

Love, tolerance and creative freedom aren't just for fairytales



# THE ART OF DISSENT

Directed by  
**James Dean Le Sueur**

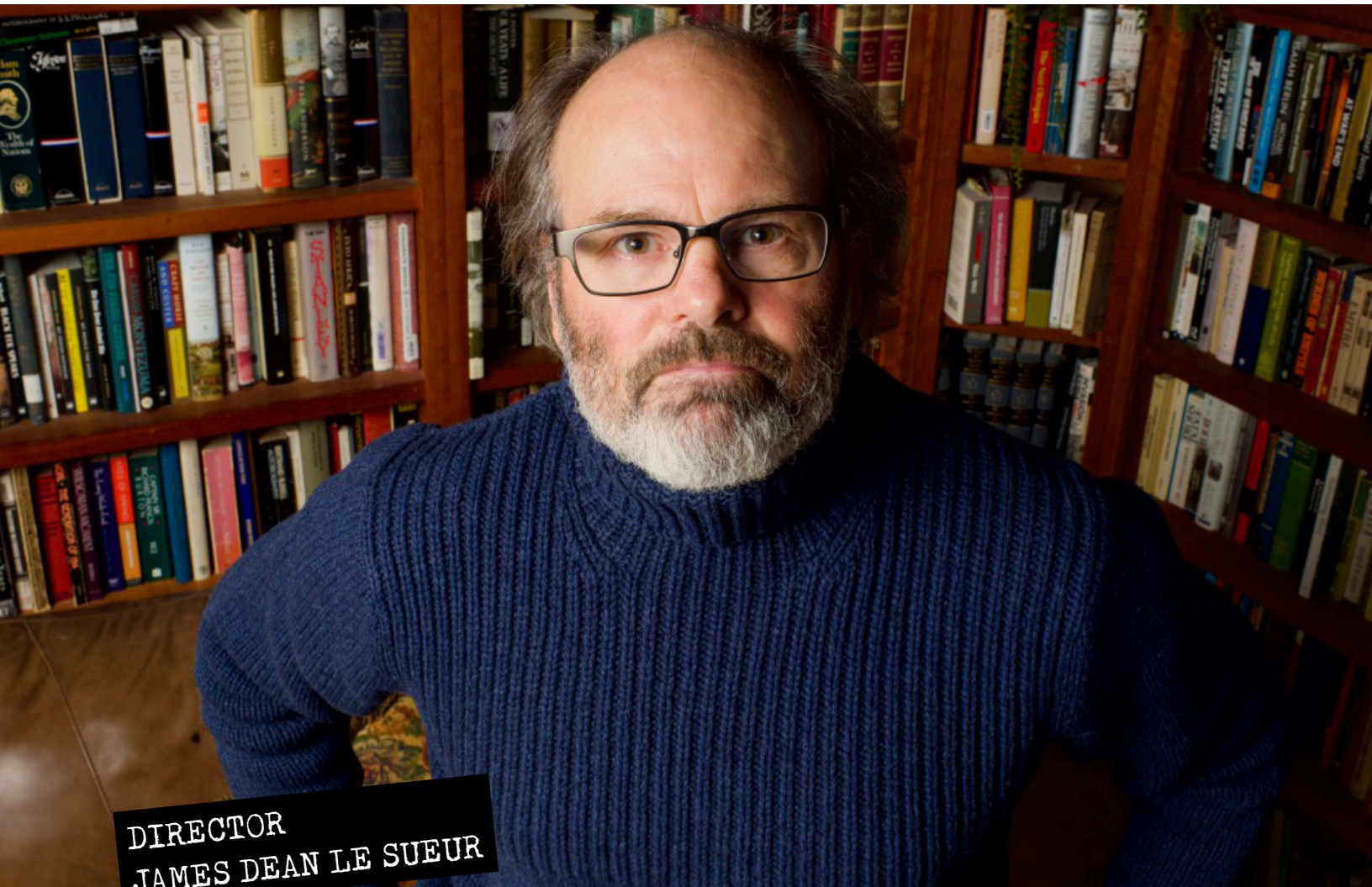
Writing, narration and cinematography by **James D. Le Sueur**, Edited by **Evžen Brabcová & James D. Le Sueur**, Film Archivist: **Martin Bouda**, Music by **Tom Larson**, Sound by **Petr Sýs**, Associate Producer: **Mariana Čapková**, Production Manager: **David Hanzal**, Co-Produced by **NUtech Ventures (USA) & Czech TV (Czech Republic)**, Produced by **FRMOL Productions (Prague)**, US Executive Producers: **NUtech Ventures, Arpi Siyahian & Brad Roth**, Czech Republic Executive Producers: **FRMOL Production, David Hanzal & Vít Bělohorský**, Producer: **James D. Le Sueur**, Czech Television Creative Producer: **Jakub Mahler**



**We wanted to take risks.**

After all, what could be more daring than to make a movie about intellectuals today?

But this came with cinematic challenges. How do you make a movie about intellectuals banned by a regime? Where do you find the footage? And how do you use state-controlled media to flesh the story out? The results are dramatic, surprising and above all, new.



**DIRECTOR  
JAMES DEAN LE SUEUR**

Photo by: Sef Sarroub-Le Sueur

**Love, tolerance and creative freedom aren't just for fairytales.**

*The Art of Dissent* celebrates the power of artistic engagement in Czechoslovakia before and after the 1968 Soviet-led invasion. The documentary's main protagonists – Václav Havel, banned singer Marta Kubišová, and the underground rock group the Plastic People of the Universe – became the most recognizable dissidents during the 1970-80s. Havel fused literary, political, philosophical, and rock 'n' roll worlds into a hybrid network that eventually toppled the totalitarian regime.

A co-production with Czech TV, *The Art of Dissent* combines rare archival footage with interviews filmed over three years in the Czech Republic, England, and the United States. James Dean Le Sueur worked closely with Czech TV archivist Martin Bouda to weave historical footage and contemporary interviews into a unique and compelling interplay. Our film celebrates the power and courage of dissent to build tolerance, truth and civil society.

# A James Dean Le Sueur and Mariana Čapková Production



Mariana and James in London

## Written, directed, narrated and filmed by James Dean Le Sueur

### Cinematic Division of Labor

The *Art of Dissent*'s journey began in 2016, when producer and director James D. Le Sueur and producer Mariana Čapková conceived the idea and planned for the movie. In 2017, they made the pitch to producers at Czech TV in Prague together with Susan Pahlke. Over the next three years, James, Mariana and Susan filmed interviews with 30 people to map out the networks of dissent in Czechoslovakia in the aftermath of the Warsaw Pact invasion in 1968. During this time, as a film co-produced with NUtech Ventures (American Executive Producer) and Czech TV, James began working with Czech TV film archivist Martin Bouda on the archival collections necessary to build the storyline. This core group then formed an international team of researchers, which included translator and advisor, Alena Jirásek, who worked primarily with James and Susan throughout development.

In 2018, as development transitioned to production, James worked with a creative team in Prague, partnering with FRMOL Production to produce the movie. Mariana Čapková assumed responsibility for co-ordinating among NUtech, FRMOL and Czech TV. David Hanzal at FRMOL is the film's producer and executive producer in the Czech Republic. Throughout 2019, James edited with Evženie Brabcová, worked with dramaturge and Czech historian Vít Poláček, and collaborated with Czech TV creative producer Jakub Mahler on the final cut of the

movie. Over the course of the year, the movie transformed from the director's 6-hour long version of edited film to one of 1 hour 45 minutes.

The film is made in English for international cinema and festival presentations. A Czech language version of the movie will be broadcast on Czech TV after our festival screenings, with the well-known Czech actor Martin Pechlát's voiceovers.

As his first feature documentary film, James directed, wrote, filmed, co-edited and narrated the movie. Susan Pahlke conducted research and worked as the principal second camerawoman and filmed with James in the Czech Republic, England and the United States over the course of three years. Alena Jirásek oversaw the translations for both versions of the movie and worked as a consultant on the project for two years.

James was the producer responsible for all financial aspects of development and production. As the movie advanced, he worked closely with Kirk Dombroski and partnered with NUtech Ventures to complete the movie. Executive producer Arpi Siyahian oversaw the production and rights work for the University of Nebraska. Financing came from the team in the United States.



Director and Ivan Havel in Prague

## Development Team



DIRECTOR

**James Dean Le Sueur** is Samuel Clark Waugh Distinguished Professor of International Relations and Chair of the History Department at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln. He completed his PhD in history at the University of Chicago, and was elected Senior Associate Members of St Antony's College, Oxford in 2002. He has written extensively on the history of decolonization, terrorism and intellectuals and has worked with film for 15 years. *The Art of Dissent* is his first feature documentary, and he is currently working on two new films, one on death threats against writers, artists, athletes and activists by authoritarian regimes and religious extremists after 1989, and a second on terrorism in the United States before 9/11. He teaches history and filmmaking. He is a producer, editor, writer and cinematographer and is a professional photographer.



ASSOCIATE PRODUCER

**Mariana Čapková**, Czech citizen and politician, is a member of the Prague City Council, in charge of Education, Schooling and Educational Programmes. She graduated from the University of Economics in Prague, in Diplomacy and European Politics Major and also studied at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln and Universitaet Passau, Germany, as well as in Heidelberg and in Moscow. She worked for the Czech National Security Authority and National Cyber Security Centre. She has overseen several Prague cultural events connected to former Czechoslovak President and dissident Václav Havel and the 30th anniversary of the Velvet Revolution.



Mariana and Alan Pajer during interview in Prague



Mariana, Marta Kubišová and James

## Development Team continued



PRINCIPAL SECOND  
CAMERA & RESEARCH

**Susan Wood Pahlke** is a native of Omaha, Nebraska and received her juris doctor degree from the University of Nebraska College of Law. She specializes in legal research/writing currently at the Pahlke Law firm and also works as a second cameraperson, researcher and advisor in film projects.

## Creative Team



CREATIVE  
PRODUCER

**Jakub Mahler** is a creative producer at Czech TV and oversees production of documentaries and feature films. He often takes part in projects that are created in international co-production, mostly with German ZDF, Austrian ORF or Arte television. He also acts as an independent fiction films producer in the MasterFilm production company he co-founded in 2011.



DRAMATURGE

**Vít Poláček** is a Czech historian, screenwriter and dramaturge. He has worked on many projects, such as the feature fiction film *Chvilky of Beata Parkánová* or *Journey to Rome of Tomasz Mielnik*. When he was 4 years old, Vít wore a badge of the Občanské fórum or Civic Forum and took part in the 1989 demonstrations.



Memorial, Nov. 17, 2018, Prague

## Creative Team continued



TRANSLATOR &  
RESEARCHER

**Alena Jirásek** is a translator and speech pathologist of Czech background based in Australia, currently working on translations of the works of Josef and Karel Čapek. Her direct family experience of exile in 1969, keen interest in Central European history and current affairs and active engagement both with the diaspora and in the democratic transformation following the 1989 Velvet Revolution allows her to offer a unique insight into the chronological and personal warp and weft of that remarkable time.



EDITOR

**Evženie Brabcová** has a bachelor's and master's degree in film editing from Film & TV School of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague (FAMU). During studies she attended an internship at Middlesex University and at the LUX Artists film agency in London. She has worked as a freelance editor for different production houses and TV and edited over 15 feature-length documentary films, such as *Never Been Better* (BiH, CZ), *The Day After a Long Night* (CZ, DE), *Powrót Agnieszki H.* (PL, CZ), *Looking for President* (CZ), *Plan* (CZ), *FC ROMA* (CZ). She is the co-author of two film scripts and director of three short films and a TV docu-series. She has edited the book *Ludvík Šváb - Tidy Up After* and recently took part in the Nipkow programme in Berlin to develop the script of her authorial debut.



Shirley Bassey singing in Prague in August 1968



Recently discovered 16mm film of the 1968 invasion



Claudia Holm, University of Nebraska-Lincoln  
music performance student

## Creative Team continued



COMPOSER

**Tom Larson** is Professor of Music Composition at the Glenn Korff School of Music at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He has composed the musical scores to dozens of films including *Follow the Water* (PBS), and *Monkey Trial* (*The American Experience*, WGBH, Boston). He has made recordings in Paris (*An Afternoon in Paris*, a duo with Hans Sturm, 2012) and Tokyo (*Focus*, the Tom Larson Group, 2019) as a jazz pianist, written three textbooks: *The History and Tradition of Jazz*; *Modern Sounds: The Artistry of Contemporary Jazz*; and *The History of Rock and Roll* and served as recording engineer for artists such as Paul Barnes, Jackie Allen, and François Rabbath.



James interviewing Timothy Garton Ash in Oxford



Mariana with Josef Janiček and Vratislav Brabenec (Plastic People of the Universe)



Mariana, Eda Kriseová and Susan in Prague

## Production Team



**EXECUTIVE PRODUCER**

**David Hanzal** graduated from the Production Department at Film & TV School of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague (FAMU). Since FAMU, David has worked in the film industry for 25 years and on many projects as a production manager and executive producer. David mainly focuses on TV production (TV shows, such as the worldwide distributed documentary series *Národní klenoty*, *Miracles of Nature*, *Unusual Cultures*); his portfolio also includes feature films (*Jízda*, *Šeptej*, *Protector*) and documentaries (*Sny o toulavých kočkách*).



**EXECUTIVE PRODUCER**

**Dr. Arpi Siyahian** is a Senior Technology Manager at NUtech Ventures, the technology transfer affiliate at UNL, working on bringing a diverse set of innovations from academia to the public. Arpi was born and raised in Baghdad, Iraq and is a descendant of Armenian Genocide survivors. She holds a PhD in biological chemistry from UCLA, and a BS in biochemistry from UC Riverside. *The Art of Dissent* is Arpi's first foray into the world of film.



Archival research in Prague



Ben Kreimer using a drone to film the end of the movie



Composer Tom Larson (left) with Steinway Artist Mark Clinton at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln

## Production Team continued



**Petr Sýs** graduated from the Czech Technical University and since 1989 has worked as a sound engineer. Petr created and owns the Professional Sound Studio in Prague and has done sound on thousands of television shows over his career. He has worked extensively in live broadcasting and has done recording for dozens of renowned singers and musicians, such as Karel Gott, Helena Vondráčková, Miroslav Žbirka and Chick Corea. He has been the sound designer and sound master for 10 television series and also works with documentaries.



**Martin Bouda** is a film and television archivist at Czech TV. Between 2010-2016 he co-ordinated the promotion of Czech TV by using almost 1,300 curated videos to explore the Czech Republic's rich and diverse cultural history via television content in the EUscreen project. Currently he supervises the Audiovisual Archives and is involved in their research, digitization, reconstruction, and online archival publication.

# Credits

Director: James D. Le Sueur  
Script: James D. Le Sueur  
Editors: Evženie Brabcová & James D. Le Sueur  
Director of Photography: James D. Le Sueur  
Film Archivist: Czech TV, Martin Bouda  
Music: Tom Larson  
Music Recording: Fuse Recording, Tim Kechely  
Sound: Petr Sýs  
Colorist: Ivan Dvořák  
Dramaturge: Vít Poláček

Co-produced by: NUtech Ventures (USA) & Czech TV (Czech Republic)  
Produced by: FRMOL Productions (Prague)  
Associate Producer: Mariana Čapková  
Executive Producers: NUtech Ventures, Arpi Siyahian & Brad Roth  
FRMOL Production  
David Hanzal &  
Vít Bělohradský  
Producer: Fox Hollow Films, James Le Sueur  
Production Manager: David Hanzal

## Česká televize

Creative Producer: Jakub Mahler  
Production Manager: Jana Vokrouhlíková  
Production Assistant: Žaneta Malečková  
Development Manager: Radomír Šofr  
Realization Manager: Petr Morávek

Cameras: James D. Le Sueur (First)  
Susan Pahlke (Principal Second)  
Sef Sarroub-Le Sueur (Second)  
Sofia Sarroub-Le Sueur (Second)  
Daniel Čapek (Second)

Translator & Researcher: Alena Jirásek  
Voiceover Director: Otto Kallus  
Graphic Designers: Michal Volf  
Petr Andrlé  
Editing Assistants: David Votava  
Jan Řehák  
Roman Škára

Interviewees in order of appearance: Timothy Garton Ash  
Jacques Rupnik  
Tomáš Halík  
Eda Kriseová  
Michael Žantovský  
Paul Wilson  
Josef Janiček  
Vratislav Brabenec  
Ivan Havel  
Kamila Bendová  
Marta Kubišová  
Jaroslav Hutka  
Edward Lucas  
Alan Pajer

## BASIC INFORMATION:



Artwork: Otakar Přihoda and Miroslav Krátký



Mariana, James, Jaroslav and Susan



Susan, Ivan Havel and Mariana



# Credits continued

Original title: The Art of Dissent  
Length: 1:44:57  
Languages: English, Czech  
Subtitles: English  
Image: Color and B&W  
Ratio: (1020x1080);  
(1998x1080)  
Sound: ProRes 2.0; DCP 2.1 (Dolby)  
Formats: ProRes HQ 422; DCP

News: <https://www.radio.cz/en/section/panorama/the-art-of-dissent-or-why-love-tolerance-and-creative-freedom-arent-just-for-fairytales>

Website: <http://www.theartofdissentfilm.com/>  
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/theartofdissentfilm/>  
Twitter: <https://twitter.com/artdissent>

## RIGHTS AND DISTRIBUTION:

Arpi Siyahian  
NUTech Ventures  
2021 Transformation Drive  
Lincoln, NE 68508  
(402) 472-1783  
Cell: (818) 599-2542  
[asiyahian@nutechventures.org](mailto:asiyahian@nutechventures.org)  
<http://www.nutechventures.org>

## MEDIA CONTACT:

James D. Le Sueur  
Fox Hollow Films  
2831 Fox Hollow Road  
Lincoln, NE 68506  
Cell: 402-202-6150  
[jlesueur@unl.edu](mailto:jlesueur@unl.edu)  
[jameslesueur007@gmail.com](mailto:jameslesueur007@gmail.com)  
[jamesdeanlesueur.com](http://jamesdeanlesueur.com)

## CZECH REPUBLIC MEDIA CONTACT:

Jakub Mahler  
Na Hřebenech II 1132/4  
147 00 Praha 4  
+420 732 670 027  
[jakub.mahler@ceskatelevize.cz](mailto:jakub.mahler@ceskatelevize.cz)

Press kit designed by Katie Nieland  
Poster designed by Matyas M. Svejdik

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Filming Edward Lucas in London



Edward Lucas, journalist



James filming





Kamila Bendová, mathematician and activist



James with sculptor David Černý, whose art appears in the film



Still shot from newly discovered archival film



Michael Žantovský



Presidential photographer Alan Pajer being interviewed about his Havel photos