

New Czech documentary film The Eye Over Prague



Eye over Prague

The tragic story of one man, one building and one love

„A thing like that happens once in a lifetime. This is the first Czech international competition and the first competition in a free country. The man who left a long time ago is now slowly coming back, the circle is closed.”

Jan Kaplický, March 2007

DIRECTED AND WRITTEN BY

Olga Špátová

Release date: 15. 4. 2010

78 min | 35 mm | Dolby Digital | 1,85:1

PRODUCER

Eliška Kaplický Fuchsová

SIMPLY CINEMA

CO-PRODUCER

ČESKÁ TELEVIZE

LAFARGE CEMENT

STARRING

Jan Kaplický, Václav Havel, Eva Jiřičná, Vlastimil Ježek, Pavel Bém, Pavel Bobek, Milan Knížák, Eliška Kaplický Fuchsová, Zdeněk Lukeš, Norman Foster a další

www.okonadprahou.cz

Synopsis

An extraordinary tale about strongly passionate and elegant architect Jan Kaplický with a clear vision of the future who has the biggest fight on his hands in Prague again. Shot over three years in the UK, Czech and Italy tells the powerful story of Jan Kaplický, one of the most emotional figures in the world of architecture. His greatest unrealized architectural achievement, the new National library in Prague means the world to him.

The project called the Eye over Prague is radical, exciting and far enough ahead of its time to provoke a fair degree of controversy. It represents a triumphant return to his homeland for the Czech-born émigré, a vindication of his uncompromisingly forward-looking philosophy and a tragically poetic ending to his remarkable career.

Credits

SCRIPTWRITER

Olga Špátová, Eliška Kaplický Fuchsová

BASED AND ORIGINAL IDEA BY

Eliška Kaplický Fuchsová

EDITING

Jakub Voves

SOUND

Tomáš Kubec

DOLBY MIX

Štěpán Mamula

MICROPHONISTS

Richard Müller

Michal Gábor

Petr Provazník

Jaroslav Jehlička

HEAD OF SCRIPT EDITING ČR

Darja Macáková

SCRIPT EDITOR ČR

Hana Stibralová

SCRIPT CONSULTANT

Jan Gogola ml.

HEAD OF PRODUCTION ČT
Petr Morávek

EXECUTIVE PRODUCTION ČT
Roman Blaas
Lucie Zvěřinová

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER
Zuzana Bieliková

POST-PRODUCTION SUPERVISOR
Kryštof Šafer

SPECIAL EFFECTS – GRAPHIC ART DEPARTMENT ČT
Zbyněk Louda
Dagmar Šperlová
Břetislav Kašpar
Petr Mikeš
Tomáš Musílek
Ondřej Ševčík

COLOUR CORRECTION
Daniel Tučka

GRAPHIC DESIGNER
Alan Záruba

Director's note

The story of the film begins on March 2nd, 2007, the day of publication of the results of the international competition for the new National Library in Prague, when Jan Kaplicky and his studio Future Systems won out.

Since that moment we filmed over the course of two years. The main character of the film is the National Library. Its author called it The Eye above Prague and our film is called the same.

The publication of the winner of the first international architecture competition raised an extraordinary interest of the public and a great media discussion among the experts, architects, urban designers and laymen. Jan Kaplicky's dream came true; he got an opportunity to carry out his building project in his hometown Prague.

I grew up on Letna, the location chosen by the municipality as the place for the new National Library. I was looking forward to see the origination of the new building right in front of my eyes and the possibility to watch it's growth with through my camera.

Two months after the deliberations of the international jury, the president of the Czech Republic Vaclav Klaus started to publicly criticize the design of the new library. The enthusiasm about Jan Kaplicky's project turned shortly to an exhausting fight for its realization. The most clear-cut character of this drama is the mayor of Prague, Pavel Bem; his enthusiastic praise of the library turned all of a sudden to it's refusal. The municipality clerks decided that the library will not be built on Letna.

The original screenplay of the film changed to a dramatic public discussion among citizens, experts and politicians. Within a few months I watched Kaplicky's happiness switch to a bitter disappointment and astonishment about lies and the dirty games of manipulated clerks together with the objectors of the library.

Jan Kaplicky faced the attacks and impugns of the building from the highest political positions.

At the same time he was supported by his defenders, who stood up for the protection of the author and his project; and fought against manipulation of power. This absurd plot was happening in Prague, Kaplicky's hometown, which he wanted to enrich by his art. Through my camera I watched how his dignified personality runs in a tourbillion of a hassle that he didn't experience so far. His courage to answer his indecent critics at loud moved me. At the same time I saw his strength running down.

But Kaplicky used to say that he is living the time of his life. While working with the crew I could often see him in his privacy. He was a different man; not the sturdy polemist from the Czech public and political scene. He spoke of his childhood, talked about his parents and his 13 year old son Josef from his first marriage with great love.

In Future Systems, the London studio, I questioned all the young colleagues of different nationalities who admired his works. In the meantime he got married with a film producer Eliska Fuchsova, who supported him greatly at that time.

Nearly two years after the publication of the results the then minister of culture, Vaclav Jehlicka, cancelled the project, because supposedly, there was not enough money.

Jan Kaplicky and his wife kept struggling for a fair result of a verdict of the international jury for the most modern library in Europe.

After nearly two years of fighting, on January 14th, 2009, Jan Kaplicky dies suddenly of cardiac failure in Prague. This happened on the very day of the birth of his daughter Johanka. The students organized a manifestation in favour of the National Library, the supporters filled up the whole Staromestske namesti.

Jan Kaplicky's death emphasized the need of a human being to promote spiritual values in spite of disfavour of the deluded masters.

Jan Kaplicky's fate is a warning and an urge to fight lies and injustice. His example shows us the courage to follow one's dream and truth by every means.

Our film is a picture of an incongruous state of a present Czech society. In the meantime it's a homage to the courage and work of a brave man Jan Kaplicky.

Olga Spatova, February 2010

Characters

Jan Kaplicky, world-renowned architect of Czech origins who lived in London. Winner of the competition to design the new building of the National Library in Prague.

Eliska Kaplicky Fuchsova, film producer. She married Jan Kaplicky in 2007 and supported him most fully.

Josef Kaplicky, son of Jan Kaplicky, born in 1995. He lives in London with his mother, architect Amanda Leveté. An exhibition *Josef a Josef*, homage to the work of Jan Kaplicky and a presentation of youthful art works of his son was held in the Zdenek Sklenar gallery.

Kaplicky's team Future Systems, young people of different nationalities working in the studio in London, e.g.: architect Georg Roetzel, Jan Kaplicky's personal assistant Michaela Gabriel and Filippo Previtali author of 3D visualisations.

Eva Jiricna, architect, chairwoman of the jury in the competition for the project of the National Library in Prague.

Zaha Hadid, architect, member of the jury. In 2004 she was awarded the Pritzker prize, as the only woman in history.

Vlastimil Jezek, director of the National Library, member of the jury in the competition for the project of the National Library in Prague.

Initiator of the idea of the first International architecture competition in Czech Republic.

18 months after the publication of the results he was dismissed from the office by the minister of culture.

Bohdana Stoklasova, head of the funds of the National Library, supporter of the building. She declares that the National Library necessitates more room, or it will collapse.

Vaclav Havel, dramatist and former president of the Czech Republic, supporter of the building. He visited Kaplicky and his atelier Future Systems in London.

Vaclav Klaus, current president of the Czech Republic, objector of the building. He doesn't know Jan Kaplicky and he says, that his architectural works aren't known in the world and that he didn't build that much so far. He declared that in case of the realisation of the building, he is going to chain himself at the construction site, as the eco-activists do.

Pavel Bem, mayor of Prague, objector of the localization of the building at Letna. In the beginning he affirmed, that the National Library will be the next admired jewel of Prague's architecture and will complete its mosaic of architectural styles. Two months later he declares, that the plan is in arrogant disharmony with near and distant surroundings of the considered building. Supposedly, from the urbanism point of view, the Library is not to be compared with the Dancing house. He said that the building can be anywhere but on Letna.

Milan Knizak, director of the National Gallery. He likes Jan Kaplicky's project, but he objects on the placement of the building at Letna. At the demonstration in front of the Municipality he held a banner that said that the competition for the library was not regular and

the whole cause was politicised by the author of the project Jan Kaplicky and the director of the National library Vlastimil Jezek.

Zdenek Lukes, historian of architecture, supporter of the building. He will comment on a historical-architectural presentation about Letna, where he lives himself.

Lord Norman Foster, British architect who worked with Jan Kaplicky in London in the 70's.

Pavel Bobek, singer, Kaplicky's lifetime friend, supporter of the building. He supports Kaplicky's project publicly.

Brian Clarke, British artist. He declares Jan Kaplicky to be one of the key people of British architecture.

Petra Sedlackova and Gabriela Galova, high school students in Uherske Hradiste.

Together with their classmates they wrote a letter to Jan Kaplicky, where they support his project and object the rejection of certain politicians.

Profiles of the main protagonist and the author

JAN KAPLICKY

Jan Kaplicky, the innovative Czech architect, has died 71. His career began with flight from Czechoslovakia to London and peaked with award-winning designs for Selfridges in Birmingham and the Lord's cricket ground media centre

18 April, 1937: Born in Prague, Czechoslovakia

1962: Graduates with a Diploma in Architecture from the College of Applied Arts and Architecture, Prague

1964-1968: Works in private practice, Prague

1968: In the wake of the Prague Spring, leaves for London with only \$100 in his pocket

1969-1971: Works for Denys Lasdun and Partners, London

1971-1977: Works for Renzo Piano and Richard Rogers in London, where he helps develop the competition winning design for the Centre Georges Pompidou

1974-1975: Works at Spencer and Webster Associates, London

1979-1983: Joins Foster Associates (now Foster and Partners), London

1979: Sets up Future Systems with David Nixon while working at Fosters

1982-1988: Teaches at the Architectural Association

1989: Amanda Leveté joins Future Systems as partner in 1989

1992: Teaches at the School of Architecture in Bordeaux and the Design Workshop of the Technische Universität Berlin

1994: Future Systems commissioned to design the new media centre at the Lord's Cricket Ground

1994: Hauer-King House, Islington by Future Systems is completed

1995-1998: Works as an external examiner for the Architectural Association

1996: West India Quay Bridge, Docklands by Future Systems is completed

1999: Lord's Cricket Ground media centre wins RIBA Stirling Prize

2000: Named Honourable Fellow of the RIBA

2001: Lord's Cricket Ground media centre wins World Architecture Award

2003: Selfridges Building in Birmingham completed

2003: Commissioned to design Naples Subway Station

2004: Commissioned to design Maserati Museum, Modena

2007: Future Systems wins competition for Czech National Library

2008: Future Systems announces it will separate into two practices, one headed by Amanda Levete, while the other is to retain the name Future Systems under Kaplicky

14 January, 2009: Dies of a heart attack in Prague, aged 71

OLGA SPATOVA

Director and cinematographer

Born on March 6th 1984 in Prague.

Finished studies at the Secondary School of Advertisement in Prague. She started shooting amateur films at the age of 15. She shot 4 short fiction films and she won more than 23 awards on international festivals of professional and amateur film production.

She shot and directed several documentaries for the Czech TV: *Trojhra (Threesome)* (2004) which won two grand prix on national festivals; *(Ne)cenzurované rozhovory (Un-censored dialogues)* (2005) and *Láska včera, dnes a zítra (Love yesterday, today and tomorrow)* (2006). She won an award on Arts & Film festival in Telc for *Terry z Montmartru (Terry from Montmartre)* (2006). She was nominated for the musical award Andel for the concert DVD and a documentary *Pujdu, kam chci (I'll go wherever I want)* (2007) that she shot with the Czech singer Raduza