Within the next month, there were something like 200 articles about it in Czech Republic, and most of them didn't go into what we were trying to say, but how much it all cost, who paid for it, and who approved it. But soon the news spread worldwide, and we found ourselves going to big festivals and galleries with a film that wasn't even finished yet. In New York the MoMa Gallery helped us with a presentation, putting us in touch with a Brooklyn art community, where we screened parts of the film and then had a three hour long discussion with artists from all around the world—

Japan, Iran, Palestine, Cuba, Columbia, Argentina. We spoke about life in socialist Czechoslovakia, the advent of hypermarkets, the return to Marx. In the Czech Republic we promoted the film into standard distribution in cinemas, and so far we have managed to overcome the Czech viewers' prejudice against the genre of documentary cinema. Some critics have said that we were the most original Czech film of the last thirty years, the funniest Czech documentary, or a film which depicts the absurdity of our time by its very existence. During the first month, over ten thousand viewers saw *CZECH DREAM*. We would be happy if our film helped open the way for other documentary films to enter the cinemas. The international premiere will take place during the official program of the upcoming Locarno Film Festival. The film is already scheduled to be shown in the London Film Festival, as well as other important international festivals. In Europe and the US, we are negotiating with several cinematic distributors and television channels.

Is the cinema an ideal setting for this type of film? Would it perhaps work better as a TV documentary?

We have already taken part in numerous discussions after screenings, and rarely were they shorter than an hour. Usually the debates are quite lively, and the viewers argued among themselves a few times! It is the cinema that makes this direct interaction possible, the filmic space for an encounter. It is interesting that it is far more difficult to organize debates in multiplex cinemas, because the next film begins right away and you have to get out of the room, and outside there is no common space, just the popcorn stand. One hears that the furniture designers for McDonalds have a clear task: that the chairs must be inconvenient! Eat your meal and get out of here. The conveyor belt must not get stuck. And what else is a TV program but a conveyor belt of images and sounds? We wanted to step out of this stream of media, to invite people to the cinema to see a nonfictional story, and now we learn during these electrifying debates all the things that our film is about.

Translated by Barbora Štefanová and Keith Jones

Do believe the hype—and ask more! For instance:

On the promotional materials Remunda and Klusák had bloodied faces—what happened? Why is this scene not in the film?

Why was *Czech Dream* a topic for discussion in national parliament?

Did the public television station Czech TV, one of the co-producers of the film, encounter a bad response from the public, and were there legal proceedings?

PRODUCTION AND FUNDING

The budget for making the Czech and international feature version (35 mm, 87 minutes) and the Czech and international television version (DIGIBETACAM, 57 minutes) was almost 19 million CZK (approx. 585,000 Euros): this amounts to the average cost of making a regular Czech feature film. Obviously the cost was so high for a documentary because so much was staged for the film's central 'fiction.'

CZECH DREAM was financed by HYPERMARKET FILM s.r.o., (founded by Vít Klusák and Filip Remunda exclusively for the purpose of making CZECH DREAM), by CZECH TELEVISION, STUDIO MIRAGE, FAMU, two loans from the *State Fund of the Czech Republic for the Support and Development of Czech Cinematography* (1 million CZK for making the film and 500,000 CZK for distribution) by the distributor, SPI INTERNATIONAL, and TASKOVSKI FILMS Ltd.

INTERNATIONAL REACTIONS

The CZECH DREAM project drew considerable attention abroad. Prominent world dailies and film magazines, including *Screen International* and *Variety*, reported on the opening of the fictitious Czech hypermarket, as did several radio stations, including the BBC, and numerous internet sites.

Its creators were invited at that mid-production stage to several international film festivals and screenings abroad.

CZECH DREAM is now acknowledged as the most successful Eastern European documentary ever produced and is set to be released in cinemas across Europe. In particular, distribution deals have been secured with **Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, Czech Republic (SPI Int.), and are imminent with Germany (Real Fiction), Portugal (Atlanta Films), as well as the UK with Soda Pictures.**

TASKOVSKI FILMS are also negotiating the broadcast of CZECH DREAM with the German-French ZDF/ARTE channel, Austria's ORF, Belgium's VRT and Finland's YLE.

INTERESTING FACTS

- In 1995 the first western-style supermarket opened in Prague. Consumer development continues at an accelerated rate. Some 125 hypermarkets have been built in the Czech Republic in the past five years; it took 20 years to build the same number in the Netherlands.
- The most famous photographer in Czech Republic canceled his appointment with Russian Prime Minister, Vladimir Putin, to stay in Prague during the shooting of *Czech Dream*.
- There were 195 articles published about the project from 23 May to 18 September 2003
- The filmmakers wanted to create more than just a jingle for CZECH DREAM, they created a whole pop song, with ironic lyrics written by a famous Czech composer that contained a clue to the nature of the CZECH DREAM ruse, sung by a choir of 50 children. Nobody got the joke. Available for download at: <http://hypermarket.ceskysen.cz/index2.php?clanek=15>
- A large, 8m x 100m hypermarket set piece was put up for the purposes of shooting. The canvas representing the hypermarket's façade was hung by 24 mountaineers.
- On opening day (31 May 2003) the CZECH DREAM staff counted about 4,280 'customers.' Around 8pm on the same day, roughly six cars per minute were still arriving and turning back at the hypermarket's parking lot.
- Customers who set out for Letňany on 31 May 2003 to search for the CZECH DREAM hypermarket were filmed by 11 film crews.
- The TNS FACTUM agency carried out a public opinion poll showing that, out of a thousand respondents, 18% still believed that CZECH DREAM was an actual hypermarket.
- The Council for Advertising assessed the ethical aspects of the CZECH DREAM campaign, ruling that CZECH DREAM was not false advertising because it did not sell anything.
- Czech Television, a public corporation, were co-producers of CZECH DREAM. Members of the public and politicians complained to the Council for Radio and Television Broadcasting about Czech Television's participation in the project.
- The filmmakers and the distributor, SPI INTERNATIONAL, invited the people who attended the hypermarket opening on 31 May 2003 to attend the screening for free. The filmmakers view this gesture as the first step towards reconciliation. The ceremonial pre-premiere took place on 30 May 2004.
- The Civic Democratic Party and the Julius Meinl supermarket chain misused the flyer and logo of CZECH DREAM for the purpose of their own promotion. CZECH DREAM managers are considering filing a suit against both. *Available for download at:* http://www.ods.cz/docs/listy/listy_04-2003.pdf
- On the 1st of May, 2004, the Czech Republic along with 9 other countries joined the EU. In May 2003, in the lead up to a public vote on joining the EU and parallel to the CZECH DREAM campaign, there was an intensive ad campaign run by the government to win public opinion for joining.

DIRECTORS' BIOGRAPHIES

Vít Klusák (born 1980)

Vít Klusák is a director, cinematographer and producer. With a background in photography; in 1997-98 he was the core photographer of *Taneční sezóna* magazine. Currently he is in his 5th year of documentary film studies at FAMU.

In 2001 he made the film **Ocet** (Jazz War With Absent Father) about his father—musician Emil Viklický, with whom he had only communicated through signatures on child-support cheques—without his subject's participation. When the son proposed to the father that they get to know each other through a film project about him, Viklický refused. So Klusák put an ad in a magazine with his father's photograph, looking for a double for the film.

Jan Gogola, screenwriter for Czech Television, wrote about the film: "The bold dimension of the film resonates in the shot where Klusák ascends to the father-double's window on a cherry picker lift so as to have a regular family chat with him. The intimate starting point of the film gradually develops into a reflection on personal and public human identity." (Právo, 4/12/2001)

Filmography:

Začátek světa (The Beginning of the World, 1999) 35mm, 15min, FAMU

Mráz po zádech (Heebie-jeebies, 1999) Betacam, 20min, FAMU

Digestive (1999) 35mm, 20min, FAMU

Ocet (Jazz War With Absent Father, 2001) 35mm, 25min, FAMU

(FAMU Fest Award, Best Documentary 2001)

Vlast a Burian (Authority and Burian, 2003) 35mm, 60min, FAMU

(FAMU Fest Award, Best Production 2003)

CZECH DREAM (2004) 35mm, 93', Hypermarket Film, Czech Television, Studio Mirage, FAMU

Klusák frequently collaborates as cinematographer with prominent film directors such as:

Vít Janeček: *Máme NATO?* (We Have Nato?)

Martin Mareček: *Domov můj...*, *AUTO-MAT* (My Homeland..., AUTO-MAT)

Filip Remunda: *A.B.C.D.T.O.P.O.L.*

Filip Remunda (born 1973)

Filip Remunda is a director, cinematographer and producer. In 1990 he graduated from secondary technical school, where he studied telecommunications. He shot his first films on 8mm film on his trips to India and Iran.

His fascination with flickering images brought him to the department of documentary film at FAMU in 1997. During his studies he shot several films on such diverse topics as organised holidays to forgotten Czech villages in the mountains of Romania; a portrait of two California musicians— anarchist Hilary and Marxist Chris—who escaped from America to the small South-Bohemian town of Tábor; and a film told by amateur filmmaker Jaroslav Tříska from Blšany, who decided to make a film “about the smallest village in the world to be home to premier league football...”

His film, *Village B.*, was named best documentary film at the 2002 Karlovy Vary International Film Festival and at the 2003 FAMU Festival, and it received the Don Quixote Award at the 2003 Art Film Trenčianské Teplice festival, as well as several other prizes at festivals in Europe and the United States. Petr Kubica, programme director of the Jihlava documentary film festival wrote about *Village B.*: “...the legacy of the Czech New Wave, primarily its serious lightness and awakening of the importance of the mundane, resonates throughout the film.”

During his studies, Filip Remunda also attended the Sam Spiegel Film and Television School in Jerusalem and the Zellig Film School in Bolzano. He is the co-founder of the Institute for Documentary Film, which supports the promotion of Czech film abroad.

Filmography

Z Čech do Svaté Heleny, (From Czech Lands to Santa Helena, 1999) 16mm, 15', FAMU
Nová jména pro staré kamarády, (New Names For Old Friends, 1999) Betacam, 40', What Ever!

Hilary a Chris na Cestě, (Hillary and Chris On The Road, 1999) 16mm, 16', FAMU, Czech Television

Městečko Andělů, (City of Angels, 2000) Betacam, 25', FAMU, Sam Spiegel Film and TV School Jerusalem

Sběratelé obrazů našeho světa, (Collectors of Pictures of Our World 2001) Betacam, (2001) 28', Czech Television

Obec B, (*Village B.*, 2002) 35mm, 30', FAMU, Czech Television, YLE, ARTE

A.B.C.D.T.O.P.O.L., (2003) Betacam, 73', Simply Cinema, CT

CZECH DREAM, (2004) 35mm, 93', Hypermarket Film, Czech Television, Studio Mirage, FAMU

Village B, Awards:

International Film Festival Karlovy Vary 2002—**Best Documentary under 30 min.**

TSTT CZ , 2002—**Best Documentary**

FAMU Fest 2002—**Best Documentary Director and Best Documentary Editing**

Chicago International Film Festival—**Silver Plaque for short documentary**

IFF Ústí nad Orlicí (CZ)—**2nd Price For Best Film**

Art Film Festival Slovakia, F.I.C.C. **JURY—Don Quijote Award**

Art Film Festival Slovakia, **The Slovenska Sportelna Award**

Terezin Fort Film Festival 2003—**Best Documentary, Audience Award**

***“An original, cheeky treatise on capitalism, with more than a whiff of exploitation.....”
Eddie Cockrell, Variety 12th July ‘04***

***“It may well be the funniest European film of the year”
Economist, 7th August ‘04***

***“this year’s Karlovy Vary offered solid fare with few revelations, perhaps closest was Czech Dream...”
Dan Fainaru, Screen International, 16th July ‘04***

***“This year ‘s best Czech film was the unclassifiable documentary Czech Dream”
Peter Hames, Sight & Sound, September ‘04***

***“The best doc - Czech Dream, a stunt film that would make Michael Moore and Morgan Spurlock proud.”
Wendy Mitchell/indieWIRE.***

***“Czech Dream (the film and the concept) is an ingenious affair”
Guardian, 2nd November ‘04***

Posted: Mon., Jul. 12, 2004, 4:54am PT

Czech Dream

Cesky sen

(Docu -- Czech Republic)

An SPI Intl. release of a Hypermarket Film, Czech TV, Studio Mirage, FAMU production, in association with SPI Intl., Taskovski Films. (International sales: Taskovski Films, London.) Produced by Vit Klusak, Filip Remunda, Filip Cermak. Directed, written by Vit Klusak, Filip Remunda.

By [EDDIE COCKRELL](#)

An original, cheeky treatise on capitalism, with more than a whiff of exploitation, "Czech Dream" follows two film students who used a state grant to promote the opening of an entirely fictitious big-box mega-market in a Prague field. The resulting scandal, alternately hilarious and discomfiting, illuminates the waking nightmare of consumerism in a country still adjusting to the strengths and pitfalls of the concept. A strong item for fests, pic -- dubbed a "provocumentary" by its makers -- could surf the wave of contempo non-fiction films to some theatrical bookings.

Known as "hypermarkets" in the Czech Republic, these mammoth stores have become as ubiquitous in Central Europe as anywhere in the world since the first were built in 1995. The phenomenon has also sparked the same debates over the globalization of goods and the loss of cultural identity, particularly in a country where most everyone still remembers standing in lines for items taken for granted elsewhere.

Enter students Vit Klusak and Filip Remunda, who conceived of a "film reality show" involving a fortnight of intense media promotion, followed by a public ribbon-cutting ceremony for a store, the Czech Dream, that doesn't exist. (They do, however, erect a huge facade some distance from the parking lot.) Taking full responsibility for the hoax from the beginning, they seem more interested in watching what grows in their social Petrie dish than actually scamming anybody.

After some grooming, filmmakers look precisely like the stone-faced, dead-eyed managers they pretend to be. Recruiting both a high-end men's clothing chain and a cutting-edge ad agency to dress them and the idea in the trappings of mass media, they set about building the fantasy. A gaudy flier offers absurdly low prices on everything from TV sets to obviously blotchy bananas, while billboards urge consumers "Don't go there," "Don't spend," and, of course, "Don't push."

Sure enough, this reverse psychology works - to a certain extent. The opening-day crowd, estimated by filmmakers as close to 5,000 but by a local paper as one fifth of that, looks thin in light of pic's build-up. But it's here the film turns creepy, as the older victims struggle to cross the field and rail against the hoax.

One of the prank's best wheezes is its inspirational theme song. Transparently absurd and thus completely believable, the sappy power ballad from composer Hynek Schneider lays it on thick with a breathy female singer and a soothing children's choir. Lyrics by popular actor and personality Tomas Hanak rival anything penned by Christopher Guest, with priceless couplets such as "It will be a nice big bash/And if you got no cash/Get a loan and scream/"I want to fulfill my dream."

Tech credits are smooth. Per filmmakers, 11 separate crews were used to cover the opening ceremony.

Camera (color), Klusak; editor, Zdenek Marek; music, Hynek Schneider; sound, David Hysek. Reviewed at Karlovy Vary Film Festival (Czech Films 2003-2004), July 6, 2004. (Also in Locarno Film Festival, Filmmakers of the Present.) Running time: 87 MIN.