

Press Release:

Arctic Festival in Iceland on 15-30 September 2022

On 15th-18th September 2022, the Czech University of Life Sciences in Prague (CZU) in cooperation with the Agricultural University of Iceland in Reykjavík (AUI), the Center for International Climate Research in Oslo (CICERO) and The Norden Association in Iceland is organizing the 4th edition of the Arctic Festival, this time in Iceland (Reykjavík and Akureyri). The event is being held with the financial support of the Fund for Bilateral Relations within the EEA and Norway Grants, and sponsor Luděk Volf, who co-financed the first year of the Arctic Festival in 2018 in Svalbard.

The philosophy of the Arctic Festival

The Arctic Festival is a traditional festival of Arctic and Czech culture and science. Its main aim is to deepen the already established contacts between Czech and Arctic artists and scientists and starting cooperation between new partners. Thanks to the Festival, both the professional and non-professional audiences can become familiar with the achievements of Czech and Nordic scientists in Arctic research and learn about joint Czech-Arctic cultural and scientific activities in Czechia and the Arctic. The Czech public can gain awareness of the Arctic nations and enjoy a unique culture from various parts of the far North. On the contrary, the public in the Arctic can get closer to Czech culture. In short, the Festival tries to present how culture can increase media interest in scientific research in the Arctic, how science can be brought closer to a non-professional audience, and how public interest can influence the stakeholders' approach to providing and increasing finances for further scientific research. On the other hand, scientists, with their long presence in the Arctic, their number of personal contacts and prestige, can open the door to music, art and other cultural projects that would not otherwise appear in these places, and even Arctic culture would not be so easily accepted in Czechia. It is therefore a mutually beneficial symbiosis.

History of the Arctic Festival

At Home in Svalbard 2018

The cultural and scientific festival AT HOME IN SVALBARD 2018 took place from 21 August to 13 September 2018 in Longyearbyen, the Svalbard administrative centre, and in the abandoned mining ghost-town of Pyramiden, previously run by the Russian trust Arktikugol. The Festival was held in honour of the 100th anniversary of Czechoslovakia, the 25th anniversary of the Czech Republic's establishment and the 10th anniversary of regular research stays of Czech scientists on the Norwegian archipelago of Svalbard. The Festival was named after the focal point of the whole event – a concert by the avant-garde punk-rock band Už jsme doma (UJD) and the release of their new CD. The project, also called the Days of Czech Culture and Science, was held thanks to the financial support of the sponsor Luděk Volf and the cooperation of the organizers Zdeněk Lyčka and Miroslav Wanek with the Czech Arctic “Josef Svoboda Station“ in Svalbard, and Svalbard partners.

Arctic Festival 2019

From November 2019 to January 2020, a reciprocal continuation of the cultural-scientific project At Home in Svalbard 2018 took place in Czechia (Prague, České Budějovice, Teplice

and Pilsen) under the title of ARCTIC FESTIVAL 2019 / Days of Arctic and Czech Culture and Science. The main aim of the Festival was to make a follow-up to the 2018 event in Svalbard, deepen the acquired contacts and start cooperation between new partners. The Czech public became familiar with the achievements of Nordic and Czech scientists in Arctic research, with the culture and history of the Arctic nations, and with joint Czech-Arctic cultural and scientific activities in Czechia and the Arctic. In addition to being introduced to the core points of the At Home in Svalbard 2018 project, the Czech professional audience, the public and all interested people in Czechia had the possibility to enjoy the Arctic culture from Svalbard, Lapland, Greenland, Norway and Denmark. The ARCTIC FESTIVAL 2019 was organized by the Centre for Polar Ecology at the University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice (CPE) in cooperation with the University Centre in Svalbard (UNIS) and with the financial support of the Fund for Bilateral Relations within the EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021. Other international cooperating partners were the Embassies of Norway, Canada, Denmark and Finland in Prague, the Norwegian Polar Institute and the Fridtjof Nansen Institute.

Arctic Festival 2020–21

The ARCTIC FESTIVAL 2020–21 took place in six Czech cities and towns (Ústí nad Labem, Teplice, Prague, České Budějovice, Hradec Králové and Dačice) and online from 6 December 2020 to 31 December 2021. Its extremely long duration was caused by the Coronavirus pandemic. The Festival was the result of cooperation between Jan Evangelista Purkyně University in Ústí nad Labem and the Norwegian Polar Institute in Tromsø with financial support from the Fund for Bilateral Relations within the EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021. The following institutions participated in the Festival: The Julius von Payer Institute in Ústí nad Labem, the band Už jsme doma, the Museum of the City of Ústí nad Labem, the Regional Museum in Teplice, the Municipal Museum and Gallery in Dačice, the Akropolis Palace in Prague, the Institute of Geophysics of the Czech Academy of Sciences, the Jaroslav Fragner Gallery, Charles University in Prague, the University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice, Masaryk University in Brno, the University of Ostrava, the Scandinavian House, Evald Cinema, the Hraničář Public Hall in Ústí nad Labem, Dauphin and Portal publishing houses, magazines A2, Plav and Geografické rozhledy, the sauna and refreshment room NUUK in Hradec Králové, the Embassies of Norway, Canada, Great Britain and Denmark in Prague, the Honorary Consulate of Iceland in Prague, etc.

Programme of the Arctic Festival 2022

The AF 2022 traditionally consists of a Scientific and Cultural Conference, a Film Festival and a Cultural Programme (exhibitions, concerts, performances, etc.). Detailed information is available on the Festival website www.arctickyfestival.cz. The FB page of the Festival has been created for inviting you to all events: <https://www.facebook.com/arctickyfestival>.

The opening part of the *Scientific-Cultural Conference* will take place on Thursday 15 September at the headquarters of the International Arctic Science Committee (IASC) in Akureyri in the north of Iceland, where two speakers will participate – Josef Elster (Centre for Polar Ecology at the University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice) and Zdeněk Lyčka (Ministry of Foreign Affairs). The main part of the conference will take place in the premises of the Agricultural University of Iceland in Reykjavík (AUI) on Friday 16 September, with the participation of 11 speakers – Ragnheiður I. Þórarinsdóttir (AUI), Pavla Dagsson-

Waldhauserová (AUI/CZU), Harald Ólafsson (University of Iceland and Icelandic Meteorological Office, Reykjavík), Maria Sand (CICERO, Oslo), Ásdís Eva Hannesdóttir (The Norden Association in Iceland, Reykjavík), Michael Komárek and Vladislav Chrastný (CZU), Josef Elster (CPE), Gerlis Fugmann (IASC, Akureyri), Radim Procházka (FAMU, Prague) and Zdeněk Lyčka (MFA).

The *Arctic Film Festival* will take place in Reykjavík's Bíó Paradís from Friday 16 September to Sunday 18 September. It will be opened by the Icelandic photographer and director Ragnar Axelsson (RAX) with his film "The Last Days of the Arctic" (DE/IS 2011, 90 min.), which was awarded, among other prizes, the Icelandic film and television awards for "Best Documentary" and "Best Original Score". The Saturday morning block will feature the films "Bear Islands" (CZ 2010, 62 min.) directed by Martin Ryšavý, and "Czech Scientists in the Melting Arctic" (CZ 2021, 52 min.) directed by Zdeněk Zvonek. The Sunday block will show the films "Mediated Motion in the Lava Field / Artscape Iceland" (CZ 2017, 28 min.) by directors Jiří Straka and Dan Merta, "The Arctic" (NO 2019, 23 min.) by Svalbard director Bjørn Anders Nymoén, film clips by CICERO (the Center for International Climate Research in Oslo) entitled "A little bit of everything we do" (NO 2022, 32 min.) directed by Amund Aasbrenn and a selection of short films by 7 Icelandic FAMU graduates (IS/CZ, 110 min.) – Grímur Hákonarson, Ívar Erik Yeoman, Elísabet Elma Guðrúnardóttir, Haukur Hallsson, Heimir Gestur Valdimarsson, Eydís Eir Brynju-Björnsdóttir and Sigurður Möller Sívertsen. The Arctic Film Festival will end with the film "Amundsen" (NO/SE/CZ 2019, 125 min.) by Norwegian director Espen Sandberg.

The *Cultural Programme* will start at the Gaukurinn Music Club in Reykjavík on Thursday 15 September with a punk-rock concert by Icelandic band Gróa and Czech band Už jsme doma (UJD). On Friday 16 September, the opening of the exhibition "Czechia in the Arctic / The Arctic in Czechia" will take place at AUI. The opening of the exhibition "The Dog with a Bun – Greenlandic Fairy Tales and Legends / Illustrations by Martin Velíšek" will take place at 12 Tónar. Both exhibitions will be on view until 30 September 2022. The Festival's main cultural programme will take place on Saturday 17 September at the Iðnó Theatre in Reykjavík: the morning film screenings for children will be followed by the afternoon opening of the exhibition "North Pole Expedition / Illustrations by Julius Payer" and screening of the film "Sailing Around the Island of Jan Mayen" (CZ 2010, 22 min.) directed by Jiří Zindulka. The afternoon programme block will be filled with a performance by Petr Nikl, a classical music concert by Icelandic mezzo-soprano Arnheiður Eiríksdóttir accompanied by Ahmad Hedar, a performance by Icelandic artist Maria Rún Þrándardóttir, a guitar concert by Icelandic artist Svavar Knútur and a piano concert by Paul Lydon, American artist living in Iceland. The cultural programme at the Iðnó Theatre will culminate in the evening punk-rock concert by Icelandic band Gróa, Norwegian band Skov, and UJD.

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The Arctic Festival is a media partner of the exhibition "nordic arctic / Sustainable architecture beyond the Arctic Circle", organized by the Jaroslav Fragner Gallery from 8 September to 30 October 2022. We cordially invite you to the opening debate with the authors Jiří Havran, Martin Fojtek and Dan Merta at the GJF (Betlémské nám. 5a, Praha 1, www.gjf.cz) on Thursday, 8 September at 6 pm, and the exhibition opening (from 7 pm).

28 August 2022

Zdeněk Lyčka

founder of the Arctic Festival and co-organizer of all its previous editions