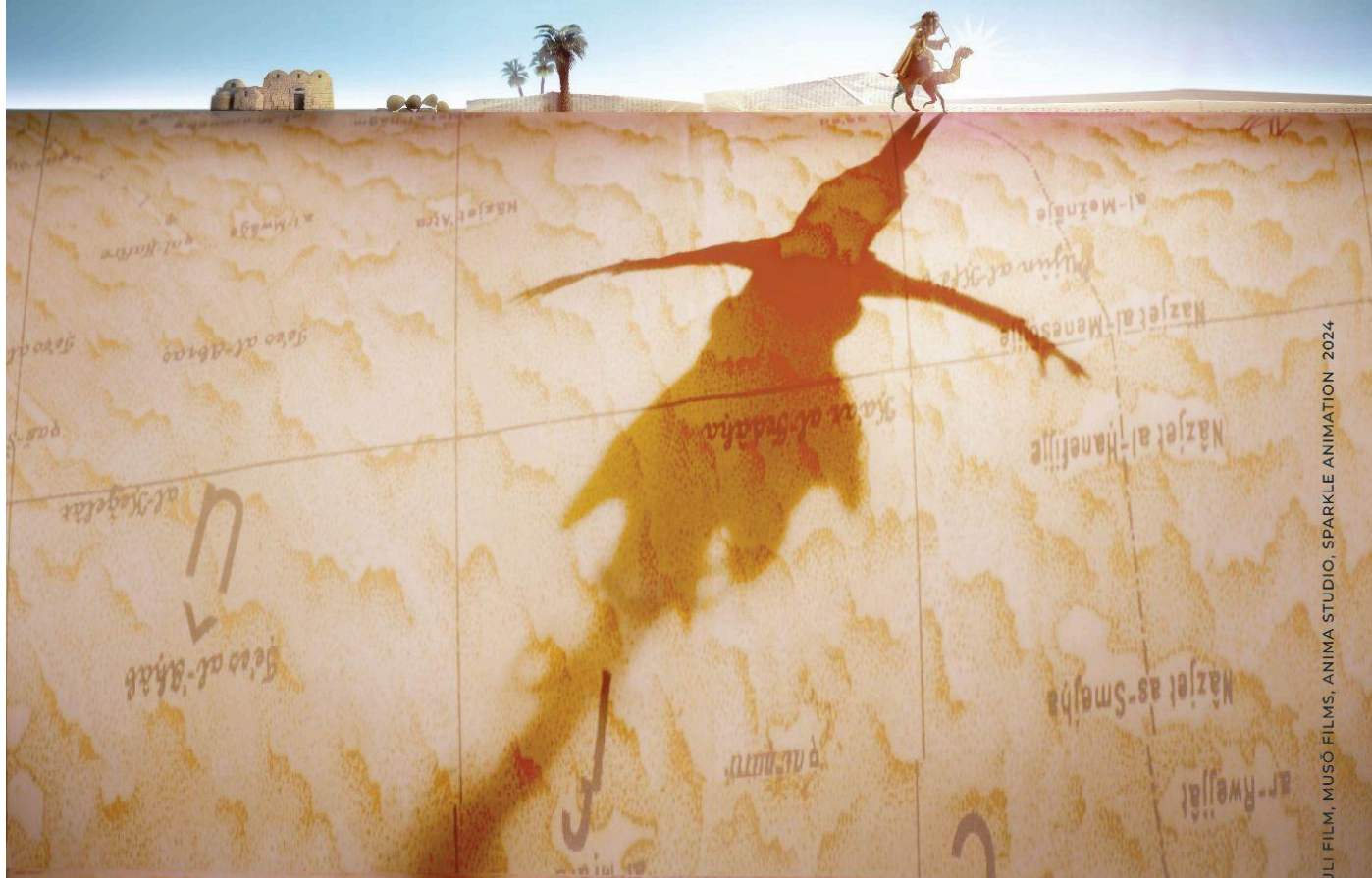




LAWRENCE OF MORAVIA



"HE SOUGHT TRUTH IN THE VAST DESERT OF ARÁBIA..."

DIRECTOR **JAN CEHL** DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY **JAKUB HALOUSEK** EDITOR **JAN DAÑHEL**
COMPOSER **BÁRBARA CAMPOS** ANIMATION **JAN CEHL** WRITTEN BY **VÍT POLÁČEK**
PRODUCED BY **RADIM PROCHÁZKA, IRINA CALADO, JAN BUŠTA,**
MARCELA HALOUSKOVÁ, LUÍS DA MATTA ALMEIDA

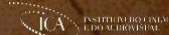


MUSÓ



jihočeský kraj

Vyškov





PRESS KIT

LAWRENCE OF MORAVIA

Synopsis

The Catholic clergyman Alois Musil is one of the most important discoverers of the archaeological treasures of the Moslim world. He was caught in the Middle East by WW1. The Austrian government at that time wanted to turn him into a spy, which is why he is known today as the „Moravian Lawrence of Arabia“. The printed sheets of Musil’s travelogues inspired the director and artist Jan Cechl to create traditional, semi-plastic puppets that experience dangerous adventures in the fairy-tale Orient, full of fiery genie and Bedouin wisdom. As a Sheikh Músa ar Ruelli, the Moravian priest becomes a wild nomad of the desert, and during a dangerous expedition he discovers the lost Amra Castle, which makes him famous throughout the world. At the same time it is also a playful reference to one of the most valuable jewels of world cinema - the film Lawrence of Arabia by David Lean.

Trailer

<https://vimeo.com/911481536>

Materials for downloading (posters, photos, trailer, press kit, ...):

<https://1url.cz/u1LKY>



Conversation with Jan Cechl

Why did you choose for your professional debut the historical figure of a priest and explorer Alois Musil?

All my life I've been fascinated by the period around the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, an age of great discoveries and progress when the Golden Age culminated and ended, and at the same time there were individuals who set out beyond the safety of the European Western world to seek truth in the Near and Far East. Alois Musil was one of them. Just now unjustly overlooked, half-forgotten, but at the same time a fascinating figure. My aim was to show that someone like that existed. As a Catholic priest he lived amongst Bedouins and his legacy thus has a lot to say about the events of today.

What public is the film aimed at?

I don't like to set boundaries. I assume that it's a film for adults, more likely cinephiles. But it may be of interest to all sorts of people, perhaps even children if they have a sense of adventure and are interested in foreign cultures and history. But don't expect a comprehensive plausible historical story. I use Alois Musil as a prototype of an explorer at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. He represents a Kiplingian hero which in the present era is missing really.

In your film's synopsis it says that it concerns „a playful cinematographic tribute to one of the most valuable jewels of world cinema – David Lean's Lawrence of Arabia“. Where exactly do you see this tribute to the famous feature film in an animated film?

Formally most certainly in the camera work, editing, use of the horizon and the wide-screen format. And Lean's film also showed me the way how to portray a personality from a memorial plaque as a normal person. Furthermore, here it concerns a comparison of two similar historical figures. One of them, Thomas Edward Lawrence, is in people's subconscious thanks to the above-mentioned cinematographic classic. And the second, Alois Musil, is mainly known in the narrow specialist field focused on the Near East, and because he still has something to say he awaits public exposure. Let's hope that our film contributes at least a little towards that.

Where can people see it?

We hope that following premieres at prestigious festivals Monstra in Lisbon and Anifilm in Liberec the film will travel on to other festivals. We will offer it to Czech cinemas as part of a programme which introduces my other work but, above all, shows Lawrence in the context of other Studio Anima productions. You can look forward to box-office hits such as Rudolf Šmíd's Chronicle of Oldřich S. or Petr Vodička's Charlie The Snowman's Christmas Wedding.

Where did you shoot?

We filmed in the already mentioned Studio Anima which has concentrated on classical animation techniques for over thirty years. Above all it involves puppets but also relief animation, paper, plasticine or painting on glass. They are hand technologies which in today's computer age are quite unusual and a valued rarity. The technical and personnel facilities within a studio with such a long tradition in the field of animation was for me extremely beneficial.

The film was created in a co-production with the Portuguese producer Irina Calado and her team. They were largely responsible for digital post-production and sound. Thanks to them the puppet horizon could be extended with a further plan and allow the combination of puppetoon technology and paper. For me the objective view from the outside was extremely valuable, from a different cultural tradition (moreover from a culture of seafarers and explorers influenced also by Moorish culture).

What are you working on now?

Just now on several projects at the same time: for Studio Anima and Czech Television I'm preparing a plasticine early evening short fairytale Tribík and Wee Amonita and as an art director and one of the animators I'm responsible for the puppet feature film Babu in The Night City. With the producer Radim Procházka I'm trying to find money for another joint upcoming project with the mysterious title Orf. It's a tale about a boy and his talking wooden toy (Professor Duck) who set out to discover unfamiliar countries. And I'm also looking forward to working with the artist Vendulka Chalánková on a short paper puppetry portrait of another priest and in this case inventor Prokop Diviš called Modern Prometheus.





Director Jan Cechl's CV

Born into a family of painters devoting themselves to restoration. From an early age he took up drawing and was also keen on live-action films as well as animated films. At the Film and TV School of Academy of Performing Arts in Prague (FAMU) he completed his studies in animation in Břetislav Pojar's and Pavel Koutský's workshops. Thanks to the controversial puppet film *BLOODY MERRY CHRISTMAS* (2007) he established himself as an artist who experiments with decadent genres. He is the art director and animator behind Petr Vodička's full-length puppet detective story *BABU IN THE NIGHT CITY* which is being filmed right now. His professional debut came about in a Czech-Portuguese co-production *LAWRENCE OF MORAVIA* which is a tribute to the legendary explorer Alois Musil as well as David Lean's cult film *LAWRENCE OF ARABIA*. With the scriptwriter Magdalena Bittnerová he is working on a relief puppet film as an early evening short for children called *TRIBÍK AND WEE AMONITA*. Last but not least he is also developing a puppet film called *ORF* with the scriptwriter Eva Prchalová.

Studio Anima's Profile

Husband and wife team Halousek behind Studio Anima picked up in 1991 on the traditional school of Czech animation. For 33 years now this family studio environment is a place for top Czech animators, directors, artists and others to meet up having created some thirty hours of animation in the form of series, films or advertising spots. In its portfolio you'll find all the main techniques – from cut-out to relief, claymation, pixilation, right through to puppet films on which it has been focusing on lately. From the very beginning it tries to retain and develop classical processes so that the studio's work is unique and capable of competing in today's electronic age. He offers a complete production from A to Z – it makes puppets, props and decorations, animates and arranges the post-production.

Studio Anima carries on in the tradition of the famous pioneering Czech school of animation. Its animators gained experience or co-operated with the finest Czech artists. Marcela Halousková (founder and head of the studio) completed her studies in animation at Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design (UMPRUM) under Professor Adolf Hofmeister. The chief animator David Filčík collaborated with the maestro of world's film surrealism Jan Švankmajer on his *DIMENSIONS OF DIALOGUE*.

From the 1990's until today Studio Anima produces children's TV series for Czechoslovak, and later, Slovak as well as Czech, public televisions (e.g. *THE COTTAGE ON THE HILLTOP*, *LITTLE RAIN WORMS*, *STORIES ABOUT MUM AND DAD*, *VICKY: THE SLEEPY-BYE OWL*). In terms of personnel and technology it picked up the threads from Prague's

studio KRÁTKÝ FILM, the legendary animation studio with the largest animation sets in the world devoted to animation. From the middle of 2000 the most important part of the Anima's production are puppet films (including three short stories for the omnibus film FIMFARUM 2 and FIMFARUM THIRD TIME LUCKY). 2010 saw own productions being made and broadened the genre output from TV series to short films and feature films, from the children's genre through to arthouse.

At the present time in close cooperation with the producer Radim Procházka Studio Anima is developing and shooting its own films and series. In 2011 it co-produced Rudolf Šmíd's CHRONICLE OF OLDŘICH S. which became a festival hit having had its premiere in 2012 at the prestigious American festival South by Southwest and screenings at dozens other festivals concerned with animation and documentaries (e.g. FF Hiroshima and DOK Leipzig). Petr Vodička's short puppet film CHARLIE THE SNOWMAN'S CHRISTMAS WEDDING is represented by the New Europe Film Sales company and it has managed to be brought into the French and Belgian cinematographic distribution networks. It also gained the audience's prize at the Biennale animation in Bratislava. Further, Anima Studio is now shooting with Petr Vodička its first feature puppet film BABU IN THE NIGHT CITY.

Selective filmography:

2011 CHRONICLE OF OLDŘICH S. (Rudolf Šmíd, pixilation) – Eighty excerpts from the diary of an ordinary citizen Mr. Oldřich Sedláček is an original reflection of Czech society during the 20th century.

2015 TRANSPORT ER (Miloš Zvěřina, puppet) – The film brings to life puppets originally made by ten young prisoners in the Terezín ghetto before they were forced to board train transports to the Nazi extermination camps.

2017 CHARLIE THE SNOWMAN'S CHRISTMAS WEDDING (Petr Vodička, puppet) – Even between Christmas decorations may find love at first sight.

2020 SHADOWS OF THERESIENSTADT (Miloš Zvěřina, acted/animated) – Not even the ghetto's ramparts and warcan put a stop to children's imagination.

2024 LAWRENCE OF MORAVIA (Jan Cechl, short puppet film) – The life and work of a Catholic priest Alois Musil, one of the most important discoverers of treasures of the Moslem world.

In production:

2027 BABU IN THE NIGHT CITY (Petr Vodička, feature puppet film) – When a thief steals her parrot 8-year old girl Babu sets out on a night expedition in order to save her animal friend.

2027 ORF (Jan Cechl, TV special) – Orf discovers a mysterious plain which awakes a child's imagination.

Selected awards

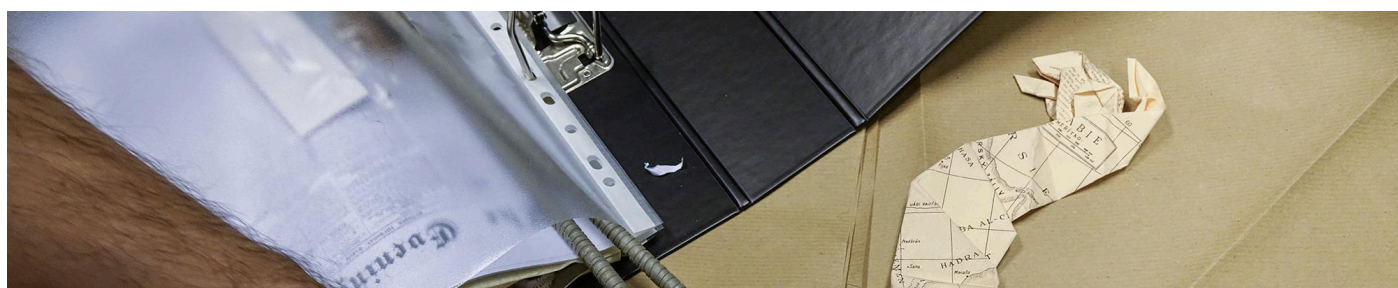
2012 Main Prize, AniFest, Třeboň – CHRONICLE OF OLDŘICH S.

Prize for the Best Animation, Anima Mundi, Rio de Janeiro – CHRONICLE OF OLDŘICH S.

Special Appreciation by the Student Jury, Festival dei Popoli – CHRONICLE OF OLDŘICH S.

2018 Audience's Prize, Animation Bienale, Bratislava – CHARLIE THE SNOWMAN'S CHRISTMAS WEDDING

2022 Best Czech series, Czech Horizon Prize at AniFilm 2022 – SNOOZY THE BADGER



Basic Information

CZ, PT – 2024

Length : 14 minutes

Genre: puppet fantasy about a famous Czech explorer of the Arab world

Direction, artistic work, animation : Jan Cechl

Producers: Radim Procházka and Jan Bušta (Kuli Film), Irina Calado (MUSŮ Films), Marcela Halousková (Studio Anima), Luís da Matta Almeida (Sparkle Animation)

Script: Vít Poláček

Camera: Jakub Halousek

Editor: Jan Daňhel

Hudba: Bárbara Campos

Sound: Pedro Carvalho

VFX: Carlos Carneiro

Distribution: **Kuli Film** Contact: **Veronika Zapatová**, veronika@radimprochazka.com