

*Chronicle*

## **Insects in Cinematography: The First Ever Bee Film Festival Held in Prague**

### **Šestinožky a kinematografie: Prvy festival pčelarskeho filmu vo Prage**

Eds

For Centuries, human cultures around the globe adorned and feared insects as an ever-present source of food, medicine, as well as carriers of deadly diseases and competitors for food. More subtly, yet importantly, insects also served and continue to serve a role in entertainment<sup>1</sup>. With the emergence of cinematography, insects became a subject of film. The influence of insects on the film industry has faced only little study in the past. Most such studies focused on insects in horror movies. These “big bug” movies first emerged in the 1950s in the Americas and showed insects as a dislikeable and dangerous<sup>2,3</sup>. Meanwhile, in some communistic states of Europe, the Colorado beetle (*Leptinotarsa decemlineata*) was depicted as a deadly agricultural pest by the media, that was supposedly dropped on the territory from American bombers as a means of biological warfare<sup>4,5</sup>. These and other negative portraits of insects in media, including exaggerated accounts on “killer bees”, poisonous arachnids and giant grasshoppers can explain the prevailing negativistic and dominionistic view on insects held by the general public<sup>6,7</sup>.

With the coming of the new millennium, the role of insects as indispensable ecosystem service providers is being increasingly recognised and this has left imprints in cinematography. This positive perspective on insects in cinematography has been best manifested at the First International Bee Film Festival held in Prague, Czech Republic in 2016. The two-day congress lasting from the 24<sup>th</sup> to the 25<sup>th</sup> September was organised by the Czech Beekeeping Development Society Maja. According to the organiser’s information, this was the first ever film festival devoted exclusively to bees and beekeeping. It may well have also been the first ever film festival in the world focusing solely on insects.

A total of 34 films entered the contest, 14 of which were then chosen for the final screening. Entries came from Belgium, Czechia, Norway, Italy, Israel, Slovakia, Slovenia and Turkey. The films competed in two categories and were judged by a board of four experts in cinematography and apiculture. The festival gained wide publicity in the Czech media, as well as apicultural press over the world. The festival was attended by visitors and film producers from 9 different countries.

The winning film in the category Best Film for Children was Little Miss Beekeeper [L’Apiculteuse], produced by the Loupiote Collective, a volunteer organisation aiming at promoting public issues throughout film. Little Nola learns that bees are in danger and so she sets on a journey to the Brussels to fight against pesticide corporations and save pollinators. The film will be screened in classrooms throughout Belgium in 2017 to stimulate discussion on the importance of critical thinking and collective action.

The winning film in the category Best Film for Adults was The Hoe on the Feet [La Zappa sui Piedi], a cooperative effort of the art collective Radici nel Cielo and Bee Generation. The documentary centres around a storyteller and musician that travel Italy to discover the cruel reality of modern agriculture. Currently, Radici nel Cielo is looking for donations for a new movie on organic farming that is currently under preparation.



**Fig. 1:** Participants of the First International Bee Film Festival held in Prague, Czech Republic. [www.majabee.cz](http://www.majabee.cz)

**Obr. 1:** Účesníci Prveho medžnarodneho festivalu pčelarskeho filmu vo Prague vo Čehiji. [www.majabee.cz](http://www.majabee.cz)

The festival showed, that insects in cinematography are important in the education of children and adults alike and demonstrated the diversity of approaches to the topic. Due to the immense success of the event, the Second International Bee Film Festival is scheduled to take place in 2018.

## REFERENCES

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